

Continued from page 7

- People's struggles arise even under conditions of desperate repression. More and more people seek answers as the crisis deepens.
- Struggle for national liberation and socialism intensifies and broadens. Revolutionary tendencies strengthen. There have been advances made in Latin America and other places, including Nepal. Conditions change at a rapid pace.
- The people's need to rein in capitalism's ethos of production for its own sake, and of subservience of all social concerns to the drive for maximum profit, is particularly focussed on the environment, with global warming and public rights to water at the forefront.
- The people of Cuba, north Korea, Vietnam, China and Venezuela are striving to chart their own country's path to socialism.

The Australian Experience

Australia is well and truly enmeshed in the economic and financial net of imperialism. It is experiencing features common to industrialised export-oriented countries, compounded by the effects of its dependency on imperialism, and especially on US and Japanese imperialism. An unequal Free Trade Agreement was imposed by the US prior to the current crisis. It has contributed to the huge foreign debt to US bankers and other financial institutions.

The working class has had to face a range of major battles as the ruling class attempts to increase their exploitation in order to ensure high levels of profit. There was a genuine mass movement against WorkChoices with some excellent experience of community and grass roots organisation. In its final stages, the Your Rights at Work campaign was largely coopted by social-democracy

and channelled into the dead end of parliamentarism. As a consequence, the new Labor government was able to fulfil its service to imperialism and monopoly capitalism by retaining many of the hated features of WorkChoices in its own Fair Work Act.

Had it not been for the stand taken by the working class, the situation would be much worse. Workers face a continual battle against the reduction of real wages, against erosion of hard-won working conditions, and against the loss of services that are important to maintain living standards and quality of life. Despite lower interest rates, finance is getting harder to obtain and credit card debt rises to new heights. Around 40 percent of Australians are defined as being in "precarious employment", meaning they have no security of tenure and little control over rosters or weekly hours of work. Employment figures look healthy on paper, but are distorted by a definition of employment as "paid work for at least one hour in a short reference period such as one week". The real unemployment figure is estimated to be around 11 percent. The vulnerability of women to attacks on wages and conditions was heightened under WorkChoices and unevenness and uncertainty persists in the pursuit of their equality with men in relation to wages and access to permanent full-time work.

The economic crisis is intensifying the winding down of what is left of Australia's manufacturing and industrial base. Iconic industries flounder and either downsize or relocate. This brings into sharp relief the contradictions between the working class and big business, especially foreign corporations. Intermediate classes such as the petty bourgeoisie and local capitalists are squeezed by imperialism and are pushed towards financial ruin and towards membership of the working class. Under threat of extinction by the imperialist duopoly of Woolworths and Coles who control 76 percent or more of the grocery industry and are large players in the petrol retailing industry, owners of independent local groceries have maintained

an active "fightback" by putting their case directly to consumers and asking them to "buy Australian".

A people's environmental movement is growing in Australia, uniting wide sections of the people who are concerned about climate warming, pollution and destruction of the natural environment and a critical water crisis. Solutions that protect the environment and create sustainable jobs are vigorously resisted by the corporate monopolies. Objectively, the people's movement targets imperialist domination of Australia.

Internationally, Australia is continuing its military alliance with US imperialism. It continues to support US wars of aggression in Iraq and Afghanistan and hosts important US military bases within Australia. The Rudd Labor government has reinforced Australia's role as the US 'Deputy Sheriff' in the Asia-Pacific. As US imperialism weakens economically, it increasingly relies on Australia to protect its economic and strategic interests in the region. For example, the Australian government's Defence White Paper targets China as a perceived future threat to US interests.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to suffer special oppression. The Rudd apology to the Stolen Generations was welcomed, but tempered by knowledge that the vicious "intervention" imposed on Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory by Howard – an intervention that required the suspension of the Federal Racial Discrimination Act in the NT – was to continue under the new government.

In the face of the crisis, the Rudd Labor government has moved towards strengthening forms of state capitalism, winning high praise from sections of the US and other imperialist ruling classes. As Rudd wrote in a major article on social-democracy, the task of his social-democratic government is "to save capitalism from itself". To this end, he moved quickly, once in office, to guarantee

bank and credit union deposits, purchasing up to \$8 billion in mortgage securities, guaranteeing \$100 billion of bank credit raisings overseas, supplying \$30 billion of joint financing with the big 4 banks of construction project developments, and putting \$43 billion into joint construction of a national broadband network with internet and communication monopolies, and extending hundreds of millions of dollars in grants to foreign car manufacturers.

The Tasks of the Party

The role of the CPA (M-L) is to take the ideas and analysis of Marxism into spontaneous struggles of the people and to assist in strengthening workplace and community organisations that act in the interests of the people.

The Party arose in the course of the struggle against ideas in the international communist movement back in the early 1960s that sought to strip Marxism of its revolutionary essence, ideas that promoted "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and "peaceful transition" to socialism through parliamentary methods.

The struggle against the watering down of Marxism to remove its challenge to capitalism required a firm understanding of the nature of revisionism, including the class nature of the state. The "revising" of Marxism occurred in Marx's own day. The *Communist Manifesto* exposes and criticises various types of phoney "socialism", and Marx was later to say that, judging by the views of certain "Marxists", he didn't want to be a "Marxist" himself!

The danger of revisionism is ever present within the Communist Party. The Party must stand firmly by the line of revolution by stages and ensure that the struggle for anti-imperialist national independence, as the first stage of struggle, is led by the working class; with the working class as the leader and main force of the revolutionary movement in Australia, the struggle for national independence has a socialist character and can only be consummated by continuing the revolution into a fully socialist next stage.

Social-democratic illusions persist in the working class. They take the form of refusing to accept that the Labor Party is a party of capitalism; or if this is accepted, that the Labor Party is a "lesser of two evils", the other being the conservative or Liberal Party. The Labor Party plays on this in its service to imperialism and capitalism, carrying out measures that harm the workers in the belief that the workers will have no one else to vote for. This creates pessimism and acts to restrict the capacity of unions and community organisations to represent their members' interests. The Party's task is to assist people in such organisations to break through these ideological barriers, and to develop their capacity and willingness to wage struggles regardless of which party of capitalism holds office at any point in time. In the unions, this means challenging what we have characterised for many years as "the ideology of trade unionism" so as to more effectively develop the unions as fighting organisations of the working class.

Rectification

A Party rectification movement was initiated at the last Congress, held in 2004. Specifically, it set itself the task of rectifying errors of left-sectarianism and isolationism in its political and organisational work, and overcoming the subjective complacency that had paralysed some aspects of the party's work.

The 2009 Congress evaluated the progress and the shortcomings of the rectification movement and determined that it was incomplete at this stage and should continue. Further work needs to be done to build an anti-imperialist focus for the people's movement. Further work needs to be done to involve women and youth in Party activities. Further work is required to build connections with our friends and supporters, and to overcome "left" sectarianism and self-isolation. This applies equally to the international arena. The Party will strive to improve its international connections, particularly those in our own