

Trotskyism and Revisionism



*Teachers By
Negative Example*

L.D.

Introduction

The Communist Party of Australia (M.L.) believes that the article entitled "maoism in australia" (the absence of capital letters is not our choice) by B. Taft (published in Australian Left Review No. 35) is an excellent teacher by negative example. We therefore publish the whole of Mr. Taft's article and our comment on it. We are more especially concerned to republish the article today because Trotskyism is being given a tremendous boost by all reactionary circles. Trotskyism under cover of those names, advocates views that are a betrayal of socialist revolution and Marxism.

The campaign for the spread of Trotskyite ideas in the revolutionary movement attempts to present Trotsky as the unswerving revolutionary leader in the battle for socialism in Russia.

An examination of the facts shows nothing can be further from the truth.

Trotsky was a traitor to the revolution.

At every twist and turn of the revolutionary path he was an opponent of Lenin's Marxist line.

Time and again Lenin bitterly attacked his anti-revolutionary, anti-Party activity.

To mention just some such occasions — in 1908 Lenin wrote — "Trotsky behaves like a most despicable careerist and factionalist . . . He pays lip service to the Party, but behaves worse than any other factionalist . . ."

In 1918 as Chairman of the Soviet delegation at Brest-Litovsk, he refused to carry out the instructions of the Bolshevik Party and conclude a Peace Treaty with Germany. Lenin declared at the time that Trotsky "actually helped the German imperialists and hindered the growth and development of the revolution in Germany" (Lenin, Selected Works Eng. ed. Moscow 1947 Vol. II p. 287).

Methods of socialist construction, and the new socialist relations of production dealt with by Lenin in

"The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" were likewise opposed by Trotsky on the grounds that socialist construction and the victory of socialism in Russia alone were impossible.

The history of inner-Party struggles in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was the history of struggle against the ideas of Trotsky and others of his ilk whose left phrases covered up their anti-revolutionary position.

Without their defeat Socialism would never have been won in the Soviet Union.

In our opinion, it is not sufficient merely to brand someone a Trotskyist: his views require analysis. But it is an important fact that Mr. Taft has a long history of Trotskyism. Now that the Aarons revisionist group, of which Mr. Taft is a prominent member, openly proclaims Trotskyism, Mr. Taft himself is able to carry out openly what we believe has been his long term advocacy of Trotskyist views. In our opinion, those views are thoroughgoing betrayal of and treachery to the working class movement.

Nor do we propose to say much about E. F. Hill, who features so largely in Taft's article. Hill's record in the Australian revolutionary socialist movement is reasonably well known. It is for the workers and working people of Australia to judge him and the Party of which he is a member just as it is for those same workers and working people to judge Mr. Taft and the Party of which he is a member. It does not dispose of the matter for Hill to be praised or abused and it does not dispose of the matter for Mr. Taft to be praised or abused.

We of course have our own opinion of Mr. Taft. We believe that we are correct and we believe that Mr. Taft is a traitor to the revolutionary cause. Merely because we believe it, does not make it correct but we think an analysis of the facts about Mr. Taft and of his writings does show that it is correct. It is in this sense that we republish his article in full and without alteration and then publish our own comments separately.

5 OCT 1972
STATE LIBRARY
OF VICTORIA
SOURCE
L.D. SC
CALL No.

AP
335.4
C73T

maoism in australia

Bernie Taft

THE organised Maoist movement in Australia is going through difficulties. The last twelve months have denied some of their simplistic certainties. Up till then, all seemed very simple to them, the world was divided into pure revolutionaries on the one hand and revisionists and traitors and counter-revolutionaries on the other. There were simple tests to decide which category one belonged to. China supported the oppressed people everywhere and unconditionally. The policies seemed clear, consistent and predictable. At the same time the local Maoists, mainly centred in Melbourne round the Worker Student Alliance and what is left of Ted Hill's Communist Party (ML), gave some of the Chinese policies their own dogmatic interpretation.

The changes in Chinese policies consequently caught them quite unprepared and embarrassed. The events in Ceylon in April 1971, the struggle in Pakistan, and the Nixon visit to China did not fit into the picture that the readers of *Vanguard* (Ted Hill's paper) and the members of the WSA had been fed on.

Because of the considerable influence of Ted Hill on the outlook and mode of thinking of the organised young Maoists and the "educational" role of *Vanguard* and similar Hillites publications, it is necessary to say something about the history of this group which puts its own particular imprint on the leading cadres of the WSA.

As a result of the differences and subsequent split between the Soviet Union and China, small groups that proclaimed their adherence to China emerged in a number of established Communist Parties in the early sixties. In Australia such a grouping was formed under the leadership of E. F. Hill, the former Victorian Secretary of the CPA. After a partywide discussion in 1963 as a result

Bernie Taft is Victorian President of the Communist Party of Australia.

of which the policies advocated by E. F. Hill were overwhelmingly rejected by the CPA membership, Ted Hill broke away from the CPA and established a separate organisation named the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist). He took about 200 with him out of the CPA.

Essentially this group was and remained confined to Victoria where E. F. Hill's personal and political influence had been greatest. Naturally the group publicly proclaimed its complete adherence to the stated Chinese policies at the time. But in attempting to mechanically apply those policies to the quite different situation in Australia, a relatively advanced capitalist country, the group inevitably blocked any possibility of becoming a viable political force. What made sense in China, just became farcical when it was mechanically transplanted to Australia. From the very beginning no attempt was made to analyse the Australian reality, still less to elaborate any kind of revolutionary strategy for Australia.

In fact E. F. Hill felt no need for such an examination. The group confined itself in the main to proclaiming and re-proclaiming each week in the columns of its paper *Vanguard* the same old eternal truths about the evils of capitalism and the onset of the economic crisis. Its headline invariably proclaimed that the Australian people were uniting and rising against US imperialism. It was a dull, repetitive and highly general paper, and each week it repeated much of what had been said the week before. It denounced what it called revisionism and went in for a great deal of personal abuse. Because of past personal loyalty to E. F. Hill of some of the Victorian communist trade union officials, this group retained some trade union positions. However its pro-Chinese policies were frequently kept out of trade union activities.

It was characteristic of E. F. Hill that he now dogmatically and unconditionally supported every policy and action of China, just as he had previously equally dogmatically and unconditionally supported every policy and action of the Soviet leadership. As late as 1959, after returning from the 21st Congress of the CPSU he wrote a glowing report about the Soviet Union. In a pamphlet called *Builders of Communism* he stated: "To me words are not adequate to describe fully the grand picture of the new way of life in the Soviet Union. . . ." "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union leads the Soviet people." "Everything it does is for the interests and advancement of the Soviet people." "The spirit and enthusiasm of Soviet workers is something that has to be experienced."

Hill, an authoritarian himself, always needed a supreme authority. Shortly after writing the above he simply transferred from one "authority" to another. One who consistently proclaimed Stalin's primitive treatise on *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* as a masterpiece, who was always attracted by the most dogmatic and uncreative

statements, found no difficulty in transferring his ideologies from one figure to another.

It is interesting to recall that when this writer returned to Australia at the end of 1956 after a prolonged stay in China, considerably impressed with the Chinese attitudes and methods, Hill strongly denounced "Chinese liberalism" and ridiculed their efforts to critically examine their own concrete situation and their attention to people's ideologies (their views, attitudes, approaches and feelings). The Chinese emphasis on remoulding man conditioned in an exploitative society, were the special target of Hill's sarcastic scorn during the latter fifties.

Hill certainly tolerated no criticism inside the CPA itself and ruled in a rigid authoritarian manner. He played a major part in suppressing any serious discussion on the problems posed by Khrushchov's revelations at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956. It is little wonder that after the split the Hill group maintained a shadowy existence and was subject to growing internal division and jealousies.

Yet, as with some of the young who are attached to the WSA today the people who followed Ted Hill in 1963 included a number of active and competent people. The reason for that was that the influence of the CPA was tending to decline, it did not face up to the realities in Australia, it did not attempt to elaborate a serious socialist strategy for Australia, rather it continued to base itself on outdated strategic assumptions, which were increasingly felt to be out of line with our experience and needs. It was in face of these difficulties that Hill switched his attachment, rather than face up to the hard, serious and independent work necessary to examine these problems and draw the necessary strategic conclusions from them.

In this Hill was not alone, of course; other CPA leaders at the time were attracted to the Chinese more militant position on a number of questions in dispute between the Russians and the Chinese. But to Hill the alternatives were always attachment to the USSR or China. An independent elaboration of policies and attitudes was outside his frame of reference. In this he was and remains completely at variance with the tradition of both the Russian and the Chinese revolutions. Both Lenin and Mao Tse-tung elaborated their revolutionary strategies as a result of, and only as a result of, an independent analysis of the specific conditions of their own countries.

The people who went with Ted Hill reflected this situation. There were those who were active, militant and impatient, but also dogmatists and bureaucrats. Hill took a large proportion of the full-time Victorian party officials as well as a number of trade union officials with him. Ironically it was the departure of Hill and the big section of the party apparatus that went with him that removed some of the barriers to the subsequent independent development of the CPA.

Meanwhile the new revolutionary upsurge began in the mid-sixties. The growing questioning and rejection of the values of capitalist society, by some of the young, was coupled with a disillusionment with the USSR, and the feeling that it had become a conservative force, as, they believed, had the Communist Party of Australia. In this situation the attraction of China as an alternative model of a socialist society grew among the radicalised youth. China seemed to challenge the established authorities, including the USSR, she appeared to place moral considerations ahead of material ones and adopt anti-bureaucratic measures. The Cultural Revolution was seen by many as an attack on entrenched authority and as an attempt to prevent the degeneration of the revolution, to prevent the return "to the capitalist road"

China appeared as the genuine champion of the oppressed and under-privileged everywhere, opposed to the two super-powers, the USA and the USSR, who were competing but also co-operating in the attempt to control the rest of the world. It seemed that China, unlike the USSR, was not putting its own State interests ahead of the interest of the world revolutionary movement. Internally it promoted communal living and seemed closer to the ideals of an egalitarian society. Many of those who were repelled by the irrationality and hypocrisy of our society were attracted to China as the alternative. Those visiting China were clearly impressed with the advances made and by the enthusiasm they met in the country. The stirring call that "to rebel is justified" struck a chord in the hearts of many a radicalised youth wanting to change society.

It was in this atmosphere that the Maoist youth organisation which grew out of the Monash Labor Club was established. The leading cadres of what became the WSA were closely associated with Ted Hill and the CP (M-L) and absorbed its elitist attitudes and its highly authoritarian structure. At the same time they attracted a number of young radicals, although they were not able to hold many of them.

There were several reasons for this attraction. Firstly, there was the identification with China. Secondly, the activism of the group attracted those who wanted to DO things. Thirdly, they provided simple, easily understood "answers" to complex problems. Simplistic answers have a certain attraction, at least temporarily, for those who are new to the revolutionary movement. You don't have to think, the truth is clear, even "obvious". With this went a strong belief — nourished by the political atmosphere in the universities — that the revolution was round the corner. In the absence of any real contact with the working class masses some of the WSA cadres came to believe that all that stood between the working class and revolution in Australia were a few "revisionist" trade union leaders.

The real harm lies in what the group did to

some of the young people that it attracted to its ranks. It introduced them or rather subjected them to a brand of "Marxism" which is a caricature of Marx and Lenin's views and runs counter to many of Mao Tse-tung's own stated attitudes. These are some of the typical features:

- It trained its members to regard critical thought as being alien to Marxism. Open discussion, a clash of views, was seen as wrong and dangerous. It based itself on Stalin, rather than on Marx and Lenin, who regarded critical thought and free debate as essential to the revolutionary movement and for the future socialist society.
- With this goes an attitude of utter intolerance to other groups and viewpoints inside the revolutionary movement. The group revived the Stalinist precept that the main enemy is the one closest to your own position and that the main blow is to be directed at him (since he is most likely to deceive the masses). Jill Joliffe, who herself grew up politically in this group, notes in retrospect that "the struggle against 'revisionism' loomed larger than 'the struggle against capitalism.'" (*Socialist Review*, Feb. 1972.)
- They have absorbed some of the worst Stalinist traits and attitudes and have even taken some of them further. Believing themselves to be the only true revolutionaries, they regard any means as justified to defeat their political opponents. Truth matters little, arguments are distorted and misrepresented. Their style of work is highly manipulative, anything goes as long as it achieves their purpose.
- Their dogmatism, their blind copying of foreign slogans and forms of struggle and attempting to apply them to quite different situations in Australia — such as the call for the Australian workers to arm themselves and for a People's Army here in our conditions — produces some grotesque results.
- Feature of their dogmatism is the extraordinarily primitive approach. By refusing to discuss, or being unable to discuss, political issues seriously and by reducing student politics to 24-hour slogan shouting, they have created an adverse reaction to politics generally among many students. The reaction to this is often "if this is politics I want nothing of it".
- Because of their primitive attitudes they tend to personalise their politics. They can only focus on individuals (individual enemies) rather than social forces and movements. Hence the individual policeman becomes the main object of attack rather than the institutionalised role of the police force.
- As well as a preoccupation with the individual policeman they have the primitive view that

fighters with the police will radicalise the victims of police action. This is certainly not always the case, especially if police reaction and over-reaction is artificially induced as a result of such a theory.

- The same simplistic attitude is expressed in the slogans that they advance. It is frequently concerned with smashing something — be it US imperialism, capitalism or even inflation. The trouble with such a slogan is that it appeals only to those already convinced.

In preparation for the April 21 demonstration, *Struggle* (March 21, '72) informed its readers that "WSA is producing a large number of stickers with various slogans including *Smash Inflation on April 21!*" Since WSA's own political diet is rather meagre, they readily absorb the diet dished out by *Vanguard*, which revived Stalin's theory of "social fascism". Under the heading: "Labor Reformists and Revisionists are part of Fascism", *Vanguard*, October 8, 1970, stated:

... the struggle against fascism is primarily the struggle against reformism and revisionism and the bourgeois sacred cows they both support, parliamentarism and orthodox trade unionism.

Long ago Stalin said that social democracy (labor party reformism) was the moderate wing of fascism.

In concerting their fire exclusively on the exposure of the Number One Enemy, US imperialism, they leave the Australian capitalists out of the line of fire, and often let them get off scot free. The blind copying of a foreign slogan had some amusing consequences, when recently the local Maoists added Japan to the list of enemies after Chou En-lai's statement to this effect.

In the belief that simplistic answers are the whole and sole truth, such people defend the Stalinist terror and physical destruction of tens of thousands of devoted communists and socialists. They sneer at socialist humanism and advocate the suppression of free debate even for fellow socialists in a socialist society. Their model of socialism is as defective as their tactics to achieve it. If their kind of socialism ever comes many socialists will not be alive to participate in it.

Those who have a primitive view of social change and who substitute pseudo-left phraseology for revolutionary activities which reach out to the masses of the people, generally have a corresponding attitude to the kind of socialist society they want. It is usually an elitist attitude which ignores or neglects the mass movement, and which involves manipulation of supporters, substitution of sloganising, empty clichés and abuse or worse for serious discussion of socialist society.

Underlying such attitudes and approaches are certain assumptions about the perspective for social change. They can briefly be summed up as follows:

They believe that the capitalist system in Australia is only maintained by force and suppres-

sion. They do not recognise that it is ideological domination the hegemony of bourgeois ideas and attitudes that are the main cause for the continued existence and acceptance of the capitalist system. Certainly capitalism will attempt to use force to maintain itself if it is seriously challenged. But the majority of Australians despite criticism accept the capitalist system at present.

They believe that making revolution is a simple matter of announcing the "truth" and of presenting the "true slogans" and that by creating confrontation situations (almost irrespective of the issue involved) you can force the system to use force and show its real nature. This they believe, is the way to open people's eyes and to bring about a revolution in Australia.

An organisation brought up in that intellectual and cultural climate, with its lack of knowledge of Marxism, has found it especially difficult to adjust to the recent changes in Chinese policies.

The first big thing that really burst on them were the events in Ceylon in April 1971. When the news of the armed uprising reached this country *Vanguard* on May 13, 1971, on the front page under the heading "Armed Struggle in Ceylon", stated the following:

The people of Ceylon have taken to arms against the great tea plantation owners, against exploitation. There are people who say they should not have done it or their policies were wrong or some other lament. But they did take to arms: they did get mass support. We think it is all fine. No doubt they will find the correct political guidance in the course of protracted struggle. Their efforts to date have revealed the essential capitalist character of the "left" Mrs. Bandaranaike and the revisionist Communists in her cabinet and their efforts have revealed the coalescing of all reactionary forces to put down rebellion by the people.

Unhappily for *Vanguard* a few days later Chou En-lai joined what *Vanguard* called "the coalescing of all reactionary forces to put down the rebellion by the people" by his public support for Mrs. Bandaranaike. In a message to her he stated:

Following Chairman Mao Tse-tung's teaching the Chinese people have all along opposed ultra "left" and right opportunism in their protracted revolutionary struggles. We are glad to see that thanks to the efforts of Your Excellency and the Ceylon Government, the chaotic situation created by a handful of persons who style themselves "Guevarists" and into whose ranks foreign spies have sneaked has been brought under control. We believe that as a result of Your Excellency's leadership and co-operation and support of the Ceylonese people these acts of rebellion plotted by reactionaries at home and abroad for the purpose of undermining the interests of the Ceylonese people are bound to fail.

In the interests of friendship between China and Ceylon and in consideration of the needs of the Ceylon Government, the Chinese Government in compliance with the request of the Ceylon Government agrees to provide it with a long-term interest free loan of 150 million rupees in convertible foreign exchange. We would like to hear any views which you might have on this matter. We are prepared to deliver a portion of the loan in May and sign a document on it. As for other material assistance, please let us know if it is needed. (*Ceylon Daily News*, May 27, 1971.)

If indeed *Vanguard* had made a mistake should

it not openly say so, should it not heed Lenin's advice in *Left-Wing Communism* that "To admit a mistake openly, to disclose its reasons, to analyse the conditions which gave rise to it, to study attentively the means of correcting it — these are the signs of a serious party"?

But not a word appeared in *Vanguard* — Ceylon simply ceased to exist. Then the events in Pakistan burst upon the local Maoists. Naturally the sympathy of most of the young Maoists was with the people of East Pakistan rather than with the butcher Yahya Khan. Ted Hill had the misfortune to deliver his annual May Day oration at Monash on April 30, 1971. In answer to questions about the struggle in Pakistan, he first claimed that it was an internal matter. Someone asked: "Is not racism in South Africa also an internal matter?" Then Hill changed his position and claimed that he did not know the facts. At this point the majority responded with approving prolonged applause. Pandemonium broke loose as a vote supporting East Bengali workers, peasants and students was overwhelmingly carried by the audience. Whatever Indian motives and designs, the local Maoists found it hard to convince their followers that Yahya Khan ought to be supported or that the "majority" of the population of Pakistan (East Pakistan) could "secede" from the minority (West Pakistan).

The Nixon visit to China and its timing in the midst of the war in Vietnam was the next blow. The local Maoists were totally unprepared for it. For years they had criticised the Russians for their diplomatic dealings with various foreign reactionary leaders. When the leader of Number One Enemy of all mankind, Nixon, was received in China, shook hands with the Chinese leaders, at the time when the war in Vietnam was being escalated, this certainly did not fit into the pattern of thinking and attitudes on which the WSA and its followers had been nourished. In addition many of them felt that Nixon's visit to China enabled him to pose as a man of peace to the American people, and that this inevitably had a negative effect on the anti-war movement in the USA.

It is little wonder that the organised Maoist movement is beset with some problems. The monolithic character of the organisation is being challenged. There are dissident voices and groups in revolt. The real problem for revolutionaries is to provide a viable, credible revolutionary alternative. What Lenin said about "anarchism often being a sort of punishment for the opportunist sins of the working class movement" applies also to the local Maoists. These young people who are fired with enthusiasm and who want to change society and do it quickly, turn to dead-end solutions, because they are not presented with an acceptable serious revolutionary alternative. Until the CPA is clearly seen to do this, much of this revolutionary enthusiasm and energy will continue to be frustrated and wasted.

OUR COMMENT

Mr. Taft's article says that the Maoist movement in Australia is going through difficulties. We must immediately say that anyone who denied the difficulties in building a revolutionary party and in working in the revolutionary movement, would be very foolish indeed. If Mr. Taft is referring to difficulties in the building of the Communist Party of Australia (M.L.), then he is quite correct. (We will confine our remarks in this regard to the Communist Party of Australia (M.L.): the other organisations to which Mr. Taft refers will no doubt speak for themselves.) Not only have we had difficulties but we have made errors. But does Mr. Taft's observation conclude the question? Scarcely. The greatest revolutionary Parties in history have been the Communist Party of the Soviet Union before the revisionist seizure of its leadership, the Communist Party of China and the Albanian Party of Labour. Each of these Parties went through great difficulties. Lenin wrote very much on this matter in relation to the Russian Communist Party. His early writings were very largely concerned with the problems and difficulties of building a revolutionary Party. The Communist Party of China, founded in 1921, went through great difficulties in Party building right up to 1935, and after that, though the quality of the difficulties changed, difficulties remained. The Albanian Party of Labour went through great difficulties, not the least of which were caused by interference in the Albanian Party of Labour by Mr. Taft's friend, the Trotskyist Tito. But the difficulties experienced by these Parties assumed secondary importance beside their great positive achievements. It was precisely through difficulties that these Parties grew strong and led great revolutionary movements. One must certainly recognise difficulties. They are facts of life. The Communist Party of Australia (M.L.) has faced difficulties and is going through difficulties. But in our opinion precisely by recognising those difficulties, facing them and dealing with them, the Party has grown greatly. It has grown in the ideological sense, political sense and organisational sense.

Mr. Taft continues that the Communist Party of Australia (M.L.) has been "embarrassed" by "changes in Chinese policies". But this is simply not true and it is based upon quite wrong assumptions. Certainly we are admirers of People's China. Certainly we regard Chairman Mao as having developed the science of Marxism-Leninism to an entirely new and higher stage. We

regard contemporary Marxism-Leninism as including Mao Tse-tung Thought. We certainly believe that People's China is building socialism, that its Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was a historically unprecedented and immeasurable contribution to the building of socialism. Certainly we are proud to subscribe, along with the Chinese Party and other Parties, to Marxism-Leninism. But we believe that the revolutionary problems in Australia must be solved by the Australian revolutionary movement by correctly integrating Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought into Australian conditions. As long ago as 1847, Marx and Engels in speaking of the internationalism of the working class said: "The proletariat of each country must, of course, first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie." (The Communist Manifesto 1848). All Marxists have always pointed out that revolution can neither be exported nor imported. Revolutionary theory, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought, is indeed international but its correct use depends upon the Communists of a given country; and whether or not the people of a given country make revolution is a matter for those people. Moreover the relations between states are an entirely different thing from relations between the classes within a given state and in particular the class struggle within a given state. At the time of the alliance between the then socialist Soviet Union and the U.S.A. and Great Britain, Chairman Mao himself said:

"WE MADE MISTAKE"

"Such compromise between the United States, Britain and France and the Soviet Union can be the outcome only of resolute, effective struggles by all the democratic forces of the world against the reactionary forces of the United States, Britain and France. Such compromise does not require the people in the countries of the capitalist world to follow suit and make compromises at home. The people in those countries will continue to wage different struggles in accordance with their different conditions." (Selected Works Vol. 4, p.87.)

Let us turn now to Mr. Taft's assertion of our embarrassment over the events in Ceylon in April 1971. We made a mistake about these events. Our mistake had nothing to do with People's China. Our mistake arose from proceeding

on inadequate information from Ceylon and a certain wishful thinking which gave rise to a "left" interpretation of the events. Since then we have corrected our mistake. We have published material from the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ceylon. Any embarrassment which we suffered arose from our own mistake but we do not regard it as embarrassment to engage in self-criticism. We think it is only honest. Revolutionaries must above all be honest with the workers and working people. To make a mistake is not good; to deny having made a mistake is very bad indeed: to fail to analyse the reason for that mistake too is bad. Lenin said that only he who does nothing makes no mistakes. He also said: "The attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of the party and how it fulfils in practice its obligations toward its class and towards the toiling masses. To admit a mistake openly, to disclose its reasons, to analyse the conditions which gave rise to it, to study attentively the means of correcting it — these are the signs of a serious party; this means the performance of its duties, this means educating and training the class, and then the masses." ("Left-wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder — Lenin's emphasis). As to Pakistan, we consider we made no mistake but that events have proved that the Indian reactionary ruling class, backed by the Soviet revisionist imperialists, launched aggression against Pakistan and dismembered her. The so-called Bangla Desh, far from giving the peoples freedom, subjects them to the brutal dictatorship of the Indian reactionaries (backed by the Soviet imperialists) and subjects these peoples to lives of misery, starvation, oppression. The peoples of all these countries, (Pakistan including Bangla Desh, and India) have their own task of winning their liberation. As to Nixon's visit to People's China our view is that People's China was correct in agreeing to Nixon's request to visit China. People's China was and is duty bound to exploit the contradictions that it estimates exist among the imperialist powers and in particular between the imperialist Soviet Union and U.S. imperialism. That is a matter for People's China. People's China is united with all revolutionaries in the struggle against imperialism. As a big power, it has a special part in this struggle and what it does as a State accords with the needs of the world revolutionary struggle.

REVISIONISTS DISINTEGRATE

Mr. Taft says that in 1963 the views held by those who subsequently reconstituted the Com-

munist Party were overwhelmingly rejected in the then Communist Party. If the question is regarded as one of numbers, Mr. Taft's assertion is correct. However matters of ideology cannot be determined by mere numbers. No matter how many people support a wrong idea, the idea does not cease to be wrong. All people at one time had the idea that the earth was flat: that unanimity of idea did not make the earth flat. In Mr. Taft's case how does his 1963 majority stand today? It has indeed disintegrated. Those who composed the majority are split up into all sorts of groups many of them bitterly opposed to Mr. Taft. It is not an exaggeration to say that Mr. Taft's majority has become the minority and the minority has become the majority; indeed that seems to be part of his complaint. The real question involved in the political controversy in Australia in the early sixties, was adherence to or repudiation of the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism. Mr. Taft was prominent among those who repudiated that revolutionary essence. He wholeheartedly embraced the views of the then Soviet Party leader Khrushchov. (Khrushchov, too in his time, had been an adherent of Trotsky's views.) This dispute did involve the Soviet Communist Party and the Chinese Communist Party. In our opinion, the Chinese Communist Party correctly upheld the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism while the Soviet Party leaders rejected it. In Australia, those who subsequently reconstituted the Communist Party, shared with the Chinese Communist Party, a common adherence to the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism. Mr. Taft and his colleagues shared with the Soviet Party leadership a common desertion of the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism. Thus it was not a question of subservience either on the one side to the Chinese Communist Party or on the other side to the Soviet Party leadership. Neither one of these parties could have imposed their ideas on anyone against the will of that person, but if that anyone had ideas common with either the Chinese Party or the Soviet Party naturally there was affinity of ideas. In our opinion there is nothing abnormal in that. We are indeed proud that we did and do have an adherence to the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism along with the Communist Party of China and Chairman Mao. That is our position. That is our position. We did, in the days of Stalin, share with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union a common adherence to Marxism-Leninism. In the early days of Khrushchov's leadership we accepted him as a Marxist-Leninist and said so. At that time Khrushchov trod carefully in concealing the whole of his real desertion

of Marxism-Leninism. It was in this spirit that Hill wrote in praise of the Soviet Union a booklet entitled "Builders of Communism". That booklet did draw attention to great achievements in the Soviet Union — achievements the foundation for which were laid by Lenin and Stalin. Nevertheless there is no doubt that in the earlier years of Khrushchov those who subsequently reconstituted the Communist Party in Australia, did have the mistaken idea that Khrushchov was a Marxist-Leninist. Events unfolded and showed that Khrushchov was a scoundrel. We have never denied that we changed some of our positions on this matter: we have openly said that our original position was mistaken. We have corrected the mistake. We think events have shown that our criticism of our own mistake was correct.

Mr. Taft denounces Stalin's "Dialectical and Historical Materialism" as a "primitive treatise". Well Mr. Taft is, of course, entitled to his opinion. Everyone should read Stalin's work. It is a very good exposition of dialectical and historical materialism, in our view. These days we prefer Chairman Mao's "On Contradiction" and "On Practice" in their exposition of dialectical and historical materialism to Stalin's. Stalin's views we now see are a little mechanical, arbitrary and rigid nor do they place the law of contradiction firmly enough as the core of materialist dialectics. This does not alter the historical fact that Stalin's material has done great service to the revolutionary movement. People can easily enough read the material and choose between Stalin and Mr. Taft. At least Stalin discusses his views and tells us what they are. Stalin never condemned something as a "primitive treatise" and left it at that; he at least told us why and in what respects it was a "primitive treatise". Only very superior beings are in the position of loftily dismissing (without discussing) an important discussion as a primitive treatise.

As for alleged denunciation of "Chinese liberalism" what are the facts? Mr. Taft and his colleagues were greatly attracted to the bourgeois rightists in China. These bourgeois rightists were working hard for the restoration of capitalism in China. When Mr. Taft and his colleagues returned to Australia they adopted and expounded the views of the bourgeois rightists. They went in for "self cultivation" (a sort of pseudo psycho-analysis), and tried to impose it on the Communist Party as a whole. In our view this was correctly opposed and condemned. Ideas of the bourgeois rightists, ideas such as self cultivation were and are opposed to the Marxist-Leninist position of Chairman Mao and the Communist Party of

China. Mr. Taft and his colleagues certainly found themselves at home on the bosom of these Chinese bourgeois rightists whose ideas they attempted to import into Australia. It is a question similar to that we have discussed before. These bourgeois rightists could not impose their ideas on Mr. Taft: Mr. Taft adopted them because they were essentially similar to his own in their hostility to Marxism-Leninism. Such ideas in the revolutionary movement were and are in our opinion correctly subject to analysis and criticism and withering scorn.

PROTECTS U.S. IMPERIALISM

Two of the most revealing things in Mr. Taft's article are his protection of U.S. imperialism and his protection of the capitalist state machine. Look at Mr. Taft's article. On the third page, not once but several times he challenges the line of exposure of the "No. One Enemy, U.S. imperialism". He uses various pretexts, "reasons" he would call them. But the essence of his position is don't do too much against U.S. imperialism. What is this but service to U.S. imperialism? Mr. Taft is even lagging behind those sections of the Australian capitalist class which are increasingly concerned about U.S. imperialism in Australia. But Mr. Taft is serving a definite purpose. That purpose is to paralyse, confuse and divide the growing movement in Australia against U.S. imperialism. There could be no better service to U.S. imperialism. It is simple fact that U.S. imperialism dominates whole sections of Australian industry and dictates Australian policy. One may think that is good or bad. We think it is very bad but Mr. Taft thinks that to say that is simplistic. He does not say it is very good; that is true. But what is the difference? — his article is direct protection of U.S. imperialism. At the risk of Mr. Taft's scorn, we think we would have been failing in our duty if we did not turn our campaign too against Japanese militarism. Mr. Taft thinks that too is simplistic. Well Australians know Japanese militarism from the past. Mr. Taft may find it amusing and simplistic. No one can stop him from thinking that way. We thank him very much for putting his views so clearly. Just as in the days of Hitler, Trotskyists served the Hitlerites, and Japanese militarists, mankind's then greatest enemies, so today's Trotskyists serve U.S. imperialism and Japanese militarism, mankind's greatest present-day enemies.

In criticising our "simplistic" slogans, "elitist attitudes", "manipulation of supporters", "substitution of sloganising", "empty cliches",



"abuse or worse for serious discussion of socialist society", Mr. Taft says: "They believe that the capitalist system in Australia is only maintained by force and suppression. They do not recognise that it is ideological domination the hegemony of bourgeois ideas and attitudes that are the *main cause* for the continued existence and acceptance of the capitalist system. *Certainly capitalism will attempt to use force to maintain itself if it is seriously challenged.* But the majority of Australians despite criticism accept the capitalist system at present." (Emphasis ours). This is really the crux of Mr. Taft's argument. This particular argument serves the specific purpose of disarming the working class and its allies ideologically and materially in the face of the capitalists. Marx and Lenin pointed out that the State machine is an apparatus for the suppression of one class by another, in this case suppression of the working class and working people by the capitalist class. Its chief component is the army; other components are the police, courts, gaols. It is a special instrument of suppression. It is organised force and violence against the working people. In Australia it is the instrument of the U.S. imperialists and their local collaborators against the Australian people. Contrary to Mr. Taft's assertion that capitalism will attempt to use force if seriously challenged, capitalism uses force continually minute by minute, hourly, daily. Its force lies in the army, the police, courts, gaols. (Australian anti-imperialists at this moment languish in the capitalist gaols.) Is that not force, Mr. Taft? Too simplistic, you reply! Capitalism uses systematic police violence, courts as mere ciphers, gaols and the army. So it goes on. One would think all this is clear. Some of these high sounding words of Mr. Taft deal with the part played by ideas. One *idea* the ruling circles promote is that the State is not an instrument of force (Your idea too Mr. Taft), that it does justice, parliament is the thing (no, no, not "a talking shop" as Marx said), parliamentary elections are good (not the right of the people to choose every few years which member of the ruling class will misrepresent the people in parliament, as Marx said). All far too simplistic! Of course, *ideas* are disseminated by the ruling circles to serve their own cause, the maintenance of exploitation and their own power. These ideas evolve from capitalism. Revolutionaries exist to fight capitalism and capitalist state power on all fronts — the front of ideas and the front of physical force. Mr. Taft says with considerable satisfaction "But the majority of Australians despite criticism accept the capitalist system at present". Note Mr. Taft does not attack capitalism as such, at its root. Despite "criticism", it is good

enough at present. Lenin had a good deal to say on now a revolutionary movement lives and develops. For example, he said:

"As for the preaching of revolution being 'inopportune', this objection rests on a confusion of terms customary with the Latin Socialists: they confuse the beginning of a revolution with the open and direct propaganda for revolution. In Russia, nobody places the beginning of the 1905 Revolution before January 22 (9), 1905, whereas revolutionary propaganda, in the very narrow sense of the word, the propaganda and the preparation of mass action, demonstrations, strikes, barricades, had been conducted for *years* before that. The old Iskra, for instance, began to preach this at the end of 1900, as Marx did in 1847, when there could have been no thought as yet of the *beginning of a revolution in Europe.*"

CONDEMNES DEMONSTRATIONS

In revolutionary crisis the people properly led take up a revolutionary position, they overthrow with workers', people's *revolutionary*, force and violence the reactionary force and violence of the capitalist class. But this is horrible to Mr. Taft who wants to just sit about debating with the capitalists "the hegemony of ideas", and winning a parliamentary majority peacefully turning capitalism into socialism. But even then capitalism will attempt to use force if (not even "when", Mr. Taft) it is seriously challenged. (How you love the everlasting virtues of capitalism!) Mr. Taft condemns demonstrations, says it is no good resisting police, etc. etc. Lenin no doubt is not very pleasant reading to Mr. Taft. For our part we exalt in the clarity of his analysis and exposition in such books as "State and Revolution", "Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky". In our opinion, the principles Lenin expounded in such works apply to Australia in their entirety. Our job is to integrate them with the concrete conditions of Australia. Permit us Mr. Taft to quote the somewhat mild statement of Engels (Principles of Communism) on this type of question:

"Question: Will the abolition of private property be possible in a peaceful way?

Answer: It were to be wished that this could happen, and the Communists would certainly be the last to take exception thereto. The Communists know too well that all conspiracies are not only useless, but even harmful. They know too well that revolutions are not made arbitrarily and to order, but that they were everywhere and at all times the necessary consequence of circumstan-

ces which are entirely independent of the will and control of particular parties and whole classes. They also see, however, that the development of the proletariat in almost all civilised lands is forcibly suppressed, and that in this way the opponents of the Communists are making with all their might for a revolution. Should the oppressed proletariat be in this way driven finally to a revolution, then we Communists will defend the cause of the proletarians just as well with deeds as we now do with words." (Principles of Communism).

What we are dealing with in Mr. Taft's article here are really two fundamental questions — (1) the nature of imperialism and (2) the so called peaceful transition to socialism. What Mr. Taft has done has been to dish up in slightly different words from those previously used by him and his revisionist Trotskyist colleagues, the proposition that the nature of imperialism has changed so that it is no longer necessary to overthrow it and the proposition that socialism can be achieved by peaceful means. This is nothing but unadulterated revisionism. Because in their original verbiage these ideas have been thoroughly discredited by experience and by debate, Mr. Taft can no longer use the original words. He therefore dresses this old stuff up in new words. The new words do not alter the facts.

In this regard, look at his article again. What does it say. Don't demonstrate, don't resist the police, it is too simplistic to single out a "Number One enemy", U.S. imperialism, it is amusing that Japanese militarism is included as an enemy, the question of state power is merely a question of ideas. In short that means give away all revolutionary struggle: lie down before the enemy.

According to Marxism-Leninism the central question of revolution is the question of state power. The working class and its allies struggle to take power and establish an anti imperialist democratic dictatorship led by the working class — a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a desperate struggle — legal and illegal, peaceful and armed, open and secret.

As we have said, ideas are fundamentally important. Our Communist Party espouses its ideas as vigorously as it can. But it recognises that propaganda and agitation alone are not enough. "... the masses must have their own political experience" (Lenin). To repeat, Mr. Taft is really (although in so many words he doesn't say so) putting the case for peaceful parliamentary tran-

sition to socialism. We content ourselves by quoting Lenin.

"Only scoundrels or simpletons can think that the proletariat must win the majority in elections carried out under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, under the yoke of wage-slavery, and that only after this must it win power. This is the height of folly or hypocrisy; it is substituting voting, under the old system and with the old power, for class struggle and revolution.

"The proletariat wages its class struggle and does not wait for voting to begin a strike, although for the complete success of a strike it is necessary to have the sympathy of the majority of the working people (and, it follows, of the majority of the population); the proletariat wages its class struggle and overthrows the bourgeoisie without waiting for any preliminary (supervised by the bourgeoisie and carried out under its oppression) voting; and the proletariat is perfectly well aware that for the success of its revolution, for the successful overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the sympathy of the majority of the working people (and, it follows, of the majority of the population) is *absolutely necessary.*" (Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists, October 10, 1919.)

And to deal with Mr. Taft's article on the essence of revolution — the question of state power and how to achieve it permit us to quote Lenin again:

"The main question of every revolution is, undoubtedly, the question of state power. In the hands of which class power is — this decides everything." (One of the Fundamental Questions of the Revolution). And again:

"To imagine Socialism as though Messrs. Socialists will present it to us on a platter, in a ready-made little dress, is not permissible — it will not happen. Not a single question of the class struggle has yet been solved in history except by violence. Violence, when it occurs from the side of the toiling, exploited masses against the exploiters — yes, we are for such violence! And we are not a bit embarrassed by the wails of people who, consciously or unconsciously, stand on the side of the bourgeoisie or are so intimidated, so oppressed by its domination that now, seeing this class struggle of unheard-of sharpness, they have lost their bearings, begun to weep, forgot all their premises and demand from us the impossible — that we Socialists should attain complete victory without struggle against the exploiters, without crushing their resistance."

(Report on the Work of the Council of People's Commissars, Made to the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, January 11, 1918).

Lest it be said that we have torn statements of Mr. Taft from their context we have published all his article. Our readers can make their own judgment. Lest it be said we have torn statements of Lenin from their context we earnestly ask our readers to study Lenin's "State and Revolution" and "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kantsky". As to their application to Australia and our failure according to Mr. Taft to make analysis of Australia, we can do no more than refer our readers to our paper "Vanguard" (so much reviled by Mr. Taft), our journal "Australian Communist", our pamphlets and E. F. Hill's "Looking Backward: Looking Forward". All in all we think we have created a veritable library of material that integrates Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought with Australian condi-

tions. You can look in vain for anything from Mr. Taft and his friends on the same important subjects. Once more it is a matter for you to judge.

Mr. Taft's article really shows a complete aloofness from the working class. He and his colleagues show clearly they have nothing in common with the workers of Australia. They are professional "revolutionaries" who participate in no genuine struggle but try to divert the struggle into harmless channels.

Trotsky always proceeded in his statements on his own infallibility. Unlike Lenin, nowhere did he admit, or in his own estimation, make a mistake. His material proceeds on the assumption of his own statements being Holy Writ and everyone else's being rubbish. Such infallibility is reserved for few mortals. Trotsky's disciples and followers proceed on a similar footing.

Melbourne, June 1972.

A Communist (Marxist-Leninist) Publication