

J. A. Blake

OUTLINE

OF THE

POST-WAR HISTORY

OF THE

COMMUNIST **P**ARTY of **A**USTRALIA

by
**E. A.
BACON**



Draft for discussion



HISTORY

The history of the Communist Party of Australia in the years since the Second World War is a history of persistent struggle in defence of peace, national independence, democracy, and the living standards of the people.

This has demanded protracted, stubborn defence of fundamental working class rights—especially the rights of independent political and trade union organisation and of freedom to act on basic economic and political issues.

This struggle has taken place in a period marked by the Cold War, launched by imperialism in an effort to destroy the gains of the peoples and halt their further progress, but in which Socialism has become the chief determining force of historical development.

The Party's post-war history is a continuation of the proud record of heroic, self-sacrificing effort by thousands of men and women to maintain and build a Marxist-Leninist Party which, dedicated to the cause of Socialism in Australia, has sought ceaselessly to extend its influence and ideas widely among the people, despite the continual efforts of monopoly capital and its agents to destroy it.

In Australia, where the working class is the majority of the population, while the power of capitalism is concentrated in the hands of a few monopolists, where the Labor Party, based on the workers and professing Socialism as its aim, has been a strong force since the turn of the century; where the trade unions are powerful and the Communist Party, founded in 1920, has built a nationwide organisation and won many important trade union positions, the prospects of Socialism are soundly based. In practice, however, the struggle for Socialism in Australia has proved a long, difficult and complicated one.

The key to victory over capitalism is a united working class with clear, Socialist aims.

To unite the working class and to infuse its movement with Socialist consciousness has therefore, been the constant endeavour of the Communists.

The Party has done a tremendous amount of work to these ends.

Today, when Socialism has become the decisive force in world history, it is important that the Australian Party's history and the reasons for its successes and failures be studied, so that

lessons may be learned which will enable a big new advance in the struggle to build a Socialist Australia.

Such study should help in the current efforts to build a bigger and stronger Party.

• • •

This outline is intended to describe only the chief features of the history of the Party in the period since the Second World War.

It does not pretend to be a complete history, but should provide the basis for discussions that could result in the writing of a definitive history of the Party. More extensive research is needed into many fields only briefly surveyed in this outline, or not explored by it at all.

The history of the Party in each State as well as in Australia as a whole should, for instance, be recorded. The States have retained important powers since Federation and each has economic and political peculiarities and traditions. These may or may not have much national significance, but are often very important in a particular State.

Much valuable work could also be done in investigating the Party's history in particular fields of activity—the trade unions, farmers, youth, women, the arts and sciences, etc.

Finally, the experience of preparing this outline has convinced me that we should do more to draw on the recollections and records of older members, before these are lost.

With the exception of L. L. Sharkey's brief 1944 lecture, some material written by E. W. Campbell (who has also helped greatly in the preparation of this draft), and a few Tribune and Communist Review articles, no systematic account of the Party's history has been published. A more thorough review of the years covered in L. L. Sharkey's outline—especially the 80's and the '39-'45 war years—is needed.

It is hoped that discussion of this draft throughout Australia will stimulate a flow of materials to the Central Committee, for use in compiling a more allsided, authentic Party History.

E. A. Bacon

Brisbane, October, 1965.

CHAPTER I

EARLY POST-WAR PERIOD

1945-1949: The Party faces great problems caused by the abrupt changes in the world and Australian situations following the victory over fascism; the launching of the Cold War against Socialism; the Australian capitalist offensive against the working class, aided by the Rightwing. The danger of a new world war arises.

• • •

The Second World War resulted in the defeat of fascism—that is, of the brutal, militaristic dictatorship of the powerful sections of imperialism which led by Nazi Germany, had set out to dominate the world and destroy Socialism and all forms of democracy by force of arms.

The smashing of monopoly capital's armed spearhead, fascism, by the democratic forces of the world headed by the Socialist Soviet Union, further weakened world imperialism, which had been in a stage of general crisis since the first world war, and shaken by the victorious 1917 Russian Revolution and the impetus this gave to the forces of progress in all countries.

Led by their Communist Parties, the peoples of countries in Europe and Asia broke free from imperialism and began to build Socialism in the immediate post war years. By the time of the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949, the world Socialist system had expanded to embrace 1/3rd of the world's people.

The mighty wave of the national liberation movement, sweeping over the whole colonial world, tore country after country from the grip of imperialism, depriving it of enormous amounts of wealth, cheap labour, manpower and military bases, and creating a multitude of newly-independent nations whose own needs caused them to adopt neutralist or even pro-Socialist policies, and, objectively, compelled them to favour world peace.

AUSTRALIA IN A NEW WORLD

Australia at the end of the Second World War found itself in a new and rapidly changing world.

Japanese imperialism, whose rise to power in Asia and the Pacific had been supported in the pre-war years by Australian monopoly capital (in the face of bitter working class opposition) had been forced back within the confines of its home islands.

The Indonesian revolution, beginning in 1945 with powerful support from the Australian working class, broke the 350 year old power of Dutch imperialism in South East Asia.

British and French imperialism were fast losing their positions in Asia, though bloody struggles were to come.

The footholds and influence of the imperialist powers in China were on the way to destruction by the Chinese people's revolution.

THE COLD WAR BEGINS

The great sweep of the peoples' movements in many lands against imperialism, for national liberation, independence and socialism, terrified the giant international monopolies and their governments.

Headed by the USA, which had profited enormously from the second world war and emerged as by far the strongest capitalist power, the imperialists set out to try to crush or contain the peoples' movements.

They turned savagely on their great wartime ally the Soviet Union which, they hoped, having borne the brunt of the fighting and destruction of the war, would be so seriously weakened as to be unable to stand up to their threats or to assist the newly-developing nations.

They counted heavily on their then monopoly of atomic weapons. The US atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki towards the end of the war was militarily unjustifiable. Japan was already making approaches to surrender and the Soviet Union, by agreement with Britain and the USA, was about to deal a fatal blow at her main remaining forces in Manchuria.

The use of the A-Bomb was not, as US propagandists claim, the last big action of the second world war but, in fact, the first major action of the "Cold War" launched by imperialism against socialism and the movements for national independence:

Winston Churchill's speech at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri on March 5, 1946, with US President Truman in the chair, is generally regarded as being the first public declaration of the Cold War. However, the Cold War had been secretly planned in Britain and the USA since 1942, and Churchill had revealed his ideas seven months before his Fulton speech.

In the House of Commons on August 16, 1945, he attacked the Soviet Union, denounced the new popular governments arising in Eastern Europe and pleaded that the atomic bomb be kept an Anglo-American monopoly.

In his Fulton, Missouri speech, in which he first used the term "Iron Curtain" (coined by Hitler's propaganda Minister Goebbels) Churchill further developed the theme of atomic diplomacy.

He called for an Anglo-American union; a pooling of armed forces to contain the Soviet Union; halt the advance of Com-

munism in the world and restore capitalism in the newly liberated countries.

The US leaders took up this reactionary cause with enthusiasm and a vast expenditure of money. The "Truman Doctrine" and the Marshall Plan were proclaimed.

The Truman Doctrine called for encirclement of the Soviet Union and pledged support for counter revolution in any part of the world.

The Marshall Plan aimed at facilitating the penetration of US capital into Europe, under the guise of economic aid; at restoring the power of West German militarism; and at resisting the advance of the colonial liberation movement.

MONOPOLY ATTACKS AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE

The Australian monopolists, whose ties with US imperialism had been strengthened in the course of the war, associated themselves from the outset with the Cold War.

They set out to destroy the people's hopes of a postwar New Order, break the power of the trade unions and other democratic forces, and establish an Australia ruthlessly controlled by big capital and closely allied with world reaction, headed by US imperialism.

The splendid records of the Soviet Union, of the Communist Parties in the allied and occupied countries and of Australian Communists in the armed forces and on the home front had greatly heightened the appeal of the ideas of Socialism to the Australian people.

Aware of this, and recognising the Communist Party as a formidable obstacle to their plans, Australian monopolists, like their counterparts elsewhere, launched a fierce, sustained anti-Soviet, anti-Communist propaganda barrage, even before the war against Japan had ended, and set out to isolate and destroy the Party. A.L.P. Rightwing leaders supported this.

NEW TASKS FOR COMMUNISTS

The 14th National Congress of the Party, which was held in the Sydney Town Hall on August 9-12, 1945, coinciding with the end of the Second World War, was thus faced with the task of planning the way forward in conditions greatly different from those of the war years.

A fundamental realignment of policy was needed.

Cold War propaganda internationally was being linked with anti-Communism at home. In December 1944 a conference of anti-labor organisations had been held in Albury, NSW, to reconstitute the discredited United Australia Party as the Liberal Party, under the leadership of R. G. Menzies.

In his opening speech to the conference, Menzies had foreshadowed an intense campaign against the Labor Party, the trade unions and the Communist Party.

About the same time, "The Movement" (later to expand into "Industrial Groups", "Democratic Labor" and the "National Civic Council"), formed a national anti-Communist organisation and set out to capture control of trade unions and the ALP. In this it had support from extreme Rightwing elements in the ALP and the unions, who had played a disruptive role throughout the war years.

THE WARTIME GROWTH OF THE PARTY

Because the supreme task of the time was to defeat fascism, the Party had devoted its main attention during the war years to building the maximum national unity for this purpose.

The Party worked might and main to unite the working class as the core of the national endeavour. It gave powerful and indispensable support to all the major policies of the Curtin Labor Government, fought hard against Right and Left splitting tendencies, and published a wealth of constructive proposals for the better conduct of the war effort and for post-war reconstruction.

The outstanding patriotism of the Party and its clear, firm stand on the immediate and prospective needs of the nation attracted many thousands of people to its side. In every mainland State, Communist newspapers achieved large circulations despite wartime restrictions of newsprint supplies. The Communist Review and other periodicals were widely read, as were many topical pamphlets, job and locality bulletins.

The Party vote in Local Authority, State and Federal elections rose sharply. Communists were elected to a number of municipal and shire Councils. F. W. Paterson won and held a Queensland State seat and several other Communist candidates came very close to election in both States and Federal seats.

The dependence of the Allied powers on the Soviet war effort (which far outweighed all others) made it necessary for the Australian and other capitalist governments in the alliance to allow the people to learn a good deal of the truth about the achievements of Socialism in the Soviet Union in all spheres of life.

Churchill, Roosevelt and other public figures spoke glowingly of the Soviet Union and its contribution. On February 23, 1942, Gen. Douglas MacArthur said: "The hopes of civilisation rest on the worthy banners of the courageous Red Army . . . The scale and grandeur of the effort mark it as the greatest military

achievement in all history." As late as June 25, 1945, the New York Herald Tribune wrote editorially about the Red Army:

"It has in fact proved an army of liberation for Europe and half the world in the vital sense that, without the Red Army and the illimitable sacrifices with which the Russian people supported and maintained it, liberation from the brutal blight of Nazism would have been all but impossible."

Australia's Communist Party grew rapidly. During the earlier period of the war, after the Party had been declared illegal in June 1940 by the Menzies Government, the membership quadrupled. By the end of the war, a mass Party of more than 20,000 members—4000 of them in the armed forces—had been built.

But rapid growth brought problems of its own. The Party was not well equipped to consolidate and train the high intake of new members. It had a limited force of experienced cadres and its practical activities were conditioned by the need to build and maintain national unity around the war effort.

SHARP CHANGES NEEDED

The ending of the war, the changeover to peacetime conditions and the launching of the Cold War against the Soviet Union, raised great ideological problems for the Party and called for sharp changes in tactics and organisational methods.

The Party reoriented itself to the new situation somewhat slowly and there was some confusion. Many, especially new members, could not understand the nature of the changes and began to fall away.

The capitalist class went over to a savage offensive against the workers, and the Labor Government, which held office until December 1949, devoted much time, effort and national expense to helping monopoly capital to consolidate itself in Australia.

The BHP steel monopoly, for example, which had been brought directly into the work of war-planning, was enabled to strengthen its positions greatly in the immediate postwar years. Government-owned munitions and other establishments were handed over to "private enterprise", GMH and other US monopolies were welcomed into Australia on most favourable terms.

This, together with the use of Government powers against the working class, including new repressive legislation, soon began to create deep problems of disunity in the ranks of the working class. The sinister "Movement" flourished, with increasing official support from a section of the ALP leadership.

MONOPOLY DEMANDS STILL MORE

However, the ALP leaders' plans for the strengthening and modernisation of Australian capitalism did not meet with the

full approval of the monopolists. These gentry were, moreover, concerned at the evident pressure the ALP rank-and-file—especially the big trade unions—were able to exert on the ALP leadership. They set out to discredit and destroy the Labor Government and replace it with men of their own class—the Liberals.

On issue after issue they expressed themselves with extraordinary venom and wild exaggeration. This was to rise to an unprecedented height in connection with the 1947 Bank Nationalisation proposal.

BANK NATIONALISATION FAILURE

In 1947, without warning and with no preparatory campaign throughout the labor movement, Prime Minister Chifley introduced a brief Bill to nationalise the private trading banks.

This was met with a tirade of abuse and denunciation by the spokesmen of monopoly and reaction. Sir Earle Page, later to become a Minister in the Menzies Government, said:

"Australia was gradually approaching the stage when blood would flow . . . Australians did not want the dictatorial policy of the Prime Minister and his proposed nationalised banks. The latter fitted in with the overall pattern of totalitarian dictatorship. All free men must be prepared to fight the issue."

Sir Raymond Connelly, Lord Mayor of Melbourne, said:

"Anything of a communist nature must be fought and treated seriously. We must meet this challenge from Communism, this threat from within, even if it means we must create cruel war to do so."

These statements, typical of many at the time, threatening bloodshed and civil war, were quite unjustified. The Chifley Government's bank nationalisation proposals were intended not to undermine but to strengthen Australian capitalism. Major enterprises have been nationalised in many capitalist countries. The British Tory Government accepted and continued the Labor Government's nationalisation of the coal and transport industries.

But the capitalist class fears and opposes nationalisation especially when the working class movement is strong and active. It understands that the successful functioning of nationally-run enterprises demonstrates that private (capitalist) ownership of industry is unnecessary, and that this encourages Socialist thinking among the workers.

The Communist Party waged a vigorous campaign in support of Chifley's bank nationalisation proposals.

It explained that the proposals were not Socialist in character, but limited only to capitalist nationalisation of the banks, but it also took the opportunity to mobilise and educate the

people on the need for nationalisation of all key industries and for Socialism.

The Labor Party leaders, however, failed to wage a sufficiently vigorous campaign outside Parliament in support of the Bill, and the Rightwing openly sabotaged it.

In Victoria, the State Labor Party executive rejected Federal speakers. In October, the NSW Labor Party executive decided to hold no more public meetings on bank nationalisation.

In these circumstances of a powerful campaign by reaction and a divided labor movement, the High Court ruled the Bank Nationalisation Act invalid under the Federal Constitution.

The Labor Government was to meet with another set-back in May 1948, when a Referendum to give the Commonwealth permanent power to control prices and rents was defeated.

TRENDS IN THE PARTY

At the end of the war the Party's search for a correct line in the new situation was hampered by both Right and Left trends. Left trends had displayed themselves, even at the height of the war, in sectarian, cynical attitudes to the building of ALP-Communist unity, crude dogmatic views as to the imminence of Socialism in Australia, and failure to subordinate immediate, partial aims to more important ones.

These tendencies were now strengthened by the ferocity and bitterness of the Cold War launched by imperialism and by the Labor Government's policies for strengthening Australian capitalism. They were also reinforced by a strong element of scholastic dogmatism in the Party's theoretical work. Like all Parties at the time, the Australian Party tended to accept and try to apply all the theories of Stalin, which included much that was correct and useful, but also much that was schematic and proved wrong in practice.

The main Right tendency was known loosely at that time as Browderism, after Earl Browder who, as General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, had created a whole system of Right revisionist views on the basis of a wildly optimistic belief that the Teheran and Yalta wartime agreements between the USA, Britain and the Soviet Union would be honoured by the imperialists.

Holding that a decisive, "enlightened" section of the monopoly capitalists would work with the USSR for the complete eradication of fascism and cooperate with the working class for progress in the postwar world, Browder succeeded in persuading the CPUSA to dissolve itself voluntarily.

Browderism gained some support in many Communist Parties, including the Australian Party, and, though it was rejected before the 14th National Congress in August 1945, the report to

that Congress noted that there had been "undoubted tendencies towards percolation of some of these theories, particularly the economic ones, into the Party."

The course of events in Australia and elsewhere in the world, especially in the USA, soon shattered any apparent foundation for Browder-type views.

A POLICY FOR THE PEOPLE

Under the slogan, "Jobs, Freedom, Progress", the 14th Congress formulated a policy for international peace, for jobs, homes and economic security for all toilers (with special stress on rehabilitation of exservicemen and women), for improved living standards, social amenities and cultural opportunities for the masses.

It called for labor and national unity, nationalisation of key monopolies and Socialist education of the masses, government control over capital investment, nationalisation of the coal industry, Government retention of ownership of war factories, converting them to peacetime production, a new Commonwealth Overseas Shipping Line and no return to pre-war monopoly domination, lifting of the war-time wage freeze, a £1 increase in the basic wage, a 40 hour week and increased annual and sick leave.

Stress was laid on the struggle for a strong, free and independent Australia.

In his speech to Congress, R. Dixon said that the crucial issue of post-war rehabilitation was whether Australia was to return to unrestricted domination by private enterprise, or to go forward on the basis of national planning and organisation, with the great monopolies and private concerns subordinated to the general interests of the people.

L. L. Sharkey predicted that the realisation of Congress proposals implied "a serious and decisive struggle with the monopoly capitalists and their reactionary political parties and stooges."

POSTWAR STRIKE WAVE

The monopolists soon made it clear that this prediction was true.

From the end of the war to the middle of 1946, there were more than 30 strikes in Sydney alone against victimisation of shop stewards and union activists, beginning with Australia's leading monopoly, the BHP, only five weeks after Japan's surrender.

An Ironworkers' Union delegate at Port Kembla steelworks was dismissed, in violation of trade union seniority rights.

The BHP refused to negotiate with the Ironworkers' Union, provoking a stoppage, which spread to Newcastle and Whyalla

and was later joined by miners, seamen, firemen and engine-drivers, with support from many unions.

After a bitter three months struggle, in which Redbaiting by monopoly spokesmen and Rightwingers inside and outside the Ironworkers' Union, was a feature, the Full Bench of the NSW Industrial Commission ordered the delegate's reinstatement.

The strike was won, but bitterness and disunity remained.

A more protracted and less successful 18 weeks' strike over seniority rights was precipitated in the Queensland meat industry on March 8, 1946, when four men in a bacon factory were dismissed out of order of seniority.

When the employers rejected the union's demand for reinstatement of the men and recognition of seniority, the Meatworkers' Union instructed all its members throughout the State to cease work.

Miners and waterside workers joined the strike in solidarity with the meatworkers. Key rail and metal unions declared support. Seamen refused to man ships carrying "black" goods.

The strike was bitterly opposed by the State Labor Government, which anticipated later Federal practices by carrying out a police raid on the Meatworkers' Union office to seize records in order to conduct a Court-controlled secret ballot for ending the strike. The ballot was a fiasco, but the Rightwing in the leadership of the Meatworkers' Union succeeded in splitting the strikers' ranks and securing a return to work without victory. Great bitterness and disunity resulted.

COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

Noting that these and other strikes had been forced on the workers on purely defensive issues, the Communist Party's Central Committee warned the working class that, while it was necessary to uphold trade union rights, continual fighting of major battles on defensive issues could divert the unions from the struggle for vital economic demands. It called on the Party to help develop a broad trade union counter-offensive struggle for outstanding needs, including a basic wage increase of at least £1, a 40 hour week, conversion of government factories to peace time production and abolition of wage pegging.

The Party membership and Communist press took up this call. The first successful offensive struggle following it was waged in the Victorian tramway and railway services in October 1946. The stoppage lasted ten days and resulted in a victory. The unions' claims for penalty rates for Saturday and Sunday work were won.

The strike was opposed by the Victorian Labor Government and Rightwing leaders in the Melbourne Trades Hall Council.

In December 1946 and January 1947 gasworkers in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Hobart took action for higher wages and shorter hours, highlighted by a six-weeks stay-in strike by Adelaide gasworkers. The gasworkers won their claim for week-end penalty rates and increased industry allowance.

THE MOONEY AWARD

In February 1947, Melbourne foundry workers who had been in action for wage increases for some time were joined by several thousand AEU members, in accordance with a decision by the Metal Trades Federation.

Though Conciliation Commissioner Mooney awarded marginal increases of 5/-, 7/- and 9/- a week for metal trades workers and the Commonwealth Arbitration Court had granted a 7/- interim increase in the basic wage and declared in principle for a 40 hour week in December 1946, the metal unions rejected the Mooney award and continued the strike.

In April the Arbitration Court de-registered the AEU. Later in the month the ACTU Executive, by a majority decision of 8 to 4, directed the strikers to resume work by May 7 and submit their claims to Arbitration.

This decision was rejected by the workers, who intensified the struggle. Acting on an appeal by the Victorian Premier, the Court convened a conference, whose outcome was one of the greatest economic successes achieved to date by the unions.

Wages of more than 100,000 workers were increased by 5/- for workers on the lowest margins up to 26/- for higher classifications. These increases were to apply throughout Australia. They added £6 million to metal workers' wages alone. Further increases of 6/- and 9/- for lower paid workers, granted later, meant that the full original demands were met.

During the struggle, R. G. Menzies gave a clear indication of what could be expected when the Liberals came to power.

In April 1947, speaking in Parliament to an amendment to the Arbitration Bill, he proposed a call for volunteers to break the strike and penalties up to £1000 for organisations or persons encouraging or taking part in strikes.

STRUGGLE CONTINUES

However, the working class offensive continued.

In September 1947 the ACTU Congress issued an ultimatum that, if the 40 hour week was not introduced by October 20, a general stoppage of all workers would take place. Less than a week later, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court agreed to the introduction of the 40 hour week, commencing in January 1948.

In January 1948 Victorian tramwaymen struck against unsatisfactory work rosters. The Hollway Liberal Government introduced an "Essential Services Act", — the forerunner of similar Acts in other States and the Federal sphere. It was designed to break the strike and smash the unions.

The ARU and AFULE threatened a complete rail stoppage if the Act was applied. Seamen stopped the transport of coal to Victoria. Engineers and building workers prepared for 24 hour stoppages. Key workers in Newport Power House stopped work, immobilising the electric train service.

Confronted with this display of working class unity the Hollway Government refrained from implementing its legislation and a settlement generally favourable to tramwaymen was negotiated.

THE QUEENSLAND RAIL STRIKE

On February 3, 1948, Queensland railway workers, after union ballots, went on strike for the wage increases being paid to rail workers in other States under terms of the Mooney Award.

The Hanlon Labor Government, which had offered a small wage increase, to tradesmen only, reacted sharply.

On February 27 the Government declared a "State of Emergency"—the first of many to be proclaimed in Queensland. Extraordinary powers were vested in the Government and the police force. Picketing was banned and counselling of strike action prohibited. This had the opposite of the desired effect.

Waterside workers joined the strike on March 1, seamen banned all shipping to Queensland ports and Queensland miners engaged in solidarity action.

Tension rose rapidly but the Government, miscalculating the mood of the workers, decided to use force.

On March 9 an Industrial Law Amendment Act, (the so-called anti-picketing Act) was rushed through the State Parliament by the Government, designed to encourage strike-breaking, prevent picketing and legalise intimidation and violence against workers. Under this Act, many workers were fined. Some were jailed for refusing to pay fines.

On St. Patrick's Day, March 17, police attacked and broke up a peaceful demonstration near the Brisbane Trades Hall. Communist MLA for Bowen, Fred Paterson, was batoned from behind by a detective while observing the demonstration. He and several workers finished up in hospital.

This brought forth a mass, illegal protest rally of 15,000 workers in King George Square, Brisbane, which marked a turning point in the strike.

The Government began to look for a way out. By April 1 it granted advances of 10/- for labourers, who had previously

been offered nothing, rising to 12/4 for fitters, who had previously been offered 6/10, and a resumption of work took place on April 5.

GAINS AND LOSSES

The Queensland railway strike was the most dramatic event to that date in the great wave of postwar strike struggles, which resulted in raising the level of real wages to the highest point attained in the post-war period. In 1946 wages constituted 58½% of the value of production and in 1948 59 2/3%.

This meant an undoubted economic advance for the working class but, because of the intensity and bitterness of the strike struggles and the disunity engendered by Right betrayals and Left adventurism, the economic gains were accompanied by growing signs of exhaustion and apprehension among the great mass of the less-advanced workers.

LEFTIST OVERESTIMATION

The Party failed to take these warning signs fully into account. There was a general tendency in Party thinking to overestimate the extent of radicalisation of the workers and of support for the Communist Party, and to underestimate the effects of Cold War anti-Communism.

There was also an underestimation of the extent and depth of reformist ideas among the workers and of traditional working class support for the ALP, despite the behaviour of Right-wing leaders.

Insufficient importance was attached to the growing differences inside the ALP, hence the Communist Party was usually presented as the only possible immediate alternative to a Right-wing-led ALP.

The dangerous features of these Leftist tendencies were to be more clearly revealed in the course of the 1949 coal miners' strike, which marked a new stage in the post-war strike struggles and had deep political implications.

AGAINST WAR DANGER

In May 1948, the 15th Congress of the Communist Party took place. The Cold War was mounting rapidly, and the need to strengthen the people's movement for peace was urgent.

The Congress Resolution said that the post-war world had been divided into two camps—that of the peace-loving, democratic and anti-imperialist forces, on the one hand, and that of the imperialists, promoters of new wars, and anti-democrats on the other.

The democratic, peace-loving forces of the world, led by the working-class, it said, were stronger than the forces making for war and declared:—

"It is the duty of Communists to lead the resistance to the war-mongers and to organise peace-lovers around a broad

program of peaceful cooperation among the nations; for the restoration of the United Nations as a peace-preserving organization, for the outlawing of atomic weapons and war propaganda; for universal disarmament and the ending of armed intervention in Greece, China and other countries struggling for liberation."

Noting the continuous movement of Australian official policies towards identity with the aims of US imperialism, Congress called on the Australian people, "who have long since rebelled against domination from London, to now guard against domination from Wall Street and to continue to struggle for Australian independence."

The Congress also put forward constructive proposals for strengthening working class unity, building the trade unions and struggle for a substantial increase in the basic wage, reduction and strict control of prices, and nationalisation of basic industries.

WRONG ESTIMATE

However, the outlook of the Party at the time was clouded by a doctrinaire belief that capitalist cyclical development would mechanically repeat itself in the classical prewar forms, resulting in the early outbreak of a new economic crisis, even more catastrophic than that of the 1930's.

This view, based on inadequate examination of the realities of the postwar world and reinforced by the dogmatic writings of respected Marxist economists influenced by the cult of Stalin, was also strengthened by pessimistic statements emanating from official capitalist sources. For example, in October 1946, American Government authorities had forecast there would be 10 million unemployed in the United States before the year's end and up to 20 million by the end of 1948.

This picture proved to be exaggerated. In 1948, at the time of the 15th Congress, America was experiencing her first post-war economic recession and there were three million unemployed.

The Party, not yet having sufficient data on which to base a deeper, all-sided analysis of the new features in the capitalist cycle, took an oversimplified view of developments.

Under the heading, "How to Fight Oncoming Depression," the Congress Resolution stated:

"The capitalist world, already deeply affected by the general crisis, which was worsened by the war, is about to plunge into the biggest of all its economic crises." This incorrect prediction naturally affected the Party's approach to the tactical problems of the day.

At the 15th Congress J. B. Miles, because of advancing age, retired from the position of General Secretary. He had held the post for 17 years and played a major part in the development of the Party. L. L. Sharkey was elected General Secretary and R. Dixon was elected General President.

A YEAR OF GREAT PRESSURE

The year 1949 was a difficult one for the Australian Party and labour movement. It witnessed the general strike in the mining industry, the Victorian Royal Commission into Communism, the jailing of L. L. Sharkey and others under the sedition clauses of the Commonwealth Crimes Act, and the defeat of the Chifley Government and election of the Menzies Liberal Government, which has held power until today.

However the year also marked one of mankind's greatest new advances—the victory of the Chinese People's revolution in October. It also saw the first successful testing of an atomic bomb by the USSR, which went on to take the lead from the USA with the first hydrogen bomb explosion in 1953.

It was a year of tension internationally, marked by attacks on democratic rights and threats to peace in all capitalist countries.

From the middle of 1948, the danger of a third world war was growing.

IMPERIALISTS SPLIT GERMANY

Counting heavily on their stockpiles of atomic weapons, the imperialist powers, headed by the USA, had thrown aside the Potsdam Agreement and were rebuilding monopoly power in Western Germany.

Their first open move was to impose a new currency in their sector of Berlin, 120 miles inside the Soviet zone of occupation in Eastern Germany.

Soviet occupation authorities met this provocation by imposing travel restrictions into Berlin, and the imperialist powers resorted to airlifting supplies in.

In January 1949, Liberal Party leader, R. G. Menzies, just returned from a three weeks visit to the United States, said in a speech in the Sydney Town Hall that the so-called "western powers" had the choice of flying or shooting their way into Berlin. To an interjector who said "or using the atom bomb", Menzies replied: "Or much better, I suggest, using the atom bomb, yes." In the same speech Menzies called for a ban on the Communist Party.

THE JAILING OF SHARKEY

As the Cold War deepened, anti-Soviet and anti-Communist threats and provocations mounted rapidly. In France, this

caused the leader of the Communist Party, Maurice Thorez, to declare on March 2 that French workers would do everything possible to make a war against Russia "not only difficult but impossible."

A reporter on the Sydney Daily Telegraph rang L. L. Sharkey, asking him to comment on Thorez' statement. Arising from the publication of this interview, Sharkey was indicted under the Commonwealth Crimes Act for allegedly saying that if Soviet forces in pursuit of aggressors entered Australia, Australian workers would welcome them as the workers welcomed them throughout Europe when the Red Army liberated the people from the Nazis.

Supporting the statement made by the French Communist leader Maurice Thorez, Sharkey went on:

"Invasion of Australia by forces of the Soviet Union seems very remote and hypothetical to me. I believe the Soviet union will go to war only if she is invaded. I cannot see Australia being invaded by Soviet troops.

"The job of Communists is to struggle to prevent war and to educate the mass of the people against the idea of war. The Communist Party also wants to bring the working class to power, but if the fascists in Australia use force to prevent the workers gaining that power, Communists will advise the workers to meet force with force."

In an atmosphere of anti-Communist hysteria, L. L. Sharkey was found guilty of seditious utterance. Pending an appeal to the High Court he was released on £2,000 bail. On October 7th, 1949, the High Court by a 5 to 1 majority confirmed the conviction and on October 17th, 1949, L. L. Sharkey was called up for sentence.

SLANDER REFUTED

From the dock, he told the Court that it was no part of the outlook, policy nor the programme of the Communist Party to expect Soviet troops to come to Australia to establish Communism.

That question, he said, had been dealt with by the great founders of the Communist movement—such men as Marx, Engels and Lenin, who were very clear and definite that one nation where the socialists were victorious should not attempt to impose socialism by force on another nation. To do so would only undermine its own victory.

Sharkey said that the all-important part of his statement was where he defined the task of the Communist Party as taking a leading part in the fight for preservation of international peace.

Handwritten note:
He is not in bed

So far as the policy of the Communist Party was concerned, he said, we should do everything in our power to prevent the outbreak of any further internationalist wars.

Judge Dwyer, however, characterised Sharkey's statement as resulting from careful and deliberate predetermination to effect a malign and traitorous purpose, involving disloyalty to Australia, and sentenced him to the maximum penalty of three years imprisonment.

2
1
From Long Bay prison, Sharkey conducted his own appeal against the severity of the sentence, which was reduced to 18 months. He remained in jail until March 1951.

Later in the year G. Burns (Brisbane) and Kevin Healy (Western Australia) were also charged under the Commonwealth Crimes Act for statements similar to that made by L. L. Sharkey. The former was found guilty and sentenced to six months, while the latter was found not guilty and discharged.

In the same year L. J. McPhillips, who had been appointed ACTU advocate in the 30/- basic wage rise case, was found guilty of contempt of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court and sentenced to a month's jail.

THE VICTORIAN ROYAL COMMISSION

On June 20th, the anti-Labor Hollway Government in Victoria set up a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the activities of the Communist Party in that State, basing itself on a series of newspaper articles written in 1948 by a renegade from the Party in Victoria, C. Sharpley.

The Royal Commission sat for 154 days, from June 20th 1949 to March 6th 1950. It heard 159 witnesses and examined 1083 documents. It considered 9,791 pages of transcript of evidence. After all this, the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Justice Lowe, found no sabotage, no treason, no strikes promoted or inspired by Communists for the purpose of disrupting industry or essential services.

However, the daily press and other capitalist agencies made the most of the stream of slanders against the Party at the Commission's hearings throughout the second half of 1949, which included the miners' strike and the Federal Elections.

THE MINERS' STRIKE

Throughout the first half of 1949 the coal mining unions had conducted a campaign for nationalisation of the coal industry and for a log of economic claims, which included a 35-hour week, 30/- wage increase, long service leave and improved pit and town amenities.

After several negotiations with the coalowners, Joint Coal Board and Coal Industry Tribunal had proved unsatisfactory,

aggregate meetings of miners were held on coalfields on June 16th.

The vote at these meetings was 7995 to 822 in favour of a general strike on June 27th unless a satisfactory settlement was reached.

The Federal Labor Government refused to act to bring about a settlement, maintaining that the miners must go back to arbitration.

Taking the view that the Coal Tribunal had already shown support for the owners, the mineworkers decided to implement the decisions of the aggregate meetings, and struck on June 27th.

The Chifley Government immediately introduced emergency legislation to counter the strike, freezing union funds to cut off strike relief and starve strikers into submission.

Several unions withdrew substantial sums from banks before the Act became law. Eight of their officials were held guilty of contempt of the Arbitration Court when they refused to divulge the whereabouts of the money and were sentenced to up to 12 months imprisonment.

The monopoly press conducted a fierce anti-Communist campaign, alleging that the unions' strike was a "Red plot".

Party offices and the printery producing Tribune were raided by political police. Party officials were brought before the Courts in an effort to prove the existence of a "Communist Plot".

Though this effort failed, the accusations continued and the Government proceeded to use all possible means to break the strike.

It put troops into open-cut mines to produce coal, though this violated its own Party programme.

ALP politicians and Rightwing union officials were organised to tour the coalfields to defend the Government's strike-breaking legislation, and plug the theme that the strike was a "Communist conspiracy" against the Labor Government.

THE COMMUNIST POSITION

The Party vigorously denied this, and carried out a big campaign in support of the miners, holding many public meetings and issuing many thousands of leaflets, in its own name, as well as assisting in the unions' campaign. To alleviate the effects of the fund-freezing legislation the Party helped organise food convoys to the coalfields.

The Communist press gave much space and prominence to publicising the mineworkers' case and refuting the strike-breaking lies and slanders of reaction.

A big weakness in the Party's work, however, was the left-sectarian presentation of much of its propagand, and insuffi-

Q 11
cient attention to developing unity in action with the big numbers of Labor Party members and supporters who sympathised with the miners.

That scope existed for a broader development of unity was shown by such facts as that a number of ALP members resigned from that Party in protest against the Government's strike-breaking, and three large ALP branches in Sydney had their Charters withdrawn by the State Executive for opposing the Government's action.

RIGHTWING SPLITS MINERS' LEADERS

After the strike had been in progress for two months the Rightwing succeeded in creating a division in the leadership of the Northern NSW District of the Miners' Federation—the main district—and among craft union officials on the Combined Mining Union Committee.

This section began to advocate a return to work and submission of the claims to arbitration.

The deluge of reactionary propaganda was also having increasing effect in turning public opinion against continuation of the strike.

In an effort to retain the initiative, the Miners' Central Council recommended to aggregate meetings that the Government be given a week to reach a settlement, but the rank and file voted to return to work, and the strike was declared off on August 15.

ERRONEOUS JUDGMENTS

This made it clear that there had been serious errors in the estimate of the situation in which the strike was launched and failure to judge correctly how it was proceeding.

The fact that the strike occurred at the end of the first big post-war strike wave, which had won considerable gains by 1948, had caused union leaders and the Party to believe that the pattern set by these earlier struggles, in which the strikers stood firm for long periods; overcame the opposition of Courts and State Governments, nullifying their strike-breaking legislation; successfully rebuffed Rightwing capitulators; and won their demands, could be repeated by the miners.

Q 11
Signs of exhaustion, hesitation and disunity among the workers were ignored. Those who sounded a note of caution in the Party were not heeded.

B y o
of over
Thus, the level of radicalisation of the working class as a whole was badly overestimated and the depth of illusions about Arbitration was underestimated. The capacity of the Government, press and Rightwing union leaders to disrupt the strike front, alienate public opinion, and virtually isolate the mineworkers was equally badly underestimated.

A general strike affecting a whole industry is a very serious undertaking, which should be embarked on only after most thorough and careful examination of all the facts, including the political situation, because it inevitably has political implications from the outset. Correct judgment of the constantly changing situation is necessary.

There is no question as to whether the mineworkers should have fought for their economic demands. But more sober judgment of the realities of the time would undoubtedly have meant that the struggle would have been better prepared and conducted and could have had much better results.

As it was, the miners returned to work with their demands unsatisfied, and the divisions in the ranks of working class had been widened and deepened for a time. This had a disastrous effect in the Federal Elections, which took place in December.

LABOR GOVERNMENT DEFEATED

The Chifley Labor Government, though it had pursued an essentially Rightwing policy, which had lost it much support from those whose hopes of a postwar New Order had been dashed, was nevertheless being sabotaged from within and in the unions by extreme Rightwingers who were becoming more and more closely associated with the Santamaria-led Industrial Group leaders. It was under fierce attack from the daily press. Its progressive moves, such as those on bank nationalisation and price control had failed. Inflation and rising costs were reducing the value of real wages.

The Government had largely paralysed the most vital and active sections of the industrial workers by its anti-working class actions and legislation, especially the use of troops in the coal strike.

It went to the polls with nothing new or attractive in its policy.

Menzies' Liberals, on the other hand, riding on the crest of Cold War anti-Communism, backed to the limit by the monopoly press, presented themselves as the only possible saviours of the nation, and also promised to curb inflation and "put value in the £.

Both promises were cynical falsehoods. The real intentions of the Liberals were to greatly strengthen the power of domestic and foreign monopoly in Australia and tie it more firmly to imperialist war plans.

For these purposes, they were to embark, almost immediately after the election, on a crash programme of war preparations and to attempt to ban the Communist Party—which they promised—and silence all other opposition to their plans.

LEFTIST APPROACH

The Communist Party did not underestimate the Liberals' potential for evil, but it did not do enough to mobilise the maximum opposition to them, because it was guided in its election campaign by views that there was no basic difference between the Labor, Liberal and Country Parties on major issues and that the Communist Party was the only real alternative.

The Party contested a record 76 seats in the elections. This had been decided on at the February 1949 Central Committee meeting, which took the view that the political situation made it necessary to present the Communist Party as the only real alternative to the Labor Government.

The Central Committee decided that the Party's main job in the election was to popularise its programme among the masses, and develop the struggle against both reformism and reaction, and combat the theory that the Labor Government was a lesser evil than a Liberal or Country Party Government.

This theory, it was said, was holding back the Party and the working class movement. In its approach to all basic issues the Labor Party was at one with the Liberal and Country Parties, differing only in minor details.

The Central Committee decided to advocate that Communist voters give their second preferences to the Labor candidates and, where there were no Communist candidates, if the Party's opinion was sought, to propose No. 1 vote for the Labor Party.

The Central Committee reaffirmed that the Party was for a united front with the Labor Party, in order to unite the working class movement, and must strive to strengthen in every way its relations with the Labor Party workers. But, it said, the Party must at the same time make it quite clear to these workers that a vote for the Labor Party would not solve the problems of the working class, that Labor Party policy would bring disaster to the working class movement and that the way out was to organise and struggle under the leadership of the Communist Party.

This approach, it was said, did not violate the Party's basic united front tactic. The building of the united front did not call for playing down of criticism of the rightwing or for fostering illusions about the Labor Party or the Labor Government. The way to unity was through organised working class struggle against capitalism and this demanded the most resolute struggle against the rightwing, the opponents of unity.

In practice, this approach led to a left, sectarian presentation of the Party's position at the elections.

SECTARIANISM STRENGTHENED

Between the February meeting of the Central Committee in 1949 and the December Federal elections such events as the general coal strike, jailing of union leaders by the Labor Government, use of troops to break the strike and the jailing of L. L. Sharkey caused great bitterness among militant workers and in the Party. On the other hand, the great victory of the Chinese Revolution in October was taken, by many superficial observers, to indicate that victory over capitalism was imminent everywhere, including Australia, justifying hopes that great masses of people would very soon recognise the Party as the only possible alternative to the ALP. The effects of the huge, sustained anti-Communist campaign were underestimated.

Thus leftist and sectarian tendencies were strengthened in the Party. Its election campaigning was marked by Leftist concentration of the main attack on the ALP leadership, without much systematic effort to strengthen relations with Labor Party workers in true united front fashion.

The practical political effect of this was to further divide the working class forces, already seriously weakened by the Rightwing, and to fail to concentrate the main fire on the main enemy—the Liberals.

Thus Leftist, sectarian errors by the Party did not result in the desired effect of uniting the workers to overcome the ALP Rightwing, but added to the great damage done to the labor movement by the Right. The Labor Government was defeated and Menzies' Liberals took office in coalition with the Country Party. This coalition has held power until now.

With few exceptions, the Communist vote was generally lower than in 1946, showing that the belief that the Party might be accepted as the real alternative to the Labor Government in the political situation of 1949 was thoroughly subjective. Much more experience was obviously necessary before the working class would be prepared to take the direct path to Socialism.

THE LIBERALS GET TO WORK

Once established in power, the Liberal Party lost no time in setting to work to implement its reactionary aims.

Early in 1950, Menzies went to Washington and returned to Australia proclaiming that the nation must be ready for war in three years. This bald assertion did not panic the people. The movement for peace, which had been developing for some years, grew stronger. However, the Menzies Government used

the alleged war danger as a pretext for greatly increased war expenditure and for repeated attacks on democratic rights in Australia.

The Soviet Union, having broken the imperialists' atomic weapons monopoly in 1947, on carrying out tests in 1949 had proposed world nuclear disarmament. But the US warplanners, from whom Menzies got his orders, had reacted by intensifying their war preparations, still hoping to crush the USSR before it became a strong nuclear power.

The Party intensified its campaign for peace, launching a sustained campaign to raise the consciousness of Party members and working people generally to the dangers of war and the need for mass action for peace.

FIRST AUSTRALIAN PEACE CONGRESS

Heartened by the successful launching of a world movement of partisans of peace in Paris in 1949, Australian peacelovers had already set about organising a representative Australian Peace Congress. This was held in Melbourne in April, 1950, with 15,000 people present at the opening to hear the guest speaker, the Dean of Canterbury.

The Congress, representing half-a-million people, decided to establish a nation-wide peace movement.

The Party actively supported the moves to organise the Congress and was represented at it. Its delegate said that, despite differences on many political and social matters, the Communists were at one with all other delegates in an ardent desire to prevent a new war and preserve peace in the world.

In April 1950 the World Peace Council, meeting in Stockholm, launched a world-wide petition — the famous "Stockholm Appeal" — against the atomic bomb. This Appeal was a huge success and had a definite sobering effect on the warmongers. In Australia alone, over 200,000 signatures were collected.

The need for organised work for peace was further underlined in April when British imperialists launched armed intervention against the people's liberation movement in Malaya and the Menzies Government immediately moved to aid Britain.

CHAPTER 2

STRUGGLE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

1950-54. The Party in the struggle against Menzies' "war in 3 years" plan; the fight for legal existence; unity in action; the formation of an organised movement for peace; the struggle against the Industrial Groups and for trade union democracy. The Party adopts a new Programme.

On April 27, 1950, only four months after his election, Menzies introduced the Communist Party Dissolution Bill into Parliament. This Bill, while alleged to be aimed only at Communists, in line with the Liberals' election threat, in fact constituted the most far-reaching attack on the labor movement ever known in Australian history.

It was an essential part of the preparation for the anti-Soviet war Menzies had forecast for 1953. Its aim was to behead the labor movement, destroy democracy, and stifle opposition to the employers and their Government.

In a dragnet clause, it provided that any person "who in any way takes part in any activity of an unlawful association or carries on, in the direct or indirect interest of an unlawful association, any activity in which the unlawful association was engaged, or could have engaged, at the time when it became an unlawful association", would be guilty of an offence. In other words, any worker saying or doing anything about wages, prices, housing, peace or democratic rights, or any other of the many activities engaged in by the Communist Party could be jailed.

DISSOLUTION ACT INVALIDATED

Pointing out that the Bill threatened not only the Communist Party's legal existence, but also the trade unions, the peace movement and the Labor Party, the Party called for a mass campaign against it.

There was an immediate, broad response to this call, not only from the working class, but from many other people, including university professors who, while dissociating themselves from Communism, publicly opposed the Bill.

The Rightwing-dominated Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, however, decided to support the legislation "in principle" and proposed only some minor amendments, which were rejected by the Menzies Government.

The Bill became law in October 1950, but the Party continued the mass campaign against the Act and challenged it in the High Court. Several trade unions, the Waterside Workers' Federation, Seamen, Miners and AEU, also challenged the Act,

the Federal Parliamentary Labor Leader, Dr. Evatt, appearing for the Waterside Workers' Federation.

In March 1951 the High Court, by a majority of six to one, declared the Communist Party Dissolution Act invalid under the Commonwealth Constitution.

Enraged by this, Menzies announced that a referendum would be held to amend the Commonwealth Constitution.

KOREAN WAR BEGINS

Meanwhile, the Korean war, launched in June 1950 by South Korean forces incited by U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, was raging. It was to last for three years and cost the lives of millions of Korean people.

The U.S.A. quickly took control of the war from South Korea, and operated under the flag of the United Nations. The U.S.A. was able to secure the appearance of U.N. support for its war by pushing a vote through the Security Council while the Soviet delegate was absent in protest over the exclusion of China from the U.N.

The Menzies Government, together with other imperialist powers, sent armed forces to assist U.S. imperialism. The danger of world war became grave as the imperialist forces approached the Chinese border and threatened to atom-bomb Chinese cities. The Soviet Union, however, warned that it would come to China's aid if China was attacked. This warning, together with vigorous, world-wide pressure from the various peace forces, and the military prowess of the Korean people and the Chinese People's volunteers, prevented the war from spreading. In 1953 a truce was arranged, with both sides resuming the positions held at the 38th parallel before the war broke out in 1950. This was a great proof of the strength of the world peace forces. It gave new heart and impetus to the peace movement.

In Australia, the Party had campaigned vigorously against the war, under the slogan "Hands off Korea", maintaining that world war was not inevitable and could be prevented by the world peace forces.

ANTI-COMMUNISM AS A POLICY

The Menzies Government intensified its anti-Communist drive.

In April 1951, it fought and won an early election, declaring the main issue to be the suppression of Communism. The Communist Party declared, however, that peace was the main issue and the A.L.P., having at first declared that the main issue was prices, finished by saying that it was prices and

peace. There was a slight swing away from Menzies as compared with 1949.

The Communist Party analysed the result of the election closely and decided on an intense campaign for peace and the people's needs of a broad, non-sectarian character.

The Menzies Government meanwhile drew up its Bill for a Referendum to ban the Party, fixing the date for the voting as September 22, 1951.

In Parliament, Menzies made it quite clear that he regarded all progressives, not only Communists, as targets. He said that at least one Labor M.P. could be 'declared' and named several non-Communist union leaders in a list of 50-odd 'Communist union leaders' prepared by his secret police.

TRIUMPH OF DEMOCRACY

The greatest campaign for democratic rights in Australian history developed against the Referendum proposals. Hundreds of thousands of popular leaflets and posters were produced and distributed, thousands of meetings were held. The Party initiated the campaign but it quickly came to include democrats of all shades of political opinion.

There was a real growth of unity in action between members of the Labor and Communist Parties. This brought the main leaders of the Labor Party into action for a NO vote, including many who were anti-Communist and had themselves attacked the Party.

Only the extreme rightwing (mostly those who later broke away and formed the Democratic Labor Party) supported Menzies. Unions campaigned vigorously, hundreds of united "Vote No" committees were formed all over Australia, chiefly in industry. Thousands of people who, in the elections held five months earlier, had voted for Liberal and Country Party candidates, intellectuals, lawyers, churchmen, writers, university professors and students, farmers and others, joined in the campaign for a NO vote.

This unprecedentedly broad, vigorous campaign, led by a labor movement united for the purpose, turned what could have been a serious defeat for Australian democracy into a great victory.

On September 22, 1951, a majority of the people, in a majority of States, voted NO. This meant that the Government had failed to secure power to ban the Communist Party and persecute other opponents of its policies.

The vote was close: 50.6% of the electors to 49.4%. Only the strong, democratic movement prevented Menzies and his monopoly backers from securing their anti-democratic objective.

The Referendum campaign demonstrated vividly the tremendous, attractive power of a united working class movement, fighting for a common, progressive aim. It showed the great importance of the struggle for democratic rights in the general movement towards Socialism.

THE PARTY PROGRAM

In the midst of the preparations for the Referendum, in August 1951, the Communist Party's 16th National Congress met, and reviewed the Party's position.

In the months leading up to the 16th Congress such important questions as the way to build working class unity, the approach to the Labor Party, the relationship of economic and political struggles and the role of mass organisations were all under discussion. It was apparent that serious Left errors had appeared in the work of the Party and had to be corrected. Congress adopted a new Party Program, "Australia's Path to Socialism", the draft of which had been widely discussed throughout Australia.

This program called for the development of a broad, popular alliance of the people, with unity of workers and small farmers as the base, to impose the people's will on the narrow group of monopoly capitalists; and through the use of Parliament and creation of a People's Government, to work for peaceful transition to Socialism.

Warning that the U.S. imperialists had ringed the world with air and naval bases and had troops stationed in many countries, were stockpiling atom bombs and had embarked upon a colossal armament programme, which was impoverishing America and the whole capitalist world, the Program declared:

"The struggle to maintain peace is the most pressing task of the present time and therefore the Communist Party devotes its main energies to fighting and organising for peace. . . The Communist Party emphatically rejects the theory of the inevitability of a new world war."

The program declared support for the peace policy of the Soviet Union, for disarmament, for outlawing atomic weapons and for a Five Power Peace Pact between the U.S.A., the Soviet Union, Britain, France and People's China.

Upholding the principle of peaceful co-existence, the Program declared: "It is possible for the rival systems, Socialism and Capitalism, to live side by side in peace."

This statement predated by more than a year the declaration in the main report to the C.P.S.U. 19th Congress (October 1952) that "peaceful co-existence and co-operation of capitalism and communism are quite possible." (This was the last C.P.S.U. Congress in which Stalin took part.)

WHY LABOR FELL

The main report to the C.P.A.'s 16th Congress attributed the downfall of the Labor Government to its carrying out of the policy of monopoly capital against the interests of the workers.

On the international field, the Labor Government had adopted as its aim the aggressive anti-Soviet policy of the American and British imperialists.

On the home front it had adopted a policy of strike-breaking and anti-communism, which strengthened reaction and paved the way for its own defeat.

However, since the return of Menzies to office the Labor Party leaders, while still supporting the basic policies of monopoly and continuing to engage in anti-communism, were beginning to oppose some of the worst features of Menzies' programme of fascism and war.

Communist Party General Secretary L. L. Sharkey declared: "The Communist Party fights for the unity of the working class and will strive to build unity on the basis of what is progressive in the Labor Party's present policy. . ."

REASONS FOR PARTY DECLINE

Noting that Federal election results revealed considerable losses in the Party's vote as compared with peak periods, that the Communist position in a number of trade unions had also deteriorated, and that there had been a big decline in Party membership and press circulation, Sharkey said that this was not simply due to the tremendous offensive waged by the bourgeoisie and Rightwing reformists against the Party.

Fear of going out to the masses, economism, sectarianism and a generally narrow approach by the Party had also contributed to this.

The Congress devoted a good deal of time to discussion of these facts and of the measures necessary to overcome sectarianism and Leftism in the Party.

In view of the serious danger that the Party might be declared illegal, Congress decided that steps had to be taken to ensure that it could continue to function, no matter what restrictions were imposed. The Congress, however, recognised that experience everywhere showed that the main way to protect the Party was to strengthen its mass connections and support in every way.

POSITIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

The main report to Congress stressed that, notwithstanding the weaknesses and losses incurred by the Party, there were also notable achievements. "After all the years of struggle

and hopes and victories and defeats, we have a stable nation-wide organisation of our Party," it said.

"The organisation is one of the prerequisites Lenin showed to be necessary for the victory of Socialism.

"The Party may suffer from many weaknesses, but the fact that we have established in this country such an organisation is a mighty achievement.

"We have a widespread Party press that is also stable and looked up to by the masses. We have a strong position in the trade unions and support from a considerable number of Australian people. We have a growing cadre of Party activists. We have accumulated considerable experience in the struggle.

"We have a programme for peace, for democracy, for independence of our country, for prosperity of our people, which is the basis for victory. In the international situation, the forces of peace are stronger than the forces of war. Capitalism cannot overcome its crises. In Australia the economic crisis is rousing the masses.

"The united front is the key to our work, the possibility of our victory here in our country for peace and people's democracy, then, becomes very real."

This confident assertion of the essentially sound and strong character of the Party, despite errors and setbacks, set the keynote for a healthy, optimistic Congress of a Party facing the threat of illegality and under constant fire.

THE PEOPLE FEEL THE PINCH

In 1952, the vastly increased war expenditure by the Menzies Government, directly associated with the war in Korea and preparation for other adventures, worsened currency inflation and sharply increased the cost of living. Quarterly adjustments to the basic wage failed to keep pace with the rapidly increasing prices of consumer goods, thus causing a drop in real wages. At the same time the profits of the big monopoly capitalists increased. The Menzies Government adopted a budget policy of high taxation and restrictions on consumer spending, which further reduced the standard of living.

The Party advanced demands for doubling of wage margins, with a minimum increase of £1 and for strict price control.

Though the crisis predicted earlier by the Party did not reach the catastrophic proportions anticipated, an economic recession in 1952 saw unemployment figures reach the 100,000 mark, the highest to that stage in the post-war period.

An indication of the thinking of the ruling class about measures to meet a deep depression was given by Judge Kelly who, in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, came out with a proposal for a 10 per cent cut in the basic wage, elimination

of overtime rates for the first 4 hours overtime and reduction of paid holidays to 10 a year.

NEW WAVE OF STRUGGLE

A new nation-wide wave of strike struggles developed in the first half of 1952, extending to sections of the working class outside the unions with Communist or militant leadership. One successful struggle, in the Western Australian metal industry, lasted for six months. The struggles assumed a great variety of forms, including 24-hour stoppages, overtime bans, stop-work meetings, departmental stoppages of short duration and also stay-in strikes, of which the most notable were at the Collinsville (Nth. Qld.) coalmine and at Glen Davis, N.S.W., in protest against the closure of Australia's only shale oil project by the Menzies Government.

Coal miners also sought to advance their claims by one-day a week stoppages rather than be provoked into a general stoppage on the 1949 lines.

Supporting this mass movement, the Party called for the linking of the economic struggle with the fight for peace. These struggles hampered the employers' offensive and in some cases won over-award payments.

The Government introduced a series of measures, strengthening the penal clauses of the Arbitration Act and giving the Courts increased power to intervene in union affairs.

The Industrial Groups, having "permeated" the Labor Party deeply, used the Courts to capture control of unions. They succeeded in obtaining the removal of Communist officials from the Ironworkers and Clerks' Unions and the installation of "Groupers" in the leadership, and made some gains in other unions.

But the wave of struggle continued to mount, becoming the most extensive and significant of the post-war period. Growing trade union unity on a national scale, despite the efforts of the Groupers, made it impossible for the Government to isolate and defeat sections of the workers.

PEACE CONSCIOUSNESS GROWS

The working class also displayed growing consciousness of the relation between the economic struggles and the struggles for peace.

This was shown, for example, in connection with the 1952 Youth Carnival.

A delegation of 134 young Australians had attended a World Youth Festival in Berlin in 1951. Inspired by this, an Australian Youth Carnival for Peace and Friendship was organised, to take place in Sydney in March 1952. Though the Menzies

Government and its political police did everything possible to prevent the Carnival from taking place, a splendid struggle in defence of democratic rights was waged by the youth movement, powerfully backed by the trade unions and the Party. The Carnival succeeded.

AGAINST SECTARIANISM

The Party took serious note of the importance of the high level of working class struggle. With a Federal election not far off, it engaged in a series of discussions aimed at overcoming weaknesses in its understanding and practice in relation to the key question of developing working class unity, strengthening the unions and improving Communist-Labor relations.

At a meeting of the Political Committee and Party organisers in June, R. Dixon spoke out strongly against "sectarian mistakes that are holding us back from the masses."

Pointing to the obvious differentiation taking place in the A.L.P. leadership under the pressure of the working class movement, he said: "We must set out to remove all sectarian barriers to unity. We must do everything possible to promote working class unity, the building of the Communist-Labor Party united front." Saying that a perverted conception of the united front as meaning "agreement with those who now support us in one way or another" was prevalent in the Party, he insisted that Communists seek out A.L.P. workers and members of the Industrial Groups (then officially A.L.P.-backed) and work out with them plans for common action for the development of united front struggle on job, industry or local conditions.

The united front, he said, "is an agreement whereby workers supporting the Communist Party and the Labor Party, who politically are opposed, agree on common action for the defence of the interests of the working class."

"THE LABOR PARTY CRISIS"

Later, in the August issue of the Communist Review, L. L. Sharkey published an important article: "The Labor Party Crisis," which was reprinted as a pamphlet.

Showing that the actual alternative to the Menzies Government was an A.L.P. Government, he analysed the nature of the A.L.P. closely, showing its two-class character and the differentiations in its leadership, between Left and Right and within both Left and Right.

"The class conscious workers within and without the A.L.P. must fight for the defeat of the Rightwing and its reactionary policies within the Labor Party and the trade union movement," he said. . . "The Left within the A.L.P. has a particular

responsibility to bestir itself against the corrupt rightwing. . ."
"The Communist Party stands for the broadest united front with the A.L.P. rank and file and also with those A.L.P. leaders who fight for a progressive policy for the Labor Movement. . ."

"Our aim is not the 'smashing' or 'disruption' of the A.L.P. according to the crude ideas of the Leftists, the old-time anarcho-syndicalists and the like. Our aim is unity with the A.L.P. membership on the broad base of the interests of the masses; of a progressive policy."

"Our criticism must be constructive . . . criticism must . . . avoid sectarian, negative attitudes like poison. . . Mere abuse or hard words not based on facts are of little use."

This article, together with the many discussions throughout the Party, opened the road to concrete searching out of the many ways of building unity in action. It struck a heavy blow at deeply-ingrained sectarian tendencies in the Party, especially such wrong and dangerous views as that the A.L.P. consisted of one reactionary mass and that unity could be built only on the terms put forward by the Communists.

At the same time, the need to build the Communist Party was stressed. Emphasising the importance of the Party's new Programme, Sharkey said in his article: "It is the kind of programme that the A.L.P. workers expected from their leaders, only to have their hopes repeatedly betrayed. It is the programme of a united working class, leading the toiling masses to their liberation from war, unemployment and poverty."

There was a big upsurge in united activity. At the same time, Party membership increased by 13 per cent in N.S.W. and 7 per cent in Victoria during 1952, while Tribune circulation increased by 5000 copies per week.

PEACE MOVEMENT GROWS

The struggle for peace, which had been highlighted by a sustained campaign for a Five Power Peace Pact, also received new impetus.

Early in 1953, while peacelovers throughout the world were making strenuous efforts to compel a halt to the horror of the Korean War, a number of prominent people in N.S.W. initiated a movement for the holding of a national peace convention. The Party decided to support this move and did its best to rally public opinion for peace and help make the convention a success.

Despite vicious attacks on their bona fides by the Menzies Government, which went so far as to use its secret police to raid the Sydney offices of the Communist Party, in an unsuc-

cessful effort to obtain "evidence" that the Peace Convention was a "Communist Plot," and to browbeat and intimidate them into withdrawing their sponsorship of the Convention, the convenors went ahead. They secured wide and strong support, and when the Convention was held, on September 26, with 1,000 delegates present, it was clear that this marked a big advance in the situation of the peace movement in Australia.

The Convention would have been a much greater success had it not been for the fact that the A.L.P. Federal leadership, still strongly under the influence of the Industrial Groups, had declared that it must be boycotted because of alleged Communist influence in it. This ruling kept many ardent peace-lovers in the A.L.P. and trade unions away, though a considerable number attended in spite of the ban.

Feeling ran high among progressives in the A.L.P., many of whom were coming to realise that the Santamaria-controlled Groups were an alien force which, having "permeated" the A.L.P. and won powerful positions in it, were perverting its policies to coincide with those of the Liberals and so destroying the confidence of the workers.

A showdown was to come in the following year.

As was to become clear later, the police raids on the Party and other curious events of 1953 were not only intended to frighten away support for the Peace Convention. They were part of the pattern of provocation and slander being developed by the Menzies Government in preparation for a new attack on the Party—the Petrov Commission.

100 YEARS AFTER EUREKA

The year 1954, centenary of the Eureka Stockade, was to prove a great testing time for the democracy for whose beginnings Australians had fought and died at Ballarat.

While the Korean peace negotiations dragged on, hampered by the efforts of extreme U.S. reactionaries to resume and extend the war, Australia prepared to face the Federal elections, due in May.

The Menzies Government's stocks were low. The people had been sickened by the Korean War and alarmed at the Government's reckless support for U.S. extremism there, for Japanese rearmament, and for the 8 years old dirty French imperialist war in Indo-China.

This support, which had cost many Australian lives and largely destroyed the prestige won among our neighbours by Australian troops in World War II, appeared likely to involve Australia more and more deeply in imperialist war-plans. Conscription was threatened.

The second U.S. H-bomb explosion in the Marshall Islands in March, destroying everything within 12 miles and contaminating fishermen hundreds of miles away, caused deep concern in Australia, confirming the warnings of the 1953 Peace Convention.

Working class resentment at the Government's continuing wage-freeze was deep and wide. The A.C.T.U., under strong mass pressure, was demanding restoration of automatic adjustments to the Federal basic wage and doubling of margins.

In March, following rejection of union claims by the Federal Court, the A.C.T.U. Emergency Committee declared that the Court had outlived its usefulness, and demanded a complete review of the Conciliation and Arbitration system.

The working class movement was also concerned by the revelation that Menzies, if re-elected, intended to drastically amend the political and industrial sections of the Crimes Act, to bring it into line with McCarthyite U.S. legislation.

There was widespread criticism of the Government's failure to provide adequate finance for housing and other major public needs, which were being sacrificed to the war programme.

MENZIES FACING DEFEAT

In this situation, there were very real possibilities that the Government could be defeated.

In an election call in Tribune on March 24, 1954, L. L. Sharkey (leading the Party's team of 42 candidates) called for a maximum election effort.

"The present situation," he said, "demands that we deliver the main attack on the Menzies Government."

Communists, he said, were needed in Parliament to fight for changes in policy to which the A.L.P. was pledged or which it could be compelled to adopt by mass pressure.

"A Labor Government," he said, "opens up great possibilities for advance, greater opportunities, provided we organise and lead correctly."

Criticising those who adopted a negative attitude towards the Labor Party, he said:

"The A.L.P. rank and file is anti-Menzies and we must, when necessary, carefully and painstakingly expose the A.L.P. leaders in a positive way, so as to win, not drive away the A.L.P. rank and file."

Favourable though the objective conditions were, however, there were serious difficulties inside the Labor Movement. The Industrial Groups (to be denounced and exposed by Dr. H. V. Evatt later in the year) had a strong grip on the A.L.P.

leadership and were entrenched in powerful unions with official A.L.P. backing.

The identity of their policy with that of the Menzies Government caused widespread confusion and dissatisfaction within the A.L.P. and unions, paralyzing a considerable proportion of the anti-Menzies forces.

V The Communist Party, though united as a whole around the Central Committee, had nevertheless been affected by the experiences of inner-Party bureaucracy and Left sectarian practices exposed and condemned by the Central Committee in a Statement on Party Consolidation (see below).

There was still some hesitancy about developing the united anti-Menzies drive demanded by the situation and called for by the C.C.

Nevertheless, so strongly was the tide running against the Government, that its defeat seemed very likely.

THE "RABBIT OUT OF THE HAT"

On April 6, the Sydney Morning Herald said: "The Liberal Party is hoping that the Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, will pull a rabbit out of the top hat which he wore with such assurance during the Royal tour. . . It looks as if he will have to do so if his Government is to survive the election in May."

Exactly a week later, Menzies produced the rabbit—the Petrov "spy scare". Later in the year Dr. Evatt (A.L.P. Opposition leader) said (on August 12th):

"I believe that, when the tangled skein of this matter is finally unravelled, the Petrov-Menzies letters will rank in Australian history as an equivalent to the notorious Zinoviev letter which was used to defeat a Labor Government in the 1924 British elections, or the burning of the Reichstag, which was used to usher in the Hitler regime in 1933."

X The 1954 Party Consolidation Statement referred to above had as its main aim the ridding of the Party of Leftism and sectarianism, eliminating incorrect practices within the Party and preserving and strengthening its unity.

X X An interesting sidelight on this issue was the role of E. F. Hill. During 1948-51 Hill was the most ardent and dogmatic supporter of the "Left" sectarian viewpoint. When the "Leftist" ideas and policies were rejected in 1951 he suppressed his views and, outwardly, accepted the policy of the Central Committee.

In 1954, Hill joined in exposing errors associated with the leadership of J. D. Blake and J. C. Henry. He was elected

to the Central Secretariat, together with L. Aarons, in their place.

In the following months, Hill's able handling of his legal responsibilities before the Petrov Commission won him great prestige in the Party.

XX X This helped to obscure the fact that he himself was deeply imbued with Leftist and sectarian characteristics. These became more apparent as time went by, leading to differences between himself and other Party leaders, and to problems in the Victorian Party organisation and between it and the C.C., long before his open defiance compelled the Party to expel him.

Relis des. fine of am p on get by those

McCARTHYISM IN AUSTRALIA

An armistice in the three-year Korean War had been signed on July 27, 1953, by which time military and civilian casualties had mounted to over 6,000,000 and the country had been laid in ruins.

But the peace negotiations were to drag on for many more months, and end in a stalemate in 1954, with the U.S. puppet Syngman Rhee maintaining a police state in the South under U.S. military protection, and still demanding in July that the U.S. Government back him and Chiang Kai Shek in war on People's China.

McCarthyism, which had begun in the U.S.A. in 1950, shortly before the outbreak of the Korean War, and expanded during the next few years into its full evil flowering of witch-hunting, inquisitions, victimisation, jailings, relying on wholesale informing and perjury, was at its peak in the U.S.A. in early 1954.

Menzies and his colleagues (who had openly admired German and Japanese fascism before the Second World War made the expression of such sentiments unsafe) now regarded the soon-to-be-discredited McCarthy with special favour and had already begun to try his recipes in Australia, as outlined earlier.

PETROV COMMISSION'S PURPOSES

Vladimir Petrov, third Secretary of the Soviet Embassy, who had long been negotiating with Menzies' secret police over the price of betrayal of his country, was now ripe for use.

His production in April and the months of inquisition that followed served several purposes: to stampede the electors into returning the Government in May, to raise a cloud of suspicion and doubt about the Communist Party of Australia and all progressives so as to justify further repression, and, in this atmosphere, to push ahead with the betrayal of Australia to U.S. imperialism under the guise of seeking its protection and justify further Australian involvement in aggressive U.S. war plans.

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE & SEATO

Though the uneasy Korean truce still held, French imperialism's 8-year colonialist war was still raging in Indo-China when Petrov defected.

The Geneva Conference was convened on April 26, 1954, to try to end the war. On May 7 the catastrophic French defeat occurred at Dien Bien Phu. This was followed quickly by further decisive blows, resulting in the fall of the French Laniel Government on June 10. Mendes-France assumed power on the promise that he would resign if peace was not achieved by June 20.

French imperialism had, in fact, recognised the inevitability of the end when it agreed to the Geneva Conference. Britain agreed and so, naturally, did the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic which was represented at Geneva on Soviet insistence.

The representatives of the U.S. Government—Dulles and General Bedell Smith—however, argued for continuation and extension of the war and tried to wreck the Conference. They received little support except from the Menzies Government's representative, Casey, who offered 24 Australian battalions for use by the U.S.A.

When the armistice and Agreements were signed on July 21, the U.S. representatives refused to be party to them. President Eisenhower, however, announced that the U.S. would "neither accept responsibility for them nor attempt to overthrow them by force"—thus adding one more to the long list of broken U.S. promises.

Still striving to dictate to Asia "from outside", Dulles flew to Manila where the so-called South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) was knocked together, with the enthusiastic support of the Menzies Government.

Of all the signatories to SEATO only one—Thailand—was a South East Asian country.

10 MONTHS' WITCH-HUNT

Through all this and for months after, until the end of March 1955—10 months in all—the Petrov Commission continued as a kind of public witch-hunt and threat against all progressives, especially Communists, in Australia.

Though 119 witnesses were called, and the Commission cost £140,000, and though its sordid proceedings were to be used by Menzies and his men for many months more, not a single spy was found—for the simple reason that there were none.

The traitor Petrov and other paid informers, in fact, showed up in a very sorry light. But the Commission was serving its

purpose—intimidation and smearing as justification for repressive laws and war preparations.

The Communist Party, especially its many members who were hauled before the Commission, acquitted itself with honour and, though giving due attention to the dangers inherent in the witch-hunt, did not allow this to divert it from its main tasks.

MENZIES SCRAPES HOME

When the Menzies Government was returned, at the end of May 1954, on a minority vote (due largely to Industrial Group treachery in Victoria and elsewhere) the Party's General Secretary, L. L. Sharkey, issued a stirring call to the Party.

"Lift ever higher the banner of peace. Defend national independence against U.S. imperialism. Preserve and defend democracy. On with the struggle for higher wages, pensions and better living standards generally.

"Redouble efforts to build the invincible unity of the working class—always our chief weapon, irrespective of election results." (Tribune, 2/6/54.)

A Tribune editorial of the same date said "Menzies need not last three years. Unite for the defeat of Menzies and his policies. Build the Communist Party, the organiser of unity."

The Party, in its many-sided activities, paid great attention to the struggle for peace and for higher wages.

The ACTU demand for double margins was backed by widespread job and union activity.

In August, Queensland workers under the State Mechanical and Engineering Award broke through the wage freeze with big margin gains following stubborn and repeated strike action. This added impetus to the struggle, and in October, seamen were the first to get double margins, through strike action.

THE GROUPS EXPOSED

Early in October 1954, Dr. Evatt gave voice to the long-simmering deep indignation within the ALP and trade unions at the activity of the Industrial Group leaders, by publicly exposing and denouncing Victorian Group leaders, accusing them, amongst other things, of being responsible for the return of the Menzies Government.

This set in train the process which was to result in the official outlawing of the Groups by the A.L.P.

Though they were to survive in some States as the "D.L.P." or "Q.L.P." and some were to continue to hide behind the A.L.P. label, Evatt's exposure and the A.L.P.'s later official break with the Groups broke the stranglehold Santamaria's conspirators had been developing in the A.L.P. since 1945.

A.L.P. LEFT GROWS

The way was opened for a vigorous growth of the Left in the A.L.P. and unions and adoption of new policies, especially on foreign affairs.

The great ferment in the A.L.P. and the revolt against Group policies posed important new questions of unity for the Communist Party. With its 17th Congress scheduled for October, the Party opened discussion on policy with a draft resolution, published in Tribune on August 4.

Amendments to the general programme and a draft agrarian programme were discussed in addition to the draft resolution.

In the event the Congress was postponed until May 6, 1955. Thus, the discussion continued over nine months, during which important developments in the international and national situation, and in the labor movement, confirmed the correctness of the Party's major emphasis on the questions of peace and working class unity.

Evatt's charges that Group leaders and the journal "News-weekly" had been collaborating with the Menzies Government on the Petrov affair for a long time leading up to the 1954 Federal elections, coupled with his charges that the Groups were splitting the A.L.P., receiving strong support from all over Australia, especially in the trade unions.

MENZIES' TARGET — THE WATERFRONT

Meanwhile, the Menzies Government through its Minister for Labor, Harold Holt, was about to launch amendments to the Stevedoring Industry Act described by A.C.T.U. President Albert Monk as "full of dynamite" and liable to provoke a major dispute on the waterfront.

Because the Australian economy is heavily dependent on overseas trade, and because the Waterside Workers' Federation, after being rebuilt on strong industrial lines in the 30's has a very important and militant role in the Australian trade union movement, it has been singled out for attack and again by employers and their governments.

The Party said that Holt's proposed legislation was a direct attack on trade unionism, an attempt to smash the Waterside Workers' Federation as a preliminary to smashing all trade unions fighting for better conditions and living standards.

It was linked, said the Party, with U.S.-backed moves to militarise the waterfront as part of the Government's preparation for war against the peoples of Asia consequent on the just-signed SEATO agreement.

On November 2, waterside workers throughout Australia stopped work in protest against the proposed amendments.

Plans were made immediately to carry the wharfies' case to other unions and throughout the countryside.

In a radio broadcast to the nation, Menzies called the waterfront stoppage "a challenge to Parliament, to the whole conception of Parliamentary democracy," and inveighed against "Communist plots."

But the A.C.T.U., after a conference with the maritime unions, declared support for the wharfies.

This confirmed Dr. Evatt's warning to Menzies in the Federal House a week earlier:

"By this action you have united the whole of the trade unions and the Labor Party as never before."

UNITY BEATS MENZIES' ATTACK

A tremendous campaign won nation-wide support for the wharfies. Within a fortnight, the Federation was satisfied that the situation was such that an A.C.T.U. direction to return to work was correct—the new law could not be implemented.

The A.C.T.U. declared that any attempt by the Government or shipowners to implement its provisions for recruitment of "free labor" must be resisted by the trade union movement as a whole.

Announcing acceptance of the A.C.T.U. direction to a high-spirited meeting of 5,000 wharfies, on Monday, November 15, the W.W.F.'s General Secretary, Jim Healy, said:

"A black ban by even one union is effective, but here we have a black ban by the whole trade union movement."

"We won the first round," said Big Jim, "because never before have I seen such unity. This is the force to defeat the Government legislation. The next stage we plan is to make the Government's legislation unworkable."

The unity he spoke of included not only the whole trade union movement, but the Federal Labor Party's Parliamentary caucus and, of course, the Communist Party.

That such unity could be attained in the midst of the McCarthyite atmosphere of the Petrov Commission and the war preparations consequent on the SEATO Pact was an extraordinary testimony to the strength and durability of Australian democracy, with its solid working class base.

It was a fitting celebration of the Eureka centenary, due in three weeks' time.

The lessons of this great experience were studied and discussed at great length throughout the Party, helping to deepen understanding of the full meaning and possibilities of working class unity, which was to occupy the central position in the forthcoming 17th Congress.

STRUGGLE MOUNTS AGAINST GROUPS

The mounting offensive against the Industrial Groups within the A.L.P. and trade unions was intensified by Group leaders' equivocal role in connection with the waterfront strike.

By November the struggle against the Groups had spread from Victoria to New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. A meeting of 21 unions in Sydney on November 16 branded the Groups as "a bridgehead into the Labor Party for an outside influence."

"This outside influence," said their resolution, "as well as being anti-Communist, is anti-Labor, insofar as its policy is directed against all militant labor thought, and particularly against Socialism."

"Labor would soon appear to the public as a mere appendage of the Liberal Party unless something is done to restrict the influence directing the Industrial Groups.

"Any attempt to force Labor further to the right can only have the effect of causing Labor to lose its identity and character as a Labor Party and finally help the Liberal Party and the Communist Party."

Pointing out that the last reference reflected a misconception of Communist policy, Tribune commented on November 24:

"The Communist Party would like to see, not the destruction of the Labor Party, but its strengthening around a policy of world peace, Australian independence and social advance for the Australian people.

"It works for the unity of the working class to win these objectives.

"This would lead to the building of one united working class party.

"The policy of such a party would be a Socialist one, which of course is a common objective to both parties."

This statement accurately reflected the position the Party had reached in practice on the vital question of C.P.-A.L.P. relations, though its theoretical approach to the problem was still hampered by the dogma of "directing the main blow at reformism."

The Party's intense striving to build working class unity in action and develop better relations with the A.L.P. members and supporters, coinciding with the struggle within the A.L.P. against the Industrial Groups, was a powerful factor in developing the wide and deep discussions on fundamentals of working class policy, both domestic and international, which characterised the Australian labor movement in 1954-55.

WAR DANGER ACUTE

These discussions were to prove of tremendous importance to the Australian people.

The danger of war was acute. West Germany, which had been allowed to rearm by the imperialist powers, in defiance of wartime agreements, was due to be admitted to NATO, which she joined in May 1955, quickly rising to positions of great power in this aggressive alliance.

In the Pacific, U.S. Secretary of State Dulles was openly proclaiming the intention of U.S. imperialism to use Chiang Kai Shek's forces to attack China, and to involve the SEATO powers, including Australia.

In January, 1955, Chiang provoked heavy fighting with People's China, over Quemoy, Matsu and the Tachen Islands, and on January 24 President Eisenhower proclaimed to a joint session of the U.S. Congress that the U.S. was prepared to fight "to preserve the vital stake of the free world—a free Formosa, and to engage in whatever operations may be required for that purpose."

On January 20th, U.S. imperialism took control in South Vietnam, flew in its puppet Ngo Dinh Diem and installed him as "Premier," and set out to train a puppet South Vietnamese army for war against the people of the South and the liberated North, to circumvent the otherwise inevitable victory of the progressive forces at the elections which, according to the Geneva Agreements, were due in 1956.

Meanwhile, however, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma and Indonesia had decided to convene the first Afro-Asian Conference in Indonesia, "to further goodwill and co-operation, explore common and mutual interests, discuss problems of special interest about racialism and colonialism, explore social, economic and cultural problems, and investigate what contribution can be made to world peace."

LIBERAL-COUNTRY PARTY CONFLICT

Conflicts were developing inside the Menzies Government over U.S. trade policies, which were to grow sharper over the years.

On January 5, Country Party Commerce and Agriculture Minister J. McEwen openly criticised the U.S.-controlled General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT), saying Australia should consider withdrawing from it. Liberal Trade and Customs Minister N. O'Sullivan flatly denied on January 9 that Australia had any such intention.

In the same month the World Peace Council decided to call a "World Assembly of representatives of the forces of peace"

in May, and launched a new, world-wide campaign for 1,000 million signatures against atomic weapons—the Vienna Appeal. This was taken up enthusiastically by peacelovers throughout Australia.

At the beginning of February, however, the Menzies Government agreed to send Australian troops to Malaya, to join in the eight years' old British colonialist war against the Malayan people.

"A COSTLY DEFEAT"

Meanwhile, the Government's effort to force its amended legislation on the waterfront was defeated. The Federation held the exclusive right to nominate persons to the industry after a conference with employers and the Government.

The Sydney Morning Herald said Menzies' effort to force his legislation on the wharfies had been a "major strategic blunder" and called the Government's backdown "a costly defeat."

The victory showed that a united working class could have the last word, Jim Healy commented. "It proves that the fact that an oppressive law is passed is not sufficient to ensure its operation."

In the same week, the A.C.T.U. Interstate Executive decided to convene a Federal Unions Conference on May 10, to discuss margins, equal pay and penal clauses of the Arbitration Act.

Meanwhile, as the Petrov Commission continued its sordid task of smearing and intimidating progressives, McCarthyism in the U.S.A. was losing its force as the Budenz and other cases brought discredit on it and prominent public figures began to oppose it, defeating it legally in 1957.

In this situation, both the A.L.P. and Communist Party were preparing for major national discussions—the A.L.P. Federal Conference at Hobart in March and the C.P. of A. 17th Congress in Sydney in May.

THE HOBART A.L.P. CONFERENCE

A Victorian State Conference of the A.L.P. at the end of February showed that the writing was on the wall for the Groups when it broke the power of their leaders in that State.

In Hobart on March 14, the Group leaders first resorted to force to try to prevent the Federal Conference from assembling. Baulked in this, they staged a walkout next day, thus precipitating a split in the ranks of the A.L.P. and exposing themselves as open enemies of the labor movement.

The decisions of the Hobart Conference, especially those on foreign affairs, were of major importance for the working class movement.

They constituted the first effort by the A.L.P. for many years to formulate a genuinely Australian foreign policy, basically different from that pursued by the Menzies Government and supported by the Industrial Groups.

Dr. Evatt announced that the A.L.P. had decided on "a positive policy for peace."

The Conference decisions called for:

- Admission of 18 nations, including China, to the United Nations.
- Opposition to the sending of Australian troops to Malaya.
- Opposition to the use of nuclear weapons in war as part of the (U.S.) policy of "massive retaliation."
- A nation-wide campaign in support of effective international control of nuclear weapons.
- Friendly relations with Asian peoples, including exchange of visits between their countries and ours.

Such visits "to be arranged at almost every level of our national life."

- As a first step, a Labor Party delegation of observers to attend the Afro-Asian Conference in Indonesia in April.
- A policy of negotiations and high-level talks to peacefully settle world disputes and conflicts.

WAR WASTE AND FLOODS

During this period, devastating floods hit towns in the Hunter Valley and elsewhere. An extraordinary response came from people of all kinds to the call, initiated by the Communist Party, for volunteers to go to the stricken areas to help.

This movement, led by the Unions and participated in by many of their officials, was described by Tribune on March 23 as "the greatest worker-farmer effort in our history."

The volunteer helpers found bitter consciousness among the people of the country towns of the fact that the flood-damage could have been prevented by expenditure of a fraction of the money the Menzies Government was spending on war preparations.

COMMUNISTS WELCOME POPE'S CALL

In an Easter message, the Pope made an important contribution to the struggle for world peace by calling on statesmen of East and West to make a sincere effort to reach lasting understanding, for progressive disarmament and development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

This message was welcomed by the Communist Party's General Secretary, L. L. Sharkey, who said in Tribune, on April 13, it would facilitate the world-wide campaign to ban nuclear weapons.

The Pope's message encouraged peace-loving Catholics to participate in this great campaign and helped discredit Industrial Group leaders who were trying to represent their vicious, pro-war policies as official Catholic views.

In April a secret ballot of the A.L.P. Federal Caucus declared 52-22 for the Evatt line, against the Groupers. This led to strong demands in the A.L.P. and unions for expulsion of the Group leaders. Seven M.P.'s were expelled, forming an "anti-Communist Labor Party" for a brief period.

Evatt declared: "There is no hope for the A.L.P. if its foreign policy follows slavishly that of the United States."

FIRST AFRO-ASIAN CONFERENCE

In April, at Bandung, Indonesia, the first Afro-Asian Conference, representative of 1,400 million people from 29 countries, introduced a powerful new note into the fight for world peace by unanimously condemning the production and use of weapons of mass destruction. It declared that—

"disarmament and the prohibition of the production of, experimentation with, and use of nuclear and thermo-nuclear weapons are imperative to save mankind and civilisation from the prospect of destruction."

The Conference condemned colonialism in all its forms and demanded that the U.S.A. settle the dangerous Taiwan (Formosa) situation by negotiation.

Sending greetings from the Conference to Australia and New Zealand, Indian Premier Nehru said:

"Australia and New Zealand do not belong to Europe—much less to America—and they should come nearer and nearer to Asia."

Chinese Premier Chou En Lai, at the end of the second day of the Conference, invited delegates of all countries present to visit China. He said: "We believe in Communism and believe the Socialist system is a good system. But we see no need to publicise our ideologies here.

"We come here seeking common ground and not to create divisions." (Tribune, 27/4/55.)

Dr. John Burton attended the Conference as an observer from the A.L.P., in line with the Hobart decisions.

CONGRESS FOR UNITY, PEACE

On the weekend May 7-9, 1955, the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party brought together 120 delegates from all parts of Australia in Sydney.

The Congress, which was highly united, dealt thoroughly with the key questions of the struggle for peace and for working class unity. It also gave considerable attention to the problem

of building a worker-farmer alliance, broadening the Party's concept of the content and forms of this and adopting an Agrarian Programme.

The report of the Central Committee said: "The main issue before the peoples today is the fight for the principle of peaceful co-existence of the two social orders, the socialist and the capitalist systems.

"To establish international recognition of this great principle would avert the war danger that now hangs so heavily, like an ominous black cloud, over the world. . . .

"The only alternative to peaceful co-existence is a state of war, ending in a war waged with atomic, chemical and bacteriological weapons . . .

". . . Yet there are powerful forces in the capitalist world who denounce and deride the demand for peaceful co-existence.

...
"Such men are self-branded, potential war criminals, and must be ceaselessly fought and exposed as such."

POST-WAR AUSTRALIAN GROWTH

Analysing the reasons for the continuation of the Menzies Government's control of the nation, the report pointed, among other factors, to the economic expansion that had taken place in Australia, due largely to world shortages of Australian exports, a heavy influx of foreign capital, including more than £600,000,000 from the U.S.A., and the bringing of a million migrants to the country.

This had increased the demand for consumer goods and provided labor power for industrial expansion. However, real wages had fallen since the war, and the threat of economic crisis was always present.

STRUGGLE IN THE A.L.P.

Dealing with the struggle within the A.L.P., the reporter, L. L. Sharkey, said:

"We are concerned with the A.L.P. because of the great influence that it wields over the toiling masses."

Its policy, he said, is often decisive, if progressive, leading to gains and victories for the workers, if corrupt and reactionary, leading to disillusion and defeat for the labor movement as a whole.

"For this reason," he said, "the position occupied by the A.L.P. is of concern to all workers, including the Communists. By means of criticism and our general work in the labor movement we at all times seek to influence the A.L.P. along a progressive road, fighting ceaselessly to establish united action between the two parties and indestructible unity in the ranks of the working class."

He hailed the Evatt-led movement against the Groups as progressive and called for them to be driven out of the labor movement "to the camp of Menzies, where they belong."

HEALY ON UNITY

In a down-to-earth analysis of the splendid experiences of the Party in building unity in action on the waterfront and elsewhere, Jim Healy branded sectarianism and Leftism as the main obstacles to correct Party work.

Continual attention was needed, he said, to build and maintain unity. "Conviction," "patience," "confidence" and 'flexibility,' he said, were the four words to keep in mind always.

The speech of R. Dixon, Party President, was devoted to the question of building unity in action.

The powerful surge towards unity which had developed in the working class movement since the previous Congress had, he said, led to the strengthening of the trade union movement and, in general, extended the influence of the working class amongst other sections of the people.

To show the change that had come over the working class he gave several examples. He compared the 1949 Miners' strike with the Wharfies' strike late in 1954, when the working class as a whole had been rallied to the support of the wharfies and sympathy won among the middle class and farmers.

MOVES FOR PEACE

On the following weekend, the decision of the Soviet Union, U.S.A., France and Britain to arrange a "Big Four" Conference to discuss peaceful settlement of international disputes was welcomed throughout the world. The Conference was to be held in Geneva on July 18, 1955.

On May 27, Soviet Premier Khrushchev flew to Belgrade, in accordance with decisions taken by the C.P.S.U., in consultation with the Parties of all other Socialist countries, to begin restoration of correct relations with Yugoslavia. He apologised publicly for the errors made by the C.P.S.U. in 1949 under the influence of the personality cult.

AGAINST PENAL POWERS

A Conference of Federal Unions convened by the A.C.T.U. in Melbourne in the week beginning May 9 declared war on penal powers in arbitration legislation, both Federal and State.

Use of these powers, the Conference declared, "conflicts with the declared policy of the A.C.T.U." A resolution called on unions to refuse to abandon traditional trade union rights and to resist the use of penal powers. It called for "support

of the whole trade union movement for any and all unions threatened with such legislation."

Saying that the margins formula adopted by the Commonwealth Arbitration Court was "totally unacceptable to the trade union movement," the Conference advised unions to press claims for increased margins by direct negotiation with employers and to refer industrial disputes resulting from this to the State Trades and Labor Council or the A.C.T.U.

The Conference also decided on a campaign for a basic wage equal to the amount it would have reached if quarterly adjustments had not been abolished, restoration of quarterly adjustments and equal pay.

The outstanding feature of this Conference was its complete unanimity.

It was followed in June and July by a great wave of industrial struggles, involving workers in many industries, for higher wages and against the imposition of Court fines on striking unions. Rank and file actions received A.C.T.U. and State Trades and Labor Council backing.

COLD WAR INTENSIFIED

The relaxation of international tension marked by the "Atoms for Peace" Conference and by the unilateral Soviet reduction of its armed forces in August 1955, was ended abruptly on August 24 by a speech delivered by President Eisenhower to the American Bar Association, restating and emphasising U.S. Cold War aims.

On October 12 the Bagdad Pact was formed, to strengthen U.S. imperialist positions in the Middle East.

In a series of articles in "Life" magazine, in January 1956, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was to set out the "theory" of the cold war architects, proclaiming "brinkmanship" as the essential feature of the U.S. policy of keeping the world continually on the verge of war.

However changes and developments in favour of the peace forces were also taking place.

On the initiative of the Soviet Union, 16 new nations were admitted to U.N.O. on December 16. This virtually destroyed the dominant position of the U.S.A. in the U.N. Assembly and created an anti-colonial majority.

From that time on, general or specific U.N. decisions against colonialism became a marked feature of the organisation's work.

CHAPTER III

THE C.P.S.U. 20th CONGRESS—AND AFTER—

1956-61: The 20th Congress of the CPSU and 8th Congress of the CPC. Suez crisis. Hungary. Open US intervention in Vietnam. Further routing of the Groups. The ALP moves against nuclear testing. Sputnik. International Communist meetings. "Democratic Socialism" and the struggle for unity. The 22nd Congress CPSU. Hill shows his hand.

In the second half of February, 1956, the epoch-making 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. was held in Moscow.

2) The sensational aspects of the Congress—particularly the revelations of the practices associated with the cult of Stalin's personality and the corrective measures taken since his death in 1953—attracted the most publicity in the world capitalist press.

1) But, important though rectification of the cult was, the main features of the Congress were its conclusions that Socialism was becoming the decisive force in world affairs, that world war could be prevented and peaceful co-existence of the socialist and capitalist states firmly established, and that real possibilities for peaceful transition to socialism were developing in several capitalist countries.

For the first time, the C.P.S.U. 20th Congress set the aim of developing a fully Communist society in the U.S.S.R. in measurable time—a goal that was soon to be made more definite by the 21st and 22nd Congresses.

ENORMOUS IMPACT

Coming as it did, at a time when great conflicts were developing within the U.S.-led alliance of capitalist states, the 20th Congress made an enormous impact on the world.

In the words of an authoritative U.S. historian of the Cold War, the 20th Congress "created such an atmosphere of confidence and strength that it led to a severe stocktaking in the West."

Pointing out that "the revolution of modern weapons had upset all the strategic calculations of the NATO powers," the New York Times correspondent James Reston commented that "the new phase of the East-West struggle would be fought out in the fields of political, economic and psychological warfare."

The powerful call of the 20th Congress for peace found a response throughout the world. It was reflected in March in a call by the Pope for an end to "this homicidal, this suicidal madness" (referring to the guided missiles race).

On May 14 the U.S.S.R. again unilaterally reduced its armed forces—this time by 1,200,000 men. An official Soviet statement

at the time pointed out that "a wide zone of peace, including the majority of the earth's population, had been formed."

NEW PERSPECTIVES

In Australia, as elsewhere, the Soviet initiatives for peace, so diametrically opposed to the intensified imperialist war plans, caused wide discussion.

The Party had sent L. L. Sharkey and E. F. Hill as its fraternal delegates to the 20th Congress, C.P.S.U. Both of them reported enthusiastically on the new perspectives set by the Congress. 29
11

Their reports, together with materials published by the C.P.S.U. and other fraternal Parties, gave rise to profound discussion on the fundamental questions of the world Communist movement and the application of the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the construction and policies of the U.S.S.R. They also caused deep examination of the policies and practices of our own Party. L. L. Sharkey wrote numerous articles profoundly analysing the Congress. E. F. Hill wrote (Tribune, April 4): "There are reactionary circles in our country who would still maintain the 'cold war' and 'positions of strength' policy, but their efforts are in vain because the very power of truth emerging from this Congress will overwhelm them." Hill wrote well when he was a Communist.

The revelations of the consequences of the cult of Stalin surprised and shocked the Party membership. The Party regularly published information as it came to hand, including the statement of the C.C., C.P.S.U., and encouraged discussion of it. A booklet of fundamental Marxist-Leninist material was published to help this.

MASS EXPLANATIONS

The re-election of the Menzies Government at the end of 1955 had been assisted by the Industrial Groupers.

In its issue of December 14, 1955, "Newsweekly" had declared that "Labor would never govern again" unless it capitulated to the Groupers. Thus the question of developing new paths for the A.L.P. or capitulating to Group pressure was sharpened.

At the beginning of February, the A.L.P. Federal Parliamentary Caucus removed the last of the open Groupers from the Party's leadership.

The Communist Party throughout the year combined vigorous, mass campaigning for working class unity in action with basic, principled criticism of the treachery of the Industrial Groups and of the weaknesses of the A.L.P. Rightwing's attitude

to the problems of rapidly growing inflation, the employers' offensive and workers' struggles against these.

Election campaigns in four States (N.S.W., S.A., Qld. and W.A.) in the early part of the year provided opportunities for mass explanation of the Party's policies.

The Party's election work, which directed the main fire on the Liberals and their Grouper allies, and put forward concrete, realisable proposals, helped greatly to clarify the issues. The A.L.P. was returned in N.S.W., W.A. and Qld. (later in May). In N.S.W., while the A.L.P. retained office, its vote was heavily reduced. This was seen as censure of the Industrial Group policies dominating the N.S.W. Government. The Communist vote rose substantially in N.S.W. and S.A.

In Queensland at the end of February, the long-dominant position of the Groups in the A.L.P. was ended at that Party's Triennial Convention, which resulted in the election of an Executive much more closely connected with the basic trade unions. Expulsion of Premier Gair and a number of his followers from the A.L.P. for defiance of Convention decisions was to follow next year. The Government's opposition to strike struggles in Queensland powerhouses and the pastoral industry helped to harden feeling against it.

Delegations from both Chinese and Soviet trade unions for May Day helped to develop international friendship and dispel Cold War fabrications. An invitation was issued and accepted for the A.C.T.U. to send a delegation to China.

VIETNAM SPLIT BY U.S.A.

In March 1956, a rigged, illegal "election" placed the U.S. puppet Ngo Dinh Diem in power in South Vietnam on a policy opposed to the 1954 Geneva Agreements. This heightened the war danger in South-East Asia, beginning the series of crises which have characterised South Vietnam since.

The Party warned of this and called for wide support for the struggles of the democratic people of Vietnam. At the same time, the U.S. Government was proceeding with plans to test nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands and the Australian Government was engaged, together with Britain, in a project for tests on Australian soil (later transferred, under mass pressure, to Monte Bello Island).

At a meeting of the Central Committee in May, the Party warned that the war danger was still acute and would remain so while imperialism existed. "War is no longer inevitable, but this does not mean it is no longer possible," said the main reporter, L. L. Sharkey. The struggle for peace could not be relaxed in any way.

Peaceful co-existence did not mean the watering down of class struggle, but meant peaceful relations between States, peaceful competition, not war, between the capitalist and socialist systems.

"THE CULT" AND AUSTRALIA

At the same meeting, the existence of tendencies towards a cult of the individual in the Australian Party was recognised. While collective leadership and Party democracy had always been maintained, it was said, there had been, on the one hand, at times an unthinking acceptance of the views of Party leaders, and a timidity in putting forward different views. On the other hand, leaders had also, at times presented views in a dogmatic fashion, which discouraged initiative.

"The CPSU's 20th Congress, in destroying the cult of the individual," said L. L. Sharkey, "without a doubt rendered a wonderful service to socialism the world over." These views were unanimously endorsed by the Central Committee. However, the full implications of the harm done by the cult in various fields of thought and action were not yet understood in Australia.

PARTY-WIDE DISCUSSION

On June 20, the Political Committee of the Australian Party issued a statement on "the 20th Congress and the Stalin issue", calling for discussion throughout the Party of the 20th Congress and the creative application of its important findings to Australia.

"The critical and self-critical discussion," said the P.C. Statement, "should aim at raising our level of ideological understanding, exposing all aspects of the cult of the individual as they affect us, strengthening collective methods of work and leadership, ending bureaucratic methods, eliminating dogmatic and commandist tendencies and, above all, strengthening the unity and mass work of the Party."

A series of further statements by the P.C. and C.C. was issued throughout the year, as new information on the cult of the individual became available.

Most Party members stood firm, but a Right revisionist trend appeared among some. This trend, seizing on the weaknesses and errors revealed by the 20th Congress, put forward propositions to the effect that Marxism-Leninism had failed and that the new path forward for mankind was to be found in reforms within capitalism, or that capitalism itself was becoming 'people's capitalism'. A few exponents of such views left or were expelled from the Party.

11
11
A great discussion developed in the Party and its press. Most of this was healthy and valuable. In a few cases the Party had to oppose proposals which would have meant turning branches and the Party press into debating societies. On the other hand, there was a tendency on the part of some individual leaders, such as E. F. Hill, to frown on all criticism as being disruptive.

This was shown, for example, in exaggerated attacks by Hill on articles written by W. J. Brown in Tribune and the Communist Review, which sought to examine what effects the cult of the individual had had in Australia.

Hill onesidedly seized on weaknesses in these articles and attributed arguments to Brown which he had not, in fact, advanced.

Hill's tendency to dogmatically reject criticism—especially of the "cult"—was to become more marked as time went on. The effect of this attitude was to deprive the Party of the full benefit of the lessons of the 20th Congress CPSU, to which Hill had been a delegate.

A.L.P. DECLARES AGAINST N-TESTS

In June, the Federal Labor Party Caucus made an important decision calling for a ban on nuclear weapons tests, describing them as a menace to Australia and pledging that a future Labor Government would refuse money for tests or development of weapons for nuclear warfare.

The Communist Party welcomed this decision, observing that it opened the way for every member of the Australian working class to join actively in the fight to end tests.

In the same month, a special ACTU Congress issued a rallying call for all Australian workers to unite against attacks on living standards and for trade union rights.

This call, together with the decisions of the 1955 ACTU Congress, was welcomed by the Party as constituting a minimum programme of demands, which could be supported by all sections of the trade unions.

An outstanding feature of the Congress was its unity and the almost total silence of the Industrial Group representatives present.

Together with the decisions for peace, the economic demands of the Congress marked the growing unity of the working class and isolation of the extreme Rightwing.

In June also, the Australian Party, together with all other world Communist Parties, welcomed the big steps taken by the Soviet Union towards healing the 1948 breach with Yugoslavia, through the signing of a new agreement in Moscow, only a year after the Belgrade declaration.

POLISH RIOTS

At the end of June, riots in Poznan, Poland, instigated by groups of secret agents preying on discontent over revelations of the consequences of the cult of the individual, gave new hope to imperialism. Press and radio again shouted prophecies of the impending doom of Socialism. But the imperialists, engaged in serious and growing problems of their own, were unable to exploit the events as they had hoped.

With France suffering tremendous losses in its colonial war against Algeria, Britain experiencing mass layoffs in industry and the USA beginning to lose its domination of the imperialist alliance, the latter part of 1956 was not to prove a period of victory for the forces of imperialism and war, despite the furious efforts of the warmongers.

Nevertheless, with a US election due in November, it was a difficult period for the peace forces.

THE HUNGARIAN COUNTER-REVOLUTION

The CIA and other US agencies poured out millions of dollars in ideological warfare and subversion in Europe and the Middle East.

The US imperialist policy of "rolling back" the spread of socialism was vigorously proclaimed through the "Voice of America", "Radio Free Europe" and other agencies, while large numbers of terrorists and other subversive agents were infiltrated into the European People's Democracies.

These factors, together with the social unrest caused by disclosure of the effects of the cult of the individual in Hungary, played a large part in the dangerous Hungarian counter-revolution in October-November. When, at the call of the Hungarian people's leaders, the Soviet Union gave armed support to the Hungarian people's forces, imperialist propaganda agencies launched a furious anti-Soviet attack.

The Australian Party, like all others, was confronted with a most difficult situation. Once again, it stood firm, patiently explaining the reasons for the events to the people and stressing that they must not be allowed to direct attention from the struggle for unity, democracy, higher living standards and peace in Australia.

THE SUEZ CRISIS

The hypocrisy of the imperialist pretence at concern for the independence of Hungary was exposed by the almost simultaneous, murderous attack by French, British and Israeli forces on Egypt in an effort to thwart the Egyptian Government's legitimate decision to nationalise the Suez Canal.

This attack was halted by a firm, unequivocal note from the Soviet Government on November 5th, warning that the Soviet Union was "fully determined to crush the aggressors and restore peace in the Middle East" by force, if necessary.

The Suez crisis marked a significant deterioration in the hitherto dominant position of the USA in the world imperialist alliance. France and Britain felt they had been let down by the USA which did not join in the attack.

The US imperialists' reasons for this became clear in January 1957, when the so-called Eisenhower Doctrine was proclaimed, aimed at ousting the USA's imperialist rivals from the Middle East.

The struggle for peace in Australia gained impetus when it was revealed that definite effects on animal life and vegetation were observable on the Australian coast as the result of Pacific nuclear weapons tests. The movement for a ban on tests and other activities for peace grew, leading to the holding of an Australian Assembly of Peace in Sydney on September 8th-12th with 840 delegates and 2000 present at the first rally.

Great economic struggles which won significant wage increases, marked the middle of the year, as unemployment again became a serious problem. On August 27th the Sydney Morning Herald said that "the demand for labourers is about as low as it was in the trough of the 1952 recession."

THE CHINESE PARTY'S 8th CONGRESS

On September 15th, 1956, the 8th Congress of the Communist Party of China—the first held since 1945 and the last held to date—opened in Peking.

The Australian Party sent as its fraternal delegates L. L. Sharkey and F. Johnson. Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett's reports from the Congress were published in *Tribune*, as well as much other material.

This Congress, while naturally dealing principally with the problems of building Socialism in China, also made a positive appraisal of the world significance of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and praised the Soviet Party for its "courageous and correct work" in disclosing and combating the cult of the individual. It resolved to eradicate all traces of the cult in China.

A novel decision was that the Congress should remain permanently in existence, being reconvened at regular intervals. This decision was, however, operated only once. The Chinese Party has not since held a Congress.

TRIBUTE TO U.S.S.R.

The 8th Congress of the CPC paid high tribute to the selfless, generous aid given by the Soviet Union to China in laying the foundation of Socialist industry and agriculture.

It projected a 5-year plan for more than doubling steel production, greatly increasing coal production, a 50% increase in the national income and a 20-30% increase in the incomes of workers and peasants. This plan, it said, would be partly financed by cutting defence and administration expenses from 32% to 20%.

It also emphasised the need for close co-operation between the Communist Party and other progressive Parties and re-emphasised the slogan "let flowers of many kinds bloom, let diverse schools of thought contend" as the guiding line for Party work in the fields of culture.

Our Party highly appraised the line adopted by the CPC's 8th Congress and the great friendship with the Soviet Union and its Party evident in the Congress speeches.

AUSTRALIAN VIEWS APPLAUDED

In his brief address to the Congress, which was strongly applauded, L. L. Sharkey said:

"The Australian people want no new wars, and stand firmly beside the Chinese people and all peace-loving folk all over the world in demanding that international problems be settled by peaceful negotiations."

He was further applauded when he said that "an important feature of the Australian scene is the more progressive stand of the Australian Labor Party" and spoke appreciatively of Labor Party policies for good relations with China and against US-inspired reactionary policies.

This, he said, amidst applause, was leading to a "considerable growth of mutual understanding and desire for unity among the main groupings of our Labor movement."

THE OLYMPIC GAMES

The holding of the Olympic Games in Melbourne in November 1956 became an occasion of great development of friendship and understanding between the peoples. The facts that the Soviet and other Socialist athletes received a great welcome and Soviet runner Kutz became the idol of the Games demonstrated that the apostles of war in Australia had failed to poison the minds of the people, despite the great trials through which socialism had passed during the year 1956.

The Party's work in truthfully explaining events and emphasising the essentially positive and progressive character of the

socialist countries, headed by the Soviet Union, had played no small part in this. The growth of working class unity in action and the development of a strong movement for peace were the basic reasons.

OIL AND THE "EISENHOWER DOCTRINE"

From the beginning, Arab countries of the Middle East rejected the new "Eisenhower doctrine", which meant US control in place of French and British. A Syrian Government spokesman called it a "declaration of cold war in the Middle East." The London Sunday Times said it was believed that the US policy was dictated by oil interests which were intent on pushing their rivals out.

US imperialism's plans for control of Middle East oil were destined to cause new international complications very soon, which affected Australia directly because of her dependence on imported oil. The Party warned of this and began to put forward demands for the development of an Australian-owned oil industry and calling for nationalisation of the foreign-owned oil monopolies operating here.

VALUE OF CHINESE ARTICLE

Meanwhile, the great debate on the lessons of the C.P.S.U. 20th Congress continued. In January 1957 the Party published the important Chinese Party statement "More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." In this article the Chinese comrades, while making a positive appraisal of Stalin's great merits and contribution, criticised his errors in some detail, and expressed support for the efforts of the CPSU to correct these mistakes. The article emphasised that the fundamental experiences of the Soviet Union were basic things, universal truths of Marxism-Leninism, applicable everywhere. Stalin's mistakes, it said, did not originate in the socialist system; therefore it was not necessary to "correct" the socialist system to correct these mistakes.

This article was valuable in helping to counter the views being put forward by Right revisionists in Australia, as elsewhere, to the effect that the socialist system had inherent weaknesses, which must result in the repetition elsewhere of the distortions which occurred in the USSR.

"DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM"

The revisionist views largely coincided with British and Australian Labor Party writers' attempts to popularise a "new" concept of "democratic socialism", which, while having progressive aspects, nevertheless had much in common with the

theory being propounded by US publicists that monopoly-dominated USA was really "people's capitalism".

The Party published a considerable amount of material exposing the real and sharp class divisions in the USA, and began to analyse closely the class structure of Australian society. An article on this was published by L. Aarons in the December 1957 Communist Review.

Earlier in the year, in April, L. L. Sharkey wrote a Communist Review article, "Communists and Democratic Socialism", which was later developed into a pamphlet, "Socialism in Australia". In this, while criticising the vagueness of the "Democratic Socialist" concept and showing that Socialism, in practice, in the Socialist countries is democratic, he pointed out that one of the lessons from the 20th Congress CPSU was that united action by the Socialist (Labor) and Communist Parties was essential to win peace, democracy, national independence and Socialism.

He stated firmly and clearly that "there is no great chasm between A.L.P. members who believe in Socialism and Communists", and called for everything possible to be done to unify the labor movement in Australia.

PREMIER EXPELLED

In April, the Queensland Central Executive of the ALP made national headlines by expelling the State Premier, V. C. Gair, from the Labor Party for refusing to implement decisions of the ALP Convention.

Most of his Ministers left the ALP with Gair, to form the so-called Queensland Labor Party, based on Grouper policy. Most of them, including Gair, soon lost their seats, but the split they caused enabled a Liberal-Country Party coalition to take office at the State elections soon after, for the first time since 1932 in Queensland.

The split was wide and deep, but the unions and ALP branches rallied strongly to the ALP, and this led to a considerable strengthening of working class influence in it.

STRUGGLE GROWS

Intense working class struggle throughout the year was marked especially by increased attention to the problems of coalminers being dismissed because of mechanisation, Aborigines exploited by pastoral companies and migrants, many of whom were unable to get promised jobs as official unemployment figures rose above 50,000. In fact, at least 100,000 were out of work.

The miners in particular demonstrated vigorously with stay-ins and marches.

Led by Drs. Evatt and Cairns and others, ALP leaders came out strongly against Menzies' pro-monopoly policies, the spread of unemployment and the Government's heartless, reckless immigration policy. This, coinciding with the criticisms of the Government by the Communist Party and the main trade unions, helped develop a united anti-Menzies campaign.

At the same time, both ALP and CP of A were campaigning against proposed atomic tests at Maralinga (SA) and calling for a ban on nuclear weapons.

SPUTNIK

On October 4, 1957, on the eve of the celebrations of the 40th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the world was given a most convincing proof of socialism's superiority over capitalism.

On that day the Soviet Union announced the successful launching of Sputnik 1, the first earth satellite, which ushered in a new era in man's conquest of space.

Newspapers which had for years past, in common with the capitalist press in general, depicted the Soviet Union as "backward", were forced to recant.

"The success of their latest experiment shows Russia's technological advances have left the rest of the world far behind", said the Sydney Daily Telegraph.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia welcomed the launching of Sputnik as a tremendous advance in science and technique and a big contribution to the cause of world peace.

The Central Committee statement went on to say:

"The rulers of the USA are thrown into panic by this great achievement. Instead of welcoming this step forward into a new era, the US imperialists answer by warlike threats. They are blinded by their offensive war plans and instead of peaceful development demand new efforts for military superiority over the Soviet Union.

"This would mean new burdens on the people, increasing world tension and the danger of war. The Menzies Government supports this futile effort to achieve military superiority, which means new burdens for the Australian people."

Subsequent developments in the international arena confirmed the Central Committee's analysis.

On the one hand, the Soviet Union intensified its efforts for world peace, while on the other hand American imperialism stepped up its drive towards war.

SOVIET PEACE PROPOSALS

Coinciding with the successful launching of the Sputnik, the Soviet Union advanced new peace proposals in the United Nations General Assembly.

It called for the suspension of nuclear weapons tests from January 1, 1958; a five-year ban on the use of nuclear weapons; broadening of the membership of the UN sub-committee on disarmament; reduction of all foreign armed forces in Germany, and a declaration on peaceful co-existence.

On November 6, the Supreme Soviet made a call for a new Summit meeting to end the cold war and armaments race and to reach agreements based on mutual understanding.

On November 16, Soviet Premier Khrushchev repeated these proposals, adding that Russia had the power to smash NATO bases the world over and to strike at vital centres anywhere in the United States.

These proposals were received in Washington with "chilly disinterest" and the Dulles policy of "brinkmanship" continued as though there had been no change in the balance of world power.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST DECLARATION

On November 14, 15, 1957, the representatives of Communist and Workers' parties of twelve socialist countries met in Moscow, after the celebrations of the 40th anniversary of the October Revolution.

The conference discussed the relations between the parties, current problems of the international situation and the struggle for world peace and socialism.

The Declaration unanimously adopted by the meeting stated that the main content of the current epoch is the transition from capitalism to socialism.

In our epoch, the Declaration said, world development is determined by the course and results of the competition between two diametrically opposed social systems.

While socialism is on the upsurge, imperialism is heading towards decline. The Declaration noted that "so long as imperialism exists there will always be soil for aggressive wars", but the forces of peace had grown to such an extent that "there is a real possibility of averting war",

"The Communist Parties," said the Declaration, "regard the struggle for peace as the foremost task. In common with all peace-loving forces, they will do everything in their power to prevent war."

PEACEFUL TRANSITION POSSIBLE

On the question of transition to socialism, the Declaration said:

"Today in a number of capitalist countries the working class, headed by its vanguard, has the opportunity, given a united working class and peoples' front, or other workable forms of agreement and political cooperation between the different parties and public organisations, to unite a majority of the people, win state power without civil war and ensure the transfer of the basic means of production to the hands of the people."

The Declaration went on to point out that "In the event of the ruling class resorting to violence against the people, the possibility of non-peaceful transition to Socialism should be borne in mind".

The concept of the possibility of peaceful transition to socialism was not new to Australian Communists, having been embodied in the Party Programme adopted at the 16th National Congress in 1951.

The Communist Party of Australia had long held the view that the forces for world peace were strong enough to prevent the outbreak of a third world war and that peaceful co-existence was a real possibility.

The Central Committee unanimously endorsed the Moscow Declaration.

64 PARTIES' PEACE MANIFESTO

On November 16-19 a meeting of representatives of 64 Communist and Workers' parties was held in Moscow.

This conference at which the Communist Party of Australia was represented by General Secretary L. L. Sharkey and President R. Dixon exchanged views on current events, the international situation and the Declaration and unanimously adopted a Peace Manifesto directed to the peoples of the whole world.

The draft of the Declaration was prepared by the CPSU and the C.P.C. The section on forms of transition to Socialism was drafted by Mao Tse-tung. At a later stage the Communist Party of China was to repudiate this section.

The Peace Manifesto called on all men of goodwill, all those desiring peace to demand an end to the arms drive; to demand prohibition of the manufacture and use of atomic and hydrogen weapons, and, as a first step, an immediate end to the testing of those weapons.

It called for an end to the policy of military blocs and military bases in other countries and for support of peaceful co-existence of different social systems.

GAINS FROM STRUGGLE

The publication of the Peace Manifesto gave new impetus to the campaign for peace in Australia.

A focal point in 1957 was the campaign of protest against the British nuclear weapons tests on Christmas Island off the coast of Western Australia.

On the economic and political front the Party continued its campaign for higher wages, shorter hours and repeal of the penal clauses in the Arbitration Act.

An outstanding event in the labor movement was the election of Jim Healy to the ACTU Executive as representative of the Transport Industry group.

Prior to 1957 the ACTU Executive consisted of elected representatives of the State Labor Councils. The only Communists on the Executive were A. Macdonald and G. Dawson representing the Queensland Trades and Labor Council.

A change in the method of electing the Executive, to provide for representation of industries as well as State Labor Councils, strengthened the organisation and authority of the ACTU.

Throughout 1958, the Soviet Union's peace policy and Premier Khrushchev's proposal for a Summit Meeting won increasing support from the peoples of the world.

In January, the Soviet Union cut its armed forces by 300,000, additional to the cut of 1,840,000 made in 1955/56. In March, the Soviet Union unilaterally stopped testing of atomic weapons, calling on the imperialist powers to do likewise.

Another outstanding success for the Soviet Union's peace policy was won in July, when a Soviet initiative brought about a peaceful settlement of the Middle East crisis, provoked by the landing of US troops in Jordan and Lebanon.

18th CONGRESS CALLS FOR PEACE

In April 1958, the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party was held in Sydney.

The central point in the fight for peace at that time was the struggle for a summit meeting. In addition, the Congress called for:

- Withdrawal of Australia from SEATO, which menaced both the liberation movements of Asia and the Australian people.
- A collective security agreement covering the Pacific area.
- Resumption of diplomatic relations with the USSR and recognition of the Chinese People's Republic.
- Withdrawal of Australian troops from Malaya and non-interference in affairs of Asian nations.
- Abolition of the White Australia policy.

- Real assistance to underdeveloped countries to industrialise their economies.

The Congress welcomed the decision of the Soviet Union to suspend tests of atomic weapons without waiting for international agreement.

"The peace-loving people will no doubt respond to this initiative of the Soviet Union by intensifying their struggle to stop atomic tests everywhere," Congress declared.

The main tasks of Communists in the trade unions, Congress decided, were to:

- Expose the monopolies, expose speed up measures and rally the workers to resist dismissals.
- Rally the workers in the struggle for a shorter working week.
- Fight for wage improvements on the basis of the ACTU'S demand for a £6/6/0 margin for tradesmen, with corresponding increases for other grades, and a basic wage increase.
- Press on with the campaign for equal pay, making it the basis for drawing more women into the unions and activating them in union affairs.
- Organise the youth to defend their interests and to take up the struggle for their demands.

PEACE, LIVING STANDARDS, DEMOCRACY

Following the 18th Congress the campaign for summit talks was lifted to a higher level in Australia.

In May, there was mass trade union participation in a week of special activity organised by the Peace Assembly.

In August, a group of Australia's most notable literary figures asked the Federal Government to support a Summit Conference.

In the same month, a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party decided that, in the Federal Elections to be held on November 22, the Party's policy should be for peaceful co-existence and disarmament in the international sphere and, in home affairs, concrete measures to meet the deteriorating economic conditions and to extend democratic liberties.

The election programme would also demand nationalisation of the monopolies, wage increases, measures to absorb the unemployed and protection of the people from extortionate hire-purchase interest rates.

Again dealing with the Communist Party's attitude to the Labor Party, the reporter, L. L. Sharkey, said:

"Our Party's attitude to the Labor Party is a critical one. We support what is useful to the working class, while rejecting and criticising before the masses what is wrong."

Pointing out that the history of the Federal Labor Party had been one of defeats because, due to its middle class and reformist outlook, it had failed to really stand up against reaction, Sharkey drew attention to significant developments inside the Labor Party.

CHANGES IN ALP

Within the ALP today there was a growing left-wing movement, genuinely socialist in character, though not yet Marxist-Leninist in outlook he said. Following the defeat of the Grouper elements and the expulsion of most of their main leaders from the ALP, there had been radical changes in ALP policy.

The ALP had adopted a number of proposals to alter Australia's foreign policy—including withdrawal of Australian troops from Malaya and recognition of People's China. It opposed aggression in the Middle East and supported a peaceful foreign policy.

If the Labor Party won the election, favourable conditions would exist for early resumption of diplomatic relations with the USSR, disrupted by the Menzies Government in 1954.

The Labor Party, Sharkey pointed out, had also promised to repeal the penal clauses of the Arbitration Act and review Court-controlled union ballots, proposed substantial increases in pensions and other social benefits, an end to the wage freeze, and legislation to curb monopoly. It even talked of nationalisation.

While this was not socialism, it was a progressive immediate programme.

The ALP declaration that it was a "Democratic Socialist" party, said Sharkey, assisted unity among the working class, however, there were many issues on which the ALP's attitude and its concessions to the ruling class contradicted its claim to be socialist.

This, he said, made it necessary to strengthen the independent role of the Communist Party, stand our own candidates with our own policies, take a Marxist-Leninist position on all issues and, while furthering unity with the ALP, be ready at all times to criticise mistaken or opportunist policies harmful to the working class.

Hence, he concluded, it was essential to build and strengthen the Communist Party, which is selflessly devoted to the cause of the working class and socialism and makes no opportunist concessions whatsoever to the exploiting class.

The Communist Party's election policy was very well received at well attended meetings in all States, but as in the previous

election in 1955, this was not reflected in a big vote for Party candidates.

The vigorous campaign waged by the Communist Party contributed to a decline in the vote for the Menzies Government, which nevertheless was once more returned on a minority vote.

In 1955, the Menzies Government polled 46.3% of votes cast for the Lower House and 47.2 for the Senate. In 1958 the vote was 45% for the Lower House and 44 for the Senate.

RIGHT-WING STILL BIG OBSTACLE

Commenting on the 1958 election result, Tribune said:

"The Menzies Government was returned not because of public confidence in its policy, against which there is so much opposition, but because of the division in the ranks of the Labor movement, caused by the Rightwing.

"Due to its internal weakness, the Labor Party was unable to inspire confidence in its ability to provide a satisfactory alternative to the Menzies Government.

"This underlines the vital importance of defeating the Rightwing and achieving close working class unity based on progressive policy."

Calling on the working class to continue the struggle for peace, higher living standards and democratic rights, the Party warned that the Menzies Government was preparing new attacks on living standards and civil liberties.

CPSU 21st CONGRESS

In January 1959, the 21st Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted a new Seven Year Plan to further expand the national economy and raise living standards.

Internationally, it declared, the major task was to break the existing deadlock on disarmament, and secure a ban on tests of nuclear weapons.

In the Far East, the chief source of tension was the aggressive policy of the United States in relation to the Chinese Peoples' Republic and other peace-loving states.

"A zone of peace, above all an atom-free zone, can and must be created in the Far East and the entire area of the Pacific Ocean," First Secretary Khrushchev declared.

This proposal met with widespread support among peace-lovers in Australia.

AUSTRALIA-SOVIET RELATIONS RESTORED

In March, the long campaign for resumption of normal diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union was crowned by success. The Menzies Government, whose Petrov provocation

caused the breach, was compelled by public pressure to negotiate an agreement to restore relations.

In May, the prospects of Summit talks became brighter when, after long sustained resistance, the Western powers agreed to hold a conference of Foreign Ministers at Geneva.

The June meeting of the Central Committee of the CPA, called for a renewed campaign in Australia for summit talks.

In August it was announced that an exchange of visits would take place between US President Eisenhower and Soviet Premier Khrushchev.

Soon afterwards Prime Minister Menzies told Federal Parliament that he had been compelled to change his mind about a Summit Conference.

Whereas earlier he believed that "preparatory work" was an essential condition to any Summit conference, he now believed in a Summit meeting at once.

PLAN TO DISARM IN 4 YEARS

In September, the USSR stirred the world with a plan for total world disarmament in four years.

This plan, presented to the United Nations, called for:

- Disbandment of all armed forces (land, sea and air) and prohibition of their re-establishment in any form.
- Destruction of all types of arms and ammunition in the armed forces or in storage.
- Liquidation of all naval vessels, military aircraft and all other types of war materials.
- Prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons, discontinuance of the production of all nuclear weapons and destruction of all stockpiles.
- No more military rockets, including space rockets, to be produced, and all existing ones to be destroyed.
- Prohibition of production or possession of all means of chemical and bacteriological warfare, with destruction of existing stocks.
- Liquidation of all military bases on foreign territory (land, naval and air) and all rocket-launching installations.
- Ending of military production at war plants and war production facilities in general industry.

The USSR proposed that this plan for disarmament be supervised by a central body made up of representatives of every country in the world.

The plan was given an enthusiastic reception from Australians in all walks of life.

The parliamentary leader of the Labor Party, Dr. Evatt, described it as "a turning point in world history".

The Lord Mayor of Sydney, Alderman Jensen, said: "The hope of the world for peace in the future depends on the successful negotiation of these proposals".

A statement issued by the Central Committee of the CPA, said: "The simple proposition for complete disarmament in four years fully accords with the interests of the people of all lands."

The Central Committee pledged all the Party's efforts "to ensure that the hope of a world relieved of fear is turned into reality."

KHRUSHCHEV VISITS U.S.A.

Soon after launching the Soviet Union's disarmament proposals at the United Nations, Khrushchev completed a highly successful tour of the United States, where he held important peace talks with President Eisenhower.

A communique issued after the talks said: "The Chairman and the President agreed that all outstanding international questions should be settled not by the application of force but by peaceful means."

President Eisenhower said that many of his objections to a Summit conference had been removed by Mr. Khrushchev. A Summit meeting was now officially described as "probable".

AUSTRALIA-N.Z. PEACE CONGRESS

An Australian and New Zealand Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament, held in Melbourne on November 7th-14th, showed the growing strength of the peace movement in Australia.

A total of 1244 delegates attended the Congress. More than 500 organisations were represented.

Many international personalities participated, including Nobel Prizewinner Dr. Linus Pauling. New Zealand sent a delegation of 25.

Again, the Menzies Government tried hard to sabotage the Congress.

The Attorney-General, Sir Garfield Barwick, said the Congress was "Communist inspired and organised."

COMMUNIST POSITION IN PEACE MOVEMENT

In answer to this, the Central Committee issued a statement, "In crediting our Party with 'inspiring and organising' the Congress for International Co-operation and Disarmament, Sir Garfield Barwick pays us a very high compliment, but one which rightly belongs to the real, broadly representative body of sponsors.

"Sir Garfield Barwick, attempting to damage the Congress by distorting its aims, shows that both he and his Government still adhere to the policies of the cold war and are hopelessly out of touch with world developments and the mass public sentiment for peace. . .

"While continuing to propagate its own policy, the Communist Party has always been and remains willing to co-operate with other supporters of peace in mutually acceptable forms of activity.

"While we must decline the honour bestowed on us by Sir Garfield Barwick of being the organisers of the Melbourne Congress, we fully support its high aims, and will be pleased to participate, together with all other organisations, in its deliberations."

"PEACE IS UNION BUSINESS"

Strong trade union representation was a feature of the successful Congress. According to the credentials committee's report, there were 368 delegates and observers at the trade union session of the Congress, including ACTU Executive members.

The trade union commission of the Congress adopted a statement which has since become the basis of the trade union policy that "peace is trade union business".

Following the Melbourne Congress, 2,500 people packed the Sydney Town Hall to hear Professor Linus Pauling and other international celebrities who took part in the Peace Congress.

The sharp contrast between the peace policy of the Soviet Union and the war policy of American imperialism was shown by two events in January 1960. On the one hand President Eisenhower in his New Year message disclosed that America was preparing to resume nuclear weapons tests, from which the world had been free since 1958.

On the other hand the Soviet Premier announced that the Soviet Union would still further reduce its armed forces by 1,200,000 men—one-third of the total forces.

The Soviet Union continued to press for Summit talks on peace and disarmament and finally succeeded in winning agreement for a meeting in Paris on May 16 of the heads of Government of Britain, France, the Soviet Union and the United States.

SUMMIT MEETING WRECKED BY U.S.A.

The Summit meeting never took place. It was wrecked by American imperialism's blatant provocation in sending high

flying spy planes over the Soviet Union to map out targets for future atomic attack.

On May 1, one of these spy-planes, thought by the US leaders to be beyond range of anti-aircraft defence weapons, was shot down deep within the territory of the Soviet Union.

Notwithstanding this act of provocation, the Soviet Union was still prepared to proceed with the Summit meeting and Khrushchev journeyed to Paris. The imperialists, however, had never wanted the Summit, which placed them in a dilemma.

American publicist Walter Lippman summed this up by writing that the West's Summit problem was "how to go there and how to come away from there without changing anything and without losing face."

On May 9, a week before the Summit talks were due to open, President Eisenhower declared that spy plane invasions of the Soviet Union had been "suspended" and wouldn't be repeated.

Three days later he reversed his attitude by publicly stating that such flights were "essential".

When President Eisenhower refused to give an undertaking that there would be no future violation of the Soviet Union's air space, the Summit conference was wrecked.

A few weeks after the sabotage of the Summit talks, President Eisenhower had to call off a scheduled visit to Japan, because of millions-strong demonstrations of hostility to the US atomic war policy.

The Japanese people were opposed to the signing of a US-Japanese Treaty which put them under permanent occupation by a foreign power.

THE PARTY'S 40th ANNIVERSARY

The year 1960 marked the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Communist Party of Australia. The Central Committee called on the membership to make it a year of Party building, a year-long campaign of propaganda and agitation, taking up the major issues of Party policy in the struggle for peace; for higher wages, shorter hours and opposing inflation, fighting ever-growing monopoly and reaction.

In dealing with these issues, the Central Committee said, the Socialist aim and theory of the Party and its leading role in past and present struggles should be explained.

The Party launched a renewed campaign against monopoly price increases; which threatened to rob workers of the benefit of wage gains won in the previous year.

A meeting of the Central Committee in March 1960 strongly condemned the Menzies Government's policy on inflation, saying it would benefit only monopoly.

It raised demands for control of prices and reduction of taxes on all lower incomes, supported the ACTU's application for an increase in the basic wage and restoration of quarterly adjustments, and demanded increased pensions.

The Central Committee also decided to strengthen the campaign for peace, supporting the Soviet disarmament proposals and calling for the cutting of expenditure on armaments.

The renewed call for a cut in arms spending was most timely, as the Menzies Government was engaged in reorganising Australia's armed forces for intervention in South East Asia and was increasing war expenditure.

Side by side with this, the Government continued to lead monopoly's offensive against living standards and democratic rights.

It intervened in the 1960 Federal Basic Wage case to oppose the ACTU's claims, which were rejected by the Court.

NEW THREATS TO DEMOCRACY

In June, the Government legalised telephone tapping by the secret police, and in September introduced amendments to the Commonwealth Crimes Act, giving the Government additional, far-reaching dictatorial powers over the Australian people.

These new powers were aimed specifically at silencing criticism of the Menzies Government's policy and in particular of its involvement of Australia in the aggressive war plans of American imperialism, against the socialist countries and national liberation movements.

The amendments dealing with "treason", "treachery", "sabotage" and 'official secrets' constituted a most serious additional threat to civil liberties.

Any person who 'assists by any means whatsoever an enemy at war with the Commonwealth, whether or not the existence of a state of war has been declared' might be found guilty of "treason" and sentenced to death.

A new crime called "treachery" was introduced, carrying the penalty of life imprisonment.

A person might be held guilty of "treachery" not only to Australia, but to any country declared by the Australian Government to be a "proclaimed country."

For example, if the USA were declared a "proclaimed country" it could be deemed "treachery" to oppose any act

of aggression committed by the United States in any part of the world.

The sections on "sabotage" were broad enough to permit their use against any body of trade unionists striking for higher wages or better conditions in any industry.

2 11
The Party launched a mass campaign against the Crimes Bill and for the defence of democratic rights. This campaign met with widespread support throughout the labor movement and from liberals and democrats generally.

The campaign forced the Government to insert some "safeguards" in the legislation which, however, passed into law without any fundamental change in its undemocratic form.

THE "CREDIT SQUEEZE"

In November, the Menzies Government became panic stricken at the growth of inflation, which flowed directly from its own economic policy, and clamped down a credit squeeze on the economy.

This created dislocation and unemployment in the building and car manufacturing industries and precipitated the failure of some big finance companies, whose funds came mainly from small investors.

The Central Committee pointed out that the Menzies Government's panic measures would not curb inflation or stabilise costs or prices but would only increase the economic burdens carried by workers, farmers and small businessmen and give added scope for monopoly capitalism's ruthless plunder of the people.

The Central Committee called for a united struggle for price reduction and price control, lower taxation for workers and higher taxes on monopoly and the wealthy, abolition of indirect taxation on necessities, higher wages and a shorter working week, and nationalisation of monopolies.

Workers in the mining and power industries intensified their activity for a 35-hour week. Railway workers in NSW, Victoria and South Australia held a series of stoppages and meetings in support of wage increases.

The penal clauses of Federal and State Arbitration Acts were used against seamen, waterside workers, firemen, boiler-makers and ship painters and dockers during the year. This did not cow the workers. On the contrary, mass resistance to penal powers grew stronger.

The class struggle grew sharper in Australia and the working class began to adopt new methods of mass demonstration and other activities.

At the same time, the war danger increased.

THREE GREAT EVENTS

Three major events helped the Party to deal with the developing situation—the historic 81 Parties' Conference, held in November 1960, the 19th Congress of the CP of A, held in June 1961, and the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, in October 1961.

These great gatherings, and the discussions which followed them, confirmed the general correctness of the line being pursued by the Party, while indicating weaknesses that needed attention, and opening up new and clear perspectives.

The world meeting of 81 Communist and Workers' Parties, in Moscow in November 1960, was convened to deal with the differences that had developed in the world Communist movement between the Communist Party of China and the CPSU and most other Parties. L. L. Sharkey and R. Dixon represented the Australian Party.

The CPA was represented on the 26 Party committee that met in October to prepare the draft Statement for the world meeting.

Our Party was deeply concerned that unless the differences were quickly overcome the division in the world movement would grow and a split would become inevitable. We were especially concerned with its effects on the situation in South East Asia and the Pacific, where the anti-imperialist struggles were growing in intensity.

In our view it was essential to overcome the differences on a principled Marxist-Leninist basis, and to restore world Communist unity. Division would play into the hands of the imperialists.

The standpoint of the Party was explained to the leaders of both the CPC and the CPSU.

At the 81 Parties meeting the Australian delegation strove, along with most other delegations, for agreement on the ideological questions and unity.

The unanimous adoption by the 81 Parties of the fundamental propositions embodied in the historic Statement and Appeal gave a tremendous boost to the world and Australian movement. These propositions were almost universally endorsed as a correct analysis of the world and the way forward to Socialism.

The 81 Parties meeting unanimously upheld the policy of "peaceful co-existence" as the "only correct and reasonable principle of international relations" and supported the "programme for general and complete disarmament put forward by the Soviet Union". It proclaimed its support for the struggles of all peoples for national liberation from imperialism, and for the newly independent countries; it re-affirmed the

propositions of the 1957 Declaration on the perspectives for peaceful and non-peaceful forms of transition to socialism; it came out against splitting and disruption of the Communist Parties and declared that "it is the supreme internationalist duty of every Marxist-Leninist Party to work for greater unity in the world Communist movement"; it urged "closer unity of the ranks of each Communist Party", adherence to the "principle of democratic centralism", struggle against "revisionism" and "dogmatism" and re-affirmed that all the Parties are "independent and have equal rights."

With the decisions of the Moscow meeting, it was the view of the CP of A that the world Communist movement had reached a sound theoretical and practical basis for re-uniting its forces. We considered that as the Statement was unanimously adopted, which meant that each Party had voluntarily accepted its estimates and propositions, the decisions were binding on every Party.

This was not the view, however, of the Communist Party of China, nor of the Albanian Party of Labor.

At the 81 Parties meeting, L. L. Sharkey criticised the Albanian Party of Labor for its divisive activities and dissociated the Australian Party from it.

Following the 81 Parties meeting the AP of L, contrary to the decisions and spirit of the world meeting, carried on a virulent and disruptive campaign against the CPSU, violating all the norms of conduct that should govern the relations between Communist Parties and Socialist States.

After the 22nd Congress of the CPSU, at which the AP of L was openly criticised, the Communist Party of China renewed its attacks on the CPSU and brother parties. During the following years it systematically attacked and repudiated the main theoretical propositions agreed upon at the 81 Parties meeting, including the decisions on "peaceful co-existence", general disarmament and forms of transition to Socialism. It distorted the decisions on the national liberation struggles, violated the principles of democratic centralism, the relations between Parties and their independence and equality. It interfered in the internal affairs of brother Parties and justified and supported the splitting of them.

9 07
2 c } Not until well after the 22nd Congress of the CPSU did the true position of the Chinese Party and its supporters become apparent to Australian Communists.

A month after the 22nd Congress, on the occasion of the 44th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Mao Tse Tung, Liu Shao Chi, Chou En Lai and Chu Teh, in a warm message of greeting, published in Australia, said:

"In the past several years the great Soviet people, led by the CC, CPSU, headed by Comrade Khrushchev, have scored brilliant victories in the all-round development of Communist construction and in the safeguarding of the world peace. . .

"There is a kinsman-like, deep friendship between the peoples of China and the Soviet Union. . .

"May the great Soviet people score new achievements in the realisation of the grand programme of building Communism in the Soviet Union as adopted by the 22nd Congress of the CPSU."

U.S. WORSENS S.E. ASIAN TENSION

That world Communist unity was vital for the preservation of peace and defeat of imperialist war plans was obvious.

Under the stepped-up US plans for war provocation in S.E. Asia, Laos was constantly in the headlines as the New Year approached.

The Party proclaimed at the beginning of January that, grave though the situation in Laos was, bold action by the people, led by the organised workers, could save the peace.

It pointed out that the SEATO allies were badly divided and the USA was under severe criticism in Great Britain, France and India over its provocations and interference in Laos.

The struggle to save the peace and independence of Laos reached very serious proportions as the months went by.

The Party showed the terrible dangers to Australia inherent in her membership of SEATO, and sharply criticised the Menzies Government's policy of subservience to US imperialism as "betrayal of Australia's national independence."

ECONOMIC SITUATION WORSENS

The struggle for peace in S.E. Asia was accompanied throughout the year by intensified activity in Australia on behalf of the New Guinea peoples, the Aborigines, the Congo and others suffering colonial oppression or imperialist interference in their affairs.

At the same time, the year was marked by sharp economic struggles as big monopolies such as BHP, Mt. Isa Mines and GMH, while registering all-time record profits, launched savage attacks on the workers employed by them.

These attacks took place in a situation of growing unemployment, due in part at least to the Menzies Government's "credit squeeze".

By May, the number of registered unemployed had risen to 102,544, the highest figure for 20 years. The 1961 Census

disclosed that there were 127,271 unemployed at June 20th—more than 3% of the workforce.

PROGRAMME AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

The Party threw itself strenuously into activity on behalf of the struggling workers and unemployed, issuing material designed to help strengthen trade unionism and formulating programmes of action on behalf of the unemployed.

Tribune, in a front-page article on June 21, set out a programme of action in defence of jobs and the right to work.

This programme called for an increase in the purchasing power of the working people and the provision of more jobs by:

- Increasing wages by struggle for the ACTU claim for an increased basic wage and margins.
- A 35-hour week and increased annual leave.
- Improved social services, especially raising the old age pension to half the basic wage, increasing child endowment and introduction of a free health service.
- Reduction of hire purchase interest rates.
- Placing the burden of taxation on the wealthy by taxing capital gains and high incomes and reducing taxes on the working people.
- A national scheme of public works—water and soil conservation, school, home and hospital construction and road building.
- Development of trade with socialist countries and Asian nations.
- Increasing unemployment benefits to the level of the basic wage and a moratorium on debts of workers unable to meet commitments.

In advocating this programme, which was endorsed by the 19th Congress, the Party criticised the lack of difference between the policies of the Liberals and Rightwing Labor leaders and called for united working class action.

At the beginning of the year the Party had warned of US plans for the invasion of Cuba—plans which were to end in ignominious failure in April.

As the class struggle sharpened, amendments to Arbitration laws threatened to hamstring workers' rights to struggle still further.

The workers reacted in spectacular fashion, beginning in March with a mass 24-hour Queensland-wide stoppage, involving over 100,000 workers. This was in protest against Arbitration Act amendments which, as even the daily press was later to admit, were to make inevitable the protracted dispute at Mt. Isa which erupted into a head-on clash in August 1964.

"THE PEOPLE AGAINST MONOPOLY"

In April, the Party issued its draft Resolution for the 19th Congress, headed "The people against monopoly, for peace, higher living standards and democracy", and setting out a broad programme for struggle against monopoly, around which the working class and many other sections of the people could unite.

Wide discussion of this Draft, together with the 81 Parties' Statement, ensured that, by the time the Congress met in June, there was greatly heightened clarity in the Party as to the main direction of struggle and the main things needed to secure the maximum mobilisation of the people's forces, headed by the organised workers.

These discussions dealt heavy blows at the surviving elements of Leftism and sectarianism in the thinking and practices of the Party. || 99
e'

But, as Marx once remarked, "the traditions of the past weigh like an alp on the brain of the living."

And, while the 19th Congress, held in the light of the 81 Parties' Statement, was a big step forward, the next few years were to prove that still further improvements had to be made.

In particular, in his speech summing up a splendid Congress, L. L. Sharkey was impelled to remark that, while much attention was being given to the fight against monopoly, it was still insufficiently linked with the struggle for peace. This was the main weakness of the Congress.

The 19th Congress of the Australian Party sought seriously to apply the guiding ideas of the 81 Parties Statement in Australian conditions.

The Congress decisions were unanimous, giving no hint of the fact that E. F. Hill and a few others were already nurturing secret disagreements with the Party and the general line of the world movement.

GAGARIN LEADS THE WAY

In the world arena, the Soviet Union intensified its efforts to achieve agreement on a ban on nuclear tests and for progressive disarmament. At the same time, it demonstrated increasingly its growing technical and military superiority.

On April 12, Major Yuri Gagarin became the first man to travel into outer space, orbiting the earth in a 4½ ton spaceship. The coincidence of this with the abortive US invasion of Cuba was not lost on the world.

In Australia, the direct fight for peace received new impetus in May when a demonstration of 500 people in 120 cars

highlighted growing popular concern at the existence and purpose of a US U2 base in Sale (Victoria).

THE DEATH OF JIM HEALY

On July 13 the Party and working class suffered a severe blow with the death of Jim Healy. Over the years, the deaths of many sterling Party and working class fighters had inevitably been mourned, but "Big Jim's" death, which was unexpected, caused a particularly great shock.

Throughout the years, as a member of the Party's Central and Political Committees, as General Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation, as a member of the ACTU Executive and as an outstanding national and international figure in the political and economic struggles of the working people, Jim Healy had come to be regarded as a living symbol of all that is best in the working class struggle.

Uncountable thousands of people paused and grieved as 7,000 workers marched through the streets of Sydney in what was described as the biggest funeral demonstration ever seen in Australia. All Australian ports stopped work for 4 hours and work ceased on many other jobs.

Tributes to "Big Jim" came from all sections of the Australian labor movement and from overseas.

The General Secretary of the ACTU (Mr. H. Souter) said:

"His work on the ACTU Executive was a tribute to those who elected him. We shall sadly miss his sound advice, his willingness to make concessions to work in the interests of unity."

In a moving speech at the Sydney Waterside Workers' Branch Hall, the Sydney President of the Union, J. Young, said:

"His friendliness, kindness, patience and tolerance won him the respect and loyalty of the members. They trusted and heeded his wisdom and guidance.

"We knew he was incorruptible."

In his oration at the end L. L. Sharkey said ". . . we will be forever true to the grand ideals to which you so selflessly devoted your life . . . new fighters will rise to carry forward your noble cause."

(The Party later decided on a Jim Healy Memorial Party-building campaign. In 1964 the new Party Hall in Sydney was named the "Jim Healy Memorial Hall".)

LAST CALL FOR UNITY

Tribune recorded part of Jim's last major speech before his death—his speech to the 19th Party Congress.

Characteristically, this speech was a stirring call for working class unity and for increased activity against the rising tide of employer-sponsored anti-Communism.

"'Divide and conquer' has always been one of the main guiding principles of those who control the capitalist system and those who profit from the exploitation of man by man", said Healy.

"Today, the weapon of division is still very much relied on and therefore the urgent need for workers' solidarity was never so great. . . ."

"We must come to grips with and defeat this anti-Communist campaign. . . ."

"We must show the position of the Communists and our Party as consistently supporting the workers' demands and greater unity."

The broad Communist concept of unity typified by Jim Healy found further extension almost immediately as the Party swung into action against police attacks on mass demonstrations in July by migrants at Bonegilla camp (Victoria), fed up with waiting for long-promised jobs.

Powerful sections of the trade union movement demanded that the responsible Minister (Downer) find employment for the migrants and halt mass immigration until the Australian economy could provide full employment.

The incidents strengthened the campaign by the Party and trade unions for full employment and a Budget reversing the Menzies Government's economic policies.

NEW CPSU PROGRAMME

At the end of July, the draft of the new Programme of the CPSU for its 22nd Congress was issued, envisaging the building of Communism in 20 years and clearly affirming that world peace was the prime condition for this.

Almost at the same moment, a speech by US President Kennedy revealed that the basic policy to be pursued by the USA was accelerated war preparations, at the expense of living standards, with the issue of West Berlin as the main immediate excuse for the arms build-up.

The Party took the opportunity once again to show clearly to the people the contrast between the humanist, peaceful aims of Socialism and the destructive, warlike nature of imperialism.

It called for intensification of the struggle for peace and against the war policies of the Menzies Government and its US masters.

TENSION IN GERMANY

By the middle of August, tension over Berlin had been greatly increased by the US-West German moving of a big armed convoy across East German territory to Berlin.

The Party published material showing clearly the contrast between the peace plan of the USSR and GDR for settlement of the German question and the war plan followed by the USA, UK and West Germany for intensification of the war danger by strengthening NATO positions in West Germany and arming the German militarists with atomic weapons.

Alone among Australian newspapers, the Communist press published extensive details of the basic facts about the German situation.

SOVIET TESTING RESUMED

When the Soviet Union, in face of the grave danger of war, decided in September to renew nuclear testing, the Party published a statement showing that the USSR had:

- Always demanded a ban on nuclear weapons.
- Suspended tests unilaterally in 1958.
- Constantly led the struggle for complete world disarmament.
- Proposed a concrete German peace treaty, to stabilise Europe.

While USA had:

- Always opposed banning nuclear weapons.
- Accelerated arms building and made war threats.
- Re-armed German militarism, now threatening to march East.

Through its work independently, in the unions and in the broad peace movement, the Party played a major part in developing mass understanding and firmness of purpose.

Towards the end of September, the first mass march of representatives of thousands of peacelovers from all over Australia converged on Canberra to interview politicians and embassies demanding peace.

THE 22nd CONGRESS OF THE CPSU

The 22nd Congress of the CPSU in October was hailed in Australia as epoch-making both in its plans for building Communism and in its positive programme for maintaining world peace.

A cabled statement from the Party's fraternal delegation to the Congress (L. L. Sharkey, E. A. Bacon and E. Ross) was published in the Communist press. It spoke highly of the programme for building the first Communist society in the

world, and noted the enthusiastic support by Soviet and fraternal delegations alike for the CPSU's policy of peaceful co-existence.

The Political Committee discussed the delegation's report and approved it, with E. F. Hill alone expressing "reservations."

Further discussions were to take place on the delegation's return.

UNITY GRAVELY THREATENS MENZIES

Meanwhile, in Australia, the Party was engaged in an allout effort to mobilise the people for the defeat of the Menzies Government at the elections due to be held on December 9.

The Party campaigned under the great unifying slogans: "The People Against Menzies and Monopoly, for Peace, Higher Living Standards and Democracy."

At the same time, it noted with approval that the programme put forward by the ALP Opposition Leader (Mr. Calwell) offered a broader basis than previously for anti-Menzies unity in the labour movement.

Under the influence of the Party and the main sections of the ALP leadership, the trade unions mounted a powerful anti-Menzies campaign.

In the event the Menzies Government came very close to defeat, losing several seats and receiving an Australia-wide total of only 40% of primary votes.

Only the preferences of the "Industrial Group" parties—the DLP and QLP—saved it from outright defeat.

A noteworthy feature of the election results was that all MHR's who had been active in support of peace were returned with increased votes, while some of the most rabid warmongers, supporters of SEATO and anti-Communists, were either defeated or had their majorities heavily reduced.

The 1961 election campaign, though it fell just short of outright victory, had clearly made a great contribution to the struggle for unity, peace and democracy. Our Party could well be proud of its part in securing this result.

HILL'S "RESERVATIONS"

During the week ending December 16, the Political Committee heard and discussed a report from the Party's fraternal delegation to the 22nd Congress of the CPSU.

At the conclusion of a lengthy discussion, the PC issued a statement, which was presented in full in Tribune (December 29, 1961.)

This statement was endorsed by the Central Committee in February 1962, and republished in the Communist Review in March of that year.

During the discussion, E. F. Hill expressed a number of doubts and reservations, both about the CPSU and about the policies of our own Party, which he, as a member of the Central Secretariat, had played a leading part in formulating.

In particular, he expressed doubts about the correctness of the Party's attitude to the building of working class unity, its non-sectarian approach towards the broad peace movement and its efforts to become a mass Party of the working class.

Already in this discussion Hill revealed the elements of the sectarianism, Left dogmatism and lack of faith in the masses which were soon to become so characteristic of him and his group.

At the PC meeting, however, he did not vote against adoption of the report but contented himself with "abstaining"—a most unusual procedure for a Communist.

As the year ended, with official unemployment figures still over 100,000, the ACTU Executive called on all unions to intensify campaigning for wage increases and a 35-hour week, in 1962.

CHAPTER 4

1962 - EARLY 1965

West Irian returned to Indonesia. First oil discoveries in Australia. Hill forms a faction, subsequently expelled. New US pressure on Australia. ALP declares for nuclear-free Southern Hemisphere World. The Cuban crisis. NCC exposed and Left forces advance in the unions. The 20th Congress C. P. of A. US "escalates" war in Vietnam.

The year 1962 opened with the labor movement faced with the necessity of lifting the struggle for changes in Government economic policies to a higher level, and with fresh threats of war as Dutch imperialism, backed by the USA and with Australian Government support, strove to prevent Indonesia from realising its rightful claim to sovereignty over West Irian.

The Party called on the working class and people to take the offensive for wage increases, a 35-hour week, improved social services and for peace, before the Menzies Government had time to regroup its forces after its near-disaster in the December 1961 elections.

West Irian became a very live issue early in January, when President Sukarno formally proclaimed it a province of Indonesia.

Holland countered with a new-found proposition that West Irian (after 350 years of Dutch domination) should be given the right of self-determination.

ALP DIVIDED ON ISSUE

This hypocritical proposition was backed by the Menzies Government and the ALP was divided, with its leader, Calwell, joining in violent denunciation of Indonesia.

The Communist Party carefully presented the truth about the situation to the people, reiterated its adherence to joint declarations signed with the Indonesian Party, favouring restoration of West Irian to Indonesia, and set out to rally the labor movement in defence of peace and friendship and for an independent Australian foreign policy, of which good relations with Indonesia should be a major feature.

This campaign continued for many months. L. Aarons restated the Australian Party's position in unity with the Indonesian Party when he visited Indonesia in June as fraternal delegate to the Indonesian Party's 7th Congress.

The Indonesian claim was finally conceded in August.

In January, the Party and a number of trade unions began a successful struggle to save from deportation and death three young Portuguese democrats who had deserted from one of dictator Salazar's ships while in Darwin.

ABORIGINES' STRUGGLE MOUNTS

The struggle for full rights for Australian Aborigines, which had been growing for years and had registered important victories in 1961, received further impetus. The trade unions, inspired by the Party and by the growth of the Aboriginal movement itself, joined more actively in the fight, thus beginning to meet the fundamental need of the movement for solid working class support.

Revelations of the mass expulsion of North Queensland Aborigines to make way for the aluminium monopoly, of the cheap-labor rates of Aboriginal stockmen and of shocking living conditions all over Australia won wider support for human rights for Aborigines.

UNEMPLOYMENT GROWS

During January it was revealed that the number of registered unemployed in Australia had risen to 115,936 in December—the highest figure since the great depression of the 1930's.

Analysing the figures, the Party showed that there was in fact much greater "concealed" unemployment.

Of particular seriousness, it showed, was the fact that thousands of school leavers, unable to get jobs, were too young to register.

Chronic unemployment persisted throughout the year and the Party played a big part in developing working class pressure for the rights of youth and for improved education facilities, as well as for the general demands of the working class.

OIL DISCOVERED

Following the first successful oil discovery at Moonie (Qld.) the Party intensified exposure of the rapidly growing US penetration into key Australian industries, including oil and minerals, and did much valuable work in exposing the Menzies Government's complicity in this. The Party raised sharply and constantly demands for nationalisation of these industries.

During the year, US pressure mounted for Britain to be allowed to join the European Common Market. The Menzies Government's agreement with this—involving sacrifice of much Australian trade with Britain, caused deep unrest in the ranks of the Government and its supporters, and sharp disagreement between Liberal and Country Party members.

The Party explained the full meaning and implications of the ECM as a threat to world peace and Australian national interests, and played a big part in developing a nationwide movement, led by the working class, against the ECM and the Menzies Government's policy on it.

THE RIGHT TO WORK

The working class began to go into action very early in the year. By the end of January, workers in four States (NSW, Vic., Qld. and WA) were in action for wage increases and other demands.

The Right to Work began to be raised as a basic slogan of the movement.

It was thus clear, at the very outset, that 1962 would be a year of stern struggle for economic needs and for peace.

It was also clear that a new, strong mood for working class unity and for positive action for peace was rising in the ranks of the ALP and its supporters, and a genuine ALP Left was developing, while the forces of reaction, though still very dangerous, were being weakened by their own internal contradictions and antagonisms, as well as by the growing offensive of the people.

PARTY UNITY ESSENTIAL

In this situation, the need for the Communist Party to be united, to thoroughly clarify and popularise its views, and to seek all possible ways of uniting the people's forces became more urgent than ever.

The Central Committee met at the beginning of February and reaffirmed the basic policies decided by the 19th Congress, in line with the 81 Parties' Statement. It also endorsed the December statement of the Political Committee on the 22nd Congress, CPSU, and associated questions. On this occasion Hill and one other member voted against the resolution, while a third abstained. The overwhelming majority of those present--35--voted in favour.

Following this, frank discussions on the Party's policies and the main problems of the world Communist movement were held at every level of the Party throughout Australia. The Party membership overwhelmingly supported the line of the CC. Hill and his few supporters, while nominally accepting the democratic decisions of the Party, in practice embarked on a whole series of disruptive, factional activities, confined in the main to Victoria, but also forcing the CC again and again to divert some attention from the pressing and urgent tasks of the mass movement in order to deal with them.

The tactics they adopted were not unlike those adopted by the Industrial Groupers who remained in the ALP after being defeated in their bid for control: formal acceptance but actual sabotage of decisions.

HILL FACTION'S DISRUPTION

Because Hill and his colleagues occupied leading positions in the Party in the important State of Victoria, it was necessary for the CC leaders to give much time and attention to ensuring that the line of the Party was understood and applied in that State.

This greatly taxed the energies of leading comrades, and undoubtedly contributed greatly to the sudden and untimely death of Eddie Robertson on April 30 at the age of 37.

Eddie Robertson's death, like Jim Healy's only a year earlier, came as a great shock to the Party.

Like "Big Jim", he was universally loved and respected. Only the day before his death the CC had elected him to its Secretariat in place of Hill, who had resigned from his leading Central Committee responsibilities.

In a tribute to him, L. Aarons said:

"It is still difficult for all his comrades and friends to believe that this complete Communist has breathed his last.

"It is a tragic and bitter blow to us all, to the Party and the working class, to lose such a valiant and capable comrade, just when he had reached the peak of his ability to serve the Australian working people. . .

". . . In the acuteness of our grief, we can only say: we will build up the Party you loved, as the great monument to your memory; we will win new successes for the cause to which you gave so much."

MASS WORK CONTINUES

Amid these severe internal trials, the Party nevertheless kept its eyes finally fixed on the main mass tasks.

From March, the Waterside Workers were in action throughout Australia for wage increases, repeal of Federal penal legislation, world disarmament and other issues decided on by their Triennial Conference.

In April, the tasks of the peace movement were increased by revelation of the Menzies Government's rejection of a United Nations approach suggesting that Australia join other nations in keeping its territory free of nuclear weapons.

This, combined with the Menzies Government's acceptance of forthcoming US atomic tests at Christmas Island and the

US plan for a war base at Exmouth Gulf, showed that the Government had gone further along the road of converting Australia into a nuclear war base aimed against China, Indonesia and SE Asia.

Against these and other threats to world peace, tens of thousands of people were on the march in Britain, USA and Australia. Sydney was planning its first radial march "for Sanity and Survival" on April 28/29.

US GIVES BLUNT ORDERS

The visit of US Secretary of State Dean Rusk—an apostle of the Cold War—to Australia early in May aroused further apprehension.

His blunt orders to the Menzies Government were described even by the "Financial Review" as "little short of a studied insult to Australia", but they were accepted by Menzies & Co.

They included further subservience to US economic interests and the highly dangerous decision to send Australian "advisory" troops to South Vietnam—thus beginning the criminal direct involvement of Australia in the still continuing Vietnam agony.

ALP FOR NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE

Important evidence of growing ALP moves for peace and an independent foreign policy showed in sharp criticism by several Labor MHR's of Rusk's visit. This was greatly strengthened on June 26 when the ALP Federal Executive adopted a positive peace policy.

The call for a nuclear-free Southern Hemisphere, first proposed by Mr. Calwell in May, became widely accepted by peace-lovers throughout Australia and a uniting factor in the growing movement against war.

A great petition movement began for total disarmament and a nuclear-free Southern Hemisphere, culminating in the presentation to Parliament of over 150,000 signatures by more than 1,000 peace supporters who converged on Canberra on August 15 from many parts of Australia.

Early in June, State Conferences of the ALP in SA, Vic. and NSW expressed widespread rank and file support for a nuclear-free Southern Hemisphere and against nuclear bases on Australian soil.

At the same time, the ALP leadership was adopting a more positive position in support of working class struggles. This helped, for instance, in the long-sustained wharfies' struggles, which forced substantial improvements in long service leave legislation early in June.

Late in June, a grave threat to peace was revealed—US plans for war on China.

These were sternly rebuked in an official Soviet statement on July 2, warning that the Soviet peoples and the entire Socialist camp would strike back to crush any attempt to attack China.

WORLD CONGRESS FOR PEACE

In the face of world popular and scientific disapproval, the US military command exploded an H-bomb in outer space—200 miles above the Pacific on the eve of the gathering of 1906 delegates from 120 countries at a great World Congress for Peace and Disarmament, held in Moscow in mid-July.

This Congress was the biggest and most representative yet held and its decisions were almost unanimous.

A notable speech at the Congress was that of the Chinese delegate Mao Tun, who declared that the Chinese people regarded defence of world peace as their sacred duty.

China, he said, supported the Soviet disarmament proposals. She stood for settlement of problems by negotiations.

If all countries and peoples pooled their efforts, the imperialists could be made to agree to disarmament. (Tribune 1/8/63, p. 2.)

In early August, new Soviet space achievements were recorded when the first space "pair"—Nikolayev and Popovich—succeeded in working as a team in two vehicles.

This great feat not only underlined Soviet scientific ability, but had a sobering effect on the war-minded imperialist forces.

FOR UNITY AND AGAINST THE NCC

In August, the Central Committee further clarified the Party's attitude to the ALP. L. L. Sharkey, outlining positive developments in ALP policy and the weak position of the Menzies Government, said: "Our Party firmly supports the return of a Federal Labor Government". At the same time, he showed the necessity to have Communists returned to Parliament, and said:

"We Communists, while supporting and advocating reforms, know full well that these do not emancipate the working class nor end the class struggle.

"Only the abolition of capitalism, socialism alone can achieve this, on the road to a full Communist society."

In his speech to the CC, L. Aarons, supporting Sharkey's views, said that the main task of the moment was the unity of the working class in action against the Menzies Government. The progressive proposals in ALP policy would assist in this.

At the same meeting, the CC decided to wage an all-out struggle to isolate and defeat the NCC-DLP-QLP forces, successors of the "Industrial Groups".

Throughout the rest of the year, the Party published a great deal of factual material exposing the NCC-DLP and their aims.

This assisted the whole labor movement to distinguish more clearly the enemy within its ranks and to unite to destroy him.

THE CUBA CRISIS

Following threats of US invasion of Cuba in September came the terribly dangerous Cuban crisis of October, when US war plans brought the world closer to a third, nuclear, war than it had been for many years.

The firm, unequivocal attitude of the Soviet Union in defence of Cuba and the brilliant statesmanship whereby it saved the peace and ensured the calling off of the threatened US invasion received the unstinted applause of working people and peace-lovers all over the world.

The exposure of the brutal face of the US war-planners and their defeat dealt a new heavy blow at the prestige of US imperialism among its "allies".

Hill and his supporters, however, like similar groups elsewhere, violently attacked the Soviet Union at the November meeting of the Central Committee, repeating the Chinese slanders that the USSR had "appeased" the USA and that the Cuban settlement was "another Munich".

The CC rejected these anti-Soviet slanders and declared its full support and admiration for the wisdom and principled actions of the Soviet Union.

The CC at the same meeting called for settlement of the China-India border dispute by negotiations, while rejecting charges of "Chinese aggression".

Confidence in the ability of the world's peace forces, headed by the Soviet Union, to preserve world peace by active struggle was the keynote of the CC meeting.

An analysis of "Lessons of the Present Crisis" was published by the CC in the November 28 issue of Tribune. It called once again for frustration of the war policies of the Menzies Government.

FEDERAL UNIONS MOVE

On November 20-21 a conference of Federal unions, convened by the ACTU in Melbourne, marked another step forward in the economic campaigns of the working class and reaffirmed opposition to penal clauses, against which industrial action was growing.

Early in December, the British imperialist assaults on the people of Brunei (Borneo) were exposed and sharply attacked by the Party, which once again called for the return of all Australian troops.

Summing up the events of 1962, Tribune on December 19, under the headline "1962 a year of Storm, Struggle and Success", said it was "the year of victory for peace . . . the year of colonial defeat, the year of workers' advance in all lands."

RECESSION LINGERS

In the early part of 1963 Australia was still slowly recovering from the economic recession which began in the last quarter of 1960. Unemployment figures at the beginning of February were 112,000, or 2.6 per cent of the total workforce. In Queensland the percentage was 4.3.

Struggle around economic demands was sharp throughout the year.

The Commonwealth Arbitration Commission, on February 5, rejected the unions' claim for an increase in the basic wage, which was then, on an average for the six capital cities, 18/- a week below what it would have been if quarterly adjustments had not been abolished in 1953. This decision led to a new wave of industrial action.

THE EXMOUTH GULF BASE

Sharp problems also emerged in the struggle for peace.

A series of rank and file June Conferences of the ALP in Sydney during February adopted resolutions supporting a nuclear-free zone in the Pacific and opposing foreign war bases on Australian soil.

In March, the Central Committee of the CP of A issued a call against the linking of Australia to aggressive US imperialism.

It demanded an independent foreign policy for Australia, based on the principle of peaceful co-existence, a nuclear-free zone in the Pacific, support for the ALP plan for a nuclear-free Southern Hemisphere, and abolition of all nuclear weapons.

The CC declared against Malaysia and for the right of all peoples of SE Asia, Papua and New Guinea to independence.

The CC pointed out that US bases, including a nuclear-submarine control radio station, were already either operating on our shores or in the course of construction.

Twelve months earlier, when Tribune exposed the plan to establish a US naval base at North West Cape in Western Australia, the Menzies Government had denied it.

MALAYSIA CREATES TENSION

The CC warned that British imperialism's attempts to impose the Malaysian Federation on the unwilling people of Singapore, Malaya and Borneo was creating dangerous tension in Australia's near North.

Saying that the Labor Party's policy for a nuclear-free Southern Hemisphere and against all US military bases in Australia had aroused enthusiasm among the working people, the CC added:

"The Communist Party, which has long advocated a nuclear-free Pacific, welcomes the ALP proposal as a step towards the wider objective of banning all nuclear weapons.

"The ACTU has recently reaffirmed its support for these ALP policies. Hence on these questions there is now complete unity in the labor movement.

"Similarly, the whole labor movement is united on the demand for recall of all Australian troops from Malaya and for non-involvement in the aggressive adventures of US controlled SEATO."

A week later, three State Executives of the ALP, the Victorian Trades Hall Council and several Federal unions affiliated with the ALP sent messages to Federal ALP leaders supporting existing ALP peace policies and opposing foreign bases.

A great protest movement developed against the U.S. submarine control base.

ALP RETREATS

The agreement to establish the base, with a Bill for Ratification, were presented to Parliament early in May.

During the debate, Prime Minister Menzies admitted the Exmouth Gulf Base was essential to any nuclear war launched by the United States from the Southern Hemisphere.

Under Rightwing pressure, however, ALP policy on the base had been decided at a special Federal Conference in March.

This conference held that the base would "not be inconsistent with Labor policy, provided that among other things, the base was under joint Australian-US control, its use could not involve Australia in war without prior consent of the Australian Government and it did not become a base for stockpiling nuclear arms in Australia."

Thus the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, in violation of the ALP policy for a nuclear-free Southern Hemisphere, accepted Menzies' proposals for establishment of the base.

To placate the widespread opposition in the ranks of the Labor Party, the leader, Mr. Calwell, promised that a future

Labor Government would "re-negotiate" the Treaty covering the base, but the ALP leadership retreat on policy caused much concern.

GAINS FROM STRUGGLE

Meanwhile, the economic struggle was mounting.

On March 20, waterside workers in all ports held a 24-hour stoppage in support of their claims for:

- 7/- increase in the hourly rate.
- Four weeks annual leave.
- Industry pensions.
- Abolition of penal powers.

On March 26, 3,000 members of Victorian metal trades unions marched through Melbourne in support of demands for higher wage margins and increased annual leave.

A victory for united mass action was won in April 1963, when the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission increased annual leave in the Federal Metal Trades Award to three weeks and increased wage margins by 10 per cent.

In June also waterside workers in Sydney and Melbourne were granted the 10 per cent increase in wage margins, previously denied them because of their struggles in defence of wages and conditions.

During the year "white collar" workers came into significant action.

In July, 3,000 NSW public servants held a demonstration in support of higher salaries and 2,000 bank officers held a Sydney Town Hall meeting, condemning the failure of the private banks to pay an interim 10 per cent margin increase.

THE PARTIAL TEST BAN TREATY

Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union, after long negotiations, signed a Treaty in July banning nuclear weapons tests except underground.

For many years the Soviet Union, supported by all peace-loving peoples and States, had fought for a test ban as a step towards complete outlawing of atomic weapons.

When the Communists first raised the "Ban the Bomb" demand in 1946, it was described by reaction as a "Communist Plot."

By 1963, however, the demand was receiving almost world-wide support. Though it was recognised that the Partial Test Ban Treaty was far short of what was needed, most peacelovers saw it as a step in the right direction, reflecting mass pressure and encouraging the movement for peace everywhere.

Within two weeks of the signing of the Three-Power treaty, more than one hundred countries had expressed their support.

The treaty came under attack from three main sources: the ultra-reactionary wing of United States imperialism, headed by Senator Barry Goldwater, the super-nationalist French leader, General De Gaulle, who was preparing to test a hydrogen bomb in the Pacific, and the leaders of the Communist Party of China, who condemned the treaty as "a big fraud to fool the people of the world" and charged the Soviet Government with having "betrayed and sold out the interests of the Soviet people and the people of the world."

HOW TO FIGHT FOR PEACE

The Secretariat of the Communist Party of Australia, in a statement published in Tribune on August 7, 1963, rejected and condemned these views, describing them as "a most damaging and irresponsible assault against the world's forces for peace, engaged in a long and complicated struggle to prevent world nuclear war".

The Secretariat statement pointed out that the idea of agreement to end tests as a "first step" was specifically endorsed by all Communist Parties, including the Chinese, both in the 1957 and 1960 Conferences of World Parties.

The Statement concluded:

"We of the Communist Party of Australia and the people of Australia have learned how to struggle for peace.

"For many years we have struggled with others to awaken our people to action for definite aims in the struggle for peace, exposing the imperialist enemies for peace at each stage.

"We know that the present treaty conforms to the people's aspirations and in no way confuses their fight to prevent French tests, to remove US bases from Australia, to win nuclear-free zones, ban nuclear weapons and win disarmament."

This analysis was quickly confirmed by ensuing developments in the peace movement in Australia, particularly in the strong opposition to French tests and to the establishment of the American naval communications base in Western Australia.

EXPULSION OF FACTIONISTS

On August 22, E. F. Hill and Mrs. F. Russell were expelled from the Communist Party of Australia for conduct violating the rules of the Party; factional and splitting activities; flouting the Constitution and refusing to observe Party decisions; refusing to recognise the leadership elected by that State Conference, and ignoring directions of the Victorian State Committee.

A few Party members followed Hill out of the Party and later formed a group pretentiously styling itself a Marxist- /

Leninist Party. The group has no objective basis in Australia, owing its continued existence mainly to the patronage of the Communist Party of China. It plays no part in the actual struggle against monopoly capital in Australia, its main role being that of vilifying the Communist Party, the Soviet Union and the mass, working class-led movements for economic gains, unity and peace, though its publications are full of abstract calls for revolution.

BIG PEACE DEMONSTRATIONS

The signing of the partial test-ban treaty in July had set the stage for big peace demonstrations in Australia on Hiroshima day, which was commemorated on Sunday, August 4.

A meeting of 5,000 people in the Sydney Stadium declared: "Our aim must be complete abolition of the means of waging war of any kind to assure the future and well-being of people everywhere."

The meeting was preceded by a series of radial walks and motorcades from the main Sydney suburbs and a march of 1,500 from Hyde Park to the stadium.

Mr. J. D. Kenny (ALP), Vice-President of the ACTU and Secretary of the NSW Labor Council, told the Stadium Rally that the ACTU had endorsed the Melbourne Peace Congress decision of 1959 and quoted statements made in support of peace by Federal ALP Leader Mr. Calwell and deputy-leader, Mr. Whitlam.

Similar broad and successful peace demonstrations were held in Melbourne and other capital cities.

UNIONS OPPOSE FRENCH TESTS

On September 16, in his opening address to the 1963 ACTU Congress, Mr. Albert Monk said: "There is no hope for full rights for all people throughout the world until the threat of war and the arms burden are lifted."

The ACTU Executive proposed to the Congress a definite line of action against the French nuclear weapons tests, following discussions with the New Zealand Federation of Labor President, Mr. Skinner, who was present at the Congress.

The Congress subsequently endorsed a joint Statement by the ACTU and the NZFL against the French tests.

The statement called for a joint approach to the French Government urging discontinuance of the test preparations; approaches to the Government of Australia and New Zealand to support world disarmament at the United Nations; and to co-operate for further action if the French Government continued to ignore world opinion.

FOR SHORTER HOURS

In September, Mr. Justice Richards, who had been appointed by the NSW State Government in 1958 to enquire into the effects of automation, published his report.

Mr. Justice Richards' report rejected the unions' submission that a shorter working week was necessary to counter the effect of automation and mechanisation on the employment of labor.

The report roused a storm of protest from the labor movement.

The ACTU was called upon to intensify the 35-hour week campaign.

The 1963 Congress of the ACTU, held in Melbourne in September, decided to "commence and sustain a strong national campaign in support of the 35-hour working week."

The Congress also decided on a campaign in support of a claim for a 52/- increase in the basic wage.

The Congress adopted a programme for young workers and a programme demanding full rights for Aborigines, and planned positive action to advance the claim for equal pay for women workers.

On penal clauses, the Congress decided that when these powers were used in future the unions in the industry concerned would be called together "to formulate proposals for appropriate action."

Rightwing forces at the ACTU Congress suffered a severe defeat on the question of overseas visits by Australian trade unionists.

Congress reaffirmed previous decisions favouring reciprocal visits between the ACTU and trade union organisations in all other countries.

Approval was also given to trade unions in Australia sending observers to meetings convened by the World Federation of Trade Unions.

W.A. STRUGGLE A HIGHLIGHT

The ACTU Congress was followed by a series of mass actions in support of higher wages, a shorter working week and against penal powers.

A highlight was the big struggle in Western Australia in November against new laws restricting the trade unions.

Under the leadership of the WA Trades and Labor Council, more than 8,000 unionists from 30 different jobs downed tools in protest at the State Liberal Government's proposed legislation.

In the anti-monopoly struggle, Australian seamen registered a notable breakthrough in October in their long-sustained campaign to have oil tankers operating on the Australian coast manned by Australian crews on Australian rates and conditions.

The grip of the oil monopoly on the coastal tanker trade was loosened when the R. W. Miller tanker, Miller's Canopus, began to operate with an Australian crew, working under conditions negotiated by the Seamen's Union.

In November 1963, President Kennedy was assassinated Dallas, Texas. The Central Committee of the CP of A issued a public statement, which said that the assassination of President Kennedy was both a tragic event in human terms and a serious turn in world affairs. It warned that "Encouraged by the removal of Kennedy from the Presidency, extreme rightwing and pro-war elements will seek to intensify the cold-war and anti-communist campaigns."

ALP RETREAT LOSES ELECTION

At the end of the year, the Menzies Government was re-elected with an increased majority. This was a sharp warning to the ALP leaders who, having retreated from the 1961 policy on peace, when they nearly won, vied with Menzies in putting forward Rightwing versions of foreign policy, and lost heavily.

The Communist Party, in face of a violent anti-Communist campaign, led by the DLP, more than maintained its vote and made Communist policy and the Communist press known to new thousands of people.

As 1963 drew to a close, the Soviet Union gave a new lead to the world in disarmament, by slashing its arms budget by 600 million rubles (equal to about £317,500,000 in Australian currency).

Arms spending in the Soviet Budget was reduced from 16.1 per cent of total expenditure to 14.6 per cent.

New problems of peace and war emerged sharply early in 1964. The Soviet Government, in a New Year message to all other governments, proposed an international treaty renouncing the use of force to settle territorial disputes, but within a week the US Government had displayed contempt for this concept by its ruthless use of force against the people of Panama, demonstrating for the return of the Panama Canal to their control.

AUSTRALIAN TROOPS TO MALAYSIA

In Australia, the year opened in an atmosphere of concern at the Menzies Government's decision to commit Australian troops against Indonesia, if requested by British imperialism's creature, Malaysia.

There was wide public criticism of this decision. The Communist press showed that it was a decision which would materially worsen Australia's relations with her neighbours, as well as being intervention against the Malaysian people's independence.

The Sydney Sunday Mirror commented on January 5: "The British and their Malaysian puppets are doing their utmost to bulldoze Australia into active involvement in their own messy backyard. . .

"And we say this again to the British. We are not going to shoot down our neighbours for a lost imperial cause." However, the Mirror changed its tune later, when Australian troops were committed. The Communist press didn't.

On January 22, the Political Committee of the Communist Party issued a statement condemning the December 1963 decisions of a small group of renegades, led by E. F. Hill, to form a new "Party". The PC noted that the purpose of this group was disruption. Like the DLP, which, after splitting away from the ALP had spent all its time attacking that Party and trade union unity, the Hill group could be expected to devote itself to attacking the CP of A and the unity of the labor movement. It would never win mass support and could only aid monopoly and reaction. History has since confirmed the accuracy of this assessment.

RELATIONS WITH CPNZ

Growing differences between the lines pursued by the Australian Party and the CPNZ caused the CPA leadership much concern. After several suggestions by the CPA, beginning in 1963, a discussion was held in Sydney from April 6-9. A joint statement and individual statements were issued. Agreement was reached on a number of urgent questions but fundamental differences remained.

THE GREAT DEBATE

The failure of the ALP to defeat the Menzies Government at the November 1963 elections and, worse, the decline of the Labor vote from the 1961 election peak, became the subject of a great discussion and debate in all sections of the labor movement, which still continues.

The daily press, the DLP and ALP Rightwing strove to gloss over the weaknesses in the ALP's election policy, which failed to enthrone voters and, on foreign affairs especially, was little different from that of the Liberal-CP coalition. They urged the ALP to move even further to the Right and present itself, in effect, as an alternative Liberal Party.

The ALP Left and militant trade union leaders vigorously opposed this view, contending that the ALP must move Left rather than Right, identifying itself clearly and firmly with the big issues concerning the working class, champion democratic rights and popularise a foreign policy of peace and good relations with Australia's neighbours along the lines decided at the Hobart Conference.

The ALP's electoral defeat was in glaring contrast with the situation in the trade union movement. In the last months of 1963, growing working class militancy was reflected in a number of trade union elections. NCC-backed candidates were soundly defeated in "Court-controlled" ballots in the Postal Workers, AEU and BWIU elections, and in other elections conducted by the unions themselves. This trend continued in 1964, demonstrating a basic Leftward movement of the working class masses.

The Communist press opened its columns to readers for discussion of the fundamental issues involved, including the whole complex question of the nature of "the labor movement" in Australia.

In March, L. Aarons' pamphlet "Labor Movement at the Crossroads" appeared, summarising the main points at issue, pointing the way for the development of greater unity and clarity for the movement, and showing clearly the need for sober assessment of the different trends—Left, Right and Centre—in the ALP so that the maximum unity in action could be developed between Communist, ALP and non-party workers.

This pamphlet played an important part in the broad movement and in the discussions of Party policy which began in February, when the Central Committee issued a Draft of the main Resolution to come before the Party's 20th National Congress in June.

The draft was printed as a supplement to Communist newspapers, whose readers, Communist and non-Communist alike, were invited to send in comments, criticisms, etc.

TOWARDS A MASS PARTY

The Draft Resolution quickly became the main centre of discussion throughout the Party and among its supporters. Many amendments were submitted, a number of which were accepted later by the Congress.

Under three main headings: The fight for peace and an independent Australian foreign policy, The people against monopoly, and Build the Party, the draft set out the basic problems confronting the Australian people and proposed practical solutions. At the same time, the Party's Programme,

Rules, Agrarian Programme, and Programme for Aborigines were also circulated in draft form for discussion and amendment. Many proposals for improvement of these drafts were also made and accepted.

The draft documents, dealing as they did with fundamental questions of theory and practice, served as the basis for the widest and most thorough public and private discussions of Party policy and practices for many years. ||

The basic propositions placed before the Party in these documents were that a mass Communist Party could and must be built in the course of building working class unity and mobilising the whole people against monopoly, in defence of democratic rights and national independence, for higher living standards and for peace. Both Rightist and Leftist trends were declared to be obstacles to the fulfilment of these aims. In the circumstances, Leftism, dogmatism and sectarianism were the main dangers. ||

BASIC WAGE CAMPAIGN

A nationwide campaign for a Federal basic wage of £17, launched in January by the three main trade union centres—ACTU, ACSPA and HCP SO—marked a new level of unity in action between the “white collar” and industrial workers. Actions such as mass meetings of shop stewards, stopwork meetings, etc., were accompanied by new and attractive propaganda posters, songs and leaflets. The campaign was the best waged by the working class movement for years, and lasted for six months until a £1 increase was granted by the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission at the end of June.

The mounting war danger in Vietnam, the decision of the French Government to conduct H-bomb tests in the Pacific and the despatch of Australian troops in April to intervene against Indonesia in her dispute with Malaysia caused peacelovers to decide early in the year to work for a broadly representative national Congress, including New Zealand and other Pacific countries if possible.

PROTEST AGAINST PENAL POWERS

Increasing use of repressive powers and heavy fines on unions by Arbitration authorities, together with the falling purchasing power of wages caused mounting bitterness in the trade union movement. This led to a Federal Unions Conference convened in Sydney by the ACTU, on April 29. Though moves by a number of unions for strike action against the use of penal powers were defeated 84-63, the Conference clearly reflected the determination of strong unions to find ways of defeating the penal powers.

In Brisbane, on May 12, 8,000 metal workers defied a "don't-stop" order of the State Industrial Commission, streamed into the Cricket Ground and voted 18-1 (by secret ballot in boxes on the spot) for direct action at the plants of seven engineering companies. In Victoria at the end of May, 120,000 State Government employees from 40 unions held the first stoppage of its kind for 10 years, demanding a substantial increase in wages and an extra week's leave. A mass meeting of over 2,000 was held in the Festival Hall.

Meanwhile, support for the proposed Peace Congress was growing throughout Australia, highlighted by an ACTU Executive endorsement in March, which was endorsed by most State Labor Councils and many unions.

CPA'S 20th CONGRESS

The Communist Party carried on constant activity and propaganda for withdrawal of Australian troops from Malaysia and Vietnam and against the proposed French tests.

Thus, the 20th National Congress, held on the long weekend June 12-15, met in an atmosphere of great Party and mass activity for peace, higher living standards and democracy.

The Congress, comprising over 150 delegates from all over Australia, reached great heights of enthusiasm as the main policy resolution, amended Programme and Agrarian Programme and the Programme for Aborigines, and a number of special resolutions were endorsed unanimously after considerable strengthening by amendments.

In the report of the outgoing Central Committee to Congress, which was endorsed unanimously, the General Secretary, L. L. Sharkey, said that uniting the labor movement, strengthening all the organisations of the people in struggle against monopoly, establishing the supremacy of the people over monopoly, and thus creating conditions for the advance to Socialism was the way forward for the labor movement in Australia.

In all these activities, the presence, the policy and the work of the Communist Party were crucial. It was essential to defeat those forces, agents of monopoly in the labor movement, who used anti-Communism to divide and paralyse the movements and efforts of the working people.

PEACE STRUGGLE FOREMOST

The question of the way forward, he said, was also at the heart of the great debate in the world Communist movement.

The 20th Congress of the CPSU had been of great importance in commencing the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the great changes in the world since 1945. This analysis had been

developed in the decisions of 1957 and 1960 meetings of the world's Communist Parties.

The Chinese Party leaders had turned their backs on these decisions, although they had participated in making them. The CP of A had opposed their views as dogmatic and sectarian. If adopted in Australia they would isolate the Party from the masses and set back the struggle for Socialism.

The struggle for peace, said Mr. Sharkey, was the most urgent question before the people.

The main danger to peace came from US imperialism, but the Socialist camp, the national liberation movements and the peace forces in all countries were capable of restraining the imperialist aggressors and preventing war.

A vital part in the struggle for peace was the fight to reverse the reactionary and aggressive foreign and "defence" policies the Menzies Government had imposed on Australia.

Australian security and independence, he said, were not guaranteed but jeopardised by the Federal Government's policy, the real reason for which was that the Australian ruling class saw itself as a junior partner to US imperialism against the peoples of South East Asia.

Labor Party Conferences, he pointed out, had adopted good foreign policy decisions, but the ALP leaders had departed from these—a move to the Right which had contributed to the ALP's defeat in the 1963 elections.

Recalling the proud history of the Australian Communists and working class in support of the struggles of many peoples for national independence, Mr. Sharkey called for continued solidarity action in support of the world struggles for independence and liberty, with the Aboriginal and New Guinea peoples as the first responsibility.

MONOPOLY GROWTH

Analysing the growth of monopoly capital in Australia in the three years since the 19th Congress, Mr. Sharkey said that from 1961 to 1963 there had been 95 takeovers, involving assets of nearly £200 million, and several huge mergers.

US and British capital was the real power behind many so-called Australian companies.

Concentration of wealth and power into fewer and fewer hands, he said, led to increased exploitation of the people by fewer and fewer groups and individuals.

Australian state-monopoly capitalism could be ended only by the Socialist revolution, which would take all power out of the hands of monopoly capital and smash its powers of repression.

This was possible only by the people building up the necessary forces through experience in the democratic movement against monopoly.

The central question in the whole revolutionary struggle in Australia was the struggle to achieve working class unity.

The working class was the biggest class in Australia—3,200,000 of the 4,225,000 workforce. It was the most highly organised class, with 285,000 working in 256 big factories employing over 500 workers.

Continuous efforts were needed to strengthen and consolidate the unity of industrial and white-collar workers, migrants, women and youth workers.

WORKING CLASS RESPONSIBILITY

The working class, said Mr. Sharkey, should assume its leading role, standing up against the ruling class for the leadership of Australia.

Monopoly and rightwing reformist claims that the class struggle was "obsolete" were refuted by strike figures for the past two years, which showed almost uninterrupted development of trade union activity on a national scale, in which important successes had been won through united action.

Warning that monopoly had launched a campaign for the ALP to conduct an anti-Communist drive to split the trade unions down the middle, Mr. Sharkey said that, while reaction was making the Communists its first target, its next step would be to seize control of the unions and turn them into tame-cat bodies.

The Communist Party, he said, advocated representative leadership of the unions—ALP, Communist and non-Party. Unions so led were stronger, more militant and more united and therefore able to get better results for their members.

The Rightwing, he said, though rebuffed by the 1961 and 1963 ACTU Congresses, was following a class-collaborationist line.

While trying to split the unions on political issues, it at the same time opposed trade union political action. But the struggle for peace, to defeat the Menzies and anti-Labor State Governments, and the fight for democratic rights were part of the unions' responsibilities.

They should also make common cause with other classes and sections of the people affected by monopoly—for instance, with farmers on the question of a National Shipping Line.

STARTING POINT FOR UNITED ACTION

The starting point for united action, he said, was the defence of the immediate economic and political interests of the working

class. Only in this struggle could the workers test out which was correct, reformist or revolutionary policy. Return of a Labor Government would be the best way to enable workers to see in practice that a decisive change in policy was needed.

ALP workers, said Mr. Sharkey, are our class brothers and we should discuss our common problems with them in a fraternal way.

In working to overcome the influence of reformism, Communists did not lump all reformists together.

Lenin, he said, had shown that left doctrinairism must be eliminated to accomplish the task of leading the masses into action.

Defeat of the Hill group and its desertion had been a big step forward in the struggle against left doctrinairism, but the Party had still to complete the task of ridding itself of this tendency.

The ALP Leftwing did not accept Marxism-Leninism and individuals might change their positions in the future. But the ALP Leftwing was a reflection of the movement to the Left among the working class.

CLEAR AWAY OBSTACLES

"We set ourselves the aim of building a mass Party," said Mr. Sharkey. "Even though this is not an immediate possibility, we believe it necessary to set this aim, to clear away sectarian and doctrinaire obstacles which stop us from achieving the actual possibilities for considerably increasing the Party's membership and influence."

The Congress agreed to establish the perspective of a mass Party as an aim and the Party organisations began to set to work on plans for growth. Later, the whole of 1965 was proclaimed a "Party-building" year.

DEEPER WAR COMMITMENT

In analysing the situation in Australia, the 20th Congress predicted that the Menzies Government would increase war expenditure and drag Australia deeper into the bog of colonialist wars in South East Asia.

Almost immediately after the Congress, on June 18, the Menzies Government's Defence Minister announced an 8-point military expansion scheme, the first of a series of measures which were to commit Australia much more heavily in the coming year to war and war expenditure at the expense of living standards and democratic rights.

Internationally, the seriousness of the war threat was emphasised in July, when the U.S. Republican Party selected Senator

Barry Goldwater as its candidate for the US Presidential elections in November.

Protests against the extremely reactionary and aggressive policy put forward by Goldwater arose throughout the world, including Australia.

Though Goldwater, in the result, was heavily defeated, the fierce neo-fascist-like campaign he and his followers conducted had the effect of also pushing the US Democratic Party leader and their candidate, Johnson, on to a path well to the Right of that pursued by Kennedy.

On July 13, the Party dedicated the Hall in which its 20th Congress had been held to the late Jim Healy. Declaring this, the Party's president, Mr. R. Dixon, spoke of the late Comrade Healy as a man whose work and achievements had left the labor movement more united and a stronger force in the life of the people. Above all, he said, Healy was a Communist.

The Party was the source of his understanding, inspiration and great willpower. The Hall and building, which had been converted by many voluntary workers from what was virtually a barn into something to be proud of, were a fitting memorial to Jim Healy, who was always ready to give his spare time and more to the movement.

PEACE CONGRESS GAINS SUPPORT

In August, big marches and rallies were held in all main Australian cities to commemorate the atom-bombing of Hiroshima and rally the people against the dangers of new Hiroshimas. Support grew for the October Peace Congress, now very widely sponsored.

This was needed, for in the first sittings of the session of Federal Parliament that month, Foreign Minister Hasluck shocked the nation by declaring that there was no alternative to force in South East Asia. Later, in Sydney, he said that Asians must get used to foreign intervention in their affairs, because "need for foreign intervention was one of the realities of the Asian situation."

Parliament was in an uproar over Vietnam, touched off by Hasluck's speech and the US attacks in the Tonkin Gulf. ALP Parliamentarians strongly opposed US and Australian policies towards Vietnam.

The Federal Budget, while increasing war expenditure to a peacetime record of £297 million, made no concessions to the people's needs. A paltry increase of 5/- a week for pensioners touched off intensified protest.

By September, interest in the forthcoming Peace Congress was high. The Menzies Government, following its customary

pattern, launched a smear attack on the Congress. Attorney General Snedden spoke in Parliament of the Congress as a "Communist conspiracy". However, the very breadth of the sponsorship and control of the Congress prevented the Government attack from succeeding.

Prominent citizens of many walks of life refuted the Government's allegations in press statements and advertisements and in many organisations.

To clarify the Party's attitude to the Congress, W. E. Gollan, a Central Committee member long active and highly respected in the peace movement, made a press statement on September 23.

Outlining the terrible dangers confronting mankind, he said that, as a teacher who had spent nearly 40 years promoting the welfare of children, his conscience would not allow him to stand idly by whilst the supporters of the cold war prepared to blot out the lives of tens of millions of defenceless children.

Communists, he said, saw the planned Congress as they did all other approaches, in stimulating public discussion of the issues of peace and war.

Such moves could give every section of the Australian people an opportunity to speak, free from the usual barriers of party-political division.

There would be other views, including anti-Communist ones expressed at the Congress. To those who held such views he would say that they were wrong, but still his friends because they stood together in the same movement, with the same noble aims.

BASIC POLICIES

On September 26-7 the Central Committee of the Party met and defined its attitude of support for the struggles for peace and national independence.

The vice-chairman, L. Aarons, said the alternative to the Menzies Government's policy of support for the use of force in Vietnam and Asia was to

- Implement the Geneva Agreements of 1954 on Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.
- Withdraw all foreign troops and military equipment.
- Reconvene the Geneva Conference.
- Let Asian peoples decide their own destiny, including the right of self-determination for the territories incorporated in Malaysia.

The Communist Party, he said, had a great responsibility to explain consistently the vital issues for the Australian people.

It must continue to expose the war propaganda representing People's China as "threatening Australia", and stress the great importance of diplomatic recognition of China and its seating in the United Nations.

In the following year, L. Aarons was to become General Secretary of the Party, following the resignation of L. L. Sharkey because of advancing age and indifferent health. Sharkey, who had rendered many years of sterling service to the Party and working class, remained on the Central Secretariat with R. Dixon, C. Jones and L. Aarons.

The Central Committee heard and approved reports by its President (R. Dixon) and Political Committee member J. Sedy, who had been abroad and held discussions with the Communist Parties of Indonesia, the USSR, Italy and Rumania.

The CC approved the proposal to hold an early world meeting of Communist Parties.

WAGES STRUGGLE RISING

The unceasing industrial action by the working class for wage increases rose to a new level in October, when GMH workers, first in Victoria, then in South Australia and other States, went into action for a £3 rise against this powerful US-controlled monopoly.

When GMH refused to negotiate on the workers' demands, an epic strike struggle by 18,500 workers, including many European migrants, began. Their great stand against the foreign monopoly attracted nationwide and international support and ended only when the ACTU Emergency Committee and some union leaders, who had supported the strike, recommended a return to work with claims still to be negotiated, and this recommendation was declared to have been accepted at ballots conducted in an atmosphere of disorder.

The GMH men returned to work in fighting mood and their example inspired other anti-monopoly struggles, the chief among which was the great Mt. Isa dispute, which had had its origins as far back as 1961 when the Queensland Government legislated to prevent the State Arbitration authorities from increasing bonus payments.

The Mt. Isa men began their action in August 1964 by deciding to revert to wages from a contract system. On December 15 the company locked the men out and the struggle continued until the end of February 1965, resulting in big gains for the workers.

In both the GMH and Mt. Isa strikes, the Communist Party and the Communist press—Tribune and the Queensland and Victorian Guardians—won new prestige for their fearless, accurate reporting of the struggles and their successful advocacy on behalf of the workers involved.

PEACE CONGRESS SUCCESS

The Peace Congress—for International Cooperation & Disarmament—began on schedule in Sydney on October 25. It was marked by an atmosphere of sincere and searching discussion between hundreds of delegates from all walks of life and including a number of prominent international visitors. Over 7,000 attended the opening night.

Mass pressure compelled the Menzies Government to lift a ban on visas for many international visitors, though some were still excluded.

Nobel Prizewinning US scientist Prof. Linus Pauling, one of the visitors, was sharply critical of the Government's ban on Soviet visitors, which he described as McCarthyite and the action of a really backward Government.

The Chairman, Sydney dentist Dr. Allan Lawes, described the Congress, at its closing, as a "tremendous success". It marked a new stage in the growth and maturing of the diverse forces for peace in Australia.

Meanwhile, campaigning had begun for the Federal Senate election, to be held in December. The Party stood candidates in all states and conducted a vigorous campaign of exposure of the aims of the Government, which now included conscription for overseas service.

The Government fought the election mainly on foreign policy issues. ALP leaders took a creditable stand against conscription but once again, as in 1963, failed to offer a real alternative to the Menzies policy, agreeing, in fact with its essential anti-Communist, cold war line, and engaging mainly in criticism of the Government's failures on material defence measures.

Only the Communist candidates took a clear stand on the need for a sharply different, independent foreign policy for Australia. The Party's views were set out in election material, and in December W. E. Gollan published a pamphlet fully outlining the decisions of the Party's 20th Congress on foreign policy.

GOVT WEAKNESS REVEALED

The election result, though favouring the Government, revealed that practically half the population was opposed, at least, to its conscription policy, and critical of other aspects.

A vigorous ALP campaign, really exposing the Government, would undoubtedly have resulted in the election of more ALP Senators. The DLP vote, while still declining, was a big factor in returning Menzies candidates in Victoria and in Queensland, where a DLP Senator was returned on Liberal and ALP preferences.

The Communist vote registered a small increase, most significantly in Queensland.

A review of the year's work showed that the preparation for and carrying out of the decisions of the 20th Congress had lifted the whole level of the work of the Party.

Vigorous and sustained efforts for peace, against the Vietnam war and intervention in Malaysia, for the needs of the working class and whole people in the struggle against monopoly, actions on behalf of the New Guinea and Aboriginal peoples and against South African Apartheid, and positive new propositions for the welfare of the Australian people had attracted wide attention and increased support.

*and
how
was
left?*

The Congress decision to make 1965 a Party-building year was fulfilled, over 500 new members joining the Party, though other aspects of the campaign were less satisfactory.

At the beginning of 1965, the whole nation was divided on the issue of the continuing struggle of the Mt. Isa workers—with the great majority supporting them. In addition to the innumerable Party press articles and meetings supporting the workers, basic material on the Mt. Isa monopoly and the problems created by it for the workers and people was widely disseminated in two important pamphlets "Buried Treasure" and "Storm in the Tropics" produced by Pete Thomas, of the Qld. Guardian.

At the same time, the war in Vietnam was reaching a dangerously acute position as US President Johnson, repudiating his election promises, proceeded to "escalate" the war as proposed by his opponent Goldwater. Bombing of North Vietnam and a sharp increase of US forces called forth worldwide protests and a steep rise in the Australian movement of opposition to the war.

VIETNAM BECOMES MAJOR ISSUE

The Government's decision to conscript young men for two years and its sending of an Australian battalion to support US aggression in Vietnam further aroused public indignation.

The movement to end the war in Vietnam became the main issue for national debate. Bishops, prominent writers and

other intellectuals added their voices to the mass protests and a wide variety of forms of opposition developed.

In answer, the Menzies Government moved even further Right, insulting its opponents, doubling war expenditure and endeavouring to silence opposition.

Arbitration authorities fell further into disrepute as wages remained frozen except where industrial action could compel increases. Prices rose steadily until the plight of low-wage and fixed small income earners and pensioners became acute.

The struggle for economic needs became more and more closely identified with the struggle for peace and against the Government's dangerous, shortsighted policies.

In these conditions, the struggle for a correct policy for the whole labor movement, which had begun in earnest after the 1963 Federal elections, continued to develop.

Election, for the first time in many years, of a South Australian State Labor Government on a generally progressive policy, and defeat of the NSW Rightwing-led Labor Government after many years in office strengthened the arguments of those who contended that the way forward for Labor was Left not Right.

Thus the Great Debate continues.

In the midst of it, the Communist Party is building an increased membership and following, while faithfully and with much success, striving to develop still broader unity and understanding between all sections of the movement.

THE FUTURE

Stirring and difficult days lie ahead but a glance over the years of trial, error and success since the Second World War ended and the Cold War began shows an unmistakable general trend in national affairs towards a situation in which the ideas of Socialism must become more widely attractive, and a strong, mass Communist Party is certain to emerge.

By adhering firmly to its principled positions and steadily pursuing the path of unity of the working class and people against monopoly and for peace, the Party is bound to grow.

At the same time, firmly rejecting leftism and sectarianism, the Party recognises that, for the foreseeable future, other progressive forces will exist in Australia, attracting many who

are not prepared to accept the Communist viewpoints in one respect or another.

The struggle for Socialism in Australia, therefore, demands that the Party work in ever greater harmony with all who share this objective with it.

Printed and published by D. B. Young,
21 Ross Street, Forest Lodge.
