HO CHI MINH is dead! The world was stunned by the news, even though he had lived a long, arduous and adventurous life, had performed deeds of heroism and recorded achievements beyond most world figures of this crowded epoch. His life was one of passionate devotion to a cause from which he never deviated. He languished in British and Kuomintang jails, was under sentence of death by the French colonialists and was reported dead several times. A man of great stature, he so expressed his people's will and passion as to give his small country's liberation struggle a decisive significance in world history.

A true patriot, he was the greatest internationalist of his time. His patriotism led him to communism, and he never deviated from his devotion to the world revolution. His active political life spanned the 50 years of the modern communist movement. He was a revolutionary who worked in the Communist International, who always worked for its unity; his words transcend even death to call for this unity so sorely tried in recent years. A Vietnamese revolutionary, he was at various times an activist in the French and Chinese parties, and worked as a revolutionary in other Asian countries.

Ho Chi Minh, a man laden with years and a model communist, became a symbol of the revolt of radical youth. A truly great man, he was modest, simple and sincere, eschewing vanity and resisting all efforts at empty personal glorification. Marxist-leninist, materialist, he was poet and a man of culture. It can truly be said of him that he was a complete man, whose character and qualities were adequate to the heaviest burdens of revolutionary struggle, defeats and glorious victory. The measure of the man is that he faced up to three powerful and ferocious imperialisms — French, Japanese and American.

And his leadership helped his people defeat each. His memory will live for many generations, to be honoured by those who live after imperialism is only a bitter memory.

We publish his Testament, written on May 10th, 1969, as the most fitting tribute to his memory.

INDEPENDENCE, FREEDOM, HAPPINESS: In the patriotic struggle against US aggression we shall indeed have to undergo more difficulties and sacrifices but we are sure to win total victory. This is an absolute certainty. It is my intention when that day comes
to make a tour of the North and South to congratulate our heroic compatriots, cadres and combatants, to pay a visit to our old people, our beloved youth and children. Then on behalf of our people I will go to the fraternal countries of the socialist camp and friendly countries in the whole world and thank them for their whole-hearted support and assistance to our people’s patriotic struggle against US aggression.

Tu Fu, the well-known Chinese poet of the Tang period, wrote “in all times few are those who reach the age of 70”. This year with my 79 years I am counted among those few people. Still my mind is lucid though my health has somewhat weakened in comparison with previous years. When one is on the wrong side of 70 health deteriorates with age. This is no wonder. But who can forecast for how long I can continue to serve revolution, fatherland and people? That is the reason why I leave these few lines in anticipation of the day when I go to join the venerable Karl Marx, Lenin and other revolutionary elders. In this way our compatriots in the whole country, the comrades in the Party and our friends in the world will not be taken by surprise.

FIRST I WILL SPEAK ABOUT THE PARTY: thanks to its close unity and total dedication to the working class, the people and fatherland, our Party has been able since its founding to unite, organise and lead our people in ardent struggle and conduct them from victory to victory. Unity is an extremely precious tradition of our Party and people. All comrades from the central committee down to the cell must preserve union and unity of mind in the Party as the apple of their eye. Within the Party to achieve broad democracy and to practise self-criticism and criticism regularly and seriously is the best way to consolidate and develop union and unity of mind in the Party. Genuine affection should prevail among all comrades.

Ours is a Party in power. Each Party member, each cadre must be deeply imbued with revolutionary morality and show industry, thrift, integrity, uprightness, total dedication to the public cause, exemplary selflessness. Our Party should preserve its entire purity, it should remain worthy of its role as leader and very loyal servant of the people. Working youth, union members and our young people as a whole are of excellent nature, burning to volunteer for vanguard tasks undeterred by difficulties, striving for progress. The Party must give much attention to their education in revolutionary morality and train them to be continuers of building socialism, both “red” and “expert”. Training and educating the revolutionary generation to come is a highly important and necessary task.
Our laboring people both in the plains and mountain areas have for ages suffered hardships, feudal and colonial oppression and exploitation, furthermore they have experienced many years of war. Yet our people have shown great heroism, great courage, burning enthusiasm and are very hard working. They have always followed the Party since it came into being and they have always been loyal to it. The Party must work out a good plan for economic and cultural development with the view to ceaselessly raising the living standard of the people. Resistance in the war against US aggression may drag out. Our compatriots may have to undergo new sacrifices in terms of property and human lives. In any case we must be resolved to fight against the US aggressors until total victory.

*Our rivers, our mountains,*  
*Our men will always remain.*  
*The Yanks defeated, we will build*  
*Our country ten times more beautiful.*

No matter what difficulties and hardships may lie ahead our people are sure to win total victory. The US imperialists will have to pull out. Our fatherland will be re-united. Our compatriots in North and South will be re-united under the same roof. Our country will have the signal honor of being a small nation which through heroic struggle has defeated two big imperialisms — French and American — and made a worthy contribution to the national liberation movement.

ABOUT THE WORLD COMMUNIST MOVEMENT: Having dedicated my whole life to the cause of revolution, the more I am proud to see the growth of the international communist and workers’ movement, the more deeply I am grieved at dissensions that are dividing fraternal parties. I wish that our Party will do its best to contribute effectively to the restoration of unity among fraternal parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism in a way consonant with the requirements of heart and reason. I am sure that the fraternal parties and countries will unite again.

ABOUT PERSONAL MATTERS: In all my life I have wholeheartedly and with all my forces served the fatherland, and revolution and the people. Now if I should depart from this world there is nothing that I am sorry to have done. I regret only not to be able to serve longer and more. After my passing away great funerals should be avoided in order not to waste time and money of people. Finally to the whole people, the whole Party, the army, to my nephews, nieces, youths, children I leave behind my boundless affec-
tion. I also convey my fraternal greetings to the comrades, friends, youths and children of the world. My ultimate wish is that our whole Party and people closely united in the struggle to build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam and make a worthy contribution to the world revolution.

The Trade Union Congress

THE WAY IS OPEN to a qualitatively new development of Australian trade unionism. Powerful forces are pushing the movement forward to change, although most union activists concerned may not have yet clarified the issues into conscious aims and methods of the new unionism whose necessity is becoming evident. The recent Congress of the Australian Council of Trade Unions expressed the growing demand for change, and a break with the past which only appeared to centre upon the election of a new President and executive.

The daily press (from the most sensational and reactionary to the serious and "progressive" components) represented the Congress as essentially an arena of a personal power struggle between Messrs. Souter and Hawke, with sinister implications of a leftwing conspiracy lurking somewhere in the background. But when it came to analysing and explaining the result, both in numbers and implication, the old labels somehow seemed inadequate.

Was it a "leftwing" victory? Is Hawke a "leftwinger?" If so, why did the leftwing win and what happened to the old-established rightwing majority? And how explain by old labels and formulae the sometimes peculiar line-ups and shifting alliances which elected Hawke by 49 votes (though the expert numbers men on both sides had predicted different results, ranging from Hawke by a hundred to Souter by 16)?

Hawke's election was first of all a defeat for the rightwing. In this sense it was of course a victory for the left. And the candidate supported by the left won only because he had the support of many centre unions and delegates, and even some right of centre. The real surprise was not Hawke's victory, but the relatively narrow margin of the win. Viewed objectively, Hawke was surely the better candidate on almost every count — intellectual ability, age, qualifications, spirit and temperament, capacity as a union advocate (which should appeal above all to the arbitrationist element, stronger in centre and right than in left — though by no means absent there). The solid and even surprising support for Souter was essentially an ideological and regimented rightwing vote, built
up quite a bit by padded affiliations from some rightwing unions whose administrations have successfully insulated themselves from rank and file opinion and control, or even the responsibility of conveying information to their members. One such union trebled its affiliation a few weeks before Congress and its hierarchy probably counted the members’ fees well spent even though Hawke won, since they swung the vote in one of the groups which elect half the executive.

By this win, and by dividing the two junior vice-presidents, the rightwing salved as much as possible from the wreck of its design to perpetuate cramping rightwing control of the ACTU machine that has been such a feature of the past decade and more.

Features of this control were not so much the adoption of rightwing policies and resolutions, but the obstruction and even castration of action needed to implement resolutions and policies adopted by ACTU Congresses and the demands thrown up by workers through the militant constituent unions. This skilful combination of ability to absorb militant demands within the framework of negotiation — compromise — arbitration was the hallmark of Albert Monk and the main skill he imparted to his apprentice Souter.

Why did the rightwing fail, despite its cohesion, its ideological conformity, the powerful pressures it exerted and the varied inducements it traded? The main reasons were perhaps its obvious lack of vision, its clear commitment to old ideas, methods and perspectives, its routinism and conservatism. Though the rightwing is developing some new thinkers, like J.P. Ducker, these few lack any scope for the ideas they develop. These are in fact only tactical plans to keep things essentially as they are, while pretending to modernise; talking about “unity” with the aim of using a unity on their terms as a prison to contain unwary militants who are willing to exchange the substance of militant action for the shadow of militant phrases and the illusion of uniting all sections behind a militant program.

The ideological-conformist rightwing showed a keen instinct in backing Souter, although some had flirted with the idea of backing Hawke, earlier even pledging their support. This can be said without any commitment to a judgment that Hawke stands firmly on the left, or that the present tiny majority on the ACTU Executive is a left bloc. Hawke’s statements on the future of unionism show he is far more open to the demands of change, modernisation and militancy than Souter ever was. His ideas about the scope of unionism, the perspective and range of its demands and the need for modernisation are a framework that has to be filled with content.
And the future dialogue and struggle in the union movement which will centre precisely on the character of this content.

The debate on future action against the penal clauses throws a light on the possible evolution of this debate, and the type of issues which will arise. The Congress divided 404-271 in rejecting an amendment going further than the Executive’s recommendation. Allowing for accidental caucus decision, operating against both sides, the 271 represented a stand by the left on the issue itself and the tactics of the struggle. The 404 represented a coalition of what is sometimes called part of the left-centre, genuinely opposed to penal legislation but anxious that its methods be “realistic,” with the rightwing whose attitude ranges from purely theoretical distaste for the legislation to an open acceptance of penal sanctions.

This leftwing vote surprised many, including some of the left who were concerned lest the vote would reveal a weakness in support of the militant stand on this issue. But it won the support of 40 per cent of delegates, including every militant union regularly restricted and penalised by the legislation and the Court of Pains and Penalties. The vote reflected the impact of the May strikes, the growing mass impatience of workers at the law’s clear and obvious partisanship and denial of democracy.

This vote was a clear indication of the basic strength of militant unionism, that its positions more correctly reflect rank and file opinion than do all the manoeuvres, intrigues and passivity of the arbitrationists, despite the latter’s support from official ideology and the mass media.

The coming contest in unionism has entered a new and healthier phase, in which the real and important differences on aims, demands, policies and methods can be fought out in the realistic context of modern problems posed by the scientific and technological revolution. This will remain a struggle between left and right, militant and conservative, socialist and reformist trends and ideas and personalities. It will retain elements of old arguments and the imprint of personalities, but it will, hopefully, move forward from the old, outdated and outworn framework, ideas and personalities that dominated even after the changed conditions called for a new impulse and direction.

The left movement, in all its breadth and sweep, has to participate actively and decisively in the ferment and struggle of ideas which is clearly developing in the unions. These concern the new horizons of union thinking — the much bolder and more radical economic, social and political demands which social change pose and make practical today; the total involvement of the trade unions in all issues and aspects of the social and political struggle, the new possi-
bilities of industrial unionism uniting whole industries and blue and white collar workers in powerful industrial unions that can most effectively challenge the supranational giants of capital that increasingly own and control Australia and manipulate Australians.

A key issue will remain that between the two differing concepts of unionism: either a democratic movement based upon active participation of its members in workshop or institution, its methods always based upon mass action, or a movement run from the top, committed to arbitration and legalism and thus absorbed into the system. The left still needs to develop its ideas and action program for unionism. It has a new opportunity following the ACTU Congress.

THE IMMINENT FEDERAL ELECTIONS also seem to foreshadow a new framework of political struggle. Whatever the outcome — the question seems to be only how many seats the government will lose — new strains and tensions must develop. And it should not be wishful thinking to predict that the post-election situation should favour the left, given it can reach more agreement upon its perspectives and methods of action. The pressure of great social and political issues has shaken up the whole political structure.

A certain disillusion with the established parliamentary parties, including the Labor Party, even with the whole bourgeois parliamentary system, has grown over recent times. The real sources of power are more and more seen or felt to be outside parliament — whether in big business boardrooms, the bureaucracy, or the opinion manipulators.

The disillusion develops while the political and social issues affect people more deeply and impel many towards action. This action tends to by-pass parliamentary and legal forms, whether the form be strikes, demonstrations, public protests, sit-ins, or other ways. Movements around particular issues intervene in the elections (defence of public education, anti-conscription, pensioners) expressing disillusion in the traditional parties and the system itself.

These are signs of a growing new force in political life, the first shoots of a mass movement which could change the direction of political struggle. Whatever the election result, the big issues of domestic and foreign policy will remain, and in general terms they will be operated as before, whichever government is returned. The most favourable result would of course be the defeat of the sitting government, for this would be a vote of censure upon the government which acts always for the wealthy monopolies, which committed Australia to United States imperialist aggression in
Vietnam, introduced conscription, pursues a colonialist policy in New Guinea and towards the aborigines and has failed to tackle urgent social issues such as health, social services and education.

Defeat for the sitting government could only mean election of Labor, whose policy is well within the limits set by the system. Yet return of a Labor Government would certainly mean new terms of political action, since it would subject to a new test the philosophy and practice of reformism — a test that is new both since it is 20 years since Labor was in office federally, and because new social conditions exist which make it harder for social reformism to satisfy those who want fundamental social change, or even radical reforms in society, as experiences of Labor in office in Britain have emphasised.

RECENT EVENTS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA continue to cause deep anguish in the left the world over. The terrible logic of the August 21st intervention has dictated a whole series of events. Changes in leadership are made to meet the demand for "normalisation," but each change is followed by new demands. The most published changes are made at the top and the process will go on there until the old guard who supported Novotny are back in undisputed control, perhaps behind a facade of a few other figures. Just as important are the less publicised changes in lower party, government and economic bodies, changes carried out from on top, by administrative means, without popular participation or election because there is no other way to push through the changes.

It is suggested by some that any criticism of these developments is an interference in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia and its Communist Party. “Only the Czechoslovakian Party leadership can make a Marxist-Leninist assessment of developments there.” All this might sound a little better if what is happening today were a new development, unconnected with previous events. It would sound a little more convincing if those who say it had said it in 1968, had been prepared to accept the Czechoslovakian Party’s assessment, if “interference” then had been confined to comments, however critical.

Two indivisible considerations impel comment: the principle of socialist relations between nations, which is moral as well as political, practical as well as theoretical; the continuing effects of the occupation of Czechoslovakia upon the international revolutionary movement (including the consequences for the USSR and the other countries concerned).