

# AMR

Australian Marxist Review – Journal of the Communist Party of Australia



#61 May 2016

\$5

## Rescuing the word: **SOCIALISM**

- **Guns, paranoia & social change**
- **The danger of returning Chinese students**
- **The demonisation of the DPRK**
- **Agriculture after a socialist revolution**



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ISSN: 0310-8252

Issue # 61 – May 2016

# Editorial Notes

Issue #61 of the *Australian Marxist Review* is a reflection of the global scale of the capitalist offensive against the working class and other exploited people. It also brings out the extent of the resistance to this assault in the fields of economic and diplomatic relations. There is also the never ending battle of ideas, the contest between capitalist ideology, the application of which threatens the planet with war and environmental devastation and working class ideology, which has already shown its creative potential in many parts of the world.

The issue opens with a special double-length Taking Issue article by Rob Gowland entitled “Guns, paranoia and social change”. Americans live in fear despite their relative safety compared to the people US foreign policy endangers everyday. A culture of paranoia, fear and rampant individualism creates a perfect storm of circumstances causing 30,000 Americans to die from gun violence every year.

Harmful capitalist culture poses a risk to the Socialist countries as the students they send abroad bring anti-communist ideas home with them. Michael Hooper, in his article “Capitalist Trojan Horses: The danger of returning Chinese students” describes the historical political impact on Chinese society of students who studied abroad, the lengths to which institutions will go in capitalist countries to brainwash these students and the need for local communists to play their part in negating this process.

The insidious propaganda churned out by capitalist media seeks to win public support for the actions of Imperialism. The demonisation of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea aids Imperialism in its economic war against a socialist country that dares to pursue independence and an alternative to capitalism. “The crucifixion of North Korea, the demonisation of the DPRK: UN Security Council Resolution 2270” by Carla Stea provides a detailed report into this economic warfare and the campaign of lies and propaganda designed to justify anti-DPRK aggression.

Imperialism doesn't merely rely on physical and economic violence to attack working people, it also fights on an ideological and linguistic level. Bob Briton exposes the ideological attack on our movement in “Rescuing the word Socialism” and restates the need for public property and working class state power. Carrying out solidarity work in defence of the DPRK and to oppose imperialist aggression is an expression of Internationalism, one of the core principles of the Communist movement. Lars Ulrik Thomsen recounts important events and principles of Internationalism in his article: “Internationalism – past, present and future”.

Once the working class takes state power, it is faced with the massive task of building a new kind of society out of the poisoned foundations of the old world. Each successful revolution grappled with the problem of how best to organise agriculture based on non-exploitative relations of production, while improving productivity and protecting the environment. The late Marxist biologist Richard Levins who advised the Cuban government on agricultural reform and Wadi’h Halabi introduce their thoughts on how to achieve these three goals in their article: “Scientific development of agricultural productivity after a socialist revolution”. In Australia, any attempt to reorganise agriculture on a rational basis would first require sovereignty to be invested in the Australian people rather than a foreign monarch. David Matters in “The myth of *terra nullius* and Australian sovereignty”, provides a historical account of how indigenous people were dispossessed through the *terra nullius* doctrine and the need for Australia to cut ties with its colonial past.

This issue of the AMR introduces a new “Communications” section where readers are encouraged to reply to articles they have read in previous issues. Don Wilson provides the first contribution to this section with a reply to Lars Ulrik Thomsen’s article “Lenin’s analysis of imperialism – a pioneering work” from issue 60.

# AMR

# Guns, paranoia and social change

Rob Gowland

Yet another mass shooting in the US. Shockingly, they have become so commonplace that no one takes any notice now unless the body count is extreme. But gun deaths in the US are just that: commonplace. With more than 30,000 a year, how could they be anything else?

Over 30,000 gun deaths a year should be a wake-up call for any society. And plenty of people in the US (including President Obama) are calling for reform of the country's crazy gun laws. In the heartland of capitalism, however, there are also plenty of people who believe that free access to guns is a good thing. So good, in fact, that they will fight vehemently against any attempt to restrict that access.

The reasons for this attitude are many and varied, but they share one common feature, a feature identified in Michael Moore's documentary film *Bowling For Columbine*: paranoia. Americans in general are the most fearful people on the planet. Millions of them believe the end of the world is actually imminent. Millions more

are constantly told not to offend their God lest they be consigned to Hell to be tortured for eternity!

Large numbers of Americans are afraid of foreigners (just look at Donald Trump's rants against Mexicans) and a surprising number are fearful of aliens from other planets. Many are afraid of the United Nations, believing it to be part of a conspiracy to impose "one world government" on everyone. Sinister black helicopters allegedly operate on behalf of these deadly supra-national interests. The "black helicopter" paranoia seems to spring from an innate distrust of their own government and its pervasive intelligence agencies which are known to operate with scant regard for the laws of the USA.

This paranoia is deeply ingrained in popular culture in the US. American capitalism has grown rich exploiting the scientific and technological advances made by the people working in its well-funded institutes of higher learning. However, higher education in the US is restricted to those who can afford it. The wider population in the US is encouraged, in various ways both discrete and overt, to be suspicious of scientists and of science itself.





“Mad scientists” abound in American popular culture. Even the sane ones cannot be trusted. It is rare in American fiction for a sympathetic character to have faith in science, rarer still for that faith to be justified. Only in science fiction programs set safely aeons in the future is science seen as helpmeet and tool of civilised humanity.

So prevalent is fear of “what is coming” in the US, that people all over the country have actually built their own survival bunkers. Once intended to help people survive nuclear war, they are now more frequently aimed at surviving domestic unrest as “social breakdown” looms in an apocalyptic future.

Job security is largely unknown in the US today, so a great many Americans are understandably afraid of the future. In addition, they have lived for over half a century under the threat of nuclear war and neither their policies nor their institutions have been advanced to offset that threat. For Americans, the world’s people are not a powerful force concerned with the common good, but merely an amorphous bunch of individuals all concerned only with advancing their own interests.

This rampant individualism has been assiduously cultivated for decades in opposition to the collective principles that were extolled in the Soviet Union and which accord with humanity’s actual interests. It suits

capitalism to have people philosophically isolated from one another, selfishly “looking out for number one” and not caring about society as a whole, for capitalists only get rich by exploiting everyone else, ruthlessly crushing the weaker beneath their feet.

Human beings, however, are by nature social animals. Their instincts are to help one another, to co-operate. This contradiction means that capitalism must constantly dissemble to promote its individualist approach, pushing the idea that individualism is somehow not only natural but “right” and, incredibly, beneficial.

To maintain this fiction, a massive army of propagandists, academics, “think tanks” and journalists is retained by capitalism, constantly reinforcing the individualist line even while life itself constantly demonstrates that it is not in humanity’s interest.

The gun lobby in the US can be seen as the epitome of individualism, promoting as it does the absurd view that ready access to guns makes people safer! The line advanced by the peak gun lobby organisation, the National Rifle Association, speaks for itself in its fatuousness: “the answer to a bad man with a gun is a good man with a gun”. It might have some validity if by “good man with a gun” they meant the police. But they don’t; they mean relying on an armed population to shoot it out with the baddies. This highly unlikely scenario is a popular

fantasy among gun nuts, who revel in the idea of a heroic “rugged individual” drawing his gun and blowing the baddies away, with cheers all ‘round.

Capitalism is a society built on exploitation, inequality and unfairness. It rewards criminality, and fosters selfishness and aggressiveness towards others. It idolises profit, in pursuit of which it frequently resorts to war. The conflicts and contradictions in capitalist society can – and frequently do – lead to mental health problems on the part of people trying to cope with them.

In the most developed capitalist countries, this has developed into a mental health crisis, exacerbated in the USA by the prevalence of deadly weapons. Desperately unhappy people in other countries who try to end their unhappiness with suicide, will often try to overdose on sleeping pills or slash their wrists. Such attempts are frequently survivable, allowing the sufferer to be treated. But in the USA, where the would-be suicider has ready access to guns, the result is all too often irredeemable – ie fatal. In fact, some ten thousand or more people die from gun-related suicides in the US every year.

A mental health crisis of this magnitude cries out for a concerted, significant response. Capitalism, however, has other – more important – fish to fry. The USA is slowly being de-industrialised, the country’s standard of living is falling, its big corporations are moving their enterprises offshore to more profitable low-wage countries. It is imperative that capitalism keep people from thinking about these matters, or they might begin to question the validity of capitalism itself. Bernie Sanders gave Hillary Clinton a serious scare, running on a platform advocating socialism!

American imperialism is intent on gaining control of the world’s major resources – not just energy but also water and food – ensuring its continued domination of the planet. The rest of the world, however, is not prepared to sit idly by and let this happen. Conflict is looming between the USA and the BRICS\* countries, conflict the EU will try to exploit for its own benefit.

(\*BRICS countries are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.)

The USA is finding it harder to maintain its vast military machine as its economy declines. To ensure the continued support of the American people – or at least to nullify their discontent – US imperialism’s most valuable tool is the paranoia that has been so carefully fostered over so many years. A frightened populace forgives so many injustices, forgets so many broken promises.

A ramped up “war on terror” has so far served imperialism well. Numerous wars against various “rogue states”, usually co-incidentally energy-rich states, have also helped to consolidate the position of US imperialism while strengthening the image of the world as a “dangerous place”.

And, let’s face it: for millions of people in numerous countries, the world is a dangerous place. Mainly, however, because of imperialism’s many wars, coups, subversions and assassinations. To say to the people of Pakistan or the Yemen that the world is a dangerous place, as they cope with constant US or Saudi drone strikes, is to mock their suffering.

And yet, even as capitalism in decline thrashes about causing death and destruction in country after country, or simply warps their economies so that the majority must unnecessarily suffer disease and hunger, there are hopeful signs of change for the better. Imperialist domination is being seriously challenged across Asia, Africa and Latin America. In Britain and in the USA itself, there has been a resurgence in Social Democracy. Yes I know it is a diversion rather than an answer and can never solve capitalism’s problems. But that is something those people have yet to learn.

In the meantime, thanks to Bernie Sanders in particular, socialism is back on the political agenda of the capitalist world. Revolution is still a dirty word, but millions of people are seriously considering the view that there is an alternative, social system, a system called Socialism. That has to be a good sign.

Whether those people go on to support a revolutionary change in the social system surely is where we come in.

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# Capitalist Trojan Horses:

## The danger of returning Chinese students

Michael Hooper

Throughout modern Chinese history, students and scholars who studied abroad played important roles in the construction and modernisation of the Chinese nation. From the Qing Dynasty to the Peoples' Republic, Chinese youth travelled overseas to learn advanced techniques and knowledge to apply to Chinese conditions. While they have traditionally played a positive role in the history of the country, current overseas students pose a serious threat to the socialist future of China. Overseas students, particularly those sent to imperialist countries, are sent right into the belly of the beast where they are exposed to all of the tools at imperialism's disposal to strip away their belief in Communism and replace their world-view with that of capitalism. Once thoroughly prepared, they are sent home where their newly acquired technical skills allow them to take up elite positions throughout society and industry. If the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is to be successful, if the China Dream is to become a reality, then it is necessary to prevent Chinese students who study abroad from becoming agents of western imperialism as a result of their internalisation of capitalist values and world-views.

This report uses historical evidence and the most up-to-date research to show that Chinese students who study abroad have historically had a large impact on Chinese society, that imperialist countries use the media and educational institutions to indoctrinate people with capitalist ideology and that Chinese overseas students' values are currently being affected by this. The logical result of these points is: Students who return from abroad indoctrinated with capitalist ideology and values pose an existential threat.

### The tradition of studying abroad and its local impact

Since the Qing Dynasty, successive Chinese governments have sent students abroad to learn from the West (Chiang 2003, Guo 1998, Zhang 2002). Before Liberation, approximately 150,000 Chinese students studied overseas (Zhang 2002). From 1978 to 1998, 270,000 Chinese went abroad for study (Gu and Liu 1998) while in 2014 alone, 459,800 students studied abroad (Gu 2015). It is clear then that there is an ever

increasing trend of Chinese students leaving the motherland to study abroad.

Returnees have historically become elites and wielded a disproportionately large influence over Chinese society (Guo 1998, Han, Chen and Feng 2013). Of the 100 Late Qing Dynasty students who found work after studying abroad between 1872 and 1875, 30 of them took influential positions of power, with one of them, Tang Shaoyi becoming the first Prime Minister of Republican China (Zhang 2002, Guo 1998). Japan was the most popular destination for overseas study before the Boxer indemnity of 1907 and as a result, China's first modern school system, which was decreed in 1903, was a copy of the Japanese education system (Guo 1998). It was the influence of students trained in Japan that caused this to happen.

Beginning in 1907, studying in the US became more popular and the graduates of US universities returned to China to reform the Chinese higher education system along US lines, in accordance with US values (Guo 1998, Zhang 2002). Foreign graduates not only dominated the top positions in Chinese academia, they also held the vast majority of top government positions in the Republican government. Seventy-five percent of the provisional republican cabinet of Sun Yatsen had studied in Europe or the US, while 15 out of 18 ministers had studied abroad (Guo 1998, Zhang 2002). The returnees of the Republican period were criticised for being too westernised (Shu 1973, Wang 1966) and attempting to simply copy western theory to apply to China (Chiang 2003). The Communist Party of China was also deeply influenced by returnees. Founding members of the CPC, Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao both studied in Japan, where Li studied Marxist works (Yu 2014). Future leaders of the CPC such as Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping and Zhu De studied in France and Germany while others, including Liu Shaoqi and later Jiang Zemin studied in the Soviet Union (Guo 1998).

So it is clear that students who study abroad return to China and take up elite positions in society. They become top scientists, economists, educators and politicians. From these positions of power, authority and influence in society, they use the values and techniques they learned overseas to dramatically alter society based on the ideas they learned while overseas. While important and useful information can be learned by studying





abroad, students also accumulate harmful capitalist “values” and ideology.

## Impact on ideology of studying abroad

That students are changed by their time overseas should not be a surprise. For as long as they have existed, capitalist societies have been carrying out ideological work against common people. Two particularly powerful institutions of bourgeois ideological work are the media and schools, particularly universities (Belmonte 2008, Chomsky and Hermann 1988, Schmidt 2000, Zhong 2015). Since the beginning of the Cold War, the US has attempted to win people over to capitalist ideology through all possible channels including media, dance, music, movies, books and other cultural products (Belmonte 2008, Li 2015). In their seminal work; *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*, Chomsky and Hermann exposed the ideological functions of media in capitalist countries, calling them: “effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out system-supportive propaganda functions” (Chomsky and Hermann 1988). Chinese students who study in the US or similar countries are surrounded by local news and media which all act to indoctrinate them with a capitalist world-view and values.

Education in the West is carried out to strengthen the class rule of the bourgeoisie, and the university is one

of those powerful tools (Zhong 2015). The famous book *Disciplined Minds* is an amazing exposé of the indoctrination that US universities carry out to produce people with “ideological discipline”, people who won’t dare to challenge the status quo (Schmidt 2000). According to Schmidt, the role of teachers is not just to present the curriculum but to extrapolate the ideology to cover new situations and to never challenge the curriculum (Schmidt 2000). He also said that teachers are rarely fired for being poor teachers, instead they are usually fired for challenging ideological discipline (Schmidt 2000). Ironically, after publishing *Disciplined Minds*, Schmidt was fired from his position as an editor of an academic journal. Chinese students studying abroad undergo the same ideological disciplining that local students do. They too are prepared to become unquestioning missionaries of capitalist ideology and values.

The example of Sheng Ding, a Chinese scholar living in the US, shows what happens when Chinese become “ideologically disciplined” by Western education. The scholar published an article introducing personal stories that inadvertently demonstrated his surrender to local ideology. One example was when he attended a speech by the Dalai Lama, following which he was confronted by an American student who said: “Why did the Communist Party invade Tibet, occupy his holy motherland and force him into exile?” (Sheng 2007). The author says that he wanted to tell the student the truth about feudal Tibet and how the Tibetan slaves were liberated in

1950 but for some reason couldn't. In the author's own words he "neutralised his ethnic identity", i.e. rejected the truth in favour of a Western lie. Instead of defending the correct position of the CPC, the author uttered worthless platitudes to the American student. After this exchange the author claimed to feel relieved because he took another step towards becoming a "responsible academic"!

Empirical evidence proving the exact effects of studying abroad on the values of Chinese students is scarce. The reason for Samuel Huntington's rethink characterised by the famous US intellectuals insightful quote about power: "Power remains strong when it remains in the dark; exposed to the sunlight it begins to evaporate." (Huntington 1983). However there have been two-ground breaking research projects in the last few years which dared to present hard evidence on this question. A 2013 paper found, using highly robust quantitative methods, that Chinese who studied in the US had a more favourable attitude towards the US than students who stayed in China (Han, Chen and Feng 2013). This "favourable attitude" included their opinion of US political institutions. The paper concluded that this increases US

soft power penetration into China (Han, Chen and Feng 2013). The researchers found that local media had the biggest influence on Chinese students, followed by interactions with local people, while also noting that patriotic feeling towards China did not protect students from foreign influence (Han, Chen and Feng 2013).

The evidence of the 2013 report builds on earlier research in 2010 which asked whether Chinese students who studied abroad are "more receptive to international values and universal norms"(Han and Zweig 2010). This is of course bourgeois double speak for uncritical acceptance of Western capitalist hegemonic ideology and values. The results of the study were similar to that of the 2013 paper: studying overseas changes the political positions and values of students (Han and Zweig 2010). The researchers tried to claim that studying overseas encourages Chinese to favour cooperative internationalism, however a more reasonable interpretation of the data suggests that students are influenced to accept the values and "public opinion" of their host country. This also increases Western soft power penetration into China. Han and Zweig specifically mentioned that students with "pro-Western" attitudes returning to



China and taking elite positions in Chinese society could have a significant impact on government policy (Han and Zweig 2010).

## Protecting the youth: cooperation is the answer

So it is clear that Chinese students who study abroad are the target of ideological influence by foreign powers in order to inculcate them with capitalist ideology and values. Since almost half a million young Chinese leave the country to study every year, this must be considered a serious threat. General Li Dianren, Vice commissar of the National Defence University commented that political threats come from ideology and that these threats are far more dangerous to national security than military threats (Li 2015). After all, the Soviet Union was not defeated by the US army but rather by capitalist ideological infiltration into elite sections of Soviet society, among other reasons (Li 2015).

What can be done to protect these students and by extension the future of China? I propose that the CPC cooperate with overseas Communist Parties to build a network of activity and life-based ideological education to take place overseas. Local Communist Parties can help guide students through the ideological minefield of living in a capitalist country through positive socialisation, provision of student services and undermining local propaganda. Person-to-person contact with local party members helps to show Chinese students that Marxism-Leninism is an international trend, it shows them that despite the propaganda they are surrounded by, capitalism is a deeply flawed, exploitative system. Local members can immunise international students by explaining techniques or arguments that universities and the media use. In this way, comrades living in the capitalist world can play an important part in defence of the socialist world.

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# The crucifixion of North Korea, The demonisation of the DPRK: UN Security Council Resolution 2270

Carla Stea

Originally published by *Global Research*

“The UN which was created to prevent the scourge of war, has become an instrument of war”. Ramsey Clark, Former U.S. Attorney General, Re: United Nations Security Council Resolution 678:

One of the most infamous and provocative resolutions adopted in the history of the United Nations Security Council is Resolution 2270, adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter on March 2, 2016. The unconscionable cruelty of this resolution literally taunts and baits the DPRK to react, as the resolution strangles the economy of the DPRK, inevitably causing intolerable suffering to the people of that bullied nation.

The demonisation of North Korea is based on the grossest of double standards, and fraudulent testimony by defectors from the DPRK who were paid large sums of money to provide sensational and gruesome descriptions of human rights abuses in the DPRK, testimony both lurid and lucrative, and which was later proven to be false, and withdrawn by these same defectors who had so blatantly lied. This has been documented by *The New York Times* and the *The Guardian of Britain*.

It is impossible to ignore the possibility that Resolution 2270 is intended to facilitate a sinister agenda, which could very likely culminate in large-scale warfare in East Asia, pulverising North Korea, inevitably leading to massive bloodshed in both North and South Korea, and forcing the People’s Republic of China to increase military spending to the detriment of its social programs and its success in raising hundreds of millions of its citizens out of poverty.

The hypocrisy and double standards of this resolution are brazen to the point of barbarity, considering the enormity of suffering it inflicts upon the lives of North Koreans and which shames the United Nations Security Council.

By prohibiting (No “30” of the resolution) the DPRK’s export and sale of 50% of the minerals (gold, titanium,

vanadium, rare earth minerals, probably coal), upon the export of which the survival of the country’s economy depends, this resolution devastates North Korea’s economy, and condemns the citizens of the DPRK to rampant starvation.

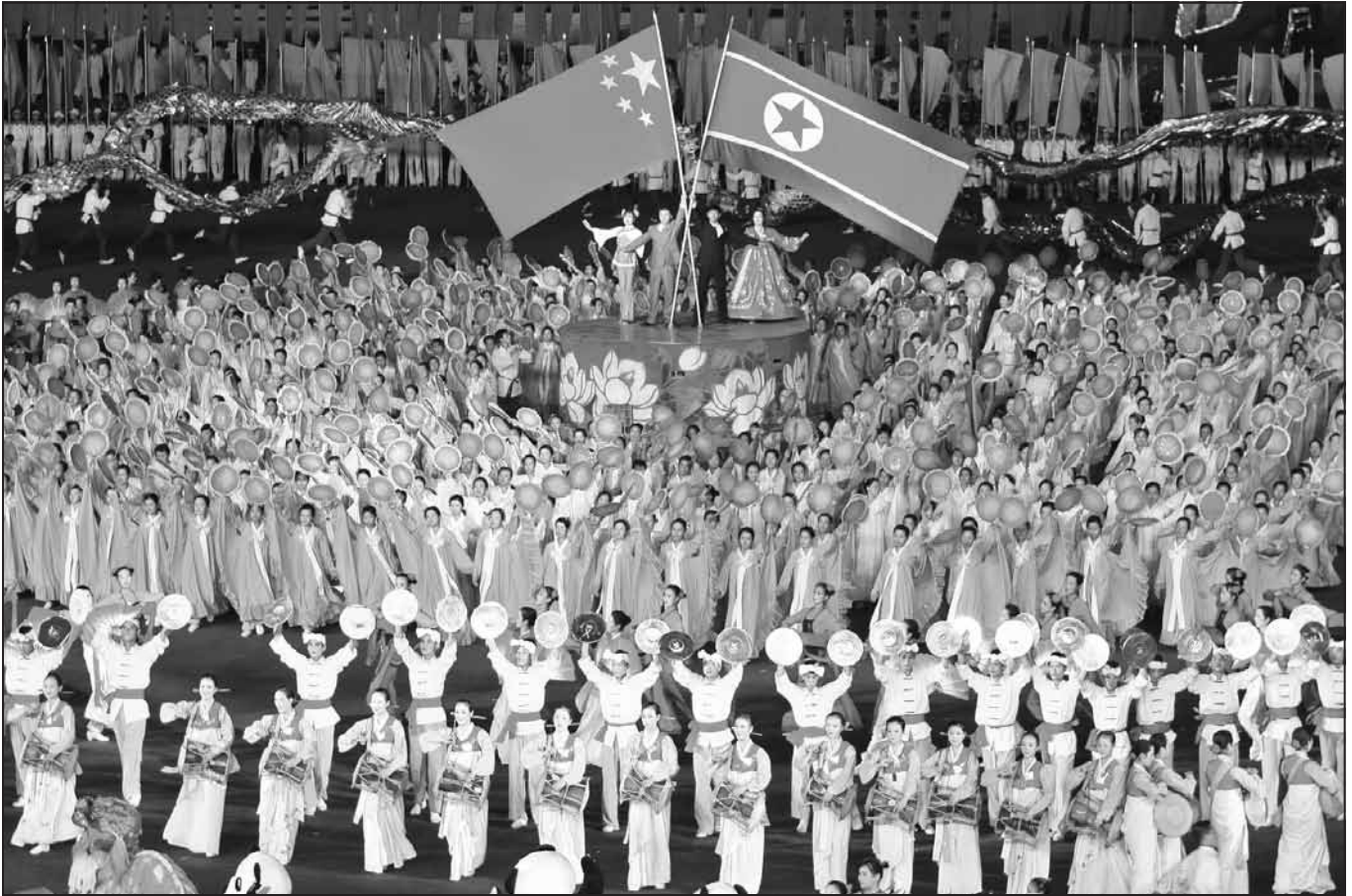
No. “17” of the resolution:

Decides that all Member States shall prevent specialised teaching or training of DPRK nationals within their territories or by their nationals ... of advanced physics, advanced computer simulation and related computer sciences, geospatial navigation, nuclear engineering and related disciplines.

Resolution 2270 thereby condemns the DPRK to intellectual impoverishment, and a primitive level in science, and, especially medicine (so much of which now depends on advanced, sophisticated computer technology and advanced nuclear engineering for swift diagnosis and options indispensable for treatment of cancers and other pathological medical conditions and illnesses, etc).

This resolution is a consequence of the ongoing demonisation of North Korea, a tiny, country which proudly defends a social and economic system which is anathema to the capitalist “west” and US-NATO powers, unlike obedient South Korea, which is regarded by the USA as merely a military base, to the humiliation of the South Koreans, many of whom cautiously confide their anger at being a mere colony hostage to the West.

The contrivances and slanders used to degrade and torment the DPRK follow the now predictable pattern that we saw with the UN Security Council adoption of Resolution 678 in 1990, which led to the annihilation of Iraq and murder of Saddam Hussein, and the spread of the most vicious terrorism; the adoption of Resolution 1973 which obliterated Libya as a functioning state, lawlessly committed the extrajudicial murder of Khaddafi, and transformed Libya into an incubator of exponentially increasing terrorism, worldwide. And now, on December 22, 2014, in violation of its mandate, and following reports of human rights abuses which have been exposed as fraudulent, the Security Council, against the opposition by Russia and China, put the “Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK” on its agenda, urging the



Security Council to refer this concocted matter to the International Criminal Court, despite the fact that at a press stakeout after that meeting, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Simonovic admitted that the testimony of defectors which was used as the basis for the *Report of the Commission of Inquiry* (S/2014/276) would not meet the standard of proof required for consideration as evidence admissible in court.

At that December, 2014 meeting the Permanent Representative of the United States, who ferrets out the most lurid and practically pornographic details, stated at that Council meeting: “A former guard testified that the baby of a political prisoner had been cooked and fed to animals.” The US permanent Representative ignored the fact that the US Senate Torture Report had been recently released, (after fierce attempts to conceal its findings) confirming (in grossly redacted form) that often innocent prisoners of the US Army had been subjected to horrifying tortures, several prisoners had been waterboarded more than 180 times, along with other atrocities.

And her conveniently, or irresponsibly selective memory ignores the fact that the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, in Chile, installed and supported by the US government, had a standard practice of forcing live rats up the vaginas of female political prisoners, after submerging their

heads in vats of excrement, and in an op-ed piece by Anthony Lewis of the *NY Times*, he reported documentation of the Chilean government forcing hungry live rats up the bleeding naked legs and torso of political prisoner Sergio Buschman, enabling the rats to eat whatever they found most edible. When it comes to pornographic torture of political prisoners, the inventiveness of the US military and its client states is probably unsurpassed. Veronica di Negri, one of the Chilean women who suffered the sexual torture using rats, had a teenage son who participated in a peaceful demonstration to restore democracy in Chile; the Chilean military poured gasoline over her son, Rodrigo Rojas di Negri, set him on fire and he died in agony. All this is documented in *The Washington Post* in an article by David Remnick.

This is only the prelude. Reports in the *NY Times* and the British *Guardian* document that not only are many of the DPRK defectors’ reports proven to be fraudulent, those very defectors, upon whose fraudulent testimony the UN Commission of Inquiry is based, (testimony which was later retracted by the defectors themselves), had initially been paid large sums of money – upwards of \$500 per hour for the most sensational, shocking inventions.

Shin Dong-hyuk, whose fanciful 2012 book *Escape from Camp 14* translated into 27 languages, met with



The US warship *USS Harry S Truman*.

Navi Pillay, the former UN Human Rights Chief, and his fabrications formed the basis for the UN Commission of inquiry. Shin subsequently retracted central parts of his account, and apologised for betraying the trust of the gullible “investigators” who eagerly sought and seized upon his lurid details. According to the *Guardian*:

Shin is not alone. Another North Korean defector, Lee Soon-ok offered testimony to the US House of Representatives in 2004 describing torture and the killing of Christians in hot iron liquid in a North Korean political prison. But Lee’s testimony was challenged by Chang In-suk, then head of the North Korean defector’s association in Seoul, who knew first hand that Lee had never been a political prisoner. Many former DPRK citizens agreed Lee’s accounts were unlikely to be true ... Cash payments in return for interviews with North Korean refugees have been standard practice in the field for years ... A government official from the South Korean ministry of unification said the range of fees could vary wildly, depending on the quality of the information ... How does the payment change the relation between a researcher and an interviewee, and what effect will it have on the story itself? This practice drives the demand for “salable stories,” the more shocking or emotional, the higher the fee.

So much for the double standards which dictate Security Council action. There is now more than reasonable doubt about the validity of the Commission of Inquiry report upon which the UN Security Council is basing its effort to refer the DPRK to the International Criminal Court. Isolation, stigmatisation, slander, defamation and demonisation of DPRK is so fashionable and lucrative an industry today that there can be little doubt about the agenda driving this. *Crimes of War*, edited by Dr Richard Falk and psychologist Robert Jay Lifton documents stage one in preparing an attack upon a people: dehumanisation, and this stage has already been accomplished among those conforming with the program. Once dehumanised, it is easy to massacre and exterminate a people, overtly or covertly. DPRK is one of the few remaining socialist countries in the world, proud and defiant of the will of the capitalist behemoth, and for this it is being crucified.

On September 27, 2014, Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong of the DPRK stated at the UN General Assembly:

The situation on the Korean Peninsula had reached the touch-and-go brink of war last year. It was started with the United States-South Korea joint military exercises aimed at “occupying” the capital city, Pyongyang of the DPRK. In January this year,

the government of the DPRK made a proposal to stop military hostile acts against each other on the Korean peninsula, but these provocative joint military exercises against the DPRK were forcibly conducted in March-April and in August as well. The government of the DPRK officially referred to the Security Council the issue of suspending such war exercises which seriously endanger peace and security of the Korean peninsula and the region as a whole. However the Security Council turned its back ... At present, the government of the DPRK set forth the economic construction and improvement of people's living standard as its major task. Accordingly, peaceful environment is a vital necessity for us to lead the just picked-up upward trend of the national economy to a sustainable development."

According to Al Jazeera:

If the current sanctions are enforced systematically, North Korea would suffer a major blow. Its economy, which began to recover in recent years, is likely to shrink again, and its living standards will certainly go down. According to Foster Klug on CNS news, "Analysts say one part of North Korea's traditional anger over drills is that they force the impoverished country to respond with its own costly war games."

On March 2 (2016), the UN Security Council inflicted this brutal resolution on the DPRK, crippling the country's economy. Five days later, the US and South Korea began the two-month military operation "Key Resolve," and "Foal Eagle," which include the "beheading operation" that plans to remove the DPRK government, colourfully describing the fate of the North Korean President in a manner identical to the practice of ISIS: beheading. According to *China Daily*, "The exercises this year are reported to be carried out on the largest scale, mobilising the highest tech weapons."

After witnessing the fate of Libya's country and leader after Khadafi abandoned his nuclear program, under no realistic circumstances could the DPRK abandon its nuclear program. Further, the question must be asked: who has the right to demand this? There are nine nuclear powers today, and only the US has ever used nuclear weapons, as a demonstration exercise on civilian human guinea pigs, to intimidate the USSR.

At the March 2, 2016 Security Council meeting, once again, gross hypocrisy and double standards were revealed by the Permanent Representative of the US, who sanctimoniously and disingenuously began:

In looking at the DPRK, it can at times feel as though one is seeing two entirely different realities.

One is the DPRK that is expending tremendous resources in pursuing advanced technology to build an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of carrying out a nuclear strike a continent away. The other is the DPRK in which according to a joint assessment conducted by the World Food Program and the North Korean government, 25 per cent of children under the age of five suffer from stunted growth as a result of chronic malnutrition.

One can only question the US Permanent Representative's awareness of reality in the country she represents: last weekend the US government celebrated the launching of the attack submarine named *Washington*, the cost of building which was huge, and the US yearly spends more than \$612 billion for the military, which it deploys in 150 countries around the world, while only nine weeks before, the *Financial Times* reported, December 11, 2015, that 20 percent of US citizens live below the poverty line, and homelessness is a national scandal. The US Permanent Representative's description of North Korea appears to be a paranoid projection of the economic priorities of the country she currently represents.

While 17,000 US troops and 300,000 South Korean troops threaten the DPRK's survival with yearly military drills rehearsing "occupying Pyongyang" and "Beheading operation," which would justify the DPRK's invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter guaranteeing the "inherent right of self-defence" against armed attack, the US-South Korean military has widened its threat and its target, and is now engaged in preparations to deploy THAAD missiles (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) in South Korea. In an interview with Reuters in Munich, Germany, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated:

China is gravely concerned about the US's such probable move. The coverage of the THAAD missile defense system, especially the monitoring scope of its X-Band radar, goes far beyond the defense need of the Korean Peninsula. It will reach deep into the hinterland of Asia, which will not only directly damage China's strategic security interests, but also do harm to the security interests of other countries in this region. There are two old Chinese sayings, one of which goes: "Xiang Zuang performed the sword dance as a cover for his attempt on Liu Bang's life," and the other one goes: "Sima Zhao's trick is obvious to everyone on the street – the villainous design is apparent." We firmly oppose any country to utilize the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula to jeopardize China's legitimate rights and interests.

On January 27, 2016 *The New York Times* reported that "China has accused Washington of using the North Korean nuclear tests as an excuse to deploy the THAAD



missile system in South Korea.” According to Wang Junsheng, a research fellow on Northeast Asia at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences: “It is simply the US technically trying to deter China and Russia with these missiles, and strategically alienating South Korea from China.”

Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated:

It doesn't require experts. Ordinary people know that the deployment of the THAAD system is not just to defend South Korea, but a wider agenda and may even serve the possibility of targeting China.

Indeed, Japan's “apology” to South Korea over the “comfort women” issue was made under pressure from the United States, which seeks to cement a coalition of Japan, South Korea and other Asian “allies” to confront and encircle China. In February 2014 the annual exercise between Japan and the US in Camp Pendleton California, called “Iron Fist,” was the largest operation ever, and included drones and air support used to cover troops bombing and invading an island prior to its capture. Russia is encircled by NATO bases in the West, and THAAD missiles in South Korea would complete the

encirclement of Russia with the THAAD missile system on the East.

There is the ominous possibility that the recklessly punitive Resolution 2270 could entirely collapse the DPRK, driving a flood of refugees into China fleeing the oncoming hordes of the United States and South Korea. This would inflame the entire area, and one cannot expect China to remain passive with hostile troops on its border. Slightly more than two years ago, the *Yale Journal of International Affairs* published an extraordinary article by the great sociologist and former adviser to President Jimmy Carter, Dr Amitai Etzioni. Dr Etzioni's article is entitled: “Who Authorized Preparations for War with China?” Last year Dr Etzioni discussed with me, personally, his alarm over these stealthy preparations.

As usual every effort will be made to provide a cosmetic veneer of legitimacy for such an act of aggression, as step by step the infrastructure is being contrived for a terrifying outcome which will very likely become inevitable. The destruction of Korea will be merely “collateral damage” in any deadly confrontation between two global super powers. And the United Nations Security Council has been distorted and manipulated to facilitate, once again, the scourge of war. This is irresponsible to an extreme.

The purpose of Reagan's “Star Wars” was to lure the USSR into an arms race requiring vast investment in the military, to the detriment of the social programs of socialism, resulting in the Soviet people's frustration and disillusionment, which contributed to the collapse of the Soviet state. The capitalist powers could then gloat that “socialism failed.” The purpose of THAAD is to lure China into a similar distortion of its economic investment priorities, so that after having lifted a half billion people out of poverty, evidence of the extraordinary success of their economic system (as confirmed by Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz), they will become trapped in an arms race which will cripple their ability to continue raising the living standards of their people, leading to social frustration and disillusionment similar to that suffered by the Soviet peoples during their arms race, and ultimately weakening the structure, and possibly the viability of the Chinese state.

In 1992 I had a long, personal conversation with Ambassador Yuliy Vorontsev, the last Soviet Ambassador to the UN, and the first Russian Ambassador to the UN, regarding this very arms race. Ambassador Vorontsev stated:

We had enough weapons to defend ourselves. But we were provoked to invest more in the military, and we should not have risen to the bait. To quote Tallyrand: “We committed something worse than a crime; we committed a blunder.”



With the destruction of the DPRK, China would become extremely vulnerable, and with the placement of THAAD in South Korea, an arms race would be provoked. This would be profitable for the “one percent” in the capitalist powers, who profit from the military-industrial arms buildup, and profit enormously from war. But it would destroy all that China has accomplished, and its model for a saner, more humanitarian world. And the ensuing tsunami of bloodshed would be the legacy of the United Nations Security Council. One can only question why Russia and China did not veto SC Resolution 2270, especially as Russia stated during that meeting:

Russia is very seriously worried about the negative trends and the way the situation in North-East Asia has been developing. We are concerned about attempts to use the actions of Pyongyang as a justification for military build-up in the region including of offensive weapons and the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense anti-missile system. The resolution we have adopted today should not be used to choke off the North Korean economy. In that regard we are concerned about the hasty introduction, even before today’s resolution was adopted, of unilateral sanctions against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, which could have very negative humanitarian consequences for the many millions of inhabitants of the country, especially those who are most vulnerable.

China stated:

China opposes the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense anti-missile system on the Korean peninsula because such an action harms the strategic security interests of China and other countries of the region, goes against the goal of maintaining peace, security and stability of the peninsula and will seriously undermine the efforts of the international community to find a political solution to the question of the Korean peninsula.

It is the passionate dream of many of the Korean people, both North and South, to reunify. The passage of UNSC Resolution 2270 makes this dream now a fantasy, and a form of magical thinking in a context where, absent dramatic change in the global economic architecture, war and bloodshed are most likely.

Under the best of circumstances this long cherished Korean hope for reunification will be excruciatingly difficult to accomplish. However, the current situation seems to be the worst of circumstances. Transformation of the economic structure and priorities of the capitalist West would provide the most favorable context in which this more than half-century longing of the Korean peoples for reunification may finally become a reality.

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# Rescuing the word: socialism

Bob Briton

“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less.” “The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.” “The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master – that’s all.”

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass*, first published in 1872.

I was prompted to write these words on the actual meaning of socialism after reading a digitised poster on my Facebook news feed. In stark black and white it asserted:

A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST IS NOT A MARXIST SOCIALIST OR A COMMUNIST. A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST IS STILL A CAPITALIST, JUST ONE WHO SEEKS TO RESTRAIN THE SELF-DESTRUCTIVE EXCESSES OF CAPITALISM AND CHANNEL GOVERNMENT’S USE OF OUR TAX MONEY INTO CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE. DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS BELIEVE THAT BOTH THE ECONOMY SHOULD BE RUN DEMOCRATICALLY TO MEET HUMAN NEEDS, NOT SIMPLY MAKE PROFITS FOR THE FEW.

The use of all capitals is the online equivalent of shouting. This view of “democratic socialism” won’t tolerate contradiction even though the message about getting big business and governments to behave themselves is extremely mild and would sit comfortably with virtually every small “I” liberal on the planet. What struck me about this brief manifesto was the observation that a “democratic socialist is still a capitalist.” What sort of socialist, democratic or otherwise, can still be a capitalist? I presume the “capitalist” reference is to supporters of capitalism but, this clarification notwithstanding, the words socialist and capitalist would appear as antonyms in any thesaurus worth its salt.

## New wave of “socialism”

The online poster is part of a wave of memes, blog entries and even syndicated columns in the capitalist press that sing the praises of “socialism” or, more specifically, latter-day “democratic socialism”. One short YouTube opinion piece prepared last year by AJ+ (a venture by Doha-based national broadcaster Al Jazeera) listed “5 Ways America [the USA] is already Socialist”\*. It

acknowledged that socialism is a dirty word in the US media and AJ+ sought to define it.

“SOCIALISM: (NOUN) A POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC THEORY OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION THAT ADVOCATES THAT THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND EXCHANGE SHOULD BE OWNED OR REGULATED BY THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE,” the program insists, again in all caps. Somehow the word “regulated” has snuck in and been given equal status to the concept of ownership.

The video goes on to lay out the features of current US socialism. They are:

- the weekend – because workers had to fight to get this and other benefits from the bosses
- many of the greats of US history and literature are/were socialist – Jack London, Mark Twain, Ernest Hemingway, etc.
- public infrastructure like highways and bridges, schools and universities and so on, that date back to the days of the New Deal
- the military – unfortunately, the biggest US public enterprise of them all
- corporate welfare – governments bailing out big business when they are down on their luck

Part tongue in cheek, the video sets out what the new wave of democratic socialists want. They want to restore the role of the public enterprises that have existed for a long time under the overarching state monopoly capitalist economic and social system. And they want to tax the “1%” to pay for the needs of the less privileged – a common sentiment of memes coming from sections of the “left” in Australia, the UK and the US lately.

The popular media in favour of “democratic socialism” appear to be taking their cue from the promotion of Jeremy Corbyn to the leadership of the British Labour Party and the surprisingly successful campaign by Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders to be the Democratic candidate at the US presidential election later this year. While Jeremy Corbyn’s promotion may have caused a spike in sales of Marxist works in bookshops across the UK, Bernie Sanders’ followers, in particular, are keen to remind people that they are dyed in the wool capitalists.

## Ownership matters

Bernie Sanders’ interviews on the subject fuel this understanding of “socialism”. He doesn’t run scared of



British Colonialism in India. The capitalist ruling class would not willingly give up the privilege flowing from their ownership of the “means of production, distribution and exchange”.

the word but, instead, empties it of its content. He goes straight away to questions of distribution of wealth and rights to jobs, education, healthcare and other social services to avoid the central question of social ownership. Socialists from the time of Marx and before recognised that the ownership of property is at the heart of socialism and Marx was among those that further recognised that the capitalist ruling class would not willingly give up the privilege flowing from their ownership of the “means of production, distribution and exchange”.

They realised that nothing truly fundamental was going to be done about conditions for the working class or the distribution of wealth in society until workers and other exploited people owned and controlled society’s productive assets. Wresting control over that property would be resisted vigorously by the existing owners. In Marx’s time, many of these owners had inherited their wealth from the vanguard that led the charge of colonial dispossession and theft in Asia, Africa and the Americas – the first wave of “primitive accumulation”. Workers didn’t have a vote or any other say regarding their generally miserable lot.

Modern capitalists generally have controlling interests in massive transnational corporations but, while the public relations they use might be more sophisticated and sound more “democratic”, they are not about to

allow purported representatives of the underprivileged to start regulating their privilege away. As Australia’s Aboriginal people will tell you, there’s no point having “ownership” of land and other assets if you have no say in how they are used or who derives the benefit and in what proportions.

The international capitalist ruling class will go to any extreme to preserve these property “rights”. In fact, they have crafted political systems where neither parliaments nor congresses, prime ministers nor presidents can change these fundamentals. In most instances such changes are even unconstitutional. Increasingly, they are proscribed by multi-lateral trade agreements. While the non-Marxist “democratic socialists” don’t like to talk about the state in this sense or even classes beyond lamenting the downward income spiral of the “middle class”, i.e. the more affluent among the working class, some acknowledgement bursts through.

In a recent campaign speech, Sanders stressed that, even if he were to win the presidential election in November, he would not have the power to do very much. More thoroughgoing change will require a veritable grassroots political revolution. Unfortunately, a “revolution” that doesn’t recognise that the ruling class will have to be stripped of its state power and its ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange is not

likely to deliver its desired outcomes of peace, equality and other aspects of social justice. Progressive voters are being set up for disappointment even in the event of a victory for Bernie Sanders.

## The latest of many

Sanders is only the most recent of a long list of “socialists” promising to do nothing at all, in reality, about the dominance of the capitalist ruling class. Australian workers have had over a century’s experience of the Australian Labor Party with its meaningless commitment to “the democratic socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange, to the extent necessary to eliminate exploitation and other anti-social features in these fields” (from the ALP *National Platform*).

As long ago as 1913, Lenin felt obliged to give a language lesson citing the Australian example to make his point:

What a peculiar capitalist country is this in which Labour predominates in the Upper House and recently predominated in the Lower House and yet the capitalist system does not suffer any danger! An English correspondent of a German Labour newspaper recently explained this circumstance, which is very often misrepresented by bourgeois writers.

The Australian Labour Party does not even claim to be a Socialist Party. As a matter of fact it is a liberal-bourgeois party, and the so-called Liberals in Australia are really Conservatives.

This strange and incorrect use of terms in naming parties is not unique. In America, for example, the slave-owners of yesterday are called Democrats, and in France, the petty bourgeois anti-socialists are called ‘Radical Socialists.’ In order to understand the real significance of parties one must examine, not their labels, but their class character and the historical conditions of each separate country.

It is true that these misnamed parties have attracted the loyalty of generations of sincere labour movement activists. They worked well with Communists in trade union leaderships to achieve significant gains. As mentioned before, state monopoly capitalism is not fundamentally undermined by the existence of public services or other crumbs from the table. At one stage it served monopoly ends to have governments provide many services to workers to enable them to survive and produce the next generations of workers.

For much of the last century, capitalism faced intense ideological challenge from socialism and, despite the

constant barrage of propaganda from the ideological apparatus of the bourgeois state, many workers recognised the economic, technological and cultural achievements of the socialist countries. The truth of this statement can be ascertained from the fact that a massive grab-back of gains made in previous decades coincided with the demise of the world socialist system. Social services are once more becoming the preserve of transnational corporations or charities. It’s a case of “now your socialist friends have disappeared, it’s no more Mr Nice guy.”

For all its triumphalism at the collapse of the Soviet Union and those other pioneering socialist societies, and despite the evolution of mighty brainwashing institutions like the modern mass media, capitalism still has a richly deserved bad reputation. There is a widespread recognition that capitalism is leading us along a path to endless war and environmental devastation. Its grip on public debate is strong but people who sense the growing inequalities and other negative consequences of capitalism and imperialism are keen to put some distance between themselves and these “excesses”. This tension between underlying capitalist ideological hegemony and its perfectly predictable consequences is behind the development of the modern “democratic socialist” - the socialist who is still a capitalist.

## The state

As previously mentioned, the modern “democratic socialist” doesn’t talk much about class and class struggle. Talk of the greed and corruption of the “1%” and the misadventures of the “middle class” is about the extent of it. For Labor in Australia, this “middle class” has become that group of swinging “aspirational voters” who determine the outcome of elections. But if class analysis is considered “outdated”, Marxist in some pejorative sense and subsequently neglected, a discussion of state power simply doesn’t arise at all.

In this view of the world, the “state” is the “government”, its various agencies and instrumentalities. It is not recognised as the mechanism by which one class maintains its dominance over another. In capitalist societies, the various administrative, coercive and ideological means to thwart potential working class power go unrecognised. They are “above classes”, the “independent umpire” as the story goes in the case of the courts, including those charged with resolving labour disputes.

Despite Bernie Sanders’ warning that changing society will take more than voting in a brace of better political representatives, “democratic socialists” continue to peddle this “impartial” state snake oil. Progressive governments have come and gone because they have failed to confront this question of state power. Some recognised

the role of state power – the forces gathered around Chilean president Salvador Allende, for example – but were too slow in mobilising defences against the predictable US-backed coup of 11 September 1973.

The late Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez survived a coup attempt by the very same forces that murdered Allende and crushed the aspirations of the workers of Chile for working class state power – socialism. The Bolivarian Revolution has had the good sense to organise militias to defend the gains of the past 18 years. Great strides in the interests of the workers and other less privileged people have been made in Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia but the question of state power remains unresolved. The enemies of these governments are constantly regrouping and causing problems for these more independently-minded, pro-people governments.

Along with the current batch of “democratic socialists”, some supporters of “Socialism for the 21st Century” ignore the question of state power. Regulation and reform are everything. There is definitely a relationship between reform and revolution. Reforms beyond a point tolerable to the ruling class will bring on a crisis and a “nodal point” for revolutionary change but it seems many “socialists” are no longer interested in these vital questions of state power and revolution. This is a major handicap on the movement for change. After all, the thing that “revolves” or changes in the revolutionary transformation from capitalism to socialism is the ruling class. The many struggles for partial demands are important but the question of state power is basic.

## Stages

On the question of language and meaning, I feel compelled to write something about the ideological position of the Communist party of Australia. Some detractors claim that the Party’s position around partial demands, the many day-to-day struggles of the workers and other exploited people indicates that we are not concerned with these questions of state and revolution. That is absolutely untrue. The notion behind this criticism appears to be that a revolutionary party needn’t bother with the “small stuff” affecting people’s lives and should remain exclusively focused on the “one fine day” when the masses erect barricades and take up arms.

Critics suggest that the Party’s Program, which from the time of its foundation in 1971 has predicted a democratic, anti-monopoly stage in the development of socialism in Australia, is “reformist” or “revisionist”. The same people claim that the CPA posits a “stage” beyond capitalism but not yet socialism. Of course, Lenin wrote a classic entitled *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, so another distinct “stage” supposedly occurring between

capitalism and socialism is non-Leninist, at least. It would be helpful to the discussion if these critics would actually read the Program. Chapter 7, which deals with the move to revolutionary change, is worth quoting at length\*\*:

The people’s government stage in the process of transition to socialism would weaken the power of monopoly and extend the democratic rights and participation of the people. But it cannot end there. Social change is a continuous process and the need to construct a socialist society will inevitably arise.

The socialist stage requires the replacement of capitalist class power with working class power and further steps to break the control and ownership of the economy by capitalism. In this stage working class control of the state apparatus will be achieved. The state itself would have to be rebuilt to ensure that the needs and interests of the working class can be fulfilled. A working class government would commence the restructuring of political and economic relations along socialist lines.

In the second stage, the alliance of forces established to challenge the power of monopoly must be consolidated to achieve new targets. The working class must act not only on its own behalf, but also demonstrate that it is capable of playing the leading role in social development by recognising, supporting and developing the political and economic demands of the other progressive anti-monopoly social groups.

The process of change will be strenuously opposed by those forces whose privileged position is being challenged. The defeated capitalist class will undertake ideological and political manoeuvres and apply pressure, a flight of capital will be organised, sanctions imposed, sabotage and other activities undertaken to make the process of transition complex and difficult. 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 best defence of the gains won by the people is the activity and unity of the working class and the unity of the working class with all other progressive forces. Equally vital for success is a close and dynamic relationship between the members of the Communist Party and the people involved in struggle.

I think the position of the Party on the relationship between a people's government comprised of left and progressive forces supported by massive grass-roots organisation in the community and the workplace and the subsequent revolutionary change to socialism is perfectly clear. In the people's government stage, state power still resides with the capitalist class. The revolution has not been completed, the process has only begun.

A sane person would hope the revolutionary change to working class state power can be achieved peacefully. We don't have a crystal ball capable of predicting such events but history doesn't favour such optimism. The CPA's Program anticipates confrontation of some sort and warns that "It is necessary for the revolutionary movement and the working class to master and be prepared to use all forms of struggle." All forms clearly includes the armed defence of the gains of the people.

It is also plain that the CPA doesn't share the democratic socialists' enthusiasm for the survival of capitalism or their blindness to the reality of the capitalist state. We don't suffer from Humpty Dumpty's erroneous belief that a word "means just what I choose it to mean – neither more nor less." Socialism means an end of private ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. It means replacing capitalist state power with working class state power.

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\* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zq-2cKEN0c>

\*\* *Program of the Communist Party of Australia, Adopted by the 10th Congress of the Communist Party of Australia, September 30, October 1, 2, 3, 2005*, Published by the Communist Party of Australia, Sydney, printed by New Age Publishers Pty Ltd, ISBN 1 876919 20 5, pp 57-58



AMR

# Internationalism – past, present and future

Lars Ulrik Thomsen

The rapid growth of the organised working class in the 1860s was followed by differences within and finally the dissolution of the 1st International.<sup>1</sup> This was also the reason for the dissolution of the 2nd International in 1914 and the founding of the 3rd International in 1919, with the Bolsheviks as the leading and driving force.<sup>2</sup> The 3rd International from 1919-1943, achieved a rise of scientific socialism all over the world. After World War Two the collaboration between the communist parties was mainly by international conferences and meetings, together with the international magazine *Problems of Peace and Socialism*. This period was characterised by a tremendous growth of the Communist movement in international perspective, and this made it the most influential political movement in the post-war period.

As with the two first Internationals, the third was also characterised by ideological differences, but it managed to overcome them and play a vital role in the victory over fascism. From the 1950s the situation became critical in the Communist movement, with contradictions between the USSR and China. This had a great impact on the aggressive attitude of imperialism, doing its best to widen the differences.

With the demise and break down of socialism in Eastern Europe, we can see the economic, political and ideological difficulties in building the foundations of scientific socialism. This is rooted in the fast development of the productive forces as a result of World War Two, and the way the Americans boosted the international economy to roll back the influence of Communism.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1980s it became clear that the USSR and other socialist countries, were unable to meet the demands of their peoples and that the productive relations were in contradiction with the productive forces. The international Communist movement was split over whether to support Perestroika and Glasnost in the USSR. This is in short, the situation for discussing the present conditions for strengthening the international Communist movement and the labour movement.

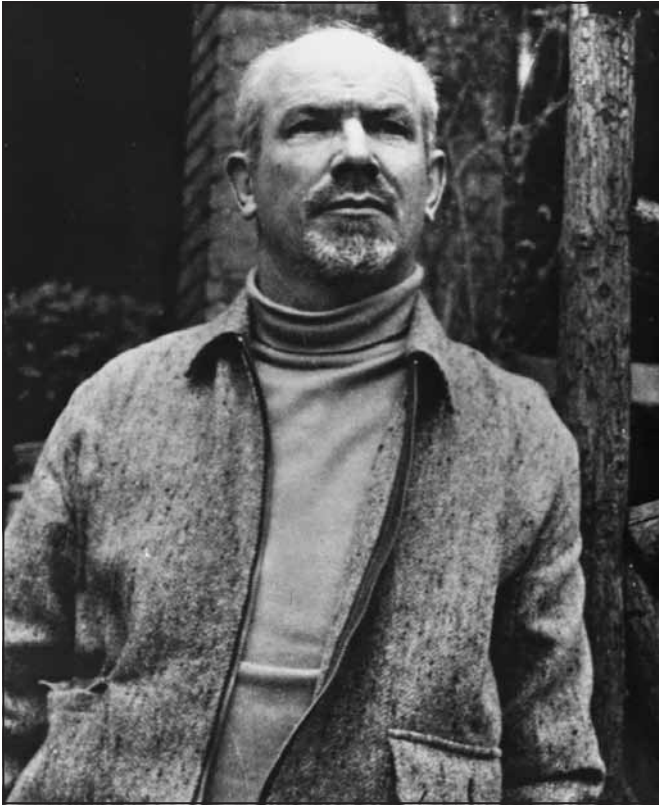
In the present situation there are parallels with the period of World War One. The imperialist powers were on the

brink of war and the 2nd International was paralysed by internal strife. However, it was also impressive that a small group of internationalists in the Zimmerwald conference in 1915, were able to formulate the foundation of what later became the 3rd International.<sup>4</sup>

This lesson is important regarding the present weakness of the international movement. If we look at conditions today, many things have changed compared to the situation in 1914. The rapid development of productive forces and the concentration and centralisation of capital has grown tremendously. That is why the economic and political contradictions are on a quantitatively and qualitatively higher level, placing greater demands on the Communist movement's ability to cooperate internationally.



A supporter of the Ukrainian Communist Party shouts slogans during a rally to mark International Worker's Day in the centre of Kiev, Ukraine.



Norman Bethune.

There are three levels where stronger cooperation is needed. Firstly at the union level: All the new types of manufacturing, with parts being produced all over the world, and with rapid changes where local unions are trying to boost the living conditions of their members. There have been some results in the form of the ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) with conflicts in Europe, USA, and Australia as an example, but there is still a long way to go before there is real and effective cooperation on an international level.

The second area is on the political level, where there is a rise in conferences and meetings in the Communist movement. There is progress in the contacts between parties, though the split from 1989 is still damaging the level of cooperation. The resolutions and documents of these conferences are inspiring for all members of the Communist movement, but there is a considerable distance between speeches and practical action. The third level is the theoretical basis. Many of the present difficulties could have been prevented, if the Communist movement (after WW2) had looked at Marxism as a *theory in movement* and not a final theoretical system. Today we pay the price for these shortcomings.

Therefore part of what international cooperation should be is to find ways of developing Marxism, according to present needs. This could be done in collaboration with the socialist countries, who have universities and higher education based on scientific socialism, and through international conferences.<sup>5</sup>

The preparations for the October revolution were extensive. Reading the letters of Lenin to different elements in the National Socialist German Workers' Party (RSDAP) in October 1917, shows the constant references to the international situation and the responsibilities of the Bolsheviks to act as *internationalists*.<sup>6</sup>

This was in a progressive period of history, but conditions today can change quickly. With the growing antagonism of the imperialist powers, the world is sliding towards a new confrontation.

This is the great responsibility of the Communist movement, to use the differences within imperialism for strengthening the forces of peace. This can only be achieved by a new international collaboration, in forms suitable for the present development of science, economics, political theory and other aspects of our societies.

International solidarity was the indispensable reason for overcoming imperialist aggression against the USSR. It was the backbone of the defence of the Spanish Republic in the 1930s and the inestimable support for the liberation of Vietnam from foreign aggression, just to mention a few examples. Internationalism will also prove to be the strongest weapon of the Communist and labour movement, in defence of peace, social progress and building socialism in the future.

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#### List of articles:

- An eyewitness of The First International Conference in Covent Garden
- Debates in *Problems of Peace and Socialism* on Internationalism in the 1980s
- An article on the present international cooperation and its forms
- The international humanitarian and refugees crises and the labour movement
- Book reviews concerning the subject

#### Notes and references:

1. The First International founded in London 1864 and dissolved in 1872.
2. The second International was founded in 1889 and dissolved in 1914 with the outbreak of WW1.
3. The Marshall-help 1948-51, was the American way of maintaining political and economic influence in Western Europe,.
4. The Zimmerwald conference was held in Switzerland from the 5-8. September 1915.
5. China, Peoples Republic of Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.
6. Letter from Lenin to the Bolshevik Comrades who participated in the District Congress for the Northern Areas. Written in October 1917. *Lenin's Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Volume 26, 1972, pp. 182-187



# Scientific development of agricultural productivity after a socialist revolution

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## Wadi'h Halabi and Richard Levins

**Abstract:** After a socialist revolution, scientific development of agricultural productivity is one of the new state's most important yet difficult tasks. Obstacles include poverty and the opposition between city and countryside inherited from capitalism. The land reform so essential for the revolution's victory creates millions of small landholdings which are ultimately incompatible with environmentally and socially sustainable development.

Scientific development of agriculture requires social planning based on ecological principles and primarily non-exploitative organizational forms and relations. Ecological principles require that land use be a mosaic that includes forest, pasture as well as field crops. A poor peasant household cannot afford to devote half its holdings to forest or to grow less profitable crops for the benefit of neighbors. Ecological principles will also be violated if land can be bought, sold and diverted to non-agricultural uses without planning.

Where individual holdings prevail, state-supported cooperatives can open the path to scientific development. Starting with cooperative purchasing, followed by cooperative credit and then selling, these sequential steps, each voluntary, can facilitate the transition from individual farming to cooperative production.

As in all spheres, the contending social, economic, and environmental forces shaping agriculture are all ultimately global. The fundamental interests of the two

global classes are profoundly opposed. Workers' parties and unions in capitalist countries have the same interests as the states formed by socialist revolutions in scientific development.

**Key words:** scientific development; agriculture; ecological principles; class interests; Marxism

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After a socialist revolution, history has shown that it is possible to advance agricultural productivity on scientific social and ecological foundations. This is one of the most important tasks of the new social system. Experience has shown it is also one of the more difficult.

The scientific development concept, which China's leadership formally adopted in 2007, correctly recognizes the profound connection between social, economic and environmental sustainability to meet human needs. It holds deep implications for agricultural policies. Nowhere is this connection more evident than in agricultural production, where nature, social organization, and global forces, both social and environmental, interact in intimate ways.

The emphasis of this article is that scientific development of agriculture is possible after socialist revolution, but within certain limits as long as capitalism remains a significant force in the world. This is because social, ecological and climate problems are global and class-based, and therefore so are the solutions.

To cite one example, recent research unexpectedly found a dramatic decline – as much as 50 percent – in tree growth rates in tropical forests in the past two decades (Feeley et al. 2007). Rising carbon dioxide levels had been expected to have the opposite effect. The exact causes for the declining growth have not been established. But there has been sufficiently rapid altering of climate and ecology to have this general effect.

The application of scientific development in China thus faces limitations. It is essential to make the best of the situation within these limitations, while acting to overcome them.

## Agricultural production under capitalism

Capitalism is driven by profit (maximizing individual gains by private owners of productive forces), not social needs. Agriculture is no exception. Capitalism can make short-term gains in productivity using one-sided “scientific” and technological inputs. But these gains have come at the cost of the social and environmental foundations of agriculture, and of human nutrition.

The majority of agricultural producers under capitalism have increasingly less control over production, and more and more of what is produced is alienated from them. This alienation takes place through exploitation of workers, debt service, high rents for land, unequal exchange (high prices for agricultural inputs produced by monopolies, such as fuel, seeds, fertilizer, machinery, low prices paid to producers of agricultural commodities), and other ways.

In the USA, advances in agricultural productivity have come with poisoning of workers and environment, growing hunger and malnutrition, and significant rural poverty. Severe hunger stalks the most productive regions of California and Florida. Profit pressures again and again lead to damage to the health of workers, soil, water, air, trees, and the entire range of life, from bacteria and fungi to insects, farm animals and wildlife, essential for a healthy ecology and society. Profit pressures lead capitalist agriculture to use one-sided “science” and technological inputs.

Furthermore, the growing contradictions of capitalism compel it to accelerate the destruction of both the social and environmental foundations for humanity’s existence (Halabi 2008). This could place the world food chain, and human society at risk. It is therefore important not to confuse modernization after a socialist revolution with “modern” capitalist methods and technology.

## After a Socialist Revolution

Following a socialist revolution, it becomes possible for the new state and its basic institutions to face reality and begin development on scientific foundations. A wide range of problems, including poverty, ignorance, insecurity of life, military threats, and the continuing influences of capitalism internally as well as externally, can lead to non-scientific approaches to developing agricultural productivity. Within limits, these problems can be addressed.

In efforts to rush progress, attempts may also be made to skip necessary steps, resulting in a fall down the spiral stairway of development, at significant cost of time, resources, and the masses’ confidence in leadership.

Mistakes will always be made, as Lenin said; we want to avoid serious mistakes, and use of scientific method is essential.

Capitalism, on the other hand, can neither face the truth nor use consistent scientific method, which is systemic and constantly reassesses its measure of the interactions among ever-changing forces, social and natural.

## Population now expects to eat

One obvious reason that development of agricultural productivity after a socialist revolution is a critical task is that inability to meet the food requirements of the population will endanger the new state – and the population now expects to eat!

More generally, saving time is the main force driving human society forward; economics is ultimately about economy of time. (Marxism is conscious that the quality of time is essential in the measure of time, and our calculations need to take this into account, based ultimately on the population’s assessment of quality and quantity.) Inability to save time in agricultural production will also threaten the new state.

## Dangers to the new society from world capitalism

Probably the greatest danger to the new society is from adoption of the methods and techniques of capitalism, which are generally in profound contradiction with scientific development. These include the carry-over of capitalist ideas and values, excessive deference to capitalist thought and ways of dealing with problems, and persistence of individualism even among revolutionaries, leading to authoritarian work styles, bureaucratic abuses and corruption.

“Low agricultural productivity” means that humans’ time is unnecessarily wasted, quantitatively and qualitatively; it is a relative, yet ultimately comprehensive measure. Low agricultural productivity after a socialist revolution leaves the new social system vulnerable to destabilization by capitalism, for example as the result of rapid inflows of lower-priced products from capitalist countries.

Capitalism may achieve lower prices because of higher productivity thanks to mechanization or favorable natural conditions, but also as a result of shortcuts in production such as deforestation, destruction of grasslands, use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides at the cost of ecology, “mining” or destruction of soil and water resources, monoculture in the most profitable crops, use of untested



Urban Agriculture in Cuba.

genetic varieties – the list is quite long (Montgomery 2007).

In addition, products from capitalist countries may be lower-priced as a result of “overproduction” (lack of paying demand in societies where production is for profit rather than need), and price and currency manipulations. Sometimes that manipulation is intended to destabilize. For example, in the 1980s the Reagan Administration orchestrated a simultaneous temporary lowering of the price of oil, and a devaluation of the dollar (the “1985 Plaza Accord”).

At the time, the Soviet Union was dependent on sales of oil and gas to capitalist countries to implement its economic plan. Because all oil and gas purchases were then made in dollars, this sharply cut Soviet revenues, and destabilized it economically and socially. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, oil prices have risen sharply, affecting planning in China, which became a significant oil importer in the 1990s. (The 1994 book, *Victory* by Peter Schweizer, describes US manipulation of oil prices and the dollar to destabilize the USSR.)

Capitalist speculation in currencies and in foods (for example, wheat, soybeans, rice) can be destabilizing, as we saw in 2008, when wheat and rice prices doubled and tripled in a few weeks. Daily speculation in foods is

currently many times the value of annual production of all crops.

Generally, the prices of agricultural commodities on world capitalist markets are highly unstable. They vary more than variation in yield due to natural events such as droughts, floods, or pests. A state substantially dependent on agricultural imports for its food supply will be highly vulnerable to the uncertainties of the market and international politics.

Imperialist “globalization” measures, such as international trade treaties, attempt to weaken mechanisms to protect domestic industries, including agriculture. Even with effective protections against such destabilization, the drive to save time requires constant efforts to develop productivity after a socialist revolution. Otherwise, capitalism’s cheap commodities can knock down even the Great Wall of China, as Marx warned over 150 years ago.

## The Real Challenge

The real question is how to develop agricultural productivity on sound social and ecological foundations after a socialist revolution. And as long as there is significant poverty and social inequality, the real challenge is how to combine and balance social and individual interests in

production, and control over it, until the use of scientific social and ecological principles becomes more or less automatic.

The “central organizing principle” of capitalist agriculture is to maximize profits; this takes precedence over social and environmental costs. It also minimizes society’s and agricultural producers’ interest in and control over production. Agricultural producers may be both workers and land tenants, who are sometimes renters and sometimes heavily indebted “owners.”

After a socialist revolution the “central organizing principle” is to meet human needs by mobilizing the collective intelligence, energy and enthusiasm of the people. Our needs include a healthy and varied nutrition and a healthy environment. But humans also have other profound and opposed needs, such as the need to know our universe, and the need for the unknown, for magic and fun and music in our lives; we need general social equality, and the ability to express our individuality; we have a need for social solidarity, and a need for quiet time alone. These and our other basic needs take time! Agricultural production stands at the foundation of human needs; scientific development ultimately requires building agricultural productivity in a manner consistent with the many, varied needs.

Scientific development of agricultural productivity necessitates social planning based on ecological principles and on (principally) non-exploitative organizational forms and relations. Ecological principles, for example, require that land use be a mosaic that includes forest, pasture as well as field crops. A poor peasant household cannot afford to devote half its holdings to forest or to grow less profitable crops for the benefit of its neighbors. Planning and allocation of resources therefore have to be on a larger scale than individual holdings.

But large-scale planning will fail if it is imposed bureaucratically from above. Ecological principles will also be violated if farm land can be bought, sold and diverted to non-agricultural uses without planning and balancing measures.

As capitalism has demonstrated again and again, scientific development of agriculture is therefore inconsistent with private selling and buying of land. Land use requires regional planning on the scale of watershed, effective forests, water resources throughout the year, fluctuating labor needs for each crop.

Non-exploiting organizational forms in agriculture include cooperatives, collectives and state farming. Which forms are appropriate in scientific development depends in part on existing forms (for example, predominantly individual holdings, or predominantly large-scale farms, etc.), past positive and negative experiences, and more

broadly on the general development of the productive forces, including industry, infrastructure (electricity, roads, railroads, etc.), and the state of science and education. Appropriate organizational forms may also depend on such factors as terrain.

In early stages, organizational forms need to consciously allow for the expression of individual as well as social interest in production, and control over production and planning. Problems should be solved at the most local level compatible with the problem, making maximum use of people’s knowledge. Each production unit should also be a research center, with people taught how to gather data and analyze, compare and thus make informed decisions.

Scientific development also requires comprehensive organization of the planning process and allocation of state resources for agricultural credit, transport, marketing and distribution, again consistent with scientific social and ecological principles.

Planning and allocation of resources is dependent on accurate and rapid collection and transmission of information, social as well as environmental; and on building the collective and individual capacity to evaluate this information, and to modify plans accordingly at every level, local, regional and society-wide. This in turn requires developing organizational forms so agricultural producers can constantly develop their scientific understanding – and teach it, not least based on their experiences in production.

Population policies are one of the most complex yet basic issues for planning consistent with scientific development. Under capitalism, population control is often used against the working class and oppressed nationalities, and especially against women. After a socialist revolution, it becomes somewhat easier to develop and implement informed population policies to best meet human needs. After a socialist revolution, a society may be “overpopulated” if agricultural productivity is very low while land and water is in short supply; a few decades later, it may be “underpopulated” if productivity has jumped but a significant part of the population has retired or is in poor health.

Designing work that is compatible with an aging population, and attending to health needs, can change the measure of “over” or “under” population. Humans have a lifelong need to contribute to our society, and also for society to support us. Population, health and work policies can allow us to both continue contributing productively to society throughout our lives, and to receive the necessary support.

Achieving all of this is very difficult and sometimes impossible under conditions of extreme poverty, such as

the Soviet Union faced after its founding on November 7, 1917, or new China after October 1, 1949. The young Soviet state made some significant contributions, such as in categorization and maintenance of soil types, and development of principles in organizing agricultural cooperatives (Chayanov 1927). But poverty, the civil war, capitalist economic sanctions, the brutal imperialist aggression in World War II, and an inability to effectively manage rapid change, greatly hobbled scientific development, and contributed to internal weaknesses, including low agricultural productivity. This set the stage for collapse of the Soviet Union in the face of immense stresses from a hostile capitalism in crisis.

The young People's Republic of China also made significant contributions, such as in biological control of pests and organic farming. But it too ran into problems with hostility from world capitalism – its sanctions and aggression against Korea in the early 1950s, its encouragement of Sino-Soviet divisions, its support for India in the 1962 war, etc. China like the USSR also faced profound problems with poverty and inequality between city and countryside inherited from capitalism.

China's 1949 socialist revolution has permitted its agricultural productivity, and nutrition, to significantly outpace India, Bangladesh, Africa, Haiti, indeed most poor capitalist countries. This is quite an accomplishment. But agricultural productivity in China is not as high as in industrialized agriculture in the capitalist world. This leaves China, and the four other existing states formed by socialist revolutions – Vietnam, Laos, People's Korea and Cuba – vulnerable, especially in times of capitalist crisis. (Cuba has made impressive advances in scientific development; see Levins 2005.)

What is extraordinary with China today is the development of high productivity in manufacturing; the Soviet Union did not achieve this, except perhaps in such fields as space exploration and some military manufacturing. In China there is reason to believe that productivity in a wide range of manufacturing now rivals or exceeds levels in capitalist countries, rich or poor. This achievement is the combined result of planning, the building of an unparalleled infrastructure in manufacturing regions (electricity, roads, ports, etc.), a generally superior system of education, opening up, and the fact that a state after a socialist revolution has some capacity to maintain demand in approximate balance with advances in production. (The latter is a major reason why economies after socialist revolution are non-cyclical, although of course they are affected by internal political crises, and by economic, political, military and environmental developments in the capitalist world.)

By contrast, capitalism cannot maintain the necessary balance between production and the income and demand

of producers and consumers. Both production and demand can and do fall sharply in times of crisis, such as today. Capitalist crisis in turn directly and indirectly stresses states formed by socialist revolutions, including the Soviet Union in the 1930s and 1940s, and again in the 1970s and 1980s – and without question will stress China in coming years. (The present capitalist crisis is far from over; its shocks come in waves.)

Furthermore, since there is no necessary relationship between the use value and the exchange value of commodities, it is possible under capitalism to produce high value crops that do not meet nutritional needs – such as for fuels – or that aim at the consumption by the rich.

A range of problems appears to have curtailed scientific development of agricultural productivity in China after 1949. These have included poverty and the individual holdings necessarily created by the Chinese Revolution's struggle for land reform; hostility from world capitalism; the divisions between the USSR and China; and difficulties in how to best advance from individual holdings to non-exploiting organizational forms.

In addition, massive unemployment could have resulted from too-rapid advances in agricultural productivity, and that alone can endanger the new social system. To avoid such unemployment, scientific development of agricultural productivity requires balancing it with industrial development, reductions in the length of the workweek, as well as addressing global problems.

## Potential Importance of Agricultural Cooperatives

Where individual holdings dominate, state-supported agricultural cooperatives can be an important step in scientific development. Soviet theoretical work on cooperatives (rather than actual experience) may make valuable contributions.

While Lenin was still alive, the Soviet leadership called for taking four steps in sequence, each voluntary, to develop cooperatives from individual holdings. The first was cooperation in purchasing, e.g. of seed or tools; the advantage is evident – reduced prices and time requirements, with payment often due only after the purchase is made. Cooperative purchasing of inputs can be linked to technical and scientific extension work which would teach ecological methods of pest, soil, and crop management. The second step was cooperation in obtaining credit. The third was cooperation in selling output, where more trust is necessary. And the final step was cooperative production, which can effectively become collective farming. Past experiences worldwide in cooperatives are examined in Alexander Chayanov's outstanding work,

*The Theory of Peasant Cooperatives*, first published in 1919 with a second edition issued in 1927 (Chayanov 1927). Lenin gave support to Chayanov's work before his death. As the new state's productive forces increase, and workers' confidence in their state and in the future grows, state farms can also become powerful ways to advance agricultural productivity consistent with scientific development.

## Conclusion

Scientific development requires that Communist leadership reaffirm our historic commitment to end the opposition between city and countryside, an opposition that declining capitalism has now pushed to an extreme. This goal is also consistent with our other historic commitment, to ending the opposition between intellectual and physical labor (Marx and Engels 1848). Scientific development of agriculture can make it pleasurable for city dwellers of all ages to come to the countryside, and contribute both to repetitive and creative work in agricultural production, and to teach as well as learn from the experience.

We need to educate workers and society as a whole in the problems and challenges in meeting both those commitments, and in developing measures and the capacity to judge our practice. We have to educate ourselves to be able to learn from them.

Because most of the world is still under capitalist rule, there are built-in limitations to what can be accomplished in the societies formed by socialist revolution. This is obvious now with the rapid, socially-induced climate disruption, and the perhaps less-obvious, but just as real and threatening poisoning of air, soil and water, e.g. with heavy metals or persistent organic pollutants, and the erosion, compaction and salinization of soils.

For all of the talk about protecting the environment, capitalism's deepening contradictions compel it into destroying the social, economic and environmental foundations for human society and scientific development. The crisis of capitalism is accelerating that destruction, if only because of deepening poverty and rising conflicts.

In the final analysis, scientific development of agricultural production truly demands, Workers of the World, Unite. This is not just a slogan, it requires international organization, education, and practice to make development scientific and to start meeting the broad mosaic of opposing human needs.

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Thanks especially to Prof. Xiaoqin Ding, Shanghai University of Finance and Economics, and World Association for Political Economy.

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Reproduced from World Review of Political Economy, Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer 2010 ([www.plutojournals.com/wrpe](http://www.plutojournals.com/wrpe))

# The myth of *terra nullius* and Australian sovereignty

David Matters

The 26th January 1788, the day we celebrate as the founding of our nation, was the day that a British aristocrat established the colony of New South Wales. From this moment, the future for many who already inhabited this continent and for some who would be brought here changed.

The ships that brought the colonists carried more than convicts, sailors and marines. The fleet they sailed in was a part of an empire, a colonial empire so vast that by the end of the 19th century it could be claimed that the sun never set on it.

This small band of colonists came into immediate conflict with an ancient civilisation, a continent inhabited with the seeds of over 300 nations. The Empire brought with it marines and peoples from its dependencies and colonies. It also brought its relations of a social nature. Although springing from the “Mother” country, these relations were bound to take new forms.

These events took place in the context of the era of unfolding revolutions associated with the transformations that capitalism was undergoing. In 1781, James Watt patented the steam engine and the industrial revolution

was in full swing. In 1776, the American colonies of the Empire revolted and established the United States of America with the federation of 13 States. The Dutch had conquered the Indonesian Archipelago in the 16th century and colonisation of the Americas and Africa were in full swing. The slave trade from Africa continued unabated while capital was accumulating vast wealth for the emerging European bourgeoisie and challenging the dominant feudal relations.

The foundation of the British Empire was an emerging alliance between the old feudal aristocracy and a newly developing capitalist class. These two groups would fuse in a process measured over centuries, reaching its pinnacle with the establishment of the Constitutional Monarchy under William of Orange, which was preceded by the fusion of the Crowns of Scotland and England and Wales. The colonial subjugation of Ireland also reached a new stage, necessitating the addition of the liberation of Ireland being to the British workers’ programme of struggle.

It is this Empire with a crowned head of state as the constitutional representative of the bourgeoisie and the nobility that took possession of Australia and eventually founded six colonies.



Australia began its colonial life as a source of raw material for Britain’s workshop of the world, as a source of wealth to expand the dominance of this empire over the world. Queen Elizabeth II inspecting sheep at Wagga Wagga on her 1954 tour.

The colony of New South Wales began as a beach head on a continent inhabited by over a million people. The myth that the British were once again shouldering the burden of civilising a continent gave way to the idea of *terra nullius*, an empty land ripe for exploitation. In short order, Australia became a huge sheep and cattle station. The mountains of mineral wealth; iron ore, silver, coal and gold provided incentive enough to support the fable of *terra nullius* and to extend royal control over the land. To ensure that these resources remained available for exploitation, a brutal war of genocide and dispossession was unleashed.

The colonial regime itself contained the seeds of the colonising society, perpetuating in miniature the structure and contradictions of the old society. British capital, still aching from the loss of its American colonies, used different tools to bind its Australian possessions. Each colony was and to this day still is tied to the Crown under Sovereign Law. The modern expression of these ties has been made clear by three recent prime ministers showing their slavish adherence to monarchism. John Howard and Tony Abbot were the most extreme examples of this trend while Julia Gillard represented a more subdued expression of subservience to Britain.

Behind this charade, lies the real issue of who owns what is produced and who owns the land upon which we live. What is Australia and what can and should Australia become? What are we now and what are the political forces and classes in our society? From which sources do they derive their power and wealth?

Despite the myth of *terra nullius* having been extinguished, it still persists in acts of dispossession and the structure of land ownership. It still exists through the British crown and in the establishment of British law throughout this land. Unlike the United States of America which came into being through a revolution, Australia came into being as an act of the British Parliament and as a response of the British Parliament to the demands of the colonists. With the exceptions of Eureka and Tarragindi, armed conflict with the crown and its representatives by the Australian colonists has not been the order of the day. The huge extent of financial holdings by British and colonial companies continues.

In essence under these laws and this Constitution all land is still held in Common by the British monarch, now Australian monarch as the Crown and the parliaments are but her administrative arm. The Governors and Governor General are but the representatives of this Constitutional Monarchy. Our democracy is a fig leaf to cover how our economic position continues. The only entities that have not ceded their rights are the nations of the original inhabitants. Though conquered there have been no treaties, and few concessions have have so far

been given by the Crown to restore land rights and to recognise the rights of the original inhabitants.

What is occurring now is a struggle to find a bourgeois solution to this issue. It is one of the issues dominating the debates over recognition, sovereignty and reconciliation. The movement for Indigenous sovereignty does not just, though important, concern the nations but is also important to working people in this country. This is why so much effort has gone into breaking or corrupting leading forces in the Indigenous community. It is why so much division is being sown on these issues, yet despite this the nations of the original peoples continue to move forward. This aspect of the national question forms a strong and urgent aspect of a socialist revolution in Australia, neither the working people who form this nation nor the original peoples can be free without each other's assistance. Aboriginal and Islander sovereignty and land rights are essential for our Revolution to be embraced by our class.

Australia began its colonial life as a source of raw material for Britain's workshop of the world, as a source of wealth to expand the dominance of this empire over the world. We are now a source of support to the new American empire. In order to continue this dominance the empires cannot afford to have the illegal and colonial relationship in Australia unravel. The descendants and the arrivals to this land must understand that they are now part of this conundrum.

Australia still lingers in its colonial past and has not broken that link. The main force that can break that link still remains the working class. The Constitution is a concession by the British crown. It is not founded on an independent Australia but on maintaining our links to our colonial past. It does not overcome the injustices of the colonial system and leaves in place Crown law. In fact it invests Crown law through the States and Territories. Australia needs a new Constitution, one based on the people not the Crown. The current domination of classes allied to the Crown and international capital cannot and will not grant such a constitution.

The Constitutional Monarchy has to be bought to an end and sovereignty invested in the people who inhabit this continent. The original Nations have to have their national sovereignty restored. Land should be held under this basis, not as the property of the British Crown or even the absurdity that we have come to, where we have a foreign monarch representing our capitalist state.



# Discussions

Have your say: [amr@cpa.org.au](mailto:amr@cpa.org.au)



The following article was prompted by reading “Lenin’s analysis of imperialism – a pioneering work”. (Published in the *Australian Marxist Review* No 60 December 2015 written by Lars Ulrik Thomsen.)

## In his own words ...

What can we learn from Lenin’s work on imperialism?

Kumpf studies the process that has to be followed in the analysis, if the result is to be in accordance with philosophical logic. This includes the transition from the abstract to the concrete, and the relation between formal and dialectical logic in the investigation.

Dialectical logic is the process in the head of the artist and, together with the reflection of reality, constitutes dialectical materialism.

world around us we will learn more about reality and the necessary steps to change it. Correct theory cannot be known in advance. It can only emerge in the process of change. All attempts to establish theoretical clarity before engaging in practice are necessarily doomed to failure. The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge.

If you want to know a certain thing or a certain class of things directly, you must personally participate in the practical struggle to change that reality, to change, that situation or class of things. Only once you try to change something can you come into contact with its phenomena; only through personal participation in the practical struggle to change reality can you uncover the essence of that thing or class of things and comprehend them. If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice of changing reality.

Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge.

Within the Party we must learn how to think and work together. It is a necessity that we have different views and opinions but there comes a point where we make formal decisions and we must come together and implement our strategy. Later we come together to review our work based on concrete results.

Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the spiral development of theory and practice. The only basis for a detailed strategy and for achieving unity around that strategy is involved in the practice of changing that reality.

We work with people outside the Party on many issues. Sometimes the benefits might be transient and the unity might be short lived, but we don’t insist that they must accept our analysis of the struggle. Most importantly is that we accept this reality, otherwise our ‘exclusiveness’ will hinder the Party’s task of uniting the people in an issue, campaign or struggle.

## The role of Practice and Theory.

Don Wilson

25/01/2016

**In the process of doing our Party’s work, how can we unite with as many people as possible?**

There is a long history of deciding questions on the basis of citations from the classics rather than from a careful study of contemporary conditions that surrounds us. We are attracted to a process of applying the experience of other countries and other times to our reality, rather than to scientifically sum up our own experiences. This process advocates that theory should be primary over practice, and demands first of all to have theoretical clarity before practice and unity.

We all have theories of how to change our reality. But how true is our knowledge of reality? What investigations have been made? In the process of changing the

This exclusiveness is sectarianism and it can be expressed in so many different ways, the way we speak and the way we portray ourselves. How often are we in the same action, the same demonstration with people “who we will not work with”? Yet we can’t sit down and work on things together. This does not mean viewpoints are not important, but at that moment they are secondary and not preventing joint action together. This is democratic centralism in practice, and is often the basis of successful work in a trade union. Why can’t we adopt this style of work in the Party? Unity is strength. This is one thing the working people around the world have learnt. How often have we heard ‘the people united will never be defeated!

We have to learn the process of uniting within a common struggle. Taking an arrogant attitude puts blocks in the way of working together on issues and stops us from learning from others. It also generates numerous tiny sects rather than a united party. Each sect insists that it has the correct interpretation of the sacred authority, and that if only the working class could see it, then it would become the leader of the revolution.

This is based upon placing theory in command, rather than practice. It believes that a theoretical battle often waged in a hostile and unconstructive way, can demolish “bad lines” and result in establishing the “correct line”.

This ignores the real process of validation of a strategy through practice. Only through testing in struggle will correctness and unity be developed.

The primary struggle in the world today is the struggle against the forces controlled by US Imperialism. China, whether it is socialist or not, is providing the economic space for third world nations, enabling them to move away from the World Bank and US corporations. For more developed countries such as Australia, this rising strength of China divides our ruling class and undermines the once secure hold Anglo-US Imperialism had on this country and indeed the whole region of Asia. These divisions raise the possibilities of a counter to the Imperialist program of war, terror, austerity, instability and destruction.

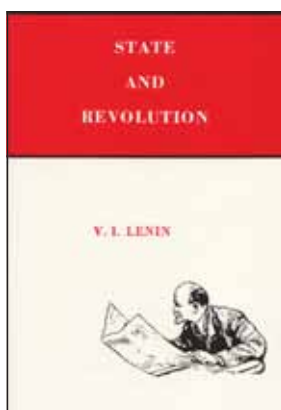
Within a united struggle the issues arise of an anti imperialist program of peace, independence and land rights for indigenous people. Countering the imperialist program of deconstruction of our industries we demand scientific and economic reconstruction. Against the attack on working people we call for unity and resistance.

The basis our work is how to unite with people in this struggle and building a strong Communist Party to defend them.

Workers of the world- Unite!



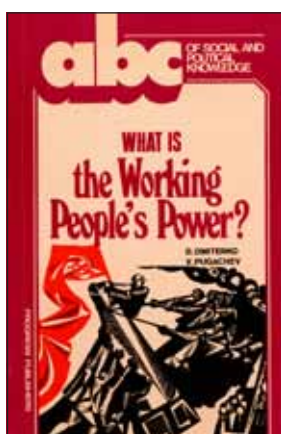
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### **State and Revolution**

Paper back – 103 pages by Vladimir Lenin **\$15**

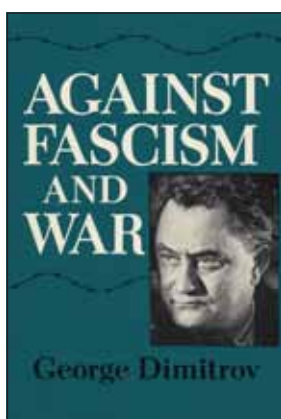
A great deal is being said about the state today as governments deregulate, privatise and wind back many of their responsibilities to provide for society. This classic is a must read for anyone wanting to understand the role of the capitalist state and the transition from capitalism to communism. It contains a chapter on Marx's analysis of the Paris Commune and several of Engels' writings including "Engels on the Overcoming of Democracy"



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