

# Australian Communist



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**China and the Widening of  
Relative Poverty**

**The Class Structure of Chinese  
Capitalist Society**

**The CPA (M-L) and the Theory of  
the Three Worlds**

**and more...**





***“The rise to power of revisionism means the rise to power of the bourgeoisie.”***

***– Mao Zedong, from a talk of Chairman Mao’s in August 1964,  
cited in “Leninism or Social-Imperialism” (April 1970)***

**M**odern China, the class basis of its society, and its position and role in the global economy and international order, are far from settled questions among international communist organisations and individuals that claim, in some form or another, adherence to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Does China remain socialist? Has it reverted to capitalism? Has it become an imperialist country? Or is it some hybrid system that cannot so easily be explained with such terms?

While acknowledging divergent analyses and opinions exist within the international communist movement, far from being mere academic questions of theory, for revolutionaries around the world today one’s class analysis of China and its place in the world has very concrete real-world implications for practice.

China today is mounting a challenge to the long held global hegemony of US imperialism. The rivalry between the US and China for influence and access to resources and markets around the world has created the conditions for a new Cold War, with the very real potential for it to become a hot one. How should communists understand these developments and how should they respond?

Our Party has regularly published its own analysis and positions on these questions. In 2018, we published a pamphlet titled *Explaining China: How a socialist country took the capitalist road to social-imperialism*, concluding that China was a social-imperialist country (socialist in word, imperialist in deed), recognising that the rivalry between the two powers is an inter-imperialist one.

This edition of *Australian Communist* includes several articles, among others, dealing with different aspects of China, from both contemporary and historical perspectives. Our focus on China in this edition should not be construed as an attack on China at the neglect of US imperialism, the far more dangerous and belligerent imperialist power in the world today, and the imperialist power most dominant in Australia. Rather, we offer these articles as a very modest contribution to the ongoing debate among the international communist movement on these questions, and are sure that readers will find them interesting and useful.

**Editors, September 2020**



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# China and the Widening of Relative Poverty

by Nick G.

**M**ing Chai and Shen Mengyu are both citizens of the People's Republic of China.

Ming Chai was formerly an Executive of the ZTE Corporation, a major Chinese telecommunications equipment maker based in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. Originally a state-owned company, ZTE "went public" (Stock Exchange-speak for opening itself to private shareholding investors) in 1997 with the result that it is now 70 per cent private and 30 per cent state owned.

Ming Chai is not only a very wealthy Chinese. He is also a cousin of President Xi Jinping.

In 2014, Ming Chai gambled \$27 million, and in 2015, \$50 million at Melbourne's Crown Casino and is the subject of Australian money-laundering investigations.

Shen Mengyu is a graduate in mathematics and computer science, but took the path of

integrating with the working class and organising them in fights for their rights at work.

After her graduation in 2015, Shen Mengyu turned her back on a white-collar career and obtained work at a Japanese-funded auto parts factory – Guangzhou NHK Spring Precision. In 2018 she was elected by the rank and file to a nine-person negotiating team. That was on April 13. On May 28, she was sacked by the company and its tame-cat union.

She then took up the case of workers at a privately-owned (US-based) welding company in Shenzhen, Jasic International.

On July 27, 2018, after two weeks of protests, the police detained 29 people, including laid-off workers, their families and supporters. Shen Mengyu was seized and disappeared. Held by the police, she was pressured into reappearing on TV to recant her self-professed Maoism.

Of these two people, one supports China's return to the socialist road; the other benefits from its departure. One went into factories to organize workers, the other went to a luxury casino to speculate with funds amassed through the exploitation of workers.

This tale of two citizens is the tale of the two basic classes facing each other in today's capitalist China.

## Is China capitalist?

How did a formerly socialist society – one of the world's most egalitarian and least socially polarised – provide the circumstances for the emergence of the classes to which Ming Chai and Shen Mengyu belong?

We attempted to answer this in December 2018, when we published *Explaining China: How a*



*Shen Mengyu – serving the people in struggle*



*socialist country took the capitalist road to social-imperialism.*<sup>1</sup>

Some people, however, remain unconvinced about China's restoration of capitalism. They argue that the country has lifted millions of people out of absolute poverty and could only have done so because it is still a socialist country. Their belief appears to be that some degree of improvement in the material standards of living for a population is not possible under capitalism. They conclude that for China to have achieved such an improvement in living standards, it must be socialist.

But is it not a fact that in today's advanced capitalist economies, our class has been lifted out of the grinding poverty of earlier times? That process was in evidence even before imperialism created what Lenin called an "aristocracy of labour" in the heartlands of finance capital.

Writing in 1847 in *Wage Labour and Capital*, Marx observed that:

The more quickly the capital destined for production – the productive capital – increases, the more prosperous industry is, the more the bourgeoisie enriches itself, the better business gets, so many more workers does the capitalist need, so much the dearer does the worker sell himself. The fastest possible growth of productive capital is, therefore, the indispensable condition for a tolerable life to the labourer.

Embedded in contemporary Chinese capitalism, as it is in all capitalism, is the relationship between capitalism as a mode of production and capitalism as a system of social relations. Capitalism leads to a significant development of the material productive forces, but also retards their development. It creates the capitalist class and the working class, but also sets in motion an irreconcilable struggle between them.

We historical materialists acknowledge that capitalism has brought forth a development of

the productive forces unrivalled by any prior social forms. For so long as this development is confined by capitalism's relations of production, the system's inherent tendencies drive it towards the accumulation of capital with its expanding wealth gaps, towards monopolies and cartels, and towards economic and financial crises. Wage slavery and exploitation are necessary to its very existence. The full benefits of the development of the productive forces under capitalism will never flow to the overwhelming majority of the people as they did during the socialist periods of the Soviet Union and People's China.

During the Mao Zedong period, China's economy developed at a high speed. During the 26 years from 1952 to 1978, the total industrial and agricultural output value increased at an average annual rate of 11.2% and 8.2% respectively.<sup>2</sup> This output requires very high levels of state expenditure in the means of production (e.g. factories, machinery, raw materials, transport infrastructure). Since the income of labourers continues to increase with the development of production, commodities (articles of consumption) tend to be in short supply, so that some people ridicule socialism as a "shortage economy".

### **Unequal distribution of wealth: smashing the "iron rice bowl"**

China is a wealthier country today than it was at any time during the era of Chairman Mao. The capitalist mode of production, however, ensures the unequal distribution of that wealth. The social relations of China, the great gaps that socialism was successfully reducing, have deteriorated as the material wealth has increased.

The capitalist measures introduced by Deng Xiaoping in the 1980s and onwards required the smashing of what Deng's supporters called the "iron rice bowl" of the workers and peasants. As the masters of society in the era of Mao Zedong,

<sup>1</sup><http://www.cpaml.org/web/uploads/Explaining+China+Final+v2.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> "Statistical Yearbook of China" 1983



the “iron rice bowl” provided workers and peasants with guaranteed employment, free health care, free and compulsory education, housing, and freedom from taxation on their wages. The hours and conditions of work were standardized and regulated, and management was supervised by workers.

The “iron rice bowl” suited the ownership system of the socialist era. There were no individual and competing private employers. But the reintroduction and restoration of private capitalist ownership after Mao’s death meant that Deng and the “reformers” had to first smash the workers’ “iron rice bowls” and make the workers “free” sellers of their own labor as a commodity in a labor market controlled by capitalists both within and outside the Party. A large number of unemployed people had to be created so that capitalists could lower the wages of workers by making them compete for jobs. This in turn led to the introduction of practices known in our capitalist economy as “labour hire”, but which are termed in China’s capitalist economy “labor dispatch” (*laowu paiqian*). That is, companies contract to sell labour power as a commodity within the labour market with all the consequences of precarious, unstable and insecure low paid employment. This has added a new element to China’s capitalist social polarisation.<sup>3</sup>

Capitalist restoration is thus not only the restoration of capitalism in the political and ideological fields. The most fundamental thing was to re-implement the wage labour system and

realize the restoration of capitalism in the economic field.

When we talk of the socialist era of Mao Zedong, we are referring to an emphasis on the elimination of polarisation into classes on the basis of socialist public ownership; an emphasis on all state power belonging to the people; an emphasis on the right of labourers to participate in management as the most fundamental right; an emphasis on the people having the capacity to monitor the government.

In the era of Mao Zedong, promoting socialist social relations, that is, social equity within the ranks of the people was of great significance. Great Han chauvinism was attacked and the equality of national minorities with the Han promoted. Patriarchy was attacked and the equality of men and women was promoted. Differences between mental and manual labour were discouraged: cadres participated in labour, workers participated in management; indeed, there was no field of social life (economic, political, educational, health, armed forces) in which workers were not expected to exercise leadership and oversight. Access to free public education and health care were fundamental to narrowing the differences between towns and the countryside and promoting equality between workers and peasants as the joint masters of socialist society.

Lifting people out of poverty is a socialist ideal but it is complemented by extending the rights and equality of the people in their social relations.

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<sup>3</sup> Translated from the Chinese website *baike.baide.com*: “Labor dispatch refers to a form of employment in which the labor dispatch agency concludes a labor contract with the dispatched worker, sends the worker to another employer, and then the employer pays a service fee to the dispatch agency. English is Labor Dispatching, also known as labor dispatch, talent leasing, labor leasing, and employee leasing. Labor payment occurs between the dispatched worker and the dispatched enterprise (the actual employer). The dispatched enterprise pays service fees to the labor dispatch agency, and the labor dispatch agency pays labor remuneration to the laborer. Labor dispatch originated in the United States, a capitalist country in the 20th century, and then spread to France, Germany, Japan and other countries. In the 1990s, in the reform of the labor system in our country's state-owned enterprises, there was labor dispatch for the placement of laid-off workers, which can be carried out across regions and industries, and the current annual salary is usually 50,000-100,000 yuan. Dispatched workers are generally engaged in low-skilled jobs, such as cleaners, security guards, salespersons, waiters, etc. Once the workers are old and weak and their working ability declines, the dispatch unit will refuse to renew their labor contract after the expiration of the labor contract.”





### **Party leaders who lack confidence in the people become capitalist-owners**

One of the challenges of building socialism is having confidence in the ability of the people to work towards the classless society of the future – Communism – by experimenting with and persevering in the development of collectivist methods aimed at reducing gaps between mental and manual labour and between urban areas and the countryside. Those gaps are inherited from capitalism and provide the foundation for the existence under socialism of bourgeois right: differences in payment based on skill levels and work value, and differences in living standards based on availability and quality of education, health and other areas of social necessity.

Lenin, Stalin and Mao Zedong had that confidence. Bukharin, Trotsky, Khrushchev and Deng Xiaoping did not. Deng Xiaoping and the leaders that followed him lacked confidence in the ability of the CPC and the broad masses in China to develop a strong, modern and relatively prosperous nation through collectivisation and self-reliance. Instead, Deng and his followers turned to

capitalist ownership and capitalist methods to push production in a direction that reopened and widened income inequality, and restored and enshrined the rights and authority of Chinese capitalists, foreign capitalists and Party people in a position to exercise all aspects of private management.

Deng was infatuated with the Chicago school of economics which stood for privatisation and

deregulation of markets. The books of Milton Friedman, the main theorist of the Chicago school, were widely available in China in the 1980s and '90s. Economic seminars were addressed by leading Western exponents of the school's "trickle-down economics".<sup>4</sup> This accorded with Deng's rehabilitation of the early Soviet Union's Bukharin, and in particular his support for the market-based "enrich yourselves" policies directed at the Soviet peasants and strongly rejected by Stalin. Deng's version was "It is glorious to get rich...we should let some people get rich first".

And they did. The Asian Development Bank Institute has stated that "before China implemented reform and open-door policies in 1978, its income distribution pattern was characterised as egalitarianism in all aspects."<sup>5</sup> This is a generalisation as there was certainly a residual bourgeois right expressed for example, in the eight-grade wage scale in the urban areas and basic subsistence farming, remunerated through work points, throughout much of rural China.

Nevertheless, the observation that China was characterised by "egalitarianism in all aspects" was largely true of China of the era of Mao Zedong. After Mao's death, that broad egalitarianism and the measures taken to support an incipient classlessness disappeared. In its place was a commitment to personal gain at the expense of others (often accompanied by ostentatious and ugly displays

**Deng and his followers turned to capitalist ownership and capitalist methods to push production in a direction that reopened and widened income inequality, and restored and enshrined the rights and authority of Chinese capitalists, foreign capitalists and Party people in a position to exercise all aspects of private management.**

<sup>4</sup> <https://newleftreview.org/issues/II115/articles/christopher-connery-ronald-coase-in-beijing>

<sup>5</sup> Shixue, Jiang (2003-09-29), "Economic Development and Integration in Asia and Latin America"



without any sense of shame) and the reappearance of class divisions.

In his 2014 book, *Class in Contemporary China*, David Goodman writes of the two working classes of the transition era:

The weight of opinion from published research is that while the old working class (in the public sector) has been considerably disempowered by the changes of the reform era, the new working class (largely migrant workers in the marketized sector of the economy) has yet to become sufficiently organized to pose much of a challenge beyond local activism, and the prospect of cooperation between the two segments of the working class remains low...Of course there is always the possibility that in the longer term the two labour movements may find that their circumstances and interests merge...In the case of the PRC, where the working classes have legitimacy and authority to act by virtue of the CCP's (stated) ideology, any additional movement or organization of the working class may have the potential to be even more politically significant.

The country I visited in 1974 and 1979 was indeed poorer than today's, but it was developing towards a collective sharing of the available and steadily increasing wealth of a socialist society. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution such elements of social wealth as free, decent health care and free education were brought to areas of the vast countryside for the first time. Those things no longer exist. And while the country was poorer, there was an acceptance of working class leadership and the need to follow the socialist path, not the capitalist path.

The first stage of China's restoration of capitalism was marked by a vicious program of decollectivisation similar to the primitive accumulation of capital in the early stage of pre-monopoly capitalism. Indeed, travelling to China on many occasions after 1979, I was often to hear the excuse that China needed to go through its own version of the misery of the Industrial

Revolution before it could get wealthier and stronger. They meant that a class of workers would be forced to work long hours in atrocious conditions for low wages (wages that were sometimes never paid). They would have no rights at work and no escape from poverty, alienation and exploitation except through a growing rash of suicides. A huge floating population of *mangliu* (peasants who had left the land after the communes were abolished) was released onto the labour market, and the influence of industrial production within the economy began to displace that of agriculture. Waged workers in the former sector grew in number, whilst peasants rewarded on the near-subsistence work points system declined in number.

Although wage levels are still low for the industrial proletariat, *per capita* income has increased for many urban residents in management and service sector roles and in the corporate economy, and a rich peasant sector has reappeared.

Apologists for the restoration of capitalism in China argue that it has lifted hundreds of millions *out of* absolute poverty. What the apologists leave out is that they have been "lifted" *into* one of the most unequal countries in the world.

Some poverty alleviation measures have been implemented under Xi Jinping. The objective has been to stop China from being dependent on export markets – a position of weakness – to the stronger position of having created a domestic market for consumption. This also supports the availability of excess capital for investment overseas. This is the current phase of China's capitalist restoration. Capitalism with Chinese characteristics has followed a path that has been a departure from traditional capitalist history in some respects, but this should not be used to prettify Chinese capitalism.

### Letting the Gini into the battle

The internationally accepted measure of a country's wealth gap is the Gini Coefficient. The coefficient ranges from 0 (or 0%) to 1 (or 100%),





with 0 representing perfect equality and 1 representing perfect inequality.

China did not begin calculating Gini Coefficient figures until 2003 (although World Bank estimates go back to 1990). Since then, the Gini Coefficient has shown just how widely income inequality has spread throughout China - at the fastest pace and to one of the highest levels in the world. China's Gini Coefficient has risen more steeply over the last decade than in any other country, according to the International Monetary Fund.<sup>citation?</sup>

Taking the Asian Development Bank Institute's estimation of Chinese income distribution during the era of Mao Zedong as "egalitarianism in all aspects", but also acknowledging the eight-grade wage system and rural income based on work points, we could roughly say that China's Gini Co-efficient was probably no higher than 10% prior to Deng's "reforms". By 1990, according to the World Bank, that figure had sky-rocketed to 32.2%, and then kept climbing to its highest point of 43.7% in 2010. The latest figures show a gradual decline to 38.6% by 2015. (Australia's

Gini Co-efficient has steadily risen over nearly four decades of neo-liberalism, from 31.3% in 1981 to our latest figure of 35.8% in 2014.)<sup>6</sup>

Capitalist methods in China have resulted in a faster elimination of absolute poverty, but at the cost of entrenching massive relative inequality and a new class structure. Socialist methods were doing both, but not in ways that provided scope for the speedy enrichment of a new capitalist class.

Socialism did not fail in China. It was defeated.<sup>7</sup> The defeat was the work of capitalist-roaders inside the leadership of the Communist Party. Deng Xiaoping was their main representative. This defeat is no cause for pessimism but for renewed determination to understand how socialism must be protected in the future.

For China, the class of Ming Chais must be overthrown and power placed back in the hands of those to whom Shen Mengyu devoted her service. A return to the socialist road is inevitable, but must be won through revolutionary struggle.

## EXPLAINING CHINA:

### How a socialist country took the capitalist road to social-imperialism

#### EXPLAINING CHINA:

How a socialist country took the capitalist road to social-imperialism



Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)  
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#### From the introduction:

China must be explained. It has become the world's second most powerful state and is breathing down the neck of its rival, US imperialism, in every important field. Its economic, political, military and ideological leadership is in the hands of the party founded by Chairman Mao, the Communist Party of China. The present leader, Xi Jinping, advocates Marxism and the socialist road. In practice, however, there has been a large-scale reversion to capitalist practices, and the question must be asked whether or not China deserves the label Mao once cursed the Soviet Union with, namely that it is social-imperialist.

What does social-imperialism mean? What are its characteristics? Does the term have a scientific basis or has it always been a convenient term of abuse to hurl at one's opponents within the Communist ranks?

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<sup>6</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=CN>

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the important distinction between concepts of "failure" and "defeat" see Pao-Yu Ching, *From Victory to Defeat: China's Socialist Road and Capitalist Reversal*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2019



# The Class Structure of Chinese Capitalist Society

by Red China Net Theory Writing Group

*This article was first published in 2017 on the Chinese Marxist political website **RedChinaCN.net**. It has been translated from the original Chinese by us, and we are solely responsible for any discrepancies or mistakes arising in translation. In publishing this article, we do not necessarily endorse the analysis that follows, but think that as an analysis originating from Chinese Marxists based in China itself, it is worthy of consideration in the debate over questions of the class nature of modern Chinese society. The article in the original Chinese can be accessed here:*

<http://redchinacn.net/portal.php?mod=view&aid=41630>

Chairman Mao said: "Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution. A revolutionary party is the guide of the masses, and no revolution ever succeeds when the revolutionary party leads them astray."

The basic reason why all previous revolutionary struggles in China achieved so little was their failure to unite with real friends in order to attack real enemies. The basic tasks of Marxist theorists are to understand and grasp the main contradictions of a capitalist society, to understand and grasp the basic laws of class struggle in a specific capitalist society, and to provide a guide for the proletarian revolution, and to clarify the leading forces of the revolution. They must distinguish between primary and secondary targets, identify proletarian allies, and strive to fight, unite, or disintegrate various intermediate forces when necessary.

The most basic class contradiction in modern capitalist society is the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In a capitalist society, the bourgeoisie possesses the means of production and seizes surplus value by exploiting the labor of others. Since modern Chinese capitalism evolved in the form of capitalist restoration after the failure of the socialist revolution, a large part of the Chinese

bourgeoisie came from the upper levels of the "party-state" bureaucracy (here the "party-state" refers to a bourgeois state governing under the name of the "communist party"); the latter not only serves the bourgeoisie and capitalist accumulation through the state machinery they control, but individuals also often accumulating huge wealth by cleverly seizing the entire people and collective property.

The proletariat is a laborer who does not own the means of production and is forced to sell his or her labor power for a living. In the core countries of the world capitalist system, the proletariat is generally the largest (though not necessarily an absolute majority). In semi-peripheral countries, the proletariat is generally the one with the largest number in the urban sector.

Historically, peasants accounted for the vast majority of China's population. Today, nearly half of China's workers still live in rural areas (about two-thirds of them work in agriculture, and the other one-third of them work in industry and services). In the Marxist tradition, peasants were often considered part of the "petty bourgeoisie". This is no longer in line with the actual situation of modern capitalist society. In China's current capitalist society, agricultural workers living in rural areas can hardly meet the normal living needs of families. Today, there are hardly any



"peasant" families where one or more of its labour force works<sup>8</sup> as hired labourers in the cities or nearby towns. The agricultural production activities of rural workers actually help the labourers who work in cities or towns to complete the function of labour reproduction, rather than as independent commodity production activities.

Therefore, labourers in rural China, whether engaged in agriculture or non-agriculture, should generally be regarded as semi-proletarian.

Similarly, the majority of labourers identified in official statistics as employed in the urban "self-employed" sector are living in conditions similar to those of the proletariat, and even those who are not employed in the capitalist sector should be considered part of the semi-proletariat.

Not all workers in the urban sector are part of the proletariat. In addition to a large number of ordinary wage labourers, the modern capitalist economy also needs a group of managers and professional technicians who serve capitalists. These managers, professional and technical personnel, such as enterprise middle managers, grass-roots civil servants, engineers, technicians, university professors, teachers, doctors, lawyers, actors, sports stars, etc., play an important role in the capitalist economy and in the reproduction of capitalist social relations and ideology. They have special skills, their labour reproduction costs are much higher than those of the general proletariat, and they have some control over their labour processes. In order to guarantee the normal functioning of the capitalist society, the bourgeoisie is willing to make certain concessions to these special hired workers. The wages given to them are significantly higher than those of the ordinary proletariat, and actually include a part of the surplus value. Such special wage labourers are petty bourgeoisie in modern capitalist society.

The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is the main class contradiction in

a capitalist society, and the proletariat is the leading force for the future socialist revolution. However, during a period of relatively stable development of capitalism and normal bourgeois rule, the modern petty-bourgeoisie was generally the most politically active class. The ideological contest between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is often manifested through the various trends of thought prevailing in the petty bourgeoisie. This social phenomenon has something to do with the fact that a section of the petty bourgeoisie is directly engaged in the reproduction of bourgeois ideology (e.g. university professors, actors, sports stars) and that the majority of the petty bourgeoisie has relatively more "leisure" than the proletariat to care about various political issues.

As far as China is concerned, in the early days of capitalist restoration, China's petty-bourgeoisie (then called "intellectuals") was a major part of the revisionist group (which later evolved into the upper class of the bourgeoisie) to launch a capitalist restoration and attack the working class.

In the world capitalist system, in general, the labour market is divided by nation states, which determines the huge differences in labour prices among core, semi-peripheral, and peripheral countries. However, because the modern petty-bourgeoisie possesses special labour skills, the core countries often use higher labour prices to attract the modern petty-bourgeoisie in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries. This has caused the modern petty-bourgeois labour market to be global in scope and relatively unified. This is the main material basis for the modern petty-bourgeoisie in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries supporting neoliberal globalization and advocating so-called "liberalism" in politics.

As the relative position of Chinese capitalism in the world capitalist system has been rising in recent years, this has in turn created illusions

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<sup>8</sup> The Chinese text uses the expression *dǎ gōng* (打工) which refers more specifically to manual labour.



among a section of the petty bourgeoisie, linking their own social and economic status to that of the capitalist nation-state and pinning their hopes on the realization of their greater material interests in the prosperity of Chinese capitalist accumulation. This is the main material basis of the nationalist ideology that is popular among a section of the petty bourgeoisie.

On the other hand, as part of the proletariat and semi-proletarian working masses fantasize about increasing their children's social status by increasing investment in labour reproduction (increasing "human capital" investment), the existing petty-bourgeoisie is also facing increasing severity. Competition is resulting in depreciation of the price of some petty-bourgeois labour. Moreover, the vicious competition between large numbers of petty bourgeoisie in terms of consumption and their illusions of being close to the bourgeoisie have raised the costs of living of petty bourgeois labour in order to maintain a social and economic status equivalent to that of the petty bourgeoisie<sup>9</sup>, "urban private units" and officially estimated urban unemployed persons; and the urban proletariat includes all urban employed persons in "urban units" and "urban private units", with the exception of those employed in public administration and social organizations, professional technicians and urban capitalists.

Estimating the size of the modern petty bourgeoisie in cities and towns is based on the "professional and technical personnel" of the urban sector in official statistics.

"Party-state bureaucracy" refers to officially defined employees of public management and social organizations.

Before 1992, there were no data on capitalists in official statistics. From 1992 to 2014, the "capitalist class" included officially defined urban private enterprise investors and rural private enterprise investors. After 2014, official statistics no longer provide data on urban and rural private

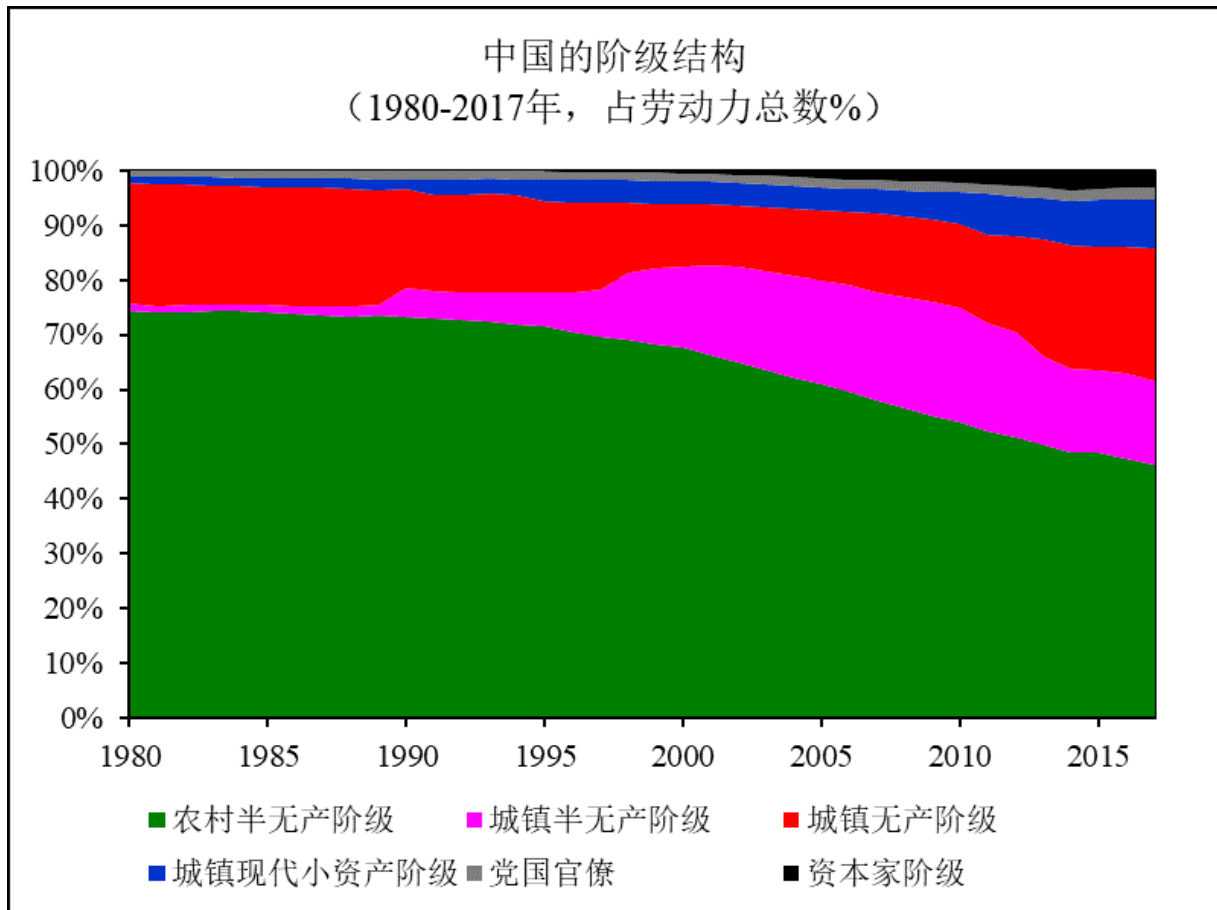
(e.g. they cannot afford to buy a house, get married, send their children to "elite" schools etc.). These two tendencies have caused a considerable part of the petty bourgeoisie to constantly face the threat of proletarianization or to actually degenerate into the proletariat. The tendency of the petty bourgeoisie to become part of the proletariat means that a considerable part of the petty-bourgeois youth radicalized their ideology, and even initially accepted Marxism-Leninism and moved closer to the proletariat on the objective material basis.

Figure 1 (see pg.12) shows the changes in the social class structure in China since 1980. In Figure 1, Chinese society is divided into six classes (or groups). Of these, the rural semi-proletariat includes all rural employed persons (whether engaged in agriculture or non-agriculture) and officially estimated rural unemployed persons, with the exception of rural capitalists; the urban semi-proletariat includes all urban employed persons who are not employed in "urban units"

enterprise investors. We estimate the total number of capitalists in China by using the proportion of "employers" reported by the World Bank among all employed persons in China; the total number of capitalists estimated from this is counted as urban capitalists. As of 2015, the number of rural capitalists is no longer estimated.

As shown in Figure 1, in the 1980s, China's class structure still had the typical characteristics of a peripheral country in the world capitalist system: the rural semi-proletariat accounted for the vast majority of the population (73-74%). On the other hand, the Chinese class structure during this period also showed the typical characteristics of a socialist country in the twentieth century: in the urban sector, almost all the labour force worked in the formal socialist sector (units of the entire people and collectively owned units. This was reflected in the relatively high degree of proletarianism at the time. The urban proletariat accounts for the vast majority of the total urban labour force, accounting for 21-22% of the

<sup>99</sup> The work unit or *dān wèi* (单位) is the name given to a worker's place of employment in China.



**Figure 1:** China's Class Structure (1980-2017) (Note: Using the class definitions offered by the authors, the green area is the rural semi-proletariat; the pink area is the urban semi-proletariat; the red is the urban proletariat; the blue is the modern urban petty-bourgeoisie; the grey is the party-state bureaucracy; and the black is the capitalist class – eds.)

total labour force in the society. The urban semi-proletariat (mainly urban individual workers and urban registered unemployed people) is small in scale, less than 2% of the total labour force of the whole society before 1990. The modern petty bourgeoisie (then "experts" at the time) and the party-state bureaucrats each accounted for 1-2% of the entire labour force.

By the 1990s, capitalism had been fully restored and China's class structure had also undergone major changes. With the full privatization of state-owned enterprises, the urban proletariat, which was originally associated with the remnants of socialist production relations, was destroyed. Formal urban employment has shrunk sharply. By 2000, the proportion of the urban proletariat in the total labour force had fallen to only 11%. On the other hand, the expansion of the urban informal sector has forced a large number of workers to accept capitalist

sweatshop-style exploitation under conditions of high instability, insecurity, long working hours, and harsh working conditions. The urban semi-proletariat skyrocketed from 5% of the total labor force in 1990 to 15% in 2000. The ranks of the modern petty bourgeoisie in cities and towns have also expanded, reaching 4% of the total labour force of the society by 2000. In 2000, the official statistics of the number of capitalists accounted for 0.5% of the total social labour force.

From 2000 to 2010, it was a period of rapid expansion of China's capitalist economy. During this period, the relative and absolute size of the rural semi-proletariat both decreased. By 2010, the proportion of the rural semi-proletariat in the total labour force dropped to 54%; the proportion of the urban semi-proletariat in the total labour force rose to 21%. The size of the urban proletariat has recovered, accounting for





15% of the total social labour force by 2010; the proportion of modern petty bourgeoisie in the urban labour force has risen to 6%; the total number of capitalists in official statistics has increased to 2% of the total social labour force.

Since 2010, with the further development of capitalism, China's class structure has begun to undergo new and significant changes. First, the rural semi-proletariat fell below 50% for the first time in modern Chinese history. In 2017, the total number of rural semi-proletarians was reduced to 373 million, accounting for 46% of the total labour force. In the era of capitalist restoration, the surplus labour force from the rural semi-proletariat was a major driving force for the accumulation of capitalism in China. It was also an important means by which capitalists objectively provoked the contradictions between workers and peasants and forced the urban proletariat to accept low wages and poor labour conditions. The shrinking of the rural semi-proletariat will help the urban and semi-proletarians to strengthen their struggle against the capitalists.

In cities, changes have also taken place in the class structure in favor of the proletariat. The ranks of the urban proletariat have grown. By 2017, the number of urban proletarians reached 194 million, accounting for 24% of the total labor force in the whole society, and 46% of all urban employees. The number of modern petty bourgeoisie in cities and towns has further increased to 72 million by 2017, accounting for 9% of the total social labor force. On the other hand, the size of the urban semi-proletariat has shrunk. In 2017, the number of urban semi-proletarians was 124 million, accounting for 15% of the total social labour force. It is also during this period that the struggle of the proletariat and semi-proletariat against capitalist exploitation has intensified, and the share of labour income in the Chinese economy has increased.

In 2017, the total number of party-state bureaucrats employed in public management and social organization departments was 17

million, accounting for 2% of the total labour force in society. The total number of Chinese capitalists reported by the World Bank is 26 million, which is 3% of the total labour force of the whole society.

The above are the changes in China's class structure as of 2017. So, what new changes will take place in China's class structure from now to the middle of this century? Both Marxist theory and the historical experience of world capitalism tell us that with the development of capitalism, the class structure of a capitalist society will inevitably become proletarian, that is, the proletariat will become the largest class in the entire society and even become an absolute majority. At present, the rural semi-proletariat is still the largest class in China. However, according to current trends, they will be overtaken by the urban proletariat in the near future.

Figure 2 (see pg.14) compares China's working-age population (15-64 years old), total labour force (i.e. "economically active population", including employed and unemployed) and urban employed. China's working-age population has stopped growing since it exceeded 1 billion in 2011. As the labour force participation rate is still rising, China's total labour force is still growing slowly, but it will soon reach its peak. In 2017, China's economically active population was 807 million.

According to the United Nations prediction, China's total working-age population will begin to decline rapidly after 2025, and will drop to 815 million by 2050. Of the total working age population, the majority of those under the age of 25 still have to go to school, and most of those over the age of 60 will withdraw from the labour market due to their frailty. Therefore, the "best working age" population between the ages of 25 and 59 actually determines the approximate size of the total labour force. China's population between the ages of 25 and 59 will fall from 767 million in 2020 to 691 million in 2030, 641 million in 2040 and 563 million in 2050.

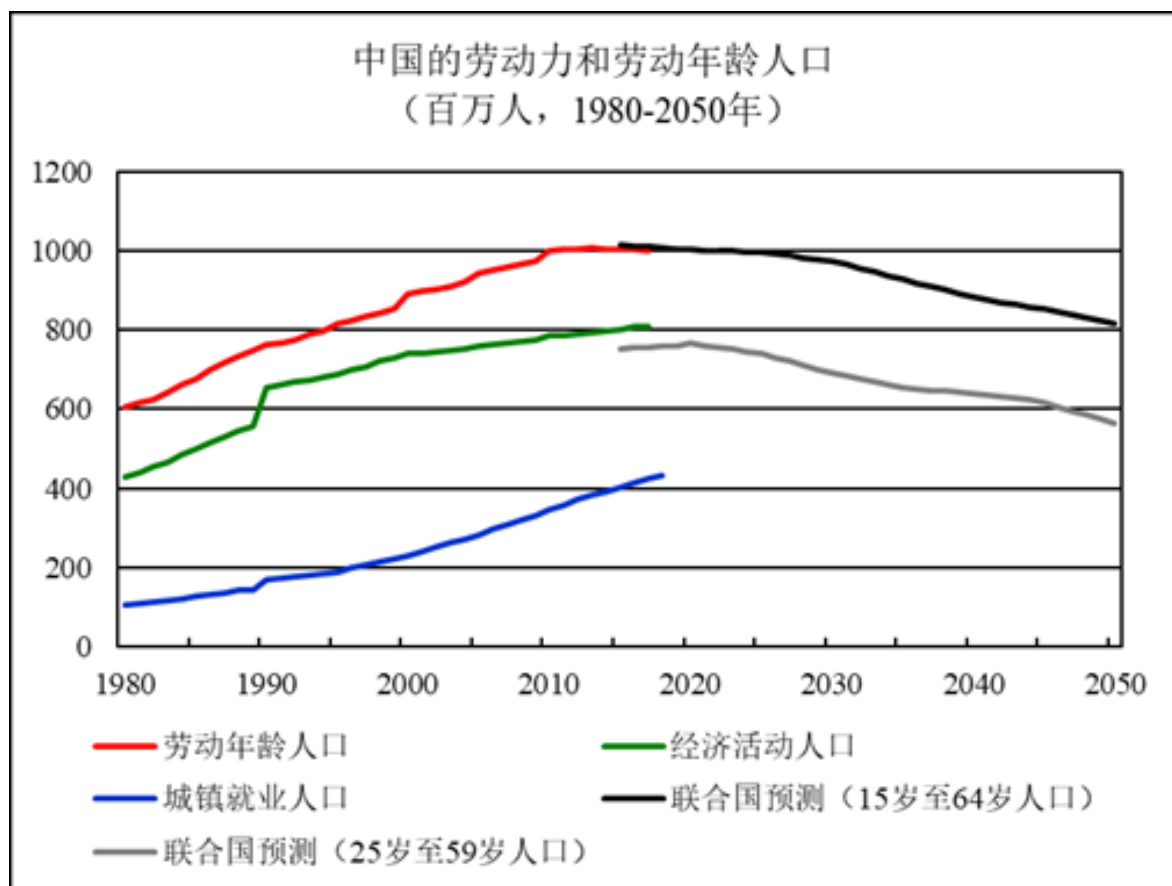




On the other hand, China's urban employment population reached 434 million in 2018 and is still rising at an annual rate of about 10 million. The difference between the urban employment population and the total working age population roughly represents the size of the surplus labour force that the Chinese capitalist economy can still mobilize. In the next few decades, this surplus labour force will shrink sharply on the one hand due to the reduction of the total labour force in China and the expansion of the urban employment force. If the urban employment force continues to increase at a rate of 10 million per year, then by 2030, the total number of urban employed will increase to about 550 million, and the total size of China's economic surplus labour will decrease to 140 million. By 2040, the total number of employed people in cities and towns

will increase to about 650 million. Beyond the total working age population at that time, the surplus labour force of the Chinese economy will virtually disappear.

The above changes, if they do occur, will not only mean that the forces of economic struggle between the urban proletariat and the modern petty bourgeoisie will greatly increase; moreover, if the proletariat, which is concentrated in cities and has a majority of the people, and the majority of the class unites around themselves, it is possible to fundamentally change the power contrast with the bourgeoisie, reshape the entire Chinese society according to their own will, and become the creators of Chinese history and world history.



**Figure 2:** China's labor force and working age population (1980-2050) (Note: This is a graph of China's labour force and working age population expressed in millions of people from 1980 to 2050. The red line is the population of working age; the green line is the total labour force, or "economically active population"; the blue line is the number of urban employed persons; the black line is the UN estimate of China's total working age population among 15 to 64 year-olds; and the grey line is the UN estimate of China's total working age population among 25 to 59 year-olds – eds.)



# The CPA (M-L) and the Theory of the Three Worlds

by Nick G.

*This article expands on some points made in our Executive Committee's reply to a reader's questions about the Theory of the Three Worlds. That reply was published on our website on June 10 2020. It prompted some comments that require further explanation.*

From time to time, questions are raised about what came to be called, in the mid-1970s, the Theory of the Three Worlds (TTW). Specifically, allegations are sometimes made about our Party and its support for this theory.

For example, it has been alleged that our founding Chairperson, Comrade E.F Hill said we should support US imperialism because Soviet social-imperialism had become the main enemy of the people of the world. It was also said that in advancing the great cause of Australian independence, as suited a Second World nation, our Party had abandoned the goal of socialism, and we had become narrow bourgeois nationalists. These and similar allegations are still directed at us occasionally, despite decades having passed since the heyday of the TTW.

The TTW also saw open differences emerge between the Albanian Party of Labour, headed by Comrade Enver Hoxha, and the Chinese Communist Party.

More broadly, some raise doubts about whether Mao had even been the source of the TTW.

The evidence suggests that this theory *was* developed by Mao Zedong on the basis of his study of, and reflections on, the various contradictions in the post-WW2 world. A contrary view, critical of China's foreign policy directions supposedly emanating from the adoption of the TTW, but seeking to hold high the legacy of Mao Zedong, describes it as the policy of the capitalist-roader Deng Xiaoping.

## Who developed the Theory of the Three Worlds?

Let it first be said that there is nothing unusual about a phenomenon, qualitative or quantitative, being divided into thirds. There are solids, liquids and gases. There are the old, middle-aged and the young, the rich, the middle class and the poor.

Communists are interested in the contradictions between things. Stalin spoke in 1928 of a "classification of countries into three types – countries with a high capitalist development (America, Germany, Britain) countries with an average capitalist development (Poland, Russia before the February Revolution etc.), and colonial countries..." (Stalin, *Collected Works Vol 11 p. 162*).

Previously, in the *Foundations of Leninism* (1924) he had written that "the world is divided into two camps: the camp of a handful of civilised nations, which possess finance capital and exploit the vast majority of the population of the globe; and the camp of the oppressed and exploited peoples in the colonies and dependent countries, which constitute that majority."

Was Stalin right in 1924 and wrong in 1928? Or right in 1928, but wrong in 1924? Actually, he was right both times. The fundamental division is the two camps, and the three types is a refinement of that. It is a basic tenet of materialist dialectics that one divides into two, and that contradictions exist in all things. In the decade of imperialist development that occurred after Stalin penned the *Foundations of Leninism*, the nations



possessing finance capital had developed unevenly into those with a higher degree of capitalist development and those with a lesser degree of development.

In the 1930s and during WW2, there were the two basic camps of the Axis powers and the Allies. But the Allies consisted of the socialist Soviet Union and the capitalist bourgeois democracies, while the Axis consisted not only of its major partners (Germany, Italy and Japan) but also of minor allies in Finland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, with Franco's Spain as a non-combatant fellow fascist state. There were contradictions between the Axis and the Allies, but also contradictions within each of the two major camps.

In 1977, *after* Mao's death, the Chinese communists published a lengthy document ascribing the TTW to Mao Zedong (*Chairman Mao's Theory of the Differentiation of the Three Worlds is a Major Contribution to Marxism-Leninism*). The first half of the book examines previous differentiations of global and systemic contradictions made by Lenin and Stalin, and bases the ownership of the TTW to Mao Zedong largely on his February 22, 1974 talk with Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda (see below).

The Chinese booklet did not trace Mao Zedong's earlier attempts to develop a theory around global contradictions. However, in 1998 the Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, published *Mao Zedong On Diplomacy*, a book containing many of Mao's speeches and discussions on foreign policy.

On January 3, 1962, in a discussion between Mao Zedong and Yasui Kaoru, chief director of the Japan Council Against A & H Bombs, Mao made the following observation:

"The socialist bloc can be counted as one side, and the United States, the other. Everything in between can be counted as part of the intermediate zone. However, countries in the intermediate zone are different in nature: countries like Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands

possess colonies. Other countries have been deprived of colonies, but have strong monopoly capital, such as West Germany and Japan. Some countries have gained genuine independence, such as Guinea, the United Arab Republic, Mali and Ghana. Other countries are independent in name, but dependent in fact. The countries of the intermediate zone are varied in kind and different in nature, but the United States wants to swallow them all up." (Mao Zedong, *On Diplomacy*, "Countries in Intermediate Zone Vary In Nature", Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 1998 p. 372)

This saw the primary contradiction as one between social systems, with the capitalist system headed by US imperialism. Every other capitalist and semi-feudal country was seen as constituting an intermediate zone, although differences were noted between the countries in that zone. What determined their place in the zone was that they were all targets for attempted control by US imperialism.

Very little had changed eighteen months later when, on August 9, 1963 Chairman Mao made the following comment in talks with Somali Prime Minister Abdirashid Ali Shermarke:

"The main target of our struggle is the United States, while Britain, France, Italy and West Germany come behind." (ibid. p.381 "The Oppressed Will Finally Rise Up")

A month later, however, at a talk by Mao Zedong at the Working Conference of the Central Committee of the CCP in September 1963, Mao had begun to talk of two intermediate zones:

"In my view there are two intermediate zones: the first, Asia, Africa and Latin America and the second, Europe, Japan and Canada are not happy with the United States. The six-nation Common Market, represented by De Gaulle, is made up of powerful capitalist countries. Japan in the East is a powerful capitalist country. They are unhappy with the US and the Soviet



Union. Are the Eastern European countries that satisfied with Khrushchev of the Soviet Union? I don't believe so. Things are evolving and contradictions are revealing themselves." (ibid p. 387)

The contradictions that were unfolding globally were developing into an obvious trend. Mao referred to this in his talks with Kikunami Katsumi, Politburo member of the Japanese Communist Party on January 5, 1964:

"We have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union; we are two countries in the socialist camp. But the relations between our two countries are not as good as those between China and the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party or China and the Ikeda faction. This is something we should think about.

"When we talk about intermediate zones, we refer to two separate parts. The vast economically backward countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America constitute the first. Imperialist and advanced capitalist countries represented by Europe constitute the second. Both are opposed to American control. Countries in Eastern Europe, on the other hand, are against control by the Soviet Union. The trend is quite obvious." (ibid p. 388)

Mao again referred to the two "intermediate zones" in talks with a Japanese Socialist delegation on July 10, 1964:

"We now put forward the view that there are two intermediate zones: Asia, Africa and Latin America are the first, and Europe, North America and Oceania, the second. Japan belongs to the second intermediate zone too." (ibid. p 389)

Despite the criticisms of Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin and of the revisionism characteristic of Khrushchev's leadership, Mao Zedong still referred in 1964 to the Soviet Union and those compliant states attached to it, as part of the socialist camp. Since June, 1963, the

Chinese had written and published seven of the eleven letters and documents published in 1965 in the collection titled *The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement*. Although Soviet economic policies were condemned, like the Yugoslav's, for embracing capitalist methods, there was not yet an analysis that suggested that the Soviet Union was imperialist. Its foreign policy was instead condemned as serving the interests of US imperialism through opposition to wars of national liberation, support for neo-colonialism, and the pursuit of peaceful coexistence to the exclusion of struggle against imperialism.

By the time Mao met the US journalist Edgar Snow on January 9, 1965, the concept of a Third World comprising the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America had become relatively common. Snow broached the concept in a question he put to Mao:

"United States intervention in Vietnam, the Congo, and other former colonial battlefields suggests a question of some theoretical interest as seen within Marxist concepts. The question is whether the contradiction between neo-colonialism and the revolutionary forces in what the French like to call the 'Third World' – the so-called underdeveloped or ex-colonial or still colonial nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America – is today the principal political contradiction in the world? Or do you consider that the basic contradiction is still one between the capitalist countries themselves?" (Edgar Snow, *The Long Revolution*, Hutchinson and Co, London, 1973, p. 200)

Mao's reply indicated that he was far from certain about the matter, and had not yet arrived at a consistent theory of differentiation. Snow records Mao's response:

"If one looked at France one saw two reasons for de Gaulle's policies. The first was to assert independence from American domination. The second was to attempt to adjust French policies to changes occurring



in the Asian-African countries and in Latin America. The result was intensified contradiction between the imperialist nations. But was France part of its so-called “Third World”? Recently he had asked some French visitors about that and they had told him no, that France was a developed country and could not be a member of the “Third World” of undeveloped countries. It seemed that the matter was not so simple.” (ibid p. 201)

Whilst Mao was puzzling over how to best define the principal and secondary contradictions on the global stage, the so-called “elder brother” of the socialist camp, the Soviet Union, had seen its capitalist measures create a Soviet bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie within the CPSU itself.

Strikes by workers, ethnic unrest and vandalism and riots by unemployed and semi-professional criminal elements were growing in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Vladimir A. Kozlov, in his study of mass uprisings in the post-Stalin USSR, quotes a pamphlet by decorated war hero and CPSU member Ivan Trofimovich Zhukov in early 1956 that articulated proletarian resistance to Khrushchev’s changes:

“Comrade miners, workers! The workers of Kemerevo went on strike in September. Why did they go on strike? They struck against illegal actions and the tyranny of the soviet bourgeoisie, and not against Soviet power.

“The basic law of Soviet power is that everything is for the good of the people. So they say in lectures and write in the newspapers. What does this mean in reality? The reality is quite different. The riches in life are enjoyed by a small clique of people – the Soviet bourgeoisie and their toadies...

“Workers do not have flour, or there is one bag for 1,000 people, but for the city party committee there is a closed distribution of goods. Here is the so-called free trade...

“Comrades, criticism at meetings will not help. Read our leaflets and relay their contents to your comrades. Expose the Soviet bourgeoisie, their arbitrariness toward you and write leaflets. Reach out and contact us.

“For Soviet power without the bourgeoisie. Signed ‘The Union of the Just’.” (V.A. Kozlov, *Mass Uprising on the USSR: Protest and Rebellion in the Post-Stalin Years*, M.E. Sharpe, New York, 2002, p. 71)

The privileges on display by the newly-emergent Soviet bourgeoisie contrasted with the consumer shortages and growing impoverishment of the workers. In 1961-2, Khrushchev raised prices for basic foodstuffs and simultaneously increased work norms, or production quotas, thereby making it harder for workers to increase their earnings through bonuses. In fact, earnings were actually lowered for many workers through these measures.

Not satisfied with what they could rip-off from within the system, and from legal and illegal private businesses, the new bourgeoisie needed foreign markets, new sources of raw materials and external investment opportunities to reverse the stagnating economy, increase their capital accumulation, and help to placate the losers in the new social polarisation taking place throughout the area once under proletarian dictatorship.

This was no longer an “elder brother” lording it over a small number of compliant allies, but a globally expansionist power backed by a nuclear-armed military. Khrushchev outlived his usefulness to this expanding capitalist power: he was deposed in October 1964 and replaced by Brezhnev under whom the tendencies towards expansion into areas previously dominated by the US and European imperialisms developed much more quickly.

Analysis of these developments within the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party culminated in the publication by three Chinese newspapers on April 22, 1970 – the centenary of





Lenin's birth - of the seminal critique of Soviet social-imperialism, *Leninism or Social-imperialism*.

Mao now began to warn leaders of "intermediate zone" nations of the ambitions of the Soviet Union. On July 10, 1972, he gave the following warning to French Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann:

"You must watch out for the Soviet Union, whose policy is just a feint to the east and attack in the west. It talks about attacking China, while actually it intends to gobble up Europe. That's dangerous!" (op cit, *Mao Zedong On Diplomacy*, p. 452)

On September 27, 1972, Mao equated the US and Soviet imperialists, placing them in a class of their own. He told Tanaka Kakuei, Prime Minister of Japan:

"This visit of yours to Beijing makes the whole world tremble with fear, chiefly the two big powers, the Soviet Union and the US. They are rather anxious about this." (ibid p. 453)

However, it was his conversation with Kenneth Kaunda on February 22, 1974 where Mao first made clear his differentiation of countries and nations into three distinct worlds:

Mao: Who belongs to the First World?

Kaunda: I think it ought to be the world of the exploiters and imperialists.

Mao: And the Second World?

Kaunda: Those who have become revisionists.

Mao: I hold that the US and the Soviet Union belong to the First World. The middle elements, such as Japan, Europe, Australia and Canada, belong to the Second World. We are the Third World. (ibid p. 454)

#### What did the Albanians say?

The Albanians rejected the TTW and did so publicly at their 7<sup>th</sup> Congress (November 1-7,

1976). E.F Hill, who attended the Congress, dissociated himself from their attack in preliminary comments written on November 11. Those comments were published in the previous issue of *Australian Communist* (Autumn 2020, see p. 29).

Hoxha attempted to establish a theoretical position for an attack on Mao Zedong's alleged revisionism, including the TTW, in the book *Imperialism and the Revolution*, published in 1978.

Far from having a coherent theory, the arguments put forward by Hoxha were illogical, exaggerated and abusive. He said, for example:

"The notion of the existence of three worlds, or of the division of the world in three, is based on a racist and metaphysical world outlook, which is an offspring of world capitalism and reaction....the racist theory which places the countries on three levels or in three "worlds", is not based simply on skin colour. It makes a classification based on the level of economic development of the countries and is intended to define the "great master race", on the one hand, and the "race of pariahs and plebs", on the other to create an unalterable and metaphysical division in the interests of the capitalist bourgeoisie....The Chinese revisionists accept and preach that the "master race" must be preserved and the "race of pariahs and plebs" must serve it meekly and devotedly." (pp.253-4)

"Only according to Mao Tsetung's theory of "three worlds", classes and the class struggle do not exist in any country. It does not see them because it judges countries and peoples according to bourgeois geo-political concepts and the level of their economic development." (p. 256)

"Now as before, there are only two worlds, and the struggle between those two worlds, between the two antagonistic classes, between socialism and capitalism, exists not





only on a national scale but also on an international scale.” (p. 258)

Hoxha’s attempt to claim some sort of continuity with a Leninist-Stalinist theory of “two camps” based solely on social systems and class was pure sophistry. We have seen, earlier, Stalin’s 1928 differentiation of countries into “three types” according to their levels of development. Even his earlier reference to “two camps” was based on levels of economic development, with being an exploiter nation or an exploited country dependent on ownership of finance capital. In the context of imperialism, Stalin noted that “The struggle that the Emir of Afghanistan is waging for the independence of Afghanistan is objectively a *revolutionary* struggle, despite the monarchist views of the Emir and his associates...” (*Foundations of Leninism*).

Mao’s TTW more convincingly fits within Stalin’s development of Leninism in the imperialist era than does Hoxha’s repudiation of it.

#### Where does Deng fit in?

The TTW is wrongly ascribed to Deng Xiaoping by some erstwhile supporters of Mao Zedong’s legacy. It enables them to blame Deng for certain foreign policy decisions of the CCP which were arrived at under the influence of a policy that saw Soviet social-imperialism as the main danger of a new world war. China under Mao and Zhou Enlai sought a broad united front with governments loyal to US imperialism, and with US imperialism itself, against the social-imperialists. This was evident in very frank talks between Mao and Nixon on February 21, 1972; with Kissinger in 1972, 1973 and 1975; and also between Mao and Nixon’s replacement, Gerald Ford on December 2, 1975. With Kissinger, Mao discussed US willingness to use nuclear weapons to deter Soviet encroachment into Europe, whilst with Ford discussions centered on arrangements to defeat the social-imperialists and their proxies in Africa.

Mao’s pursuit of cooperation with US imperialism against Soviet social-imperialism was conceived against a backdrop of Soviet hostility towards

China. More Soviet troops faced China along their mutual border than faced Europe. The Chinese were convinced that a Soviet attack was likely and had undertaken a massive campaign of building tunnels and storing grain. They were concerned that the US would “do a Dunkirk” and withdraw its troops and missiles from Europe, allowing the Soviets to build up their forces in the east for a push into China.

Under these circumstances, a united front with US imperialism was no more outrageous than had been Mao’s pursuit of a united front with Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) during the War to Resist Japan.

This was Mao’s idea, not Deng’s. It does nothing for historical accuracy to “blame” Deng for a policy that some supporters of Mao Zedong do not wish to have associated with him.

Some people say that the TTW was spelled out by Deng Xiaoping when he spoke at the United Nations on April 10, 1974. This was also the speech in which Deng said that China would never become a superpower, and that if it did, the people of the world should rise up against it and defeat it. Nowhere else had Deng made such



*Deng Xiaoping speaking at the UN General Assembly, April 10, 1974, in which he said, “If one day China should change her colour and turn into a superpower, if she too should play the tyrant in the world, and everywhere subject others to her bullying, aggression and exploitation, the people of the world should identify her as social-imperialism, expose it, oppose it and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it.”*



a statement. The whole speech expressed Mao's, not Deng's, view of the world.

Jennifer Altehenger's *Social Imperialism and Mao's Three Worlds: Deng Xiaoping's Speech at the UN General Assembly, 1974*<sup>10</sup> agrees with that view:

Deng was the first Chinese leader to speak at a UN General Assembly since the PRC had taken over China's UN seat from the Republic of China in October 1971. Because of this, and because Deng would several years later lead the PRC into the era of 'reform and opening' and a momentous social and economic transformation, this speech has been associated closely with his person. Yet, his appointment as chairman of the Chinese delegation was rushed and not as carefully planned as later interpretations of his speech might suggest. A couple of weeks before the delegation was to travel from Beijing to New York, Mao Zedong had ensured that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would select Deng to represent China at the UN.

At short notice, the responsibility for drafting the speech was transferred from the Ministry of Trade to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and it was decided that Deng would speak. Deng, with his international experience of living in France during the early 1920s, seemed a good replacement for premier Zhou Enlai who was battling cancer. With this shift to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the man responsible for drafting the speech, Qiao Guanhua, then vice-minister and soon-to-be minister of Foreign Affairs, infused a strongly political and ideological component into the text, outlining not merely an economic policy but also an international and developmental vision

along the line of Mao's 'Three Worlds Theory'.

The speech is not a classic example of one man's revolutionary thought, delivered to an audience and later canonized in his works. It is not a classic revolutionary text. It is instead an example of a revolutionary concept conceived by one man, Mao Zedong; a text written by another man, Qiao Guanhua; and a speech presented by yet another, Deng Xiaoping. It gained fame by its association with the venue, the United Nations, and by its association with a crucial moment in time, 1974, the last years of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and an age of profound global realignments as part of the late Cold War, decolonization, national liberation movements and popular protests of 1968 and after. An interpretation of the speech, I argue, must account for the impromptu historical decisions that led Deng to travel to New York, for the setting in which the speech was presented, for the domestic Chinese context in which Mao thought up the Three Worlds Theory and for the international context which this theory was supposed to explain and influence. Because the ideas Deng presented at the special session were Mao Zedong's, Deng was merely a messenger. But the significance of the speech lay both in its content and in its historical symbolism as an event, in 1974 and for years after. Here Deng became China's international representative and, though it was far too early to call in 1974, positioned himself as China's future leader. As Deng's power grew following Mao's death in 1976, he eventually sought to disassociate himself from much of the content of his UN speech, while at the same time trying to profit from the symbolic status it had provided.

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<sup>10</sup> Altehenger, Jennifer. "Social Imperialism and Mao's Three Worlds: Deng Xiaoping's Speech at the UN General Assembly, 1974." *Revolutionary Moments: Reading Revolutionary Texts*. Ed. Rachel Hammersley. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. 175–182. Bloomsbury Collections. Web. 26 Jun. 2020. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781474252669.0028>>.



Whereas the images of Deng at the speaker's podium below the United Nations insignia proliferated decades later, the actual speech was less frequently mentioned after the early 1980s and not included in Deng's *Selected Works*.

An authoritative Chinese exposition of so-called "Deng Xiaoping Thought" <sup>11</sup> certainly distances Deng from Mao's TTW. In a section headed *From Differentiation of the "Two Major Camps" and the "Three Worlds" to Cooperation and Common Progress* we read:

Back in the mid-1960s, Mao Zedong pointed out that the world political scene was no longer a simple division and confrontation between the socialist camp and the capitalist camp as had been the case in the 1950s. The world was facing great turmoil, division and realignment...In view of this, China stopped subscribing to the concept of "two major camps" after the Sino-Soviet polemic and advanced a new theory of "three worlds."

On November 5, 1971 <sup>12</sup>, Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Qiao Guanhua for the first time stated China's view on the three worlds in a speech delivered at the United Nations:

Without economic independence, a country's independence is incomplete. The economic backwardness of the Asian, African and Latin American countries is caused by imperialist plunder. To oppose economic plunder and protect its resources is the inalienable sovereignty of an independent country. China is still a country with a backward economy. It is a developing country. Like the majority of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin

America, China belongs to the Third World.

Deng Xiaoping not only inherited but developed the theory of peaceful coexistence in light of a changing world...

The proposition of Deng Xiaoping not only enriches the theories of Lenin and Mao Zedong, but also provides the theoretical underpinning in international politics for filling a historical gap and ushering in a new era. It represents a breakthrough in the traditional theories, ranging from violent revolution to the two major camps and the three worlds.

This new theory provides both the possibility and necessity for cooperation and development between two different systems, among countries, parties and organisations, both in the international arena and among different regions and ethnic groups in the same country.

On this basis Deng Xiaoping put forward the theoretical proposition of cooperation and common progress to replace the theory of world revolution and the theory of taking class struggle as the key link.

This publication makes it clear that Deng Xiaoping saw no value in Mao's TTW, in Mao's theory of world revolution, or in Mao's theory of class struggle. Deng's "breakthrough" - his theory of cooperation and development - had an entirely different aim and objective to Mao's pursuit of unity against Soviet social-imperialism.

#### **How did the CPA (M-L) respond to the TTW?**

Reference has been made to Hill's defence of the TTW in the days following Hoxha's attack on it at the Albanian Party's 7<sup>th</sup> Congress. That was towards the end of 1976.

<sup>11</sup> Wu Jie, *On Deng Xiaoping Thought*, FLP, Beijing, 1996 pp 77 – 84

<sup>12</sup> In 1971, Deng was still working at a tractor repair plant at Xinjian County, Jiangxi Province, having been dismissed from all his posts as the "No. 2 capitalist roader in China". This was at the same time that Mao was developing his TTW.



Previously, a minor difference emerged within our Party when a group of members whose enthusiasm for revolutionary struggle ran away with them, argued that Australia was part of the Third World which was the main centre of revolutionary storms. An article was published in Australian Communist no. 72 in mid-1975 titled "Australia is part of the Third World", and proposing the adoption of the slogan of Australian national liberation. This was a position that should have been raised for internal discussion. It was wrong, was not the majority view, and should not have been published. It was repudiated in Australian Communist no. 74, although a consistent exposition of an Australian TTW did not appear until Australian Communist no. 83 in June 1977 ("Theory of Three Worlds Enriches Marxism-Leninism"). This article was also published as a pamphlet and reproduced by several other parties, including the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) and the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

The "Enriches" article defined Australia as "a country of the second world...a developed capitalist country which is plundered and controlled by one superpower, and threatened with plunder and control by the other, more aggressive superpower." It stated that Mao's TTW had helped the Party to develop its strategy not just on the basis of the theory of social systems, but on the basis of an analysis that confirmed the line of continuous revolution by stages.

If a left error had been made by claiming that Australia was part of the Third World, a rightist error emerged with the suggestion that the maximum unity required in the struggle against Soviet social-imperialism meant that it was

inappropriate to raise the question of US bases in Australia. It was argued, in an article in Australian Communist no. 98 (Feb/March 1980) that this was because US imperialism had been compelled to adopt an objectively progressive stand against the social-imperialist superpower. Again, the proper place to raise such a suggestion was through internal discussion, and even then, it should have been immediately knocked on the head. Issue 101 of the Australian Communist (Aug/ Sept 1980) clarified that this was not Party policy.

### Conclusion

Mao's Theory of the Three Worlds had a background in, and was a development of, the Marxist analysis of global social, political and economic contradictions. That underlying approach of attempting to analyse the full range of global contradictions, and to sort them into a primary contradiction and other secondary contradictions, remains valid today. However, the booklet on Mao's theory published after Mao's death by the Chinese in 1977 (*Chairman Mao's Theory of the Differentiation of the Three Worlds is a Major Contribution to Marxism-Leninism*), elevated Soviet social-imperialism to the greater danger to world peace and the greater threat to revolutionary struggles throughout the world, and became a source of a right-opportunist trend towards cooperating with US imperialism, not just in China, but in the revolutionary ranks worldwide.

Our Party saw the emergence of left and right errors in relation to the TTW. There was never a call to support US imperialism because of the TTW, but the errors mentioned illustrate the fact that correct theory emerges according to the law

**However, the booklet on Mao's theory published after Mao's death...elevated Soviet social-imperialism to the greater danger to world peace...and became a source of a right-opportunist trend towards cooperating with US imperialism, not just in China, but in the revolutionary ranks worldwide.**



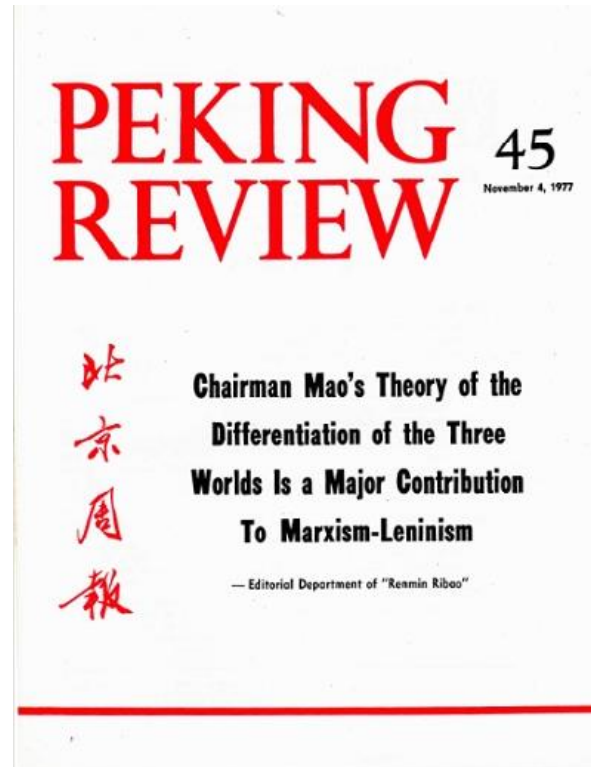


of uneven development and is a process which requires internal discussion conducted along the lines of democratic centralism.

The importance of the TTW declined with the abolition of the Soviet Union and the incorporation of its European satellites into US imperialism's sphere of influence. US imperialism appeared, for a time, to be a sole superpower capable of aiming for, and achieving "full spectrum domination". The contradiction between it and the world's people, is the main contradiction and it is clearly the Number One enemy. Complex additional contradictions continue to exist and US imperialism is challenged on a number of fronts, not the least by the growing strength and influence of Chinese social-imperialism. China is not yet, however, a superpower on a par with US imperialism and should not be elevated, as Soviet social-imperialism was, to "the greater danger to world peace".

There will be, among our members and supporters, some who are bemused by the attention we have given to the TTW. It has not been seen as a defining issue for forty years, and is not today. In so far as it is discussed at all, it is as a response to attacks on our Party based on misrepresentations of our prior approach to it, and the need to clarify the historical record.

Within the Party there are divergent views. Some argue that aspects of the Theory of the Three Worlds still hold some relevance. Particularly, the view that Australia can be described as a part of the Second World, that is the countries that have advanced capitalist systems whether they are themselves imperialist powers (Britain, some of the western EU, Russia, China) or under the control of imperialist powers (Australia, Canada, NZ, others in the EU including former members of the Eastern bloc). On the other hand, some argue strongly against the Theory of the Three Worlds. Today, adherence to or rejection of the Theory of



Chairman Mao's Theory of the Differentiation of the Three Worlds Is a Major Contribution to Marxism-Leninism  
published in Peking Review November 4, 1977 –  
published after Mao's death, the essay became a  
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movement world wide

the Three Worlds is not a defining question for our Party's ideology and practice. Discussion of these (and any other) differing views are a welcome contribution to the ideological liveliness of our organisation and will contribute in time to a better and more unified overall understanding.

Mao Zedong and the experience of the Chinese revolution strengthened, clarified and made many indispensable contributions to Marxism-Leninism. Among those are the theory of the continuation of the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the mass line, and his works on contradiction and dialectics. His Theory of the Three Worlds is not a major component of his theoretical contributions, but rather a subset of his approach to an analysis of contradictions.



# Revolutionary Organisation: The Iceberg Principle Explained

by CPA (M-L) Executive Committee

*The posting of the September online edition of our paper **Vanguard** elicited comments from two followers on our Facebook page both questioning the way in which we organise. This article seeks to answer those comments and clarify our often-misunderstood organisational principles.*

**F**ounded 56 years ago, our Party has always adhered to what we have called the “iceberg principle”: A few members are seen and open about their membership to allow the organisation to be accessible to the working class, while the membership of the majority remains largely unknown, revealed appropriately as their workplace, community and personal circumstances demand.

Why do we organise in this way? We would be the first to concede that a fully open Communist Party is entirely possible in our country at the present time. However, constitutional democracy and its attendant rights mask the reality of the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. We could use those rights to, for example, publish articles in *Vanguard* under our own names. From time to time, some of us have. It is best that most do not.

The bourgeois dictatorship rests upon coercive institutions of state power. They include the armed forces, the gaols, the courts, various police forces (themselves open and secret). The people in charge of these institutions well understand their role.

ASIO, as a secretive body, keeps political activists and militant workers under surveillance. It keeps extensive files on many Australians. When Annika Smethurst revealed in a 2018 *Daily Telegraph* story that the government wanted to grant new powers to the Australian Signals Directorate (ASD), a cyber intelligence agency, her home was raided by the Australia Federal Police. The ASD spies on people outside Australia: Smethurst revealed that it was intended that they spy on



*Like an iceberg, only a small part of our organisation is open and visible above the surface, while the majority remains submerged among the sea of the people.*

emails, bank records and text messages of Australians. The coercive powers of the state – current and planned – threaten politically active Australians.

Those coercive powers are kept at the ready. They are the constant in a mix that includes democratic rights. The Communist Party of Australia was made illegal in June 1940 following the outbreak of World War 2. Changing to circumstances of illegality, the Party brought out its paper on an illegal press. Its membership grew despite the illegality. The illegality was formally ended in March 1943.

Speaking of this period, E.F. Hill, founding Chairperson of our Party wrote:

“Illegality is a hazard that all Communist Parties face. This has been historical experience. Illegality of a Communist Party follows from the logic of capitalism, with





its state machine used as it is for the suppression of opponents of capitalism.”<sup>13</sup>

Surveillance occurs so that suppression can be introduced. A second attempt at illegality was made by Menzies after the War. He introduced a Communist Party Dissolution Bill (1950). The Australian Labor Party (ALP) opposed the power under which the Attorney-General could declare who was and who was not, a Communist. They amended that section but, supported by both major parliamentary parties, the Bill became law. Communists were prohibited from joining a union. The Communist Party of Australia was declared an unlawful organisation and was dissolved, its property forfeited to the Commonwealth without compensation.

ASIO, which had been created by the ALP in 1949, was charged with gathering the materials which would prove, in a court of law, that a person was a Communist. It was not enough for the spooks to know that a person was a Communist, or for the Attorney-General simply to declare that a person was a Communist – they had to provide evidence that would withstand a challenge all the way through to the High Court. For example, Comrade Charlie McCaffrey, then South Australian state secretary of the Federated Ironworkers Association, and after the 1964 split, a leading member of our Party, had a file opened titled “Evidence to Support Declaration”. It comprised two parts:

1. Evidence to bring within section 9 (1) of the Communist Party Dissolution Act No. 16 of 1950

- A. Admissions
- B. Documents found in searches
- C. Communist docs.

2. Evidence to bring within Section 9 (2) (Prejudicial Activity) of the Communist Party Dissolution Act No. 16 of 1950. Evidence

showing likelihood of engagement of prejudicial activity

- A. By reason of his own past activity as an individual, and
- B. By reason of his adoption of the method of achieving its objectives proposed and practised by the Australian Communist Party.

Documents were gathered to meet each of the five requirements. Among the documents in this folder is a letter written by Charlie as Secretary of the Adelaide District Committee of the CPA seeking permission to have a speakers’ platform in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. The letter had been seized during a secret raid on the party’s Adelaide office on 23 October 1950, three days after the Dissolution Bill had passed through parliament.

By this stage, ASIO head Brigadier Spry had compiled a list of around 1000 Communists and “fellow travellers” to be interned in Army-run concentration camps.<sup>14</sup> Despite the subsequent defeat of Menzies’s plans to get parliamentary approval for the camps, the lists of recommended internees were maintained by ASIO until at least 1960.

Many people opposed the banning of the Party. An appeal to the High Court was upheld in March 1951, but Menzies was undeterred. He tried to change the Constitution (the High Court had found that it did not give him the power to ban the Party). On 23 August he announced a referendum to include powers against Communists in the Constitution. A mass campaign to defeat the referendum was successful and Menzies was at last forced to retreat.

Hill’s observation that “Illegality of a Communist Party follows from the logic of capitalism” and that it was a hazard Communist Parties could expect to face, led him to reconsider the

<sup>13</sup> EF Hill, *Communism and Australia: Reflections and Reminiscences*, 1989, p. 105

<sup>14</sup> <https://quadrant.org.au/opinion/tony-thomas/2012/10/australia-s-civil-war-almost-part-ii/>



organisational basis of the way that the CPA had operated as a an open, public, legal Party.

In 1968, four years into the life of the new Party, ASIO prepared a 101-page secret report on the Party. It wrote:

“...many of the Party’s characteristics do not conform with those usually attributed to a Communist Party. Whilst it is possible to establish, by means of membership cards, the size and complexion of the C.P.A., to describe the Party’s organisational structure from its National Executive, through State, District and Section Committees to Locality Branches, to clearly delineate policy and policy changes in the C.P.A. and to observe its activities in many fields, ranging from the “cultural” to the industrial, it has not been possible to do these things with regard to the C.P.A. (M/L).”<sup>15</sup>

To summarise, the iceberg principle was adopted to protect as many as possible of the members of the Party from surveillance by state institutions; to protect members from harassment, intimidation and physical abuse by extra-legal thugs operating either independently of, or in tandem with, the state; and to enable them to carry out their mass work without the immediate barriers some people may have erected had they been publicly identified as Communists.

With that background, we now look at the comments placed on our Facebook page.

*Don't you think it's time to stop using such obvious pseudonyms as Ned K. - Ned Kelly I assume? I suggest a reading of 'The history of the CPSU(B) on the balance between a secret party and the need for open Party work.*

Well, with all due respect to the comrade with a long history of political activism who made this comment, there remain reasons why we favour the use of pseudonyms. Let us assume Ned K. is

not Ned Kelly in disguise but a worker in precarious employment who has been trying to organise his fellow precariats. Attributing reports such as those that Ned K. writes for us to him under his real name places him in a particularly vulnerable position.

Equally, some who write under pseudonyms are working in unions affiliated to the ALP. If they were identified as members of our Party, it is certain that they would be run out of their position in the union. It is a fact that some of our members who have won the respect of the union members they represent have been able to contest and win senior positions of union leadership that would have been denied to them as Communists because of popular prejudices against Communism and Communists.

The comrade refers us to the *History of the CPSU (B)*. His comment implies that we do not have “the balance” right, that we dismiss the need for open Party work.

The main period of illegal work by what was then the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was during the period between the failed 1905 bourgeois democratic revolution and the October 1917 successful proletarian socialist revolution.

Achieving a balance between legal and illegal work was pursued quite intensely after 1912.

Legal work included the newspaper *Pravda*, a daily “designed for the broadest sections of the workers” (History...p. 145) It was first published on May 5, 1912 to replace the weekly *Zvezda*, “intended for advanced workers”. *Zvezda* had “played an important part” in mobilizing the working class for the struggle. The change to a daily paper aimed at a broader audience did not signify a retreat from the “trenchant political articles” in *Zvezda* by Lenin and Stalin, but the acceptance of that message by more and more workers “in view of the rising revolutionary tide”. Changes in the material circumstances and

<sup>15</sup> <http://soda.naa.gov.au/record/30030241/1>



requirements of the revolutionary movement made it possible for a more frequent and more widely available propagation of Lenin's and Stalin's articles.

The tsarist government suppressed *Pravda* eight times in the space of two and a half years forcing it to reappear under various new names. The use of *Pravda* as a legal paper did not replace the illegal forms of Party work; rather, through *Pravda* "the illegal revolutionary activities of the Bolsheviks were combined with legal forms of agitation and organization of the masses of the workers".

Another form of legal Bolshevik work in this period was the group of six deputies elected to the Fourth Duma (parliament) in 1912. In addition to using the Duma as a platform from which to call for land redistribution and the eight-hour day, the deputies were "very active outside the Duma as well. They visited mills and factories...and working-class centres...where they made speeches, arranged secret meetings...The deputies skilfully combined legal activities with illegal, underground work" (History...p 155-6).

As the commenter says, the Bolsheviks achieved a "balance between a secret party and the need for open Party work." However, both forms were maintained and the existence of the former remained the guarantee for the existence, during periods of revolutionary high tide, of the latter.

This balance between the legal and illegal forms of work remained until early 1917. The February Revolution saw the abdication of the Tsar and the formation of a bourgeois Provisional Government. The Bolshevik Party emerged from illegality with a membership of up to 45,000 steeled and tempered revolutionary members. It began its legal existence in the midst of a new rising tide of revolution and within the year those changed material circumstances had witnessed their seizure of power.

As far as our Party goes, there is a constant striving to get the balance right. We operate a legal Facebook page, blog, Twitter account, and a legal online newspaper and website. Four of our

leading comrades have written articles for that newspaper in their own names in recent times, and have spoken as representatives of the Party on various occasions. We have legal publications and have legally had Party stalls at May Day and other events. We distribute hard copies of *Vanguard* and Party leaflets at rallies and demonstrations. However, we have survived for 56 years with most of our "iceberg" below the surface, and by and large it is the workers who most easily accept the reasons behind this.

Our second respondent made two comments.

*The party is a tool for the liberation of the Australian proletariat, why must it be so secretive in this? Unless you are funelling [sic] money or aiding spies from the USSR, I see this focus on secrecy alienating the party from ANY form of mass work. As Maoists we understand that mass work and building a mass base is CENTRAL to building the party and thus the people's power and revolution*

*Yes personally I've found the party to be overly secretive. If we are serious about building the party and a mass base we should adhere to the principles of Marxism Leninism Maoism, first and foremost being building a mass base amongst the proletariat through openly serving the people.*

As we have said, mass work and non-divulgence of membership are not inconsistent. Given a century of attacks on Communism, escalating through the Cold War with its spy scares and stories alleging infiltration, subversion and disloyalty on the part of Communists, and now with the "told-you-so" failures (really defeats) of socialist paths in the Soviet Union and China, barriers to mass work are all too likely to be raised with a premature declaration of one's Communist beliefs and Communist Party membership.

We are not a secret society, a shut-away sect that keeps to itself. Our members are actively involved in workplace and community struggles and have strong connections to ordinary people.



We simply advise our members to wait and judge for themselves until an appropriate time, with the right people, to speak of adherence to Marxism-Leninism and affiliation with the Party.

At our 14th National Congress in 2015, we advised members:

The Party must never hide its face. It can have a public face through a small group of identified leaders, and through its publications and website but it also needs a face through individual members revealing their connection to the Party when the time is right and with the right people. All comrades must exercise initiative in being the face of the Party at the level of the workplace and the community when and where conditions permit. We need to develop confidence in approaching people to join the Party.

Merely having a website and placing our wisdom on the platform of an assortment of internet search engines is not a development in the direction of practical leadership of the class struggle. We must have a membership that grows within the working class.

This means that our existing members must be active recruiters of new members. We must absolutely not be held back by a general practice of non-disclosure of membership. The reasons for the adoption of our organisational principle of general non-disclosure of membership are to protect our members from surveillance by the state and harassment and threat by its agents, and to ensure that there are no barriers to the effectiveness of the mass work conducted by members, barriers that can arise if one prematurely and inappropriately declares oneself to be a Communist.

**Our 56 years of accumulated experience show that we can survive as a revolutionary Party, not despite our organisational principles, but because of them.**

Our advice to members has been to cast aside any hesitation that might prevent them from disclosing, among trusted friends and workmates or community activists, their support for the CPA(M-L). In appropriate circumstances, membership can be divulged as the beginning of a process of approaching sympathetic persons to actively support and join the Party.

Our understanding of mass work perhaps differs from that which holds that it can only be carried out by “openly serving the people”, by which is possibly meant publicly declaring one’s Party membership first up, or doing political work in the name of the Party and under a Party flag. If that is one’s idea of “openly serving the people” then we may well appear to be “overly secretive”.

We thank our respondents for their observations and comments. The best thing for any individual or organisation, and particularly a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Party, is to be challenged on one’s underlying values and beliefs. It forces a reassessment, a re-evaluation that can only be for the good.

We know we need a public profile and that we must be accessible to prospective members and supporters. Although we are not a mass party which accepts as members all who approach us, we strongly encourage those who are interested in joining and prepared to make the commitment to building the Party and the revolutionary movement in Australia to get in touch via our email, Facebook page, or any other available method. Our 56 years of accumulated experience show that we can survive as a revolutionary Party, not despite our organisational principles, but because of them. Global warming will cause real icebergs to melt away; the heat of revolutionary struggle will put ours in position to expand and grow.



## Statement:

# Warmly Welcome the Centenary of the Communist Movement in Australia

by CPA (M-L) Central Committee

*This statement was first published on January 1. We publish it here again as the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the original Communist Party of Australia on October 30 approaches.*

**O**ctober 30 2020 will mark 100 years since the founding of the original Communist Party of Australia.

**The immediate inspiration for the formation of a Communist Party in Australia was the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917, and the subsequent creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.**

The introduction of Marxism-Leninism to Australia through the advocacy of the Communist Party built on local conditions and traditions of struggle against injustice, British imperialism, and exploitation. The Eureka Rebellion of 1854, when the flag of Australian independence was first raised, and the great strikes of the 1890s, when the newly emerging Australian working class stood in direct conflict with capital on a large scale for the first time, gave a concrete Australian context to the theories and international experience of Marxism and Leninism.

Marxism-Leninism stood in contrast to the reformism of the trade union movement which had sought to improve the conditions of the working class through the Labor Party acting in parliament and within the limits of the capitalist system. The Labor Party and the trade unions in turn also influenced the Communist Party and the ways in which it sought to build the movement for socialism. Negatively, this led it at times, to place the parliamentary electoral interests of the Labor Party above the independent class interests of the proletariat.

The great struggles in which Australian Communists participated and led are a matter of deep pride and inspiration. On building sites, on coal fields, the railways, wharves and shipping, in factories and amongst many professional and semi-professional working people, the Party's influence through its members' involvement in many struggles, and party publications, was everywhere in evidence.

Communists led and fought to prevent evictions of the unemployed and destitute, fought fascist gangs such as the New Guard, opposed imperialist wars, and refused to load pig-iron bound for the Japanese imperialist war against China in 1938. They strengthened the Party during a brief period of illegality during WW2, stood resolutely against the anti-communism of the Menzies government, working day and night for months in cities and country building and mobilizing a broad united front that defeated the referendum to dissolve the Communist Party in 1951-2, stood up to the Petrov conspiracy and the Royal Commission into the Party in Victoria.

Communists led the struggle to defeat the penal provisions of the Arbitration Act in 1969, turned the Vietnam War into a mighty crusade against US imperialism and actively supported struggles of the First Peoples, women and migrant workers.

Communists and their families were hunted, vilified and demonized by the ruling class. Many lost their jobs for serving the working class in the





great class struggle against capitalist exploitation and imperialist wars. The overwhelming majority of party members were workers, dedicated to serving the people. They were self-less and courageous, striving for self-discipline and humility, consciously studying Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, arming themselves with the science of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism for Australian conditions. We strive to uphold these values as communists today.

The ability of capitalism to survive the Great Depression and continue relatively unscathed into the 1950s and 1960s led some leading members of the Party to lose confidence in the people, the revolutionary movement and in the working class as the leadership of that movement. Our Party, the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), was formed in 1964 when it proved impossible to support and work with the defeatist leadership of the original Party that was deliberately vilifying and rejecting the main revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism. Another group of members left in 1971, forming the Socialist Party of Australia (SPA).

The defeatist liquidators took things to their logical conclusion in 1991 when they dissolved the original Communist Party. In October 1996, the SPA retook for itself the name Communist Party of Australia (CPA). In early 2019 a group of members left the new CPA and declared the foundation of the Australian Communist Party (ACP).

Neither our Party, the CPA nor the ACP are the original Communist Party formed in 1920. No Party can claim that the centenary of the

Communist movement in Australia and its inspiring history belongs to it alone.

Real ideological, political and organisational differences exist between those parties that can trace their history back to the original Communist Party. There are differences on the revolutionary working class organisation, the bourgeois state, parliamentarism, imperialism, mass work and the application of Marxism-Leninism to Australia's local conditions. Without ignoring these differences, our Party seeks mutual agreement that a revolutionary movement must exist to

promote the independent class interests of the workers. We seek mutual rejection of the defeatist notion that socialism has been a failed experiment. We seek agreement with the view that the main class contradictions and class struggle between labour and capital, and the necessity of proletarian led revolution to resolve those contradictions in accordance with the teachings of Marx and Engels, and further elaborated by Lenin, have not disappeared, but are sharper than ever today.

Our Party honours the aspirations of the founders of the original Communist Party of Australia for an

independent socialist Australian republic and continues to work towards that aim.

The greatest tribute we can pay to those who founded that Party is to work to strengthen the revolutionary movement that they began in 1920.

***Fight for revolutionary anti-imperialist independence and socialism!***

***Celebrate 100 years of the Communist movement in Australia!***

**Our Party honours the aspirations of the founders of the original Communist Party of Australia for an independent socialist Australian republic and continues to work towards that aim.**

**The greatest tribute we can pay to those who founded that Party is to work to strengthen the revolutionary movement that they began in 1920.**





## Book Review:

# Island Off the Coast of Asia: Instruments of Statecraft in Australian Foreign Policy

Clinton Fernandes,

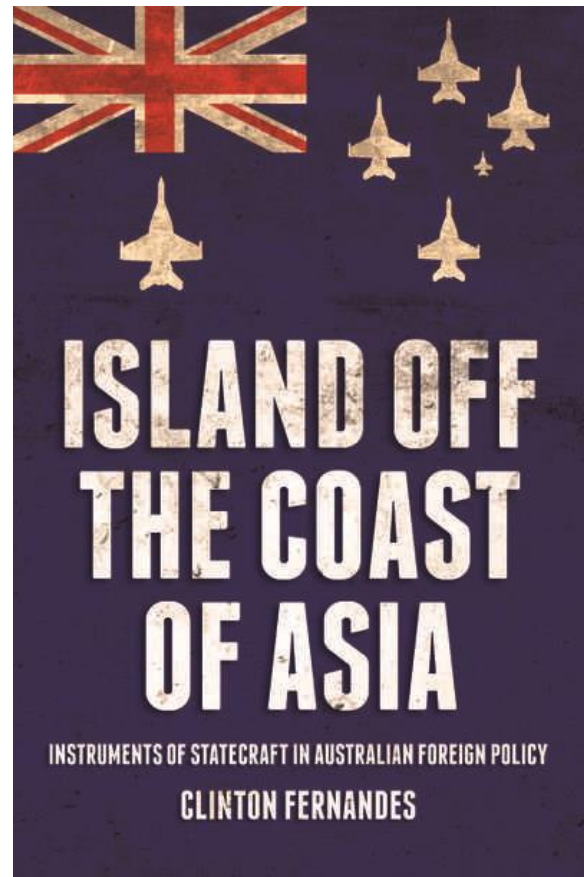
Monash University Publishing, Clayton, 2018

by Alex M.

**W**hat is most pleasing about this book is the sharpness of the analysis that the author brings to bear on Australian foreign policy, defence policy and Australia's relationship, both past and present, with the imperial projects of Great Britain and the US.

Fernandes has had an interesting career; he served as an Intelligence Officer in the Australian Army and was involved in gathering intelligence about Indonesian involvement in East Timor, prior to the plebiscite on East Timorese independence in 1999. He and another Intelligence Officer became embroiled in a controversy surrounding the withholding of intelligence about Indonesian activities in East Timor. Fernandes wrote a report that contradicted analysis by the Defence Intelligence Organisation, the latter's analysis downplayed or covered up Indonesia perfidy in the run up to the East Timorese plebiscite. Subsequent to his service in the Army he established himself as a respected academic based at the University of New South Wales, Canberra, where he is a Professor of International and Political Studies.

Fernandes's book is based on a prodigious amount of research. It is fair to say that his aim is to inform the Australian public in the expectation (hope?) that armed with such information increasing numbers of citizens will play a more active role in shaping Australian foreign relations. It is also fair to say that Noam Chomsky influences Fernandes's political outlook, because aside from having met Chomsky, he has also written a book about him and quotes



Chomsky to good effect in the book under review.

So, to start then with Fernandes's book, *Island Off the Coast of Asia* (hereafter *Island...*) the various instruments of what Fernandes calls statecraft are listed. These are: the military instrument; economic instruments such as investment treaties and trade agreements (being two examples); financial instruments; legal instruments and covert instruments. These instruments are the tools of the trade of statecraft, the latter a term that Fernandes does not define, but which can be taken to encompass



the art of diplomacy and foreign relations, trade and military affairs among other things. In short, statecraft is the geopolitical and geo-economic manoeuvring of states.

The diverse instruments of statecraft and how they are deployed help form the structure of *Island...* That is, there are chapters devoted to most of the instruments, aside from the covert instrument, which does not have a specific chapter dedicated to its discussion.

### The Military Instrument 1

The military instrument is covered in three chapters, these being chapters 3, 4 and 6. Chapter 3 is devoted to a critical examination of ANZUS. Fernandes starts the chapter on ANZUS by detailing the post-World War Two international political situation that Australian policy makers found themselves in, namely the first phase of the Cold War.

The Korean War, one of the 'hot' war parts of the Cold War confrontation between the superpowers, saw the Menzies government firmly on the side of the US in its military intervention on the Korean peninsula. In an effort to impress the US, the Australian External Affairs Minister Percy Spender pressed for an announcement of an Australian military commitment to United Nations forces in 1950, prior to an expected British government announcement. Spender successfully pressed for the Australian announcement and commitment of troops in early July 1950, four weeks after the North Koreans had crossed the South Korean border. Bypassing PM Menzies who was out of reach of communication due to being on the high seas *en route* to the US, Spender pressured the acting PM Arthur Fadden to announce the troop commitment on 9 July 1950. The reason for Spender's haste: 'He wanted to ensure that the Australian offer was seen as an independent one and not something that came after consultations with the United Kingdom.' (*Island...* p. 36) The announcement and its timing, Fernandes states, marked a turning point in Australian diplomacy. The Australian government 'made a clear choice

to prioritize the United States over the United Kingdom.' (*Island...* p.37)

Changing the priority from reliance on the UK to the US for Australian security was an acknowledgement by sections of the Australian ruling class of the change in the hierarchy of the system of states. How to fit in with the new superpower - rather than trying to pursue a non-aligned, independent foreign and security policy – was what animated Spender, Menzies and their ilk. Spender's and the Australian government's goal was to see Australian security guaranteed by the military might of a great and powerful friend. Hence the rush to commit troops for the Korean conflict as a demonstration to the US of Australia's unconditional support. Spender travelled to the US in late 1950 in the hope of getting a NATO type treaty out of the US government, a treaty that guaranteed American military intervention in Australia's region in the event of conflict. For all Spender's efforts he got less than what he hoped for in the way of the ANZUS Treaty.

What exactly did the ANZUS Treaty guarantee? Spender had insisted that he wanted 'something on the lines particularly of Article 5 of the Atlantic Pact, [NATO] whose signatories 'agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.' The relevant section of ANZUS avoids this formulation. Instead it says that each signatory to ANZUS 'recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.' This is, quite evidently, a much weaker formulation. (*Island...* p.41)

Fernandes points out that Article V of the ANZUS Treaty stipulates that if there was an attack on Pacific island territories under US jurisdiction (Guam or American Samoa for example) and 'its armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the



Pacific', then Australia and New Zealand would have obligations under the provisions of the ANZUS Treaty. Such a formulation means that in the event of an attack on a US ship in the South China Sea or an aircraft in the Taiwan Strait, the ANZUS Treaty and its provisions could be called upon. The Indian Ocean where Australia has interests is *not* covered by ANZUS, '[t]herefore an attack on an Australian ship in the Indian Ocean or in the Persian Gulf would not be within the formal scope of the Treaty. And yet, that is where Australian forces have frequently been deployed.' (*Island...* p.41)

Fernandes's acute examination of ANZUS and the historical circumstances that influenced the contents of the Treaty in this chapter are insightful, detailed and deserve close attention. In the penultimate paragraph of the chapter, Fernandes identifies a constant theme of Australian diplomacy, that being the 'search for relevance and influence – a seat at the table...' (*Island...* p.48) The measure of the Australian desire to be relevant and influential can be found in diverse things such as; phone calls from the Prime Minister being taken by the President; Australian Ministers and officials meeting with their US counterparts and the usual round of diplomatic functions and lobbying. (*Island...* pp.48-9) However, as Fernandes concludes, the Australian striving to be relevant and have influence in the thinking and strategising of the great power, the 'seat at the table' approach has largely been unsuccessful; 'Australia remains relatively unimportant in U.S. thinking.' (*Island...* p.49)

The military instrument (the commitment of troops) was used by the Australian government in the context of the Korean conflict as a demonstration of loyalty. The display of loyalty was part of the attempt to leverage out of the US a security Treaty. The ANZUS Treaty did see the light of day, though the treaty fell far short of Australian ruling class desires.

## The Military Instrument 2

Continuing his analysis of the military instrument, Fernandes shifts focus in chapter 4 to Malaya.

Now known as Malaysia, it was part of the British Empire and it was an important producer of rubber and tin. The post-World War Two UK government, burdened by the cost of fighting in a devastating global conflict looked to its overseas dominions for financial and economic succour. A return to the pre-war status quo with the benefits of Malaysian rubber production and tin mining flowing to British corporations and to the government via taxation and other revenues was what the UK wanted. The return to the status quo was thwarted somewhat by the outbreak of a rebellion in 1948. The Malayan Communist Party (MCP), an arm of which was involved in the struggle against the Japanese occupying forces during WW2, led the rebellion.

The UK government cracked down on the insurgents, declaring a state of emergency and 'portrayed the rebellion as a Communist conspiracy emanating from China and the U.S.S.R.' (*Island...* p.60) Trying to defeat 5,000 guerrillas proved difficult. The struggle against the MCP led insurgency continued through 1949. The colonial authorities endeavoured to enrol local communities in 'anti-bandit month' measures in February 1950 with little success. Eventually British military forces were sent to Malaya supported by Australian aircraft, which were dispatched in June 1950. (*Island...* p. 60) The RAAF aircraft flew numerous sorties against MCP camps in the jungles of Malaya from 1950 on supporting ground troops of British, Australian and Commonwealth provenance. The guerrillas kept up the armed struggle through the rest of the decade and the Australian government sent various squadrons of the SAS Regiment and battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment (3RAR) during the course of the conflict. (*Island...* pp.60 -2)

The MCP guerrillas and the insurgency were ultimately defeated. Australian military involvement in this little known and largely overlooked conflict is brought back to prominence by Fernandes. The lessons learned by Australian leaders are spelled out: Australia's success against the Malayan rebels informed the



thinking of its political leaders for a decade. The lessons they learned were that military intervention would work, that they could find and install pliable local clients ... that Asian nationalists would be wary of Australian military power, and that economic benefits would flow to Australia as a result of the reestablishment of triangular trade patterns between Southeast Asia and Europe. (*Island...* p.63)

As Fernandes points out, having been steeped in British Empire traditions, leading members of Australia's ruling class knew the importance of 'elite local collaborators' in the maintenance of imperial rule. Moreover, the involvement of Australian military forces in the former colony of Malaya, despite minimal Australian investment there, was almost an unthinking reflex; support for the Mother country and support for 'the overall interests of Western capitalist states' was and is the norm for Australian foreign policy. (*Island...*p.63)

Critical engagement with chapter 6, which continues Fernandes's analysis of the military instrument in respect of Australia's relationship with Indonesia, will not be undertaken, and the same holds for the chapters concerning economic, legal and financial instruments. There is much in these chapters worthy of examination but limitations of space militate against doing so. Having said that there are two chapters that cry out for scrutiny. These are chapters 2 and 5. The subjects of these chapters are what Fernandes calls a sub-imperial reflex (chapter 2) and the Australian intervention in the Vietnam War and its impact on Australian society (chapter 5). It is to the latter that our attention now turns.

## Vietnam and the transformation of Australia

Flushed with success in helping crush a pro-working class and nationalist insurgency in a former British colony, the Australian foreign policy elites were only too eager to get involved in another armed conflict in Southeast Asia. This time it was in Vietnam. So eager in fact, that as Fernandes makes clear, in early 1965, Prime Minister Menzies jumped the gun by hastily organising an Australian battalion, the 1st Battalion, the Royal Australian Regiment for deployment to Bien Hoa air base in support of a US brigade. (*Island...* p.82) Menzies and his colleagues had to arrange some behind the scenes manoeuvring in the corridors of power in Saigon and Washington in order to garner official requests from the US and South Vietnamese governments for Australian regular army combat troops.

Driving such haste to commit Australian troops were a number of factors. One of the foremost was the chance to get the US more heavily involved militarily in 'our' region.

The escalation of hostilities in Vietnam in 1965 which came after the 1964 Tonkin Gulf incident, an incident which was deliberately exaggerated by US officials to bring about the insertion of US combat troops on a large scale into South Vietnam, was a god-send for Australian politicians such as Menzies.

Here was a chance to show Australia's loyalty to the US once more and get the US militarily immersed in the region. This involvement of the superpower in Southeast Asia and the surrounding area was a crucial goal of Australian foreign policy. Australia's security would be assured under the military umbrella of the US. As Menzies remarked about the commitment of

**Flushed with success in helping crush a pro-working class and nationalist insurgency in a former British colony, the Australian foreign policy elites were only too eager to get involved in another armed conflict in Southeast Asia. This time it was in Vietnam.**





Australian troops: “‘We would be prepared to put in a battalion and were looking for a way in and not a way out. With this approach, the psychological effect on the U.S. would be phenomenally invaluable, including in Australia’s interests.’” (*Island...* pp.82-3)

In this as in other chapters, there is much in the way of historical detail provided by Fernandes. As the Vietnam War has an extensive critical literature on it anyway<sup>16</sup> then it isn’t necessary to dwell too much on his analysis of it here. There is something else though that is worthy of comment, namely Fernandes’s concluding remarks in chapter 5 about the war and Australian and US participation in it. He suggests that the US and Australia achieved their war aims, despite their withdrawal from the conflict.

... it is important to be clear about the result of the war. The Australian government demonstrated its relevance to the United States, which needed international allies in Vietnam so much that President Johnson once told British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, ‘a platoon of bagpipers would be sufficient, it was the British flag that was needed.’ The U.S. and Australian governments could not impose a client state led by a compliant puppet. In that sense, the Vietnamese resistance won

by sheer survival. But in a more fundamental sense, the Australian and U.S. governments achieved their war aims. The military instrument destroyed the National Liberation Front – the only ‘truly mass based political party in South Vietnam’ ... [the NLF’s aim was] ‘the organization in depth of the rural population through the instrument of self-control.’ The destruction caused the collapse of South Vietnam and the emergence of a single state: the Socialist Republic of Vietnam under the rule of the Communist Party of Vietnam. (*Island...* p.88)

The claim that the war aims of the US and Australia were achieved because the NLF was destroyed are based on the work of Douglas Pike whose 1966 book *Viet Cong: The Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam* is the source for the last two sections in quotation marks in the above. This claim posits the NLF as a completely separate entity to the political and military bodies of the North, which raises a number of questions. Did the NLF have a different set of goals in the struggle against the US imperialist occupation of the South compared with the leaders in the North? If so, why did the NVA send so much in the way of support in the form of troops and



*National Liberation Front fighters fly the flag during the capture of Saigon marking victory for the Vietnamese people in April 1975*

<sup>16</sup> For an insightful overview written to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the ending of the Vietnam War: <http://www.cpaml.org/post4.php?id=1588917300>





materiel along the Ho Chi Minh trail to fight in the South alongside the People's Liberation Armed Forces, the armed wing of the NLF? The answers to these questions can be found in the fact that while the NLF had some autonomy from the political and military bodies in the North, it was a front organisation, with strong links to the Vietnamese Communist Party.<sup>17</sup> The main aims of the NLF were thus the same of the Communist Party. Also, the unification of Vietnam under the aegis of the Communist Party of Vietnam would have been anathema to the leaders of the US and Australia in the Cold War crusade against communism. Remember that the domino theory was a key part of the Cold War rhetoric of the US and Australian governments. To suggest that the destruction of the NLF was *the* war aim of the governments of these two countries does not gel; too many questions are raised when considering this proposition. It may have been among US and Australian war aims, but it would be highly doubtful that having North and South Vietnam reunified under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam was one of their sought after outcomes.

Perhaps part of the reason for Fernandes's questionable conclusion can be found in the sources that he has relied on in this chapter. For example, there is no citation for the prominent historian and critic of US foreign policy Gabriel Kolko whose books on Vietnam and the US involvement therein, are indispensable in helping to understand the politics and history of the conflict from an American perspective. Nor is there any mention of Peter King's work on Australian involvement in Vietnam. That said, Humphrey McQueen's work is cited. These conjectural thoughts are offered here because it is puzzling that so much research has been undertaken by Fernandes and yet his concluding remarks about US and Australian war aims do not pass muster.

In this last section concerned with reviewing *Island...* we examine an interesting and important part of the book, a chapter where Fernandes goes some way to situate Australia in the hierarchical states system.

### A sub-imperial reflex

It is in chapter 2 where Fernandes maps out the historical background of the settler society experience that shaped and continues to shape Australian elite perceptions of the country's place in the world. Pivotal to the thinking of the European inhabitants of Australia was the pre-emptive use of military force. Such thinking was informed by numerous historical examples such as the fighting associated with the driving off of the First Nations people from their lands in the Americas and confrontations between colonial settlers and Indigenous people in various parts of Africa. Even closer to home for the British ruling class was the use of force in the Highland clearances and the suppression and occupation of Ireland and its inhabitants from the seventeenth century onwards. (*Island...* pp.11-2) Military confrontation and the use of overwhelming force was a key characteristic of European colonial expansion. Australian settlers accepted that such was the way of the world and they too were part of the imperial process:

Australian settlers regarded their expansion on the Australian continent as part of a British imperial expansion involving military campaigns in Afghanistan from 1838 to 1842, in Southern Africa from the 1830s to the 1850s, the Opium Wars in China in the early 1840s, the Crimean War in the 1850s, the suppression of the Indian rebellion from 1857 to 1858, and the war against the Maori in New Zealand in 1860. During the Indian rebellion they shared with Britain a feeling that the Empire was in crisis. ...

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<sup>17</sup> For the connection between the NLF and the Communist Party of Vietnam and its role as a front organisation see Neil Sheehan's *A Bright Shining Lie John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*, Picador, London, 1990, p. 195.



[N]ewspapers in Sydney described 'our' actions and 'our' losses and victories in India. The settlers' British roots, continuing familial connections to Britain and their imperial consciousness led them to identify with British military supremacy in India. (*Island...* p.17)

It is not hard to find contemporary commentators and think tanks willing to extol the virtues of military expeditions, thus forging the link between the imperialist excesses of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with the twenty-first. (*Island...* p.18) The ready identification with the British Empire that the Australian settler elite took as foundational to their view of the world and their position in it, stayed true well into the 1950s. However, as noted above, the switch to seeking security from the US became the ultimate goal of Australian foreign policy in the same decade.

For Fernandes, a key element of the sub-imperial reflex is the constant striving to have a powerful patron as guarantor of Australia's security in the region and the wider world. Under the umbrella of this security guarantee, the Australian ruling elites work to position Australia and Australian corporate/business interests as the dominant force in the Southwest Pacific, a process that continues to this day. So, a smaller imperialist power operating in its own region, mindful of its place in the world dominated by more powerful imperialist nations is what Fernandes means by the term sub-imperial reflex.

The summary of what Fernandes means by sub imperial reflex is the reviewer's, as Fernandes does not explicitly define the term in the chapter. As a sub-imperialist power Australia has scope to act independently in its sphere of influence,

Fernandes suggests. The ability to act autonomously in the region extends to the field of foreign policy. Fernandes argues that Australia can be said to have an independent foreign policy because in the Southwest Pacific 'Australia ... aim[s] at maximum influence, *despite popular views that Australia has no independent foreign policy.*' (*Island...*p.20, emphasis added) Despite detailing the dependence that Australia has had and continues to have on particular great and powerful nations, the lengths that Australian leaders have gone to in order to curry favour with the US in its imperial project, Fernandes still identifies Australian foreign policy in our region as independent. At the least this is a problematic claim, due to Australian foreign policy and defence officials, Ministers and the like at pains to integrate Australia more fully into US plans

globally and in our region. There is some wriggle room for Australian foreign policy settings in the Southwest Pacific region but this is conditional on US imperialist power projection and maintenance of global order.<sup>18</sup>

Fernandes's analysis, like a lot of International Relations scholarship, is very good at the examination of the intricacies of how nations

interact in the international system of states. Less good at the level of politics within particular nations, especially when it comes to the issue of class and who benefits the most from the operations of capitalism and imperialism, domestically and globally. This is to be expected, as Fernandes is not a Marxist. Tempering this comment, it should be borne in mind that no individual has a monopoly on truth and that even Marxist analysis can be wrong. To sum up, Fernandes has produced a book that is well worth reading and many lessons can be drawn from it. The book is highly recommended; the length of this review is a testament to how good it is.

**There is some wriggle room for Australian foreign policy settings in the Southwest Pacific region but this is conditional on US imperialist power projection and maintenance of global order.**

<sup>18</sup> For an alternative take on sub imperialism and why Australia is a sub imperialist nation dominated by US imperialism: <http://www.cpaml.org/web/uploads/Sub+Imp+modified+1.pdf>



# From the Archives:

## Notes from a China Study Tour 1971: Discussions with Revolutionary Workers in Shanghai

*In May 1971, Comrade A.E. (Ted) Bull, Vice-Chairperson of the CPA (M-L) and Secretary of the Victorian Branch of the Waterside Workers Federation, led a group of young workers and students on a study tour of the People's Republic of China. Bull was a Vice-President of the Victorian Branch of the Australia-China Society at the time.*

*The following excerpts from notes taken by one of the tour participants during discussions with Chinese comrades remind us of the commitment of the Chinese Communist Party to the forward march of socialism, and steps taken during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) to make that forward march a mass issue. They are also a measure against which to realise the nature and extent of the capitalist restoration that took place after Mao Zedong's death in 1976.*



*Comrade Ted Bull with his Chinese interpreter  
on the study tour to China in 1971*

*The excerpts, which have been transcribed from a handwritten notebook, and the accompanying photos, have never before been published.*

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The following discussion with Chinese comrades took place in Shanghai. The speakers on the Chinese side included participants in the GPCR from a number of factories in Shanghai.

The discussion began with an introduction by a Shanghai comrade to the GPCR:

“The GPCR was a vigorous revolution involving the revolutionary masses. A revolution carried out under the dictatorship of the proletariat and led by the Communist Party. As Chairman Mao said, ‘The GPCR is correct and most timely in order to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and to prevent the restoration of capitalism and to build socialism’.

“At first some comrades did not understand this nature. They thought the aim was merely to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat by crushing the old state organs, that is, in armed revolution. They did not understand that in a revolution under the dictatorship of the



proletariat, the nature of the state is not changed, but that small portion of power in the control of a handful of bad elements is seized back and returned to the proletariat.

“In the USSR where there has been an all-round restoration of capitalism it will be necessary to restore the dictatorship of the proletariat through armed struggle, while in China this is not necessary as only a small handful of bourgeois elements have managed to seize back power.

“Armed struggle against the Chinese state is armed struggle against the proletarian dictatorship led by the Communist Party, and, as such, is counter-revolutionary rebellion against the proletariat.

“In the West, much publicity was given to rumours of armed struggle during the Cultural Revolution. In some districts there were struggles by coercion. These were caused by the class enemies inciting violent struggle through mass organisations, for example, trade unions. They propagated non-proletarian ideas like right and “left” opportunism, sectarianism, detached intellectualism and individualism. However, these were minor currents and not the main current. Chairman Mao pointed out that the GPCR was a struggle by reason, not coercion, and this was always the policy adhered to by the Party. The West seizes upon these isolated incidents of coercion because the Cultural Revolution was an attack on bourgeois politics, ideology and organisation. They know it can only make China stronger as the proletarian dictatorship is consolidated and that China’s prestige will be raised abroad.

***“Chairman Mao pointed out that the GPCR was a struggle by reason, not coercion, and this was always the policy adhered to by the Party. The West seizes upon these isolated incidents of coercion because the Cultural Revolution was an attack on bourgeois politics, ideology and organisation.”***

“The Party’s view on these incidents is that they were caused by a few class enemies taking advantage of some non-proletarian views of the masses and that the losses were small while the achievements were very great indeed. Also, the class enemies were very stupid because in the process of inciting the masses they exposed themselves. Chairman Mao points out that coercion creates disorder in the enemy ranks, but tempers the revolutionary ranks. Thus, we cannot comprehend the GPCR if we view it simply as an armed struggle.”

Following this broad introduction, a comrade presented an outline specifically on the stages of development of the GPCR in Shanghai. Then a comrade who was a cadre and production manager in the No. 1 Valve factory at the start of the GPCR, spoke. He outlined how he had taken the revisionist road:

“Before the Cultural Revolution I was extremely influence by Liu Shaoqi’s line and carried it out in factory management. I did not give prominence to proletarian politics and, in fact, was not interested in class politics at all. I interested myself only in production. I thought that, as a Party member, doing my best for socialist construction meant doing best the job given to me by the state, that is, the tasks of production and a vice-director. Thus, I did not realise it was my job to study and participate in class politics. I also spread this view among the workers with very bad results.

“I put profit in command. For example, the state set a production task with some things urgent and some things not so urgent. I concentrated on producing the things which brought the





highest profit but neglected the urgent tasks if they were for low profit and took a longer time to produce. Thus, although the production task was fulfilled, the state's demand for urgent goods was not. This is the same as Soviet policy – production for profit rather than from the state's needs.

"I advocated material incentives (bonuses) for workers with over-fulfilled tasks and for those giving constructive suggestions. The workers were taking part in socialist construction, but I was asking them to produce for their own profit. This created disunity among the workers and lowered the quality of the goods produced.

"I also advocated reliance on the experts and authorities in running the factory which attached great importance to bourgeois and bad elements among the ranks of the workers, and these elements exercised dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the workers for some time. They were not reconciled to their defeat in the revolution and often stole profits and altered accounts. Some ex-factory owners had photos in their homes of factories formerly owned by them. These photos and the changed accounts were later exhibited in the factories.



*Comrade Ted Bull and 'Old Yuan', a personal friend of Mao's, at Ya'nan*





“As the Cultural Revolution progressed, the masses rebelled against the capitalist-roaders and I was severely criticized. However, I still did not understand the nature of the Cultural Revolution or my mistakes and felt wronged since I still thought I was helping socialist construction. Then they criticized me for not participating in labour, for not participating in class struggle and for treating the workers as backward and hence stifling their initiative. I then went to the exhibition of photos exposing the capitalists in the factory and decided that I must take part in class struggle, that this was the way for socialist construction. As Chairman Mao said:

In China, although in the main socialist transformation has been completed with respect to the system of ownership, and although the large-scale and turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of the previous revolutionary periods have in the main come to an end, there are still remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes, there is still a bourgeoisie, and the remolding of the petty bourgeoisie has only just started. The class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the different political forces, and the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will continue to be long and tortuous and at times will even become very acute. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is still not really settled.

***“If the Cultural Revolution had failed, the state most certainly would have changed its colour. That is why Chairman Mao personally initiated and led the Cultural Revolution – to prevent the restoration of capitalism.”***

“After the bourgeois elements and ideas had been exposed, the initiative of the workers began to show. Quality and production began to increase. Gradually, I began to see through Liu Shaoqi’s line that the masses are backward. I was greatly influenced by study of Chairman Mao’s works, especially his instructions on the Cultural Revolution. I had made mistakes because I didn’t have class struggle or the struggle between the two lines in mind.

“As my consciousness rose, the workers helped and re-educated me. I was eventually re-elected as Vice-director and am still a cadre member of the factory Revolutionary Committee. This repudiates the Western rumours that cadres were removed. I still have the same positions as before, but now class struggle comes before production.

“Liu Shaoqi’s line served only to restore capitalism. Following that line, only representatives of the bourgeoisie like myself, could be in power.

“If the Cultural Revolution had failed, the state most certainly would have changed its colour. That is why Chairman Mao personally initiated and led the Cultural Revolution – to prevent the restoration of capitalism.”

Another speaker was a female cadre. She explained how many cadres made mistakes and took the wrong road:

“I am 45 years old and I entered the factory (where I still work) at the age of 9, that is, as a child labourer.



*All smiles for the revolution: students of worker and peasant origin at Beijing University*

“After Liberation, I loved the Party and Chairman Mao and became a trade union representative for one workshop. However, all I knew about was how to look after the welfare of the workers and how to manage production well. Through lack of study of Chairman Mao’s works, I didn’t understand the political questions of power and class struggle.

“The Liu Shaoqi-liners took advantage of my love for Chairman Mao, saying that class struggle had died out which prevented my taking an interest in politics.

“So, when the workers rose in rebellion, I could not understand it. I took a wrong stand in trying to protect the factory leadership. A so-called ‘work team of Chairman Mao’ entered the factory in order to spread reactionary anti-class struggle ideas and I was fooled by and worked with them.

“They wanted to leave class struggle to the Public Security Bureau and the PLA and encouraged me and others to simply do a good job in production. I tried to protect the ‘work team’ and helped the ‘Red Corps’.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> At the time that Chairman Mao launched the GPCR, in mid-1966, Liu Shaoqi was State President and controlled much of the bureaucracy of the state, as well as many officials of the Party. Liu was not in favour of mass movements and sought to protect his policy directions, which differed from Mao’s. To try and head off the spread of struggle against the policies he stood for, Liu dispatched numerous “work teams” made up of Party officials loyal to himself to factories, universities, schools and communes to bring the movement under his control. The Red Guards rejected the authority of the “work teams”, but Liu’s supporters set up their own Red Guard organisations to fight those supporting Mao. The “Red Corps” mentioned by the woman at this meeting was a pro-Liu Red Guard organisation – eds.



“Later, I was criticised by the other workers. I couldn’t understand it and said ‘We represent the Party – who are you rebelling against?’ It was only after the workers patiently studied with me that I saw the true nature of the reactionaries.

“Chairman Mao teaches us Communists:

Communists must always go into the whys and wherefores of anything, use their own heads and carefully think over whether or not it corresponds to reality and is really well founded; on no account should they follow blindly and encourage slavishness.

“He also points out:

After the enemies with guns have been wiped out, there will still be enemies without guns; they are bound to struggle desperately against us, and we must never regard these enemies lightly. If we do not now raise and understand the problem in this way, we shall commit the gravest mistakes.

“After studying Chairman Mao, I criticized myself to the workers and won back their respect.”

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