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Australian Marxist Review – Journal of the Communist Party of Australia

#66 December 2017 $5

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Dr Hannah Middleton (editor)

Michael Hooper (assistant-editor)

David Matters

Bob Briton

Printed and published by the Communist Party of Australia
Postal: 74 Buckingham Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010 Australia
Phone: +61 2 9699 9844 Fax: +61 2 9699 9833
Email: cpa@cpa.org.au
Website: www.cpa.org.au
ISSN: 0310-8252 Issue # 66 – December 2017

Editorial

Welcome to the third issue of the *Australian Marxist Review* for 2017, a year where communists the world over have come together to remember the glorious events of one hundred years ago and plan for our next great success. Issue #66 provides a strong dialectical analysis of the international situation, combining an exposure of the continuing crimes and drive to war of Imperialism with a revolutionary optimism that humanity, freed from exploitation, will overcome the existential threats capitalism has created.

Capitalism's war plans, as explained by Aaron Beardsell in his article "Caliban's children: dehumanisation and imperialism", cannot succeed without first dehumanising the populations of target countries and demonising their leaders. This dehumanisation is carried out through private media monopolies and is necessary in order to disguise the common class interests of workers in Imperialist and neo-colonial countries. An example of this process at work is the Western media's coverage of events in Turkey, especially the 2016 coup attempt. In "Beyond media sensation, religion and democracy: a class analysis of political developments in Turkey", Michael Hooper discards the ideological window-dressing of Turkish politics to expose the underlying class conflict.

In the lead up to the 2003 Iraq War, the US and UK attempted to create a legal justification for their invasion. In part three of the four part series, "On the illegality of war", Craig Ryan carefully documents and critiques the Imperialist powers' attempts to legally justify a war on Iraq by reinterpreting previous Security Council resolutions and pushing the concept of anticipatory self-defence. Although events proved the legal and moral bankruptcy of Imperialism's legal arguments, the Imperialist powers are still dedicated to further bending international law to suit their own needs.

As capitalism pushes us closer to the brink of destruction, whether through nuclear war or environmental catastrophe, the need for change becomes ever clearer. Wadi'h Halabi, in his article "Richard Levins, ecological agriculture and revolutionary optimism", shares the remarkable story of the late Richard Levins, his pioneering work in ecological agriculture, his unshakeable communist principles and the Cuban efforts to turn his theories into practice. In recent years, Chinese experts have also begun to study Cuba's example and are beginning to consider how they can convert China's inefficient, highly pesticide dependent agricultural sector into a more sustainable one.

The final article of this issue is a review of Mark Isaac's *The Undesirables – Inside Nauru* which is a harrowing account of the refugees wasting away in Australia's pacific concentration camp. In his review, Rob Gowland provides context for Isaac's testimony by describing the successive waves of refugees who have made Australia their home and the politics surrounding their arrival.

As always, we encourage readers to submit articles and discussion comments for inclusion in the next issue of the *AMR*. We would also like to wish the delegates of the 13th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia a productive meeting!

AMR

Caliban's children: dehumanisation and imperialism

Aaron Beardsell

"On the other side of the ocean there was a race of less-than-humans." Jean Paul Sartre, preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*, by Frantz Fanon (2014).

For generations, feudal and now capitalist governments and their press organs have been engaged in a propaganda war against the "other" in order to convince the populace of the need for war and enslavement against the "other". The Crusades throughout the Middle East relied heavily on this, as did the Spanish Inquisition and colonisation of Latin America. The Native American people of North America were described as "dogs" and "wolves" who would prey on the "innocent" settler, and as such were hunted down like wolves by parties of settlers, who would even compare skulls as trophies, and weighed them the same as catching big game (Smith, 2011). In Australia, genocide and slavery was committed by the apartheid Australian government against the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who were regarded as subhuman (Macintyre, & Clark, 2004; Smith, 2011). In all these countries, the end result was a new source of cheap/free labour, access to new capital and resources, and the expansion of financial or capitalist governmental control.

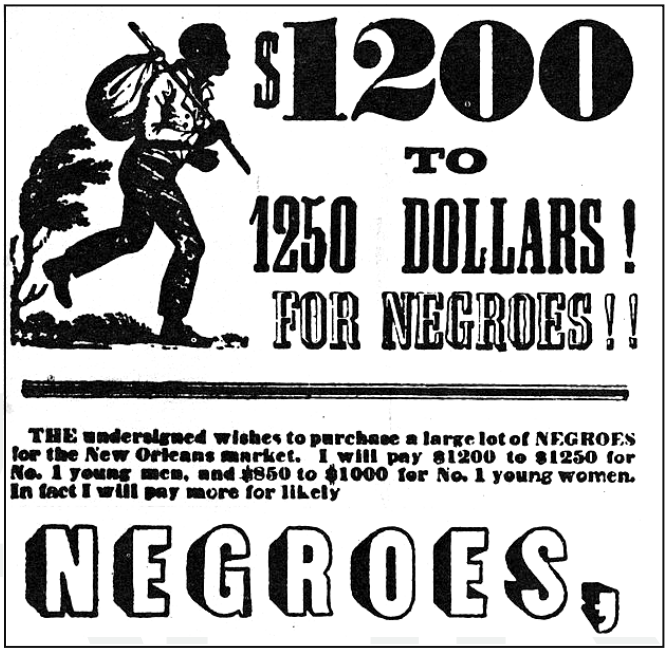
This is all without mentioning the expansive and horrific slavery, dispossession, racism, and other destructive forces created by dehumanisation and Imperialism. Indeed, the two forces have a dialectical relationship to each other. Marx explains that the base and superstructure of society have a dialectical materialist relationship with each other, with the base comprising both the means of production, and the relations to the means of production, while the superstructure comprises all aspects of ideology such as art, media, family, culture, and so on (Marx, 2007). By engaging in a dialectical relationship, the two structures shape and maintain the components inherent within each structure, moving in a continual spiral pattern (Marx, 2007).

Currently the main targets of dehumanisation are refugees, and the people living in Venezuela and North Korea, all of whom are robbed of agency, sovereignty, and individuality in the process. Dehumanisation carried out by the media has already been connected to the fear and hatred projected at refugees and migrants by recent research, and by examining the economic and ideological forces at play it is easy to analyse how this dehumanisation process is carried out again and again (Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013).

Dehumanisation is an integral part of Imperialism, and vital for transforming the targets of Imperialism from sovereign people, into objects who need to be saved from a "crazed monster-dictator" through a "humanitarian" war, a capitalist contradiction if ever there were one (Harvey, 2015).

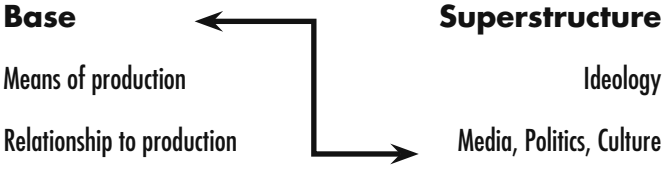
Why is there a perceived need for dehumanisation?

In the epoch of Imperialism, the need for dehumanisation against foreign populations has grown in connection to the need for monopolisation, exportation of finance capital, access to new resources, and the control of governments via capitalist bribery and financial manipulation (Lenin, 2010). Without an effective process of dehumanisation to separate the Imperialist nation from the subjugated nation, the class interests of the proletariat in each nation would quickly become apparent (Lenin, 2010). The working class of Australia has far more in common with the working class of Venezuela than it does with the government and bosses of Australia.



Despite the many critiques that can be made against Noam Chomsky, his examinations of social control, manufactured consent, and propaganda are useful from a Marxist perspective. The need for dehumanisation is essentially the need to manufacture consent and support for a new war, as well as the new enslavement and colonisation of a nation. This is done in order to obfuscate the class connections between the working class of Imperialist nations, and the working class of the Third World (colonised/exploited world). By doing this, the working class of the Imperialist nations are encouraged to abandon their class solidarity with the Third World, and instead support a "humanitarian" war to topple the government in whichever region is being targeted at the time.

This of course links to the Marxist theory of Base-Superstructure, in which the ideology of a society maintains the current economic system, and vice versa:



So, the media is shaped by the private ownership of capital, as well as the relationship the employees have to it, in this case the printing presses, office spaces, and even the computers used at the company. This base structure of capitalism reinforces the superstructure components of ideology, including liberalism and individualism, propaganda media (covered in greater detail below) and even the culture of the society. This then shapes the journalists and editors reporting on current and historical issues to reflect the current base structure, thereby reinforcing it.

In a greatly simplified format:

> Means of production = isolating and alienating, and requires new resources.
>
> Therefore:
>
> Ideology and culture = isolating and alienating, and demands new resources.

Of course, the contradictions of capitalism and Imperialism mean that this dialectical exchange between the base and superstructure is prone to rupturing and collapsing.

How is dehumanisation and consent for war achieved?

Chomsky and Herman's (2002) key work *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*, proposes the Propaganda Model Theory (PMT) of mass media. The PMT suggests there are 5 filters that influence the distribution and pro-capitalist content of mass media companies, such as newspapers, television, and even memes in the 21st century. Through this process, the monopoly interests of capitalists and the capitalist government representing them can be projected to the general populace, in an effort to manufacture consent for the decisions of these two systems.

The 5 filters are:

1. Ownership of the means of production (The mass media company).
2. Advertising (Funding and Filler).
3. Sourcing of information.
4. Flak generation (Negative perception creation).
5. Anti-Communism, Anti-"Terrorism", and Anti-Masses.

The monopoly of ownership in the media and communications industry is staggering. In Australia, between 2015 and 2016, roughly 90% of industry revenue was generated by just 4 parent companies. This creates an echo effect, whereby each subsidiary regurgitates the commands and opinion of the parent company. In order to generate new profit, these companies must increasingly monopolise, creating larger scales of economy. In Australia, this can be seen through the current attempts to scrap (the rather weak) anti-monopoly media laws. Because these businesses are capitalistic in structure and ownership, they are bound by the logics and contradictions of capitalist and Imperialist production.

The majority of mainstream (which is code for profit-producing) media is in actual fact filler and advertisement. In order to generate profit, the vast majority of a traditional newspaper or news broadcast is positive advertisement aimed at consumers for new technology, existing businesses, or something related to these categories. Stories which conflict with or challenge this message of consumption or the government (in the case of public-funded news companies) are marginalised or ignored in order to not risk losing funding from advertisers.

In order to cut costs, a capitalist necessity, the "mass media are drawn into a symbiotic relationship with powerful sources of information by economic necessity and reciprocity of interest" (Chomsky & Herman, 2002. p.18). This means that large media companies tend to concentrate resources at the source of most "news" stories, such as Parliament House, the White House, 10 Downing Street, and so on. The dangerous aspect of this is that companies which offend or disagree with these sources risk having their access cut, thereby endangering their ability to generate new profits. The mass media companies therefore have an incentive not to oppose or challenge media releases from governments. However it

is important to note that certain liberal and/or capitalist companies, such as *The Guardian* or the ABC may report and publish anti-government statements. The catch to this however is that the overwhelming majority of these are bound by two rules. 1) Critique of domestic policy may be allowed, but often not of international (Imperialist) policy. 2) There is a perceived market for these types of publications, and where there is a market a capitalist is certain to follow. These "anti-establishment" media empires are just as likely to follow the dictated truth of the government when it comes to foreign issues, such as issues involving Venezuela, the DPRK, the PRC, and Russia, to name but a few.

Flak is the process whereby companies and governments external to the media create powerful lobbying organisations or similar structures, in order to discredit and attack any program, group, or organisation which opposes the capitalist order. In the 20th century, this meant the lampooning of anti-war activists, anti-smoking doctors, and so on. In the 21st century, this meant the suppression of information, and attacks against the credibility of scientists who raised the issue of climate change, environmental catastrophe, or other issues. This also relates to anti-capitalist/pro-environment groups such as the "Stop Roe 8" highway expansion, located in the Bibra Lake Community.

Mainstream media companies frequently vilify activists, communities, and sovereign governments which oppose the interests of Imperialism and the governments of Imperialist nations. The three main aspects are the capitalist need to delegitimise Communism and Socialism, the attempts to label anti-capitalist forces as terrorists as per the War on Terror and a general anti-mass perspective which attempts to portray mass-movements as mindless, robotic, or sinister.

The result of Manufacturing Consent, and dehumanisation

The North Korean people are compared to unthinking or hive mind-like insects, animals with beast-like traits, and monsters intent on destroying the very foundations of Imperialism. Western authors also argue that as a nation, the North Korean people are less intelligent than the West, and therefore need to be wiped out or bred out of existence (Cooper, 2017; Jones, 2015). If that sounds like eugenics, that's because it is. It is no surprise that the process of dehumanisation was perfected by the Nazi party, built upon the foundations of the colonial states Australia, Canada, and America.

The final result is that the capitalist media, and many working class people in the Imperialist world consider the North Korean people to be subhuman and worth less than themselves, perhaps best summed up by a former US Army General, and published by the *New York Post*, as "better a million dead North Koreans than a thousand dead Americans" (Peters, 2017). One American is apparently worth one thousand North Koreans, or put another way, a North Korean life is worth 0.1% of an American life. This is an almost textbook example of the ideology and culture created by the process of dehumanisation

by media under Imperialism. If Western lives are considered more valuable than other lives, then obviously the next step is to ensure the survival and prosperity of Western lives at the expense of the global working class.

But why is this done? Because North Korea is sitting on a literal gold mine. Looking at all the resources that are still unused, the estimated value of the mineral resources alone in North Korea is $6-to-$10 trillion US (Bryan, 2017; Killalea, 2017). And that's a conservative estimate. For comparison, at the peak of 2012-2013 boom the resource and mineral exports of Australia was worth a measly $157 billion (Department of Industry, 2017). The same coveting of new resources is happening to Venezuela, which exported minerals worth roughly $66 billion in 2010, although this has halved in recent years (Reuters, 2017). Venezuela also has the 2nd largest crude oil reserves in the world, and roughly $100 billion worth of Coltan, which is vital in the production of electronics such as phones, computers, cars, and perhaps most importantly 21st century weapons systems (Giunta, 2015).

Whether or not these governments are breaching human rights is not important, in the sense that we should not be the ones to decide on the issue. Not only that, but it is almost impossible to ascertain the truth of the allegations because of the propaganda-nature of capitalist media. If these governments are to be toppled, it must be by the hands and minds of the working class in those countries, and *not* because of foreign intervention from Imperialist countries who are only interested in accessing new cheap sources of labour, expanding the financial market, and controlling abundant resources. Unfortunately because of dehumanisation, the populations living in these countries are reduced to unthinking slaves who need saving by the glorious white knight of Imperialism.

The Imperialist world stands on the brink of two new wars; One with Venezuela and the other with North Korea. By drawing on historical precedents in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, we already know what the result will be: An American installed dictator or puppet government loyal to the USA global agenda, the exploitation of these countries' environments, resources, and their people, and the horrific deaths of millions of working class people. The rate of these manufactured wars is increasing as the instability of Imperialism grows, which creates yet more opportunities for resistance and socialism, another of the internal contradictions of the economic system (Harvey, 2015).

If we are to prevent this, the CPA and all progressive people in the Imperialist world need to reject the dehumanisation of Venezuela and North Korea, and launch our own propaganda war against the capitalist media and government, to reject the attempts at manufacturing consent. If the Australian government knew they would face a general strike in response to a new war, it would severely dampen their desire to engage in such a war. It is our duty and responsibility to support and defend the working class of the world.

> "Our symbol is ... Caliban ... Prospero invaded the islands, killed our ancestors, enslaved Caliban, and taught him his language ... What is our history, what is our culture, if not the history and culture of Caliban?"
>
> R. F. Retamar,
> President of the Casa de las Americas,
> and member of the Council of State of Cuba
> (1974, p. 24).

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Beyond media sensation, religion and democracy: a class analysis of political developments in Turkey

Michael Hooper

If media hyperbole were to be believed, Turkey has been transformed from a thriving democracy into an Islamic dictatorship by the actions of Recep Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP). Even the military coup that attempted to oust the Turkish leader has been alternately praised as the act of civically-minded, democracy loving generals or a dastardly false-flag by Erdogan himself. Rather than relying on surface phenomena such as ideologies and supra-class appeals to democracy, Communists should first consider the class context in which these super-structural elements exist and examine the class relations that are primary in determining social reality. Instead of a struggle between democracy and dictatorship, or between Islam and secularism, Turkish events are the result of a struggle between two different factions within the capitalist ruling class and the continuing disunity of the Turkish working class.

Competing factions of Turkish capitalism

Although once united by the promise of massive profits at the beginning of the 1980's neo-liberal reforms, the ruling capitalist class of Turkey is riven by sectional interests. The first and previously dominant faction is comprised of the biggest bourgeoisie, particularly finance capital, in alliance with international monopoly capital (Kuru 2012 p.38). Finance capital, big industrial enterprises, the highest level technocrats and the military profited the most from neoliberal reforms and aligned most closely with Western capital (Onder 1998 p.71) (Waterbury 1992 p.128). The military in Turkey actively participated in, and benefited from, neoliberal reforms as the military pension scheme holds equity in most major and joint venture enterprises (Waterbury 1992 p.128). The judiciary and until recently, the media, are traditional "ideological" allies of the military (Kuru p.38).

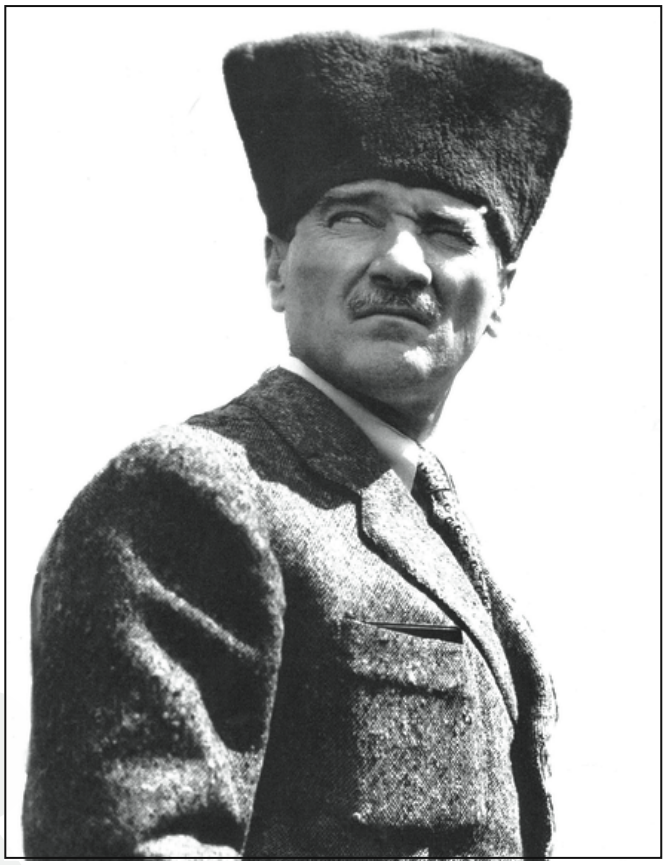
Recent political events in Turkey are the manifestation of a struggle between ruling class factions.

These forces worked hand in glove with the IMF and World Bank to pillage Turkey's resources and create a paradise for speculation and rent-seeking. The Turkish partners in the alliance with international capital are concentrated in the most exclusive business organisation in Turkey – The Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen (TUSIAD). Originally established in 1971 by the 12 richest industrialists in Turkey, it would later support the 1980 coup (Keyman and Koyuncu 2005 p.113) and dominate the financial sector (Demiralp 2009 p.323). TUSIAD members are typically large companies with close ties to the state bureaucracy (Demiralp 2009 p.321).

The other major faction of Turkey's capitalist class is headed by a new generation of entrepreneurs from the "Anatolian Tigers". These "tigers" are the formerly backward hinterland cities of the Anatolia region in Central Turkey that experienced major booms following neo-liberal reforms. The manufacturing of this region was initially driven by small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and concentrated on the production of low-value added commodities (McDonald 2011 p.535). While these capitalists were created by, and benefited from, early neo-liberal reforms, over time their sectional interests began to differ from those of the EU and IMF (McDonald 2011 p.535)(Demiralp 2009 p.319) and along with portions of the established industrial capitalists, opposed the neglect of industry caused by a "speculation/rent economy" (Onder 1998 p.68). They also recognised their substantial disadvantage when compared with the big bourgeoisie in the coastal cities and how the policy of ANAP, the ruling Party during most of the 1980's, continued to favour established elites (Demiralp 2009 p.319). Just as the biggest capitalists have TUSIAD, the regional bourgeoisie of the Anatolian Tigers have the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association (MUSIAD). The association, founded in 1990 by young businessmen, is primarily made up of small and medium businesses from outside of the traditional urban centres and presents itself unofficially as a Muslim organisation (Keyman and Koyuncu 2005 p.117) (Demiralp 2009 pp.321-322).

These competing factions are typically described in bourgeois media and scholarship as "Kemalist" and "Secularist" versus "Islamist". Rather than properly describing the class position of the factions, these terms instead describe the ideological tools these forces use to legitimise their side's struggle for power and to coax the support of subordinate classes. The traditional ideology of the "established elite" are militant secularism, Turkish nationalism and anti-communism (Kuru 2012 p.38), with the later falling out of favour following the end of the cold war and the former being particularly useful since the 1980's. The principle of secularism has been used by agents of finance capital in Turkey to oust parties with Islamic leanings that represented the growing "Anatolian Tigers", disguising the intra-class struggle with a constitutional and legal fig-leaf.

The strongest institutional tool of the monopoly capital-aligned faction is the military. Until the failed military coup of July 15th last year, the military was the most respected institution in Turkey (Magali 2007) (Hurriyet 2017). It successfully portrayed itself as the guardian of Ataturk's legacy – secularism and stability. The myth propagated by the military is that the regular economic and political crises of Turkish history were the fault of incompetent politicians, especially left-wing or Islamic ones, so it fell to the military to save the Turkish nation and restore stability. The public impact of this myth can be seen in the fact that, until recently, public confidence in the military was considerably higher than any other public institution (Magali 2007) (Hurriyet 2017). Public trust made justifying coups easier allowing the military to carry out four coups between 1960 and 1997. The 1980 coup established the ANAP government that carried out the will of the IMF and World Bank, introducing neo-liberalism onto the Turkish political scene and it was the military that deposed the Welfare Party, the forerunner of the AKP, when it began questioning neo-liberal orthodoxy. Despite a decade of steady reforms to undermine the power of the military, public trust in the military was only eventually shaken by the failed coup, which saw



Mustafa Kemal Atatürk –
founder of the Turkish Republic

support for the office of the president surpass sympathy for the military for the first time (Hurriyet 2017).

The ideological weapon of the regional bourgeoisie is a façade of political Islam. Economic changes since the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923 lead to an increasing gap between the coastal urban centres such as Ankara and Istanbul, and inland country regions. Major urban centres on the west coast industrialised, westernised and secularised while the countryside instead became dependant and maintained the role of Islam in social life (Demiralp 2009 p.318). Discontent stemming from the inequalities of this situation found expression in Islamism which served as a mutual link between disparate disadvantaged elements and as the "most powerful resource that mobilised this discontent" (Demiralp 2009 p.319). The disadvantaged classes particularly attracted to Islamism included migrant labourers who moved to urban centres seeking a better life but instead found themselves in crowded slums forming the new urban poor; regional intellectuals and white collar professionals who couldn't reconcile Islamic belief with Kemalist ideology (Demiralp 2009 p.320); as well as the peasantry and the regional population in general.

The regional bourgeoisie soon took advantage of this common ideology and used it to serve their own end. As a Turkish scholar noted:

> "The entrepreneurial class soon became the vanguard in the Islamist movement not only because it had the largest financial resources compared to other segments of the movement, such as the lower classes, students, and most intellectuals, but also because it was more aggressively interested in politics than other groups, given its immediate economic interests associated with manipulating politicians and policies."
>
> (Demiralp 2009 p.320)

Their absolute dominance of the movement would be secured with the foundation of the AKP, the current ruling Party in Turkey, in 2001 and their success in sidelining "radical" elements (Demiralp 2009 p.320). The regional bourgeoisie's strong interest in Islamism is predictable as it is an ideal class collaborationist ideology. It paints a picture of labour and capital being members of a united whole with common interests instead of diametrically opposed, separate entities with their own class interests (Keyman and Koyuncu 2005 p.120). Further evidence that Islamism is merely a convenient tool rather than a sincere belief for the ruling class is the attitudes and behaviours of MUSIAD members towards the financial sector. While MUSIAD leaders decried the evils of the financial sector, its unproductive nature and its anti-Islamic values, their members happily partook of the forbidden fruit once they accumulated enough capital to participate (Demiralp 2009 pp.322-323). It seems that MUSIAD's rhetoric is in fact a response to being excluded from this highly profitable field by TUSIAD's financial conglomerates, and that Islamic sensibilities are a mask for their class interests.

Seizure of power from international monopoly capital

By the time of the 2002 election that brought the AKP and their leader, Erdogan, to power, neo-liberalism had ravaged Turkey for 22 years. Following the 1980 coup, neo-liberalism was introduced by former World Bank employee, then Turkish Prime Minister, Turgut Ozal. The period from 1980 to 1989 saw heavy IMF interference and liberalisation of the economy with the goal of achieving "unfettered free market capitalism" (McDonald 2011 p.527) (Yeldan 1993 p.389). Of course, by adhering to these reforms, international finance capital was able to plunder the now open and defenceless country, which experienced incredibly unstable economic circumstances. In 2001, as a result of implementing IMF policies, Turkey suffered an economic crisis which halved the value of the national currency, caused GDP to drop by almost 6% and cut real wages by 20%. (McDonald 2011 p.528) (Yeldan 1993 p.389).

Political forces that dared to challenge the wisdom of neo-liberalism were deposed, just like the Welfare Party in 1997. So it is no surprise that when the newly created AKP won its first election in 2002, they were cautious about opposing the entrenched power of their factional rivals. Throughout their first term in office, the AKP diligently followed IMF orders and kept the local allies of international monopoly capital happy. At the same time, they also began to quietly redistribute some of the loot to their class allies. The tax amnesty policy of 2003 overwhelmingly favoured small and medium enterprises (SMEs), effectively shifting eight billion dollars from big companies to the former. Meanwhile, a new stock exchange just for SMEs, laws forcing banks to make loans to SMEs and the repeal of the property accounting law all favoured the factional supporters of the AKP over international capital.

In 2007, the AKP was re-elected with an increased majority of 47%. Secure in their electoral success, the AKP was able to resist IMF pressure and focus on implementing its own class faction's interests. Very soon after their victory though, the AKP came under attack from the Turkish state. In 2007, the military made a veiled threat against the AKP and their presidential candidate Abdullah Gul. In early 2008, the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals brought a case against the AKP in the Constitutional Court, seeking to ban many of its members from politics, including Erdogan,

for supposedly undermining secularism. According to one journalist at the time:

> "There were no reasons for the military to come forward, so the judiciary took on the frontal attack….so we started to call it a judicial coup. The government and ruling party are now under a legal siege".
>
> (Hughes 2008 p.16)

The judicial coup and the threat of military action both failed, but the AKP's counterattack didn't take long to materialise. In 2008, a major investigation was launched into the recently discovered "Ergenekon" organisation, an ultra-nationalist provocateur group that carried out acts of terrorism, similar to other "stay behind" networks supported by NATO in Europe. Three hundred military officers, sixty of whom were active duty generals, were charged in connection with this and other planned coups and terrorist plots, ending the belief that the military was untouchable (Kuru 2012 p.50). Turkish scholar Cinar summed up the Ergenekon experience by saying: "In any case, the Ergenekon case seems to have not only effectively eliminated the possibility of a coup attempt against the AKP but also put an end, once and for all, to the habitual ambitions of the military to intervene in and control political life in Turkey" (Cinar 2011 p.532).

The Ergenekon case was merely the resumption of a long process by which the AKP wore down the political powers and independence of the military. Before 2003, the National Security Council (MGK), which was dominated by representatives from the military and was always led by a general, exercised extensive executive powers. Following the 2003-2004 reforms, these powers were removed and leadership of the MGK could now be exercised by civilians (Kuru 2012 p.47). The military was also excluded from its former positions on the boards controlling higher education and media. Prior to 2010, military appropriations, 10% of the Turkish national budget, were controlled completely by the military without any legislative approval or review. Later reforms would put an end to this and other military privileges including the right to try civilians in military courts, immunity for the 1980 coup plotters and complete discretion in expelling politically undesirable soldiers.

The judiciary, especially its higher ranks, fought to protect the political power of the military against the AKP's assault. Throughout the course of the Ergenekon trials,

Greek economist Andreas Papandreou and Turgut Ozal (pictured right) at the World Economic Forum in 1986.

the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HYSK), the chief judicial body of Turkey, regularly interfered with investigations. Even earlier, in 2005, the HYSK disbarred a prosecutor who attempted to investigate the then Chief of General Staff over connections to a provocateur bombing of a bookstore (Bali 2010), while in 2000, a prosecutor who prepared a case against one of the 1980 coup plotters was also expelled (Kuru 2012 p.48).

Undermining the role of the judiciary as an ally of the military, and more importantly, as the legal weapon of monopoly capital, became a major reason for the 2010 constitutional reform. The constitutional reform package, brought to a referendum, included other progressive elements such as recognition of the right to collectively bargain and the rights of women, as well as judicial reform. Membership of the HYSK was to be expanded with positions on the council to be filled based on the results of a secret ballot by the country's 12,000 judges and prosecutors (Bali 2010). Prior to reform, the HYSK was stacked with senior judges appointed by other senior courts. The same applied to Turkey's Constitutional Court (TCC) which was formerly almost entirely appointed by other top courts, yet following the reform was much more representative of the legal profession as a whole (Bali 2010). These reforms began to undermine the power of entrenched elites in the judiciary and paved the way for members outside of the ruling pro-military clique to join peak Turkish judicial bodies.

By 2016, the political power of major foreign-aligned capital in Turkey had been severely weakened. The AKP, on behalf of their own class masters, clipped the military's political wings and weakened the stranglehold of forces loyal to their factional enemies in the judiciary, media and state bureaucracy. It is within this context that events in Turkey should be understood. Crack downs on the military, judiciary and liberal intelligentsia following the coup attempt are not attacks on supra-class democracy, but rather the AKP seizing the opportunity to clear out the remaining vestiges of international monopoly capital's political influence within Turkey. It represents the ultimate victory of the new wave of local capitalists created by the export oriented reforms of the Ozal government and their successors.

Conclusion

The Western media's portrayal of events in Turkey following the failed coup attempt in July of last year paints a caricature of the complex nature of Turkish politics and completely obscures the bitter struggle taking place within the ruling class. Instead of the media themes of supra-class democracy under assault, or secularism versus Islam, Marxists should apply a class analysis and investigate the balance of class forces that forms the foundation of all other issues.

The current Turkish reality is the result of a struggle between a portion of big Turkish capitalists aligned with international monopoly capital and the smaller but more numerous new industrial capitalists seeking to rebalance neoliberal development in their own favour. The failure of the coup and the resulting restrictions on the power of the military and judiciary are significant because they demonstrate both the weakening of the most powerful agents of international monopoly capital in Turkey and the breaking of the power of unelected bodies in favour of elected ones. The present victory of the new bourgeoisie, represented by the AKP, sees Turkey developing out of its former status as a mere vassal of international capital, to a more independent capitalist power.

Unfortunately, the working class trails behind the two factions of the ruling class, lacking unity and organisation. The disunity of the Communist movement in Turkey has robbed the working class of leadership at exactly the time it was needed most.

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On the illegality of war

Part 3

Editorial Note: This article appears in four parts with the first part published in issue 64 of this journal.

We also regret to inform readers that the footnotes of Part 2 were incorrect.

C T Ryan

B. The war against Iraq

The contestable nature of international law and its volatile dynamic was again demonstrated in relation to the 2003 Iraq War. The argumentation surrounding the question of that war's legality under international law also reveals there are sound bases to assert that the war was illegal.

1. UN Charter: The starting point

While Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the use of force against states, the degree to which the goal of world peace informs the founding rationale of the UN may also be gauged from other elements of the Charter. For instance, the opening lines of the Charter's preamble refer to the determination of the peoples of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and to reaffirm, among other things, "the equal rights ... of nations large and small". The preamble goes on to refer to the aims of the UN as including "to maintain international peace and security" and ensuring "that armed force shall not be used".

The first articles of the UN Charter setting out the purposes and principles of the UN, continue this theme, for example: "maintain international peace and security" (Art 1(1)); "take ... appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace" (Art 1(2)); and, "[the UN] is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all [states]" (Art 2(1)). The UN Charter then, formulated in the closing days of the most destructive war in history and given profound weight by that context and encapsulating/codifying international law, is a clear statement that the waging of aggressive war is illegal under international law.

Against this background, Bothe is right when he says that the "point of departure" for the legal debate about the legality of the Iraq War is the prohibition on the use of force under both customary international law and the UN Charter. Any specific use of force can only be lawful if it is based on an exception to the prohibition rule. There are two exceptions: self-defence and Security Council authorisation.[1]

The relevant Articles of the UN Charter are: Article 51 which refers to states having an "inherent right" to self-defence if they are attacked;[2] and, Article 42 which provides for the Security Council authorising military operations to maintain or restore international peace and security.[3]

2. The authorisation question

Did the war against Iraq fall within the exception in Article 42 (Security Council authorisation), to the United Nations Charter prohibition on the use of force against states? The war was launched without specific Security Council authorisation, however, one set of justifications put forward by the imperialist powers was that pre-existing Security Council resolutions stemming from the Gulf War of the early 1990s operated in conjunction with Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002) (sponsored by the US and Britain) to provide effective authorisation for the invasion.

The pre-existing Security Council resolutions in question were: Resolution 678 (1990), which had authorised

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1 Bothe M, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force" (2003) 14 European Journal of International Law 227 at p 228.

2 Though this does not abrogate the role of the UN Security Council. Article 51 provides that the exercise of self-defence is unimpaired "until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security" (emphasis added). The Article also requires states taking measures in self-defence to immediately report these to the Security Council. Finally, Art 51 provides that such measures "shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security." See also Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force", pp 228 – 229.

3 Under Art 39 of the UN Charter it is up to the Security Council to determine whether the peace etc is threatened, and, on that basis, to decide what action shall be taken under Art 42 to maintain or restore international peace and security. To this end, the Security Council may also decide to authorise measures "not involving the use of armed force" (eg interrupting economic relations) under Art 41. See also Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force", pp 228 – 229.

The opening lines of the Charter's preamble refer to the determination of the peoples of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and to reaffirm, among other things, "the equal rights ... of nations large and small".

the use of force against Iraq over its invasion of Kuwait; and Resolution 687 (1991), which had set out the basis for the ceasefire in the Gulf War, including establishing a disarmament process for Iraq.

Before the Security Council in March 2003, the US and Britain argued a case that the combined effect of Resolutions 678 (1990) and 687 (1991), was to provide Security Council authorisation for the invasion of Iraq. Their argument was that Iraq had not complied with Security Council Resolution 1441 of 2002, which provided it with "a final opportunity to comply with its disarmament obligations" and established an "enhanced inspections" regime with respect to Iraq's disarmament, and Iraq was therefore in "material breach" of Resolution 687 (the Gulf War ceasefire resolution), which had the effect of reviving Resolution 678 (authorising the use of force against Iraq).[4] With regards to 678, the argument ran that it had merely been suspended but not terminated in 1991.[5]

This argument relying on the continuing force of the earlier Gulf War resolutions, together with Resolution 1441 as the trigger for their reactivation, was the subject of debate within legal circles at the time of the outbreak of the Iraq War. Some legal experts saw the argument as tenuous. In one article it was said that the proponents of the war had stitched "together a cloak of authorisation from stray threads in earlier [Security Council] resolutions, stretching back as far as 1990 and 1991."[6] Others in the legal field who supported the war, variously argued that: Resolution 678 had not been specific to the Gulf War; Resolution 1441 explicitly recalled resolution 678; Resolution 1441 considered the use of force against Iraq not in isolation but as a continuation of the measures taken against Iraq following the Gulf War; etc.[7] Again from the side critical of the war, it was

4 See: Charlesworth H and Maxwell C in The Australian, 24 March 2003; Bartram D and others in The Australian, 18 March 2003; Kelly P in The Australian, 12 March 2003; Harris T, "Lawyers in bid to hold Diggers back", The Australian, 20 March 2003, p 4; Kritsiotis D, "Arguments of Mass Confusion" (2004) 15 European Journal of International Law 233 at pp 241 – 242, 252 – 254, 265 – 267; Carty, "The Iraq Invasion as a Recent United Kingdom 'Contribution to International Law'", pp 144 – 145.

5 Carty, "The Iraq Invasion as a Recent United Kingdom 'Contribution to International Law'", p 144; Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", pp 253, 265.

6 Charlesworth and Maxwell, The Australian, 24 March 2003.

7 Harris, "Lawyers in bid to hold Diggers back"; Bartram and others, The Australian, 18 March 2003.

It was up to the Security Council to decide whether Iraq had complied with its disarmament obligations.

argued that Resolution 678 had been specific to the Gulf War and could not be revived, and that with respect to Resolution 1441, it was up to the Security Council to decide whether Iraq had complied with its disarmament obligations, and, it may therefore be inferred, for the Security Council to decide on its response.[8]

One thing that can be said with certainty is that given the fundamental prohibition against aggressive war contained in the UN Charter, any purported legal argument in support of such a war must necessarily meet a very high standard to succeed. For those seeking to legally justify the war on the basis of "an intricate contextual reading, or interpretation" of the Gulf War Security Council resolutions,[9] Kritsiotis has demonstrated the kind of detailed forensic questions they must address to establish the necessary continuity of combined effect of the earlier Gulf War Security Council resolutions (678 and 687) and Resolution 1441:

- In 1990, did the Security Council authorise the use of force against Iraq for purposes other than the restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty?
- What were the intended limits of Resolution 678?
- Did the Security Council suspend or terminate Resolution 678 when it adopted Resolution 687?
- If Resolution 678 was merely suspended, how and when would a material breach result in its reactivation? When the Security Council in Resolution 1441 declared that Iraq was in "material breach" of Resolution 687?
- What about the "final opportunity" provided to Iraq in Resolution 1441?
- Which material breaches – any one, or a sum total of breaches (whatever they might be)?
- Material breaches determined and decided by whom – the Security Council, any member state of the UN, just the US, or the US in conjunction with Britain, etc?
- What role was there for the reports of the UN inspectors as provided for in Resolution 1441?[10]

With respect to the purported trigger effect of Resolution 1441, Kritsiotis argued that the US and Britain overstepped the mark in 2003 in relying on the alleged material breach by Iraq of its disarmament obligations.

8 Harris, "Lawyers in bid to hold Diggers back".

9 And "... on the use of legal concepts and terminologies such as 'authorization' and 'material breach' and 'ceasefire' – and upon the notion of precedent": Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", p 244.

10 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", pp 267 – 269.

He pointed out that Resolution 1441 provided that in the event of the Security Council receiving reports of material breach by Iraq of its obligations, that the Council would convene to consider the situation and determine its response.[11] The relevant part of the Resolution said:

> [The Security Council] Decides to convene immediately upon receipt of a report … in order to consider the situation and the need for full compliance with all of the relevant Council resolutions in order to secure international peace and security.[12]

Kritsiotis said that:

> Determinations of 'material breach' would therefore set in train a certain procedural consequence for the Security Council, at least as far as the Council was concerned from a reading of Resolution 1441 (2002).[13]

Despite this, the US and Britain contended that any determinations of material breach by Iraq "would have *substantive* consequences in terms of the reactivation of the Security Council authorization."[14] Nonetheless, the interpretations of Kritsiotis and other legal authorities/scholars claiming limited effect/operation of Resolution 1441 and the earlier Gulf War resolutions, are compelling.[15]

Underlining the interpretation of Resolution 1441 – that at most it would start a procedural process in the event of a report to the Council of a material breach by Iraq of its disarmament obligations – was the stance of the US and Britain in having initially agreed that 1441 would not be "self-executing".[16] At the time of Resolution 1441's adoption by the Security Council in November 2002, the US and British ambassadors to the UN had been emphatic in stating to the Security Council that the Resolution did not contain "hidden triggers" or "automaticity" for resort to war.[17]

Reinforcing that it can reasonably be argued that there was not implicit Security Council authorisation for the war, is other evidence of how the major powers and other Security Council members interpreted the effect of Resolution 1441 in the period leading up to the war. Speeches made to the Security Council at the time by the other representatives of member states of the Council,[18] show that the Security Council's unanimous adoption of Resolution 1441 was premised on the understanding that the Resolution did not provide for the automatic use of force against Iraq in the event of Iraq not complying with the Resolution's requirements, but rather that the Security Council would evaluate the situation and retain decision-making power as to how to respond to it.[19]

In March 2003, the other permanent members of the Security Council – Russia, China, and France – remained adamant that Resolution 1441 excluded "any automaticity in the use of force",[20] and, together with Germany, these powers in February-March 2003 argued for a continuation and strengthening of the weapons inspection regime for Iraq, and publicly opposed the drive to war.[21]

That it cannot convincingly be said that Resolution 1441 was the trigger in a scheme of purported implicit Security Council authorisation for the war, may also be inferred from the fact that the US had withdrawn an initial draft version of Resolution 1441 authorising the use of force against Iraq if it failed to sufficiently comply with the terms of the resolution, when it became apparent that the Security Council would not support the resolution in those terms.[22]

Other evidence is also telling that the supposed implicit Security Council authorisation was not sufficient to provide a legal basis for the war. In the weeks leading up to it in the face of considerable international opposition, there was frenetic activity by the main imperialist powers to shore-up support for an attack on Iraq. This took the form of offering economic inducements to, or threatening economic penalties against, non-permanent member states of the Security Council to get them to agree to another resolution authorising war (eg a US supported International Monetary Fund loan to Pakistan and a threat by the US to reduce its annual humanitarian aid to

11 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", pp 265 – 267.

12 UN Security Council Resolution 1441 (2002) para 12.

13 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", p 267.

14 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", p 267.

15 They also echo the arguments of other legal commentators who challenged the rationale of implicit UN Security Council authorisation, argued by the imperialist powers to justify their bombing of Kosovo and Iraq in the late 1990s.

16 Shearer I, 2003 – The Year of International Law: The Legality of the Iraqi & US War (NSW Young Lawyers, 2003).

17 See the report of the Security Council meeting at which Resolution 1441 was adopted (at UN document S/PV.4644): the US representative said at p 3 – "As we have said on numerous occasions to Council members, this resolution contains no 'hidden triggers' and no 'automaticity' with respect to the use of force. If there is a further Iraqi breach, reported to the Council … the matter will return to the Council for discussions as required in paragraph 12."; and the British representative said at p 5 – "Let me be equally clear … as a co-sponsor with the United States of the text we have just adopted. There is no 'automaticity' in this resolution. If there is a further Iraqi breach of its disarmament obligations, the matter will return to the Council for discussion as required in paragraph 12."

18 Including the other permanent members: China, France, and the Russian Federation.

19 For example, the representative of China said: "The text no longer includes automaticity for authorizing the use of force. According to the resolution that has just been adopted, only upon receipt of a report … on Iraq's non-compliance and failure to cooperate fully in the implementation of the resolution, will the Security Council consider the situation and take a position." (at UN document S/PV.4644, p 13).

20 Kelly, The Australian, 12 March 2003.

21 See: Overington C, "Reality bites for headstrong superpower", The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 February 2003; The Australian, 12 February 2003 and 7 March 2003; The Weekend Australian, 15 – 16 February 2003.

22 Charlesworth and Maxwell, The Australian, 24 March 2003.

Angola).[23] This drive to obtain another resolution from the UN Security Council that would expressly authorise the war, compellingly demonstrates that Resolution 1441 was not sufficient for affording legality on the basis of continuing implicit Security Council authorisation.

Britain and the US ultimately revealed their intention to go to war regardless of such action being authorised by a UN Security Council resolution. British Prime Minister Blair said that Britain would support war even without a second UN resolution. In the face of Russian, Chinese, and French insistence that the UN weapons inspectors be given more time, Blair indicated that Britain would not be deterred from going to war because of an "unreasonable, capricious use of the veto" by the permanent members of the Security Council.[24]

Even though their disdain for international law and legal procedure was becoming increasingly evident in relation to the imminent war against Iraq, the imperialist powers still felt obliged to attempt to provide a legitimate legal basis for the war, vindicating Chimni's point that the rule of law in the international sphere is not "vacuous" and that even powerful states feel compelled to justify their actions by reference to it.

For example, when in the face of resistance and reluctance from other members of the Security Council, the US, Britain, and Spain withdrew their last-ditch resolution to the Security Council seeking its agreement to giving an ultimatum to Iraq to disarm or face war within days, the US suggested the war would be legally justified under the right of states to self-defence.[25] For some time already, the imperialist powers had been attempting to secure an expanded meaning for the international law principle of pre-emptive self-defence, with the formulation of a doctrine of anticipatory self-defence.[26] This was another example of the drive by the imperialist powers in the years since the end of the Cold War, to break with the Charter order and develop a new type of international law on the use of force for their own ends.

It can be said, therefore, that those who saw the war as legally justified in terms of the Art 42 exception (Security Council authorisation), via an *implicit* Security Council authorisation rationale, had not met the high standard demanded by the UN Charter's fundamental prohibition on the use of force by states, to bring their case for war within that exception.

3. The self-defence question

The other exception to the Article 2(4) prohibition on the use of force against states that was possibly available to the prosecutors of the war against Iraq, was that provided by Article 51 of the UN Charter (the inherent right of states to self-defence).

Given the tenuous nature of the argument for implicit Security Council authorisation, and in light of the international opposition to the threatened war, the imperialist powers – relying on principles evolved in customary international law[27] – pushed to develop a new doctrine of *anticipatory self-defence* to justify their position. Their efforts, and the debate among legal scholars over the question of the validity of that doctrine in international law, demonstrates how international law develops in a context of disputative ideological interpretations of legal meanings. The imperialist powers ultimately abandoned the anticipatory self-defence doctrine as a possible formal legal justification for their aggression against Iraq, arguably attesting to its indeterminate status in international law – particularly when measured against the fundamental prohibition on the use of force by states in the UN Charter.

An analysis of the purposes and objectives of the UN Charter demonstrates that the Article 51 exception, which provides for states having an "inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs", is clear in its meaning: namely, that for the right to be triggered, an armed attack must actually happen, not merely be threatened.[28] However, in customary international law a principle of pre-emptive self-defence had developed which remained valid under the UN Charter order. This principle, formulated in the *Caroline* case of 1841, was constrained by the requirement that self-defence by a state must be necessary because the nature of the threat to the state was imminent: "instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation."[29] One strategy the imperialist powers pursued in the earlier lead-up period to the war to secure a legal justification for their aggression against Iraq, was to argue for an expanded meaning of the pre-emptive self-defence principle.

23 See: The Weekend Australian, 8 – 9 March 2003; The Australian, 13 March 2003; The Weekend Australian, 15 – 16 March 2003. Chile was warned by the US that a pending free-trade deal with it could be delayed, and Guinea and Cameroon were threatened by the US that it might not support loans both countries needed. Aside from the issue of securing another Security Council resolution authorising war, Turkey was subjected by the US to both threats and inducements in respect of billions of dollars in aid/loans to secure its agreement to allowing US troops on its soil for the invasion of Iraq.

24 The Sydney Morning Herald, 8 – 9 February 2003.

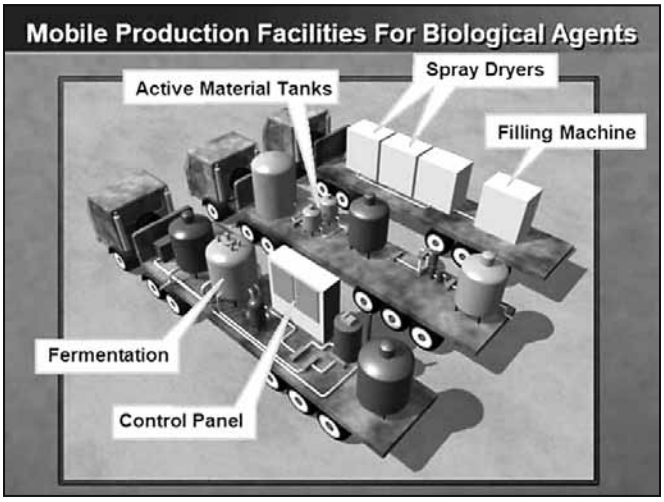
25 The Australian, 18 March 2003; The Guardian Weekly, 20 – 26 March 2003. "The US has the sovereign authority to use force in assuring its own national security," said President Bush (The Australian, 19 March 2003).

26 This will be discussed in the next section.

27 This is a body of international law conceptually distinct from treaty-made law, and it essentially develops through the practice of states and their perceptions of their legal obligations.

28 Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force", pp 228 – 230.

29 Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force", p 231. See also Harris, Cases and Materials on International Law, p 896.



Saddams nonexistent chemical weapons trucks.

In September 2002, President Bush submitted to the US Congress a National Security Strategy which argued that in a world of "rogue states and terrorists", with consideration of the inability of deterrence, the immediacy of threats, and the magnitude of possible harm that could result from the weapons used by the US's opponents, that "a reactive posture" was not sufficient: "We cannot let our enemies strike first."[30] The US National Security Strategy sought to "adapt" the imminent threat formula of the *Caroline* case to broaden the scope of the self-defence principle, on the basis of an argument that the US was facing an increased gravity of threat. Central to the Strategy was the claim that the enemies of the US might potentially, and "without warning", use weapons of mass destruction against it and its allies, a threat which provided a:

> compelling ... case for taking *anticipatory* action to defend ourselves, *even if uncertainty exists as to the time and place of the enemy's attack*. (emphases added)[31]

On the eve of the outbreak of the Iraq War, Bush justified the actions of the US and its allies on the basis of this argument. Asserting that the UN Security Council had failed in its responsibilities to authorise military action against Iraq, he said the US was acting now because the power of Iraq to cause harm to other nations would increase in the coming years, and he alluded to "evil men" plotting to use "chemical, biological and nuclear terror".[32]

While the *Caroline* formula allowed, obviously, for some flexibility and adaptation to particular circumstances, it could not cover a situation in which there was "time for many months of debate in national and international fora, including serious negotiations on ways of handling a dispute other than by the use of military force."[33] Such was the situation preceding the war against Iraq, and so the efforts by the imperialist powers to pursue their argument for an expanded right of pre-emptive self-defence in international law – anticipatory self-defence.

The claims of the US and British governments in 2002 and early 2003 about the supposed threat from Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction capability are understandable as attempts to suggest the existence of a factual justification for anticipatory self-defence action. In its 2002 dossier, *Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction: The Assessment of the British Government*, the British government asserted that Iraq had the capacity to undertake long-range missile attacks using chemical or biological warheads and was on the way to acquiring nuclear weapons. At this time Prime Minister Blair famously declared that Iraq was in a position to launch some of its weapons of mass destruction "within 45 minutes of an order to use them".[34] In February 2003 US Secretary of State Powell addressed the UN Security Council and among the claims he made was that Iraq had mobile biological weapons laboratories and had dispersal techniques for the release of prohibited substances. To underline how Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction capability posed a grave threat to the world, Powell also suggested Iraq had connections with terrorist organisations (including al-Qaeda) who were prepared to use the weapons.[35]

Notwithstanding these efforts by the leading imperialist powers, international law had not thus far adopted an expanded version of the pre-emptive self-defence principle in the form of a doctrine of anticipatory self-defence. For example, the UN Security Council had previously rejected the argument when used by Israel to justify its incursions into neighbouring territories.[36] Further, Bothe suggested there could not be a rule of anticipatory self-defence in international law as its limits and application were uncertain with there being questions relating to: the required level of seriousness of the threat; the types of weapons that need to be involved; how to respond to states that possess nuclear arms; the efforts a state needs to make not to be labelled as harbouring terrorists; etc.[37]

30 Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force", pp 227, 236.

31 Quoted in Sofaer AD, "On the Necessity of Pre-emption" (2003) 14 European Journal of International Law 209 at p 211.

32 "Every measure will be taken to defeat Saddam", The Australian, 19 March 2003, p 4.

33 Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force", pp 232 – 233.

34 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", p 255.

35 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", pp 255 – 256.

36 Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force", pp 236 – 237. Also, when Israel attacked and destroyed a nearly completed nuclear reactor in Iraq in 1981 using an anticipatory self-defence justification, Israel's action was unanimously condemned by the UN Security Council as a "clear violation" of Art 2(4) of the UN Charter: Harris, Cases and Materials on International Law, p 898.

37 Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force", p 237.

US Secretary of State Powell addressed the UN Security Council.

For other legal commentators, however, there was a place for a doctrine of anticipatory self-defence in international law. Sofaer suggested it was demanded by the times, with globalisation having made it much easier for terrorists to travel and communicate, and technology having "enhanced their ability to inflict damage with powerful explosives, modern weapons, and potentially through the use of weapons of mass destruction."[38]

Reading the *Caroline* case formula of pre-emptive self-defence, with its requirement of imminence of attack, as having only a limited application to certain situations,[39] Sofaer argued that the standard generally applicable for pre-emptive self-defence (even at the time of the *Caroline* case) was that the use of force be necessary in the circumstances and proportionate to the threat to be addressed.[40]

Sofaer outlined the criteria for establishing the existence of the required necessity, which included "the nature and magnitude of the threat" and "the likelihood … the threat will be realised unless pre-emptive action is taken."[41] Applying these criteria to Iraq, he suggested there was a strong case for the use of force against that country. He argued that Iraq posed a threat of potentially "very great" magnitude given its development of chemical and biological weapons and possibly weapons of mass destruction, and that Iraqi aggression was likely given its history of having attacked Iran and Kuwait.[42]

While Sofaer gave an expansive interpretation of the pre-emptive self-defence principle, his argument for its applicability to Iraq demonstrates the highly uncertain status the anticipatory self-defence doctrine had in relation to international law. One of the other criteria enumerated by Sofaer for establishing the required necessity for the application of pre-emptive self-defence was the exhaustion of alternatives to the use of force. From this perspective, for Sofaer the application of the anticipatory self-defence doctrine to Iraq was also determined by

38 Sofaer, "On the Necessity of Pre-emption", p 209.

39 Such as when state A has the ability to prevent attacks, emanating from within its own territory, against state B, but fails to do so, and an attack against B from the territory of A is imminent. In such a situation, B may take pre-emptive action against A in accordance with the Caroline formula: see Sofaer, "On the Necessity of Pre-emption", pp 219 – 220.

40 Sofaer, "On the Necessity of Pre-emption", p 220.

41 Sofaer, "On the Necessity of Pre-emption", p 220.

42 Sofaer, "On the Necessity of Pre-emption", pp 221 – 222.

what he implies was the failure of multiple UN Security Council resolutions imposing economic and other penalties on Iraq to secure that country's disarmament and thereby peace, with Resolution 1441 having given Iraq a final opportunity to comply. This amounted to the exhaustion of "all reasonable, alternative means for securing compliance short of force",[43] thereby *necessitating* the use of force by the US and its allies against Iraq.

Sofaer's reasoning is premised on the assumption that there was, in the purported continuing force of the earlier Security Council Gulf War-related resolutions, implicit Security Council authorisation for the invasion, in the event of the ultimate failure of the alternatives short of armed force to securing Iraq's disarmament. As we have seen, the implicit authorisation argument is a highly problematic position.

In the absence of explicit Security Council authorisation for the use of force against Iraq, Sofaer concluded that:

> the findings, conclusions, and other actions of the Council should ... be given proper weight ... Arguably, the breach by Iraq of [the Gulf War/ disarmament] resolutions restores in full force the original authorization by the Council for the use of force in 1990.[44]

This encapsulates the approach taken by the imperialist powers to justifying their war against Iraq in legal terms: the 1990-1991 Security Council resolutions related to the Gulf War[45] effectively provided authority for the invasion of Iraq; with the failure to achieve the disarmament of Iraq being the trigger, via Resolution 1441, for the 2003 invasion. Sofaer added a gloss to this rationale by suggesting that the Security Council resolutions also went to demonstrate the requisite exhaustion of alternatives to force that necessitated invocation of the anticipatory self-defence justification for the invasion. Here, two dubious legal arguments – implicit Security Council authorisation and anticipatory self-defence – are, by circular reference to each other, presented as valid in the whole.

This approach really underlines the flimsy quality of the anticipatory self-defence doctrine as a legal argument justifying the Iraq war – remembering also the UN Security Council's previous rejection of it in relation to Israel.

That the imperialist powers themselves were not convinced of the doctrine's soundness as a legal justification, was confirmed by their effective abandonment of the doctrine in their final legal argument for war before the Security Council.

In considering the question of the legality of the Iraq war, it has been stressed that it is necessary to distinguish between the *legal* and *political* justifications put forward for the invasion of Iraq. With reference to the jurisprudence that had evolved in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the 1986 *Nicaragua* case,[46] Kritsiotis explained that in examining the legality of the US intervention in Nicaragua, the ICJ had focussed on the *legal justification* put forward by the US for its action, not on the *political justification* it provided.[47] Kritsiotis suggested the ICJ, conscious of its role as arbiter of the legal not the political, did this because of its "wholehearted respect" for the *opinio juris* of the US. The legal concept of the *opinio juris* of a state refers to the belief a state has as to what it is obliged to do under international law. The ICJ also wanted to ensure the US was able to avail itself of the "essential tests and benefits" accorded by the Court to an assessment of legal "argumentation and evidence".[48]

Applying this approach to Iraq, Kritsiotis argued that the main legal argument put forward by the US and Britain (and Australia for that matter) to justify their invasion was the alleged "material breach" by Iraq of its obligations under the historic Security Council resolutions, not that the invasion was justified pursuant to an expanded notion of pre-emptive self-defence. Kritsiotis maintained that the formal communications presented by the US and Britain to the Security Council in March 2003 were legal in character.[49] He noted that, among other things, their premise relied:

> on an intricate contextual reading, or interpretation, of Security Council Resolutions 678 (1990), 687 (1991) and 1441(2002); on the use of legal concepts and terminologies such as 'authorisation' and 'material breach' and 'ceasefire' – and upon the notion of precedent.[50]

43 Sofaer, "On the Necessity of Pre-emption", p 223.

44 Sofaer, "On the Necessity of Pre-emption", p 224.

45 Resolution 678 (1990) authorising the use of force against Iraq for its invasion of Kuwait; Resolution 687 (1991) providing the basis for the Gulf War ceasefire, including establishing a disarmament process for Iraq.

46 Nicaragua v United States of America, ICJ Reports (1986) 14. The background to this case was the US military and paramilitary campaign waged against Nicaragua following the 1979 Sandinista revolution in that country. Nicaragua claimed the US had used direct armed force against it in the form of laying mines in Nicaraguan waters and attacking and damaging Nicaraguan ports, oil installations and a naval base, and that the US had also assisted the contras fighting to overthrow the Sandinista Government. See: Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", p 236 and Harris, Cases and Materials on International Law, p 866.

47 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", pp 235 – 238: the legal justification put forward by the US for its intervention in Nicaragua was that it was exercising " 'its right of collective self-defence'", while its political justification was on grounds of supporting "a particular system of 'political and moral values'" (pp 236 – 237).

48 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", pp 240 – 241. See also the section of this paper entitled: "The creation of an opinio juris for anticipatory self-defence".

49 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", pp 241 – 242, 252 – 254.

50 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", p 244.

We have seen previously that the implicit Security Council authorisation argument was an insufficient basis on which to claim that the invasion of Iraq was legal. The imperialist powers' reliance on it before the Security Council at the moment the war began, now suggests their deep uncertainty as to the place of anticipatory self-defence in international law. This tentativeness may be inferred also from the very limited reference made to the notion of self-defence in the above-mentioned US communication to the Security Council. Kritsiotis says there was one "fleeting mention" in the communication to self-defence or pre-emptive self-defence, when the US spoke of the need to take steps " 'to defend the United States and the international community from the threat posed by Iraq ...'".[51] The British Government (which, as will be seen, had also been working towards having an expanded notion of pre-emptive self-defence incorporated into international law) was even more circumspect in its communication to the Security Council on the outbreak of the war, not making any reference at all to a right of pre-emptive self-defence in the communication.[52]

This pulling back by the US and British Governments from the use of a legally dubious anticipatory self-defence argument to justify their war against Iraq, was undoubtedly partly due to the isolation they felt in the face of the widespread international opposition to the war coming from other states and their own peoples. Perhaps the material breach argument was a last-minute contrivance to suggest that they were acting consistently with the UN Charter. In any event, the retreat from the anticipatory self-defence doctrine, despite the imperialists' assertion that the world faced a dire threat from Iraq's supposed possession of weapons of mass destruction, highlights its indeterminate status in international law. Kritsiotis asserted that even if the US had invoked a pre-emptive self-defence argument in its legal justification for the invasion "there is no question that this would not have helped its legal case by edging the intervention across the wire, into the desired heartland of lawfulness ...", because Britain had backed down on this issue.[53]

Recognising the need to provide some sort of legal justification to the world for their actions, in the contestable terrain of international law in which the meanings of legal forms are inherently indeterminate, the imperialist powers had waged an ideological struggle in the earlier lead-up period to the war to secure the anticipatory self-defence doctrine as that legal justification. The imperialists' final retreat from the anticipatory self-defence argument at the outbreak of the war definitively represented the defeat of the argument as bringing the war against Iraq within the scope of legality.

The self-defence exception to the fundamental prohibition on the use of force in international law had set a high standard for states to meet to bring their use of force within its operation. The essence of that standard was the profound repudiation of the use of force by states that had become entrenched in international law. Bothe explained what was at stake if the accepted restrictive understanding of self-defence was broadened by the incorporation of an anticipatory self-defence doctrine. He noted that in the twentieth century there had developed an *opinio juris* "that war was unlawful" resulting from an underlying change in "social value judgments" in reaction to the immense human suffering caused by the First World War.[54] The 1928 Genera*l Treaty for the Renunciation of War* exemplified the new international law norm. Bothe warned that a reversion to broad concepts to justify the use of military force, such as anticipatory self-defence, would be:

> stepping on a slippery slope, one which would make us slide back into the nineteenth century when war was not illegal.[55]

The imperialist powers' earlier reliance on the anticipatory self-defence doctrine in relation to Iraq was an attempt to craft a putative legal basis for their military aggression, and despite their late abandonment of it in the case of Iraq they were not done with it. Kritisotis suggested that the invasion of Iraq would be used by them as "the test-drive" for the doctrine.[56] If the anticipatory self-defence doctrine had not achieved the critical mass of international acceptance necessary to secure its incorporation in international law at the time of Iraq, the imperialist powers were determined to achieve this outcome in due course by waging an ideological campaign designed to provide the necessary subjective foundation.

51 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", p 248. Kritsiotis also spoke of "the shallowness of the reference to self-defence in the communication made to the Security Council on 20 March 2003 – offered almost by way of a casual afterthought in the closing sentences of a document otherwise given to an impressive display of legal detail ..." (pp 250 – 251).

52 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", p 253.

53 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", p 253.

54 Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force", p 238.

55 Bothe, "Terrorism and the Legality of Pre-emptive Force", p 238.

56 Kritsiotis, "Arguments of Mass Confusion", p 246.

Richard Levins, ecological agriculture, and revolutionary optimism

Wadi'h Halabi
Economics Commission, Communist Party USA
and Center for Marxist Education, Massachusetts, USA

Summary: Decaying capitalism threatens the social and environmental foundations of human existence. Ecological agriculture can play an important role in reversing the destruction, and achieving social and environmental sustainability. The working class must take power to support and guide it. With Richard Levins' assistance, ecological agriculture was pioneered in Cuba, guided by the Communist Party and Marxism. Ecological agriculture could also provide the key to land reform today. This is the central democratic task of national liberation, the sickle in the hammer and sickle. At one time, land reform meant "land to the tiller". This certainly held in the Russian and Chinese Revolutions. But since the 1950s, capitalism has thrown hundreds of millions off the land, often into atomized life in slums. Ecological agriculture and its associated cooperatives, and possibly agrotowns, may provide the template for the "new land reform." China has begun evaluating ecological agriculture. Richard Levins' "red DNA" will help green the planet.

The legendary Dust Bowl crisis of the 1930s.

Choking in its own wastes, decaying capitalism threatens the social and environmental foundations of human existence. Sudden failures, such as in Syria, Libya, Yemen, the Congo (starting in 1991 and ongoing) – and for that matter the fall of the Soviet Union and eleven other states formed by socialist revolutions – reflect massive, unresolved global contradictions. To move these contradictions productively, suitable forms must be built or rebuilt.

Revolutionary optimism implies confidence that the workers of the world can lead successful completion of humanity's transition from capitalism to socialism. It will take conscious reunification of the working class and Communist Parties, applying the lessons from our errors and failures, and building on workers' historic accomplishments.

Ecological agriculture is one of those historic accomplishments.[1] It points to methods, forms and practices essential to stop and reverse capitalism's poisoning of human relations as well as of nature.

My teacher and friend, Richard Levins, who died in January 2016, advanced ecological agriculture in theory and practice. For half a century, he worked with Cuban state institutions, the Communist Party, scientists and ordinary farmers. His work reflects a profound integration of Marxism. His contributions ranged from theoretical design to physically nudging ants onto farm fields.

Richard Levins' advantage in science and humour

My relation with Dick contained the ingredients for bad bourgeois jokes – "A Jew and a Palestinian walk into a bar ...". Bring in Marxism, however, and there was the basis for wonderful insights and humour.

When we met, Dick proudly identified as a "third-generation Red". His parents and grandparents had been in the Communist movement. His father was a founding member of the Young Communist League of the CPUSA. (A few years before he died, he announced that he actually was "a fourth-generation Red"! His daughter Aurora had discovered that some of his great-grandparents had been part of a movement that fed into the Bolshevik party!)

All that Marxist DNA, I once teased Dick, gave him an unfair advantage in science. He nodded agreement. The same genes, I continued, also gave him an unfair advantage in humour. He was lightning-fast in seeing the contradictions in developments big and small – and to bring out the humour in them when appropriate. Who could keep up with him? Yet he worked, spoke and corresponded with the humblest, and was a unifying figure in the labor and environmental movement.

The hammer and sickle – 1871 to 1949

In addition to producing food and other agricultural products sustainably, ecological agriculture may also prove critical for a central task of socialist revolutions and the liberation of oppressed nations: land reform.

Land reform is the sickle in the hammer and sickle. To take power, the working class needs to ally with oppressed to seize the land from the exploiters and their Wall Street backers, and place it in the hands of those who will work and protect it.

At one time, land reform meant "land to the tiller". Rising capitalism had cruelly pushed millions off the land and into proletarian existence; the majority of those still working the land did so at the mercy of landlords and richer peasants and farmers.

"Land to the tiller" was an appropriate Communist call, from the Paris Commune (1871, the Commune's failure to raise it was a factor in its defeat), to the Russian Revolution (100 years ago!), through the Vietnamese (1945), Korean (1948) and Chinese Revolutions (1949).

Ecological agriculture and the hammer and sickle today

Conditions have changed. The exploiters in recent decades have been capitalizing agriculture, using industrial methods, debt and pricing measures that are extraordinarily destructive socially as well as environmentally.

Many farmers have fallen into debt peonage – in India alone, debt has pushed perhaps three million farmers to suicide in the past three decades. The debt was often less than $200.

In addition, hundreds of millions of farmers, peasants and rural proletarians have been pushed off the land since the 1950s. Most of the displaced have fallen into utter destitution, often in slums, joining laid-off workers in a horrible atomized existence. (The book *Planet of Slums* by Mike Davis provides a remarkable summary of changes from the 1950s into the early 2000s.)

1 Other major accomplishments of the working class include Marxism, socialist revolutions and the states formed by them; and Communist Parties and unions worldwide. More than 70 Communist Parties are in existence today. These meet in annual International Meetings of Communist and Workers Parties. A growing number of CPs are also meeting in annual World Socialism forums in Beijing. Today there are five states where the working class holds power through its organizations. In order of formation, these are Vietnam, People's Korea, China, Cuba and Laos. There were seventeen such states before counter-revolutions brought down the Soviet Union, Albania, Yugoslavia, etc. It is not by accident that ecological agriculture was developed in one of these states, one that survived the upheavals.

Only the working class in power can provide the necessary direction and support, as the Cuban state demonstrated in the 1990s.

People of oppressed nations have formed a majority of those displaced from the land. This has included African-Americans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Hawaiians, and native peoples in the USA. Many of the displaced continue to long for land, even decades after they were pushed off.

But for the majority, there can be no going back to "land to (individual) tillers". Why? Even short separation from the land can make it difficult, even impossible, to work it productively. In addition, it is not in the interest of humanity to recreate the social isolation, harsh labor, and unsustainable practices of peasants and farmers working individually.

Ecological agriculture can help the working class develop solutions to extraordinarily difficult problems of national oppression created by decaying capitalism. Land reform today demands cooperative approaches. It also requires deliberate, sustained social support to meet a wide range of human needs on a national and ultimately international scale.

Only the working class in power can provide the necessary direction and support, as the Cuban state demonstrated in the 1990s. Ecological agriculture, for example, requires setting land aside for forests and protection of rivers and shorelines. Who will pay the farmer whose land is turned to forest or otherwise removed from production?

Ecological agriculture requires rotation of crops. Some crops bring better incomes than others. Who will cover the difference? The exploiters won't. Ecological agriculture requires introduction of fungi to replace synthetic fertilizers, various insects to control pests. Who will supply them if they are not profitable by capitalist standards?[2]

Sustainable agricultural practices also require comprehensive planning and organization of resources on a regional level, with informed input, control and interest from below. The land reform, the ensuing support, the planning, the allocation of resources – these can only come from a working class struggling for power, and taking power.

2 Richard Levins wrote a few summaries of the social and scientific foundations of ecological agriculture in Cuba. See, for example, "How Cuba is Going Ecological" in *Capitalism Nature Socialism,* Vol.16, Number 3, September 2005.

With the associated cooperatives for production, processing and distribution, ecological agriculture points the path forward. Progress will come step by step. Cuba has pioneered.

Ecological agriculture can help advance historic goals of Marxism

Ecological agriculture can also help the majority of humans, not only displaced peasants and farmers, become engaged in agricultural production. This includes so many city residents long separated from physical labor by capitalism.

Humans have a profound need to contribute to our society physically as well as intellectually. But if the physical labor is mercilessly hard, poorly compensated, dangerous and mind-numbing, we will try to avoid it. The resources exist to address this challenge!

Richard Levins agreed that ecological agriculture can play an important role in advancing historic goals of the Communist movement. Among these are overcoming the opposition between city and countryside and between intellectual and manual labor, and the inequality between nations, and between men and women. Dick paid particular attention to the last of those.

Why didn't Richard Levins "export" ecological agriculture to puerto Rico?

Dick once told me his happiest years were those he spent in Puerto Rico. He retained a deep love for that beautiful island, colonized by US imperialism the same year it invaded Cuba. Why didn't Dick "export" ecological agriculture from Cuba to nearby Puerto Rico?

The answer is that Puerto Rico is still under capitalist rule. And capitalism is simply incapable of implementing ecological agriculture. Isolated insights may develop in agro-ecology, localized efforts may be attempted here and there.

But only a state of the working class can give ecological agriculture the necessary support and protection. Even then, it poses quite a challenge. For a thousand reasons, even the most radical capitalist countries, such as Venezuela after 1999, are unable to do what Cuba put into practice in the 1990s. The working class has to take power. Today, China, Vietnam, People's Korea and Laos are capable of emulating Cuba. Progress elsewhere awaits the expression of working class power.

Agrotowns

In recent years, Dick and I often talked about agrotowns. Agrotowns were proposed but not implemented in the Soviet Union. They were envisioned to establish close, stable combinations of food and raw-material production with processing, and also be centres of education and culture.

With ecological agriculture and new technologies correctly adapted for production and distribution, agrotowns can win youth back to agriculture. Attracting youth will be a key test! Experimentation in agrotowns by China, Vietnam, Cuba and other states of the working class can point the way forward for the "new land reform", for the liberation of oppressed nations, and establishing socially and environmentally sustainable practices.

Richard Levins, farmer and Marxist

Dick was arguably the most important published scientist in the US, certainly the most consistent across vast fields – and one of the least-known. All three were due to his commitment to Marxism in theory, in practice, in life, in his infinite curiosity, his openness to the truth and to correction of error.

He turned down membership in the US National Academy of Sciences because of its complicity with the Pentagon. Thereafter, the bourgeois press all but "disappeared" him, rarely quoting him while turning to lesser specialists. Yet his contributions to humanity are foundational, and will remain, like Darwin's or J B S Haldane's.

Dick's integration of Marxist method is evident in all his work, in ecology, agriculture, evolutionary theory, mathematical biology, public health, economics, philosophy, and beyond. Well over 400 of his articles and books have been published, and more await publication. One of the unpublished works is a "cold-war" novel set in Cuba, completed shortly before he died. The butler did not do it.

A member of the Young Communist League of the CPUSA, Dick worked hard to build the Communist Party in Puerto Rico, where he lived in McCarthyite exile in the 1950s and 1960s. Forced to farm on mountainous land in Puerto Rico, he was proud that he and his wife Rosario Morales won second prize for their carrots. That farming experience also set the stage for some of his most productive scientific insights.

The *Communist Manifesto* brought us together

We were neighbors and passing acquaintances in Cambridge, Mass. But it took Cuba to connect us. The

setting was a February 1998 symposium in Havana to mark the 150th anniversary of the *Communist Manifesto*.

Such an occasion calls for grandiose talks. Dick's choice of topics was really moving. He analyzed the contradictions that "ordinary" Cuban hotel workers were now facing with the re-opening of Cuba's tourist industry during the Special Period. He spoke without notes, in flawless Spanish, wearing a soiled t-shirt – he had come directly from the field, where he was working on ecological measures to control citrus rust. His 1998 presentation is worth reprinting today.

The *Manifesto* is the only object buried with him, at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. Dick's children saw to that.

The architecture to complete the historic transition

After some hesitation, Dick accepted my argument that the decisive preparations to complete humanity's historic transition would take place among the Communist Parties of the world, including the Communist Party of China. (The hesitation was in part because he had entertained the incorrect belief, propagated by *Monthly Review* among others, that the Chinese state was now capitalist.)

Once he accepted this argument, Dick moved seamlessly from the architecture of ecological agriculture to the architecture to complete humanity's historic transition (which will incorporate ecological agriculture!).

Dick also accepted that labor unions would play a key role in overcoming the gap that has developed between most CPs and the mass of workers. He understood that unions formed or transformed by the Communist Parties had a special place. Today, these include the unions of Cuba, China, and Vietnam, as well as many unions in capitalist countries, including the Union of Electrical Workers (UE) and the United Steelworkers (USW) in the US. Some of these unions are grouped in the World Federation of Trade Unions.

Dick supported the proposition that cooperation on necessary tasks would play an essential role in rebuilding international working-class solidarity. In US-China Labor meetings convened in Boston starting in 2007, we agreed on three such tasks.

These were environmental tasks; international labor defense of political prisoners; and organizational tasks, such as unionizing the unorganized and overcoming organizational weaknesses. Despite Dick's failing health and many commitments, he avidly followed our meetings. He proposed adding a fourth task, union cooperation on tasks of occupational safety and health, a proposal we accepted.

Reviving international labor defense

Dick encouraged efforts to revive International Labor Defense. ILD had organized mass campaigns as well as legal defense of the "Scottsboro Boys" in the 1930s. ILD helped build the Sharecroppers Unions, defended sugar workers in Cuba and helped form the Communist Party of Cuba.

Dick welcomed an August 2015 statement by the Cuba Five in support of reviving ILD, and put in his own moving words: "The ILD not only allowed workers all over the world to join forces in the face of repression but also get to know each other as allies, share our knowledge, feel victories or defeats anywhere in the world as our own. Its rebirth now reminds us of our history of solidarity."[3]

Environmental insecurity of life is a revolutionary factor

A certain amount of insecurity is inescapable, even desirable. But under capitalism, it becomes monstrous. Advances in science and technology make it worse.

Insecurity of life then becomes a revolutionary factor. Even anti-communist historians of the Russian Revolution have admitted that the insecurity of life under capitalism was a major factor in the Bolshevik victory 100 years ago.

In the days of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, the insecurity seemed "personal" – Will I have a job tomorrow? Will there be enough food to feed the family? Such insecurity has hardly disappeared.

Now humanity is conscious that it also faces an existential insecurity – Will there be air that humans can breathe, water we can drink, a climate we can survive? The enormous damage to biodiversity gives reason to ask – Could the web of life, and with it agriculture, disintegrate? Just the decline of various pollinators, from bees to bats, is reason for immense concern. This insecurity can be a world-revolutionary factor! Ecological agriculture under working class guidance points the way out.

3 (The Cuba 5 and Dick's statements for International Labor Defense can be found at https://www.internationallabordefense.org/single-post/2017/06/29/The-Rebirth-of-International-Labor-Defense.)

Communist parties have a responsibility to explain that capitalism is incapable of stopping the destruction!

Freedom is the recognition of necessity. Communist Parties have a responsibility to explain that the capitalist class is not simply unwilling, it is incapable of halting social and environmental destruction. We must also explain why and how the working class can stop this destruction.[4] Dick strongly agreed with this.

Certainly the *resources* to stop the destruction exist. But it is beyond capitalism's capacity to mobilize them. There are profound material reasons for its impotence. They range from the deepening social and individual poverty and debt plaguing the capitalist world, to private ownership of land, to the periodic crises and wars that make planning impossible. Capitalist mis-education and its pervasive distortion and denials of reality, its dishonest social and environmental accounting, its top-down-only functioning – all guarantee capitalist impotence.

Humans as productivores

Dick believed that what distinguished today's *Homo sapiens* from the 23 or so lines of extinct humans, and from other species, is that we are "productivores": we learned to produce most of the food we eat. Because capitalism has separated the majority of humans from agricultural production, few realize how destructive agriculture has become.

As currently practiced in most of the world, agriculture has become humanity's single most destructive activity – socially, nutritionally and environmentally. Agriculture currently accounts for half or more of all poisoning of nature worldwide – not only the rapid disruption of climate that the capitalists now single out, but also the damage to biodiversity, the wasting of soil, the poisoning and other damage to rivers, groundwater, oceans, all life. Even though food production has not crashed, honest scientists are in agreement that today's practices are unsustainable.

Agriculture was recently found to account for half or more of urban surface-air pollution. Emissions from synthetic fertilizers and farm animals combine with industrial and vehicle pollution to create the deadly PM2.5 particles plaguing cities in North America, Europe and China.[5]

The president of the Academy of Marxism in Beijing, Deng Chundong, agreed to begin an evaluation of ecological agriculture in Cuba as it might be implemented in China.

Ecological agriculture can greatly reduce this poisoning of nature. But capitalism can't practice it. Capitalist Sweden cannot do it. It will take working class power in Sweden, Venezuela, Haiti, Brazil, Congo, India, the USA, to achieve what Cuba has. Vietnam, People's Korea, China and Laos on the other hand are capable of making significant advances. (Laos is pioneering in Asia.)

Communist Parties in capitalist countries have a responsibility to explain why capitalism is incapable of halting social and environmental damage, and why the working class can. Communist Parties in power also have a responsibility to follow Cuba's lead in advancing ecological agriculture and associated cooperatives. In addition, Communist Parties in power are in a position to experiment with agrotowns.

After the Russian Revolution, with farming consisting mainly of individual plots, the Bolsheviks understood that building cooperatives would require stepwise development. The first step was cooperation in purchasing, which provides the greatest benefits – lower prices, reduced time – while demanding minimal trust. Subsequent steps are cooperation in obtaining credit, then in selling, and only finally in production (collectives). Cooperatives in start-up agrotowns will differ in their necessary steps and management, and will require experimentation and learning.

4 Some of the reasons why capitalism is incapable of halting the destruction are summarized by this author in "Ten Considerations: The Political Economy of Scientific Development in this Epoch," *Economic Study of Shanghai School*, Volume 23, 2008 (in Chinese). In 2007, the Communist Party of China committed to scientific development, requiring comprehensive assessments of social and environmental factors to meet human needs. Richard Levins contributed to this paper. A copy in English is available by contacting the author, wah787@yahoo.com.

5 "Significant atmospheric aerosol pollution [is] caused by world food cultivation", S.Bauer et al, *Geophysical Research Letters*, April 2016. The study focused on surface urban air quality, and does not consider the considerable impact of deforestation also associated with capitalist agricultural practices.

China to begin evaluating ecological agriculture

In late April 2017, the president of the Academy of Marxism in Beijing, Deng Chundong, agreed to begin an evaluation of ecological agriculture in Cuba as it might be implemented in China. Beijing Normal University professors Wu Xiangdong and Tian Song prepared the ground.

Cuban ecologist Miguel Vales Garcia, temporarily living in China, made key contributions. A member of the Communist Party of Cuba and the Cuban Academy of Sciences, Miguel was one of Richard Levins' students and "Cuban children".

With communist direction, the existential insecurity humanity faces today can be turned into overwhelming momentum to complete the transition to socialism. Ecological agriculture, the Cuban state and Communist Party, and Richard Levins, will have played a crucial role.

Red DNA, green planet

As Dick's heart and lungs failed, he would sometimes go silent and nearly pass out, even in the middle of meals.

Not long before his death, I came to visit him on my bicycle. Between my helmet and riding goggles, I looked like an alien. Dick's door was open, but he appeared passed out on his bed.

"Knock, knock," I said, "Do you accept visitors from another planet?"

"Only if it's the red planet," came the immediate answer.

Dick's bright red DNA will spread, making it possible to green the planet.

¡Richard Levins, Presente!

Postscript: *Richard Levins and the 2014 changes in US strategy towards Cuba: It is the US that is getting weaker!*

In December 2014, the US ruling class announced a new strategy towards working-class Cuba. Dick and I met for breakfast the next morning. We had both come to the same conclusion: the change in strategy was the result of the relative weakening of *US imperialism*, not of Cuba.

The new strategy posed considerable challenges for the Cuban state, party and people. But it is US imperialism that is weakening. Our assessment was based in part on studies of "changes in US social contradictions" initiated a few years earlier by the Academy of Marxism of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

In just four years, 2007 to 2011, US industrial production had plummeted from 160% of China's to 81%. This dramatic change was the combined result of the general crisis of capitalism and the rapid growth possible in a state formed by a socialist revolution, like China. (The statistics, which come from the UN, are actually biased towards the US; this is because the UN uses capitalist 'value added' calculations that accept monopoly pricing of commodities as honest.) In addition, the indications are that the overall productivity of labor in manufacturing in China had surpassed the US.

In addition, the tiny US ruling class was greatly weakened domestically. To save itself after the crisis in 2007-8, the ruling class had frontally attacked its own social base, lesser exploiters. Business bankruptcies tripled between 2006 and 2010. The average income of "the 1%" (the top 1% in the US, composed of lesser exploiters) fell 19% between 2007 and 2014. The income of the top 0.01% fell 27%.

By 2009, lesser exploiters were going into rebellion – the "Tea Party" was an early expression. A related development was that ruling class loss of credibility with a large portion of the US population – "NAFTA will make you rich", "Invading Iraq will free you of terrorism", etc.

Dick died before Donald Trump's election, another expression of the still-unfolding rebellion of lesser exploiters. Trump is violating the ruling class's "grand strategies", further weakening imperialism.

Dick understood the implications of the weakening. Few things in history, he said, have been more dangerous than a weakened but well-armed ruling class.

We would be foolish to ignore the danger, even more foolish to ignore the weakness – and to ignore the strengths and accomplishments of the international working class. Ecological agriculture is one of those accomplishments.

Special thanks to Sandy Rosen, John Womack, Jr., Eric Brooks, Donald Donato, Marc Brodine, Tom Whitney, and other comrades and friends of the CPUSA and the Center for Marxist Education; to Miguel Vales Garcia of the Communist Party of Cuba and the Institute of Ecology and Systematics, Havana; to comrades Deng Chundong and Liu Zixu of the Communist Party of China and the Academy of Marxism, Beijing; and to professors Wu Xiangdong and Tian Song of Beijing Normal University.

AMR

Book Review

The Undesirables – Inside Nauru

Rob Gowland

Australia's record with refugees is, in the main, not one to be proud of. At the end of World War II, while people everywhere celebrated the final defeat of fascism, Australia's immigration minister was making our country a safe haven for escaping Nazis, fascist collaborators and anti-Soviet terrorists angry at the defeat of the Germans they had had such high hopes for.

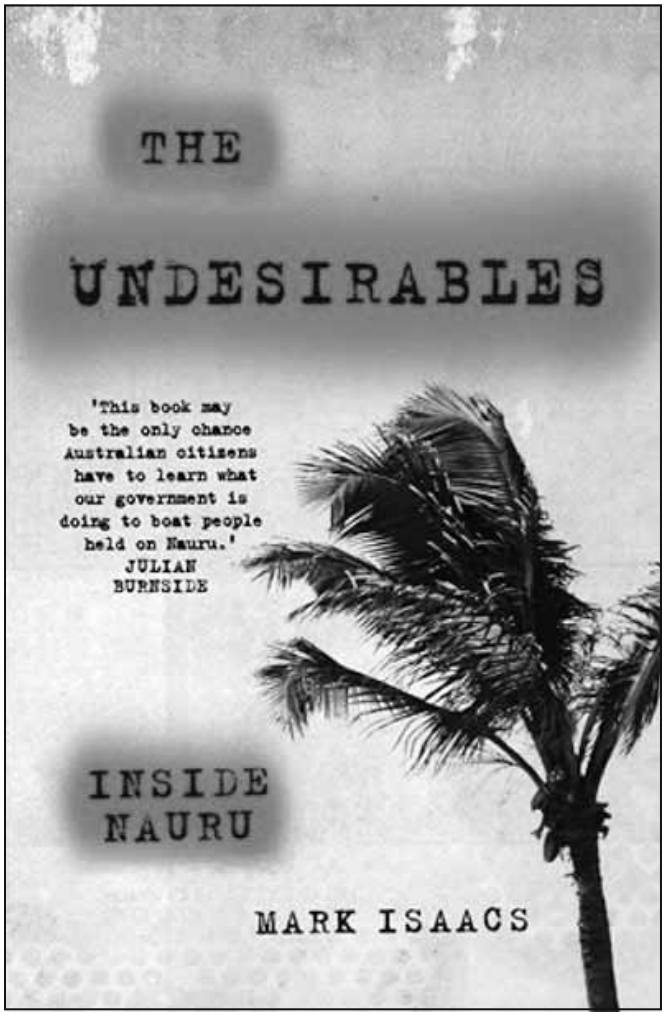
That minister was Arthur Caldwell, Roman Catholic, from the right-wing of the Labor Party, and fiercely anti-Communist. Many of the people his officers helped to come to Australia after the war were not fleeing the aftermath of war so much as fleeing retribution for their unsavoury part in it.

But while these people suited the Australian ruling class politically, they did not suit ethnically. Australia, you see, according to the powers that be, was not just White, it was Anglo-Saxon, and they were determined to keep it that way. So we had the "Bring out a Briton" immigration campaign and the £10-boat-fare subsidised passage to Australia – for migrants from Britain.

In the 1950s, when I was in high school in Sydney, we had a small but very upright woman from Dr Barnardo's outfit come to the school cadging money for their scheme that took the children of poor people in England, mainly Londoners, and sent them far away to Australia where they provided cheap – or free – labour on farms and never saw their parents again. No matter, they were poor so their rights were of no significance.

This lady drew herself up to her five-foot-nothing at a special school assembly, stood stiffly at attention, and informed us "I'm proud to be Australian, but I'm prouder still to be BRITISH!" Fortunately, that was an antiquated sentiment then; today it probably resonates only with the likes of Tony Abbott.

Our next big influx of refugees were not British at all, but they *were* suitably right-wing: Vietnamese who had thrown in their lot first with the invading colonial French and then with the invading Yanks and now were obliged to flee the wrath of their victorious countrymen. We took about 25,000 of these refugees, most of whom came unofficially and by boat, making them clearly "boat people", but curiously no stigma was attached to them for that.



There was a serious hiccup in our right-wing refugee policy during the tenure of the Whitlam Labor government, which gave refuge to *left-wing* refugees from Chile following General Pinochet's bloody overthrow of the elected government of Salvador Allende.

After that aberration, the policy of Australian governments towards refugees reverted to its default position: regard them all as undesirable and treat them as criminals. There was no political advantage to be gained for the government among actual or potential Liberal Party supporters by recognising the rights of refugees. Quite the opposite in fact.

Since most of the wars that created refugees likely to seek safety in Australia were being fought in some part of Asia, refugees from these conflicts were suitably "other", racially and culturally "alien", easily made the targets of Australia's ultra-Right racists. Australia had

helped draft the UN convention on refugees, but reactionary Federal governments – with the full support of the right-wing leadership of the Labor "opposition" – had no qualms about abandoning our responsibilities towards them.

About half of all refugees who come to Australia arrive here by air via countries where they can without too much difficulty obtain visas to enter Australia: usually short-term visas for study, tourism or business. Once in the country they apply for asylum. While their asylum claim is being resolved they are allowed to remain at large in the community. However, those who do not pass through countries that have signed the 1951 Convention on Refugees and hence cannot obtain such visas live in constant fear of detection and being returned to the country from which they were trying to escape.

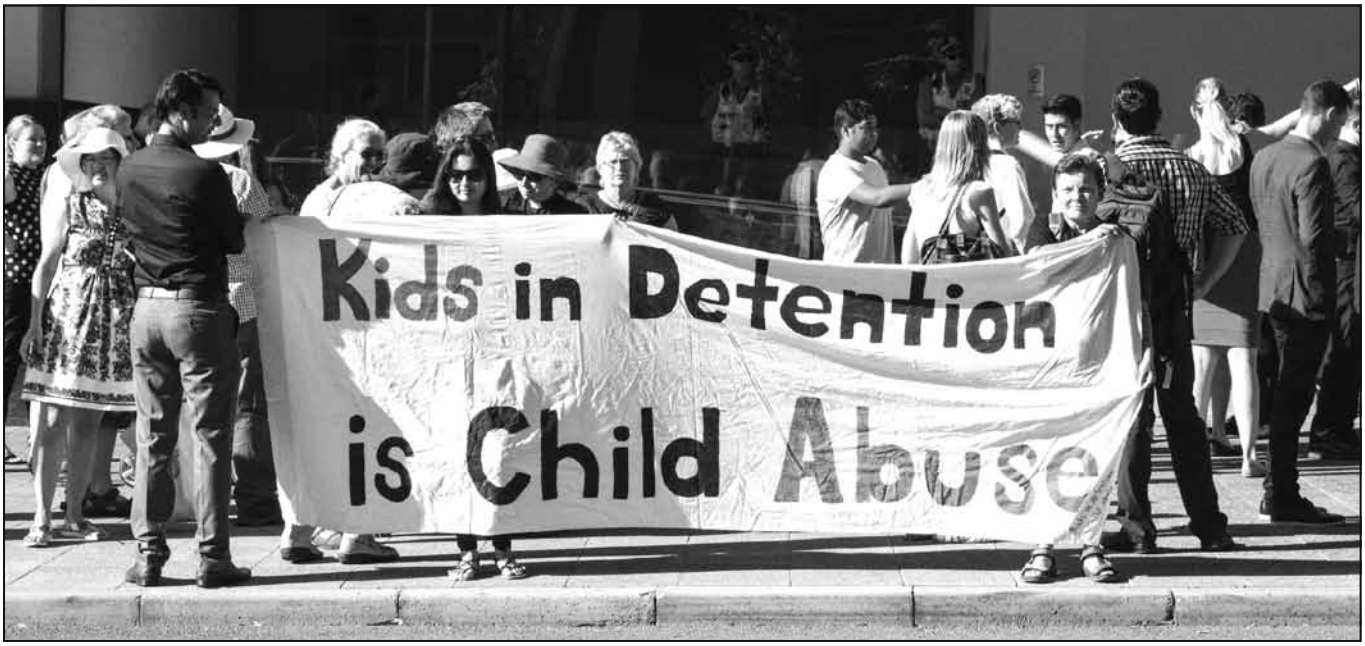
As Julian Burnside says in his excellent foreword to Mark Isaac's book on Australia's concentration camp for "boat people" on *Nauru, The Undesirables – Inside Nauru*: "In Indonesia, asylum seekers who are assessed as refugees may wait ten or twenty years before they are offered a place in a safe country. In the meantime they cannot get jobs and their kids cannot go to school, for fear of detection. ... Not surprisingly, some of them – those with initiative and courage – place themselves in the hands of people smugglers, commit themselves to a dangerous boat trip and end up in Australia."

Pauline Hanson's One Nation, a party founded on opposition to multi-culturalism, gained considerable support with scare campaigns claiming Australia was being "overrun" by aliens. The Liberal Party under John Howard, afraid it might lose its position as the leading right-wing party, adopted a high-profile posture of hostility towards refugees, claiming amongst other things that they tossed their children overboard when approached by the Australian Navy. This kind of lie shored up the Liberal government's support from racists and other ultra-rightists as intended, but to become government policy it meant Australia had to ignore its obligations to assist refugees under UN conventions and other treaties.

The cunning solution the Libs came up with (with the full support of Labor) was to pay neighbouring Papua-New Guinea to allow Australia to establish concentration camps on Nauru and Manus Island, to use the Navy to intercept boats carrying refugees and to divert them to PNG where the refugees are incarcerated indefinitely. All they are promised is that they will *never* be allowed to enter Australia. This was called "the Pacific Solution".

The full horror of just what the Australian government's policy towards refugees actually entails is graphically and chillingly revealed in Isaac's book. The book first appeared in 2014 but Hardie Grant Books has published a new edition this year. As Julian Burnside notes in his excellent foreword, refuting a claim the right-wing make constantly, "boat people are not 'illegal': coming to Australia the way they do to seek protection is not an offence against any law."

It was that pillar of support for democratic rights Scott Morrison who militarised the Department of Immigration and Citizenship when he was appointed to the portfolio by Tony Abbott in 2013. Morrison changed the name of the department to Immigration and Border Protection. "From that point on," says Burnside, "news about boat arrivals was restricted as 'an operational matter'."



However, we should not forget that it was the Gillard *Labor* government that had revived the Pacific solution in August 2012. Being "tough on refugees" is seen as a vote catcher by both major parties, so that is also the approach taken by Labor leader Bill Shorten, who is nothing if not opportunistic.

The Abbott and Turnbull Liberal governments have made their supposed "success" at "stopping the boats" a major feature of their propaganda. And yet, as Burnside points out, "the language of 'border control' and 'border protection' is completely misleading. ... At any one time, there are about 60,000 [people from among the four million visitors and 150,000 annual migrants] who have overstayed their visa and are thus staying in Australia in breach of the law. By contrast, from the mid-1980s to the early 2000s, the arrival rate for boat people averaged about 1,000 per year ...

"When 60,000 backpackers and students from Europe and America stay on for years, there is no mention of border protection. When a much smaller number of terrified people seek our help, it is absurd to believe that they represent a threat to our borders."

That this absurdity is recognised by both the Australian government and the Opposition is shown by the restrictive laws they have passed to ensure silence on the issue. As Deborah Snow said in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, "Eyewitness accounts from inside Australia's detention centres are rare. Walled in behind government secrecy, contracts which bind them to silence, and fear for their livelihoods, staff and former employees of the groups running the centres bite their tongues or confide only in close colleagues, family members or friends."

Amnesty International was not impressed when it reported on the Australian-run detention centre on Nauru in 2012: "Amnesty International has found a toxic mix of uncertainty, unlawful detention and inhumane conditions creating an increasingly volatile situation on Nauru, with the Australian Government spectacularly failing in its duty of care to asylum seekers."

A year later, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported that "the current policies, conditions and operational approaches [at the detention centre on Nauru] do not comply with international standards ..."

It is no secret that the money being spent by the Australian government to keep asylum seekers safely locked away on Nauru would allow each of them to be bought a house in country NSW *every year*! Instead, they are imprisoned under dreadful conditions without hope. The Australian government actually tried to persuade them to agree to being resettled in poverty-stricken Cambodia with no hope of a future, but not surprisingly had no success with this ploy.

On 27th April, 2016, an Iranian refugee in Australian-dictated offshore detention could take it no longer and doused himself with petrol and set himself alight. He died two days later. Cathy Wilcox, cartoonist with The *Sydney Morning Herald*, highlighted the hypocrisy of the Australian government's boasting of its success at stopping "boat people" by drawing a man engulfed in flames with the caption "Not drowning".

The Australian government had given the job of ministering to the needs of the inmates on Nauru to the Salvation Army, presumably feeling that since, unlike other religious organisations which can be inconveniently critical about things like poverty and homelessness, the Salvos depend on these things as their *raison d'être*. The only major religious organisation that never spoke out against the Vietnam War, the Salvos have never taken part in any political debates on any social or economic questions. They were clearly a safe bet for involvement in Australia's off-shore concentration camp program. And so they might have been, but for a young man from Sydney named Mark Isaacs. Mark was one of the people they hired as "support staff" on Nauru. His book about his experiences is a damming exposé of the conditions there, and of the policy of the Australian government towards asylum seekers as exemplified on Nauru.

First published in 2014, a revised edition has been published this year by Hardie Grant Books. As Deborah Snow noted in her review in 2014, "Isaacs was only 24 when, on the strength of a single phone call and with no experience, he was hired by the Salvos and sent to Nauru with less than a week's notice to 'provide support' to asylum seekers detained there." He has no criticism of the Salvos: they did their best in a situation they should never have taken on.

"I wasn't given any training before I was sent over,'' he says. "No preparation, no cultural diversity training, I didn't know anything about Tamils, or people from Iraq and Iran, and I was one of the comparatively well-informed. There was an 18-year-old there! How can you expect an 18-year-old to look after traumatised, war-torn people?''

Isaacs completed five rotations through the camp, each of several weeks' duration. Then in June of 2013, the desperate inmates burnt most of it to the ground. The following year, equally-desperate inmates at the other Australian concentration camp for "boat people", on Manus Island, rioted leaving one man dead and scores injured.

Because the people in these camps have no hope and therefore little to lose, Isaacs argues that future violence is inevitable. "Criminals were given a sentence to serve: these men were not even given that,'' Isaacs writes. "They feared they would die in Nauru, that they would

"They feared they would die in Nauru, that they would be forgotten, that they would become non-people.'' — Mark Isaacs.

be forgotten, that they would become non-people.'' The Turnbull government has tried to wriggle out from under this problem by resettling the refugees not in Australia but in America! That mad scheme seems to have hit a few snags but "negotiations are continuing" we are assured.

Meanwhile, seizing people who have committed no crime and penning them indefinitely on small Pacific islands and leaving them in limbo is certainly no way to "solve'' the asylum seeker "problem". But because the Australian government finds it expedient to regard them as criminals, they are treated with the cruelty and contempt that applies in prison. Isaacs witnessed many moments of heartbreak in the Nauru camp.

"Reza, an internee to whom he had been giving private English lessons, nearly succeeded in taking his own life with a toxic cocktail of cleaning fluids, mosquito repellent, antidepressants and sleeping tablets. One of the camp's most respected religious leaders, Ali, descended into three days of psychotic madness [when he] lost a child, having tried, and failed, to transfer funds back home for the sick youngster's treatment. A third moment of heartbreak came when the camp poet, Pez, whom Isaacs had befriended, tried to hang himself in the dank, dark laundry.''

Isaacs was left feeling as though he was working in a "death factory''. He writes, "the camp was built around destroying men, grind[ing] them into the dust.''

And like all prisons, it ran on myriad petty rules that were chopped and changed: no hair dye, swimming for inmates banned because of health and safety concerns, no vocational training for internees because that would break the "no advantage'' rule (they were not, under the policy, to receive any "advantage'' over asylum seekers still awaiting processing in UN centres).

Isaacs was mysteriously blacklisted from the camp for a few weeks, and was later told it was because of complaints by security staff that he was too willing to fraternise with camp inmates. Staff were repeatedly warned against speaking out about what was going on behind the camp gates. At one stage, Isaacs says, he was told there was an "intel'' file on him. "You were not allowed to email your loved ones about what was happening, even what the food was like,'' he said. "They said that people were checking our emails and FaceBook. It felt like being in a fascist state.''

John Howard tried to justify Australia's hostile policy towards refugees on humanitarian grounds: we were "saving lives". That furphy won't wash anymore, so the government has simply clamped down on any discussion of the subject while trying to forcibly send the refugees somewhere – anywhere – else.

But it is not a problem that will just go away. While imperialism goes on making innumerable wars around the world and destroying national economies, there will be refugees. And some of them will try to come here. We have a legal and a humanitarian commitment to help them.

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Abstracts from *World Socialism Research*, a new journal from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Editorial Note: In recent years, the Communist Party of China has begun to re-engage with the international Communist movement after a long period of absence. Part of this re-emergence is the publication of a new academic journal, *World Socialism Research*, by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Currently up to its seventh issue, the journal welcomes Marxist analysis on a range of topics. Although the journal is currently only published in Chinese, abstracts are available in English and *AMR* readers who ask very nicely may find translations of the articles they seek in their Christmas stocking. For further information, please contact the editorial board at **amr@cpa.org.au**.

Why Trump was able to ascend the historical stage – reflections on Trump, American conservatism and fascism

Ma Zhongcheng

The financial crisis of 2008 in the United States was an explosion of all the economic, political and social contradictions that accumulated since the initiation of neo-liberal policies in the 1980s. In the years following the crisis, the United States and the entire capitalist system have been facing profound changes. Deepening of neo-liberal policies, polarization and class struggle have intensified on an unprecedented scale, which eventually led to the Brexit in the UK and the Saunders and Trump phenomena in the US presidential election. The racist tradition of the United States, as an important tool of inducing the white working class to support monopoly capital, brought about support for Trump from both the monopolistic financial groups and large numbers of lumpen-proletarians.

Maintaining the "public" nature of public hospitals is a key to healthcare reform

Zhong Nanshan

Hospitals, like schools, are important public services that are absolutely necessary for people's lives. Public services should be operated mainly by the state and government. Handing them over to domestic or foreign capital would soon drain public hospitals and schools of their best staff members, with offers of high salaries by privately operated ones. In this way, people will have to go to private hospitals when they are suffering from complicated and refractory diseases, and private schools for quality education. Failure to address these most important issues concerning people's livelihoods will affect the consolidation of our state power and the CPC's status as the governing party.

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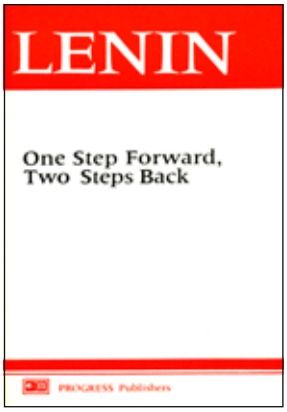
AMR discussions

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



One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

Paperback – 232 pages by Vladimir Lenin **$10**

Another classic in which Lenin studies the speeches of delegates and the political divisions at the Second Party Congress, drawing comparisons between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks (opportunists). There are many lessons to be learnt from the ideological struggle which are relevant today.

Articles and Speeches on Anniversaries of the October Revolution

Paperback – 98 pages by Vladimir Lenin **$8**

A collection of speeches given by Lenin between 1918 to 1922, taken from his *Collected Works* (Corrections in accordance with Fifth Russian edition).

Speeches include:

- "The Chief Task of Our Day"
- "What is Soviet Power?"
- "Soviet Power and the Status of Women"
- "Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution"

Battleship Potemkin plus *The General Line* **$25**

DVD – Directed by Sergei M Eisenstein

The story of the mutiny on the Russian ship *Prince Potemkin* during the 1905 uprising against the Tsarist regime. *Battleship Potemkin* is considered one of the most important and influential films of all time, as well as possibly Eisenstein's greatest work. Its revolutionary zeal led to it being banned in many countries, particularly fascist Germany, Italy and Spain, and even Britain up until 1954! The film brought Eisenstein's theories of cinema art to the world in a powerful showcase; his emphasis on montage, his stress of intellectual contact, and his treatment of the mass instead of the individual as the protagonist.

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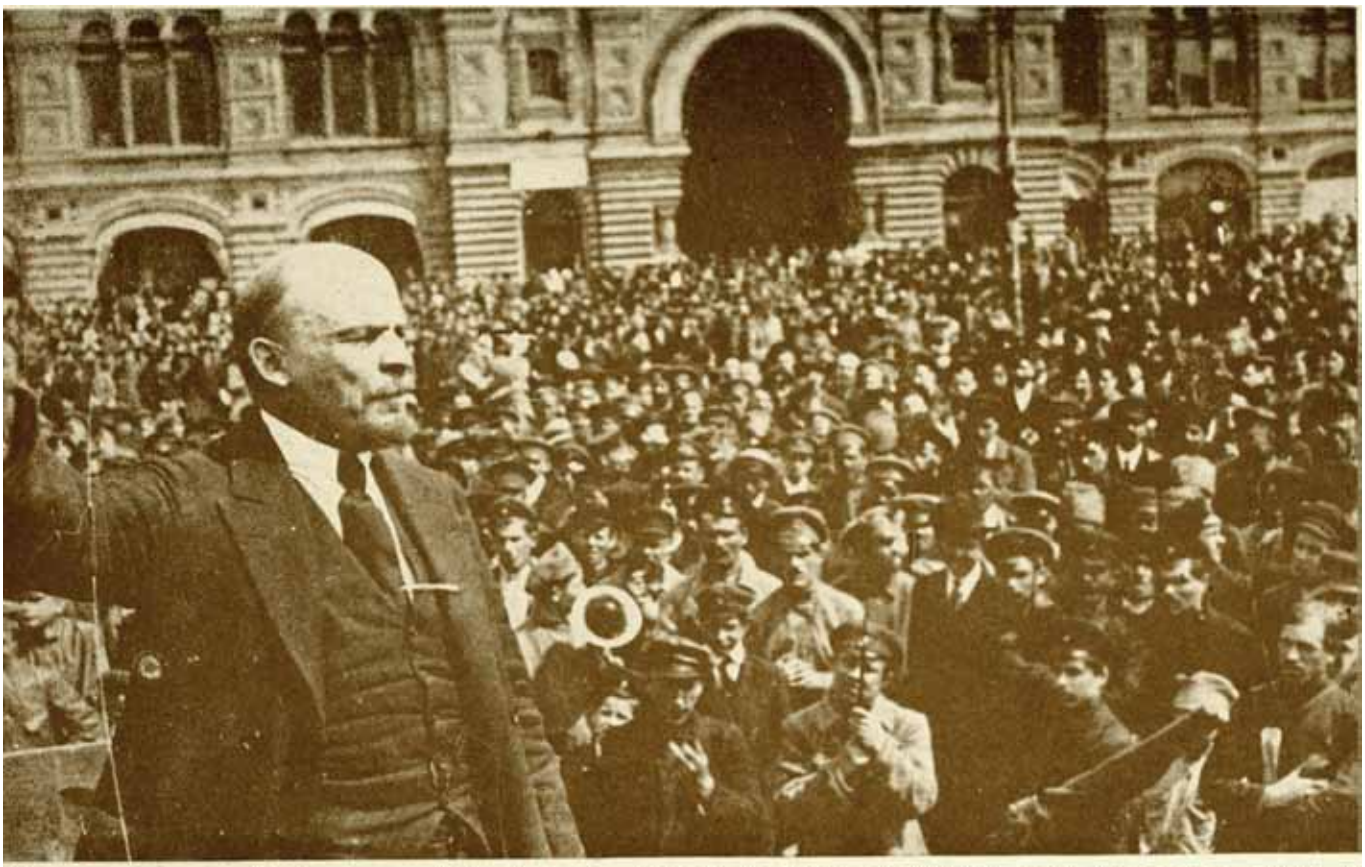
"The bourgeoisie incites the workers of one nation against those of another in the endeavor to keep them disunited."

Lenin, "Capitalism and Workers' Immigration"



The masses hearing Lenin express their demands. *"Under the pitiless pelting of facts I have been driven to the conclusion that if Lenin and 18 other Bolshevik (leaders) had perished, events in Russia would have taken much the same course. The robbed and oppressed masses—a hundred millions of men and women—moved toward the goal of their long unfulfilled desires like a flow of molten lava that no human force can dam or turn aside."*—Professor E. A. Ross.

Communist Party of Australia

Contact:

Street/Postal: 74 Buckingham Street,
Surry Hills, NSW 2010, Australia

Phone: +61 2 9699 8844 **Fax:** +61 2 9699 9833

Email: cpa@cpa.org.au **Web site:** www.cpa.org.au