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Declaration of Australian Marxists-Leninists

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November 11th, 1963

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THE open letter of the C.P.S.U. published on July 14, 1963 contained this passage:

"The Chinese leaders are undermining the unity not only of the socialist camp but also of the entire world Communist movement, trampling under foot the principles of proletarian internationalism and grossly violating the norms of relations between fraternal parties.

"The C.P.C. leadership organises and supports various anti-Party groups of renegades who come out against the Communist Parties in the United States, Brazil, Italy, Belgium, Australia, Italy . . . .

"In Australia the C.P.C. Central Committee tried to organise splitting activities against the Communist Party and its leadership with the help of a former member of the leadership, E. Hill. Having visited the Chinese People's Republic at one time, E. Hill came out publicly against the Communist Party of Australia and tried to organise a group of like thinking men. After the Communist Party of Australia expelled Hill from the Central Committee of that Party he demonstratively went to Peking".

A TRAVESTY OF THE FACTS

This statement is a travesty of the facts. In addition, the open letter of the C.P.S.U. contained no real political analysis of the great problems facing the world revolutionary movement.

It made no attempt critically to assess the practice of the C.P.S.U. leaders since the 1957 Moscow Declaration and 1960 Moscow Statement.

Practice is the test of theory.

But the Soviet Party leaders do not test their theory by practice for to do so would be to reveal the great damage their "theory" and practice has done to Marxist-Leninist revolutionary theory and practice. It would reveal that they have been the pioneers of attacks on Marxism-Leninism.

It would reveal that their relations with Tito are a direct betrayal of the theory and practice set out in the Moscow Statement, their relations with many other parties similarly, indeed that on all current questions—peace and war, transition to socialism, dictatorship of the proletariat, this position holds.

Far from the leaders of the Communist Party of China trampling underfoot the principles of proletarian internationalism and grossly violating the norms of relations between fraternial Parties, it is precisely the C.P.S.U. leaders who have done this.

The open letter states that the Communist Party of China has interfered in the internal affairs of the Communist Party of Australia and has promoted and supported an anti-Party group —in particular Comrade E. F. Hill, former Political Committee and Secretariat member.

Practice is the great test.

The C.P.S.U. leaders are the ones who have indeed interfered in the internal affairs of the Communist Party of Australia.

In 1960, the C.P.S.U. leaders were very concerned at the position taken by the General Secretary and General President of the Communist Party of Australia, Sharkey and Dixon, at the 81 Parties' Conference and its drafting commission. In each of these, the Communist Party of Australia had a position similiar to that of several Communist Parties including that of China.

This position was one opposed to the leaders of the C.P.S.U. on all the key questions of Marxism Leninism.

It was a position unanimously endorsed by the Political Committee of the Communist Party of Australia.

It upheld Marxism-Leninism.

FLATTERY AND OPEN BRIBES

The C.P.S.U. leaders know better than anyone else the extraordinary and disgraceful lengths to which they went, alternately to intimidate, to attempt to bribe and to flatter the leaders of the Communist Party of Australia. And these facts were reported to the leading committees of the Communist Party of Australia. They were not knowledge confined to the participants.

Moreover they are facts well known to the leaders of certain other Communist parties. Sharkey weakened under all this but

nonetheless in the main remained within the grouping of genuine Marxist-Leninists.

A position of support for genuine Marxist-Leninist principles was affirmed in the Political and Central Committees on his return to Australia early in 1961.

What did the leaders of the Soviet Party do? They had already nurtured a revisionist group in the Australian Party headed by L. Aarons and members of which had been put in key positions in the Communist Party of Australia.

> **Now in co-operation with this group the C.P.S.U. leaders ordered, "persuaded" or whatever other term you like to use in such sordid business, the Australian Party leaders to transfer the late E. Robertson to Sydney to work with the Central Committee Secretariat.**
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> **Subsequently he became a Secretariat member.**
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> **They decreed that L. Aarons himself be brought forward more; they decreed that another Party functionary who was then spending some 15 months in the Soviet Union be transferred to Sydney.**
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> **They decreed that W. Brown, a well known revisionist, be promoted; they made special arrangements to maintain contact with persons favorable to their standpoint in the Australian Party.**

In fact L. Aarons and Robertson and more latterly Brown, maintained very close contact with the Soviet Party.

SHARKEY BEGINS TO SURRENDER

Throughout 1961, the revisionist element in the Political and Central Committees gradually made headway. Sharkey was surrendering to them: many changes on one pretext or another were made in leading personnel.

At the end of 1961, an Australian delegation to the 22nd Congress of the C.P.S.U., consisting of Sharkey, Bacon (close revisionist associate of L. Aarons) and E. Ross was appointed.

Again this delegation was subjected in Moscow alternately to pressure, attempted bribery, flattery and all the weapons used by people who have no principle.

On the day before his departure from the Soviet Union to return to Australia, Sharkey spent many hours with Soviet

Party leaders. What happened Sharkey and they both know but Sharkey returned to Australia and completed his desertion of Marxism-Leninism.

Now he expressed full support for the policy of the leaders of the C.P.S.U. He maintained in justification of his switch that he "had not changed but the leaders of the Communist Party of China had".

His new view was upheld by a majority of the Central Committee. It was vigorously supported by the core of revisionists headed by L. Aarons and including Robertson, E. Aarons, Bacon, Sendy and Gollan.

The real views of this latter group, hitherto minority views, and concealed at that now became majority views. It was adopted despite its conflict with all previous Central Committee decisions, the decisions of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of Australia and the 81 Parties' Statement.

The previous views of the Central Committee, the decisions of the 19th National Congress and the 81 Parties' Statement were defended in the Central Committee by E. F. Hill, F. Russell, K. C. Miller and P. Malone.

REPUDIATED PREVIOUS POSITION

After that meeting, the leaders of the Communist Party of Australia in consultation with the Soviet Party leaders, proceeded to repudiate publicly step by step their previous decisions and the 81 Parties' Statement.

Contrary to the principles of the 81 Parties' Statement, they publicly attacked the Communist Parties of China and Albania, they repudiated the 81 Parties' proposition that revisionism is the main danger to the working-class movement and contrary to the 81 Parties' Statement they began to preach reconciliation with Yugoslav revisionism.

Flowing from this they seriously compromised the theory of the peace struggle, urging that it be stripped of any partisanship; in the name of unity, they urged reconciliation with the social-democratic ideology of the A.L.P. both in relations with that Party and in the trade unions; they proceeded to interfere in the women's and youth movements to try to deprive them of partisanship—in short, they threw overboard Marxism-Leninism.

In all this, they had the assistance and advice of the Soviet Party leaders.

Each step along this road was opposed by an ever increasing number of Comrades including E. F. Hill, F. Russell, K. C. Miller, P. Malone and many others, who under intensifying abuse and the circulation of lies and slanders steadfastly upheld Marxist-Leninist principles.

Who then interfered in the internal affairs of the Communist Party of Australia? Will the Soviet Party leaders and the Australian Party leaders deny the truth of this? Of course they will because they do not respect the truth. But unfortunately for them too many people know the truth and too many people are determined that the truth will be known.

Moreover the history of this matter goes back much further.

SERIOUS DIFFERENCES IN 1956

In 1956, there were very serious differences between the leaders (including E. F. Hill) of the Communist Party of Australia and the leaders of the C.P.S.U. Both in Moscow and in Peking (in a discussion with the Soviet delegation to the 8th Congress of the Chinese Party) these differences were discussed.

In the latter case it was an acrimonious discussion headed on the Australian side by L. L. Sharkey.

The matters discussed arose precisely from the capitulationist, appeasing policy of the Soviet Party leaders. True enough after long discussions and despite their obstinacy, the Soviet Party leaders changed their position.

Will they deny this discussion took place? Will L. L. Sharkey, R. Dixon and L. Aarons deny it? Of course they will, because they do not respect the truth.

Thereafter the Soviet Party leaders set out to woo particularly E. F. Hill. He was flattered, praised, spoken of as the next leader of the Communist Party of Australia—again a direct attempted interference in the affairs of the Communist Party of Australia.

Within the Communist Party of Australia differences appeared in 1956. These were precipitated by the 20th Congress C.P.S.U. and the Hungarian events but they had their roots long before in that there was a strong revisionist element already latent in the Communist Party of Australia.

This revisionist element had arisen through the corrupting influence of capitalism, low standards of recruiting to the Party,

weakness in ideology, penetration of the Party by the secret police and so on.

In 1956, in the Central Committee a revisionist position was then taken up openly by J. D. Blake, E. Aarons and W. Brown. This was defeated under the leadership of L. L. Sharkey, R. Dixon and E. F. Hill. W. Brown was removed from editorship of the Tribune and J. D. Blake ceased to be a member of the Central Committee.

But the revisionists were not to accept this defeat. They lay low, re-grouped. They were strengthened by the return to Australia from China of L. Aarons, E. Bacon, B. Taft, H. Stanistreet. B. Taft had a background of Trotskyism in the late thirties and more latterly, logically enough, association with Tito's views.

They proceeded to urge a now covert, now overt struggle for revisionism against the leadership of Sharkey, Dixon and Hill. W. Brown openly in the Communist Review stated that there had been tendencies to a cult of the individual around Sharkey and previous General Secretary Miles.

When the leaders of the Communist Party of Australia assert that the differences with Hill preceded the 22nd Congress C.P.S.U. they are quite correct.

The differences go back to 1956 but they were differences between him and the revisionists and the revisionists were defeated.

These differences did not raise the whole range of Marxism-Leninism but took place on the character of the Party (should it be a Party of quality or should it be a mass amorphous Party fulfilling certain arbitrary quotas of recruiting); on questions of Marxist-Leninist education (should the basis of it be Marxist-Leninist classics or what E. Aarons said was Marxian economics and L. Aarons said was the theory of the Marxist-Leninist Party), on the peace struggle (should it observe a partisan character or be non partisan); on the A.L.P. (what is its nature and its ideology) and many other questions. On all these questions, the minority opinion in the Political Committee was that of L. Aarons.

Nonetheless L. Aarons continued his underground revisionist activities.

SECRET CONTACT WITH C.P.S.U.

By intrigue, lies, underhand methods, discussions outside the regular committees of the Party contact with the Soviet Party leaders he organised to subvert or defeat the leadership of Sharkey, Dixon and Hill.

He got the Party education system into his own hands. He wooed E. Robertson and J. Sendy in South Australia, E. Bacon (his close supporter) was already Queensland Secretary and he set out to woo C. Jones, Queensland President. By exploiting the weaknesses of Sharkey he strengthened his own position.

But he could not get his men into the leadership in Victoria. In 1960, the members of his group there—Taft, Stanistreet, Mortimer (with all of whom he had many discussions and meetings outside Party committees)—launched an open struggle against the leadership, aimed nominally at the staunch Marxist-Leninist Vida Little but really at all the Marxist-Leninists in the Victorian Party leadership.

The struggle ended in defeat for the revisionists who were, with the participation of L. L. Sharkey, condemned as such.

Again they pressed on with their underground activities and played upon Sharkey's fear of struggle.

Now what happened?

In 1960 Sharkey and Dixon went to Moscow to attend the 81 Parties' Conference and early in 1961 Hill was sent by Party decision to Moscow for medical treatment. At that time the C.P.S.U. leaders had a very adverse estimate of Dixon. He was kept in Moscow for almost twelve months, having suffered a heart attack. Sharkey's political firmness was weakened by the Soviet Party leaders: Hill was kept out of Australia until July, 1961.

In that time the revisionists had worked very hard to further their cause. They renewed the struggle in Victoria with greater success this time.

Now the Political Committee reversed the views on the Party, on education, on peace, on China, on the C.P.S.U. leaders, that it previously had held and began to assert that they were minority views—the minority being Hill and F. Johnson, Political Committee member and Victorian President.

On Dixon's return to Australia in 1961 the revisionists were very unsure of his position and kept him isolated for a long time. They spread in the Party the story that Dixon and Hill were too sick ever to play any further part in the Party.

Sharkey went to the 22nd Congress of the C.P.S.U. at the end of 1961 and his conversion to the C.P.S.U. line was completed.

On his return he spent a long time with Dixon and at the February 1962 Central Committee meeting Dixon committed himself (although then with many qualifications) to the C.P.S.U. line.

So the revisionists had subverted the Communist Party of Australia.

The C.P.S.U. leaders had played a big part in it.

Sharkey lent himself and his prestige to the revisionists—became their tool and now shares the fate of all such tools—to be cast aside.

Who then created the split? Who was responsible? Who interfered?

Will the leaders of the C.P.S.U. deny their attempted use of impermissible "persuasion" on Hill? Will the Australian leaders deny that Hill reported this to them? And if they attempted to "persuade" Hill without success, who else did they attempt to "persuade" and with what success?

ALIEN TO MARXISM-LENINISM

Such methods are completely alien to Marxism-Leninism. It ill behoves the exponents of such methods to talk about renegades and anti-Party conduct. Their conduct is the complete rejection of Marxism-Leninism.

And what of the allegation of interference by the Communist Party of China?

Foremost amongst the champions of the methods of work of the Communist Party of China was L. L. Sharkey who frequently contrasted the high and heavy handed and standover demands of the Soviet Party leaders with the comradely fraternal discussions with the leaders of the Communist Party of China.

At no stage did the Chinese Party leaders ever interfere or attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of the Communist Party of Australia.