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- Editorial
- The Fracturing of Socialist Thought in Australia
- A Time of Qualitative Change: the importance of China's New Political Party System
- The Leninist Party and the Question of Cadre
- Multipolarity and Chinese Modernisation
- Book review: *Storming the Heavens: Peasant Rebellion in China 1925-1949 Through a Marxist Lens*

THEORY
PRACTICE
EXPERIENCE
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Editorial

This issue of the *Australian Marxist Review* is the last issue during the current mandate of the Editorial Committee. Since 2022, the committee has been able to gather, edit, and publish ten issues of the AMR, from issue 72 to 81.

This issue brings together articles by members of the Editorial Committee, beginning with David Matters's called for recovering unity in socialist thought. In tracking the long-term deleterious effects of Khrushchev's infamous "secret speech" that tried to denounce Stalin, the article pays particular attention to the Australian context and the fracturing of socialist thought here. Much work remains to be done to recover and develop socialist thought in Australia and especially unified socialist thought.

The next article is translated from Chinese and was originally delivered as a paper at a conference on political parties and party politics at the School of Marxism at Jiaxing University, China. Jiaxing, in the "southern river" district, is the home of the famous "South Lake," where the first congress of the CPC in 1921 moved after a police raid at the Shanghai venue. Embarking on a small "red boat," the handful of founding members completed their meeting and founded the CPC. The article focuses on the "Eight-Point Regulation" and its "spirit," which was the basis for party building in 2025, and then moves onto the questions of socialist governance and its combination of rule of law and rule of virtue, how democratic centralism may make the transition from inner-party governance to country-wide governance, and the international implications of the "China model" of party building through rectification and reform. In preparing the article for publication in AMR, a couple of "boxes" have been included to illustrate some of the points made.

The third article is by Christian Goopy and offers an analysis of the historical process through which the Leninist model of party building emerged. Deploying the universal-particular distinction, the article argues that the principals established by Lenin for building a party of a new type are universal but that their application takes place in light of the concrete realities of each country and region. The key is a "selective cadre party" of class conscious and dedicated revolutionaries who are able to rebuild the party into the vanguard of the working class and organise for revolution.

Fourth is a study of the concept and global reality of "multipolarity." Given that there are some misunderstandings of this term among comrades and in wider circles, the article pays a careful read in view of its "big picture" historical analysis.

The final item is a book review by a new member of the Editorial Board, Lachlan Varley. The book is known as *Storming the Heavens: Peasant Rebellion in China 1925–1949 Viewed Through a Marxist Lens* and was published in 2025.

We hope you find the material in issue 81 of the *Australian Marxist Review* helpful, inspirational, thought-provoking, and above all action-provoking.

South Lake, Jaixing, scene of the "Red Boat" and the founding of the CPC

The Fracturing of Socialist Thought in Australia and Khrushchev's so-called Secret Speech

David Matters

The previous issue of the *Australian Marxist Review* carried an excerpt from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation's 19th Congress seeking to rehabilitate Joseph Stalin (Uncle Joe as he had been referred to until 1956) and to offer a reassessment of Khrushchev's place in the history of the communist movement. Going back to 1952 and 1956, the 19th and 20th congresses of the CPSU(b) had been rent by a power struggle between Molotov and Malenkov, which saw these comrades come under a barrage of accusations. Beria and Khrushchev also played a role in this process with both jockeying for position.

Many old accusations were bought forward and some ahistorical approaches were adopted. Along with this barrage of criticism, some thinking had come forward that was not based on reality. Stalin had made claims that class antagonisms had ceased to exist under socialism. He had challenged in his *Economic Problems of Socialism* (1952) the erroneous concept that the law of value ceased to exist and argued that it had been modified. The text does not elaborate how.

Stalin had been viewed as the main ideological leader in the defeat of Trotskyism and in holding the Soviet Union together during the Great Patriotic War. The development of people's democracies in Eastern Europe and China during this period were the result of the positions of communists in liberated countries. Some examination may be undertaken of the post-war process, but unfolding were the national liberation struggles boosted by the defeat of fascism and the weakening of colonialism.

Along with the attack on Stalin, some new views proposed that a new war was not inevitable. The dismissal of Stalin as a historical figure meant that he was airbrushed out of history and his works placed on a banned list. This has prevented a correct appreciation of his historical role and been used to begin fresh attacks on the Soviet victory in the European theatre of the Second World War.

In Eastern Europe, there were challenges to the people's democracies that followed Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech in 1946, along with increased attacks on communists in the major capitalist countries. There were uprisings in Eastern European countries during so-called "thaws." In this light, Trotskyism found was reinvigorated and anti-communism was assisted.

The approach and conduct of Khrushchev in making this speech were overwhelmed by the noise unleashed against the reputation of the Soviet Union. The USA was not a friend. Their agents had engaged in a duplicitous manner with former Nazis and seized control of their networks in Eastern Europe and Ukraine. They transported war criminals to South America and they armed and funded the mafia in Italy against the Communist Party of Italy. In Germany and elsewhere in Western Europe they carefully reinvigorated social democracy. Thus, the Cold War was unleashed.

In Australia the communist party had been building support and was locked in a struggle with underground fascist forces as Australia's immigration was stepped up to bring defeated fascists to Australia. The pressure on the Soviet Union was intensified with the growing nuclear arsenal of the USA and the proliferation of nuclear weapons in France and the UK. Continued wars of national liberation were being suppressed by the British and French, and fascist forces were protected by the UK and the USA.

In this climate, Khrushchev delivered a speech at a special closed session. He did so in a manner that disarmed the communists. First, he took back the copies that had been distributed; the same happened again after the main congress concluded. He then made the speech unavailable to communists while sending it through his own connections to western media. This placed communists in a position of having their hands tied behind their backs while the punches began landing.

If Khrushchev's only goal was to stop his factional opponents in the Soviet Union, this in itself is bad enough in the sense of placing himself above the whole movement. This is not all: he went on to undermine the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry by declaring its abolition and replacing it with the "state of the whole

people” coupled with a reduction of the organs of the state directed by the party.

We know that historically this has led towards the reestablishment of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. These economic and political mistakes bled into the whole communist movement. Right and left opportunism was let out of the bag and with a counter-revolutionary push spread internationally. Communist parties had a crisis of thought. What had been a coherent and united ideological outlook came under challenge and communists around the world were disoriented.

Historically different communist parties had had a strong relationship with the Soviet party, but trends had been developing of poor advice from or relations with the Communist International that had directed the struggles. This relationship underwent new stresses. The heroic role of the Soviet Red Army and communists in the struggle against fascism and militarism was challenged. The first of these came from Tito, who removed the communist party from its leading role and shut the borders of Yugoslavia to Greek partisans. Khrushchev brought these types back into the fold.

The question of cause and effect should be examined. Opportunism does not arise in a vacuum and has material causes. Thus, the rise of these forms of opportunism are a material phenomenon in the movement. There is no doubt that these material forces were operating as a result of the strengthening of US imperialism and the mixed class forces mobilised in the fight against fascism. However, it was not inevitable that these forces would come to dominate.

When this crisis was created, it opened some divisions in approach by the leaders of the Communist Party of Australia. What had been a coherent and influential line suffered some setbacks. Socialist thinking was fractured but not destroyed. Each of the leaders pursued the question as a reaction and petty-bourgeois forces pushed to increase the disequilibrium.

What has been achieved by the capitalist forces has been to disperse our socialist thought. Without coherent and unifying thought the struggle for socialism is set back. A full reassessment of the history of socialist thought in Australia is needed. This involves scientifically accepting that without socialist forces and relations of production Australia cannot meet the needs and aspiration of the people.

The correct appreciation of the adoption of opportunist errors and the dominant liquidationist trend must be overcome. Many during the period walked away from the need to make the change and covered their retreat with all manner of diffusions of socialist thought. It is from the best of all the contributors to socialist thought in this country that we need to rebuild coherent and reflective views based on the most advanced experiences. In Australia, the movement to do so is obstructed by the false view of history that came about as a result of the assault on socialist thinking.

It is with this in mind that we should remove some of the obstacles, which includes the twin evils of trying to counter the unscientific vilification of Stalin – and thereby of Australian communists – with an equally unscientific adoption of an all-out defence against the accusations. It requires us to work towards the material basis of socialist thought. It is indisputable that the socialist revolution is a conscious act of the working class and their allies. It is indisputable that a party that comprises the majority of the vanguard of that class and the forces of allied classes is needed. The unity of such a party derives from the historical struggle of workers as a class for itself. The magnification of a sectarian approach that is based on idealism and not the material interests of the class is what has prevented the unity of those forces that argue for a communist party but do not set about solving this pressing problem.

All those who claim some connection to socialist thought in this country need to undertake a rectification of working from facts and the material interests of the class and stop reducing their thoughts to idealist formulae. Unity is based on a material understanding of history and the unity comes from a dialectical process of working in practice and uniting this practice with socialist thought.

We have reached a period in history where the big bourgeoisie is again toying with the reintroduction of extreme right parties. The bourgeoisie is undergoing a deepening crisis in light of the challenge issued by the modernisation of China and the continuing development of multipolarity. Imperialism is in struggle first within itself and driving this further is the US demand that its dominant position not be challenged. The outcome of the Second World War was game changing, and not even the reversal of socialism in Europe has stopped the trends of global interdependence and national sovereignty.

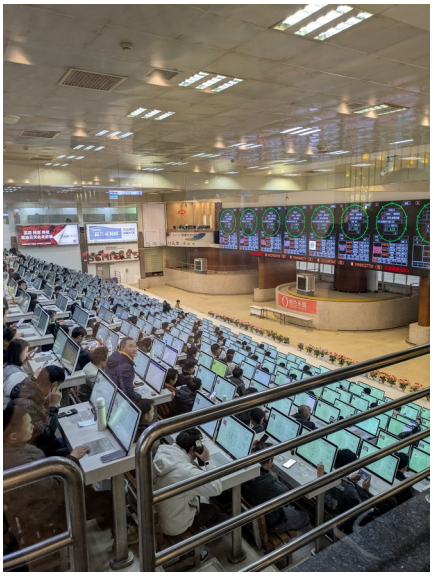
To counter this trend, the big bourgeoisie is seeking to increase militarism and to return to direct colonial subservience. Old conflicts are being revived and have been revived. The Anglo-French imperialist rivalry in which the USA also figures is part of this conflict. In the former colonial countries extremists are being pushed to power by the big bourgeoisie.

This is giving the lie to the assertion by the opportunist trend that war under capitalism is not inevitable. These assertions run in a line through Bernstein–Kautsky–Khrushchev–Gorbachev and it is this trend in socialist thought that has seen capitalist militarists strengthened. The rejection of these trends is not successful unless its twin of left opportunism is also rejected. The first opportunism bound the workers to the bourgeoisie and capitalism, thereby feeding liberalism. The second opportunism has the same effect, except that it involves separating the working class from political struggle and still leaves the bourgeois forces in charge. Introduced into ruling communist parties these trends lead to the restoration of capitalism. In parties still struggling under capitalism they lead to liquidationist trends: the right through integration, the left through isolation.

In developing a consistent socialist line of thought in Australia, the historic struggle of workers and communist parties forms the practice upon which we should build. A study of our history will show that when the thought has been unified with the class huge strides have been made. In Australia there are personalities that have contributed enormously. In the fracturing of the socialist thought in Australia this has also seen the fracturing of personalities, and this has divided the movement around these personalities.

The basic question posed for unity in our socialist thinking is an honest look at the connection of our party to the people. We should begin united work; the fracturing of socialist thought has to be overcome.

Kunming, Yunnan Province: World’s Second Largest Flower Market



Multipolarity and Chinese Modernization—
2025 Shanghai University of Finance and Economics International Forum

A Time of Qualitative Change: The Importance of the Model of China's New Political Party System

Roland Boer

1. Opening Remarks

The initial "touchstone" of my paper is the fact that 2025 was the year of making the "eight-point regulation" and its spirit the centre of party-building activities. Why a touchstone? The "eight-point regulation" and its "spirit" reveal much about the developments of China's socialist governance, especially as it relates to international forms of governance.

While I begin with the "eight-point regulation" and its "spirit," especially since 2025 marks a focus on the regulation and its spirit for Party building after 13 years of a through-going reform of party structures and practices, I am interested in the broader framework. Thus, in the first part I will move from the regulation and its spirit to the dialectic of rule of law and rule of virtue. The second part moves to the question of the statutory processes for country-wide governance, that is, the relationship between the leadership of the CPC and the now rather mature socialist democratic system – or whole-process people's democracy. Here, the key is that the people own any decision made, from the grassroots level to the country-wide level. The third part pays attention to international implications, initially for the practice of communist and workers' parties in other countries (my specific example will be Australia), and then for political parties more generally.

2. From the Eight-Point Regulation and its Spirit to Rule of Law and Rule of Virtue

The eight-point regulation may be summarised as follows: improving the quality of investigation and research, streamlining meetings and activities, simplifying documents and briefings, regulating travel and visits, minimising security protocols so as to cause minimal disruption, improving news reporting, strictly regulating the publication of documents, and practising diligence and thrift. They were promulgated in December of 2012 and once again became the centre of Party building in 2025.

We should also keep in mind the history of the CPC since its founding in 1921 and the renewed emphasis on the risks of the "four winds," on the work-style of Party members and so on since the CPC's 18th National Congress in 2012. However, allow me a comment here concerning the eighth regulation, which is captured in a four-character phrase, 勤俭节约 *qínjiǎnjiéyuē*, to be diligent and thrifty. Many are the expressions of this deeply-held value in Chinese culture, but I would like to say that it this value is close to my heart. Why? My parents were immigrants from the Netherlands to Australia and this is also a traditional Dutch value to which I hold even today.

> In October of 2014 at the full assembly of the Fourth Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, Xi Jinping first mentioned the "seven malpratices." In order to seek promotion and great power, some officials, ignoring the party's political discipline and rules, have engaged in one or more of these malpractices:
>
> (1) Practising cronyism and sidelining those outside their circle;
>
> (2) Ganging together to form self-serving factions;
>
> (3) Making anonymous and false accusations against others and generating rumours;
>
> (4) Buying support and votes;
>
> (5) Promising official posts in exchange for personal gain and relying on favouritism for promotion;
>
> (6) Feigning compliance while obstructing in practice and acting as they please;
>
> (7) Practising insubordination and making baseless criticisms of Central Committee decisions.

However, I would like to pay attention to what is really a dialectical relation, between the eight-point regulation and its spirit, which leads to the dialectic of boundary and work-style, and ultimately between rule of law and rule of virtue. To begin with the eight-point regulation and its spirit, this embodies the relation between what to avoid and what should be promoted, the temptations to be negated and the values that should be upheld. We may put this in terms of strict enforcement of the regulations and the promotion of a healthy work-style. As it is said, "To cultivate oneself strictly means to enhance one's

party spirit, strengthen ideals and beliefs, elevate moral standards, pursue noble sentiments." We may put it in the following terms: the eight-point regulation indicates the boundary between what is acceptable and what is not acceptable; however, within this boundary we also need a positive model, a code of ethics, a work style to which all party members should adhere and seek to develop and promote.

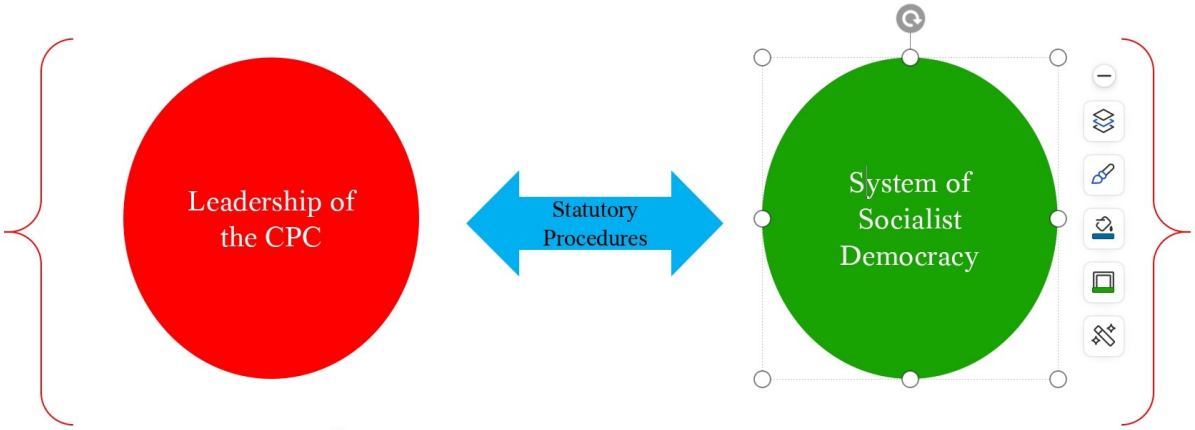
In many respects, this is a philosophical question, or a Marxist dialectical question. We may put this in terms of rule of law and rule of virtue, which is a distinctly Chinese contribution to the Marxist tradition of governance and thus a contribution to Marxist political philosophy. Unlike other types of governance, where rule of law is held to be supreme, the Chinese tradition gives us both rule of law and rule of virtue – albeit thoroughly and qualitatively transformed in light of Marxism.

As we know, developing a rule of law in the context of a socialist system has been a project that dates back more than 100 years to the beginnings of the Soviet Union. In China, the search for and development of a socialist rule of law has been a long road with many twists and turns. However, the unique contribution has been to bring the rule of virtue into a relation with the rule of law. This really is an excellent example of the "second integration," in which the basic principles of Marxism are integrated with the best of the traditional Chinese culture of governance.

3. Implications for Country-Wide Governance and Everyday Life

At this point, we move to consider the relation between inner-party governance and country-side governance. This is more than simply a process of infiltration, in the sense that that the practice of the eight-point regulation and its spirit by grassroots party branches infiltrates into society at large. Instead, I would like to emphasise a more systematic framework. In my earlier research, I have pointed out that a major achievement of the CPC has been to solve at last the problem of how to translate issues of inner-party governance to country-wide governance. More specifically, this concerns the process of transforming democratic centralism from an inner-party policy to the reality of country-wide governance. Understanding how to achieve this transformation has taken more than a century: it is not simply a case of transferring the inner-party practice of democratic centralism to country-wide governance (as was assumed in the Soviet Union). Instead, the process required new insights derived from practice.

Let me put it this way: the core principle is that the leadership of the CPC is enhanced through socialist democracy and socialist democracy is strengthened through the leadership of the CPC. Now for the breakthrough as to how this can be achieved: it is through the statutory processes of the socialist democratic system, or what we know as "whole-process people's democracy." In other words, the will of the Party, which has been drawn from careful research and insights from the people, becomes the will of the people through the whole system of statutory processes. These include rule of law and rule of virtue, the dialectical integration of both electoral and consultative democracy in light of China's experience, as well as the always developing process of integrating the party with the masses. To my mind, this has been a significant achievement in development China's governance.



"Whole-process people's democracy"

But what is the key? The key is that the people need to "own" the deliberations and decisions made. By "owning decisions" I mean that the people may make proposals, be involved in deliberations, discuss and debate them, and then accept as their own the policies and decisions made. This process relates to the eight-point regulation and its spirit, the statutory processes of country-wide democratic centralism, grassroots contact points for developing legislation, the levels of people's congresses and consultative conferences, the "Party-Masses Service Centres" and so on. From my perspective, this is a much more substantive and higher level of democracy than is found in Western countries.

4. International Influence of the "China Model"

As far as the international implications and influence of the "China model" are concerned, I will emphasise three aspects. The first concerns the international background, the second deals with the implications for all political parties, and the third concerns what various communist parties may learn from the "China model."

To begin with, more and more analysts agree that the few Western countries of the world are facing a multi-dimensional crisis – a crisis in economic, political, social, cultural, educational, and philosophical fields. I do not have time to go into detail here, especially in terms of the different approaches taken by scholars, but I would like to emphasise the political crisis for Western countries. Their political systems are fraying, breaking up, and in the process of transformation into another form. They have much to learn from China's experience. Of course, the multi-dimensional crisis of the West is only one aspect of a period of qualitative change in world history, of changes unseen in a century.

Further, it seems to me that all political parties in various countries should study and learn from the CPC's eight-point regulation and its spirit. To my mind, the regulation and its spirit are simply common sense: any political party should abide by these regulations and their spirit if they wish to seek legitimacy and approval of the common people. Strict and enforced discipline along with a higher level of values and work style than among ordinary citizens is a must for any political party. I would go as so far as to say that in our time the CPC is setting a new standard for all political parties worldwide, and it is a high standard indeed.

> The General Secretary observed in March 2025, during an inspection visit of Guizhou: "The Central Committee has decided to carry out in-depth study and education on the implementation of the Eight-Point Regulation and its spirit throughout the party. This is a key task for party building this year. Party organisations at all levels should carefully organise and implement this decision, and encourage party members and cadres to enhance their resolve and form good habits, so as to unite people's hearts and minds and inspire them to work hard and with a fine style. We must ensure that party spirit, conduct, and discipline are all addressed simultaneously, and that efforts to improve party conduct, enforce discipline, and fight corruption are closely integrated. Let us carry forward the spirit of the Long March and the spirit of Zunyi, and energetically forge ahead on the new Long March."

Finally, I would like to say a little more concerning the implications of the China model for communist and workers' parties worldwide. Here we need to distinguish between parties that lead socialist

countries (Vietnam, Laos, DPRK, and Cuba) and parties that are still in the long process of gaining such leadership. The former group have their own histories and experiences from which to draw, but have also learned from each other. However, the latter group has more to learn from the “China model.”

While there are many communist and workers’ parties throughout the world, some smaller and some larger, I would like to draw from my experience as a member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). The CPA was established in 1920, soon after the October Revolution in Russia, and the party has a long and complicated history. Over the last decade or more, the CPA has emerged from a period of survival in the 1990s and early 2000s to a period of party-building and development and is regaining in some respects a role of leadership in some parts of the working class. During this process of party building, the CPA has always adhered to the principle of seeking truth from facts and conducting in-depth research, focusing on enhancing its understanding of China and the Communist Party of China. As a result, it has gained a deeper grasp of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the cinification of Marxism, and Chinese-style modernisation.

To be realistic, the CPA is still a small but growing party, but it seems to me that the CPA may still learn the following from the CPC:

1) The dialectical unity of regulation and spirit, or disciplinary boundaries and the higher ethical standards for a Party member. Currently, there is an imbalance in the relation between regulation and spirit; in other words, the spirit or work style of party members still needs to be improved.

2) At present, the CPA is gradually recovering its earlier practices of democratic centralism for inner-party governance. However, since Australia is not yet a socialist country, not much thought has been devoted to considering how democratic centralism may be implemented for country-wide governance through the statutory processes of socialist democracy.

3) To go a little further, the CPA has not yet given adequate attention to the question of culture. To be clear: while the CPA has learned well the lesson of the “first integration” and seeks to integrate the basic principles of Marxism with Australia’s concrete realities, it has not yet addressed and understood the need for the “second integration.” I think here especially of how the basic principles of Marxism may be integrated with the best of traditional indigenous culture in Australia.

5. Concluding Reflections

In this paper, I have addressed the following: the dialectical unity of regulation and spirit, and of rule of law and rule of virtue; the statutory processes for country-wide practice of democratic centralism; the people owning decisions made; then the implications for worldwide political parties, and especially communist and workers’ parties (with a focus on the CPA).

By way of conclusion, I would like to tell a small story. Some years ago, I was participating in a conference in Yalta, Crimea (now once again part of Russia). The mother of the conference organiser was also participating in the conference; she is both from Russia and a long-time member of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. At one point my host’s mother made a comment: even today in Russia, the cultural assumption is that a communist party member is honest, forthright, concerned with others and not themselves, and lives a simple and frugal life. These are the some of the moral standards, the ethical values, the work style of a member of the communist party.

Jaixing, Zhejiang Province:
Conference on Political Parties and Party Politics
November 2025

‘Workers and Oppressed People of the World, Unite!’ The Leninist Party and the Question of Cadre

Christian Goopy

“I remember that we, the Bolshevik delegates, huddled together in a group, gazing at Lenin and asking his advice. I remember Lenin bitingly replied though clenched teeth: ‘Don’t whine comrades, we are bound to win, for we are right’.”

• Stalin (Speech to the Kremlin military school 1924)

The October Revolution and Australia

This is a better world for the October Revolution. No other movement in human history has expanded human development at the scale and speed or reached the same heights of success. Australia is a better country for the work and contributions of communists. Disagree or doubt? Let’s consider the alternative.

Imagine for instance a world in which the October Revolution never happened. Would European empires stretch across and still chain the world? How many more genocides would have occurred and succeeded? Would education and healthcare remain largely restricted to the privileged and wealthy? Would open and unashamed racism and sexism remain dominant in our cultures? Would Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders still be classified as flora and fauna? Would women be able to open bank accounts without a husband, or have lives and careers of their own? What would be the incidence of workplace deaths from unsafe workplaces? Would humanity have landed on the moon without the space race? Would Australians today see themselves as loyal subjects of the British Empire rather than as Australians?

A world in which the October Revolution never happened would be one that saw the definitive triumph of barbarism. Imagine the nuclear age emerging in a world divided between feuding colonial empires? We would all be worse and poorer for it. Without the Soviet Union, without the Bolsheviks and without Lenin, many of the social, cultural, and economic conditions we experience that have been won through militant struggle may have never happened. If they were won they may have taken longer to achieve at a higher price. When we imagine the alternative without it, we can see that the Great October Socialist Revolution altered the course of human development.

The Russian empire was shattered as both a bulwark of reaction in Europe and Asia, and as the weakest link in an imperial chain of oppression that bound nations and peoples across the world. Through the deepest unity of theory and practice bound together with conscious organisation, socialism was brought from abstract theorising to concrete practice for the first time. Oppressed nations and peoples began re-emerging from crushing imperial exploitation, and national liberation movements spread. The emergence of the Soviet Union proved in practice that oppression can be overthrown. It proves that a society that ends exploitation and focused towards promoting social liberation and human development can be built today.

The Russian Revolution and the wave of liberation struggles it unleashed have left traces within every country on earth. In many European countries Soviets emerged alongside popular uprisings. Troops to be deployed to intervene into the Russian civil war mutinied. Strikes and unrest swept across the world, contributing to the end of the First World War as millions of working and progressive peoples saw that it is possible for revolution to succeed. Through its inspiration and concrete example, and through the founding and spreading of communist parties following the revolution to organise for fundamental change, workers and oppressed people across the world took action to become the masters of their own destiny.

In her 1956 reflection, “Why I am a Communist,” Australian novelist and writer Kathrine Susane Prichard recalled the immediate impact the news of the October revolution reaching Melbourne in 1917 had on her and how it changed her:

> “Then crossing Prince’s Bridge in Melbourne, one evening, I saw newspaper posters about the

> revolution in Russia. They were flaring against the sunset.
>
> In a moment I remembered those Russian friends I had met in 1908, and realised their dream had come true. Until then, despite all my wanderings and searching, I had not heard of Karl Marx or communism. I lost no time finding out all I could about them.
>
> But it was not until I had read “Socialism Utopian and Scientific'' by Engels, and other works by Marx and Engels, that I felt firm ground under my feet. At last, I told myself, I had found a logical explanation of the poverty and injustices in the social system under which we are living: a complete tracing of social development through the ages; a philosophy derived from scientific investigation into the nature of actual, observable material from which the earth and everything on it, evolved.
>
> ‘Then felt I like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken’.
>
> Finding this exposition of communism was like discovering a new world: a world with a social system created by the organised workers so that they could use their hands and brains for the welfare of their country and people.
>
> I had a vision of that new world for which the process of social evolution had been maturing over the centuries: of feudalism driven by revolution of the peoples against it, into capitalism. Of capitalism developing the industrial forces which would inevitably lead to socialism — although, perhaps, not without violent conflicts. Under a system of ownership and administration by a majority of the people, the working class in any nation, I realised that one set of human beings could no longer exploit and cruelly abuse others for personal profit.”

Katherine Susane Prichard became a founding member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), founded in Sydney in October 1920 out of existing socialist parties, ex-IWW militants and trade unionists. While the decision to form a communist party was inspired by the success of the Russian Revolution, it was primarily a product of developments within the Australian working-class movement. The ultra-left IWW abstention from politics surrendered leadership of the working-class movement to right-opportunists in the ALP, contributing to the defeat of the 1917 general strike. The lesson that the working class cannot abstain from political struggle and that it must embrace all forms of struggle was a definitive impetus to the formation of the CPA.

The establishment of the CPA had effects on the development of Australian political life that may have been difficult to envision by the comrades that founded it. In Sydney the existence of heritage buildings in the CBD, parks, neighbourhoods, and remnant pockets of pre-colonisation vegetation owe their existence to the efforts of communist and militant builders labourers striving to transform their union into a militant fighting union. Communists contributed to many of the improvements in living conditions, and to the development of an Australian culture distinct from the narrow and imperial British culture.

The considerable rise in post-Second World War living standards experienced by the working class in Australia is also a product of communist activity. The international competition between capitalism and socialism gave the Soviet Union a role as the “trade union” of the international working class. Concessions were granted to forestall and divert away from revolution, particularly in the form of the welfare state. Within Australian society communists won leading positions within trade unions, industries, cultural and artistic organisations, raising demands and lifting the capacity of workers to struggle for more. Simultaneously the capitalist class went on the offensive, sending troops to break the miners strike of 1949, creating ASIO, and attempting to ban the communist party. The Liberal Menzies government adopted a policy of universal home ownership based on the privatisation of public housing that had been built following the Second World War. This consciously aimed to create a mass property-owning constituency for conservative politics.

It is no accident that the trend towards improving living standards among the working class throughout the capitalist west stalled and went into reverse with the development of the counter-revolution within the Soviet Union. The splintering of the communist movement divided cadres against each other, and opportunist mistakes greatly assisted the Australian ruling class. The Accords, which reduced the power and stature of the Australian trade union movement through restructuring and openness are analogous to the counter-revolution within the Soviet Union, especially perestroika and glasnost.

Today, under the state-monopoly capitalist stage, Australia has become a small, mean, pessimistic and culturally impoverished society that is adrift in the currents of history. With class struggle at an ebb, generations of young Australians have never experienced a militant trade union movement. Wages and incomes have stagnated while profits have soared. Gains made in previous eras are being eroded, with more Australians in insecure and inadequately paid work. Media ownership is concentrated into Murdoch’s News Corp and run as a political campaigning tool for the extreme right that fosters racism, prejudice, and division.

Universal home-ownership has given way to property speculation, having turned houses from homes into the chief means of storing wealth within Australia. Artistic, scientific, and cultural institutions are on life support, while billions are available for nuclear submarines raising regional tensions through the AUKUS pact. The Australian government openly attacks democratic rights, seeking to demonise and suppress the mass movement in solidarity with Palestine. Australia's former colony, Papua-New Guinea, through the Pukpuk alliance has had its independence eroded and now forms part of an Australian sphere of influence in support of US global dominance. The climate crisis looms large on the horizon. Australians are under significant financial strain and are lonelier, more socially isolated, and more miserable then ever with rates of psychological distress soaring. This situation is unsustainable. It is producing the basis for far reaching changes to occur within society.

This situation will not inevitably lead to progressive or revolutionary outcomes. Without concerted, purposeful, and disciplined intervention on a mass scale these circumstances could lead to a politics of despair taking deeper root within Australia. A movement animated by despair akin to the MAGA movement within the USA that brought Trump into power would be eagerly supported by the Murdoch media and the most reactionary sections of the capitalist class in Australia. It would deteriorate conditions only further and tighten the chains on the Australian people. How can this be forestalled and turned around? How can we break the chains that the bourgeoisie tightens? How can the growing crisis within Australian capitalism be channelled into a revolutionary direction?

Life became better for millions of Australians when the communist party was a major force in public life. Under today's conditions even the winning of progressive reforms requires revolutionary actions. Most revolutionary is the dispelling through practical experiences the powerlessness and helplessness that the system engenders. Empowerment and gaining the belief that change is possible and achievable is an essential step in the growing of class consciousness. For those seeking fundamental change in support of a better life for the millions of workers within Australia and across the world, in support of peace, in support of people's democracy, to advance progress, and win liberation, there has never been a more urgent time to use the lessons of the most historically successful movement for change to guide action today. There has never been a more urgent time to build and strengthen the communist party. To study the ideas and theoretical underpinnings of building communist parties gives communists the basis for undertaking better action in building the party. Lenin's definitive contributions to the theory and practice of the working-class movement and its party offer essential guidance for this urgent task.

Leninism is a stage in the development of the working class as a class for itself

Marxism is a comprehensive theory of the laws of historical development of human society. It enables an objective analysis of the world as it is that is proudly partisan in its application. Marxism reveals that the class struggle is the motive force driving forward historical development. Social classes, being groups of people with common material and social interests based upon their relationship to the means of production and as a result to property and power, must become conscious of their own interests to take actions in support of advancing their interests.

Being determines consciousness; people must first solve the basic problems of life and meet the needs of food, shelter, and medicine, before they can think, engage in culture, create art, engage in science, or philosophise about the human condition. How people guarantee their existence therefore shapes their values, worldview, and politics. It determines how they organise to protect what they have and how they aim to go forwards in meeting their material needs. It influences the shape of the state, religion, philosophy, culture and all other popular ideas which can themselves influence how the products and necessities of life are created and distributed.

Arising from this and under the capitalist mode of production, the working class – being all who must sell their labour power and without ownership of means of production to work themselves – is identified as the sole consistently revolutionary class. This is not due to an imbued morality within the working class, or from a particular tendency towards radical politics or rebellious worldviews, or because of any particular subjective identity that may arise within it. It is due to the fact that the objective and material interests of the working class under capitalism are mutually exclusive with that of the capitalist ruling class, the wealthy property owning and exploiting class. There can be no long-term, stable, or enduring compromises between them. Such compromises cost one side far more than the other. When one gains the other loses. In

capitalist countries like Australia the majority of the population has a class position within the working class and as such has a direct material stake in the ending of the capitalist system. Just by following the material and social interests of the working class we can walk the narrow and treacherous path to socialism.

Lenin, a great leader, revolutionary, and pioneer of the working-class struggle, continued the development of Marxism's revolutionary core. Lenin's greatness owes to his discovery – alongside and with the core leadership and cadres of the Bolsheviks and through continual struggle against opportunist forces – the universal practical principles for the making and winning of revolution. In *Foundations of Leninism* these are summarised as "the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, and the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular."

Leninism rests upon a singular principle: the working class must win. All other principles whether they be:

- The disciplined cadre party of a new type as the leading force within the struggle,
- The united front of the working class to organise the working class and all progressive peoples in support of liberation,
- The struggle against of all forms of opportunism that undermine the struggle, and encourages workers to sell themselves for trinkets when they are worth more than all the riches in the world,
- The importance of unity, particularly unity in action, and the proven means of organising together through democratic centralism,
- The raising of the working class to the level of state power through the dictatorship of the proletariat,

are all derivatives of this singular uncompromising principle of ensuring that in the decisive moment of struggle it is our class that wins. These principles are developed through experience and practice in the class struggle. They are a collection of the experiences and methods that empowered the working class and assisted it to succeed in winning unmatched victories in the struggle for communism. This struggle is for the creation of a world that abolishes poverty, superstition, war, and exploitation in all its forms, and which unleashes the creative potential of humanity.

Before the October Revolution questions swirled within the working-class movement as to how the working class could take power, what socialism would look like in practice, and how the working-class could best be organised? The working-class movement internationally tried every possible approach. Some looked to the example of the spontaneity of the French Revolution and thought that this is how revolution would occur. Some thought that a military coup by an underground group of revolutionaries was the way forward. Other figures in the working-class movement thought that the gains in democratic rights made it possible to gradually reform capitalism towards socialism through a social-democratic government. Others, looking at the betrayals and opportunism associated with parliamentary approaches, rejected the political contest all together and believed that a syndicalist approach deploying a general strike of the whole working class could abolish capitalism in one massive and direct action.

Practice is the sole determinant of truth. Every one of these approaches failed in practice. Spontaneous risings come and go no matter how disruptive they may be. Without organisation, mass mobilisations leave no enduring effects. No small group of individuals, no matter how dedicated or talented, can substitute themselves for the mass movement of people. Nor can extreme actions by individuals replace mass action. In all cases, these ultra-left actions have consequences that harm the movement and which inhibit further activity. The structures of the existing bourgeois state are shaped by the bourgeoisie and are designed for the bourgeoisie to govern themselves and society in support of their common class interests. They neither came to power as a class through elections, nor will they tolerate being voted out. This is notwithstanding the co-opting pressures of parliament and the development of parliamentary cretinism that have led to social-democrats abandoning any pretence of seeking the dialectical transformation of capitalism. The apparent radicalism and commitment to organising the class against the boss by syndicalists neglects the political struggle, discounts the importance of struggling for progressive reforms in the here and now, and as such surrenders this struggle to the enemies of the working class. Just because parliament has become obsolete for us does not mean it has become obsolete for the majority of people. As is said in the CPA program:

> "It is necessary for the revolutionary movement and the working class to master and be prepared to use

> all forms of struggle. Any limitations on forms of struggle will create weaknesses which will be used by the ruling class to retain its hold."

The victory of the October Revolution reveals the essential elements for the raising of the working class into the position of the ruling class of society. Lenin's personal qualities and capacities, combined with the historical circumstances in which he lived, facilitated the early discovery of these universal laws. His concrete role as one of the finest leaders of the working class definitively emancipated millions of workers, peasants, and oppressed nationalities within the Russian empire, and triggered an international revolutionary wave. These achievements are immortal and defined international politics within the 20th century and up to the present.

However, Lenin himself was not essential for the existence of these laws. While Lenin, the man, may have been a product of chance, "Leninism" is a necessary stage in the historical development of the working class as a class for itself. At some point, in another time and place and with a far higher cost, these principles would have been uncovered. They are a product of physical laws determining the motion of matter, the patterns and flows of energy, the arising of life as a leap in the organisation of matter, and the emergence of human and class society. "Leninism" arises from the necessity of organisation inherent to the structure of the working class, and its optimal functioning in the struggle to secure its material and social interests. These interests have no limit; they extend to the entire world, all within it, and perhaps beyond.

A consequence arising from the material basis of Leninism is that the essence of Lenin's approach and achievements are reproducible across time, cultures, and contexts so long as the working-class exists. If the universal principles are adapted to meet the concrete and particular needs of the day they will advance working-class interest. This is why Marxism-Leninism offers no ready-made schema and is heavily degraded when ossified or reduced to a dogma. It achieves its transformative and scientific role when utilised as a guide to action, as a tool kit for discovery, analysis, and practical activity in support of winning liberation and transforming the world. It is philosophy, analysis, and a body of knowledge in support of the basic objective of developing the movements and forms necessary to ensure that the working class wins.

Development through the struggle for an independent class position – a historical outline

The emergence of the working class, as part of the development of capitalism from within European-style feudal society, is simultaneously a necessary condition for the existence of capitalism and the guarantee of its doom. Emerging from the demolition of ancient and rural modes of life and concentrated into towns and cities, the working class was formed out of a ruined mass that was concentrated and organised for maximising production and profits. The capitalist system through its summoning of historically unprecedented forces of production dissolved all previous certainties, leaving in its place permanent disruption. As Marx and Engels observe in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*:

> "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind."

As feudal social relations came into contradiction with the rising productive forces of capitalism, the emerging working class along with sections of the peasantry joined with the bourgeoisie in its revolutionary struggles against feudalism. Freed from the fetters to its development, capitalism unleashed a series of industrial revolutions and swept away the archaic patterns of life of a decayed feudalism. With the scramble to develop and seize new markets, it remade the world in its image, a world of unprecedented wealth, exploitation, and squalor.

The emergence of capitalism has also led to the emergence of the movement towards communism as a historical trend and the destination of historical development. This arises out of the conflict of mutually exclusive material, social, and political interests. The growth of the working class and its concentration through industrial production intensified the contradiction between the divergent interests of the working and capitalist classes, and between private ownership of the means of production and the socialised nature of production.

Fights over the price and conditions of labour expose the nature of the system and place into full view the basic class contradiction within capitalism. They also educate through experience certain truths of what advances the interests of the working class, being that there are many of us and few of them, organisation is essential, unity is strength, division is death, and that the bosses need workers for production to occur. The workers however do not need the bosses. All elements of

working-class success ultimately are based upon unity in action. These struggles also begin to reveal what the real interests of the working class are and who opposes them. Success in setting better prices and conditions for selling our labour power does not change the fact that we are selling ourselves. The destination of working-class struggle will be the abolition of wage- and all other forms of slavery and exploitation. This becomes a concrete reality only when the working class frees itself from the subordination of its interests to hostile and alien class interests and wins the struggle for an independent class position that enables it to organise for its own liberation. This is when it struggles against and defeats opportunism in all its forms.

The working class first developed trade union consciousness under conditions of extreme repression and formed the first trade unions and mutual aid associations, at first drawing from the historical experience of guilds. These craft unions succeeded in lessening the intensity of exploitation of sections of the working class and ultimately forced the bourgeoisie to a legal recognition of the trade unions. However, these early craft unions were unable to represent the total interests of the working class. The sectional and craft differences between unions at times were even exploited to divide one section of workers against another, ensuring that all lose out in the end except the bosses. Some trade union officials became accustomed to the bones thrown by the bourgeoisie and came to play a role in restraining the struggle of the working class, working to subordinate working-class interests to that of capital.

Furthermore, confrontation of interests between the working class and the capitalists is not restricted to the workplace. These divergent interests extend through society up to and including questions of state power, and how and in what circumstances it is used. In England in the 1840s the Chartist movement emerged to expand democratic rights and extend the franchise from the hands of the bourgeoisie into wider sections of the population. Upon winning an expansion in democratic rights, the movement to form a political party that can express class interests in parliament emerged. In Australia following the defeat of the great shearers strike of the 1890s, the experience of the colonial parliaments sending the military to crush the strikes at gunpoint led directly to the formation of the Australian Labor Party.

The social-democratic parties were never ‘just’ working-class parties, since they took in petty-bourgeois and religious social reformers alongside trade unionists. Their mixed nature brought together diverse and divergent interests that competed in the formation of policy and organisational positions, leading to accommodations to the interests of the bourgeoisie. In Europe, parties such as the German SPD began with explicit affiliations with Marxism and a commitment to revolutionary change and gradually abandoned these positions. The Australian Labor Party was never founded with such an understanding, largely adopting a petty-bourgeois ‘liberal’ program and outlook. The 19th century saw other developments in the working-class movement. The emergence of the first and second internationals developed an international organisation of the working class that was coordinated across borders. In the revolutionary crisis of France in 1871, the Paris Commune showed that it was possible for the working class to take power itself through revolutionary means. Its defeat demonstrated the essential need for a revolution to be able to defend itself and its gains.

Within the Russian empire capitalism arrived late compared with its western neighbours. Serfdom was abolished in the 1860s, and throughout the 19th century feudal modes of life and existence persisted alongside the slow emergence of the capitalist mode of production in towns, cities, and specific regions. The ancient, superstitious, and crushing autocracy also repressed the development of democratic rights and placed certain restrictions on the strength and development of the capitalist class within Russia. Reform movements among intellectuals and the petty-bourgeoisie came in fits and starts, with their failures driving some towards terroristic methods seeking to accelerate social change.

Marxism arrived in Russia as an intellectual movement through Plekhanov and at first spread slowly. This movement became organised through reading groups and study circles that grew to involve local working-class and political questions. In this context it came into contact with existing ideas, organisations, and methods of work developed in the underground movements that were resisting Tsarist absolutism. Lenin became part of and developed these reading and study circles, which in some localities had deepened to take on roles of supporting and expanding working class struggles. He proposed uniting the disparate groups through a common all-Russia newspaper to serve as a way of connecting them all. This paper was *Iskra,* which served the role of connecting the separate Marxist groups into the

Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP).

While the RSDLP brought together the work of previously separate groups and enabled the development of working-class struggle, it also brought together considerable differences of opinion and much baggage from both within the Russian empire and within the international working-class movement. These differences were focus on the nature of the party, who should be admitted, the conditions of membership, and how it should be organised. These differences were also expressed in two distinct positions. One denied the possibility of working-class state power at that time in the historical process and argued that state power should be in the hands of the bourgeoisie, whose task was to complete the historical process of capitalism after which socialism would become possible through revolutionary changes. The other saw working-class state power as being essential for social and economic progress, and that the process of revolutionary change was possible through breaking the weakest link in the capitalist imperialist chain. These differences, between subservience to the interests of capital and the development of an independent working-class position, were organisationally solidified into the Menshevik and Bolshevik factions of the RSDLP (although there were also differences among the Bolsheviks).

The core animating difference that divided the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks at the second RSDLP congress of 1903 were expressed through the question of organisation and the nature of the party. The Mensheviks sought to build an “inclusive” and broad party on the model of the western social-democratic parties that were organised primarily to contest elections. Payment of a nominal membership fee and superficial agreement with party policies were sufficient conditions of membership. The Bolsheviks sought to build a “selective” cadre party of professional revolutionaries working to support the tasks of organising the working-class and other progressive forces in society for revolutionary struggle against Trarist autocracy and capitalism. Additional requirements included activity within a party organisation and actively working for the implementation of the party program.

Lenin’s polemical, farsighted, uncompromising, and leading role led to a unique achievement: the separation of opportunist and revolutionary currents in the working-class movement, not merely in theory but also in practical organisation. The principled nature of the split between the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions of the RSDLP liberated the advanced sections of the working class and revolutionary sections of the peasantry from the morass of opportunism. The 1905 revolution, which arose primarily from internal contradictions of the decaying Russian Empire and was aided by defeat at the hands of Japan in the Russo-Japanese war, forced concessions that expanded democratic rights and provided valuable revolutionary lessons. These included the relationship between objective factors of internal development and the subjective factors leading to a revolutionary crisis, the political general-strike, and the emergence of the Soviets. The Bolsheviks worked with the working class in creating the first Soviets, or revolutionary councils, and recognised these as a fundamental organ for supporting the creation of a new society. This creative development of the working class was decried and rejected by the Mensheviks. In the difficult period of counter-revolution before the outbreak of the First World War, the split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks resulted in two completely separate organisations.

By the beginning of the 20th century the world had been divided between competing European colonial empires. The outbreak of the First World War led to a bloody struggle for the re-division of the world between the imperial powers. At this decisive moment the degenerating social-democratic parties fully succumbed to opportunism in their betrayal of the working class, with member parties of the Second International voting in support of war credits in their respective countries. This led to the eventual collapse of the Second International and precipitated splits throughout Europe. These parties voted to side with the capitalists of their own countries against the workers of other countries, voting to send workers to kill workers. The revolutionary position was to recognise that the enemy is internal, and that soldiers should turn their guns against their officers and the bourgeoisie. That is, to turn a war of states into a war of classes. In this betrayal of the working class, an opportunity for the revolution was missed. Lenin devoted immense energy while in exile to understanding what had happened and what could be learned. At times, Lenin expressed despondency in that he might never again see revolution in Russia in his lifetime.

However, due to internal contradictions, the Russian empire broke first in early 1917 with a mass demonstration in St Petersburg for bread. This demonstration was fired upon. The mass uprising that followed achieved in days what the

1905 revolution never accomplished: the abdication of the Tsar and the emergence of bourgeois democracy. They led to the re-emergence of the Soviets and the emergence of dual power between the Soviets and the provisional government. When Lenin returned to Russia from exile, the Bolsheviks were focused on organising the revolution with the slogans such as “all power to the soviets.” A class alliance was forged between the working class and peasantry, which had a revolutionary interest in the redistribution of land, along with the slogan “peace, land, and bread.” This deepened the unity between workers and other progressive layers.

The twists and turns of the revolution, the near misses of arrests, suppression, and survival, ended with the meticulously organised October Revolution of 1917. In the Petrograd Soviet Lenin announced to cheers and applause the beginning of the construction of a new socialist order. This success shifted the centre of the revolutionary movement eastward, to Russia. Russia’s exit from the First World War led to an effort at invasion by 14 imperialist countries in support of the counter-revolutionary “white” forces and with the aim of strangling the revolution. The formation of a Red Army, using proven organising methods and the development of institutions and forms of organisation in defence of the revolution, overpowered the reactionaries, while the outbreak of revolutions within the imperialist powers and mutinies in their armies led to the end of the war and the defeat of the intervention into Russia. With the establishment of the Comintern in 1919, and the foundation of communist parties across the world a new phase began in international working-class struggle.

Further developments in the party of a new type occurred in the light of practice and experience. Factions came to be understood as attacks on the unity of the working-class party and a vector for opportunism. Far from expanding democracy, they constitute a fundamental attack on both the unity and democracy of the working class. Simultaneously, it was recognised that the smashing of the Russian empire was also the smashing of the prison of nations. The working-class revolution was combined with mass peasant revolts and the liberation struggles of oppressed nations, with profound implications for colonised and oppressed peoples of the world. This struggle saw the adoption of a modified slogan to that used by Marx and Engels in the Manifesto to reflect the path of liberation opened by the October Revolution: “Workers and oppressed peoples of the world: Unite!”

The party the working class needs

The Leninist party emerged from the development of the working class and its confrontation with the problems of every-day and political life. While the events that led to the emergence of Marxism-Leninism within the Russian empire were due to specific conditions at the time, it was a necessary historical development that the Leninist solution to the problem of how to organise the class to make revolution would emerge. As the working-class struggle developed in the light of practice, the party of the new type as a selective cadre party of the most advanced section of the working class emerged.

The development of class consciousness is uneven within the class. The capacity to act on this consciousness is less common. The combination of class consciousness and willingness to act is how we identify advanced sections of the working class. This is supplemented by progressive people of other class backgrounds that consciously choose to ally with the working class and consciously choose to act in support of their interests from the recognition that their liberation is bound up with ours. The party gathers the advanced sections of the working class alongside progressive individuals. Simultaneously, the party must develop the capacity of its members to struggle and protect itself from hostile infiltration by enemies and incorrect ideas.

The process of building the party organisation gathers together those who are most willing to act. From here organisational needs emerge, being the maintenance of unity of action in an ever-changing world while under continual ideological assault. The question of how individuals coordinate to act together, develop common understandings of the problems facing themselves, determine priorities and allocate resources, are really questions of democracy.

Democracy is a question of class unity and organisation. The form of democracy conforms to the life and habit of the class it serves. In Australia and most capitalist countries, democracy – limited to periodic elections – is popularly understood in terms that are hostile to the proper and optimal functioning of the working class as a class for itself. Liberal democracy is the democracy of the bourgeoisie and is structurally part of the bourgeois state. Liberalism as a philosophy and ideology is based upon an assertion that the expansion of the rights of the individual expands social and economic progress. It emerges from the life and functioning of the bourgeoisie as a

class that exists in continual competition and struggle with itself but with common interests with respect to the working class. The capitalist class needs both an independent umpire to fairly resolve the differences among itself and the capacity to unleash state power upon its class enemies, as well as to protect the system of private property.

Liberal democracy, the basic system in most developed capitalist countries, is a concrete expression of liberalism in the form of the state. It is based upon government built upon the consent of the governed, equality before the law, separation of powers, representative government formed by elections, one person one vote, and a professional bureaucracy. This system played a progressive role in the struggles against feudalism, and some of its achievements will continue into the next mode of production just as surrounding us today are the inventions of feudalism. However, today liberal phraseology serves to cloak a hidden dictatorship that protects and expands the exploitation and immiseration of the majority, while its encouragement of individualism in all its forms draws workers back into approaches where they will always lose. It defines democracy in such a way to ensure that the people will always be living off scraps and thus be shrunken in stature.

Democratic centralism – first identified in 1904-1905 – is the democracy of the working class; it is how we collectively make decisions and act together while becoming more united in the process. Workers as individuals will always lose against capitalist individuals. As a collective we can overpower them. Democratic centralism is how we unite, advance, and win. It is not a metaphysical combination of democracy and centralism, nor a spectrum between these concepts. Rather it is a dialectically united process of freedom in discussion, unity in action, and the maintenance of strict organisational discipline.

Within the party it is a privilege to be part of the decision-making process, and this privilege comes with the obligation to carry out the agreed-upon decision. This does not require agreement with the decision, rather it requires action in support of the decision. In the development of a large and complex organisation, this leads to the development of levels of organisation and leadership connected to the grass roots through the internal democratic process. This includes the election of all leadership bodies by appropriately representative meetings, the two-way flows of information, the use of democratic methods of persuasion through political argument, and the binding observance of correctly-made decisions of higher party bodies by lower bodies. It also leads to the development of comradely norms and standards of behaviour that reinforce unity and build trust. When democratic centralism is fully adhered to individuals act together with a collective strength and wisdom that exceeds that of the individuals comprising the collective.

This organised force is crucial for developing the arguments and organising the actions needed to transform our circumstances. When we reflect on previous revolutionary struggles across the world it becomes possible to see what kind of communist party our class needs. It also becomes clear why being a member of the communist party is and must be a conscious political choice. It is a choice to embark upon a life of struggle, of hard work, and of discipline for winning fundamental change.

Lenin, in arguing for a party of professional revolutionaries, was arguing for a party centred on a tightly organised cadre force that embarks on struggle wherever the people are. These cadres would take positions of leadership widely throughout the community and be tightly bound together through a common political and organisational approach in support of the development of socialism. The cadre has been long recognised as being essential to the proper development of communist parties and the class struggle. Cadres are communist party members that play an essential functional and political role. Cadres can be defined and identified through:

1. a substantial ideological commitment to struggle for communism,

2. a practical expression of this commitment to building up, improving, and maintaining organisation of the working class over the course of a substantial section of their life.

Cadres are professional and theoretically developed activist organisers within the party and working-class movement. Cadres are more than activists: they are professional revolutionaries, local leaders of the working class, and crucial organisational functionaries. Wherever cadres go the organisation of the party and the working class should increase and be expanded. Cadres are essential for decisions and initiatives of the central committee to be applied in practice and for the proper functioning of the whole structure of the party. Cadres are also essential for the party to properly respond to situations in society and at the grassroots of the party. Well-developed cadres will in their work develop activists around them

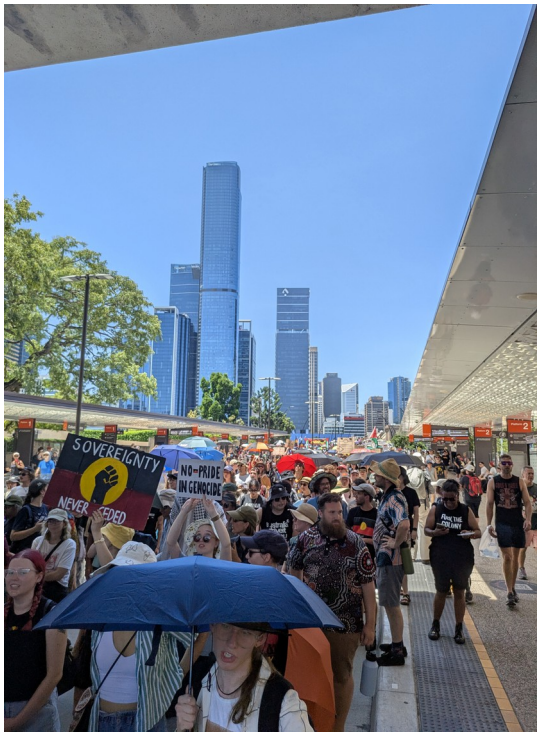
into additional cadres. They will uplift and encourage others into making a better contribution.

If we consider the enormous task of changing our society and how many cadres would be needed in which roles, the shape of a communist party that is mass in scale and comprised of the advanced section of the class takes shape. It is clear why Stalin recognised that cadres determine everything. This cadre force could be envisioned to include:

- leaders of trade unions,
- delegates and activists of major workplaces (strategic factories, hospitals, depots, intermodals, warehouses, universities, banks, mines, public agencies and departments),
- professional party employees based around a national high-reach publication and regional organisers and offices,
- academics, professors, and teachers,
- local councillors and community activists,
- organisers of NGO's and community campaigns,
- employees and leaders of cooperatives,
- parliamentarians able to act as tribunes of the people and professional mavericks seeking to discredit and expose the failure of the existing system.

A party with this reach and this many leaders of workers in these many places would be one with hundreds of branches organised within workplaces, industries, communities, and localities. The party would be in the mines, docks, hospitals, research facilities, and intermodals. The party would be in childcare centres, on farms, in truck stops and rest centres, in server hubs and in the banks. It is one that would be at the heart of a movement that embraces the whole working class and would be part of the ordinary lives of workers.

This force would be supported by and would organise the working class and friendly forces in their area and build up and strengthen the greatest possible united front against capitalism. This is the force that would be necessary to be able to take a potential revolutionary movement up to the stage of mass, political, and general strikes, begin the development of dual power by building soviets through the political and general strikes, and extract considerable reforms if it is not possible to proceed further than this. For the working class to become a class for itself and win the battle for democracy this is the communist party our class needs.



Invasion Day 2026: Brisbane and Sydney

Multipolarity and Chinese Modernisation – A synopsis of *Nation, State and Class*

David Matters

> "Tantae molis erat, to establish the 'eternal laws of Nature' of the capitalist mode of production, to complete the process of separation between labourers and conditions of labour, to transform, at one pole, the social means of production and subsistence into capital, at the opposite pole, the mass of the population into wage labourers, into free labouring poor, that artificial product of modern society. If money, according to Augier, 'comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek', capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt" (Marx, *Capital* ch. 31).

Marxists under the science of historical materialism regard capitalism as a progress in human history. It is progressive in that it opens the road to the abolition of slavery in all its forms including wage slavery. That we have such an historical understanding of capitalism does not blind us to the negative features that accompany its historical rise. Its progress is in the fact that it socialises all production thus opening the road to socialism and communism. Our science is based on dialectical materialism and the progress of human society as a discovery and application of the laws governing historical materialism, which is the application of the laws of dialectical materialism to the development of human society.

We have under the auspices of the rise of merchant capital and usury the rise of manufacture and the embryo of the industrial and finance capitalists. Within the constraints of feudal agriculture, a revolution is set in place running concurrent with and feeding manufactory a process of "emancipation" but more correctly a driving from the land those who tilled the soil. Feeding this is the vast wars of conquest of extermination and displacement.

Capitalism develops first in Europe from the colonial conquests by Spain and Portugal and their blood-lust for gold we see first the Netherlands then England developing on top of and in conjunction with the city-states who foster the merchants and usurers who enslave the decaying feudal states in debt bondage.

To pay these debts the Dutch and then the English state push over the occupants of the land. The surplus population of the land is driven to the manufactures by the laws enacted by the monarchs who rule as absolute rulers. The first laws against the poor are enacted to force them towards wage slavery. The colonialists begin to enslave people and sell them into the colonies as chattel slaves.

It is on the back of the dispossession of the peoples in Asia and Africa of their very rights as human beings that these people were transported by the people smugglers of Europe under the control of the emerging capitalist states. State piracy and enslavement of whole nations form the backdrop and mainstay of the wealth of capitalist nations.

> "At present, all the wealth of society goes first into the possession of the capitalist ... he pays the landowner his rent, the labourer his wages, the tax and tithe gatherer their claims, and keeps a large, indeed the largest, and a continually augmenting share, of the annual produce of labour for himself. The capitalist may now be said to be the first owner of all the wealth of the community, though no law has conferred on him the right to this property... this change has been effected by the taking of interest on capital ... and it is not a little curious that all the law-givers of Europe endeavoured to prevent this by statutes, viz., statutes against usury. The power of the capitalist over all the wealth of the country is a complete change in the right of property, and by what law, or series of laws, was it effected?"

The author of *Nation, State and Class* should have remembered that revolutions are not made by laws.

> "The money capital formed by means of usury and commerce was prevented from turning into industrial capital, in the country by the feudal constitution, in the towns by the guild organisation. These fetters vanished with the dissolution of feudal society, with the expropriation and partial eviction of the country population" (Marx, *Capital*, ch. 31).

And to add further.

> "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalised the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief momenta of primitive accumulation. On their heels treads the commercial war of the European nations, with the globe for a theatre. It begins with the revolt of the Netherlands from Spain, assumes giant dimensions in England's Anti-Jacobin War, and is still going on in the opium wars against China, &c" (Marx, *Capital,* ch. 31).

As in each revolution a transformation in the form of the state comes into being, as Marx remarks:

> "The different momenta of primitive accumulation distribute themselves now, more or less in chronological order, particularly over Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England. In England at the end of the 17th century, they arrive at a systematical combination, embracing the colonies, the national debt, the modern mode of taxation, and the protectionist system. These methods depend in part on brute force, e.g., the colonial system. But, they all employ the power of the State, the concentrated and organised force of society, to hasten, hot-house fashion, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition. Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one. It is itself an economic power" (Marx, *Capital*, ch. 31).

The emergence and consolidation of capitalist states in western Europe, the late emergence of a unified German state, the system that emerged from the Samurai system of Japan, and the growing imperialism of the USA at first in north and south America set the stage for the distribution as enslavers of the west Europeans, the Nordics and the England as the strongest power for the distribution of empires between these nations.

Already in Marx we see an understanding of the role of the banks and the national debt as the driving force behind the conquest of nations, the enslavement of whole peoples and the atrocities of what we now term genocide committed in the name of these nations in service to the investment corporations whether they be the Dutch East India Company, the Bank of England, the English East India company and the many other trading corporations that formed a monopoly of trade with the colonies. The Dutch East India Company was one of the first multinational corporations and operated as a law unto itself taking slaves and executing defenders of the rights of the nations they conquered. Each of these and the other trading corporations waged wars with support of their home states. Piracy in the high seas was illegal by individuals but in the interest of the state was given a "respectable" name. Francis Drake as a pirate for England was called a "buccaneer." I am not sure what name Donald Trump wants to give to his pirates off the coast of Venezuela.

The rivalry of these Imperialist nations was increasingly settled by war between the competitors. Britain with a superior naval force was able to acquire the lions share. By around 1870 there was little of the world that had not been divided between the capitalist pirates. Germany and Japan and the USA came late to the feast. Russia and China were seen as ripe for plunder along with the crumbling Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires.

War was waged between empires such that the conflict between the Ottoman and Russian empires was preyed on by the English and French for gains. With the emergence of a Germany united through Prussian conquest, a struggle emerged where France lost some of its territories in the Franco-Prussian War as part of the price the French bourgeoisie paid for Prussian bayonets in the historic creation of the first proletarian state, the Paris Commune.

The breakup of the Ottoman Empire set Germany on a collision course with French and now British Imperialism (having united the Kingdoms of England and Scotland and subjecting Ireland and Wales). World War had become inevitable and only a united proletariat could have stopped it, but under the tutelage of opportunists the working peoples were led to betrayal and mass slaughter.

In Russia and Iran, the social democrats adopted positions against such betrayals but even there social democrats played a role as amongst the Mensheviks and other opportunists. After three long years the proletariat were moving to end the slaughter. The first Russian revolution ended the Tsarist autocracy and established a democratic republic. The second revolution ended the rule of the bourgeoisie and placed the revolutionary proletariat at the helm. In 1918 the Russian people set off on the path to socialism.

Revolutions in other belligerent nations such as Germany and the Austro-Hungarian empire added weight to the ending of the war. The imperialists were in a hurry to end their conflict so that they could free up forces to deal with the emerging proletarian and peasant power. Having ended their war with each other, they sent 19 imperialist armies to suppress the Russian peoples. In the ensuing civil war, they ere defeated by an ally of the oppressed nations who having been freed of capitalistic and feudalistic bondage in the most historic manner established first free unification of oppressed peoples in the Soviet Union in 1921.

The Soviet Union began assisting other oppressed nations throughout the world to begin the struggle against imperialist enslavement. The imperialist nations now including the USA, Britain, and France imposed savage conditions on Germany, seizing its colonies and redistributing them amongst themselves, along with harsh terms on the newly emerged republic of the German peoples. At this stage Italy and France were siding with the plunderers.

Britain, France and the USA tried to dismember China. Despite the intervention of Ho Chi Minh and patriots from other oppressed nations the

colonial powers sought to continue as before. Japan still occupied parts of Russia from their earlier colonial wars and Taiwan island from a previous colonial conquest, trying to force the Chinese people on the island to become Japanese.

Hong Kong and Macau were under foreign occupation as was the Bund in Shanghai. During trade negotiations with USA billionaires, Lenin offered concessions in the Kamchatka peninsula to these businessmen with the full understanding that the Japanese and US imperialism would eventually come to war over their ambitions in the Pacific and Asia. The Japanese had forced concessions from the Tsarist empire in the Russo-Japanese war.

During this period the imperialist powers never let up on their wars against and subversion of nations to their economic interests. The British began their intervention in the Irish civil war by funding the Free Staters against the republicans and then partitioning Ireland at great human cost. The French continued their occupation of Indochina, African and Pacific nations, and a colony in India.

The Dutch occupation continued in Indonesia, while the Belgians continued their atrocities in the Congo. Other European powers held onto their colonies despite the creation of the League of Nations and most notably with their assistance. Notable too was Lord Balfour's declaration of a Jewish homeland in the lands of the Palestinian peoples, which the British had seized from the Ottoman empire by 1917, advancing the Zionist project.

In India the wars to suppress the Bengali people in their war of resistance continued. In an atrocity led by Winston Churchill, 1000 Indian patriots were driven into a well in Amritsar and massacred.

The vast change that had occurred was the creation of the Comintern and the international organisation of the proletariat and the oppressed nations. The University of the Toilers of the East saw contributors such as Zhou Enlai and Ho Chi Minh contributing to the development and enrichment of Marxist theories on the national question.

Sun Yat-sen founded the Whampoa Military Academy (now Huangpu) in Guangzhou in 1924 with Soviet aid, seeking to create a revolutionary army for a unified China. He appointed Chiang Kai-shek as its first principal. It trained key leaders for both Nationalist (Guomindang GMD) and Communist parties, becoming a pivotal institution in modern Chinese history, although it later transformed and evolved.

The GMD worked within the first united front formed with the leadership of the Communist Party of China. The treachery of Chiang Kai-Shek and the 1925 Shanghai massacre undermined this united front.

In 1937, following six years of aggression in Manchuria, Japan launched a war against China. This was the beginning of what the Chinese call the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1937-1945) and may be seen as the beginning of the Second World War. The occupation of large parts of China ended only with the Japanese in 1945. The Japanese committed massive war crimes, and the Chinese people made huge sacrifices to defeat the Japanese criminals.

During this war the Communist Party called on the Guomindang to end their war against the Communist Party and the Chinese people so as to fight the Japanese. This united front saw many patriots join the Communist Party and the Red Army. At the end of the war, Chiang Kai-Shek, under the influence of the USA, attacked the people and the party again. Despite massive aid from the USA, Chiang's forces were defeated and fled to Taiwan island under the protection of the US Navy, where they carried out a white terror on local people.

The imperialist aspect of the Second World War arose in the reaction of the big bourgeoisie to the proletarian revolution and the rising tide of national democratic revolutions against the imperial powers and their occupation and colonial domination of the oppressed and emerging nations. In their home countries they financed armed thugs to terrorise the working people.

In Germany, Italy, and Japan, they seized direct control of the state, first to terrorise the local population and then to militarise the whole population in preparation for an armed attack on the Soviet Union and the occupation and enslavement of nations in Africa and Asia. The big bourgeoisie were frustrated in their aims by the movement and organisation by communists in all nations through the movement against war and fascism.

One of the largest examples of this was the refusal by wharf labourers under the leadership of local communists to refuse to load pig iron in Port Kembla for use by the Japanese against the Chinese resistance. During the imperialist stage

of the world war, when the British and French bourgeoisie were surrendering war materials to Nazi Germany, the Communist Party of Australia was banned. The communists were instrumental in Australia in opposing the Menzies plan to surrender all territory north of the Brisbane Line.

After the defeat of this arch-reactionary, the communists entered a *de facto* united front with the Labor party to defeat fascism. This united front was declared by general-secretary Lance Sharkey to an overflowing public meeting at Sydney Town Hall while the party was still banned.

The defeat of fascism was an historic achievement of the peoples of the world, with major contributions through the huge sacrifices of the Chinese and Soviet peoples. The liberation movements in Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam, Burma, the Philippines, and India played no small part. The Soviet Red Army and the Chinese Peasant's and Worker's Red Army played the leading role in this victory at tremendous cost to the peoples of those nations.

Of course, throughout the world imperialism had been wounded, but those countries that had joined with the victory against fascism at a late hour remained a force. The old imperialist powers were weakened, but the USA had assumed the leading role among the imperialists and as in the First World War became the financier of the capitalist system. A new world centre was established in New York and the United Nations came into existence.

The defeat of fascism opened a new chapter in human history with nations renewing their struggle for national independence and an end to colonialism. The oppressed of settler-colonial states like the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Namibia, Angola, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, and even India found new inspiration. Australia and New Zealand as small imperialist powers were challenged to let go of their colonies and back off from the role as oppressor states.

In this atmosphere renewed colonial wars were waged by the French in Algeria, Britain's proxy South Africa. The British rearmed the Japanese in Vietnam until the French came and lost. The USA replaced the French. The USA set forth first to stop China from gaining full independence and then to wage a proxy war in Korea so as to move from the Korean peninsula to attack the New China. But they were defeated by the heroic Chinese volunteers in support of the Korean patriots. Of course, South Korea still has bases of USA troops.

In this period neocolonialism arrived and, as was done in Ireland, a partition of India occurred. In Africa the racist apartheid regime carried out massacres in Namibia and Angola, opposing the just independence of these nations. Throughout Africa former colonial powers imposed neocolonial regimes whose task was to extract tribute in the form of debt bondage for the former colonial power. This arrangement has hampered the development of the peoples of Africa from gaining their full independence.

Australia, for instance, in light of its former colonial relationship with colonies granted it by Britain such as Papua-New Guinea and Fiji, works hard against the sovereign rights of these nations by imposing unjust conditions through mining giants like BHP and Rio Tinto or agricultural conglomerates such as Burns-Phillips.

The history of sugar cane in Australia has a shameful past in that slave labour from Pacific islands were lured and indentured in slave conditions on sugar cane plantations. This practice is now revived through the importation of Pasifika labour, which has been subjected to abuses of unpaid labour under the visa system.

The history of the Queensland, Northern Territory, and Western Australian pastoral industry has the shame of Aboriginal workers being forced to work for rations and bought back in chains to these farms when they escaped this bondage. The reactionary Menzies government was heavily implicated in this practice. Communists and trade unionists were supportive of the rights of Aboriginal people to land rights during the famous Wave Hill walk off which resulted in the Whitlam government beginning the return of land rights, a process which remains far from complete.

In 1949 the establishment of the People's Republic of China set the people of China away from imperialist domination as the Communist Party of China and the people of China have declared it ended 'the century of humiliation' and began a new era for the people of China.

Without the people's democratic dictatorship China is defenceless against neocolonial domination. The unity of China has been achieved through the liberation of all national minorities and their free association as Chinese peoples. The process of the development of the culture of all Chinese people, including national minorities, is in the hands of the Chinese people. The celebration of what it means to be Chinese is being carried out by the Chinese people themselves. There are consequently 55 national minorities along with the Han nation, all of whom pay careful attention to

the development and flourishing of their cultural identities.

Imperialism seeks to divide China relying on previous social and colonial domination. China is the free unification of all Chinese. China is modernising social relations. It is undergoing a cultural renaissance because of the growing material wealth. Urbanisation of China is the largest urbanisation in human history. The proletariat is no longer a small minority. Rural life is undergoing a transformation from old forms of social existence and human rights are being advanced and transformed. The hard work of generations of Chinese people is transforming China bit by bit towards its centenary goal of a modern socialist nation by advancing the cultural and material rights of the people.

The city and country are being united and rural isolation bought to an end. In just 12 years the development of transport, national social insurance, and healthcare has been going through the difficulty of universalisation so that healthcare is available to all and education becomes a right for all.

Chinese modernisation changes the world. Multipolarity and its unity in common destiny are already the experience that China shares with the world. The modernisation of the Chinese economy has not just set an example of development on the terms of the people, it has provided a new base of support for nations seeking their own path to modernisation. The Belt and Road Initiative and the investment funds are an improved form of aid by a socialist country to newly independent countries or those suffering imperialist domination.

The major improvement has been the mutually beneficial non-interference in those countries engaging in those exchanges as well as technological and skill transfers.

Multipolarity is increasingly a modern reality. The newly independent countries built a non-aligned movement in response to the USA attack on their independence and the bipolar world that USA and British and European imperialisms sought to impose. The fall of the Soviet Union did not return the world to the colonial past, but new nations continued to emerge. Multipolarism is the assertion of national independence; it runs counter to colonialism. China refuses to engage in unipolarism or bipolarism. The development of the world economy has increased global interdependence and has begun to break the USA monopoly over technologies.

Learning from the Soviet experience, China has not sought to separate itself from international institutions, instead joining them and seeking to democratise them so as to defend international law and the rights of nations.

So-called “decoupling,” efforts at creating military blocs, pushing India to be an alternative to China, rearming Japan – all these raise questions concerning each nation’s peaceful development and pose complex problems to nations that are being pressured into engaging in such behaviour.

Socialism develops the ability of a country to rid itself of parasitic colonial powers and to develop the material wealth of the nation. Capitalism has through its characteristics ceased to be a modern form of human development. The planet has become smaller and the problems of humanity can only be solved by the common actions of humanity.

Thus, multipolarity is the form through which human society needs to pass so that all can enjoy common prosperity. Socialism is the system that can remove the risk of war and environmental catastrophe and raise the material and cultural level of all peoples.

Book Review: Clegg, Jenny. *Storming the Heavens: Peasant Rebellion in China 1925–1949 Viewed Through a Marxist Lens* (London: Manifesto Press, 2025)

Lachlan Varley

Storming the Heavens is a new English-language examination of the context, nature and mechanisms of peasant rebellion in China leading up to and during the Chinese civil war. Clegg engages in a detailed and sophisticated study of the class structure of pre-revolutionary Chinese society, the historical resistance of the peasantry to the exploitation of feudal rule, and how the CPC worked within this context of peasant struggle to defeat both the Japanese and the Nationalists in the revolutionary period.

The book is divided into five parts. The first deals with the characteristics of China's agrarian structure, concluding that the correct assessment of pre-revolutionary China is of a largely feudal society, where landlord exploitation of peasants was the primary mode of economic exploitation. Clegg then details in the second section how the agrarian economy declined throughout the late Qing dynasty and early republican period, coinciding with increased colonial extraction by the European powers. This created, as Mao famously assessed, the semi-feudal, semi-colonial mode of production in China.

Parts three and four take a close study of the revolutionary experience from the First United Front in 1925 to the victory of the CPC in the Chinese civil war in 1949. Part three examines the first united front period until 1937 and part four from 1937-1949. Clegg analyses and details the various expressions of the Chinese revolution amongst the peasantry, and how the CPC was constantly trialling and refining it's work efforts. Some standout analysis in these sections, in my opinion, was the importance of the middle peasantry to CPC political strategy and how the CPC struggled to transcend some of the longstanding trends and tendencies in Chinese peasant rebellion. These sections show the intense learning and analysis that developed from the intense and brutal class struggle throughout this period.

Part five discusses in broader terms the relationship between peasant revolution and the specific role played by the CPC in fomenting, organising, and escalating the Chinese revolution. This section considers and critiques some alternative theses on the nature of the Chinese revolution and the importance of certain classes within it. Of note in this section is the broader comparison between traditional peasant rebellion and the form led by the CPC, noting the continuities and changes over time as the political situation developed.

While an excellent standalone study, Clegg's work is also a response to other theories held in the field of "peasant studies" in contemporary academia. As such, it is a useful work that both offers readers insights into the Chinese revolution and re-establishes the relevance of Marxist analysis. To her credit, Clegg's work is well-researched and well-referenced and explains clearly alternative theories, making a background in these academic fields not entirely necessary to appreciate the arguments made. However, the comprehensive references and bibliography make further reference or research easy.

Perhaps the greatest strength of Clegg's work is her engagement with both Chinese (in translation) and English-language source material to support her analysis and argument. The comparisons and use of primary source material go a long way to illustrating her points and supporting her critiques of other analyses. Such an approach also helps the reader understand the context of those primary sources, which they may have encountered in other contexts, the political writings of Mao being one such example.

Overall, this book is highly recommended to those with an interest in the Chinese revolution, and how the CPC specifically acted and organised in that period. Its density may deter the casual reader, but for any communist student of history or the Chinese revolution, it is well worth the read.

“The real education of the masses can never be separated from their independent political, and especially revolutionary, struggle. Only struggle educates the exploited class. Only struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizon, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will.”

- VI Lenin (Lecture on the 1905 Revolution - 1917)

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