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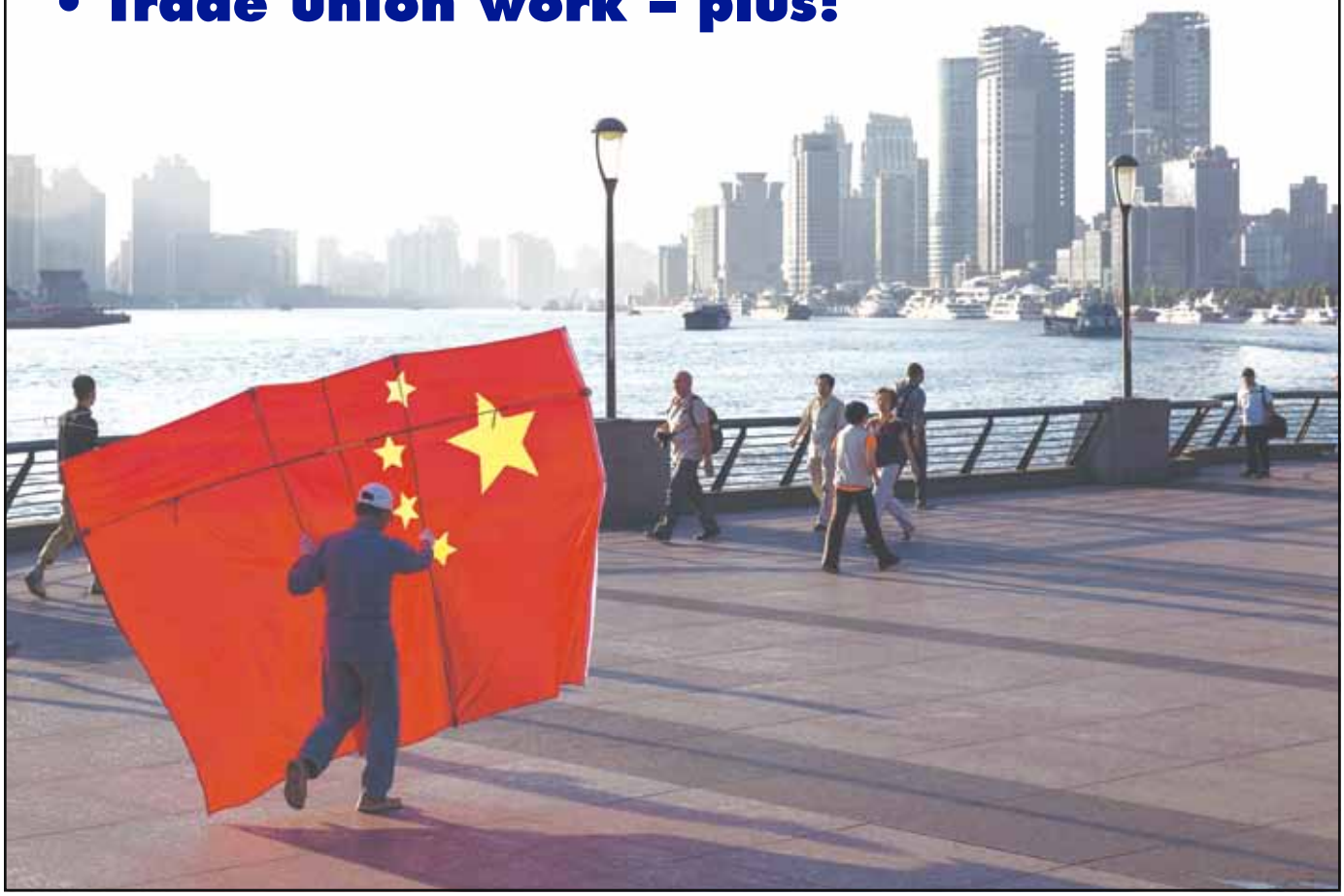
- **Impending global debt crisis**
- **One Belt One Road: New Globalisation**
- **Trade union work – plus!**



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Editorial

Issue 69 of the *Australian Marxist Review* begins where the previous issue left off: focusing on the situation in Australia and the tasks facing the Party. It begins with General Secretary Bob Briton's contribution to the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. In his report, Bob describes the objective conditions that shaped the Australian proletariat's current situation and rejects claims that the proletariat are no longer a revolutionary class. Based on this analysis, he clearly states the tasks facing the Communist Party of Australia in this period.

Despite the structural changes that have taken place in Australia's economy, the proletariat remains the main driving force for revolutionary change. Trade union work holds a special place in Communist activity but good trade union work is not enough: it must be trade union "plus". This was Gus Hall's key message in a speech to the 1986 Communist Party USA trade union conference, a message which is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago. CPA members working in the trade union movement would do well to heed his advice and remember that trade union work without the communist "plus" is opportunism.

The work of Australian communists falls within a wider international context of capitalism in crisis. In "Impending global debt crisis, development and the role of the People's Republic of China", Anna Pha explains how fragile the weak recovery following the 2008 financial crisis is and how the traditional way out of crisis for imperialist countries is war and plunder. By contrast, China's Belt and Road Initiative offers developing countries much needed investments without World Bank or IMF style political strings attached.

In his article, "Clipping imperialism's claws", Michael Hooper discusses how China's foreign policy changed from one of aiding communist and anti-imperialist struggles abroad to self-isolation. Now that China is emerging from its isolation and returning to the international stage as a major economic power, Michael argues that the best way to protect itself from imperialist aggression is to once again support fraternal communist parties so that they may effectively lead anti-war movements.

The term globalisation has become synonymous with imperialism. Now, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has proposed a new form of globalisation based on mutual benefit and mutual respect for sovereignty. In the articles "Scientifically judge orientation of the times" and "One Belt One Road: to initiate new globalisation", Li Shenming, Cao Yaxiong and Meng Ying, three Chinese academics, present the CPC's analysis of the current international situation and its plan for developing a "community with a shared future for mankind".

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20th International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties

CPA General Secretary Bob Briton's contribution to the meeting

Comrades,

On behalf of the Communist Party of Australia, I would like to thank the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) for hosting this 20th gathering called the International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. We would like to acknowledge the crucial role of the KKE in reviving the international meetings and its contribution to the movement over these past 20 years. I would like to send greetings on the centenary of the founding of the KKE and the 50th anniversary of the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE). These are major achievements and milestones and deserve our heartiest congratulations.

The working class in today's Australia

The international working class has changed and developed over recent decades in line with the imposition of capitalist globalisation, new trade and economic frameworks and even military conquest. In developed countries like Australia, there has been a major change in the composition of the working class. Manufacturing, which used to flourish behind a wall of tariffs, quotas and other instruments of protection, has shrunk dramatically in the face of competition from cheap imports from low-wage centres.

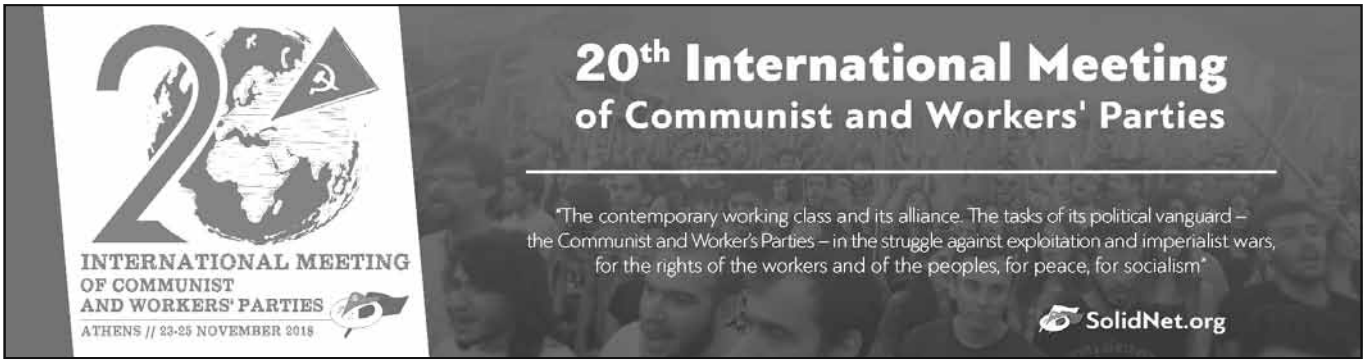
This process of de-industrialisation was begun in the 1980s and coincided with the floating of the Australian dollar on world currency markets and the first moves to the privatisation of the significant public sector of the Australian economy. Australia has never recovered the levels of employment maintained in the early to mid-1970s. Jobs lost in the manufacturing sector were replaced, to some extent, by those in the service sector.

Most significantly for the Australian working class, it was the beginning of the era of a class collaborationist approach by most Australian trade unions and their peak council, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). Union leaderships accepted capitalist arguments regarding wage rises and inflation, a feature of capitalist economies of the time, and promises for increases in the "social wage" in return for industrial peace.

The emphasis in much trade union work shifted from organisation in the workplace to "fixing" issues at meetings of governments, heads of industry and trade union leaderships. Trade union activism began a decline from which it has never recovered.

The combination of the decline in manufacturing and the ideological betrayal of trade union leaderships have left the working class in Australia vulnerable to the relentless attacks on its rights and conditions built up over decades of often bitter struggle. The lack of effectiveness of trade unions has led to a steep decline in membership setting off a downward spiral with grave consequences for Australia's trade unions.

The shift from manufacturing to the service sector has altered the class consciousness of the organised labour movement. Manufacturing and other directly productive exploiters of labour create circumstances more conducive to a militant class consciousness among workers. Marx and others noted the effects from the early days of manufacturing in Britain. Workers were brought together in large numbers and disciplined to produce



commodities in massive amounts. Their exploitation and alienation from the products of their labour was obvious.

This is not so in the modern service sector but the reality of exploitation in the whole system of exploitation is just as real. Service sector workers may not have the same level of class consciousness on the whole as the industrial proletariat but they are members of the working class.

A special category are the large numbers of Australian workers spun off by large corporations and even government enterprises to work as contractors. Naturally, these workers may drift into a petty bourgeois outlook as the operators of a small business but their conditions and need to find a buyer for their labour power is the same as it was when they were employed "in house".

The role of the working class in Australia

These changes in the composition of the working class and the decline in the ideological level of the organised labour movement have led some to conclude that the working class is no longer the main force for revolutionary change in countries like Australia. Some have despaired and said if such potential exists it will be led by the unemployed and others completely cast off by the capitalist economy. Some have gone so far to say that there is no working class at all in the developed capitalist countries and that their inhabitants will have to await an uprising in the developing countries to achieve liberation.

Such confusion is rife in the "left" media and social media. It has taken root in the political environment of recent decades of retreat. In the education system, postmodernism, which denies concepts such as class or class consciousness in favour of the supposed primacy of personal perceptions, has enforced this deliberate blurring of the persistent fact of increasing rates of exploitation.

The working class is not the only section of the population to suffer increased exploitation and disregard at the hands of monopolies. Poorer family farmers are extremely vulnerable to the demands of supermarket chains and other monopoly purchasers. They no longer have the assistance of government-run marketing boards for cereal crops. Government assistance during times of drought is miserly. Agri-business sits ready to pounce to buy up more and more farms held by families, sometimes for generations.

Notions that exploitation somehow does not exist in countries like Australia or has somehow become benign denies the deteriorating reality of large sections of the working class and poor family farmers. The working class, due to its indispensable role in the process of production, remains the only class with the potential to end the system of exploitation it suffers under.

The situation of the working class in Australia

Almost four decades of retreat in the organised labour movement in Australia has delivered bitter results for Australian workers. Precarious work dominates in the sluggish jobs growth that does take place. OECD research[1] suggests that nearly 40 percent of jobs in Australia are now categorised as precarious. Workers in this category have little security and few rights. Economically, it means such workers have issues in planning long-term budgeting and securing the basics of daily life such as housing. Thirty percent of Australians do not have a secure home of their own and over 100,000 are homeless.[2]

The wages share of GDP has shrunk to 53 percent while the profits share has swollen to 27.6 percent. The tax burden on workers has remained steady or increased due to wage rises trailing inflation. Corporations tax has declined from 33 percent to 30 percent.[3] For those Australians unable to find work, a heartless system of

1 OECD, *In it together: Why lower inequality benefits all*, 2015.

2 Australian Council of Social Service, Housing and Homelessness, 2018.

3 Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian System of National Accounts*, 2017-18, 2018, 2018.

The working class, due to its indispensable role in the process of production, remains the only class with the potential to end the system of exploitation it suffers under.

"work for the dole" exists. The unemployment benefit has not increased since 1996. The poor are humiliated by the increasingly privatised and charity-dominated social security system.

Workers are punished under a restrictive industrial relations legislative framework. Unions are prevented from taking industrial action during the term of their enterprise bargaining contract. These contracts can only include a limited number of types of conditions for workers. Workers' access to their unions is strictly policed and restricted. Unions taking industrial action have incurred huge fines designed to break them. Union organisers and activists also face fines and jail time for defying the anti-worker industrial relations regime. A secret police force in the construction industry has special powers that completely deny workers the right to remain silent and other basic legal protections.

This repressive environment has developed over the decades since the 1990s and has tightened regardless of whether the openly conservative Liberal-National Coalition or the nominally social democratic Australian Labor Party has been in office. Disillusionment with these two major forces is on the rise. The ACTU's Change the Rules campaign has mobilised many workers to act against the crushing industrial relations framework. The CPA supports this campaign but has put more ambitious demands including the unfettered right to strike. It is warning workers of the inevitable betrayal of workers' interests in the event of a Labor victory and reminding them of the need for a revolutionary change in the social and political system; for socialism.

Aboriginal people continue to suffer the worst oppression of any section of the Australian people. Report after report has identified a wide gap between life expectancy, health, education and other vital indicators. Incarceration rates among Indigenous Australians are the highest in the world and deaths and mistreatment in prisons persist despite government inquiries and undertakings. Children are still forcibly removed from their families and resource companies are still working to remove Aboriginal people from their traditional lands over which they have no effective control. Aboriginal workers toil in slave-like conditions for meagre government payments.

Tasks of the Communists, the alliance of the working class

The primary task of the Communists in Australia is to forge the strongest possible alliance of workers and other exploited people to resist and to defeat the capitalist agenda. It means rebuilding the trade unions on a militant, class-conscious basis. In Australia it means raising the ideological level of workers to a socialist one to give them the confidence in their own capacity to break through the legislative and other shackles placed on them.

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Communists must unite other struggles of the people against the sneaking privatisation and other aggressions by the monopolies and show the connection between people's declining standards of living, loss of security and support and the existence and functioning of capitalism. They must unite with Aboriginal workers in their joint struggle for liberation. While much can be and must done in the short-term, only socialism will take on the task of smashing racism and guaranteeing real rights to land.

Communists must fight racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia and the rise of the far right. Attitudes from these sections of the population have infiltrated mainstream political parties and their purpose, to disunite the working class, must be exposed.

Communists must also rebuild an anti-war movement with an anti-imperialist orientation. The peace movement in Australia has suffered a long decline following the massive rallies against the second Gulf War. There are promising signs following the establishment of a new nationwide peace organisation called the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN).

The challenge before the anti-war movement is huge. Australia is still locked into a war-fighting alliance with US imperialism. The government robs the people to meet its commitment to wars of conquest. Over the next 20 years, the Australian government is to spend $1 trillion on the military. It is helping to provoke wars in the region, chiefly with the People's Republic of China, and beyond. It hosts military bases including the Pine Gap spy base so vital for US aggression across the globe. Communists must win workers to an understanding of the existential threat this alliance involves and convince them of the need for peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with our neighbours.

Building the revolutionary Party

The Communist Party of Australia has experienced growth in recent times, particularly among the youth. The increase in membership is encouraging but still inadequate for the size of the challenges ahead. Members, and not just younger ones, come to us from a political environment that is confusing for those wanting to fight back in an effective way.

The Party's 13th National Congress held last December declared in its Political Resolution that the Party must refocus on the trade union movement and that every member should be an activist in it and in their workplace.

The Party must increase its efforts in the area of education. Members must be united around our Marxist-Leninist Program and not be diverted into left, or the more dangerous right, errors. This is of great concern in Australia due to more than a century of the dominance of social democrat ideas on the workers of Australia and the trade union movement.

We must meet our commitments to solidarity with our brothers and sisters struggling for liberation internationally. Our Party has an unbroken tradition of internationalism and much fine work is currently being done. We must play our part in the reinvigoration of the International Communist movement. Our focus on the struggles of our own people must never blind us to the struggles of others, often carried on in even more trying circumstances.

The Party must recruit more members with an emphasis on young workers. The youth of the Party have been tasked with this work in their growing networks across the country. Signs are very encouraging with some outstanding community work being done in the spirit of serving the people as Party members. Much more work in this spirit needs to be carried out.

The finances of our Party must be built to increase the volume and professionalism of our propaganda and our other campaigning work. This is a great challenge because our supporter base is feeling the pinch financially along with the rest of the working class.

The time has arrived to devote unprecedented effort to all these requirements, to thwart the monopolies' agenda to impose more open slavery on workers and to profit from imperialist war. As the Communist movement approaches the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the original CPA in 1920, all members of our Party must act in the spirit of the 13th National Congress by "Taking the Party to the People". Our success in this task of building the Party through action is essential for the future well-being and even survival of our people.

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Impending global debt crisis, development and the role of the People's Republic of China

Anna Pha

The global economy is still not fully recovered from the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent deep recession, yet economic indicators suggest that the next financial crisis is looming large. Historically, debt-ridden industrialised countries have resorted to war or the further plunder of developing countries to climb out of crises. The highly militarised US economy is in bad shape despite all President Trump's claims to the contrary and since former President Obama announced the US's pivot to Asia the Pentagon has focused on preparing for war against China. However, China is playing a leading role in international relations, in particular with the developing countries, by presenting to the world a way forward without war.

Debt-led "recovery"

Globally, investment and productivity growth are low and average incomes are stagnant or even falling. "Global flows of foreign direct investment fell by 23 per cent in 2017. Cross-border investment in developed and transition economies dropped sharply, while growth was near zero in developing economies." (UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2018*) The UNCTAD report also noted some of the challenges facing developing countries, such as "the lack of adequate infrastructure and scarce access to finance."

The situation is compounded by high and rising inequality in incomes and wealth within and between nations. Extensive quantitative easing by the US Federal Reserve has created new problems that have been added to by the threat of all-out trade wars initiated by the US. If interest rates rise, this could bring down stock markets and precipitate a deep recession.

What recovery there has been has to a large extent been based on debt. The US, Japan and many European economies have huge and mounting sovereign debts as well as large corporate and household debts. The US's sovereign debt, for example, reached US$21.46 trillion at the end of the 2018 financial year. China was the largest foreign holder of US treasury debt as of June with around US$1.7 trillion in securities. A significant component of the US's fast-growing budget deficits and debt is driven by interest payments on that debt and military spending. "Defence" is big business for the military-industrial complex. They need wars to keep new orders and mega profits flowing in. Massive corporate tax cuts have added to debt repayment problems.

Developing countries' debt trap

It is not just the developed countries that are carrying large debts. According to Jubilee Germany and the Catholic aid organisation Misereor, 119 developing countries are in dire financial straits with the threat of bankruptcy looming large and some already unable to service their sovereign debts. Loans from western financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) come with neo-liberal conditions attached. Conditions such as privatisation, corporate tax cuts, financial deregulation and pension and wage cuts have a contractionary effect on economies. This guarantees future failure to meet debt repayments and the necessity to negotiate new larger loans with even more strings attached. It is a vicious downward spiral, often referred to as the "debt trap." At the same time, working people experience impoverishment and unemployment while the profits of US and other corporations rise.

US imperialism

Developing countries need to be able to enforce capital control measures. They also need a cancellation or a restructuring of their debts on non-exploitative terms that are not disadvantageous to them and not tied with countless conditions that do further damage to their economies and peoples. Clearly western financial institutions and governments have no intention of agreeing to this as it would eat into their profits.

The US and some other industrialised countries have opposed moves to establish a multilateral legal framework for sovereign debt restructuring. Clearly it would not be in the interests of US imperialism to do so.

Any attempt by a government to take a politically and economically independent path in the interests of their people or national capital, are met with a strong reaction. This response can take various forms of political

Anna Pha hosting a seminar on the Belt and Road Initiative and new economic globalisation.

and economic destabilisation and interference, blockades, coups and even invasions. Witness Chile, Libya, Venezuela, Brazil, Iraq, Iran and so on. US imperialism constantly strives for global hegemony.

US-China relations

Since "Reform and Opening-up" began under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, China's growth as an economic power has been phenomenal and taken most of the world by surprise. This rapid growth has been accompanied by the spread of investments around the world, offering developing and other countries much needed assistance.

I believe the US underestimated the speed of this growth and the sophistication of China's economy and defence capacity. A new defence act passed recently in the US declared competition with China a principal priority, vowing to take comprehensive measures to contain Beijing. This act escalates an already very dangerous situation – with all indicators pointing to plans for war against China. The US's pivot and its provocative behaviour in the South China Sea are suggestive of this.

Australia is a host to the US's Pine Gap communications and spy facility which would be central to any war. At present, an intense anti-China propaganda campaign is being waged by the Murdoch media and by sections of the Australian government and ruling class, preparing the Australian people for aggression against China. Australia has strong military ties with the US through the US-Australia military alliance and a number of other alliances. It has participated in all of the US's major wars since the Second World War and hosts a network of over 50 secretive US military bases and other military facilities across Australia, including Pine Gap.

In addition, the US has access to Australian Defence Force facilities and carries out training of its forces in Australia. The US is also using Australia to bring India, a nuclear power, into its orbit as a partner in joint military exercises.

The Australian capitalist ruling class, however, appears to be divided over China. Those sections that see their economic future lying with China are showing signs of backing off from blind subservience to US imperialism. They see no benefit in a war with China. This illustrates the strategic importance of strong economic ties and

economic integration in preventing war and maintaining peace.

Australia's increase in military spending is of an aggressive, rather than defensive nature. It is being increased to two percent of Gross Domestic Product in line with instructions from the US.

The bellicose attitude towards China, in Australia and elsewhere, raises the question of the importance of the anti-war movement in western developed countries. Unfortunately, in Australia, it is not large or strong enough to have the impact required to bring about a breaking of the US-Australia alliance or removal of US bases. The Communist Party of Australia calls for an independent, non-aligned foreign policy.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

China, in putting forward the concept of the BRI, speaks in terms of new globalisation. This brings me back to the question of developing country debt. There are already a number of bodies in existence based on South-South relations such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), the BRICS grouping of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and growing ties between Asia and Europe. But they are not enough.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) offers considerable scope, holding out hopes for greater autonomy and less vulnerability to the US and other former colonisers. The loans being offered through the BRI are for key infrastructure such as communications, transportation, pipelines, ports, schools, hospitals, and cultural and environmental projects. These are all key to trade and development as well as having long-term job creation potential. They provide the opportunity to reduce or eliminate reliance on the West. China and its state banks do not have a record of imposing harsh and destructive IMF-style conditions but rather offering loans that are of mutual benefit to the borrowing countries as well as to China.

The BRI, initially for developing and emerging economies has been opened up to any country that wishes to join. Australia, which could benefit considerably from investment attached to the BRI, has so far refused to join on the advice of its security officials.

The BRI is an economic infrastructure project of unprecedented magnitude assisting mostly developing countries on mutually beneficial terms with considerable spin-offs in other areas such as climate change. President Xi Jinping spoke of it in terms of "peace and cooperation", "openness and inclusiveness", "mutual learning" and "mutual benefit." It has the potential to provide a different model for international relations and co-operation, and be a force for peace and friendship.

The Communist Party of Australia calls for an independent, non-aligned foreign policy.

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Clipping imperialism's claws: Why China needs to support communist parties in the imperialist countries

Michael Hooper

Growing international opposition to One Belt One Road combined with intensified imperialist aggression towards China should encourage Chinese policy makers to reconsider their abandonment of proletarian internationalism in the 1990s. Rather than a financial burden or political risk, practical support for communist parties in imperialist countries is a viable strategy for diminishing the capacity of those states to pursue aggressive anti-Chinese policies. History has proven that communist-led or influenced anti-war movements have limited and occasionally reversed imperialist policies and actions. As communist parties in the imperialist countries begin to rally after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has a unique chance to not only further the cause of Communism internationally, but to secure Chinese national security and foreign policy goals. By understanding the specific challenges that these parties face and providing the help necessary for these parties to achieve "critical mass", the CPC will be securing the stable and peaceful international situation necessary for China's peaceful rise.

The decline of class conscious internationalism

Opening and Reform in China marked the beginning of a new phase in China's attitude towards the international communist movement and the struggles of fraternal parties. CPC policy gradually shifted from a class conscious position of firm material support of the proletariat and oppressed peoples of the world to a self-imposed isolation from the international movement.

In 1982, the Constitution of the Communist Party of China proudly declared the Party's intention to persist with proletarian internationalism and to unite with the proletariat, oppressed peoples and peace loving peoples of the world to jointly oppose imperialism, hegemonism and colonialism. However, by 1992 all mention of proletarian internationalism, the class character of international relations and current opposition to imperialism had disappeared from the CPC Constitution. The drastic changes between these documents were a sign of the changing attitude of the CPC towards the international communist movement.

The term proletarian internationalism began to fall out of use in the 1980s as scholars, media outlets and even officials following the 14th CPC Congress in 1992 stopped using the term (Li 2017 p.29). At this time, the CPC consciously decided to downplay proletarian internationalism in a bid to normalise relations with the capitalist world (Li 2017 p.30). Whether withdrawing support for the international communist movement was actually necessary for achieving this goal is debatable, considering that the US was actively inviting China to participate in the international capitalist system in order to encourage counter-revolution within China, not because Chinese policy had changed (Hooper 2016).

However, it is unfair to simply criticise China for this change when other socialist countries and even major Communist parties in the capitalist world did the same thing. In 1992, Proletarian Internationalism was deleted from the constitution of the Korean Workers' Party with the Communist parties of Japan, Portugal and France following suit (Li 2017 p.30). The important difference though, is that the CPC commands far greater resources than all of the aforementioned parties combined or even the Soviet Union at its height. Despite having enormous economic power, China today provides even less material support to the international communist movement than pre-Reform and Opening China or tiny Cuba has done.

The win-win character of supporting Communist parties in the imperialist world

It goes without saying that all Marxist-Leninist parties have a duty to support the international communist movement without sacrificing their own domestic struggle. However, rather than being a burden, fraternal aid to the Communist parties of the imperialist world is actually beneficial for the CPC's own immediate po-

Michael Hooper preparing to speak at the 9th World Socialism Forum.

litical goals by limiting the aggressive foreign policy of imperialist states.

Imperialist aims in regard to China have remained the same: Crush the Communist Party of China and re-enslave the Chinese people. Formerly, they used brutally direct methods such as bombing China under the pretext of the Korean War, and then less-direct methods such as encouraging China to join the world capitalist system and pursuing "peaceful evolution" (Jiao 2015). With the "Pivot to Asia", the US and its vassals in Asia are carrying out a new round of "engaging and containing". However, it is not the strength of the Chinese economy or the power of the Chinese military that will deter imperialism. Instead it is political pressure from within the imperialist countries that will lead to a weakening of their anti-Chinese policy.

History has shown that a "... proven moderating influence on the policy of imperialist countries is mass political campaigns by progressive domestic political forces" (Briton & Hooper 2016). Imperialism's campaign against Vietnam didn't end because the Vietnamese army defeated the US military in combat, but largely because of the anti-war movement in the imperialist countries (Briton & Hooper 2016). Australia's involvement in Vietnam ended when "The Liberal government, which had kept power for 22 years, was defeated by mass opposition to Australia's role in the Vietnam War. Upon winning the election, the new Whitlam Labor (social democrat) government withdrew Australian forces from Vietnam. This new government, which took power in a climate of powerful Communist-led labour unions and successful public campaigns for social justice causes, finally recognised the Peoples' Republic of China." (Briton & Hooper 2016).

A strong, progressive, anti-war movement in imperialist countries helps limit imperialist adventures and protects the peaceful international situation China requires for development. However, these movements require class-conscious, principled leadership from Marxist-Leninist parties in order to preserve their correct orientation and to maintain their momentum once an issue has fallen from the media spotlight. These Communist parties must first overcome some serious problems and achieve

a critical mass in order to achieve the necessary level of leadership over these mass movements to continue defending China's peaceful rise.

The vicious cycle that holds Communist Parties in the imperialist world back

History textbooks are filled with the heroic exploits and sufferings of the Bolsheviks and early CPC members. Workers were tortured in Tsarist dungeons, ate grass to survive on the Long March and fought in brutal civil wars. There is no disputing that these comrades made extraordinary sacrifices under grim conditions. Yet their enemy was divided and on the cusp of self-destruction. The situation facing Communist parties in the imperialist countries is not as grim but is far more challenging.

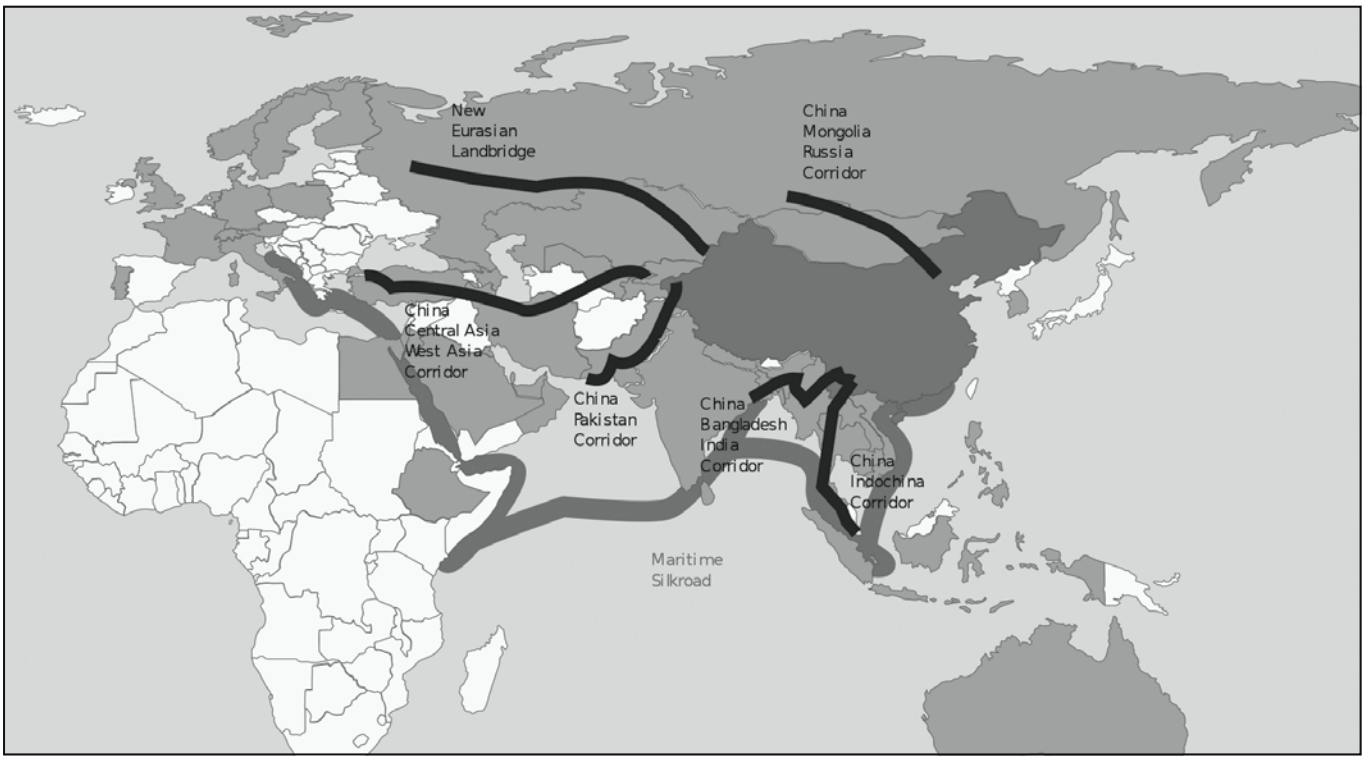
While Communists in the imperialist countries today don't currently face firing squads for their activities, they are instead faced with an extremely well-funded and state-of-the-art propaganda apparatus at the command of an ascendant ruling class with no revolutionary situation in sight. This class has perfected a stable system of hegemony that effectively keeps workers from questioning the system or considering alternatives. On the occasions that workers do begin to suspect the status quo, faux-socialist groups such as the left-wing of the Australian Labor Party and the Greens are "safe" outlets for their frustrations. Desires for genuine revolutionary change are filtered through these organisations and turned into petty reformism. Modern technology has drastically shortened the attention spans of working people and the atomisation of society has broken communities into individuals with few links to each other. An Australian survey revealed that more than half of respondents are not members of any kind of social organisation, while membership in all kinds of organisations such as unions, church groups, sporting clubs and political parties is declining (Lewis 2016). An analysis of all of the above phenomena is beyond the scope of this paper but it suffices to say that it has become increasingly difficult for Communist parties to function in imperialist countries.

Despite improved work methods and dedication by volunteer members, Communist parties such as the Communist Party of Australia continue to lack important resources that are necessary for them to lead the struggle of the working class. Among the most important of these resources are sufficient numbers of paid, full-time professional cadre; technical skills for producing propaganda, conducting education and carrying out political activities and training. The result of constant shortcomings in these areas is a vicious cycle, where a lack of one of the above resources causes further shortcomings in other areas, preventing parties from reaching the critical mass of members and activity necessary to begin achieving victory.

Working people in imperialist countries today will not take propaganda from political organisations seriously unless it is presented in an extremely professional and polished manner. This is a major change from previous decades where plain material was eagerly read as long as the content was compelling. Indeed, even professionally designed material runs the risk of being ignored by "consumers" with limited attention spans. There is a growing pressure on Communist parties to not only produce visually striking banners and leaflets but to also engage through electronic media. Professionally produced videos on topics of interest to the working class would make an excellent way of engaging workers. Unfortunately, while the ruling class can easily afford graphic designers, marketing specialists and media talents, working class organisations can't compete. Comrades typically don't join with highly developed media production skills nor can overworked volunteers devote the time or money necessary to acquiring these skills.

Another unique challenge is the rise of social media such as Facebook and Twitter. As society in the imperialist countries becomes more atomised and individuals become ever more isolated, people are spending more and more time on social media, a platform that is well known to be manipulated by ruling class interest groups. People are drawn into sterile ultra-leftist discussions and turned away from real activity. Other disgruntled youths are attracted to the far-right through online gateway communities. Lenin said that if you want to help the masses, one: "... must absolutely work wherever the masses are to be found" (Lenin 1964). One area where young people today may be found is precisely on social media. Unfortunately, while many members of Communist Parties use social media, parties often lack talented social media staff that focus their attention on furthering the Party's will online. A lack of training, personnel and the means of supporting them financially hobbles parties in this regard.

Simply taking these two issues as examples demonstrates the pressing need for greater full-time professional cadre, technical training and the funding to support them. Unfortunately, to achieve the necessary funding would require the parties in question to already have the cadre and technical training that the funding is being raised to support! It is a vicious cycle that requires a certain critical mass to break out of. Currently, the communist parties of countries like the United States and Australia have not reached this critical mass, despite continuous improvements and great effort on the part of members.



How can the CPC assist?

Aware of their internationalist duty, seized of the mutual benefits that international cooperation provides and armed with knowledge of the specific problems facing Communist parties in the imperialist countries, how can the CPC best assist fraternal parties?

Unlike the CPC, which received Soviet aid, these Communist parties do not receive any kind of support from the existing socialist countries. The CPC is in an excellent position to offer exactly the kinds of support that Communist parties in the imperialist world need to reach a critical mass. This support should primarily focus on resolving the technical and human resource shortages of local parties but could also, depending on local conditions, involve provision of technical equipment or online resources.

One of the most important ways that parties such as the CPC could assist fraternal parties is by providing training to foreign cadres. As mentioned in the previous section, one of the key problems facing communist parties in the imperialist world is the lack of technical skills, especially those related to the production of high-quality propaganda. The CPC could establish cadre training schools just as the Soviet Union established the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. These schools could provide training in skills the cadres of fraternal parties lack whether they are technical, such as graphic design and video production; or ideological, such as Marxist philosophy and economics.

On the question of CPC branches abroad

Since 2017, Western media outlets have begun publishing stories about Chinese scholars and exchange students establishing CPC branches in the US (Allen-Ebrahimian 2018, Gan & Zhuang 2017). This isn't a phenomena dreamed up by Western media as part of a scare campaign since Chinese media not only confirms that this takes place but also endorses the practice (Zhang 2017). In fact, this trend isn't limited to the US as the National University of Defence Technology alone has established Party branches in over 20 countries for its students studying outside of China (Zhang 2017).

According to media reports, these overseas CPC branches carry out numerous activities ranging from ideological education for the benefit of branch members to attempting to raise support for CPC policies amongst locals (Zhang 2017). Unfortunately, what these branches don't do is support the struggle of the local proletariat or work with local Communist parties. This is an unacceptable departure from the principle of proletarian internationalism.

An important element of proletarian internationalism is that Communists, no matter where they find themselves, must engage in the struggle of the local working class. It does not matter where one is born, only where one can serve. This is a long standing internationalist principle that most, but not all, Communist parties follow. To facilitate this principle, the Constitution of the Communist Party of Australia states that: "Membership of the

Communist Party of Australia is open to any person 16 years of age or over, who normally resides in Australia". Many, though not all, fraternal parties adhere to this position and have traditionally directed their members who migrate to Australia to join the CPA and serve the cause of the Australian working class. Even if members relocate to another country temporarily, they could contact the local Party organisation and offer their support. So for example, members of the CPC residing in Australia could contact the Communist Party of Australia and ask how they could best contribute. Yet despite tens of thousands of CPC members coming to Australia every year, I am only aware of a single case where a CPC member residing in Australia asked to help the cause of the local working class.

To continue with the Australian example, why is it that so many Chinese communists arrive in Australia and express no interest in the Australian proletariat? Instead of directing members overseas to carry out publicity for Chinese government policies, these members should be encouraged to involve themselves in local struggles, under the leadership of local Communist parties. If the CPC Central Committee is worried about the ideological danger of members spending time in the capitalist world, what better way is there to temper comrades than in the proletariat's struggle for emancipation? If members are spending their time in contact with working people, hearing about their critiques and struggles against capitalism, surely they will gain a greater appreciation of socialism and the struggles of the original Chinese revolutionaries?

It would assist local movements and Communist Parties if CPC members in foreign countries did not form branches of the CPC but instead contacted local Communist Parties and offer to join their struggle. Likewise if CPC members migrate to foreign countries then it would assist if they resigned from the PCP and joined the Communist Party of that country.

Conclusion

With the fall of the Soviet Union and the retreat of the CPC from the world scene, the international communist movement was at its lowest ebb. However, after decades of retreat, the Communist parties of the imperialist countries are like green shoots that only require a little watering to flourish. Yet, despite the exceedingly challenging circumstances these parties find themselves in, they have been left to struggle on their own by parties that previously benefited from Soviet generosity.

The international situation is now ripe for Communist parties like the CPC to return to performing their internationalist duties. This duty should not be seen as a burden but rather an effective measure for limiting the aggressive foreign policy of imperialist countries. If parties such as the CPC used a tiny portion of their massive human resources to aid communist parties in the imperialist world, it would make a big difference to everyone's fortunes.

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Scientifically judge the orientation of the times to develop full confidence in socialism with Chinese characteristics and world socialism

Li Shenming

Editor's note: The following article was originally published in Chinese as a contribution to the 9th World Socialism Forum. It is a prime example of Chinese political writing that makes heavy use of official slogans that have deeper meanings than direct English translations can provide. This feature, combined with long sentences filled with commas, makes for difficult reading for the uninitiated. In the interest of preserving Shenming's precise meaning and intent, we have decided to only edit obvious grammatical errors and to adapt the source to our formatting standards.

At the routine group study session of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee on September 29, 2017, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasised:

> Times are changing and society is developing, but the fundamental principle of Marxism remains a scientific truth. Great and deep changes have taken place in our age compared with that of Marx, but, from the horizon of the 500 years of world socialism, we are still in the historical times as clarified by Marx, which is the scientific basis for us to maintain unshakable confidence in Marxism and firmly believe that socialism will certainly win.[1]

The judgment by General Secretary Xi Jinping is perfectly right and very important.

I. We are still in the general historical times as defined by Marx and Engels

Historians often carry out periodisation by means of production. Comparatively, Marx and Engels determined and divided "all past historical times" and social development forms by the class playing a leading role in society, and clearly raised the concept of "the epoch of the bourgeoisie".

They first established dialectical materialism and used it as a powerful tool to look at human history, with which they revealed the objective law of the development of human society for the first time. They drew the remarkable conclusion that capitalism is bound to perish and socialism and communism are bound to succeed [Ed. In official Chinese language, this is referred to as the "Two Bounds"] in view of the general trend of history.

On the basis of this conclusion, Marx deeply examined and studied the capitalist mode of production with the materialist conception of history, exposed the secret of capitalist exploitation, developed the theory of surplus value, and thereby discovered the basic contradiction in capitalist society, namely the ultimate incompatible antagonism between the socialisation of production and capitalist private ownership of means of production, and identified the proletariat as the force to realise social change. The theory of scientific socialism is just based on the materialist conception of history and the theory of surplus value.

While drawing the "Two Bounds" conclusion, Marx clearly pointed out "Two Nevers", namely, "any social form will never perish before all productive forces it contains are released; and any new and more advanced relations of production will never emerge before the material conditions for its existence become mature in the womb of the old society."[2]

"Two Bounds" and "Two Nevers" constitute a unified organic whole, and should never be used to negate each

1 *Xi Jinping, the Governance of China*, Vol.2, Foreign Languages Press, 2017, pp.66.

2 *The Selected Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol.2, pp.33.

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other. Philosophically, using one to negate the other is "dualism" and "theory of one point" rather than "monism" and "theory of two points". However, we must also note that, according to the fundamental principle of Marxism, "Two Bounds" and "Two Nevers" are never in a completely parallel relation; if they are considered parallel, a considerably active space for various wrong recognitions of "Left" or "Right", even for historical nihilism, will occur. In a certain sense, "Two Bounds" are the general trend and destination of the development of human history, the master source for us to establish correct ideals and beliefs, the root of our confidence in building socialism with Chinese characteristics and finally realising communism. The "Two Nevers" are a general collection and description of the specific process and details of the overall development of human history, and the actual basis for the objective and specific conditions that we should examine when formulating, implementing and realising the minimum programs, and strategies and tactics in the course of realising the maximum program.

Just for this reason, we absolutely cannot and should never take them separately or even as opposites. The road of building socialism with Chinese characteristics and finally realising communism will surely be full of thorns and hardships, and it will never be an easy job, but we are fully confident in reaching the final destination of all mankind, namely communism, or a community with a shared future for mankind.

To sum up, it can be said that the world today is still in the era of imperialism and in the transition from capitalism to communism; socialism is the primary stage of communism, while the present socialism with Chinese characteristics is only the primary stage of socialism.

II. We are in the specific minor historical period of financial imperialism as defined by Lenin at the same time

Personally, I think, General Secretary Xi's judgment that "we are still in the historical times as clarified by Marx" covers both the general historical times as defined by Marx and Engels and the specific minor historical period of imperialism as specified by Lenin.

Lenin upheld and developed the thoughts of Marx and Engels. According to Lenin's criterion on periodisation, we can further divide the development of capitalism into three stages: 1. Commercial capitalism; 2. Industrial capitalism; and 3. Financial capitalism, namely financial imperialism. Correspondingly, we should translate the "general historical times" of the capitalist class into three minor historical periods: 1. The period of commercial capitalism; 2. The period of industrial capitalism, which, together with the period of commercial capitalism, belongs to the period of free-competition capitalism; and 3. The period of financial capitalism in which industrial capital and banking capital are centralised faster and increasingly integrated. The period of financial imperialism is a period of monopolistic, parasitic/decadent and moribund capitalism.

In 1914, Lenin pointed out: "imperialism is such a state that capitalism has completed all it can and turned to decline"; "we cannot assert how long the period will continue".[3] From the end of 1915 to 1916, Lenin clearly pointed out that: "financial capital has become the typical 'overlord' of the world ... the destiny of the whole world is simply in the hands of hundreds of millionaires and billionaires".[4] "Imperialism exactly features financial capital rather than industrial capital".[5] In the first half of 1916, Lenin very clearly specified in his famous *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*:

> Imperialism has developed to such an extent, that most of the profit has been swallowed by the 'geniuses' in the dirty deals of finance, but the great progress by humanity after going through all kinds of hardships and difficulties ... has benefited speculators.[6]

He further stated:

> The general character of capitalism lies in the separation between capital possession and the application of capitalism in production, between money capital and industrial capital or production capital, and between the rentier completely living on returns on money capital and the entrepreneur and all others directly using capital. Imperialism, or the rule of financial capital, is the highest stage of capitalism.[7]

I think that, imperialism as mentioned by Lenin in the article, is an abbreviation for the financial imperialism ruled by financial capital; and that "imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism" is just Lenin's brief expression that financial imperialism is the highest stage of the development of capitalism. In addition, that the world today is still in the period of imperialism as we often mention just means that we remain in the period of financial imperialism. For this reason, we can confirm that, using Lenin's wording of "financial imperialism" will help us more directly to deeply understand the

3 *The Collected Works of Lenin*. Edition 2, Vol.26 , 1988, pp.36.

4 *The Collected Works of Lenin*. Edition 2, Vol.27, 1990, pp.142

5 The Collected Works of Lenin. Edition 2, Vol.27, pp.403.

6 *The Selected Works of Lenin*. pp.594.

7 *The Collected Works of Lenin*. Edition 2, Vol.27, 1990, pp.374.

Lenin recognised the dominance of finance capital rather than industrial capital as a key feature of imperialism.

essence of imperialism, international financial crisis and major events around the world at present, and find the strategic measures for a scientific response.

Without a doubt, "the capitalist class played a very revolutionary role in history." With the coming of the times of financial imperialism, however, it has gradually stepped into the parasitic, decadent, reactionary and declining historical stage. We cannot assert how long the period of financial imperialism as mentioned by Lenin will continue, but one thing is sure, namely the period will not last decades or a hundred years, but at least hundreds of years even longer. Lenin's argument that imperialism is decadent and moribund capitalism is sometimes critiqued from a short-sighted perspective of imperialism, and is based on the time span of 100 years or even on decades. Based on this short-term perspective some people drew the conclusion that the argument is out of date. In fact, this claim is generated not from the error of Lenin's judgment, but from our intolerance and error in understanding his thought.

The transition from capitalism to socialism is a long process, and the course is tortuous and may even be reversed sometimes. According to a definite viewpoint of Lenin, "every era has and always presents individual and partial movements sometimes forward and sometimes backward, and various cases deviating from the general type and speed of movements".[8] This can serve as a way for us to properly understand the radical changes of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the contemporary low tide of socialism.

In the course of transition from capitalism to socialism, socialist revolution experienced rapid development and depression. As Lenin clearly pointed out, socialist revolution would never be as:

> Broad, unhindered and straight ... as the sidewalk of Nevsky Prospekt, without the need to bear serious sacrifices on the way to victory, "be entrenched in a besieged fortress", or pass through the narrowest, hardest, most zigzagged and most dangerous paths among the mountains. Anyone who thinks that only "under such conditions", "can" proletarian revolution be carried out will not be a revolutionary.[9]

8 *The Collected Works of Lenin*. Edition 2, Vol.26, 1988, pp.143.

9 *The Collected Works of Lenin*. Edition 2, Vol.35, 1985, pp.55.

He thought that, "it will be a long and tortuous path for the thorough victory of socialism"[10]; revolution would experience a period of rapid development in which "the results in one day may be equal to those in 20 years sometimes", and the "political depression period" with "'peaceful' turtle-speed development".[11] Such phenomenon may occur in the revolution of a single county and around the world. Therefore, we should not view the phenomenon that the world socialist revolution is in a period of depression at present as a change of the fundamental nature of the times, or to even want to bid farewell to revolution, because it is just changes in themes at different development stages. Lenin said:

"All strategies of the proletariat should be based on the objective and necessary dialectics of human history", "we should take advantages of the political depression" period "to develop the consciousness, strength and battle effectiveness of the advanced class ... and make the class able to actually accomplish all great tasks upon the coming of the great day when 'the results in one day may be equal to those in 20 years sometimes'".[12]

In my personal view, with economic globalisation deepening, international financial crisis worsening and rich-poor polarisation around the world and socialism with Chinese characteristics standing majestically, the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people and the proletariat and working people all over the world will surely put an end to the "political depression" period with "'peaceful' turtle-speed development", and usher in the coming of the great day when "the results in one day may be equal to those in 20 years" as Lenin said, in the incoming two or three decades.

Chinese leaders, Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and General Secretary Xi have never denied that the world today is still in the period of imperialism. To the contrary, they have all directly or indirectly affirmed that the essence of the period remains unchanged.

In March 2013, when making a speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Comrade Xi Jinping pointed out:

> In the world today, humans still faces many difficulties and challenges: deep influences of international financial crisis continue, protectionism of all shades worsen, hotspot issues arise, hegemonism, power politics and new interventionism become worse, and conventional and unconventional security threats such as arms race, terrorism and cyber-insecurity are interwoven. Therefore, we have a long way to go in safeguarding world peace and promoting common development."[13]

On June 25, 2016, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Putin jointly issued the *Joint Statement between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Strengthening Global Strategic Stability* in Beijing, clearly pointing out that:

> Currently, passive factors influencing global strategic stability are increasing around the world, about which we have some concerns. The trend is dangerous. First, individual countries and military-political alliances seek their decisive advantages in military and military technology fields, so as to realise their interests by using or threatening to use military force without any barrier in international affairs. They openly ignore the basic security principle that the security of all countries must not be impaired, and try to guarantee their security at the price of the insecurity of other countries. This policy makes the increase of military force grow out of control, shakes the global strategic stability system, and runs counter to the philosophy of realising general and complete disarmament under effective international supervision.

The judgement not only indirectly affirms the existence of imperialism as specified by Lenin, but also fully asserts the conclusion that imperialism is war.

Whether it is admitted, faced up to and recognised or not, the times as defined by Lenin exist in our political, economic and social life all the time, and in our internal and international imperatives which we must keep in our mind urgently. In a certain sense, it is a very important issue of basic theory and objective reality demanding instant clarification.

We have been able to reveal the root of the international financial crisis which is still unfathomable: the drastic polarisation of rich and poor around the world after the sharp change in Eastern Europe and the subjugation of the Soviet Union and its ruling party. It has been 10 years since the last international financial crisis, which, in the author's view, will not be cast off in another 10 or more years. Today, the birth and development of new hi-tech revolution and new means of production represented by Internet plus intelligent robots greatly improves the global social productive forces, but aggravates global polarization and income distribution. Such a situation is just as Marx stressed: in capitalist society:

> Any progress in civilization, or any increase in social productive force (the productive force of

10 *The Collected Works of Lenin*. Edition 2,Vol.33, 1992, pp.410.

11 *The Collected Works of Lenin*. Edition 2,Vol.26 , 1992, pp.78.

12 *The Collected Works of Lenin*. Edition 2, Vol.26, 1992, pp.78.

13 *People's Daily*. March 24, 2013.

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> labor itself), for example, science, inventions, division and combination of labor, improvement of means of transport, development of world markets, machines and so on, will only make capital richer rather than workers.[14]

That is to say, within the framework of the capitalist relations of production, capital and labour are two ends of a seesaw and in essence, they get richer separately, but will never become richer at the same time. The richer capital becomes, the poorer the broad working masses surely; the poorer the broad working masses, the less the effective social demands certainly. The economic globalisation dominated by Western capitalist countries headed by the US will be bound to make broad masses worldwide poorer and relative social demands fall sharply. We can also prophesise that in the following two or three decades, many intelligent robots will misappropriate more jobs from workers and unmanned factories will spring up like mushrooms around the world. This course may be much faster and its coverage may be broader than common people can imagine. However, if capital can go without employing workers, common people will have no salaries, then who will buy the cheap and fine products?

In essence, the international financial crisis in 2008 was a comprehensive crisis of capitalist economy, politics and cultural values, and a general outburst of the basic capitalist contradiction between the highly developed social productive forces, namely the socialisation and globalisation of production, and the existing relations of production, namely the possession of means of production by a very few private owners. History has repeatedly proved that the basic contradiction can never be cast off within the framework of the capitalist relations of production. With the contradiction developing and deepening, it can be foretold that more serious financial disasters will break out one after another in the following years.

The entire capitalist world looks like the internally empty Jia Mansion in *The Dream of Red Mansion*, a famous Chinese novel. The polarisation of rich and poor around the world today will surely lead to pain, resentment even resistance of the people from countries all over the world, which will be the fundamental impetus for great change and adjustment worldwide, thereby driving the great development of human society.

In view of immediate and partial areas, we have a few convergences of interests with the US, particularly in economic and trade exchanges due to high mutual trade volumes. In view of fundamentals and long-term development, the capitalist path, theoretical system, rule and culture headed by the US are opposed to those of our socialism with Chinese characteristics.

In a certain sense, as long as Western powers dominate our world, war will be inevitable. The judgement by Lenin remains scientific and accurate: imperialism is the source of war. Since the Cold War ended, more than 10 serious local wars have occurred around the world, to which imperialist powers contributed directly or indirectly. We think, however, that world peace is hopeful, as people from countries all over the world, including those of developed countries and developing countries, have strong wishes for and pursuits of world peace, and have deepened their recognition of the phenomena and essence of imperialism and its nature as the source of war. In addition, Western countries headed by the US are on the decline, the world multi-polarisation is developing deeply, and the US has become unable to seek global hegemony as it wishes. Driven by their success in the former Soviet Union through "peaceful evolution", western countries will mainly make use of their economic, political and cultural hegemony to play the same trick in socialist countries and stir up "colour revolutions" in other developing countries, for their purpose of seeking perpetual hegemony and plundering the world. Against the backdrop, the overall pattern of world peace may remain as ever for a period in the future.

War and peace are always dominated by different classes and powers, which lead to their difference by nature. Meanwhile, there are the relations of opposition and unification and of qualitative change and quantitative change between them. In the long history of human beings, the relatively cosy and peaceful period is normal in terms of time and overall situations, while wars full of blood and fire are short even transient. However, once a war breaks out, it will cause great hardships to nations and people, but can also lead to their birth under certain conditions. Just as the relations between economic crisis and economic development, economic development is a normal state, while economic crisis is a non-normal state, but short economic crisis as a non-normal state may cause great hardships to nations and people for a long or even very long time, which may promote their revitalisation.

The times of financial imperialism may last for a considerably long historical stage, so we should never belittle the times and not think it to be shorter, as the view goes that our times is one of peace and development. Of course, in a certain sense, how long the times continue depends on how people from countries all over the world, particularly communists representing their fundamental interests, recognize the times and on how they give play to their subjective initiative in cooperating, competing and contesting imperialism. To a certain extent, it can be

14 *The Collected Works of Marx and Engels*. Vol.46, pp.268, People's Publishing House, 1979.

said that with the economic base of financial hegemony, the US is equipped with various approaches for hegemony in other fields. Nowadays, the American economic situation is complicated and confused, which is one of the reasons why the US is transferring and will continuously transfer its economic crisis in 2007 to the broad developing countries and even developed economies including the EU and Japan. In view of the general trend of history, imperialism is a decadent and moribund capitalism and a paper tiger. We must view it in such a manner strategically and essentially, as it is a law and will be certain in the future. However, we must also bear in mind other arguments of Lenin as follows. In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin pointed out:

> If you think that the decadent trend excludes rapid development of capitalism, you will be wrong. No, in the period of imperialism, some industrial sectors, strata of bourgeoisie or countries may present sometimes this trend and sometimes that trend. Overall, capitalism may develop much faster than ever.[15]

Therefore, tactically, financial imperialism should be taken as a real and iron tiger. The tiger always wants to eat others. The Soviet Union, represented by a big socialist party and power, was eaten, wasn't it? One of the major reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union is that the Western world headed by the US directly or indirectly plundered vast wealth from it by stirring up financial turmoil there. With this case as a reference, we must be highly alert tactically, respond to the Western world seriously and not act carelessly. Only by seeing clearly the important character that financial imperialism is decadent and moribund but may develop at an amazing speed can we be clearheaded and win the initiative under any situations.

Peace and development, as "two major themes", "two major topics" and "two big issues", will never be easily addressed in a historical stage of decades, hundreds of years or an even longer time. Primitive communist society existed for more than one million years, slave society for more than 1,600 years and feudal society for more than 2,000 years, but capitalist society has had a history of only 370 years so far. History has sped up its pace of development, but we have no reason and, more importantly, no power to make capitalism pass away peacefully.

In our times, financial imperialism has undoubtedly been on the decline. In essence, jeopardies facing capitalism mean opportunities for socialism: The more serious the jeopardies, the bigger the opportunities. As long as socialism stands rock-firm, the general outburst of the biggest capitalist crisis for 500 years, since the birth of capitalism, will probably be triggered. Even in such a situation, financial imperialism will never change its essence, but may become insane and put up a last ditch struggle. We must sharpen our vigilance, develop complete and all-round emergency response plans in advance and actively make preparations for the great struggle against various complicated situations.

III. Major theory and practice issues facing the world today

General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that:

> Only by attentively listening to the voice, responding to the call of the era, and seriously studying and solving major and pressing problems, can we really be clear about the historical vein, find the law of development and move ahead with theoretical innovation.

The world today mainly faces the following major theory and reality issues, which need to be addressed by sticking to the fundamental principle of Marxism and driving theoretical innovation, so as to deal with challenges and promote world peace and development.

1. Peace. In the report to the 19th CPC National Congress, General Secretary Xi Jinping stated: "Both

15 *The Collected Works of Lenin*. Edition 2, Vol.27, People's Publishing House, 1990, pp.436.

To promote sustained and healthy development of the world economy, a more just and reasonable globalisation, new mode of development and even a globalisation of socialism are required.

China and the world are in the midst of profound and complex changes. China is still in an important period of strategic opportunity for development; the prospects are bright but the challenges are severe." Since the international financial crisis in 2008, global economic growth has been weak and is still in turmoil, and a new round of more serious financial even economic crisis is likely brewing and accumulating. The world is experiencing an arduous, complicated and changeable period, and some countries of capitalist hegemony are intensifying tense situations in some regions in an attempt to cast off and transfer their crisis. After the breakout of the international financial crisis, the American think tank RAND delivered an evaluation report to the Department of Defense on the feasibility of starting a war to transfer the economic crisis, as it was war that really made capitalist countries recover from economic crises and restart new economic cycles throughout capitalism's history, particularly the crisis in 1929. In order to safeguard the dollar hegemony and the financialised accumulation mechanism, international financial monopoly capital is taking advantage of its hegemony in economic, financial, political, cultural and military fields, supported by other economic and financial approaches such as interest rate rises and QE (Quantitative Easing), to cause geo-political trouble, create disturbances at strategic strongholds around the world, and foment financial and economic crisis abroad, with a view to transferring the crisis and maintaining hegemony. Meanwhile, driven by their deep ideological and institutional prejudice against and strategic doubt and fear of China, Western countries are more and more overly trying to contain and oppress rising China. Some geo-political conflicts such as the Syrian and Ukrainian Crisis have threatened the core strategic interests of major powers, and made all major powers behind the crises try their strength against and contend with each other more and more fiercely. Western military hegemony may rise, and their increasingly adventurous strategies should not be discounted. Recently, American warships and bombers frequently intruded into the South China Sea, and, a few days ago, its warships brazenly passed through the Taiwan Strait. So, what does the US want to do?

2. Development. Economic globalisation and regional integration are the general trend, but globalisation by far has mainly been dominated by international financial capital, and accompanied by many unequal, unjust and unreasonable phenomena in the international economic order. The breakout of the international financial crisis in 2008 foretells the need of structural adjustment of the globalization mode, the capitalist development path and the global economic and financial governance systems led by developed countries. Crisis is inevitable though it may be postponed for many years and many times, and may last for more than 10 years or even longer. We must fully understand that the world economic adjustment will be a long-term and tortuous process. There is a long way to go before we realise general economic recovery, and there still exist many uncertainties and risks in international financial and economic fields. All countries face many difficulties in economic structural adjustment. Various trade frictions and protectionism have increased and economic globalisation has entered a period of deep adjustment and rebalancing. With insufficient driving forces for economic growth around the world, developed countries have presented an obvious "de-globalisation" trend. The US has accelerated its restructuring of regional economic and trade cooperation systems. Under the Obama Administration, the US expected to reshape global economic and trade rules, while the Trump Administration advocated the America-First trade protection policy. In fact, the two administrations both attempted to dominate the creation of new rules and standards for the international economy and trade to safeguard its hegemonic interests. To promote sustained and healthy development of the world economy, a more just and reasonable globalisation, new mode of development and even a globalisation of socialism are required.

3. Sharing. In recent years, massive data disclosed by developed capitalist countries have further supported Lenin's judgement made more than 100 years ago that "financial capital has become the typical 'overlord' of the world ... the destiny of the whole world is simply in the hands of hundreds of millionaires and billionaires", and that "most of the profit has been swallowed by 'geniuses' in the dirty deals of finance." For example, according to the article "Major Crisis of American Capitalism" by Rana Foroohar in American *Time* dated May 23, 2016, in the US, "currently, the financial sector accounts for about seven percent of the economy, higher than the four percent in 1980, but enjoys about 25 percent of the total profits of all companies and creates only four percent of jobs." The article by Oliver Greene in Austrian *Die Presse* dated March 9, 2016 tells: "the richest 62 people occupy half of the fortune of all others. If those with the fortune equivalent to that of half of the poorest in the world can fill a plane in 2010, such rich people can only fill a bus in 2015". On January 18, 2016, on the eve of the opening of the World Economic Forum at Davos, Oxfam, a charitable organization, reported that "out of control inequality has led to 62 people owning the same fortune as that by the poorest half of the world population. But just 5 years ago, the figure was 388." The 2016 January and February edition of the American magazine *Foreign Affairs* published the article "Inequality and Modernization", which states that "in 1915, the richest one percent of the American population accounted for about 18 percent of the total national income, while in 2011, the same group controls 40 percent of the national wealth", thinking that the conflict now is no longer that

between the working class and the middle class, but between a handful of elites and the broad citizenry. In 1965, the CEOs of the Top 350 companies in the US enjoyed salaries 20 times that of common workers, but the proportion is 273 times today.

The rich-poor gap is the economic base for the lack of new driving forces for world economic growth, no shared benefits and balanced development, continuous turmoil of regional hotspots and the spread of terrorism, and the fundamental reason for deficits in peace, development and governance internationally.

Essentially, the gap between rich and poor or the polarisation of rich and poor among or within countries all over the world indicates the evil and shame of capitalism, but should never represent the failure and end of socialism. On the contrary, it serves as the prerequisite for the rebirth of socialism.

IV. The Chinese program and strength to deal with global problems

On January 18, 2017, when delivering a speech at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva, Chinese President Xi Jinping clearly pointed out:

> From the dimension of reality, we are in a world with frequent challenges. New driving forces are needed for world economic growth, development should be more inclusive and balanced so that its benefits are shared by all, and the gap between rich and poor should be narrowed; regional hotspots remain in turmoil and terrorism wreaks havoc; deficits in peace, development and governance are severe challenges facing all mankind, which are my concerns all the time.[16]

How can we deal with three major deficits in peace, development and governance?

1. Facing severe challenges, China is prepared for danger in times of peace and strengthens her confidence for calm and unhurried response.

Western powers are speeding up the pace of their "peaceful evolution" against China on political and military levels, and constantly launching strategic challenges to and exploration of China, forming geo-political pressure on our country and attempting to compress our strategic space and encircle us geographically. Following the strategy of cultural hegemonism in international cultural exchanges, Western countries popularise their cultural values, ideologies, institutional modes and development paths as the "universal rule". In particular, they intensify ideological penetration into socialist countries to make long-term preparations for starting "colour revolutions". Economically, the Trump Administration provoked a trade war and imposed sanctions on Chinese firms, trying to reap strategic compromises and concessions from China, impeding China's industrial upgrading and the implementation of the Made-in-China plan, and to fuel economic and social turbulence in China, against which we must be clearheaded and sharpen our strategic vigilance. In addition, in the period of international financial imperialism, hegemonic powers are good at attacking and collapsing opponents by economic and financial means. China now faces severe problems of financial risk and economic security, which demand prompt prevention and countermeasures. We should, on the one hand, coordinate responses to various issues in international political and economic games, clarify the real strategic intent and purpose of the US and safeguard our national security and core interests, and on the other hand, stick to the basic socialist political and economic systems against comprehensive penetration and attack by Western hegemonic powers, to prevent deviation from reform, denying our institutional advantages or losing our own way. As instructed by General Secretary Xi Jinping, we should never allow any subversive error in any aspect involving fundamental interests and the core security of our country. Moreover, we should also establish and insist on the overall security outlook, continue to uphold our confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and establish and develop systems and mechanisms to protect the security of systems, politics, economics, ideology and culture. We must immunize ourselves from any lure by promised gain, and defy any deterrence by any big powers, which are excellent cultural traditions of the Chinese nation, and the treasure of Chinese revolutionary and advanced culture. We Chinese communists follow our own attitude towards war: opposition and firm resistance. We will make full and necessary preparations for military struggle or any attempts to challenge our sovereignty, security or to split our territory. Although China seems to be in difficulty as a result of the actions of imperialism, the US is suffering worse. On November 8, 1966, Mao Zedong said to visiting Vietnamese friends: "when the situation is most difficult, victory is coming,"[17] presenting the dialectics that the road is tortuous, but the future is bright, as he had stressed many times.

2. Moving ahead with the Belt and Road Initiative and upholding win-win cooperation. Since the international financial crisis of 2008, China has made important contributions to global economic growth and innovative

16 *People's Daily*. May 15, 2017

17 *The Chronicle of Mao Zedong's Life (1949 ~ 1976)*. Vol.3, Central Party Literature Press, pp.15.

development with its role as the second largest economy and important engine for world economic growth. Deng Xiaoping said: "as long as China does not collapse, one fifth of the world's population will stick to socialism," and "if China keeps stable and achieves her development goals, socialism can demonstrate its superiority". The success of socialism with Chinese characteristics and the development and expansion of socialist countries in reform and opening-up, will make contributions to the revival and development of world socialism, and indicate that the history of socialism will not end. Continuous development of socialism with Chinese characteristics has also widened paths for developing countries to realise modernisation, and provided wholly-new options to all countries and nations hoping to quicken their development while preserving their independence. Facing global challenges and problems, China, as a responsible power, will play an active role in and make more constructive contributions to world peace and development together with the international community. The 19th CPC National Congress proposed Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, which is the latest fruit of the sinicisation of Marxism, and greatly enriches and develops Marxism. The ideas of the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of a community with a shared future for mankind in the Thought offers a "Chinese philosophy and program" and "Chinese wisdom and Chinese strengthen" to address current world deficits in peace, development and governance. Following a path of peaceful development and working to build a community with a shared future for mankind are important components in the Thought, and an innovative development of the Marxist recognition of the development law of human society. The Thought adds powerful vitality to the development and propagation of Marxism in the 21st century, serves as a major theoretical contribution and driver of practice in China to world peace and development, and will surely write a brilliant chapter in the development history of Marxism and of human thought. The Belt and Road Initiative, practicing the idea of a community with a shared future for mankind, has been supported and participated in by more than 100 countries and international organizations, and has become a huge cooperation platform for countries to realise common development. It will inject lasting new driving forces to the more balanced and inclusive new-type globalisation so that its benefits are shared by all, and bring new opportunities for international development.

3. Developing a community with a shared future for mankind. The important strategic thought of developing a community with a shared future for mankind is the Chinese philosophy and Chinese program proposed by General Secretary Xi Jinping from the perspectives of human development and world prospects. Domestically, President Xi pursues the vision of "innovative, coordinated, green, and open development"; internationally, he advocates the vision of "achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration", which is the basic content of developing a community with a shared future for mankind.

Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping raised two famous issues. Mao stated "for whom we develop? It is a fundamental issue, and a principle one" while Deng Xiaoping insisted on sticking to public ownership and common prosperity. Domestically and internationally, Xi upholds shared development as his development of the key issues presented by Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. The issues in essence are fundamental and principle ones that Marxism wants to address. Marx pointed out that the key "depends not only on the development of productive forces, but also on whether the productive force is owned by people".[18] Therefore, how to make the cake bigger is an issue of development, while how to distribute the cake, namely sharing, is an issue of distribution. Properly addressing the issue of cake distribution while making the cake bigger and better has a bearing on whether the two topics of peace and development can be smoothly settled. Upholding the thought of shared development is of extremely important significance in today's world and the history of human civilisation. Essentially, peace and development must rely on the people of the world, and thus to make development benefit all countries and people. This will be the peak of the world outlook on civilisation and world values in the present and the future.

We deeply understand that new changes are taking place in the competition and momentum of struggle and the contrast of strength between the two major social paths and systems in the world, but the development of world socialism still faces great challenges. The outbreak of the international financial crisis in 2008 is the biggest international opportunity for socialism with Chinese characteristics, and the most striking focus of preparing for many great struggles with many new historical peculiarities as General Secretary Xi Jinping advocated.

It can be foretold that, with the deepening of international financial crisis, socialism with Chinese characteristics will surely stand lofty in the family of nations following years. If no special event occurs, economic globalisation featuring the polarization of rich and poor dominated by international monopoly capital with the US as its representative will open a new era of decline, while the fair, just and reasonable new economic globalisation led by the people of the world will go from success to success.

18 *The Selected Works of Marx and Engels*. Vol.1, People's Publishing House, 1995, pp.771.

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"One Belt One Road": to initiate new globalisation

Cao Yaxiong and Meng Ying

Globalisation means that all countries, nationalities and regions are mutually dependent, influenced and restricted; global relationships are gradually tightened; the world is compressed to a single whole and; people live on a global scale and develop and form global ideologies and ideas. Centred on economic globalisation, the concept of globalisation involves the aspects of politics, culture, science and technology, military, security, ideology, ways of life and values.

1. Globalisation is a necessity of human society development

Globalisation is a long cause and speeds up with social development. It began with the great geographic discoveries of the 15th century and will end at the formation of a communist society, where people will eliminate restrictions on productive relations and productivity and become freely and fully developed individuals. At this time, the history of humanity will become world history; the world will become a community of free individuals.

Improvements in productivity and socialisation promote the progress of globalisation. Each technological breakthrough has greatly pushed forward the process of globalisation. Surmounting the narrow range of traditional society, globalisation is about to connect the whole world, organising the division of work and resource distribution as well as production and consumption across the world so as to enhance efficiency. This expanding space will in turn open broader roads and increase the socialisation of production, causing significant influences on culture, society, political and legal systems, production and living, and even people's behaviour, thinking and habits.

Globalisation is an inevitable result of the development and regulation of systems. Some international organisations, rules and conventions are established to standardise international behaviour, coordinate the contradictions and conflicts of various countries, and facilitate international cooperation and exchange, thus greatly reducing the cost of globalisation and accelerating its pace.

2. Capitalist-dominated globalisation is unfair and unsustainable

Globalisation is not a natural historic process, but the result of the great efforts of capitalist society. In pursuit of profit maximisation, capitalism continuously crosses the borders of regions and countries, expands, divides labour and distributes resources globally, and incorporates the whole world into its commercial system.

On the other hand, the development of globalisation brings huge profits to capitalism, solidifies and fully validates the capitalism's governance. Meanwhile, globalisation expands capital space, alleviates the contradictions and dilemmas of capitalism, eases crisis and domestic class contradictions and postpones the decline and fall of capitalism. Capitalist-dominated globalisation is unfair globalisation, which maximises profit through a series of particular systems, and enables capitalism to control the world, so as to make developing countries dependant on it. Its results include increasingly imbalanced global economic development, widening gaps between rich and poor countries, weakness of sustainable economic development, turmoil in world politics, the threat of war, the growing influence of terrorism, extremism and separatist forces, the rise of populism and far-right forces; ecological degradation and increasingly clear ecological disasters; great conflicts between cultures and values, the spread of extreme individualism, materialism, consumerism and hedonism around the world, and the squeezing, reduction and disappearance of national traditional cultures; solidification of social stratification, an increase in social conflicts, major threats to public security and order, severe challenges to social insurance systems, and the alienated, empty and dispirited status of people's lives. Such globalisation does not benefit humanity, but pushes the world to a dangerous situation, so it is actually a violation of the development trend of history. The rise of trade protectionism and nationalism, the surge of a world anti-globalisation tide, and the sustainability of world financial crisis indicate that capitalist-dominated globalisation will come to its end and be replaced by a new type of globalisation.

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3. The development of a new globalisation is the inevitable result of historical development

Russia's October Revolution, the establishment of the socialist system, and continuous independence and liberation of colonies and semi-colonies in Africa and Latin America stopped the process of capitalist-dominated globalisation. These countries took various measures to maintain their national sovereignty and territorial integrity, to develop their national economies and initiated various systems of socialist values or traditional national values and culture, with the aim of breaking away from the control of imperialism and taking a road of independent development. To maintain their legal rights and interests, some countries formed political and economic alliances and started a new cause of globalisation in practice. Unfortunately, at the end of 1980s, as the Soviet Union disintegrated and Eastern European socialism collapsed, developing countries had to depend on developed capitalist countries due to development difficulties. Capitalist globalisation recovered and developed rapidly, regaining its dominant position in the cause of globalisation.

China, Vietnam and other socialist countries drew lessons from the fate of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and according to the requirements of productive force socialization, caught the historical opportunity provided by the international division of labour and global industry transfer. They opened up to the outside world and implemented market economy oriented reforms, positively participated in globalisation, utilized the globalisation platform to seek their own development, and gradually improved their influence and discourse power in international competitions. It can be said to some extent that socialist countries have resumed the push for socialist globalisation after a period of retreat.

New globalisation is essentially different from capitalist-oriented globalisation. The purpose of the latter is to maximize the value of capital, maintain oppression and domination over other countries and nationalities and to preserve the governing position of capital; while the former is based on the principle of equality, mutual benefit and cooperation. It is intended to increase the well-being of the whole human race, broaden people's vision, and move towards the goal of full human freedom and liberation. Capitalist-oriented globalisation results in uneven development, which is reflected through imbalanced development in different fields and the gaps between countries, regions, classes and hierarchies; while new globalisation is an authentic and thorough globalisation as it achieves balanced development in various fields, countries, regions, classes and hierarchies. Finally, the two types of globalisation have different development prospects: capitalist-oriented globalisation will finally be terminated due to its limitations, while new globalisation which eliminates systemic barriers has infinite space for development, so it is more able to pursue the authentic and thorough globalisation. Therefore, new globalisation is also an inevitable result of the development of new social productive forces. It surpasses and abandons capitalist-oriented globalisation. This higher-level globalisation is an irresistible trend of globalisation.

4. "Belt and Road" is an important measure to advance new globalisation

In 2013, President Xi Jinping proposed the "Belt and Road" initiative as a necessary Chinese scheme to adapt to new globalisation and overcome capitalist-oriented globalisation. The proposal has attracted international attention and become an important strategic measure for advancing new globalisation.

According to "'One Belt One Road' Vision and Actions", the "Belt and Road" geographically covers the European, Asian and African continents, connects the active East Asian economic circle on one end and the developed European economic circle at the other end, and involves most of the developing and underdeveloped countries of the region in between. It incorporates over 70 countries and regions, with a combined population of 4.4 billion and 40 percent of the world's GDP, into the globalisation process, thus achieving all-around cooperation, exchange and interconnection among countries. China has concluded over 110 cooperative agreements with 103 countries and international organisations, and become the biggest trade partner of the 25 countries participating in "Belt and Road". In addition, "Belt and Road" is highly open and has infinite space for development. It is not limited to countries along the routes, but can be extended to any countries and regions willing to join. It is expected in the near future that more countries will become participants in the initiative. The scale of "Belt and Road" is far beyond any regional organizations or groups, and can be stretched to all countries, regions and fields in the world. So it can be said that "Belt and Road" is really a global development strategy.

Secondly, "Belt and Road" offers inexhaustible impetus to new globalisation. The spirit and principle of "Belt and Road" is highly consistent with new globalisation. It sticks to the principle of achieving shared growth through discussion and collaboration and upholds the Silk Road spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit. The initiative, based on voluntary participation, equal consultation and

The first-ever freight train from Britain to China started its mammoth journey along a modern-day "Silk Road" trade route by land – 12,000 km.

concerted efforts and respect for sovereignty and the core interests of all countries and regions, highlights cooperation and mutual benefit and enables all countries to participate equally in global governance. Therefore, it can attract and mobilize many countries to actively participate and play to their competitive resource advantages so as to fully and reasonably distribute resources around the world, maximise benefits, enable all participants to evenly share the results of globalisation, and greatly accelerate the process of new globalisation.

Thirdly, "Belt and Road" overcomes the abuses of the past globalisation and makes new contributions to deepen globalisation. Capitalist-oriented globalisation results in wealth gaps and imbalanced development in different regions and fields. It can lead developing countries into trouble, and cause insurmountable obstacles to the progress of globalisation led by developed countries. With the focus on road connection, unimpeded trade, currency circulation, policy coordination, and strengthened people-to-people ties (a five-pronged approach), and the goal of building a community of shared interests, responsibility and shared future on the basis of political mutual trust, economic integration and cultural inclusiveness, "Belt and Road" promotes the cooperation and exchange between countries along the routes, enables them to share dividends, experiences and the lessons of China's reform and development and lays a solid foundation for long and sound development of the world economy by using its own advantages of productivity, technology, money, experience and model. It also looks at building a more equal and balanced global partnership, accelerating construction of a harmonious world of lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity, and creating new regional cooperation modes.

Finally, "Belt and Road" provides an institutional and legal guarantee for the development of new globalisation. A series of bilateral and multi-lateral cooperative agreements have been reached around the "Belt and Road" initiative. Bilateral and multi-lateral joint working mechanisms and organizational systems have been established, facilitating and standardising the strategic, economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation among various countries, such as the Boao Forum for Asia, Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), China-ASEAN Expo and Euro-Asia Economic Forum. "Belt and Road" establishes and strengthens various institutional arrangements, for example, it makes full use of current institutions, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), China and ASEAN (10 plus 1) Summit, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) to provide various institutional frameworks and guarantees. Moreover, the Silk Road Fund, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and BRICS Bank offer financial and technical support to the development of the "Belt and Road" economies and trade.

Trade union work – plus! The Communist essence

Editor's Note:

Thirty-two years ago, the then general secretary of the Communist Party of the USA, the late Gus Hall, gave a speech at a party trade union conference. His address dealt with the role of Communists in the trade unions and offered timeless advice to members of Communist Parties. The counsel is worth considering in the context of the Change the Rules campaign, which some in the trade union movement are trying to limit to a marginal seats campaign on behalf of the ALP and our other trade union work.

The Communist Party of Australia can be pleased but never satisfied with the growth of the Party in the trade unions and the efforts surrounding the Change the Rules campaign. Young members have joined their union and are seeking roles within them. This is another good development. But the influence of social democracy and the lack of questioning of the presumed permanence of capitalism must be tackled. Hall's words, presented in this extract of the original 1986 *Political Affairs* article, are a timely reminder that, as we tackle the tasks associated with the campaign and our Party obligations in general, we must bring that "plus" to our work.

Opening and summary remarks by Gus Hall, general secretary, CPUSA at a Party conference on trade union work, March 22,1986, at Unity Center, New York City.

First, I want to commend the Trade Union Department for calling this conference. It is timely and necessary. It takes place at a very good moment for many reasons, including the fact that we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of May Day.

It is also timely in the sense that we are celebrating Reagan's first serious defeat – the vote in Congress against the $100 million for the Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries. It is a tremendous victory and I think our Party acted quickly and more effectively than ever before on such an issue. The districts were already in gear when we called to check up.

I think the telephone has become the best, most effective and efficient method of protest in the country – surpassing petitions and delegations. It is a direct form of reaching opinion-makers. The calls are computerised and Congress gets the tally at the end of every day. But there's a wrinkle, which is new. Some congress people have been asking for names and addresses, which is a form of intimidation. However, many admitted it was the telephone campaign that changed their vote.

This conference is also timely because the congressional elections will be held in six months. It is possible that this election can spell the end of Reaganism.

It is also timely because it comes right on the heels of the 27th Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) Congress, a congress that will have implications far, far beyond the borders of the Soviet Union.

It is timely because, come May 1, we will issue the first edition of the *People's Daily World*. Our new daily, national, working-class paper will raise our work to a new level. We should consider the new paper as a critical, indispensable instrument in the trade union field.

This conference is timely because it comes after the Geneva Summit. There is now a danger of the collapse of the summit process. After the recent provocations there are some real obstacles to Summit II – the US fleet violating the sea lanes of Libya, Bulgaria and the Soviet Union; the expulsion of Soviet personnel from the UN mission on the false charge of spying; the restrictions placed on the missions of Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, the German Democratic Republic and Poland, and the most hostile, rabid and lying March 16 speech by Reagan.

It is especially timely because the Soviet Union proclaimed its last moratorium on nuclear testing on the basis that it will be in effect as long as the US does not conduct another test. Today, almost at this very hour, a nuclear bomb will be tested in the Nevada desert, thus

breaking the test ban. The ban will end as of today and then negotiations will have to start on a new basis.

The conference is timely because there has been a period of militant, long strikes, including those against Hormel, GE, American Can, TWA, Colt Industries, etc. These struggles raise some very important questions about our role. Generally, it was and is very positive, but with some negatives and weaknesses.

But above all else, it is timely because we meet after the 16th convention of the AFL-CIO. As we said at the last Central Committee meeting, that convention was more anti-monopoly, anti-multinational, anti-racist, anti-apartheid, politically independent and anti-dictatorship. Lane Kirkland has now included Chile in his denunciation of dictatorships, as well as commended the AFL-CIO for its support of the labour unions in the Philippines and its role in toppling Marcos. The convention was less anti-Communist, less class collaborationist.

This convention, which was the convergence and surfacing of many directions, patterns and tendencies, opened the door for progressives, Communists, the Left and militant trade unionists. We have not yet fully assessed these possibilities.

This conference also comes at a good time because it is right after our last Central Committee meeting, in which we discussed the new political framework which the summit created.

What stands out is wider open doors

The challenge is to answer the question: How do we work in the new framework? What do we do with the new "fresh winds" we have been talking about? What do these mean in the daily life and work of our Party, in concrete terms?

In the new framework what stands way out is that the doors are open wider than ever before for us, for progressives and those on the Left. Therefore, it is not only that the doors are open, but in many cases, we are asked to come in and take part in struggles and in leadership. Trade union leaders and rank and file are asking us to come and help. So, the new framework is most important.

Then, the question is, once we are in what do we do? It is possible to walk in and then just stand around and talk about generalities.

Where do we go from there?

For instance, should we organize Left forms? If so, on what levels?

Is it possible to think about the Left in broader terms now – how broad and what forces?

We have to deal with complex new problems of the class struggle. But as a working-class party we have to deal with them in many cases in a new way. These problems include:

- the new role of the government
- the fusion of corporate galaxies such as GE and RCA, GM and Hughes. These mergers create political and economic galaxies which are multinational. We are dealing with a new phenomenon, not the old monopolisation process, but on a totally new scale.
- the huge military corporations, corporations whose main profits come from military orders. This presents a whole new problem, especially because they have become the very corrupt core of the military-industrial complex.
- there are new problems concerning imports and exports.
- new problems in high tech and automation.
- new so-called "hollow" corporations, which are basically assembly lines for imported parts and parts made in smaller companies. Assembly lines for foreign parts are becoming the dominant form of production in the US.
- then, add the new skilful manoeuvring of corporations – for example, there are corporations which have an annual outing of employees, costing $150,000, to create an atmosphere in which to build a class collaborationist structure.
- new problems of how to deal with the phony Left, who have penetrated many unions and strike struggles.
- the high unemployment in a period of economic upturn.

How to deal with all these questions and problems from a Communist viewpoint should be the theme of this conference.

Then there are some new philosophical ideas that have emerged on the scene.

For example, the concept of the "under-class" has slipped in and made its way into our writing. It is not accidental. It is an attempt to divide the working class and create something that is not part of the working class. This concept is totally out of place and non-Marxist. It should not even be used enclosed between quote marks.

The concept is being promoted that strikes are outmoded and do not accomplish anything anymore. The concept is that today, under new conditions, this is not the way to fight anymore.

As struggles develop new problems emerge. An important contribution we can make is to keep the struggles focused and to show the connection between different areas of struggle.

For example, it is progress that Lane Kirkland takes a good position on the struggles in South Africa. But he

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Hormel worker on strike.

uses this to cover up his bad position on the struggles in Central America.

The National Organization of Women (NOW) carries on good work on the abortion issue. But they do not connect this struggle with the struggle for a nuclear test ban.

Many movements use the so-called Jewish question to cover up their support for Reagan's policies of nuclear aggression.

The task of Communists must be to make the connection between issues and to keep the focus on the main questions of the day.

The meaning of Communist trade union work

Maybe some did not take enough notice that this is not just a trade union conference; it is a Communist Party conference on trade union work. There is a big difference when you place it this way.

Perhaps it is a reflection on our work, that we do trade union work and not Communist trade union work. I want to emphasize that difference.

I don't think we are over the hump on this weakness. There is a big difference between good trade union work and Communist trade union work.

Communist trade union work means good trade union work *plus*. When a Communist does good trade union work without the "plus" it is opportunism. As good as the work may be, without the plus it is opportunism. Without the plus it will go nowhere. It is a path to nowhere and nothing. We have to once and for all understand this. This is true whether a Communist is working full time as a union organiser or working in a shop.

Our new trade union program is correct. Our new assessment, our new framework are correct. Our ideas of raising the level of the trade union movement are correct. But we must still work out how to raise the Party's work in this new framework, how to apply this new level.

For example, how did we apply this on the drive to defeat the anti-Nicaragua bill? Did we see the new framework and take advantage of it? I think there are very positive things in the actions we took to defeat this bill.

Or, the Hormel strike. Are Hormel workers more class conscious now than they were six months ago when the strike began? They are angry at Hormel. But are they angry at the capitalist system after six months? Do they question the system after six months on the picket lines?

What have we done, specifically, to raise the consciousness of Hormel workers? Picketing the bank will not do it!

We have to ask this question about all strikes, all struggles. I think if we do, we will find weaknesses.

What develops class consciousness is a very important question. It does not develop automatically or spontaneously. There has to be an injection and only our Party can do this.

Class consciousness develops by explanations of how the system works, explanations of what exploitation is, labor as a source of value, explanations of class struggle and socialism, etc.

Of course, we are interested in winning struggles. But we are interested in the "plus." There is no contradiction. On the contrary, the plus makes a stronger, better organised, better understood strike. The plus is a plus even for the strike and should not be seen as being in contradiction to it.

When a strike begins, do we sit down and ask ourselves: How can it help workers to develop class consciousness? What can we do to help this process? We do not think in these terms.

I want to take this opportunity to correct a wrong concept in the Party that has been with us for a long time. It was such a strong trend that once when I wrote a pamphlet on the trade union movement and our Party's role, the Political Bureau decided not to publish it. That is how strong the concept was. It comes from a misuse of an unclear formulation by Lenin.

> We have said that there could not have been Social-Democratic (socialist) consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc.

The misuse is "it would have to be brought to them from without." Outside of what? This has been interpreted to mean outside of the class. By whom? This has been interpreted to mean that class consciousness and socialist consciousness must be brought to the workers by the professionals, intellectuals and middle class.

What Lenin obviously meant is that such ideas must be brought to the working class by a working-class political party that combines workers and intellectuals, outside of the trade union movement, not from outside the class. The working-class political party is inside the class.

This became clear when he said:

> I speak of the organisation of revolutionaries, meaning revolutionary social democrats. In view of this common characteristic of the members of such an organisation, all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals, not to speak of distinctions of trade and profession, in both categories, must be effaced.

It was clear later when he said that in Party committees there should be eight workers to one intellectual.

What Lenin meant is that such ideas must be brought to the working class by a working class political party outside the trade union movement. Therefore, not outside the class, because the working-class political party is within the class.

When Lenin said, "I speak of the organisation of revolutionaries, meaning social democrats," he meant that in view of the common character of members of such an organisation all distinctions between workers and intellectuals must be eliminated.

Lenin went further into this question about how the Party looks on class struggle as a revolutionary movement. After the upsurge of 1905, Lenin said the ratio should be two intellectuals to 100 workers.

For example, in the upcoming American Institute for Marxist Studies conference the speakers are 20 intellectuals to 1 worker. This is a terrible weakness. Workers and trade unionists should not only participate, but also speak. This is an example of the misinterpretation. Such a misinterpretation has led to many weaknesses, such as:

- a lack of emphasis on the working class and the class struggle
- intellectual smugness. Some of this remains. Intellectual smugness is a real weakness. This retards the development of intellectuals, not workers, because it becomes an obstacle to development and maturity.

Lenin spoke about the role of intellectuals like Marx and Engels in the development of the theories of socialism and the class struggle.

Left formations in trade union work

We have to examine all levels of work in the new framework. Very closely related to Party building is the organisation of Left forms. The political concepts and ideas are closer between the Party and the Left than with the overall trade union movement.

ATR

The development of the Left in this new situation is not even. The Left has become a mass development on economic questions. The strikes indicate this.

The Left is a growing sector on Central America and South Africa. The resolution passed at the AFL-CIO Convention was mainly pushed by broad Left forces, which gives an indication of the growth of the Left.

The Left sector is growing within the movements for political independence.

The Left is growing in the struggle for equality. There are many indications, including the approach to affirmative action and seniority.

There is a Left among women workers, youth, etc.

So besides overall Left formations it is necessary to help organise Left forms in the specific sectors rather than just overall general Left formations. We will move faster if we organise Left forms in these specific areas.

It is not quite true, but almost, that it is very difficult to build the Party without building Left forms. I want to leave this door open. Without Left forms we will not build very fast.

Generally, in this period, the danger is sectarianism. It is almost natural. When things move you either have to move with them or you are lagging behind. The whole idea of a new framework means things are moving and we have to move with them – find new and bold tactics and initiatives. This is necessary at this moment.

I think we must make a revolutionary change.

Party building is the test of good trade union work

We are far behind on the question of Party building because the objective developments are increasingly preparing the soil for it. But the objective soil will not by itself build the Party. Farmers are now preparing for planting, but without the seeds nothing will grow. So it is with Party building.

The question is how can we take advantage of new developments?

If your trade union work does not result in Party building you are doing poor trade union work. It is dialectical. Communists cannot do poor Party work and good trade union work. They are tied together. What you do to prepare workers for a strike should also prepare workers for the Party. There should be no contradiction.

If you have to be reminded, or even if you have to remind yourself, about the need to build the Party, or if it is a-once-in-a-while in your thoughts, you are not going to build the Party. If it is not a Party of your life you will not recruit. Party building consciousness must be a factor in everything we do, almost spontaneously, like a conditioned reflex. It must become a part of our lifestyle. It is not that way with most of us. It is a-once-in-a-while thought. If we have to say, "The Central Committee said we have to build the Party!" we probably will not do it.

What do we gain from good trade union work without the "plus." A momentary credit. It actually turns into a negative to do good trade union work without the plus. Because you win results without the workers learning what it was all about. It turns into an illusion for workers. Not knowing what you are really fighting for, or about, turns into a negative because it builds illusions; it is not even neutral, but negative.

For example, recently I met with an old timer. A fine comrade. A full-time trade union official for 50 years, who always accepted the line of the Party, always paid dues, never behind, always made contributions. He always attended state committee meetings. He was a member of a district trade union commission. But he never recruited anyone. So now he is retiring. How do we assess his work? What has he contributed to class consciousness, to socialist revolution?

It is a negative assessment. It is a wasted political life – at least. It is very sad because he believes in socialism and the Party, but he leaves nothing. And that is trade unionism without the plus. It adds up to nothing. We have to think about this now, before we retire. Maybe this comrade will change, but it is a little too late.

Adding the plus in good trade union work

We must examine our work from this viewpoint. It is not easy. But it is not impossible and certainly not difficult if you eliminate opportunism. This is an excuse – that it is too difficult to add the plus.

We have the means of doing it.

There is an excitement even among non-Party trade unionists about the launching of the *People's Daily World* on May 1. Of course, the fact that the paper is Marxist-Leninist, Communist, makes it even better, more exciting.

We need a revolutionary change in our approach to our new paper. There cannot be a Communist who is not involved with the paper. This should become the "Year of No Excuses."

There has been a tremendous explosion of shop papers. This is a very positive development. But we must

examine the content and see if comrades are achieving the plus. Also, we have to examine the content of our writing, our speeches.

Will workers join our Party because they see Communists as good trade unionists? A few will, if they know the trade unionist is a Communist.

Will they remain in the Party if they remain on a trade union level? No. They will come in, but they will leave.

Will workers join the Party because of our position on racism, both Afro-American and white workers? Yes. Will they remain based on this one issue? No. Most will not.

Some will join because of our position on peace. But if they remain on this level they will not stay in the Party. Pacifism is not a solid basis for remaining in the Party.

Will workers develop class consciousness during a strike? Some, but not too many. The Hormel workers are angry at Hormel, but this is not class consciousness.

Will workers who are not class conscious join the Party? Of course, we should recruit them, but then we must help to develop class consciousness as soon as they join.

The challenge is not only to build the Party, but to build Communists. This can mainly be done on the club level.

Do we have problems with comrades who become full-time trade union leaders? Yes. This is an old weakness. In fact, I resigned as a full-time trade union organiser mainly because of this and because of the unlimited expense account.

When these comrades leave the Party orbit they almost always move to the Right. In the trade union they move to the Right, but in their rhetoric, they become more Left. They move Right and talk Left. They become extra critical of the Party from the Left, while they are moving to the Right.

We have had cases where they were moving in an opportunist direction in the trade union movement and in the Party, they were moving Left – defending Stalin in the Party. Their lifestyle changed. They were going to more cocktail parties and fewer Party meetings.

What is the "plus"?

It is explaining issues in a way that goes beyond reforms.

It is making the connection between issues, using the *People's Daily World*, shop papers. How to deal with ideological questions. The mind is not a blank slate. One cannot write anything one wants on it. One must argue to make room for good ideas. One must argue against bad and wrong ideas and then present good substitute ideas. If you only present new ones without getting rid of the wrong ideas, the new ones won't stick.

For example, on class collaboration, you have to undo the ideas of class collaboration and replace them with ideas of class struggle trade unionism.

You have to undo racist ideas and, in place, argue for equality and affirmative action.

To develop class consciousness, you have to clear out the ideas of class collaboration. That is why this is not a spontaneous process. Therefore, we have to think about *how* to do this.

AMR discussions

Have your say: **amr@cpa.org.au**

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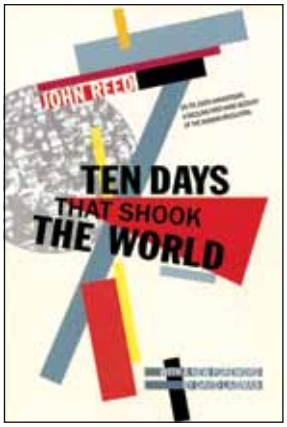

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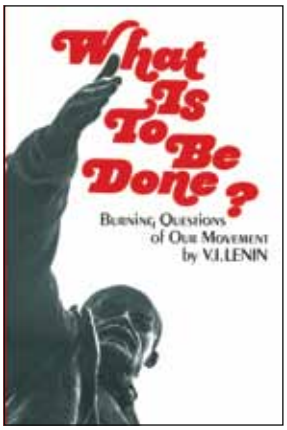
The book was first published in March 1919, and this edition for the centenary of the Revolution includes Lenin's introduction written at the end of 1919, the preface written by M K Krupskaya in 1923 and a new forward by David Laibman. It includes an interesting piece about the author John Reed by Howard Lawson, which raises some questions for today.



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Progress Publishers, 1961 - 2014

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Lenin – *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*

Communist Party of Australia

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