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THEORY
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EXPERIENCE
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Front cover:

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Editorial

Dear readers, in this issue of the *Australian Marxist Review* we bring together a collection that deals with the problems of our time: the rise of right-wing popularism and the re-emergence of the different forms taken by these open terrorist regimes using a mix of bourgeois democratic covers; the decline of trade unions and the urgent task to rebuild the workers' basic organisation.

The methods of work and the experiences of organising in the workplaces is studied and shared in an informative article by Arthur P. Martin. These experiences are an invaluable guide to action. An analysis of what exists and in the framework of building the union movement into an effective force for workers. The low density in the Australian Union Movement and working in under unionised environments as well as the pitfalls of union work are examined. It is a contribution to developing our science in the situations that we face.

Following this is the final part of an interview with veteran of union and party struggles, Sally Mitchell. This continues the very valuable experiences of Sally as a trade-union organiser including the experience of the savage interest rates and closures of industries during the 1980s. Sally discusses the problems associated with the amalgamation of unions, which arose as part of the Accord, under government pressure and the accord process which led to the reduction of the over 300 unions down to the present handful of unions. The new mega-unions and the reduction in democracy within the unions made it harder for workers to control their unions.

Sally adds further to the understanding of how we should work and discusses the problems associated with dogmatism and the liquidationist trends. The experience of comrades in preserving and guaranteeing a future for our movement in advancing the interests of the people.

It is 90 years since the seventh congress of the Comintern and Georgi Dimitrov's delivery of the report on war and fascism that was the rallying point of the international Communist and workers' movement's fight against these features of capitalism. We reprint here the wonderful speech delivered on behalf of our party in Bulgaria by Jack McPhillips, our then party president, on celebration of the 90th anniversary of Dimitrov's birth.

The speech is rich in lessons for the approach to the united front of workers against the rise of war and fascism. With the ascension of Donald Trump to the level of dictator under USA legal circumstances and the rise of similar styles of rule throughout Europe, the struggle against fascism and war has new urgency. Jack is to the point on those issues. Dimitrov, whose contribution to a clear scientific characterisation of fascism as the open terrorist dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, beat the Nazis in their plots and gave our movement masterpieces such as the document against war and fascism. This clear and insightful analysis is needed when the bourgeois liberals of our day try to present the rise of these rightist forces as a break in their system rather than the culmination of their brutal attacks on the rights of the working class.

We reprint for readers the article from the first edition of the *World Marxist Review* from Cheng Enfu and Li Wei which discusses and elucidates the developments in the science of Marxism-Leninism. The comrades write from the practical experiences in the struggle to build socialism and to defend and develop the international communist and workers' movement.

The comrades take their experience and show the scientific basis of Marxism-Leninism and its relationship to practice. They critically review mistaken views and provide guidance in the developments.

The final contribution is a reprint from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation that gives a historical-materialist understanding of how Soviet Ukraine came to be and to what the current state of Ukraine has degenerated. This shows the rise of the oligarchs and how these types of semi-criminal capitalists have arisen on the theft of people's assets, and their features as more degenerated and parasitic layers in society resting on racist and even fascist ideologies. This resort to such extremes is the basis of these regimes and makes them subservient to imperialism. It is part of the extreme weakness of these regimes, which cannot even afford the limited aspects of bourgeois democracy. They rely on xenophobia and genocidal policies.

We hope you enjoy this collection and that it helps in the study of our science.

Australian Marxist Review #79 (July, 2025)

Organising in Low-Density Unions

Arthur P. Martin

Introduction

Union membership in Australia has been on the decline for decades, with the most recent figures estimating union membership to be 13.1% as of December 2024 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2024). Many industries that have grown in recent years have little union membership to speak of. This occurs in a climate where Australian unions face some of the most anti-union laws in the developed world including barriers to organising such as limited entry rights for union officials, tight restrictions on industrial action with no recognised right to strike, and a hostile and deliberately over-complicated system for winning collective agreements, historically a major draw to unionising (McAlpine and Roberts, 2017). These are all underpinned by severe penalties for disobedience, including crippling fines on individual workers and the right of businesses to sue over damages incurred by industrial action (Fair Work Act, 2009). Of course, there is also the looming threat of administration and de-registration for unions that push back against this (Gillies-Palmer, 2024).

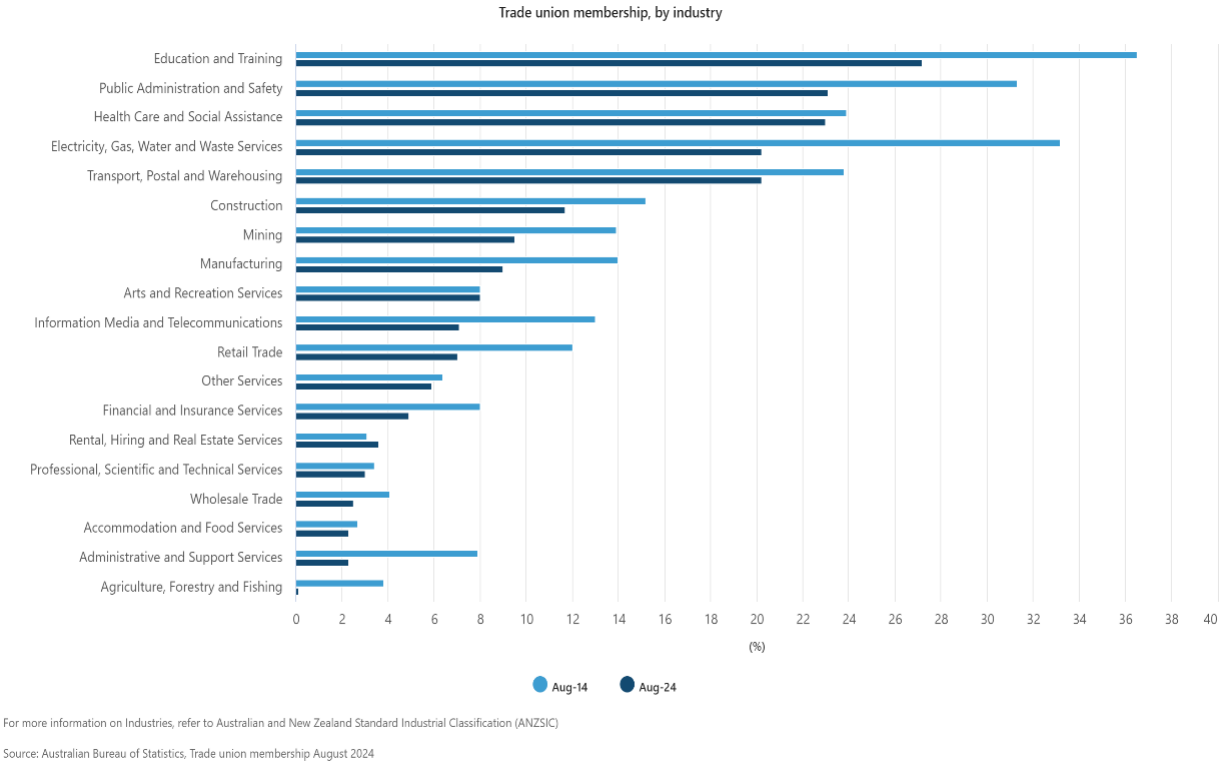

Figure 1.Union membership by industry (ABS, 2024)

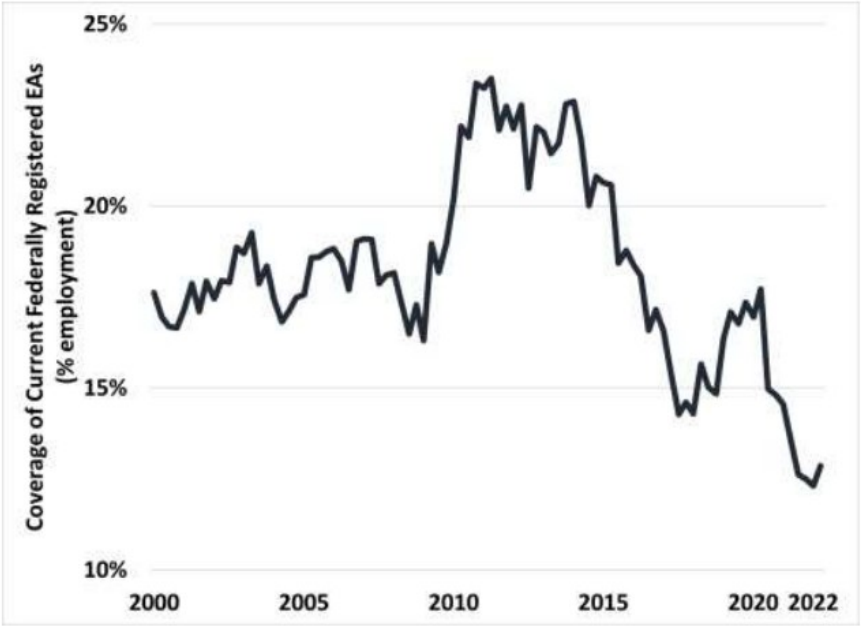

Figure 2. Federal Collective Bargaining Coverage, 2000-2022 (The Australia Institute, 2022)

Many young communists in the workforce are eager to engage in mass work with the goal of advancing the working class and developing the party into a vanguard force. Due to the historical role of unions as organisations of mass work as well as the relative convenience of being able to conduct union activism as part of a full-time working life, many communists find themselves wanting to make union work their primary avenue of mass work. This must be considered in the context of where the union movement currently sits: it is more common than not that young party members discover that their workplaces are not unionised, often without a single member. In this scenario there can be confusion about which union provides coverage for their workplace, uncertainty about how to get involved, and a lack of resources towards practical actions. Indeed, many experienced party members and unionists alike are embedded in industries with a rich history and culture of union militancy, which is positive in of itself but largely unhelpful for those operating in a low-density environment.

This article is intended to address this in a simple and straightforward manner. Mass work is defined by meeting people at their level and at their area of immediate interest and need (Chen, 2001); this work is no different. At one point in time all unions were illegal and labour struggles often ended in worker's deaths (Wilcox, n.d.). While the current environment is difficult, it is not insurmountable. It is intended that party members working in low density workplaces can refer to this article as a starting point to begin their mass work, with the goal of building their workplaces into union strongholds that are capable of engaging in struggle, winning, and ultimately building class consciousness. The target audience of this article is the rank-and-file member, though there may be points of interest for organisers and other union officials.

Before starting, there are some key pieces of knowledge one must obtain; bearing in mind the target audience, *no prior knowledge of Australia's industrial system is assumed*.

Union Coverage – Who Covers My Industry?

This basic question can be surprisingly complex to those just entering the workforce or who are newcomers to the union movement. For example, some professions have a historical union that is fairly well-established in addition to a second union, usually not registered, which competes for membership.

In some cases, these unions have their roots in anti-union campaigns with links to the right-wing Liberal Party, such as the Nurses' Professional Association of NSW, which competes with the established (and considerably more effective) NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. In other cases, an upstart union is a necessary development; the infamous Shop, Distributive and

Allied Employees Association is a right-wing union with its roots in the anti-communist Catholic worker's associations of the past (Langdon, 1956). It faces legitimate competition from the grassroots Retail and Fast Food Workers Union, a considerably more militant organisation that seeks to win genuine improvements for its members.

Further complications can be industries in which multiple unions exist, with a case such as Woolworths having up to five different unions providing coverage and largely being segregated by profession, or in professions where multiple established unions can represent a worker (e.g. pharmacists who are covered by both Professionals Australia and the Health Services Union).

The person who is eager to become active but has no baseline of knowledge will find this step to be critical, especially if the union in which they will operate is not immediately obvious. It is important that the union is consistent and that the activist supports them from day one; to be seen flip-flopping because of uncertainty over coverage is a quick way to lose the attention of their workforce.

Industrial Agreement and Commission

This is a more complicated topic for the young union activist. The following points are not exhaustive but provide a good precursor for those looking to begin organising their workplaces:

- The agreement that determines your grades, wages, penalty rates, etc. Is it a collective agreement? Is it a private sector award with a set of bare minimums? Is it a public sector award that has been collectively bargained for? Every unionist should know what their agreement is and have ready access to it, as they will need to learn it inside and out.
- Federal or state commission, which can be the arbitrator for industrial disputes and importantly operate under a different set of laws. For example, the federal Fair Work Commission (FWC) covers the private sector and some of the public, while the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) covers much of the public sector in NSW. This will impact the ease of certain actions (for example, unprotected industrial action faces considerably less harsh penalties with the IRC compared to the FWC).

Determining the Starting Point

At this point, the activist should be confident of their union, what agreement they are covered by, and what their commission body is. The next steps involve getting to understand the union and what the activist will have to work with as they begin. Some of the steps taken must be:

- Touch base with the union, particularly with an organiser. Introducing oneself as a member wanting to get involved is an important step to take as the activist will need to get to know their organiser, officials, and union structures.
- Find out, usually by asking the organiser, if your workplace has a delegate that you can speak to. Very often in the current climate the answer to this will be no, but if there is a delegate, it will be necessary to seek them out.
- It must be worked out if there are existing members and if so, what kind of density the activist is working with. With any luck there may be lots of members who are simply disorganised (a case more common in the public sector). Mapping of the workplace must be undertaken in a methodical way so that the activist has a strong idea of where they are and where they need to be.
- Determine if there are any existing union campaigns. In a low-density industry, these often take the form of the union lobbying the government, usually a Labor government, seeking out a small concession in something extremely specific that will not require collective action. Examples of these campaigns in recent times include campaigns around the "right to disconnect" and mandatory superannuation payments for mothers on maternity leave (Australian Council of Trade Unions, 2024).

It is good practice to be vocally supportive of these campaigns even when they are largely artificial, but they can never be adopted as an activist's primary focus. In the beginning it is simply important for the activist to be aware of them and to demonstrate to the union that they are a positive and supportive force; this good-faith engagement will help the activist win support down the track as they begin organising for power.

Conditions and Considerations

Before they begin organising, there are some key conditions for the activist to consider. This information must be gathered by intuition and paying close attention to the workplace; there is a lot of information present in a given environment if one knows where to look.

- Employment status of the activist: The activist should consider their own employment status. Are they a casual? Full-time but on probation? Past probation but not long in the job and therefore not as firmly entrenched as someone who has been around for years and years? The activist's employment status will influence their work and the kinds of risks they can take. If the activist happens to have many years on the job and is a well-liked and trusted colleague, much of their organising work will be easier; in contrast, being a casual who is new on the job increases the difficulty of any organising work.
- Employment status of everyone else: Are many of their colleagues long tenured? Is there a high turnover rate? Is it an industry with a large number of casuals? For the same reasons that they consider their own employment status, so too must the activist consider the people they would be organising. It is easier to organise workers who have stable, long-term employment than to organise temporary workers who are not planning to stick around.
- Union status in the workplace: Is the company explicitly anti-union, filled with casuals, and willing to sack anyone who dares mention it? Is the union a topic no one knows or cares about? Sometimes there are employees that had a background as a union member in a previous job that had a stronger union culture. Of course, the opposite may also be true, and one may find hostile employees who despise unions for one reason or another. Reading the room can help the activist understand what they are working with.
- Union politics, strengths, and weaknesses: Every union has its own structures, politics, strengths, and weaknesses. To be clear, if one goes in expecting their union to be perfect, they are going to be disappointed. But developing an understanding of where their union sits on certain issues will help the activist learn to navigate them to win support. Knowing if the union is Labor-affiliated and if so, which faction they are involved with, learning their existing structures, how their delegate's councils are elected and what powers they have, learning how they bring in officials, and even learning the personalities and biases of the leadership will all help the activist to understand where they are likely to be supported or blocked. It is also helpful to learn what the union does well, whether it is a style of campaigning or an organising model. Understanding these strengths and limitations will help the activist to undertake realistic campaigns.

Getting Started

By this point many activists hit a wall as these tasks can be accomplished fairly methodically early on; progress inevitably slows down considerably afterwards. This is the point where organising begins, and there are some things that the inexperienced activist must take to heart if they are to embark on this line of work.

As the great unionist Jane McAlevey said, there are no shortcuts (McAlevey, 2018). Organising is slow and difficult work; it is less of the brave hero rushing into battle, and more of a war of attrition that requires empathy and patience. The young communist must note that the general workforce runs across the full spectrum of political opinions: they will have to organise workers who are socially conservative and who might be racist, misogynistic, or transphobic. There may be coworkers who are anti-vaxxers and peddle conspiracy theories, those who inherited investment properties and complain about unruly tenants, those who are unapologetic Zionists, and those who rattle on about cryptocurrency. The working class is not a romantic monolith of proletarian nobility, but a layered and complex cornucopia of ideas of variable quality. It is a monumental ask for a young activist to guide these people towards a position of understanding their shared economic interests whatever their background may be, yet that is what is asked of communists.

If the activist has followed the basic steps around information gathering, they should be well-equipped to start organising their workplace. The following sections are general guidelines which, in

the spirit of a dialectical approach, must not be taken as a rigid set of rules, but rather a set of interconnected principles that must be adapted to ever-changing circumstances. Some of these guidelines are conditional and will be described as much.

Building Trust

It may be tempting to approach colleagues with a union flyer on day one in the hopes that they will start pouring in and be prepared for glorious industrial action at the first opportunity. Obviously, it is not so. In fact, this aggressive approach could damage the cause as it can paint the activist as someone with an agenda, a judgemental political pariah who does not represent the average worker. It is important that the union activist is a reflection of their coworkers insofar as representing their interests and earning their trust. Trust is paramount to any kind of industrial activity. In a struggle of any nature, collective actions are built on the foundation of trust in one another. As with organising in general, there is no shortcut to building trust in the workplace.

There are some general principles to keep in mind regarding trust. There should be absolutely no ambiguity about whose side the activist is on. The activist should be seen as trustworthy, being reliable and capable when needed but without being seen as obsessed with work for its own sake. The activist should strive to demonstrate to their colleagues that they can be spoken to about grievances and issues without any risk of being complained about or turned in. Being known and reasonably well-liked while not getting involved in petty affairs will aid the activist in building trust.

The final point is that to some extent, time is the most powerful tool for building trust. An activist who has years in the workplace already will have already built up a certain amount of trust, perhaps without even realising it. The new employee must earn it and accept that they will probably not unionise their workplace within six months, or a year, or even longer. It is unwise to attempt to build a union when one is still trying to build trust; trust is the tilled field on which the seeds of agitation will eventually be planted.

Discovering the Issue

The majority of working people are unlikely to spontaneously unionise for the sake of terrorising their bosses. Instead of relying on this from the outset, the activist will need to find issues that can become points of agitation. These issues will be different from job to job, site to site, industry to industry, and company to company. They may often seem small and relatively insignificant. It can be as simple as an unspoken expectation that workers not take their tea break or the full extent of their lunch break. It could be not receiving a roster with adequate notice. It could be the air-conditioning unit not functioning well and putting up with a mild degree of discomfort at work. There are thousands of potential issues, and they are generally not difficult to discover.

The union activist must develop an ear for picking up on issues. If one person mentions it, it likely is bothering others. It is the job of the activist to speak to people about these issues in an informal and sociable way, and the desired outcome is that the majority of workers in the workplace will become aware of the issue at hand and relatively united in how they feel about it. Spreading the issue around and breaking the taboo of speaking about it openly is an act of agitation and is in some ways the first step to organising.

The most important thing about the issue is that it must be something that is important to the workers; applying the “widely felt and deeply felt” criteria might be a good indicator of the quality of the issue (see appendix). While the activist can find an issue on their own to bring to others, there is a large amount of trust required if it is not already being noticed or felt, and it is significantly easier to organise people around an issue they already care about. No issue is too small, and the seeds of this agitation will grow into campaigns around conditions at work.

Solving the Issue

It is well and good to discover things bothering the workers, which are unfair and that make their working lives more difficult. But offering no solution or course of action is a poor way to inspire the workers to take action. It is important for the activist to understand that collective action is the key to everything. While not extremely likely, there are occasional small issues in which an individual approaching their boss may find that they get a positive outcome. This must be discouraged, as it stops the train of organising dead in its tracks. The activist should aim to bring all of the workers who are in agreement about the issue at hand together to work out a collective solution. This is often the point at which a union can be brought up, though the activist must use their best judgement and common sense. Prior to

bringing people together the activist must at least have a strong idea of how the issue may be solved and how to involve the union; this may involve discussion with the organiser and having a plan in place.

When the activist first mentions the union to their coworkers in a workplace with no members or culture of unionism, there will likely be push-back or confusion. Some may have preconceived ideas that unions are filled with thugs based on what they have seen in Australia's manufactured media. Regardless, the ice must be broken at some point, and if the activist is already reasonably trusted and proposing a solution to a problem people are genuinely feeling, it is likely that at least some positive interest will be generated. It is unlikely that everyone will join all at once, and it may start with just a handful of members, but it must start somewhere. If the activist is struggling to talk to their colleagues about issues and collective solutions, one tool that can aid the activist is the "anger, hope, action" model of conversation (see figure 3 and Appendix).

*Author's note: I have found that having a stack of paper sign-up forms is far more effective that having people sign up digitally. Speaking to a group is also much better than approaching people individually if it is at all possible.

Figure 3. The AHA (anger, hope, action) model for unionists

Wins breed wins and losses breed losses. Organising people around a small issue and solving it may not change the world, nor will it radically change their working conditions, but it will be felt and can build momentum. Many workers have never experienced having influence over their conditions before, and these steps are the crucial foundation in organising for power. The principles of member involvement will already be present: all members will be aware of the issue, in agreement about what should be changed about it, and generally agree on the process. This is important. If the issue had been solved by an individual going to management, or perhaps by an active union member seeking a service model approach from their officials, it would end there, with no power being built. By working as a collective in this way, the first steps have been taken to organising for power, building a path to bigger and better wins in the future.

*Author's note: This process can take a long time. Party members should not be discouraged if it takes months or even a couple of years to get to the point of gathering members to solve an issue. Foundations are everything in organising, and to successfully get to this point is a major achievement.

Collective Bargaining Agreements

In a low-density workplace there are realistically two kinds of agreements one will find: award minimums that have not been collectively bargained for, or collective agreements that have been bargained by a minority union. Neither is particularly inspirational. The activist will need to become familiar with the document that covers them, as the enforcement of it is a fertile ground for finding issues and resolutions that will matter to their colleagues.

If one were to ask why people unionise, in a general sense the answer would be to improve their wages and conditions. How is this achieved? The answer is generally through collective bargaining, a contract or agreement that covers a group of people who have bargained for it together through a union. Winning a collective agreement is arguably the primary drive for serious organising and the vehicle through which these changes are made. If the activist's goal is to address the most urgent issues right in front of them and their colleagues at work, they will often find low pay, poor career prospects, instability, and other such things that can be addressed in collective agreements. Because of this, the goal of the activist should be to organise for a strong agreement that their workplace feels a sense of ownership of, which addresses their most basic needs.

In Australia this process is not straightforward. In the public sector, collectively bargained awards are renegotiated automatically regardless of union density and often with turgid bureaucratic structures making it difficult for members' voices to be heard. In the private sector there are a number of scenarios. Some companies have existing enterprise agreements despite having a minority union, which faces similar challenges to the public. In fact, being trapped in a renegotiation cycle with low membership can be an even harder environment to organise in than one with no agreement, as it can appear that the union is pointless to many workers. It is also difficult to force a site or company with no existing enterprise agreement to agree to come to the table. While there is a legal process to facilitate this through bargaining orders, it ultimately comes down to the decision of a commissioner and is out of the hands of the union or its members. The majority of new agreements come about by the company willingly agreeing to bargain; the process of pressuring them to agree to it can be risky if it involves unprotected action, making this course of action one that requires careful planning. Recklessness and ultra-leftist actions from those with a hero complex are fast ways to destroy a movement.

Despite these challenges, there are new agreements that come into existence every year. Working towards collective agreements (or dramatically improving existing ones) is in many ways the most compelling goal to organise towards. The general process of union work is to build momentum, membership, and engagement through smaller wins on issues that matter to the workers, introduce the concept of collective bargaining, and set goals that can be achieved. This will require support from the union, which makes it important to have a positive and professional relationship with officials and organisers as much as possible.

Local Structures and Principles

By the time the activist is considering escalating from small issues to collective bargaining, they will ideally have a group of members working together informally. It is important that a local structure be built among the membership in preparation for campaigning and decision-making. Many unions have a model for this already in the form of branches, subbranches, workplace committees, or simply "locals". They can range in size and formality, with some having constitutional requirements, annual general meetings, and defined roles and others having no formalities at all.

In a disorganised site with no history or culture of unionism, it may be a bad idea to introduce a rigid structure with multiple elected roles and responsibilities. An informal local or committee that selects a steward or delegate will suffice at the start. The purpose of a structure is to have a precedent to meet and decide on campaigns; it is also a draw to fence sitters who might agree in principle with the union but be reluctant to make the first move themselves. In a large company there will ideally be a great deal of well-organised local structures, though the proliferation of service model unionism may prove to be a barrier in encouraging this practice outside one's own workplace. Regardless, forming these structures and getting results with them will be difficult for a union to ignore whatever their organising model may be, making this an important piece of work in preparation for struggle.

The final point of a structure is that its principles must be agreed upon at the start. It is generally a

good idea to agree that all campaigns must be decided on democratically and all decisions must be decided by a majority. It is also a good idea to try and win formal recognition from the union where possible, though this is not necessarily a requirement to have a successful local structure in a union workplace.

For those who happen to be in a workplace with an existing structure (as would be the case in many public sector workplaces), regular meetings will prove to be an important avenue of work in which issues can be addressed and fought. An activist in this position must fight the temptation not to engage with the existing structure even if it is compromised by management or service model members; our job is to build unity, not dissent. We trust our ideas and our organising model, and we can overcome these challenges on sheer merit in the vast majority of cases.

Organising Models and the Concept of a Union

The phrase “service model” has been referred to, as well as “organising for power” which falls under what is commonly known as the “organising model” of unionism. These phrases might be new to the activist and are worth a brief explanation.

Service model unionism is based on an individualist approach in which people sign up to the union expecting a service in return for their dues. There are many reasons why a union may promote a service model. Some unions fell towards it in a desperate attempt to win members as they began dramatically shrinking in the 90s. Some unions had a non-militant, anti-organising approach built into their politics. The service model has failed to grow membership, win strong collective agreements, and build meaningful power for the unions that employ it. Jane McAlevey refers to the “advocacy” model of unionism and how the quality of their contracts deteriorates over time as members become less engaged and active (McAlevey, 2018). Whether deliberately or not, the service model is designed with a specific concept of a union in mind, one in which unions are minority organisations whose members are not decision-makers, but receivers of a product. In addition to not winning good outcomes, this model also has a low ceiling on how many it can service due to resourcing, creating a feedback loop whereby servicing the small number of remaining members prevents the union from growing beyond a certain level as officials are constantly at capacity, drowning in the demands of individuals.

This diagram, taken from Jane McAlevey’s *No Short-cuts*, describes the “new labor” approach of treating members as secondary in union negotiations, one equal part of many levers (McAlevey, 2018). There is overlap in this model with service model unionism, one which favours lobbying and corporate campaigning over organising for power.

Figure 4. A diagram representing advocacy unionism and corporate-style campaigning, a model that treats members as simply one of many actors (McAlevey, 2018).

An organising model, by contrast, requires activity by its members. In this model, members are primary decision-makers and actions are designed to be collective rather than individual. An organised group of workers is one in which all are aware of what they are fighting for and willing to act together to achieve it; the union officials and organisers are simply there to facilitate this. This model is reflective of the roots of unionism and form the basis of high-density workplaces. It builds union culture and wins stronger agreements and outcomes. The organising model requires that unions be mass organisations designed to have as many members as possible, with democratic structures built in at each step.

The complexity of unionism is that these lines can be blurred. There are unions that strive for high activity and mass membership while placing firm guardrails on the ability of the members to make decisions. There are unions with different divisions operating with completely different models. Individual organisers might fall into one category or another and the union may not strongly endorse one.

It is not a matter of opinion. Data around union membership and the quality of wages and conditions won is significantly higher when the operating model is an organising one (McAlevey, 2018). Communists should strive to build an organised workforce, with the concept of the union as a mass organisation with direct involvement from the members.

Leadership in the Workplace

It is well and good to suggest that communists should strive to be recognised as leaders in the struggle for better wages and conditions. And indeed we should. But in day-to-day organising, especially in the early stages, the activist must realise they are unlikely to be instantly recognised as a leader. To be a natural leader is a rare quality, and many who appear charismatic and win recognition without substantial time in struggle are simply egoists and charlatans with an ulterior motive or agenda.

The majority of the time, a young activist will not be a leader from the outset. Our position as the vanguard of the working class is earned, not an entitlement based on having the right opinion on a number of issues. So how does this affect organising work? Recognition of the fact that one may not be seen as a leader by others makes way for the fact that there may be others in the workplace who are. The concept of the organic workplace leader is the idea that there are often ordinary workers who, whether through experience, disposition, trust, or competence, are naturally seen by the majority of the workforce as a de facto leader, separate from management and in amongst the regular workers (McAlevey, 2018). Recognising these organic workplace leaders is a key step to organising. Many are skeptical of change and may not endorse a unionisation effort on day one, and as their endorsement carries some weight, they may not want to risk their status or reputation. The activist must learn to recognise genuine workplace leaders and seek to win their support of the union. There is an effect that follows where many people who look up to these workplace leaders will often follow suit, and building power becomes easier.

This task is easier said than done. The experienced unionists in the rank and file are also likely to have become organic workplace leaders themselves with time, but for the sake of the new activist who is battling their own ego, this step may make or break their efforts.

Conclusion

Organising in the workplace is one of the primary avenues of mass work for the average member of the communist party. Our party has a rich history of delegates, rank and file activists, and success at winning improvements to the lives of working Australians. Engaging in this work is a noble albeit difficult task, and there are aspects of the current climate that make the work a true uphill battle.

It is hoped that younger communists looking to become active in their unions may read this article and take first steps of their journey regardless of how little background knowledge they have. Party branches should be active places of discussion where the union activist can ask questions and receive advice from experienced communists. And over time, as the union movement is rebuilt into a militant and empowered force, communists at its helm will be recognised as the vanguard that has led the working class to a higher point of development.

All work must start somewhere.

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Appendix

Widely Felt, Deeply Felt – A standard criteria for identifying an issue worth organising around. In short, an issue is most effective if it is experienced by the majority (widely felt) and if it is impactful enough to inspire people to action (deeply felt). While aspirational, the author would like to emphasise that not all issues worth organising around appear so obviously, and it can be surprising what resonates with people in a given workplace.

Anger, Hope, Action – A model for organising and campaigning that is tried and true, with a long history in the union movement. It can be used at the conversational level and is common in workshops and training events for young organisers and shop stewards. The basic idea of the model is that open-ended questions can be used to let workers open up about the things that make them angry, whatever that may be (often a source of the aforementioned "issues"). They must then be given an opportunity to discuss how they would like things to be instead, an aspiration that can become something that generates hope. Finally, they must be brought around to a practical course of action that can lead to this place of hope. The action part must emphasise the role of the union and engagement of the collective.

This model is simple but powerful and should be practised by union activists who are struggling to break the ice in conversation. As a general rule of thumb, when having these conversations, it is good to listen more than speak, and a good rule of thumb is to listen at least 70% of the time and talk 30% of the time.

"The strike muscle is like any other muscle, you have to keep it in good shape or it will atrophy."Jerry Brown, former president of 1199NE

(McAlevey, 2018)

AMR Interview with Sally Mitchell, Part 3

The final part of Sally Mitchell's interview with the AMR describes the experience witnessing the amalgamations of unions and the narrowing of trade union organising to recruitment through the Organising Works program, as well as the rich cultural activity of the Semaphore Workers Club. The period was during the Prices and Income accord and the development of a concept of Unions being amalgamated to provide "a more authoritative" union structure to carry out the collaboration of unions with Government through what was called the Tripartite involvement of the delivery of wage restraint coupled with the increase in what was deemed the "social wage" i.e., increased health benefits and additional family supplements.

AMR:

What was the amalgamation process of merging the many small unions like? What do you think the effects and consequences of this process?

Sally M:

Yeah, amalgamations were upon us at that point in time with the change in nature, industrial relations, you know, as a result of the accord and the move towards the workplace bargaining. It was inevitable that we were going down that path and that it clearly was with the decline of manufacturing. So, amalgamations were being pushed. Bigger unions to survive with smaller resources and smaller memberships were the argument. Bigger unions, less democracy, less opportunities for positions, is what I see being the outcome.

I think amalgamations were not necessarily positive in the opportunities for people. I think it's declined the number of opportunities, and I think the number of number of people wanting the leadership roles doubled. So, you might have one secretary and two assistant secretary positions in the leadership of a union while the number of people wanting these positions has doubled. It's like a fight to the death in many cases, and in the Metal Workers (AMWU) it definitely became a fight to the death.

In terms of our organisation, the food preservers - we're a small union in the industry. We had a good membership, but we were, like all unions, facing negative impact on our membership. First years being secretary I negotiated half my members redundancies. That was the time Interest rates have gone to 17% it was that period of time in, in our economy. We were seeing factories closed left, right and centre and so you did need to go and find somewhere.

I do know that some other unions approached Tom, our national secretary, to have that discussion at that level to ask him about, you know, come and amalgamate with us. One of them put to him "what do you want, Tom?" you know, to make the amalgamation happen. Tom said, 'it's not about me.' We never touched that lot with a 10-foot bargepole, you know? He said 'we're not going with that union. It's not about us; it's about our members and what's our members' best interest.

The confectionaries union was like us, a small union, here in South Australia they were a right-wing union, but they were in Victoria on the left. We ended up amalgamating with them, and that was a good small logical amalgamation. Here it was problematic because they took the membership from that Union and put it into another Union. They gave me a shell with no assets and no members. We did have members, but they would not tell me where they were. I got thrown out of factories and stuff like that through that period of time. We ended up with those workers and they spoiled my taste with cheap chocolate because I got to eat the good stuff with my members.

From there it was again, in the face of economic times, the need to look at the next amalgamation point. Our choices were the AWU, the Storeman and Packers as they were called at the time at the time, or United Voice. We were manufacturing as far as I'm concerned and so we went to the Metal Workers. It's a political decision too. The Metal Workers were, in my mind, out of all of those choices, the best option for us. Yeah. And nationally, that was where we went, and I still believe that a good option for us; for the members. It was always about what was in the best interest of the members.

AMR:

You mentioned before having to negotiate redundancies and before this interview explained it to us in terms of the context of the dismantling of the industrial system in Australia?

Sally M:

When I was with the Miscellaneous Workers Union, so I had gone around with an official for a period of starting there. My first job I went to by myself was an industrial laundry. We visited this factory, so I'd been there before. I went out there and I get there and I'm getting told that the factory is shutting that day. I looked at him and said, 'you know I'm new, I need to make a phone call' (Laughter). I had no idea what to do, so I rang back to the office and a senior official came out, you know? So that was my first hitting kind of 'Shit, now what do I do!?' 'How do you deal with this?' When I got into the Food Preservers Union; we've got all these little factories all over with those workers working these jobs making fruit juice and all those sorts of things. Next thing and it's 'high interest rate or that', the next thing we got factory closure, and factory closure after factory closure.

We had had a factory here that was the state government food factory before my time. They had gone into difficulties and had been bought out by a local company that was called 'Some Soft Foods'. Some Soft Foods was a great factory, good membership around the corner from the office and I spent a lot of there with them. People might recognise SPC (canned fruit). They did SPC before SPC was a sort of thing. One day I walked in, and they had the receivers in. What they had deliberately done, we didn't know until after the receivers were there, they had shifted all the assets of the company out of the company to another company, and they shifted all the workers off to a different company, technically on the books. We didn't know, none of us knew, and they had been deducting people's entitlements now for the Union dues, for their health benefits, whatever they had deducted from their wages and not sending it. It wasn't just the Union fees they withheld; they stole money from people. We had to work through this; It was 'How do you get money from something that had no money?' They'd left a shell and shut it down.

So that's where I started to learn about this stuff, I had to work through how we got our members entitlements. We had this group of largely migrant workers, women workers at that. There was a bank foreclosure; when a company went into receivership the bank had instigated the move for their money. And so, what are we going to do? it's coming up to Christmas time. So, we decide we're going to occupy the bank (laughs). We went through this process for these poor workers. Fortunately, I got a bit of money out of the receiver, and I was able to take that route and deliver cheques. That was my first experience with that.

But and then from that point on I began negotiating redundancies for people and trying to get whatever I could for them. I got angry and I just went. You know, I walk into redundancy negotiations with the attitude of 'you're taking away these jobs for the future; I'm going to make you pay as much as I can out of here, I'm going to penalise you with as much as I can'. The best time to negotiate it with the companies is when they need to do something. Yeah, they've got deadlines, they want to move their equipment out of the factory. I think that's the best time to negotiate because they can't get it out the door unless you let them. You can decide to occupy the factory, and we had done that in history, this one we occupied the bank.

We had these poor migrant workers, I had this industrial Officer they were a pain in the ass. He came and he started interfering. We come back to the office, we talked about what would be our next action and we've carefully planning this stuff to put the pressure on to try and get the money out. This guy stands up in the office with these workers telling them that tomorrow we're going to occupy the bank, then the police are going to come and they're going to arrest us all, you know. I mean these migrant worker's husbands are in there with them hearing this talk about them all getting arrested. Shut up! We've not going to have anyone on picket line tomorrow if you keep this up. That was his lack of understanding of what he was doing. We knew we had to do this really carefully to hold these workers with us. To be able to get what they needed. They were prepared to fight, but don't scare them about it.

We planned it out, we're going do that, we're going to have chains around the doors to the bank. We're going say we're doing all this stuff and have banners and demonstrate we have great massive support. Every night we would get media, we're getting into the news, and they were with us and the police were with us. Everything we did was in conjunction to make sure we hit the right news bit and they were planning it with us. It was quite funny. We went who will be going there? Yeah, now we're going to sit in the bank and then we're going to refuse to leave. The Police would go 'were going to come in and take you out.' I told them 'That's OK, you're going to take me.' That's basically what we're doing. They

would be opposite ourselves, this picket line with ‘we're not letting anybody in the bank’ with chains on the doors. They said, ‘that’s alright we're going to fix this after’. They were supportive they were workers too; they understood it. And so yeah they the police and me the official would be the one they would be seen in the media being taken out. Not my members, not somebody's wife being arrested. And it was all for the media. It was all staged, it was all media staged. At the end of the day, I was able to get some money for those workers, not all of their entitlements, but some that was critical.

And so, every job I went on to negotiate redundancy for people at a time when redundancy would have ceilings and the amount people would get, or you know whatever I was getting 4 weeks per year of service ad infinitum and however many years you work there, you got it. I was getting a full payout of sick leave. I'd get full payout long service, or after seven years, three years, five years, whatever. I would just try and get any bit of money I could and put It into the workers hands. Very much from that perspective that these jobs will no longer be available for kids to the future, and I'm going make you regret every bit of that. It was a horrible time in that way. But it was also, I learned a hell of a lot through that process.

One of the things about that dispute that nearly blew the whole thing out of the water strategically was this industrial officer who I worked with who didn't, in my mind, understand what we were doing to some degree and got his own views about things. He decided one night without any discussion or consultation to ring the receiver at his home and implied threats. The next day I had the angriest receiver on the phone, basically could have blown everything up. Everything we've done would been destroyed and we get nothing because he was about ready to prosecute us for threatening. I had to talk him down. Him down and the Industrial Officer out the door. ‘Get away from this dispute. You're not touching it. Don't you say another word and how dare you do this! Cause it's not about you. It's about the members.’

AMR:

This clearly demonstrates what ultra-left ‘radicalism’ actually gets you.

Sally M:

Absolutely, yeah. Listen, and I've said it numerous times in the union movement with people who are, you know, they're good people. They're lefties. They're really excited. They're organisers, but they forget they're not ‘it’. It's not about them. Therefore, their actions overtake what the issue is and their personal behaviours detract from what the point is that you're trying to make is and damaging the issue. Whether it been the stuff I've been involved with or others they can become so self-centred in their behaviours that they have no regard for the impact or consideration with the impact of their behaviour either on the workers or on their union.

Sally M:

I spent a lot of time realising that things have changed, that organisers didn't know how to do a lot of that stuff and that the basics of how to organise on the job that we learn on the job and with good people around us had changed significantly. It wasn't that they weren't good people, but the job of organising had been narrowed down within the Union movement. I argue that ‘Organising Works’ has eroded and broken down the skill of organising. (Organising works was a new training scheme introduced by the ACTU).

AMR:

Could you tell us a bit more about ‘Organising Works’?

Sally M:

My experience of Organising Works was that at the very beginning of it. I had the opportunity to go and talk with groups of new people coming in through it. These were people that were engaged to recruit. They are recruiters. They get brought in keen and eager, they might have been just out of university, going to work with the unions. Incredibly exciting time for people. They put them through education on community organising using all those skills that people think they need and then they send them out there to the unions. Now the gaps in that were number one they taught them the theoretical approach to all but not the real politics of unions. The issues who has power and who decides things? Then secondly, they taught them to recruit, but they didn't teach them how to do anything else with that. If they taught them how to do anything else, then the union wouldn't let them do anything else. Those organisers hit lots of barriers.

I also say that the fundamental reason they were brought in was to recruit which was the hardest job ever, the hardest job in the union

movement to recruit new members. Arguing with the bosses is the easy bit. Getting the members in the first place is the hardest. This is coming in at a point in time in our working history were all the jobs that could be organised had been organised. The ones left were the hardest, hardest ones, and we've gotten brand new kids there to do it. ‘So, here's your toolkit. You go do it.’ Then putting the new organisers up is a union that would be maybe having some internal problems and was cautious about who was allowed to do what in terms of knowing things and having access to information or access to groups of members. I was with the foodies where we did an industry thing, and somebody tried to put out some bloke that I wouldn't let anywhere near my members because we couldn't politically trust him. We couldn’t trust him not try and do a job on us and so I just refused point blank. “If that’s going be it I'm out of here right now.” There's a political thing and that's what these young people collided with in many cases, the internal politics of the union. That can get interesting.

They can hit that frustration. I had one came into the metal workers, Tracy, I said ‘listen Tracy I got some factories here would you like to work with’, I just gave it to I said ‘do you do whatever you need to, there's no restrictions here, if you get them in, you get them in.’ After a while she came back and she said, ‘I don't know what I'm doing wrong.’ I said, ‘thank god, it's not just me’. Those factories I've gone to many times. You get a friendly reception, there's no sense the boss was undermining you; there's no sense of anti-union feeling, no sense they are being threatened if they join. They ring if they had a problem. I had some members just could not get the rest on the line. She did everything, everything new that she went off from the Organising Works training and couldn't get any of them on the line either. I don't know how you deal with that. I don't. But still, to this day I have always found that recruitment is the hardest bit of union organising.

It's easy to get a member of the Union when they got a problem, but the unions by that stage had adopted an attitude that said ‘Well, if you're just walking in the door now and you've got a problem we're going to charge you a year's fees.’ Please, we didn't do that. If we did that we wouldn’t have a member. I used to. I used that stuff a lot to educate people about unions, you know, because we're, I guess I had maybe more flexibility in that one. I'd often have at many times over the years done something for a non-member on the basis that it would show them what unions do; demonstrate it.

AMR:

You also mentioned the Semaphore Workers Club and how you have been involved in it, and that is a really fascinating story. Could you tell us about the Semaphore Workers Club and how it came to be?

Sally M:

I have the proud privilege on top of everything else to be President of the Semaphore Workers Club. The Semaphore Workers Club goes back in this state as a building, as a club dates back to the early 1900s, when originally it was a cruising yacht squadron. When that moved out of the premises because their view got blocked, you know that was an elite sort of establishment. That was Commodores and the Governor sitting there watching the regattas. It went then to be just the Semaphore Club and that was an upper-class sort of thing. It wasn't a worker’s club by any means. I believe it was where the bosses went and played like cards and billiards and things like that.

Around the late 70s, early 80s, you know, some comrades in the party, Benny Carslike and others become aware of the place, not sure who was the 1st through the door is always bragging rights on that one. The club membership had been declining. It was getting to the point of being not enough to run it. The very first time we went in there with no beers on tap or anything like that. It was a long-neck beer opened up around the bar. You know the place was really not being utilised. We joined so we just started to join the club. I actually became the first, another first, full female member of the club because the rules at that point of time only allowed associate membership to women and I challenged that and just said ‘oh, it's illegal to do that’. I’m glad they didn't take us down because there's been a couple of clubs that went down on challenging that under the EO laws. But I verbally said it and they caved, and I became a full member. In effect we over time gained control of the club politically and it became the some of the Workers Club and that's what it has been known as ever since, that and the ‘Commo’ club. Everybody has always known that it is, since it's in its you know format since that time early 80s, as the Commo Club.

When we started doing bands down there and things like that, opening up place more and trying to get more income, I was running the Sunday bar

sessions and that there. It became the commo club, and it's carried on being an entertainment venue for all those years. We're still only open a couple of days a week. We still run largely with a large portion of voluntary work though we pay the bar staff and the planners first before anybody else, probably cleaners first, then us. People coming back the next day for cleaning the novelty that wears off really quickly.

To be involved in the club is to respect the club and understand the politics, what the club and where we see ourselves as having a place within the Community. Not everybody walks in the door as a member of the party or may not even vote that way. I don't care, if they'll come and spend their money as we'll take it, you know, we'll educate them a bit along the way. You can always tell first comes to the club as their jaws will just drop when they walk in. They look at everything around the walls and we have trade union stuff, we have political stuff, and we have great murals, and then we have the bust of Lenin. Somebody asked who the black fellow was in the corner because it's painted black, very heavy it got stolen once for a number of years and then returned, you know some funny stuff like that.

Since that time within all of the communities around Adelaide, there were small community clubs, around in the suburbs and they're all closing up as trading hours and hotels went longer, people died off. They were in my mind the men sheds of their days where blokes went and congregate, play pool, darts and the rest of it but of home after the pubs are closed at 6:00 PM. That that whole lifestyle was the Workingmen's Club has declined in our society, and they are largely gone. There was a Queenstown Workers club. That was, I think, sold and the money was used to renovate the toilet block of the Workers Club. Then we became part of the Royal Park Doghouse club and same thing. It's a great little club rooms and community, serving a purpose for many, many years that declining now and there's still some original members of the club. That came under the umbrella of the Port Adelaide United Workers Clubs. It gives the club two premises to be able to have activities in and work with both the party and with other community groups, so it's a great way of propagating the party out there within community in that positive way. I've hosted wakes for people outside of our party and the broader left. They've come to us because of the venue, because they appreciate that. We're about the last party left in the left with any structure around it that can be utilised in a progressive way.

AMR:

What do you think is some of the work that the party could do to improve its work in the community?

Sally M:

I think it is being seen, actually being seen. One of the criticisms we've had down the workers club over time was that we're just those faceless old people behind the scenes calling the shots, they think that of the party. So, one of the things I've been saying to the newer people that we bring into the leadership group at the club and it's one of the things I knew to be involved with the club is to protect it for the party and to make sure that it doesn't get lost to us. We have an obligation to be part of our community. We are there every week talking to people. We're there now on the question of the referendum (Voice Referendum) and getting information out there. We always have party information. Then we have our parties' banners there.

Somebody questioned something one day, I said "listen we're not afraid of our politics. We have no shame in our politics. I go and we can at the moment point out that right next door is a major million-dollar development going down, and we're sitting here watching the sunset, drinking workers rates beer behind the bar listening to some of the best music in Adelaide, the reality is if it wasn't for the politics at this club that's what it would be. It would not be this. They understand that and they understand what that means to this Community. It's well respected in that regard. They don't all like us, but they respect us.

AMR:

How do you think being a member of the Communist Party has changed overtime in terms of the experience?

Sally M:

Not a lot. That was still very disciplined, we are the most disciplined party in my mind. No other organisation I've been in that works in the way we work, and I understand there can be issues in the way we work at time, that is what it means to be party member, working together in a disciplined way. Sometimes I still wonder how we engage broadly, if we can be dogmatic in our ideology, how do you be so dogmatic in your ideology and worry about where you're at, and work broadly.

Sometimes it can be quite a difficult thing to balance, you know, because you can go too far. You can end up a nice new situation where your broad left ACU (Association of Communist Unity an organisation formed after the split on the accord) situation where you end up expelled from the party because you've gone outside the framework.

I see no contradiction whatsoever in myself in what I do, you know. Although I do recognise the need to ensure that everything is being looked after. You can't do everything. You have to develop people. You have to have succession plans. You have to give people the opportunity to get experience and not tie them down too much. I think the party in the past has had the risk of bringing the excitement of new members in and then dampening it as quickly as we can in trying to teach them how to be a party member and the discipline of being a party member. So, when you're coming in all enthused, you might have come out one of the other groups were you were allowed to do whatever you like and then you hit the party. Like a brick wall. You can't just go off and do your own thing. That's what you learn in the party. That's our discipline. That's why we still are here and why we still have very clear direction on where we're going.

AMR:

What are some of the most important lessons from your experience as an activist and as a communist that you think should be imparted on future generations or lessons that we should learn for the future?

Sally M:

First I swear, learning to work collectively. You must learn to not take on more than you can deliver. The hardest thing of all for comrades to learn is to say 'no, I can't do that' when you know things need to be done. I think we're we've a party that has less members than it has had in past days yet we still in our mindset think we're that big. We can take on all those things that we've always done and if you're not careful, you burn people out. That's a lesson from my working life.

You have to at the same time bring through people. I'm looking at our young cadre in this branch and going wow, they're talented people, they're really good value. And I'm trying to do 2 things. One is to make sure they don't burn out and give them this what they need but equally let them do what they need to do, because the party, the party to the future, is what they make of it. Not what I make of it. It's what they make of it. I can tell them about the past. They're the ones going to tell me about the future. That's the way I look at it. We're going to have to be prepared to sit back a little bit more maybe than what we do.

I know the struggle continues, always just remind you, it's a lifelong struggle. Doesn't matter if we achieved a change in system tomorrow, it doesn't stop the struggle, to maintain it. This is not a short-term commitment; this is a life-long commitment.

Dimitrov's 100th Birth Anniversary

Jack McPhillips

Statement made by J. McPhillips, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party of Australia to the International Theoretical Conference for the Centenary Celebration of G. Dimitrov's birth, Sofia, 15 to 17 June, 1982 (slightly abridged).

In the name of the Socialist Party of Australia and on behalf of its Central Committee and Party membership I greet this conference, its participants and the organisations constituting it.

We pay our homage to Dimitrov not only for his anti-fascist stand but also, and mainly for his outstanding capacity as a redoubtable revolutionary, a proletarian internationalist, an adherent, advocate, and practitioner of the scientific theories elaborated by Marx, Engels, and Lenin and of the norms and organisational principles of a revolutionary party developed by them. We pay homage to Dimitrov as a devoted communist of world standing.

The homage on our part does not arise merely from memory of his work but from a realisation of the applicability of his writings and activities to the problems of the communist and workers' movement today, including that movement in Australia.

At a conference similar to this and held in the city of Sofia ten years ago, to mark the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the birth of Georgi Dimitrov the representative of the Communist Party of Ireland, James Stewart is recorded as saying:

"Dimitrov's contribution to the international struggle of the working class and its allies for democratic rights, self-determination, peace, and socialism neither began nor ended with the Reichstag Five Trial. A true product of the rich and courageous history of the Bulgarian Communist Party, his life's writings and actions spanned the fight for national liberation, for democratic rights, against fascism, to the laying of the foundations of the socialist state in Bulgaria.

"Georgi Dimitrov's profound impact and living contribution to the international communist movement is based on this experience and his creative application and development of Marxist-Leninist ideological principles in theory and in practice."

In What is probably his most widely known writing, and certainly the most widely known in Australia, his report to the Communist International 7th Congress in 1935, Comrade Dimitrov put fascism as the most immediate danger to the peace of the world and to the democratic freedoms and economic well-being of the peoples.

He described the inner essence of fascism and pointed to the fact that if its real nature was known, many who were misled by it would change their attitude.

He called for a wide dissemination of knowledge of the real nature of fascism and the development of a united front against fascism and war.

Today the world faces an ever-present and mounting danger of nuclear holocaust and also the danger of devastating wars by sophisticated, conventional (that is, non-nuclear) weapons.

The Socialist Party of Australia has accepted the proposition that the struggle to prevent such wars, the struggle for the strengthening and extension of detente – military and political – for disarmament and peace is the most important international task facing us and we have declared that task to be the centre of the work of our party.

Our experience in pursuing this task emphasises the need to expose the falsity of the "Soviet threat" and the real nature and purpose of imperialism. This latter factor is made the more difficult but the more urgent by reason of the close and formal alliance between Australia, as a middle-sized capitalist power, and US imperialism. Our success in this most urgent task is restricted by a widespread acceptance by the Australian people of the so-called "Soviet threat" and by an equally widespread failure to understand the real nature and purpose of imperialism.

Pointing to the use of anti-communism by the forces of reaction Dimitrov said:

"Anti-communism served as a smoke scree of Hitler's aggression, of the German imperialists' drive for world domination … and now the American imperialists and their official

representatives are also trying to use anti-communism as a smoke screen (*Georgi Dimitrov Speaking*, Sofia Press, p. 109).

That is the position of US imperialism and its allies including the current central government in Australia.

Just as Dimitrov saw the need to explain the real nature of fascism when calling for a united struggle against it as the main threat to peace, so today, experience shows the need to expose the real nature of imperialism for purposes of developing a broad united front against the threat of world war. Our experience shows that such a process requires exposure of the basis for the government's foreign policy.

The struggle for peace encompasses a wide area and extensive aims and validates, in today's circumstances, Dimitrov's claim that "The struggle for peace is a struggle for the victory of socialism throughout the world" (ibid., p. 96).

In the elaboration of concepts of the united front of various forces Dimitrov drew attention to a number of features.

He said: "the united front of the proletarian masses will not be achieved in the name of abstract aims and ideals which are not yet comprehensible to the broad masses, but on the basis of every day needs and interests of the working masses (ibid., p. I35).

"The establishment of unity of action in all sections of the working class, irrespective of the party or organisation to which they belong, is necessary even before the majority of the working class has been united in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the victory of the proletarian revolution (ibid., p. 137).

Those concepts and processes have application today in the circumstances in which truly communist forces function in Australia. The "Socialist Program" of the Socialist Party of Australia states on this matter:

"The corner-stone of correct revolutionary strategy requires the achievement of working class unity in action Without the united activity of millions of working people for their many demands and directed against state-monopoly capitalism there can be no real prospect of ending the power of monopoly, of winning working class power and creating the conditions for an Australian socialist society."

However, there are many in the communist and workers' movement who quote Dimitrov on the question of the united front as though he had advocated such a process as a substitute for, or alternative to, class struggle and as a form of collaboration with the class enemy.

Dispelling such notions Dimitrov said: "The united front and class collaboration far from being identical, are, on the contrary, two profoundly opposed, quite incompatible and mutually exclusive tactics … the united front of labour, far from running counter to the uncompromising class struggle between labour and capital, is actually one of the forms in which this struggle is conducted under specific circumstances" (ibid., p. 136).

There are also those in the working class movement who. allegedly pursuing the aim of a united front of working class forces and claiming to do this in accordance with Dimitrov's views, would proceed without the communist party or seek to minimise its role in such a united front.

On this, Dimitrov said: "Actually, only the Communist Party is the initiator, organiser, and driving force of the united front of the working class." "When fighting for the establishment of a united proletarian front, the communists must never lose sight of the revolutionary perspective; they must be able to link the united front tactics with the strategic task, namely the struggle for victory of the proletarian revolution for a dictatorship of proletariat."

"The reaching of an agreement with the social-democratic parties for a joint way of realising the united proletarian front, in no way means to postpone or abate our struggle against social democracy as an ideology and practice of collaboration with the bourgeoisie (ibid., pp. 138-9).

Dimitrov's concepts are echoed in the "Socialist Program" of the Socialist Party of Australia. That program asserts the over-riding importance and need for a party guided by Marxism-Leninism and says: "Reformism seeks to 'improve' and modify the excesses of capitalism while preserving the system intact. This approach denies the need for socialist change and ties the workers to capitalism and all its ills. It is therefore necessary to combat the ideology of reformism even while fighting side by side with Labor Party (social-democratic) workers in the common struggle."

Despite some increases in wage rates and decreases in working hours recently granted to sections of employed workers in Australia, the national economy is marked by evidence of decline due to a combination of internal and external factors arising from the crisis afflicting the economies of all capitalist countries. In those circumstances living standards are being attacked and main features of the economic situation include investment deferments and abandonments, international trade difficulties and adverse balance of payment problems. high and increasing interest rates, continuing price rises, plant closures, threats to levels of social services, and increasing unemployment.

These circumstances, which show signs of long-term duration, require from the working class and its trade unions the development of a planned counter-offensive aimed not only at short-term alleviating measures but at extensive, and in some respects, basic changes in economic policy as well.

The development and elaboration of the necessary program capable of encompassing the concepts of essential basic changes is essentially the task of a political party guided by the science of Marxism/Leninism and unhindered by concepts limited to reforms within the confines of capitalism. Successful implementation of such a program requires collaboration with, and support from, the trade unions.

Dimitrov's writings on the trade unions give much guidance on necessary approaches to this problem.

He said: "Organising the masses and raising their class consciousness, the trade unions must also wage a struggle in defence of the interests of these masses against capitalist exploitation. On the other hand the success of this struggle also depends on the class consciousness and education of the militants" (ibid., p. 64).

"We are resolutely opposed to any dependency of the trade unions on the bourgeoisie and shall not give up our principles point of view that it is inadmissible for the trade unions to adopt a neutral stand with regard to the class struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie."

Comrade Dimitrov elaborated views concerning the role of the bourgeois state and the need for it to be changed, concerning the need to build and maintain the basic role of a Marxist-Leninist party, including the question of proletarian internationalism and support for the mighty USSR.

We in Australia find all those views of Dimitrov acceptable to us as a Marxist-Leninist party and applicable to the struggle in Australia.

We are under no illusion about the difficulties in winning support amongst the mass of workers for these views and for policies based upon them.

Our difficulties stem from two main sources Firstly, a deeply ingrained reformist ideology amongst the mass of the workers in the trade union movement and the existence of an influential social-democratic party – the Australian Labor Party – which receives extensive support both from the class as a whole and from the organised trade union movement.

Our second difficulty is our own limited capacity. We are working strenuously to improve our own Marxist-Leninist capacity.

The Socialist Party of Australia bases its position on the same grounds as those in which Dimitrov based himself. We are confident in the correctness of those views, and of our ability to lift our own capacity as Marxist-Leninists.

That is the task we have set ourselves and we are certain that as the situation in our own country changes and more workers see the correctness of these views the Socialist Party of Australia, the Marxist-Leninist Party of Australia, will grow in strength and influence.

Marxism-Leninism: A Scientific Method and Guide for Understanding and Transforming the World

Cheng Enfu and Li Wei

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Centered on two new collections recently published in China, *Collected Works of Marx and Engels* and *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, this article elaborates on five key issues of theoretical concern: it emphasises the importance of being revolutionists and builders like Marx and Lenin, clarifies that the two collections are scientific tools of knowledge, and discusses important theoretical questions such as the union of workers and oppressed nations of the world, socialism as the abolition of classes and the elimination of exploitation, and the communist party as the leader and organiser of the proletariat.

In 2009 in China, two new compilations were published: *Collected Works of Marx and Engels* (10 volumes) and *Thematic Collection of Lenin* (5 volumes). This was a commendable achievement in the intellectual and cultural sphere. During the 1980s and 1990s, the International Communist Movement experienced severe setbacks, and the promotion of Marxism-Leninism encountered unprecedented resistance globally. Within such an international context, the Communist Party of China initiated and completed this significant project of editing and publishing Marxist-Leninist works, making a tangible effort to spread and develop Marxism-Leninism and to revive the International Communist Movement that had for a time fallen into a trough.

At the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1954, Mao Zedong solemnly announced in his opening speech to the people of China and the whole world: “The theoretical basis guiding our thoughts is Marxism-Leninism.”[1] This not only identified the relationship between Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought that guides the Communist Party of China (CPC), but also explained the relationship between Marxism-Leninism and the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics that directs contemporary socialist construction in China. Clarifying this relationship is crucial for our scientific understanding of Marxism-Leninism, both during the era of the New Democratic Revolution and in the period of contemporary socialist revolution and construction. Obviously, without knowing and understanding the theoretical foundation of the Party and the government's guiding thought, we cannot scientifically apply and develop them.

Marxist-Leninist works are very rich. Which articles and works should we read first in order to learn the stand, viewpoint and methodology of Marxism-Leninism? The editing and publishing of the *Collected Works of Marx and Engels* and the *Thematic Collection of Lenin* have provided additional texts for the Chinese people and scholars to embark on an in-depth study of Marxism-Leninism, and this can be considered another achievement that people in China have achieved in the study of Marxism-Leninism. One of the topics that Chinese Marxists continue to explore in studying Marxism-Leninism is to combine the history and experience of our predecessors in learning Marxism-Leninism, constantly study and understand Marxism-Leninism, and answer and solve the new problems that constantly arise in practice.

1. Being revolutionists and builders like Marx and Lenin

“For Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and needs, conscious of the conditions of its emancipation. Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity and a success such as few could rival… And, consequently, Marx was the best-hated and most calumniated man of his time. Governments, both absolutist and republican, deported him from their territories. Bourgeois, whether conservative or ultra-democratic, vied with one another in heaping slanders upon him. All this he brushed aside as though it were cobweb, ignoring it, answering only when extreme necessity compelled him. And he died beloved, revered and mourned by millions of revolutionary fellow-workers—from the mines of Siberia to

1 *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, Volume 6 (Beijing: People's Publishing House 1999), p. 350.

California, in all parts of Europe and America – and I make bold to say that though he may have had many opponents he had hardly one personal enemy."[2]

This speech of Engels at Marx's grave is, so to speak, a commentary not only on Marx, but also on the cause pursued by proletarian revolutionary fighters such as Lenin and others throughout their lives, and on their whole activity and thought. To learn and master Marxism-Leninism, one must be like them; and only those who are like Marx and Lenin can truly learn Marxism-Leninism.

Over the more than a century since the birth of Marxism-Leninism, Marxism-Leninism has been repeatedly pondered and debated by numerous countries and people from different social camps and declared outdated or dead by a multitude of fashionable thinkers from both inside and outside the Marxist camp. However, whenever Marxism-Leninism is declared outdated and dead, it is as much a signal of its vigorous existence and resilient struggle. Aren't these repeated attacks and denials of Marxism-Leninism from the anti-Marxist and non-Marxist camps just a strong manifestation of its unstoppable and vigorous vitality? Is it not a striking embodiment of its great influence and extremely profound relevance across time and space? The recurrent debates over Marxism-Leninism clearly show that there are those who need it and those who fear it. The two major classes and camps that coexist and oppose each other in this world – the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, socialism and capitalism – can be identified and distinguished by their attitude toward Marxism-Leninism.

Following the drastic changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Marxism-Leninism was widely condemned as "outdated" and "bankrupt" in the Western intellectual world. Yet, not long afterwards the 2008 financial crisis erupted in the United States, leading to a global economic crisis, which forced the Western intellectual world to pay attention to the classics of Marxism, especially Marx's work, *Capital*, and to acknowledge the theoretical and scientific foresight of Marx in providing practical enlightenment and guidance for analyzing the current crisis. Now, it is ironic to witness a dramatic shift in the Western world from repeatedly declaring that Marxism is outdated, to discussions about the "revival" of Marxism. Why is Marxism being revived in the West? The reason for this lies in the fact that Marxism is a scientific worldview and methodology with a tremendous cognitive and practical (transformative) function, a doctrine of revolution and construction. The oft-discussed timeless theme of Marxism-Leninism – "the liberation of humankind" – also makes its revival historically inevitable. In studying these two collections, we must neither overlook a series of historical events with far-reaching influence that have taken place since the birth of Marxism-Leninism, nor can we ignore the new changes and progress that have taken place in the world-historical process. Currently, we feel there is an urgent need to study these two collections that reflect the essence of Marxism-Leninism, to enhance our level and ability to apply Marxism-Leninism, and to observe deeply and analyze scientifically the ongoing Western financial and economic crisis and predict the new directions of the world.

Where to begin with the study of Marxism-Leninism? Marx remarks: "the theoretical conclusions of the Communists are in no way based on ideas or principles that have been invented, or discovered by this or that would-be universal reformer."[3] Engels publicly declared that Marxism "has no fixed ready-made proposals to submit"; "our views as to the points of difference between a future, non-capitalistic society and that of today, are strict conclusions from existing historical facts and developments, and of no value – theoretical or practical – unless presented in connection with these facts and developments."[4]

Marxism, the theoretical quintessence of proletarian revolution and socialist construction, is by no means the result of Marx and Engels sitting in a room and thinking hard, but the record and summary of their active revolutionary activities, the "theoretical expression of the proletarian movement" which they were engaged in. Its theoretical task is to examine in-depth the historical mission of the modern proletariat – the cause of the liberation of humankind and the world – its historical conditions as well as the nature of this cause itself, "to impart to the now oppressed proletarian class a full knowledge of the conditions and of the meaning of the

2 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 24. London: Lawrence & Wishart, pp. 468-469.

3 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 6. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 498.

4 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 24. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 325.

momentous act it is called upon to accomplish."[5] The same goes for Leninism.

"The Marxian doctrine, which directly serves to enlighten and organise the advanced class in modern society, indicates the tasks facing this class and demonstrates the inevitable replacement (by virtue of economic development) of the present system by a new order – no wonder that this doctrine has had to fight for every step forward in the course of its life."[6] What is obtained through battle can only truly be understood and applied in battle. We should understand and grasp how Marx and Lenin used to think and solve problems from the social activities they were engaged in. Any interpretations of the texts – whether purely on the basis of these texts or academically – will only move further and further away from Marxism-Leninism.

In the history of the Chinese people's study of Marxism-Leninism, and even today, it is not uncommon to hear a view that blames so-and-so for not being sufficiently prepared for the theory and doing something wrong. This view is unscientific as it fails to withstand questions such as what "theoretical preparation" entails, how to prepare, and to what extent preparation is considered adequate. Are there any cases in the history of revolutionary struggle where the theory is "well prepared"? Since the problem of insufficient theoretical preparation is raised, can we then ask the person who put forward this view to prepare theories needed in the future? Obviously, this will not work and runs against the common sense of life and history. Mao Zedong has criticized such a situation: "The correct and unwavering strategy of the Communist Party cannot be produced by a few individuals sitting in a room; it must arise from the process of mass struggle, meaning it can only be derived from practical experience."[7] This understanding scientifically answers where the revolutionary theory of Marxism comes from and how Marxist theory is "prepared." Theory arises from practice, and its significance lies in addressing the questions posed by practice. The close integration of theory and practice is the spring source and the driving force of development of the life of Marxism. Therefore, the founders of Marxism repeatedly observed that the theoretical principles of Communists are "actual relations springing from an existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes,"[8] and that "the practical application of the principles will depend, as the Manifesto itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing."[9]

We should not "treat it in a doctrinaire and dogmatic way, as something which has got to be learnt o# by heart but which will then supply all needs without more ado."[10] Marxism is not a dogma but a guide to action. The tasks of revolution and construction related to socialism and communism in China and the world have not all been accomplished; on the contrary, there is still a long way to go. There is no doubt that if we do not spend our lives like Marx and Lenin, "contribute, in one way or another, to the and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat", but detach ourselves from the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat as an alternative to capitalism, from the concrete practice of socialist revolution and construction in which the broad masses of the people are the mainstay, and study Marxism-Leninism only behind closed doors, then Marxism-Leninism will become a lifeless antique. Moreover, it could even lead to its opposite.

2. On scientific tools of knowledge

In order to rid themselves of countless forms of exploitation and oppression and escape all kinds of suffering, humanity has experienced millennia of hardships, and yet have never ceased the pursuit of an "ideal state" and an "ideal world." Even the modern bourgeois economists and the great utopian socialist critics, though deserving of recognition for all the study they have done while groping in the dark, have not been able to discover, have not found, an effective way to the ideal society. Prior to the emergence of Marxism, the best deal the proletariat could get was to be treated by bourgeois scholars and utopian socialist critics as a stratum in deepest sorrow and worthy of sympathy, as a crowd of paupers to

5 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 24. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 325.

6 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 1: On Marxism. Beijing: People's Press, p. 148.

7 Mao Zedong. 1991. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 1. Beijing: People's Press, p. 115.

8 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 6. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 498.

9 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 26. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 518.

10 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol 47. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 531-532.

whom some social philanthropists gave alms or who needed charity. Even the tenacious co-operativist reformers, like the English Owenites, who, in order to change the poor conditions of the workers caused by what they considered to be an irrational system of production, built new social pilot areas such as the Rational Society, the Harmony Hall, and the Rochdale Pioneers Cooperative etc., failed to find, at the end of the day, a quick way out of their misery for the proletariat. The reason for this was that they had neither fully expounded the essence of wage-slavery under the capitalist system, nor had they fully discovered the laws of capitalist development, and thus they were not able to discover the social forces that are capable to become creators of a new society.

Marxism has brought about a complete revolution in the realm of human thought. Marx and Engels inherited and developed materialism, extending its application from the knowledge of nature to the knowledge of human society, and pursued materialism to the end. The historical materialism they discovered and established is one of the greatest achievements in scientific thought, replacing chaos and arbitrariness that had previously reigned in views on history and politics with a strikingly integral and harmonious scientific theory.[11] Historical materialism reveals and clarifies the simple fact long obscured by a tangle of ideologies, that human beings must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means, and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch, form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art, and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved.[12] Using the method of historical materialism, Marx and Engels studied the entire history of humanity and its social life, discovered surplus-value hidden in commodity production, unveiled the secret of the exploitation of labour by capital, and thus discovered the laws of motion of modern capitalist production and the bourgeois society it produces, clarifying that “all history has been a history of class struggles, struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development; that this struggle, however, has now reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class (the proletariat) can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it (the bourgeoisie), without at the same time forever freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression and class struggles.”[13]

In 1872, the first year after the failure of the Paris Commune and in the face of a powerful capitalist world in which capital had defeated labour, Marx reprinted the first volume of *Capital*, publicly stating that *Capital* was a merciless criticism of capital, “represents a class whose vocation in history is the overthrow of the capitalist mode of production and the final abolition of all classes – the proletariat.”[14] Starting out from the standpoint of the proletariat, from a hidden fact of capitalist social life, Marx and Engels saw a trend of development that no force could stop, that is, “the proletariat is not only a suffering class; that it is, in fact, the disgraceful economic condition of the proletariat that drives it irresistibly forward and compels it to fight for its ultimate emancipation. And the fighting proletariat will help itself. The political movement of the working class will inevitably lead the workers to realise that their only salvation lies in socialism. On the other hand, socialism will become a force only when it becomes the aim of the political struggle of the working class.”[15] Therefore, when a group of social dreamers, even some geniuses who, standing outside the mass movement of workers, thought that it was only necessary to convince the rulers and the governing classes of the injustice of the contemporary social order, and it would then be easy to establish a truly human system of peace, harmony, freedom, democracy, fairness, justice and welfare on earth, and dreamt of a socialism without struggle, it was Marx and Engels who pointed out to the working class that the working class and its demands are a necessary outcome of the present economic system, which together with the bourgeoisie inevitably creates and organises the proletariat, that it is not the well-meaning efforts of noble-minded individuals, but the class struggle of the organised proletariat that will deliver humanity

11 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 1: On Marxism. Beijing: People’s Press, p. 68.

12 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 24. London: Lawrence & Wishart, pp. 467-468.

13 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 26. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 118.

14 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 35. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 16.

15 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 1: On Marxism. Beijing: People’s Press, p. 55.

from the evils which now oppress it, that socialism is not the invention of dreamers, but the final aim and necessary result of the development of the productive forces in modern society, that all recorded history hitherto has been a history of class struggle, of the succession of the rule and victory of certain social classes over others, that this will continue until the foundations of class struggle and of class domination – private property and anarchic social production – disappear, that the interests of the proletariat demand the destruction of these foundations, and therefore the conscious class struggle of the organised workers must be directed against them.[16] The abolition of private ownership and its associated concepts is what the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* emphasizes as the essential difference between the communist movement and other social movements.

Historical materialism and the theory of surplus-value are two epoch-making historical contributions made by Marx and Engels to humankind. The philosophical materialist worldview of Marxism has freed the proletariat from the spiritual slavery of the deceived bourgeoisie, while the economic theory of Marxism has explained the true position of the proletariat in the general system of capitalism,[17] thus "taught the working class to know itself and be conscious of itself, and substituted science for dreams."[18]

Marxism-Leninism is the theoretical foundation of all guiding thoughts of the Chinese people and the CPC. the complete materialist philosophical worldview constituted by dialectical materialism and historical materialism is the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism. Mastering this theoretical foundation is crucial and indispensable for professing Marxism-Leninism.

In the 1960s, Mao Zedong made a comment on an academic material compiled by the Publicit Department of the CPC: "Our work cannot be successful if we do not care about philosophy."[19] This is the first time in the history of Marxist thought that concern for philosophy, the improvement of philosophical thinking and analytical abilities, are associated with the success or failure of the Communist cause. When Mao Zedong made this assertion and announced it to the entire Party, he was not making an overstatement, but drew a lesson from the history of the international communist movement and the Chinese Revolution.

The Second International socialist movement, which developed from the 1880s, reached its climax in the 1890s and met bankruptcy by the early 20th century. This historical outcome began with the leaders of the Second International, led by the German Social-Democratic Party, altering and betraying the philosophical materialist worldview of Marxism. After Engels' death, bourgeois thinkers launched a broad attack on Marxist philosophy. At that time, bourgeois professors represented by Barthes and Simmel openly opposed the materialist conception of history. They belittled and distorted the Marxist view of historical materialism on a series of questions concerning the interrelation of social consciousness determined by social being, the laws (regularity) of society, the role of the masses and of the individual in history, the nature and interaction of various forms of social consciousness (art, religion), the relative independence of the development of thought, etc.. The arguments with which opponents confronted Marxist views received support from the revisionists of the Second International. They completely accepted these enemies' idealistic worldviews, vulgar theory of evolution and the way of "criticising" historical materialism. Revisionists had tied themselves to the chariot of idealism in an attempt to "reconcile" any kind of idealist doctrine with Marxism. A group of Second International theorists, represented by Bernstein, called for returning to Kant, proclaiming that Marxism should be reconciled with Kantianism and "social Darwinism," and merged with Neo-Kantianism and Machism.

Lenin had a fierce debate with the second international theorists, exposing and criticizing them mercilessly: "In the sphere of philosophy revisionism followed in the wake of bourgeois professorial 'science'."[20] The philosophical front is one of the battlefields where the Bolsheviks led by

16 Ibid., p. 52.

17 Ibid., p. 71

18 Ibid., p. 53.

19 Mao Zedong. 1996. *Manuscripts of Mao Zedong Since the Founding of the People's Republic*. Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, p.148.

20 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 1: On Marxism. Beijing: People's Press, p. 150

Lenin fought fiercely against the Second International opportunists. It is in this struggle to criticize bourgeois idealist philosophy and defend Marxist materialist philosophy that Lenin wrote several philosophical works, such as "Marxism and Revisionism" and *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*, which excised bourgeois idealist philosophy from and defended the theoretical foundation of the Marxist movement in Russia. By contrast, "the revisionists' attacks against the theory of Marxism often met with no serious resistance within the Second International. Revolutionary Marxists such as Paul Lafargue, Wilhelm Liebknecht and Franz Mehring underestimated the danger from the revisionist trend, and especially Bernstein's struggle against Marxist materialism. Paul Lafargue was inclined to regard Bernstein's 'criticism' of Marxism as a result of his 'intellectual overstrain'. Wilhelm Liebknecht spoke of Bernsteinianism as an intellectual trend, which should not be taken into account. In Franz Mehring's opinion, revisionism was not engendered by the social and historical conditions of the development of the working-class movement. 'Revisionism has never been more than a mood in Germany,' he wrote."[21] With such a philosophical vision and ideological level, how could the revolutionary Marxists within the Second International not lose the battle with revisionist thinking? The bankruptcy of the Second International is a typical case of Mao Zedong's saying that "without concern for philosophy, our work cannot succeed." The past practices and historical experiences of the sharp philosophical struggle between Lenin and Second International revisionism are what we Chinese Marxists should think over and draw lessons from when studying Marxism-Leninism.

The Chinese Communists represented by Mao Zedong have learned and inherited the fighting style and ideological legacy of Leninism to defend the Marxist theoretical basis and have always regarded instilling and popularizing the Marxist worldview within the CPC as an important aspect of Party building that should not be overlooked. As early as the pioneering period of the revolutionary war in the early 1930s, Mao Zedong wrote the article called "Oppose Book Worship" to prevent dogmatism from encroaching on the construction of revolutionary base areas. He pointed out that "we must wipe out idealism and guard against all opportunist and putschist errors before we can succeed in winning over the masses and defeating the enemy. The only way to wipe out idealism is to make the effort and investigate the actual situation", and uttered the slogan "No investigation, no right to speak."[22] On the occasion of the full-scale outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression, Mao Zedong carefully wrote the famous treatises *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*, which laid the foundation of philosophical theory for the ideological transformation of the whole party and the formulation of new strategies and tactics.

Attaching importance to the inquiry of Marxist methods is a common feature of Lenin and Mao Zedong. Lenin emphasized: "Marxists unreservedly borrow from Marx's theory only its in valuable methods, without which an elucidation of social relations is impossible."[23] In the years of Mao Zedong's hard struggle to lead the revolution and construction of the CPC, he paid special attention to the innovation and construction of the CPC's methods of thought and work. He personally formulated and discussed the adoption of the first "Decision of the Central Committee of the CPC on Working Methods." He wrote a series of methodological works on politics, economy, military affairs and society, such as "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party," "How to Differentiate Classes in the Rural Areas," "Be Concerned with the Well-being of the Masses, Pay Attention to Methods of Work," "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership," "Methods of Work of Party Committees" and "Sixty Points on Working Methods," etc.. Mao Zedong knew that method was not a small matter, especially in philosophy, because method is the soul of any philosophical system and has decisive significance in every serious system.[24]

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong promoted the study of Marxist philosophy to a more important position in the context of socialist construction and development. In 1955, when socialist revolution and construction was promoted in an all-round way, Mao Zedong clearly raised the issue of establishing a common language among the

21 Chagin, B. A.. 1976. *Selected Philosophical Works of Georgi Plekhanov*, Vol. 2. Moscow: Progress Publishers, p. 10.

22 Mao Zedong. 1991. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 1. Beijing: People's Press, pp. 112 and 109.

23 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 1: On Marxism. Beijing: People's Press, p. 300

24 Mao Zedong. 1991. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 5. Beijing: People's Press, p.160.

whole Party and the whole nation at the National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and clearly pointed out: “I recommend that you comrades read philosophy. Quite a few people are not interested in philosophy and have not cultivated the habit of reading it. They can begin by reading pamphlets or short articles, and after their interest is thus awakened, tackle books running to a length of 70,000 and 80,000, and then even several hundred thousand words. Marxism consists of several branches of learning: Marxist philosophy, Marxist political economy, and Marxist Socialism, that is, the theory of class struggle, but the foundation is Marxist philosophy. If this is not grasped, we will not have a common language or any common method, and we may keep on arguing back and forth without making things any clearer. Once dialectical materialism is grasped, a lot of trouble will be saved and many mistakes avoided.” Mao Zedong called on the whole Party “to draw up a plan for the formation of such a corps with several million people taking up the study of dialectical materialism and historical materialism, the theoretical basis of Marxism, and combating all shades of idealism and mechanical materialism. At present there are many cadres doing theoretical work, but there is still no corps of theoretical workers, much less a powerful one. Without such a corps, the cause of the entire Party, the socialist industrialization and socialis transformation of our country, the modernization of our national defence and our research in atomic energy cannot move along or succeed.”[25]

Philosophy is the cornerstone of the formation and development of national thought and the direct embodiment of a nation’s ability to think theoretically. The history of human thought shows that philosophy is the nourishment and impetus that transforms people from bystanders to actors; a nation without advanced philosophy is a nation without a future. On the basis of his mastery and application of the method of thought of Marxist dialectical and historical materialism, Lenin went on to open up the sphere of their scientific application and thus created Leninism, which led to the victory of the Great October Revolution and the opening of a new era in the development of human history. The history of China being reduced to a semi-colony is also the history of the decline of Chinese philosophy and ability. China was a nation rich in philosophy, boasting a proud and splendid heritage. But by the late 19th century and early 20th century, China was already deteriorating to a situation where, as the saying goes, “it is difficult to help the Tang state with one hand’’ and “tears abound in front of the before the lamp of battle drums and horns.”[26] The poverty of the country and the peril of the nation forced China’s intellectual community to shout out “Down with *Kongjiadian* (Speculative Confucianism)” and angrily dug their own “ancestral graves”! At that time, Chinese philosophy, represented by the veneration of Confucius and the advocacy of old rites, was no longer a rival to Western capitalism. It not only failed to lead the nation forward but also formed a “cultural reactionary alliance” with imperialism, rejecting new thoughts and new cultures. World history has repeatedly shown that in the era of imperialist expansion and domination, the rise and fall of philosophy and the rise and fall of the nation can be said to be intertwined. The experience of Leninism in Soviet Russia is also the history of the rise and fall of the Soviet Union. The tragic realities of Yugoslavia and other countries are invariably footnotes to the history of glory and shame of philosophy.

The history of the development and theory of Marxism reveals such a phenomenon in the construction and innovation of theoretical thought: “Without dialectics, without the mind of a philosopher, it is impossible for a writer to produce a good work of economics. Marx was able to write *Capital* and Lenin was able to write *Imperialism* because they were both philosophers, equipped with the mind of a philosopher and the weapon of dialectics.”[27] Innovation in methodology is the hallmark of the emergence and development of a philosophical idea or system. The complete philosophical materialist worldview of Marxism is a great tool of knowledge. Marx gave this great tool to mankind, especially to the working class, showing them how to escape the intellectual bondage from which all oppressed classes have suffered to date. Marxism-Leninism is a great tool of knowledge, a telescope and microscope for the proletariat to observe and change the world.

25 Mao Zedong. 1999. *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 6. Beijing: People’s Press, p. 396.

26 Yan Suicheng (Qing Dynasty): *Sanchuigang.* 1996. in *Manuscripts of Mao Zedong Since the Founding of the People’s Republic*, Vol. 10. Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, p. 225.

27 Mao Zedong. 1999. *Collected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 8. Beijing: People’s Press, p. 140.

3. On uniting the workers and oppressed nations of the world

Those who have carefully read the *Communist Manifesto* will never forget its last sentence – "Working men of all countries, unite!" This call was issued in 1848 by Marx, Engels, and their comrades of the Communist League proclaimed these words to the world, on the eve of the first Paris revolution in which the proletariat came out with demands of its own.[28] Sixteen years later, Marx led the International Working Men's Association, and so the First International was founded in London. Marx personally drafted the "Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association." The last sentence of this declaration was still the call he first issued in the Communist Manifesto: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!". Since then, from Marx and Engels, to Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, all proletarian revolutionaries who firmly believe in Marxism would in their published works have the call "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" solemnly printed on the first page of their published works. This long-standing practice has become a tradition of Marxist revolutionaries and a public declaration of their identity and beliefs. This slogan, one of the quintessences of Marxism, clearly displays the nature of Marxism and its uncompromising revolutionary character.

To thoroughly change their social status of being exploited, oppressed, and enslaved by capital, the proletariat has no choice but to unite and fight against capitalism together. The proletariat owes this realization to Marx and Engels and Marxism.

Entering the 20th century, European liberal capitalism developed into monopoly capitalism, further resorting to armed force to compete for world domination. Lenin, using the telescope and microscope of Marxism, re-examined and deeply analyzed the world and various countries greatly divided by the struggle for domination by monopoly capitalism, thereby discovering that the uneven economic and political development among countries had become a general status quo of capitalism and the absolute law of development, and confirming the world had entered the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution. He put forward the assertion that "socialism may first triumph in a few or even in a single capitalist country," which broke through the many revisionist barriers of the Second International.[29]

We will not discuss here the many significant aspects of the October Revolution, which divided an entire era of the history of human development. As far as the study of Marxism–Leninism is concerned, one of the most important and successful experiences is that Lenin, while adhering to Marx's slogan and program – "Proletarians of all countries unite!", further enriched and developed them into 'Proletarians and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!" This great programmatic slogan is one of the most important and distinctive features of Leninism, and it is also one of the most important and distinctive features of the era of proletarian socialist revolution initiated by the October Revolution.

Chinese people and Chinese Communists have always felt intimate with and committed to the slogan, "Proletarians and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!" It was Lenin's call and the mobilization of the East that shone the light of the October Revolution on China, which had been long humiliated by imperialist powers, enlightened the thinkers among the Chinese people, empowered them with dignity and courage, and enabled them to re-plan the future of the country. The Communist Party of China (CPC) is a direct outcome of Lenin's great slogan that shocked the contemporary world.

From "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" to "Proletarians and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!," the two slogans respectively represent different revolutionary eras and show that as the scope and power of revolution expanded, so also did the content and theme of revolution.

In 1848, the year when Marx and Engels called for "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" was the era when the European bourgeois revolution was moving towards its later stages. Through the Communist League, Marx and Engels issued this call with the dual purpose of uniting and organizing the scattered proletariat across Europe, and more importantly, liberating the organized proletariat from the long-term leadership and ideological influence of the bourgeois revolutionary movement. This was to make the proletariat stand as a political force independent of the bourgeoisie movement, as

28 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 27. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 60.

29 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 4: On Socialism. Beijing: People's Press, p. 4.

well as to unite with those of the bourgeoisie capable of revolution to jointly carry out the anti-feudal bourgeois revolution to its end. Only in this way could the proletariat enjoy the fruits of the bourgeois revolution for which they had fought and bled, and on the day of this revolution's success, immediately develop the bourgeois revolution into a proletarian socialist revolution, and thereby achieve their own complete emancipation. Obviously, this was a very arduous task in an era when the proletarian revolution had just begun and was still mingled with the bourgeois revolutionary movement. The slogan “Proletarians of all countries, unite!” directly reflects the scope of the 19th-century proletarian revolutionary movement in Europe and the successful strategies and tactics formulated by Marx and Engels for this purpose. On one hand, Marx and Engels actively participated in the revolutionary movement on the European continent, and on the other, they had to devote more energy to researching, formulating, and establishing the ideological system and theoretical program of the proletarian revolution, so as to enlighten, educate, and organise the young proletariat. This latter aspect was urgently needed by the immaturity of the proletariat and its revolutionary movement in that era. The research and writing of Capital profoundly demonstrate that history determined the task they could accomplish with their limited lives was to lay down the foundation of thoughts, theories and organization for the later proletarian revolutionary movement.

Compared to the 19th century, the era in which Lenin lived saw earth-shattering changes for both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. By the early 20th century, European liberal capitalism had developed into monopoly capitalism, completely losing its early anti-feudal revolutionary nature and becoming vicious imperialism. The European proletarian movement, having been forged through decades of the First and Second Internationals, had formed organized revolutionary parties in various countries. The maturity and flexibility of its ideological program and the rigor and strength of their organizational structures were first demonstrated in the Bolshevik section of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, led by Lenin. Shortly after the success of the February bourgeois revolution in Russia in 1917, Lenin immediately led the Bolsheviks to “shed the 'familiar' and 'beloved' dirty shirt” in ideology, determined to change the party’s name from the Social-Democratic Party to the Communist Party,[30] thereby starting afresh and completely breaking with the social democracy of the Second International. At the same time, seizing the opportunity of the mutual slaughter and mutual harm of the imperialist powers in World War I, the Communist Party turned the international war into a domestic revolution, successfully transitioning the February Bourgeois Revolution into the October Socialist Revolution of the proletariat. Lenin, adhering to and applying Marx's theory of continuous revolution, established the Communist International and formed the broadest revolutionary united front, tirelessly opening up the battlefield for proletarian revolution worldwide, expanding the achievements of the October Revolution, and organizing the revolution's spread to colonial and semi-colonial countries, and thus defending and expanding the direct outcome of the October Revolution – the dictatorship of the Soviet proletariat. Lenin lived up to the title of revolutionary master, who was able to maximize the development of the revolution and expand its achievements.

Through the October Revolution, Lenin led Soviet Russia and the Communist International, based on the slogan “Proletarians of all countries, unite!”, to issue and mobilize the call for “Proletarians and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!”, which immensely inspired and mobilized the courage and strength of the oppressed nations and peoples of the world to fight for their own liberation. This slogan, deeply marked by its era, eloquently and brilliantly embodies the strategies and tactics of the proletarian revolution culminating in Leninism. The brilliance of this programmatic slogan lies in its firm grasp of the most important and basic economic facts and characteristics of the era of monopoly capitalism and imperialism: “The happiness of a few special nations' exploiters is built on the enslavement of the millions of working people in Asia, all colonies, and smaller countries"[31]; "The world has now been divided into two parts, one being the numerous oppressed nations, the other being a few nations possessing vast wealth and military power.”[32] It is this fundamental fact and the contrast it reveals between class forces, distinct from previous era, that has determined the strategies and tactics the proletarian revolution in each country should adopt, and from this specific fact formulate

30 Lenin. 1995. *Selected Works of Lenin*, Vol. 3. Beijing: People’s Press, p. 68

concrete and viable revolutionary policies. Under Lenin's leadership and inspiration, the Communist International and communist parties of various countries adjusted their policies on supporting the bourgeois democratic movements of backward countries, first conceptually and nominally changing the "bourgeois democratic" movement to a national revolutionary movement.[33] This redefinition of the bourgeois national revolutionary movement, especially in colonial and semi-colonial countries, holds immense practical and theoretical significance.

The slogan "Proletarians and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!" is one of the quintessential features of Leninism, containing Leninism's significant development of Marx's theory of proletarian revolution, especially in relation to the peasantry. First, in practice it is manifested as directly influencing, mobilizing, and launching the world-wide national liberation movement, which itself is a particularly significant contribution to the proletarian revolutionary movement and the liberation of human society. Lenin clearly saw that the main mass of inhabitants in backward countries are peasants,[34] and that the essence and the mainstay of the national liberation movement should be the peasantry led by the working class. Therefore, Lenin greatly valued the exploited and oppressed dimension of the peasants, unearthed and elevated the long-neglected and suppressed revolutionary potential and infinite strength of peasants, considering them as a solid ally of the proletarian revolution. In this way, the peasant movement, which had long been attached to the bourgeoisie, was embraced by the proletarian revolutionary movement, resolving the issue of the proletariat leading a bourgeois revolutionary movement with peasants as the mainstay. From then on, such a bourgeois national democratic revolutionary movement "no longer belonged to the old category of world bourgeois democratic revolution, but to a new category; it was no longer a part of the old world revolution of the bourgeoisie and capitalism, but a part of the new world revolution, that is, the part of the proletarian socialist world revolution. These revolutionary colonies and semi-colonies could no longer be considered allies of the world capitalist counter-revolutionary front, but had been changed to allies of the world socialist revolutionary front."[35] The great slogan of "Proletarians and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!" directly reflects the fact that the exploited and oppressed peasants had become an equal revolutionary mainstay and an extremely important revolutionary force in the proletarian revolutionary movement, thus forming a solid alliance of workers and peasants in socialist revolution and construction. It was precisely because Lenin sincerely considered peasants as an extremely important and massive revolutionary force of the proletariat and relied on them that not only theoretically but also in practice, the "correct approach to peasantry" that Engels himself "merely felt," but that Marx, Engels, and the entirety of the First and Second Internationals "had not found," was finally resolved.[36]

History shows that under the leadership and influence of Leninism, the close integration and mutual support of the proletarian revolutionary movement and the national liberation movement opened up an infinitely vast battlefield for attacking and weakening imperialism. On the one hand, such national liberation movements were a major force that supported the socialist Soviet Union to withstand encirclement and suppression by imperialism in the first half of the 20th century; on the other hand, it provided the socialist Soviet Union with an incomparably strategic depth for survival and development, with extensive room for maneuvering. Lenin proposed a new doctrine on the question of the peasantry: "The victorious revolutionary proletariat should systematically exert its influence on the backward nations, and all Soviet governments should assist them by all means at their disposal. Then, it would be incorrect to say that backward nations could not skip the stage of capitalist development. In all colonies and backward countries, we should not only organise a cadre team capable of independent struggle, i.e., the party organization, but also immediately mobile and organize peasantry soviets adapting to pre-capitalist conditions, and the Communist International should also point out and theoretically explain

31 Ibid., p. 387.

32 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 3: On Capitalism. Beijing: People's Press, p. 278.

33 Ibid., p. 278.

34 Ibid., p. 278.

35 Mao Zedong. 1991. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 2. Beijing: People's Press, p. 668.

36 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 27. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 495.

that, with the help of the proletariat of advanced countries, backward countries can transition to the Soviet system without going through the stage of capitalist development, and then after a certain stage of development transition to communism."[37] This new theory has greatly advanced the Marxist theory of socialism.

Undoubtedly, Leninism in both theory and practice resolved the relationship between the proletarian revolution and the bourgeois revolution, achieving the connection and transition from the bourgeois revolution to the proletarian socialist revolution, as well as giving the colonial and semi-colonial peoples a powerful ideological weapon for their own liberation. Particularly in Russia and China, it realized Engels's conception of striving to prevent peasants from truly becoming proletarians, arguing that the more peasants could be won over while still peasants, the quicker and easier would be the transformation of society. This is true especially in Russia and China, who realised Engels' idea that "the greater the number of peasants whom we can save from being actually hurled down into the proletariat, whom we can win over to our side while they are still peasants, the more quickly and easily the social transformation will be accomplished."[38] It was through the phase of Leninism that the Marxist-Leninist theory on the question of the peasantry was developed and enhanced magnified in China – a country with a vast peasant population – by Mao Zedong through the practice of Chinese revolution and construction, and it is now being spread and applied in the broader Third World.

Leninism's slogan and thought, "Proletarians and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!" still holds very important practical significance in the world today of the 21st century, since the global economic situation and political pattern that are reflected in and based upon this great slogan have not fundamentally changed – "The world has been divided into two parts, one being the numerous oppressed nations, the other being a few nations possessing vast wealth and military power." There is no doubt then, that by adhering to implementing this programmatic slogan and its strategies and tactics becomes the inescapable duty of all true Marxist parties and Marxists today.

In the 21st century, many developing countries and countries of global south are oppressed by neo-imperialism and its allies. In our revolutionary strategy,,we can advocate the call and thought of "Proletarians and oppressed peoples of all countries, unite!"

IV. On Socialism as eliminating class and exploitation

"What do the proletarians over the world unite to do?" "What do the proletarians and oppressed nations over the world unite to do?" It is to eliminate capitalism and establish socialism. In the 1840s, when scientific socialism emerged, communism was Marx's socialism. So, what is socialism? This was at one time a very clear-cut question, but has been muddled in recent times due to the subversion and destruction of the Soviet Union and the socialist countries in Eastern Europe by domestic and foreign hostile forces. What we are engaged in is the cause of scientific socialism guided by Marxism-Leninism, not some other socialism under the influence of another ideology. Remembering a few of the most straightforward and understandable points about what socialism is, as stated by the classic Marxist writers, will enable us to identify all kinds of counterfeit socialism.

– In 1846, Engels wrote to the Communist Communication Committee in Brussels: "what communism was... I therefore defined the aims of communists as follows: 1. to ensure that the interests of the proletariat prevail, as opposed to those of the bourgeoisie; 2. to do so by abolishing private property and replacing same with community of goods; 3. to recognise no means of attaining these aims other than democratic revolution by force."[39]

– In 1848, Marx and Engels stated in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*: "The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property." "In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property."[40]

– In 1850, Marx, summarizing the class struggles in France from 1848 to 1850, pointed out: "The proletariat increasingly organises itself around revolutionary Socialism, around

37 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 3: On Capitalism. Beijing: People's Press, p. 281.

38 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol 27. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 498.

39 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 38. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 82.

40 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 6. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 489.

Communism, for which the bourgeoisie itself has invented the name of Blanqui. This Socialism is the declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally, to the abolition of all the relations of production on which they rest, to the abolition of all the social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionising of all the ideas that result from these social relations."[41]

– In 1875, when Engels criticized the Russian Populists, he pointed out: "The revolution that modern socialism strives to achieve is, briefly, the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a new organisation of society by the destruction of all class distinctions."[42]

– In 1880, Engels wrote in his book *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*: "From that time forward Socialism was no longer an accidental discovery of this or that ingenious brain, but the necessary outcome of the struggle between two historically developed classes – the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Its task was no longer to manufacture a system of society as perfect as possible, but to examine the historico-economic succession of events from which these classes and their antagonism had of necessity sprung, and to discover in the economic conditions thus created the means of ending the conflict."[43]

– In 1894, Engels pinpointed in the article "The Peasant Question in France and Germany": "socialism is particularly opposed to the exploitation of wage-labour."[44]

— In 1894, Lenin, in his critique of liberal populists, said "It must be understood that protests and struggles against the exploitation of workers are aimed at the complete elimination of this kind of exploitation, and this is called socialism."[45]

— In 1905, Lenin wrote in his article "Petty-bourgeois and Proletarian Socialism": "The socialist struggle is waged by the workers against the whole of the bourgeoisie."[46]

— In 1916, Lenin emphasised in his article "The 'Disarmament' Slogan": "Whoever expects that socialism will be achieved without a social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat is not a socialist."[47]

— In 1919, Lenin said in the work "Economy and Politics in the Era of the Proletarian Dictatorship": "Socialism means the abolition of classes."[48]

We do not need to elaborate much on the above statements, since even less-educated workers and peasants can understand them. They learn and understand socialism from their own lives, as Mao Zedong revealed, "whole batches of Chinese Communists who confined themselves to books in their study of the social sciences have turned into counter-revolutionaries … whereas illiterate workers often grasp Marxism very well."[49]

The contemporary Chinese are familiar with a quote from Deng Xiaoping: "The essence of socialism is liberation and development of the productive forces, elimination of exploitation and polarization, and the ultimate achievement of common prosperity."[50] We say that Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, and Deng Xiaoping Theory are of the same lineage. What is this "lineage"? Where is it? We believe it is what Deng Xiaoping mentioned about "eliminating exploitation." In the popular interpretations of Deng Xiaoping's theory in the market, people can easily see that our ideological circles often only talk about "liberating and developing the productive forces" and "achieving common prosperity", considering these to be the most crucial and essential aspects of Deng Xiaoping's view on the essence of socialism. However, there is a tendency to avoid discussing " abolishing exploitation and eliminating polarization," or even

41 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 10. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 127.

42 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 24. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 39.

43 Ibid., p. 304.

44 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 27. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 491.

45 Lenin. 1984. *Collected Works of Lenin*, Vol. 1. Beijing: People's Press, p. 237.

46 Lenin. 1995. *Selected Works of Lenin*, Vol. 1. Beijing: People's Press, p. 657.

47 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 4: On Socialism. Beijing: People's Press, p. 385.

48 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 3: On Capitalism. Beijing: People's Press, p. 158.

49 Mao Zedong. 1991. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 1. Beijing: People's Press, p. 111

50 Deng Xiaoping. 1993. *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3. Beijing: People's Press, p. 373.

to promote the notion that “private capital involves no exploitation.” This perception is extremely extremely wrong and harmful. Those who hold this view are in dire need of learning the basic knowledge about socialism.

Deng Xiaoping repeatedly emphasized: "Socialism has two major requirements. First, its economy must be dominated by public ownership, and second, there must be no polarization.”[51] “The policies of using foreign funds and allowing the private sector to expand will not weaken the predominant position of the public sector, which is a basic feature of the economy as a whole. On the contrary, those policies are intended, in the last analysis, to develop the productive forces more vigorously and to strengthen the public sector.”[52] “Special economic zones are socialist, not capitalist. In the case of Shenzhen, the publicly owned sector is the mainstay of the economy, while the foreign-invested sector accounts for only a quarter. And even in that sector, we benefit from taxes and employment opportunities.”[53] Clearly, the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics established by Deng Xiaoping underscores the dominance of public ownership and distribution according to work in the initial stage of socialism and achieving common prosperity on this basis, ultimately aiming to eliminate exploitation. However, popular misinterpretations sever Deng Xiaoping's essential view of socialism from its distinct party principles – class nature and revolutionary character, obscuring the social orientation and revolutionary edge of Deng Xiaoping's view on the essence of socialism. This turns Marxism's scientific socialism into a vulgar sociology that can be accepted and manipulated by non-Marxist or anti-Marxist ideologies. Why is that? The logic behind is not complex. Does the bourgeoisie not liberate and develop the productive forces? Any idea about what socialism is, if it does not consider “the elimination of private ownership and its exploitation” as the most essential thing, is fundamentally flawed. As Jack Matlock, the former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, incisively analysed in *Autopsy on an Empire*, ““if the Soviet leaders were willing genuinely to discard that concept [i.e., the theory of class struggle; author’s note], it would matter little whether they continued to call their guiding philosophy ‘Marxism’ or not. It would be a different ‘Marxism’ in a different world, a world we could all recognize.”[54] Clearly, any discourse on Deng Xiaoping's essential view of socialism that intentionally or unintentionally avoids "eliminating exploitation," which is the core formed by private ownership, is erasing the essential difference between Marxist proletarian socialism and bourgeois socialism, amounting to a desecration of Deng Xiaoping's essential view of socialism.

“Liberating the productive forces and developing the productive forces” serve as the material basis for “eliminating exploitation, abolishing polarization, and ultimately achieving common prosperity.” Meanwhile, “eliminating exploitation and abolishing polarization” form the ownership basis for “liberating the productive forces, developing the productive forces” and “ultimately achieving common prosperity.” The ultimate goal and result of the development of productive forces and public ownership are to achieve common prosperity. The deeper content of Deng Xiaoping's view on the essence of socialism is that since “the essence of socialism” is “eliminating exploitation,” it naturally presupposes that, to a certain extent and within certain boundaries, exploitation triggered by private ownership still exists in the process of establishing and constructing socialism. Therefore, the investigation of socialist practice will inevitably produce a series of very important questions and their ideological logic, such as what is exploitation? Who is exploiting whom? How to “end exploitation”? On who, and by what means to “eliminate exploitation” and so on. Marxism–Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought tell us that exploitation is a question of the mode of production and the relations of production, which occurs between classes, and therefore exploitation relations are also a question of class relations.

The contemporary world is dominated by the capitalist mode of production and relations, where nothing but private capital exploits labour, and the bourgeoisie exploits the working class and other labouring people. How does exploitation take place? It is mainly achieved through commodity exchange, that is, through a commodity economy.

51 Ibid., p. 138.

52 Ibid., p. 149.

53 Ibid., p. 372.

54 Matlock, Jack F. Jr. 1995. *Autopsy on an Empire. The American Ambassador’s Account of the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. New York: Random House, p. 148.

This means that exploitation exists within an economy based on private property because private surplus value is embedded within commodities and realized through the commodity economy, via the buying and selling of labor power and other commodity exchanges. The inevitable result of exploitation is polarization, which is essentially class differentiation, manifesting in the contradictions and struggles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Abolishing exploitation and eliminating class are two inseparable aspects of the same question. Based on this understanding, Lenin stated that "socialism is the elimination of classes," but also acknowledged that "classes cannot be abolished at one stroke."[55] This is because the existence of classes is linked to certain historical stages of production development.[56] the abolition of exploitation, i.e. elimination of classes, is a historical process, and the abolition of exploitation, i.e. abolition of capitalism, by socialism requires a set of scientific and lasting strategies and tactics. That's why Deng said “ultimately achieve common prosperity”. “Ultimately” is a concept of time and space, and its message is to tell people that “achieving common prosperity” is a historical process and the final result of the development of socialism.

Undoubtedly, in the historical process of achieving “common prosperity”, contradictions and contests between classes inevitably occur in order to “eliminate exploitation,” that is, the struggle of the proletariat to completely eliminate the bourgeoisie, and Deng’s four basic principles are the most powerful weapons for the proletariat to completely eliminate the bourgeoisie in order to “eliminate exploitation” because “socialism is the transition from a society with the dictatorship of the proletariat to a stateless society”[57]. At the beginning of 1992, when the International Communist Movement had just suffered great setbacks, Deng resolutely pointed out that the essence of socialism was to “eliminate exploitation”, that is, to adhere to the Marxist theory of class struggle and proletarian dictatorship, and to uphold the socialist revolutionary banner of Marxist class struggle and the people’s democratic dictatorship (dictatorship of the proletariat). As Deng warned us, it was the revisionist leading group of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union who abandoned this basic principle of scientific socialism and led to the collapse of the party as well as the Soviet Union as a state.

Undoubtedly, the essence and purpose of Marxist scientific socialism “is that it brings out the historic role of the proletariat as the builder of socialist society.”[58] That is, the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie: “the necessity of political action by the proletariat and of its dictatorship as the transition to the abolition of classes and, with them, of the state.”[59] Therefore, only by liberating all humankind can the proletariat finally emancipate itself. In other words, ““outside the class struggle, socialism is either a hollow phrase or a naïve dream.”[60] “As long as class struggle still exists to a certain degree, we cannot abandon the Marxist view and method of class and class analysis. This view and method is the key for use to observe the complex political phenomenon of struggle between socialism and all sorts of hostile forces.”[61] It can be said that Marxist scientific socialism is the socialism of all-round construction, including the construction of economy, politics, culture society, ecology, national defense and other fields; including correctly handling contradictions among the people, between the enemies and ourselves, and among other classes; including scientific development, reform, and opening up, and also including socialist revolution, construction and reform.

V. On the Party as the leader and organizer of the class

In the works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, there are rich descriptions of their historical practice and theories concerning party building, and these include both summaries of successful experiences and analyses of failures and hard lessons. When we study the glorious history and theoretical ideas of the party of the working class they painstakingly established, we must also confront the twisted historical outcomes within the

55 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 4: On Socialism. Beijing: People’s Press, p. 161.

56 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 39. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 62.

57 Stalin. 1954. *Works of Stalin*, Vol. 7. Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, p. 161.

58 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 1: On Marxism. Beijing: People’s Press, p. 61.

59 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 23. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 370.

60 Lenin. 1995. *Selected Works of Lenin*, Vol. 1. Beijing: People’s Press, p. 658.

61 Jiang Zemin. 2006. *Selected Works of Jiang Zemin*, Vol. 3. Beijing: People’s Press, p. 83

International Communist Movement. A history of the development of Marxism-Leninism is a history of proletarian parties that have experienced both successful developments and painful failures. This material provides us with a textbook on the experiences and lessons of building proletarian parties. Clearly, to learn properly the theories and basic experiences of Marx and Lenin on party building, one must integrate the experiences of the tortuous struggles of proletarian parties in various countries.

Beginning with the 1840s, when the international Communist movement began from scratch, Marx and Engels, through arduous publicity and mobilization, initially established working class political party organizations in some European countries and organized and launched the proletarian revolutionary movement. At that time, Marx and Engels organized scattered workers who were struggling against individual capitalists, “centralise[d] the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes, [hence organised] the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party.”[62] By forming workers’ parties, they instilled in the European working class two fundamental ideological concepts: First, “they never cease, for a single instant, to instill into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in order that the German workers may straightway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary classes in Germany, the fought against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin.”[63] Second, “making it clear to themselves what their class interests are, by taking up their position as an independent party as soon as possible and by not allowing themselves to be misled for a single moment by the hypocritical phrases of the democratic petty bourgeois into refraining from the independent organisation of the party of thproletariat. Their battle cry must be: thee Revolution in Permanence.”[64] It was because of the establishment of such a revolutionary or thoroughly reformist consciousness that the European working class kept revolutionizing, leading to the struggle of the Paris Commune to seize bourgeois state power. Subsequently, they strongly supported the establishment of the German Social-Democratic Party, under the pressure of Bismarck's “anti-socialist law,” and relentlessly carried out “illegal” semi-open secret struggle, and achieved great development. After Marx's death, Engels shouldered the burden of guiding the world proletarian revolutionary movement, and lost no time in initiating and forming the Second International with the German Social-Democratic Party as the core, breaking the “anti-socialist law” in Germany, and enabling the German Social-Democratic Party to obtain the right and conditions for public activities.

Compared with later revolutionaries, organizers, and theorists such as Lenin and Mao Zedong, who were able to completely control the proletarian party in their own country, Marx and Engels revealed deep historical and temporal limitations in the practice of party building. Since Marx was wanted and persecuted by reactionary governments across Europe, not only in his homeland Germany, but also in other countries, it was difficult for him to settle down and forced him into exile in England. This public identity as a revolutionary made it difficult for him to guide directly the practical struggle and development of proletarian parties in various countries. He mainly influenced and guided the activities of workers' parties in some countries from afar and from the outside.

Social existence determines social conscious ness. The history of political parties in the International Communist Movement shows that the theoretical ideas, policy strategies and basic experiences that have a great guiding role in party building have been systematized and matured through the development of Lenin and Mao Zedong. The victories of the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution under Lenin's leadership in Russia and the Communist Party of China’s victory in the Chinese Revolution under Mao Zedong's leadership are successful manifestations of Marxist-Leninist principles on the construction of a proletarian party in both theory and method. These achievements represent an inexhaustible treasury of ideas for the building of a proletarian party.

What do political parties stand for? Political parties are products and tools of class

62 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 6. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 493.

63 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 26. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 121.

64 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 10. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 287.

development that have emerged in the modern era since the establishment of capitalist society. Engaging in political activities to seize and lead state power is the most fundamental task of all political parties. Anyone who does not understand this point, or does not firmly grasp it, fails to comprehend what a political party is for. They also fail to understand how the aims, tasks, and methods of party building should be determined and implemented. Consequently, they cannot discuss the construction of the Communist Party's advancement, its capability to seize power, and its governance capacity.

Lenin's significant developments and contributions to the building of a Marxist party are first and foremost reflected in organizational construction, where he established the principle of democratic centralism. This was the product of Lenin's fierce struggle with the Menshevik faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, who were deeply influenced by the "legal" struggle of the Second International. Marx had early on recognized that "revolutionary activity [...] can proceed with full force only from the centre… it is the task of the really revolutionary party to carry through the strictest centralisation"[65] Lenin inherited this basic idea from Marx and creatively proposed and implemented the organizational principle of democratic centralism. This allowed him to combine in a flexible manner "illegal" struggle with "legal" struggle under the complex circumstances of bourgeois suppression of the revolution, achieving development and victory for the proletarian revolutionary party. While the Mensheviks of the Second International and the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party were still practicing the liberal ideas and systems of party building from the bourgeois parties, they were transformed beyond recognition by so-called "legitimate" political party struggle within the structures of parliamentary democracy of bourgeois states, thereby losing the character of a working class party and degenerating into opportunistic political parties that deceive workers. Lenin not only established and developed the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party on the basis of democratic centralism, but also extended this principle to the leadership and construction of the Russian Communist Party over the state under the dictatorship of the proletariat after the October Revolution. He stressed the necessity of maintaining the Communist Party's leading position in state power, stating that ""all the political and economic activities of which are guided by the class-conscious vanguard of the working class—the Communist Party."[66] Other parties must accept and support the leadership of the Communist Party, and any form of bourgeois parliamentary multi-party system is strictly prohibited. Facing attacks from the national and international bourgeoisie and the Second International, which accused the Communist Party of "dictatorship" and "dictatorship of one party," Lenin responded sharply that if maintaining the leadership of the Communist Party is considered "dictatorship of one party," then "yes, it is a dictatorship of one party! This is what we stand for and we shall not shift from that position."[67] The organizational principle of democratic centralism is one of the basic principles and experiences in the construction of a proletarian party guided by Marxism-Leninism.

Lenin's second important contribution to the building of the Marxist party was the renaming of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party as the Russian Communist Party. Lenin's action was a major event in the history of the International Communist Movement and Marxist political parties in the early 20th century, having a profound impact on the establishment and development of Communist parties in various countries thereafter. The impact and significance of this event, as Lenin explained at the time, are manifold: First, "the name 'Social-Democratic Party' is scientifically incorrect. When the workers set up their own state they realised that the old concept of democracy – bourgeois democracy – had been surpassed in the process of the development of our revolution. We have arrived at a type of democracy that has never existed anywhere in Western Europe," and "if we at least state precisely, without departing from reality, Soviet power is a new type of state, a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat". Second, for a real proletarian party, "the goal [...], that is, the creation of a communist society. That is why the name of Communist Party is the only one that is scientifically correct." Third, in the period of World War I, "up to now the old official socialist parties in all the leading European countries have still not got rid of their intoxication with social-chauvinism

65 Marx, K., and F. Engels. 2010. *Marx/Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 10. London: Lawrence & Wishart, p. 285.

66 Lenin. 1987. *Collected Works of Lenin*, Vol. 42. Beijing: People's Press, p. 274.

67 Lenin. 1986. *Collected Works of Lenin*, Vol. 37. Beijing: People's Press, p. 126.

and social-patriotism that led to the complete collapse of European official socialism during the present war, so that up to now almost all official socialist parties have been a real hindrance to the working-class revolutionary socialist movement, a real encumbrance to it."[68] The new name of the Russian Communist Party cleared the way for the establishment of the long expected Communist International, and promoted the great development of the International Communist Movement in the later period.

Lenin's third major contribution to the construction of Marxist parties was his reliance on peasants as an extremely important and vast revolutionary force for the proletariat. He solved the problem that Marx, Engels, and the entire First and Second Internationals had not found a "correct approach to the peasantry," thereby expanding the party's organization and the revolutionary forces it led. This greatly broadened the depth and breadth of the construction of the proletarian party.

Lenin's fourth significant contribution to the construction of Marxist parties was his opposition to and rejection of "spontaneity" in ideological construction, advocating and implementing the scientific approach of "indoctrination." Lenin deeply explored and discussed the viewpoint that Marxism, or scientific socialism, cannot spontaneously emerge within the working class. Practice has proven that "the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness" and its economism; the consciousness of scientific socialism in the working class "have to be brought to them from without." Thus, "the only choice is – either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course"; because "in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree means to strengthen bourgeois ideology"; and "the spontaneous development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology."[69] The stance, viewpoints, methods of Marxism-Leninism, and the excellent human thought, morality, and styles, all need to be consciously, intentionally, and persistently advocated and cultivated in order to be widely accepted and formed among people. This is because since the emergence of class society, the ruling exploitative classes have oppressed and enslaved the working people for thousands of years, deeply embedding the ideology and morals of the exploitative classes into every aspect of social life, creating a powerful force of habit. To change this situation, only through long-term and unrelenting education, can this be achieved. Therefore, it is necessary to educate systematically all party members and the masses from all walks of life on Marxist ideology and morals in an organized and regular manner.

Lenin's developments and contributions to Marxism and its party construction were achieved in the struggle against the opportunism of the Second International, arising and evolving through the fight against all forms of revisionism and opportunism.

The Communist Party of China was established on the historical platform built by the October Revolution and Leninism, adopting and absorbing the world's most advanced and successful revolutionary experiences and party-building theories from the Russian Communist Party. To establish a powerful proletarian party guided by Marxism-Leninism with combat effectiveness in China, a country that was at one time an extremely backward semi-colonial and semi-feudal state, with hundreds of millions of poor and ignorant peasants, numerous petty bourgeoisie but very few modern industrial proletarians, Chinese Communists represented by Mao Zedong consciously raised and solved the question: "How can we build up 'a bolshevized Chinese Communist Party, a party which is national in scale and has a broad mass character, a party which is fully consolidated ideologically, politically and organizationally'?" "It is this kind of party that we now want to build, but how shall we go about it?"[70] From this, Mao Zedong developed the party construction and its theoretical doctrines of Marxism-Leninism into a systematic and complete scientific system. Why say this, and based on what? The basis is that Mao Zedong identified and elucidated a fundamental principle of the construction of the proletarian party.

68 Lenin. 1995. *Selected Works of Lenin,* Vol. 3. Beijing: People's Press, pp. 456, 467, 457.

69 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 5: On the Proletarian Party. Beijing: People's Press, pp. 76, 85.

70 Mao Zedong. 1991. *Selected Works of Mao Zedon*g, Vol. 2. Beijing: People's Press, pp. 603, 613.

The history of the emergence and development of science shows that a scientific system can be established only when its theoretical form contains a number of basic principles of nature or society, and only then does it possess independent human value in the history of science. Principles are not artificially created, but are natural or social inviolable laws discovered by people through long-term production practice and scientific research.

What is the basic principle of proletarian party construction discovered by Mao Zedong? In 1945, Mao summarised in the political report of the Seventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) the movement for rectification and the basic experience of 24 years of party construction: "Ideological education is the key link to be grasped in uniting the whole Party for great political struggles. Unless this is done, the Party cannot accomplish any of its political tasks."[71] This principle reveals that the proletarian party, the Communist Party, is primarily an organ dedicated to political and ideological work. Political and ideological work is the primary work and task of the Communist Party at all levels of organization and leadership. The history of the party shows that the leadership and prestige of the Communist Party, and thus the power of the Communist Party, are primarily and fundamentally established through persistent and in-depth political and ideological education of the masses, influencing them, uniting, and winning them over to the banner of Marxism and the Communist Party. The leadership of the Communist Party is primarily and fundamentally a reflection of the "leadership of proletarian ideology."[72] "Ideological leadership" can be achieved only through the political and ideological education of the party. Mao Zedong regarded ideological education and political work as the "central link" and the "lifeline," highlighting its importance. If the Communist Party neglects or forgets such work and matters as the "central link" and the "lifeline," what would that mean? It would mean that the Communist Party or any level of its organization has given up and lost its influence over the masses upon which it relies, essentially abandoning its fundamental leadership over the masses, which amounts to an act of suicide. Once the political and ideological education of the party is neglected or undermined, the outcome would be that the masses and cadres scatter like wild horses leaving the herd, and the corresponding system would collapse. While systems are important, ideology guides the formulation and implementation of systems.

"The Party is the highest form of class organization," Deng pointed out in his report on the amendment of the Party Constitution at the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China. "It is particularly important to point this out today when our Party has assumed the leading role in state affairs."[73] There is no doubt that the party is "the leader and organizer of the class,"[74] but if the party does not consciously think about and engage in party construction and its political and ideological work from the proletariat against all kinds of non-proletariat, especially from the side of feudalism and the bourgeoisie, it will not even be able to enter the "door" of party construction. Only by clarifying and addressing the objectives and issues related to the party's construction and its political-ideological work can the rest of the party's construction efforts be targeted effectively, can the party organization become a school for educating and transforming people, and can the party's political and ideological work become a powerful tool for realizing the Party's various tasks.

Ideological and theoretical education is the foundation of party construction, a fundamental experience summarized by the Communist Party of China from its study of Marxism-Leninism, proven by both positive and negative historical experiences and lessons from the CPC and the International Communist Movement as a whole. Addressing the political turmoil in 1989, Deng Xiaoping hit the nail on the head when he pointed out: "This incident has really revealed enough of our mistakes! We have indeed made mistakes. And they are not minor ones."[75] Where did the major problem lie? It was "the failure to do a good job in education and in ideological and political work," "we have not talked about those things consistently, and there has been no action or even any mention of the need for action," stating," "our biggest mistake was made in the field of education, primarily in ideological and political

71 Mao Zedong. 1991. *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. 3. Beijing: People's Press, p. 1094.

72 Ibid., p. 77.

73 Deng Xiaoping. 1994. *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3. Beijing: People's Press, p. 236.

74 Lenin. 2009. *Thematic Collection of Lenin*, Vol. 5: On the Proletarian Party. Beijing: People's Press, p.337.

75 Deng Xiaoping. 1993. *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 3. Beijing: People's Press, p. 312.

education – not just of students but of the people in general."[76]

It was precisely because of the inadequacy in "education and ideological-political work" that corruption spread and severe political turmoil was incited, leading Deng Xiaoping to urgently exclaim to the entire Party, "It is high time that this Party was rectified; there can be no delay."[77] The collapse of the Communist Parties in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union can be scientifically explained by their abandonment of this fundamental principle of proletarian party construction.

In summary, the editing and publishing of Collected Works of Marx and Engels and Thematic Collection of Lenin reflect the diligent study, accurate inheritance, and scientific development of Marxism-Leninism by the Chinese people and the Communists of China. To advance the development of Marxism-Leninism and its sinicization, we must first study Marxism-Leninism itself and then understand the relationship between Marxism-Leninism and its sinicization. On the important issue of how to study Marxism-Leninism and its role in the international communist movement, Deng Xiaoping's summarizing assertion, drawn from the long-term practice of the Chinese Communists, should become a guide for all comrades who adhere to Marxism. He stated, "Marxist ideological and theoretical work cannot be divorced from current politics. By politics here I mean the overall situation in the domestic and international class struggle and the fundamental interests of the Chinese people and the people of the world in current struggles. It is inconceivable that anyone can become a Marxist thinker or theorist if he is divorced from the overall political situation, if he doesn't study it, if he doesn't assess the actual development of the revolutionary struggle."[78] Guided by Marxism-Leninism and its sinicization, we must continue to promote continuous progress and harmony in China and the world.

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76 Ibid., pp. 305, 306.

77 Ibid., p. 314.

78 Deng Xiaoping. 1994. *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, Vol. 2. Beijing: People's Press, p. 179.

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What is happening in and around Ukraine

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T**here is a war in Ukraine**. Outwardly, it looks like an armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. All political forces, including Left, have spoken out about these events. The range of assessments: from humanistic-emotional ("people are dying, stop the war") to purely class ("The West is pushing two oligarchic regimes"). In fact, this conflict has deep roots. When analyzing the situation, we must take into account both t*he national content of the class struggle and the class content of the national struggle*.

What is Ukraine? The territory of present-day Ukraine until the middle of the XVII century was a sparsely populated space, contested by neighboring countries. By the beginning of the XX century the lands of present-day Ukraine were divided between Poland, Austria-Hungary and Russia. After 1917 revolution some of these lands temporarily declared independence. However in 1922 they joined the USSR as the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. So Ukraine gained statehood, although limited.

Ukraine was an agricultural country. To ensure its development in 1918 at the suggestion of Vladimir Lenin six Russian industrial regions including Donetsk and Lugansk which had never been part of Ukraine were transferred to Ukraine. In 1939 Galicia (Western Ukraine) was annexed to Ukraine, previously part of Poland. The *current territory of Ukraine is the result of its entry into the USSR. It consists of disparate pieces: from Galicia* (Lviv) with a strong influence of Catholicism to Eastern Ukraine, which strongly gravitates towards Russia.

Socialist Ukraine developed powerfully. Aircraft and rocket building, petrochemistry, electric power industry (4 nuclear power plants) and defense industries were added to the extraction of metal and coal. As part of the USSR Ukraine received not only the bulk of its current territory, but economic potential making it 10th largest economy in Europe. Ukrainian politicians were dominant in the Soviet leadership. N.Khrushev, L.Brezhnev, K.Tchernenko run the USSR from 1953 to 1983.

After the collapse of the USSR in December 1991, Ukraine became an independent state for the first time in its history. But this destroyed centuries-old economic integration with Russia. The "market" model led to the de-industrialization of Ukraine, to sharp drop in the standard of living of the population. On the basis of predatory privatization, an oligarchic class arose.

Now it is the poorest country in Europe. The level of corruption and social differentiation is of the world highest. The manufacturing industry except metallurgy, is practically destroyed. The economy rests on Western loans and money transfers from migrant labour who left for Europe and Russia in search of work. (about 10 million out of 45 million people), basically qualified specialists. The degradation of human capital has reached its limit. The country is on the verge of a national catastrophe.

The population of Ukraine is strongly dissatisfied. However this dissatisfaction with pro-Western authorities is manipulated in such a way that each time even more pro-Western forces win the elections. In February 2014, a US and NATO-backed state coup was carried out in Ukraine. The US State Department has publicly stated that it has invested $5 billion in its preparation.

Neo-Nazis came to power. These are, first of all, people from Western Ukraine (Galicia), which for centuries was under the rule of Poland and Austria-Hungary. Extremely nationalistic, anti-Semitic, anti-Polish, Russophobic and anti-Communist sentiments are historically strong there. After Hitler's invasion of the USSR, German troops were greeted in Western Ukraine with flowers. SS divisions were formed there fought against the Red Army. Local nationalists, led by Hitler's admirer Stephan Bandera, set about exterminating the Jewish population. In Ukraine about 1.5 million Jews were killed – one fourth of all Holocaust victims. During the "Volyn massacre" in 1944 about 100,000 Poles were brutally murdered in Western Ukraine. Banderas destroyed Soviet guerillas and burned alive the

men, women and children in hundreds of villages in Belarus. Ukrainian nationalists who served as guards in German concentration camps became notorious for monstrous cruelty.

After the war from 1945 to 1953, US and UK-supported anti-Communist and anti-Soviet rebels in Western Ukraine unleashed terror against civilian population. During these years Banderas killed about 50 thousand civilians. This is the nature of *forces – descendants and followers of fascists – which came to power after the 2014 coup*. The traditions of anti-Polish, anti-Semitic and anti-Russian terror are very strong among the neo-Nazis who now really govern Ukraine. 42 opponents of Nazi were burnt alive in the Trade Unions building in Odessa on May, 2, 2014 /

It is an alliance of neo-Nazis with oligarchic capital. Banderas (like the SS stormtroopers in Germany) serve as a shock detachment of big business. The only difference is that Banderas refrain from outright anti-Semitism, having established a class unity with the local oligarchy. Banderas tightly control every move of state power, constantly blackmailing it with the threat of a coup. On the other hand, the policy of Ukraine is determined by the US Embassy in Kyiv.

The nature of the current Ukrainian state is an alliance of big capital and the state bureaucracy, relying on criminal and fascist elements under the full political and financial control of the United States.

After 2014 Nazi ideology is being implanted in Ukraine. Day of Victory over fascism on May 9 has been canceled. Ukrainian fascists – organizers and participants in the atrocities of the war – are officially recognized as national heroes. Every year torch marches are held in honor of fascist criminals. Streets and squares are named after them. The Communist Party of Ukraine operates underground. Intimidation and political assassinations of politicians and journalists became constant. Monuments to Lenin and everything related to the memory of life in the USSR are being destroyed.

At the same time an attempt began to forcibly assimilate the Russian population of Ukraine with the suppression of the Russian language. An attempt to introduce Afrikaans instead of English in South Africa led to the Soweto uprising in 1976. The same thing happened in Ukraine. An attempt to transfer school education from Russian into Ukrainian gave rise to powerful resistance in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions. People took up arms. In May 2014 a referendum was held there, in which 87% of citizens voted for independence. This is how the Donetsk (DPR) and Lugansk people's republics (LPR) arose. After several unsuccessful attempts to invade the LPR-DPR, the Nazis from Kyiv switched over to terror. *During 8 years of shelling from large-caliber guns, more than 13 thousand civilians, including children, women and elderly people were killed in LPR-DPR. With the complete silence of the world community.*

The Communists of Russia take an active part in the defense of the LPR-DPR. Hundreds of communists are fighting the Nazis as part of the troops of the people's republics. Dozens of communists died in this struggle. In 8 years the CPRF sent 93 convoys with humanitarian aid to these republics with a total weight of 13,000 tons, received thousands of children for rest and treatment in Russia. All these years the CPRF headed by Gennady Zyuganov demanded from the leadership of Russia the recognition of the independence of Donbass.

In March 2015 at the initiative of Russia (with the participation of Germany and France) the Minsk agreements were concluded, which provided for the special status of the LPR-DPR within Ukraine. However, Ukraine evaded their implementation. With the support of the United States, Kyiv was preparing to crush the LPR-DPR by force of arms. *The US, UK and other NATO members provided training for the Ukrainian army. They constructed over 30 major military installation in Ukraine including 15 Pentagon laboratories for the development of bacteriological weapons (cholera, the plague and other deadly diseases).* Ukraine with its four nuclear power stations and huge scientific-technical potential is able to construct an A-bomb. This intention was publically declared. There was a danger of deployment of US cruise missiles. The situation in Ukraine increasingly threatened Russia's security.

In December 2021 Russia proposed to the United States to talk about non-expansion of NATO. The US and NATO ignored the proposal. In January 2022 Russia warned that it would be forced to take additional measures to protect its security. At the same time it became known that Ukraine had concentrated 150,000 servicemen and Nazi battalions in Donbass. Kyiv, backed by the USA was preparing to regain control over Donbass through war this March.

On February 22 President Putin announced the recognition of the independence of the LPR-DPR. On February 25 the Russian Armed Forces operation of began.

Russia is not going to occupy Ukraine. The purpose of the operation is the liberation of Ukraine from the Nazis and its neutrality (refusal to join NATO). The tactics of the Russian troops is, while attacking military facilities, to minimize the casualties among civilian population and Ukrainian military, to avoid destruction of civilian infrastructure. They are brotherly people. We will continue to live together. However, the Bandera Nazis use the most disgusting tactics of the German fascists, using civilians and their houses as human shields. They install artillery and tanks in residential areas, forbid citizens to leave war zones, turning hundreds of thousands of people into hostages.

This nefarious Nazi tactic is not condemned in the West. It is the United States, waging an information war through the media controlled by them (only Russia Today resists), that are interested in the war. The United States strikes not only at Russia but also at Europe. The NATO war against Yugoslavia in 1999 was a means of destabilizing the European Union. Today the US main goal is to prevent Russian gas supplies via the Nord Stream-2 pipeline to force Europe to buy more expensive liquefied gas from the United States, thereby sharply weakening Germany and other EU countries. The volume of trade between Russia and the EU is 260 billion dollars a year. With the US – 23 billion USD . 10 times less. Therefore the sanctions imposed at the request of the United States hit, first of all, Europe. *The events in Ukraine are yet another American war for control of the world.*

By the way, the claims about global nature of boycott of Russia are false. BRICS countries (Brazil, India, China and South Africa) constituting 43% of the world population did not support sanctions. China is the 1st and India – 3d biggest economies of the world. Sanctions were not supported by Asia (excluding Japan and South Korea with their US military bases), by the Middle East, by the largest countries of Latin America and by the majority of the

For 30 years I have been one of the most active critics of the domestic and foreign policy of the Russian elite. In its class character, the oligarchic-bureaucratic power in Russia is not much different from the power in Ukraine (except without fascism and full US control). However, in those unfortunately rare cases when the leaders of Russia pursue a line that meets the historical interests of the country and the people, the principle of “automatic” criticism is hardly appropriate.

I have long argued that sanctions will have a beneficial effect on getting rid of Russia’s imposed dependence on the West in various areas of life. The Russian government is already taking the first steps in this direction. The task of the left forces is to vigorously encourage the authorities to change not only foreign policy, but also the socio-economic course, which does not correspond to the interests of the people.

“ Theory arises from practice, and its signficance lies in addressing the questions posed by practice. The close intergration of theory and practice is the spring source and driving force of development of the life of Marxism.”

- Chen Enfu & Li Wei (2024)

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