'AN ALIEN ASSOCIATION'

Australian Maoism and the Communist Party

of China, 1971-1977

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This thesis is my own work containing, to the best of my knowledge
and belief, no material published or written by another person except
as referred to in the text.

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AAISAG	Adelaide Anti-Imperialist Study-Action Group
AC	Australian Communist
ACS	Australia-China Society
AFR	Australian Financial Review
ALR	Australian Left Review
ANLM	Australian National Liberation Movement
BCD ...	Bulletin of the Committee in Defence of Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung Thought
CC	Central Committee
CPA	Communist Party of Australia
CPA-ML	Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
GPCR	Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution
NPC	National People's Congress
PR	Peking Review
PRC	People's Republic of China
SW	Selected Works
V	Vanguard
WSA	Worker-Student Alliance
YCL	Young Communist League

A NOTE ON SPELLING

Throughout this thesis inconsistent spellings of Chinese names
and places appear (e.g. 'Mao Tsetung' and 'Mao Zedong', 'Peking'
and 'Beijing'). This is a product of the Romanisation of Chinese
characters in 1979 by decision of the Chinese National People's
Congress. The spelling used prior to 1979 has been retained in
quotations and where required for accurate sourcing.

A NOTE ON INTERVIEWEES

Most interviewees required anonymity as a condition of consenting
to interviews. With their permission, a separate insert is included
in the thesis providing their identity. Anonymous interviewees
agreed to this insert on condition that it be destroyed after the
examiners had read the thesis.

Where interviews were conducted other than in Melbourne, the
place at which they occurred has been omitted from footnotes in
order to avoid possible identification of the interviewee. All
places of interview, however, are specified on the insert.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to explore, document and explain

the pronounced similarity between the policies and attitudes of

the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the Communist Party of Australia

(Marxist-Leninist) (CPA-ML) between 1971 and 1977.

The period selected for detailed investigation opens with

a profound reorientation of Chinese policy away from the millenarian

zeal and diplomatic isolation of the 1960s. It closes with dramatic

political changes in China which triggered the first open split

in the CPA-ML's ranks.

The thesis would obviously be incomplete if it overlooked

the conditions under which the CPA-ML was founded in 1964 and its

fortunes up to 1971, by which time the patterns of CPC/CPA-ML relations

had formed and ossified. These matters are addressed in the first

chapter.

While I would contend that the CPA-ML's nexus with the CPC

is the single most important element in the former's history, it

should be pointed out that this thesis is a history of that nexus,

and not of the CPA-ML per se. In the space available, other tributaries

of CPA-ML policies and attitudes can only be mentioned allusively.

To the extent that the CPA-ML understood Chinese foreign and

domestic policies it supported them unequivocally. If a historical

account of this sameness of policy merely involved producing a checklist

of CPC statements and the corresponding CPA-ML endorsement and adoption

of these statements, the thesis could justifiably be regarded as

going to inordinate lengths to demonstrate the obvious. However,

the thesis is particularly concerned to pursue just how helpful

the China connection is in explaining the milieu and dynamics of inner-party life, and the CPA-ML's stance on Australian domestic politics.

From the early 1930s the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) was reflexively obedient to Soviet policy. Yet in writing that party's history Davidson 'came to the conclusion that the central theme in CPA history was the dialogue between local exigencies and central orders.'[1] The line along which these central orders were transmitted could not but encounter static from the interference of Australian reality, and it was not uncommon for Australian communists to find themselves out of step with, or even opposed to, Soviet policy.[2]

The CPA-ML can be usefully considered as the lineal descendant of the CPA's foreign fixation. Nonetheless, all manner of time lags and dysfunctions are discernible in its relations with the CPC. The degree to which Australia's pro-Chinese communists would be prepared to imitate and tag along behind the CPC could not be safely predicted when the CPA-ML was formed and, as events in 1976 were to demonstrate, it had its limits. The complexities involved are elucidated in the thesis's conclusion.

While national communist parties have been historically bedevilled

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1   Alastair Davidson, 'Writing the History of a C.P.', Australian Left Review (hereafter abbreviated to ALR), no. 27 (October-November 1970), p. 81, emphasis added.

2   See, for example: Cecil H. Sharpley, The Great Delusion, p. 31; Alastair Davidson, The Communist Party of Australia: A Short History, pp. 29, 78-9, 88, 104, 115-20 passim, 148-52 passim; Frank Farrell, 'Explaining Communist History', Labour History, no. 32 (May 1977), p. 5; id., International Socialism and Australian Labour - The Left in Australia: 1919-1939, pp. 226-7.

by subservience to an overseas font of wisdom, it is noteworthy that
the broader radical and left movement in Australia also has a tradition
of drinking from foreign streams.[3]

The historiography of the CPA-ML is virtually non-existent.
Both scholarly and journalistic sources are scant, and generally
repetitive, superficial, speculative or simply wrong. Given the
extremely secretive, underground nature of the CPA-ML, historians
have been severely disadvantaged, and the lack of depth is quite
understandable.

The historiography of the mainstream CPA, from which the pro-
Chinese communists departed in 1963-4, is considerably more promising.
Since the first scholarly treatment of the CPA was published in
1969[4] a serious and authoritative body of work has been produced.
A good proportion of this material is pertinent to the thesis, dealing
as it does with the split which culminated in the formation of the
CPA-ML, and the tradition of subservience with which the CPA, and
therefore those who formed the new party, were imbued.

The historiography relating to the Chinese aspect of the thesis
is vast and often highly specialised.

Largely as a legacy of my personal involvement in Maoist politics
between 1971-80, I have been able to undertake extensive interviewing

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3   See, for example: Patrick O'Brien, The Saviours: An Intellectual
     History of the Left in Australia, esp. ch. 1; Brian McKinlay
     (ed.), A Documentary History of the Australian Labor Movement:
     1850-1975, pp. 309-10, 505-18, 527-33, 556-8, 607-19; Ian Turner,
     'The Politics of Action', in id. (Leonie Sandercock & Stephen
     Murray-Smith [eds]), Room for Manoeuvre: Writings on History,
     Politics, Ideas and Play, pp. 150-53 passim; Davidson, The
     Communist Party of Australia ..., p. 4; L. Churchward, 'The
     American Influence on the Australian Labour Movement', Historical
     Studies: Australia and New Zealand, vol. 5, no. 19 (November 1952),
     pp. 258-77; Farrell, loc. cit., pp. xv, ch. 1 passim.

4   Davidson, loc. cit.

(most of which, unfortunately, must be sourced anonymously) and have had access to several personal collections, including an extensive one in my own possession, which contain much rare and otherwise **inaccessible material.**

In handling interview material, personal recollections and sources which lack identifying notation, the academically-precarious nature of such matter has been uppermost in my mind. If I have erred in its use, I trust that it has been on the side of caution. Approached circumspectly, such sources are capable of scholarly treatment. If the thesis appears excessively-documented on occasion, this is due partly to over-compensation for the above-mentioned hazards associated with some of my sources, and partly to the general paucity of readily-obtainable material on the CPA-ML.[5]

The thesis attempts to avoid the well-thrashed empiricist pitfalls to which institutional history is prone. However, while accepting the historicist view that it is incumbent on the historian to locate his or her topic in its historical setting, I find the adoption of this approach for its own sake quite pointless. To assert that an institution <u>must be</u> examined in its socio-economic context before it can be explained, argues Davidson, is 'arrant totalitarian nonsense'.[6] Davidson's language may be immoderate, but his thrust is appealing to one who has felt the hot breath of the word-count on his neck.

As most of the thesis's subject matter is perfectly intelligible on its own, background analysis and argument are provided only where

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5   These matters are discussed in greater detail in Appendix I.

6   Davidson, 'Writing the History ...', p. 82, emphasis in original.

their omission would mislead or mystify the reader.   There is much

to be said for the view that 'a history of a Communist Party would

be vulgarly deformed if it did not <u>single out</u> the real development

of its policies, and how far they were determined by its leaders ...'[7]

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7   Milas Hajek, Czech historian of the Comintern, quoted in Ibid.,
    p. 78, my emphasis.

CHAPTER ONE

AN IMPULSE TO SUBSERVIENCE: THE ORIGINS AND DYNAMICS

OF THE CPC/CPA-ML NEXUS

The people who gathered at the seaside Melbourne suburb of

Rosebud in 1964 to form the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-

Leninist) had for decades been schooled in obedience to a political

line dictated from Moscow. Loyalty to a directing centre was a

central tradition of the international communist movement[1] and,

as part of that movement, Australian communists had been 'haunted

by an alien association' for over forty years.[2]

In 1956 Australia's leading communists were disquieted by

Soviet leader Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, for thirty years

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1   The literature on this topic is extensive. For a cross-section
     see: J. Braunthal, History of the International: 1914-1943, (vol.
     2); Fernando Claudin, The Communist Movement: From Comintern to
     Cominform; Harold R. Isaacs, The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution,
     esp. pp. 61-4, 86-103, 114-17, chs 10-13, 15; Dominique Eudes,
     The Kapetanios: Partisans and Civil War in Greece, 1943-1949,
     esp. pp. 122-7, 130-50, 167-73, pt 3 passim; Arthur Koestler,
     Darkness at Noon, pp. 54-64; Edward Upward, The Rotten Elements,
     pp. 109-14 passim; John P. Diggins, The American Left in the
     Twentieth Century, pp. 94-6, 123-9; Bob Avakian, 'Conquer the
     World? The International Proletariat Must and Will', Revolution
     (Chicago), Special Issue, vol. 6, no. 2 (December 1981), pp. 16,
     19, 21-3.

2   Rupert Lockwood, 'The Making and Unmaking of a Communist Propa-
     gandist', Australian, 24 January 1970, p. 15. Scholarly treat-
     ments of this alien association include: Davidson, The Communist
     Party of Australia ..., esp. pp. 15, 24, 39, 50-54, 58, 72-84,
     100-102, 116-21, 175-83; Farrell, International Socialism ...,
     pp. 70-72, ch. 7 passim, p. 215. Former and present Australian
     communists have also dealt extensively with this matter. See,
     for example: Geoff McDonald, Australia at Stake, p. 55; Keith
     McEwan, Once a Jolly Comrade, p. 57; Humphrey McQueen's review
     of Farrell's International Socialism ..., Bowyang, no. 6 (1981),
     pp. 41-3; L. L. Sharkey, quoted in T. H. Rigby, 'Australasia',
     Survey, no. 54 (January 1965), p. 141; E. F. Hill, in Vanguard
     (hereafter abbreviated to V), vol. 2, no. 39 (August 1965), p. 3;
     id., Class Struggle Within the Communist Parties: Defeat of Gang
     of Four Great Victory for World Proletariat: Some Experiences.

the central paragon of communist hagiography.[3] Until 1961 they
soft-pedalled Khrushchev's concepts of peaceful co-existence with
imperialism, peaceful transition to socialism and de-Stalinisation,
preferring the more trenchant and familiar viewpoint of the Communist
Party of China.[4]

When the long-simmering Sino-Soviet differences exploded into
public polemics in the early 1960s, however, Beijing openly emerged
as a rival centre to Moscow. The formerly monolithic unity of inter-
national communism was breached and the tradition of subservience
with which Australian communists were imbued required that they
align themselves with one or other of the protagonists.[5]

The pro-Chinese minority was led by E. F. (Ted) Hill, a member
of the CPA's four-man National Secretariat and Secretary of its
Victorian Branch. Hill's group, shortly to be dubbed 'the Maoists',
expressed total concurrence with the CPC, and enthusiastically seconded

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3   Davidson, loc. cit., pp. 148-9; Rupert Lockwood, quoted in
     Australian Financial Review (hereafter abbreviated to AFR),
     2 July 1982, p. 38; personal interview with a founding CPA-ML
     Central Committee (CC) member (notes taken during interview),
     Melbourne, 24 March 1983. The denunciation of Stalin was
     published in the New York Times, 5 June 1956, pp. 8, 10. For
     the CPC's defence of Stalin see Peking Review (hereafter abbrev-
     iated to PR), 20 September 1963, pp. 8-15.

4   See, for example: 'Stenographic Record of a Discussion in 1960
     Between Leaders of the Communist Party of Australia - L. L.
     Sharkey and R. Dixon - and Mao Tsetung, Chairman of the Central
     Committee of the Communist Party of China', in E. F. Hill,
     Australia's Revolution: On the Struggle for a Marxist-Leninist
     Communist Party, pp. 249-54; Davidson, The Communist Party of
     Australia ..., pp. 148-54; Justus M. van der Kroef, 'Australia's
     Maoists', Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, vol. 8,
     no. 2 (July 1970), pp. 92-3.

5   The historiography of the effects of the Sino-Soviet split on the
     CPA is considerable. Among the most concise and accurate
     accounts are: Davidson, loc. cit., ch. 7; [T. H. Rigby],
     'Between Moscow and Peking - the C.P. of Australia', Current
     Affairs Bulletin, no. 34 (22 June 1964), pp. 34-48.

China's execration of the Soviet Union's revisionist betrayal. The Russians were accused of watering down the principles of Marxism-Leninism and capitulating to the class enemy.[6]

The conflict within the CPA was seen by the daily press as 'further proof that the party is activated by considerations outside this country ...'[7] In a rare interview with the press, however, Hill denied that the split was directly related to the dispute between Moscow and Beijing. After the interview the journalists left the airport and Hill flew to China.[8] Three days later Lance Sharkey and Dick Dixon, the leaders of the overwhelmingly pro-Soviet CPA, departed for Moscow.

On 15 March 1964 the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) was formed with Ted Hill as its chairman. Initially confined to Melbourne, its ranks embraced a third of the CPA's Victorian State Committee, almost the same proportion of the party's Victorian membership and about half of the State's communist trade union officials, a total of 300 of the CPA's national membership of 5000-6000. 'The upholders of truth', commented Australian Communist, the new party's

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6   The main ideas of the pro-CPC communists were expounded in
     several pamphlets, including Hill's The Australian Socialist
     Movement at the Crossroads and The Revisionism of L. Aarons.
     See also Declaration of Australian Marxist-Leninists. For the
     CPA's stand see Differences in the Communist Movement: Views
     of the Communist Party of Australia. For a representative sample
     of Chinese views see PR: 15 March 1963, pp. 8-62; 21 June 1963,
     pp. 6-22; 20 December 1963, pp. 5-18.

7   Age editorial, 21 June 1963, p. 2. See also Sydney Morning Herald
     editorial, 21 June 1963, p. 2.

8   Age, 1 July 1963, p. 3.

theoretical journal, 'are commonly small in numbers'.[9]

Ironically, many of the sixty-seven CPA members trained in China between 1951-61 featured prominently in the anti-Hill struggle. Only nine of them joined the CPA-ML. The remainder included those who had clashed with Hill in the 1950s, when he ridiculed the more liberal Chinese approach to inner-party life and punished its advocates.[10]

Now firmly pro-Chinese, Hill and his supporters found themselves cut adrift from a movement which was itself excluded from the mainstream of Australian political life. Thus unmoored, they derived inestimable moral support from their bonds with the world's most populous nation. Their status within the left - their whole credibility - largely depended on this link. Frank Johnson, soon to be elected the party's secretary, told its founding congress that the CPA-ML's international connections would exercise a 'profound influence on the party's

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9   'Perspectives for 1965', Australian Communist (hereafter abbreviated to AC), no. 10 (February 1965), p. 1. The figure of 300 is the writer's estimate. Not all those sympathetic to Hill's position were invited to the party's founding congress. (E. F. Hill, 'Continuing E. F. Hill's Report to the Historic Conference of Australian Marxist-Leninists', AC, no. 6 [June 1964], p. 6; taped interview with founding party vice-chairman Clarrie O'Shea, Melbourne, 31 March 1983; personal interview with a founding CPA-ML CC member [notes taken during interview], Melbourne, 10 March 1983.) O'Shea recollects 400 people being present at that meeting. The above-mentioned founding CC member puts the figure at 'three or four hundred'. According to Hill's most prominent opponent within the Victorian Branch of the CPA at the time, Hill 'took about 200 with him ...' (Bernie Taft, 'Maoism in Australia', ALR, no. 35 [May 1972], p. 8.)

10   '"New Look" C.P.A.,' Current Affairs Bulletin, 25 September 1967, quoted in van der Kroef, p. 89; Taft, p. 9; Rex Mortimer, 'The Benefits of a Liberal Education', Meanjin Quarterly, vol. 35, no. 2 (June 1976), pp. 123, 125; McDonald, pp. 151-2, 154; McEwan, p. 47; Angus McIntyre, 'The Training of Australian Communist Cadres in China, 1951-1961', Studies in Comparative Communism, vol. 11, no. 4 (Winter 1978), pp. 410-23.

growth and prestige'.[11]

The party's theoretical reliance on the CPC was equally profound. A foundation member describes the Chinese polemics as 'marvellous', adding: **'we drank them in like dying men on desert islands because** they crystallised what was wrong ...' For founding party vice-chairman Clarrie O'Shea, Mao Zedong 'opened our eyes ...'[12]

Immediately after the party's formation, Hill and Central Committee (CC) member Rick Oke visited China, where 'the two sides exchanged views on questions of common concern and were completely at one with each other'.[13]

It was only natural that this concurrence should encompass the new party's foreign policy. From its inception the CPA-ML news-paper, Vanguard, took its coverage of international affairs directly from China's official Xinhua newsagency, and therefore invariably mirrored the CPC's foreign policy line.

Throughout the 1960s China pursued an ultra-militant foreign policy which eschewed diplomatic niceties and spurned the power politics enshrined and dignified by the United Nations. It championed armed revolution, especially against U.S. imperialism, which China stigmatised as the most ferocious enemy of the world's peoples.[14] The CPA-ML undeviatingly echoed China's foreign policy and identified

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11   Quoted in 'Rank and File Circular' (issued by the Rank and File Committee, CPA), cyclostyled, no. 5, [March or April 1964], in writer's possession, p. 2.

12   Taped interviews with Marjorie Broadbent and Clarrie O'Shea, Melbourne, 31 March 1983.

13   PR, 17 April 1964, pp. 3-4.

14   E.g. PR: 15 March 1963, p. 16; 8 December 1967, p. 21; 30 April 1969, p. 31.

U.S. imperialism as 'the central enemy of the Australian people'.[15]

It saw China's diplomatic isolation as evidence of that country's

fidelity to the revolutionary cause.[16]

On every single international issue the CPA-ML reproduced

the Chinese line. When Sino-Cuban relations deteriorated in 1966,

Hill retracted his former praise of Castro. As Chinese warnings

of the revival of Japanese militarism became more insistent, Vanguard

reminded its readers that Australia was 'directly in [Japan's] expan-

sionist path' during World War II, adding that 'an exactly similar

process is going on now'.[17]

Even the CPA-ML's structure was Chinese in inspiration. Already

predisposed to secrecy[18] Hill modelled his organisation along lines

developed by CPC Vice-Chairman Liu Shaoqi, whose writings on under-

ground work in enemy-occupied areas were studied by CPA-ML cadres in China.[19]

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15   E. F. Hill, 'E. F. Hill's Report to Historic Conference of Marxist-
      Leninists: Part 1', AC, no. 5 [mid-1964], p. 4.

16   'China's "Isolation": Illusion and Reality', AC, no. 25 (May
      1967), pp. 1-7.

17   V: vol. 3, no. 7 (March 1966), p. 1; 21 January 1971, p. 8.

18   Mortimer, p. 115; Fred Wells, 'Ideology of Power', Quadrant,
      vol. 8, no. 4 (October-November 1964), p. 66; McEwan, pp. 26,
      48-9; John Sendy, Comrades Come Rally: Recollections of an
      Australian Communist, pp. 132-3; taped interview with Bill
      Wilson (CPA member 1942-65), Melbourne, 27 March 1983.

19   Personal interviews with a founding CPA-ML CC member (notes taken
      during interview), Melbourne, 24 March and 2 June 1983. Liu
      controlled the CPC's international liaison department. He was
      purged in 1968. Following his posthumous rehabilitation in 1980,
      his organisational precepts were resurrected and the CPA-ML
      restructured accordingly. (V: 20 March 1980, pp. 6-7; 10 April
      1980, p. 1; 17 April 1980, p. 6. Also: 'Anti-Soviet Struggle
      Moves into New Stage', AC, no. 98 [February-March 1980], pp.
      22-3; taped interviews with former CPA-ML members A & B,
      Melbourne, 29 January 1982 and 13 February 1983 respectively.)

As early as 1961 writes Sendy, who took over the Victorian

CPA after Hill's expulsion, Hill had 'advanced ideas, influenced

by the Chinese experience, which would have involved turning our

Party into an underground, clandestine, revolutionary detachment,

working in an illegal fashion ...'[20] These proposals were spurned

by the CPA CC. Three years later, as undisputed leader of his own

party, Hill could proceed with his organisational ideas. He warned

his supporters at the CPA-ML's foundation congress:

> our society is bourgeois dictatorship which can very rapidly
> pass to fascist dictatorship ... our Party must be so organised
> to meet this ... our members are ... readily tabulated and
> overnight could be collected. There is loose talk, loose
> use of the telephones, the mail. This is entirely wrong and
> must be ended.[21]

Describing the consequences of Hill's organisational strictures,

which came to be known as the 'lie low' theory of organisation,

one Maoist commented that 'party members went so far underground

that even the wombats couldn't find them'.[22]

Hill's ability to shape his party's structure in this fashion

provides a sanguinary illustration of the sway he held within the

CPA-ML. According to former party members, opponents of the chairman's

lie low policy were 'trounced' in a party where Hill was 'king'.

If organisational forms outside Melbourne were comparatively less

stringent, it was only the intervening distance that saved interstate

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20   Sendy, p. 127.

21   E. F. Hill, 'Concluding E. F. Hill's Report to the Historic
      Congress of Marxist-Leninists', AC, no. 7 (September 1964),
      p. 3. See also p. 4. Cf. Bertil Häggmann, 'Sweden's Maoist
      "Subversives" - a Case Study', Conflict Studies, no. 58 (May
      1975), p. 5.

22   'Zugzwang', 'Famous Australian "Maoists" and Their Peculiar
      Ideas on Organization', in Bulletin of the Committee in Defence
      of Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung Thought (hereafter abbreviated

party members from 'Hill's stranglehold'.[23]

Hill's control of the CPA-ML was total, outstripping even the immense power he had wielded in the CPA.[24] Unyielding and indefatigable, he was the theoretician and spokesman of the pro-Chinese faction during the split, the object of intense loyalty and unequivocal obedience. When the new party was formed he ruled it almost by decree, vetting its publications and dictating the frequency and composition of its Central Committee meetings.[25]

Between 1963 and 1977 Hill spent about three weeks in China each year. The CPA-ML's Chinese connection was further reinforced by a steady flow of other party pilgrims. China's provision of propaganda to its Australian supporters, its bulk purchase of their publications and the appointment of the Vanguard editor as Australian representative of the Xinhua newsagency, on 'full journalists' wages',[26] further deepened the party's reliance on Chinese patronage.

Vanguard eulogised China as 'the symbol of hope ... for all the people all over the world' and 'the world base of the international working class'. Hill wrote hosannahs to 'the great socialist bastion' and 'the leading Communist Party'.[27] But an aura of deja vu surrounded

23 Founding CPA-ML CC member, 10 March 1983; editorial introduction to 'Chairman E. F. Hill: "Soft on the U.S." - For How Long?', Adelaide Anti-Imperialist Study-Action Group (hereafter abbreviated to AAISAG) Theoretical Bulletin, no. 1 (May 1981), p. 17.

24 On Hill's power in the CPA see, for example: van der Kroef, pp. 97-8; Sendy, pp. 128-9; McDonald, pp. 149-50, 152-3; McEwan, pp. 60, 88; Mortimer, p. 123; Taft, p. 9.

25 Taft, p. 8; Sendy, p. 61; personal interviews with: a founding CPA-ML CC member (notes taken during interview), Melbourne, loc. cit. and 7 April 1983; Broadbent; O'Shea. Also: van der Kroef, p. 115n.; Australian, 26 February 1969, p. 9.

26 O'Shea interview. Further sources for CPC aid to the CPA-ML are provided in fn. 57 below.

27 V: vol. 8, no. 32 [mislabelled: actually no. 34] (September 1966),

the panegyrics. In 1959 Hill had written:

> For me words are not adequate to describe fully the grand
> picture of the new way of life in the Soviet Union ... the
> spirit and enthusiasm of Soviet workers is something that
> has to be experienced.[28]

Sixteen years later the paeans were identical, only the addressee

had changed: 'In every single direction the Chinese people are

accomplishing marvels. The English language has not enough super-

latives to deal with the matter adequately'.[29]

Although not as fawning in tone, Chinese reciprocal praise

and publicity was lavish. The CPC CC's organ, People's Daily, republished

the Declaration of Australian Marxist-Leninists and included Hill

and his comrades among the heroic guardians of Marxist-Leninist

purity who had refused to be cowed by the revisionist Community

Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Peking Review regularly featured

CPA-ML statements.[30] Moreover, the CPC was impressed that the Australian

Maoists emerged from the split retaining a significant trade union

presence. According to Flo Russell, a former CPA CC member who

directed the Victorian party's trade union work for fourteen years

until she was expelled along with Hill: 'Chinese comrades said

that this was the only place in the world where such a victory for

Marxism-Leninism took place in that period'.[31]

If the CPC was impressed with its Australian supporters, the

latter were infatuated with their powerful patrons, and moulded

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28   E. F. Hill, Builders of Communism, quoted in Taft, p. 8.

29   V, 13 February 1975, p. 3.

30   PR: 6 December 1963, pp. 20-25; 7 February 1964, p. 18; 3 April
      1964, pp. 23-4; 9 July 1965, p. 14; 11 February 1966, p. 15.

31   [Flo Russell], 'Looking at "Looking Backward: Looking Forward"',
      BCD ..., vol. 1, no. 4 (August 1981), p. 10. See also Davidson,

their whole political physiognomy around Chinese domestic developments. The far-reaching significance of this imitative approach was dramatically illustrated by the outbreak of China's cultural revolution in 1966.

The objective of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) was the socialist purification of the CPC and, through it, of Chinese society. Mao Zedong, enshrined by the CPC as the greatest Marxist-Leninist of the era, issued the battlecry: 'it is right to rebel against reactionaries'. In response the young Red Guards mobilised, launching a ferocious attack against the 'capitalist-roaders' which was to decimate the CPC's leadership. By 1968 the ensuing maelstrom had unseated party vice-chairman Liu Shaoqi, who was identified as the number one capitalist-roader and denounced as a renegade, traitor and scab. With the emphasis on arousing the revolutionary ardour of the masses and 'bombarding the headquarters', the CPC swung further left.[32]

Within the CPA a pronounced extreme- or ultra-left tendency had often been dominant, particularly in Victoria. During the Sino-Soviet split the foremost Victorian leftists (among whom Hill was pre-eminent) had sided with the CPC.[33] They now endorsed, absorbed and propagated the rebellious emphases of the cultural revolution.

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32   See PR from 12 August 1966. For the denunciation of Liu see Supplement to PR, 1 November 1968.

33   Davidson, loc. cit., pp. 52, 63-4, 99-100, 133-7; Upward, pp. 105-11 passim; McDonald, pp. 53-8; 82-3; Ralph Gibson, My Years in the Communist Party, pp. 18-19, 24, 149-50, 245; Rupert Lockwood, loc. cit.; Wells, pp. 66-7; [E. F. Hill], untitled political reminiscences, [? Melbourne, post-1972], nine-page photocopy, in writer's possession, p. 3; Jack Blake, '1949 to 1956: Stalinism or Independence?', ALR, no. 76 (June 1981), pp. 8-16 passim.

The message which permeated CPA-ML publications was simple, direct and urgent: dare to think, dare to rebel, dare to struggle, dare to win.[34]

Hill described Mao as 'the undisputed leader of the people of the world' and 'a genius of Marxism-Leninism', while reviling 'Liu Shao-chi and his miserable bunch of traitors'.[35] In November 1966 Vanguard began to publish quotations from Mao Zedong in every edition. Readers were urged to study, ingest and propagate Mao Zedong Thought and carry the little red book of Mao's quotations wherever they went.[36]

While the cultural revolution unfolded in China, a period of mass rejection of traditional values developed in the west. Both movements were spearheaded by youth. Mao's message, 'it is right to rebel', encapsulated perfectly the mood which gripped millions throughout the world, including Australia. Mao appeared as a romantic anti-establishment figure of titanic stature, leading hundreds of millions of people in an audacious and pioneering co-operative experiment explicitly aimed at producing a socialist human being.

The spectacle of a government enthusiastically fostering criticism, questioning and rebellion had an understandable and immediate effect on sections of western youth, and stood in contrast to the perceived

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34   For example: 'The Thought of Mao Tse-tung is a Liberating Force', AC, no. 25 (May 1967), p. 15; 'To Rebel is Justified', V, 5 September 1968, p. 1.

35   On Mao see V, 20 July 1967, p. 3. On Liu see PR, 29 November 1968, p. 29 and cf. the CPA-ML pamphlet Some Ideological Questions, [1967], p. 17.

36   V, 6 March 1969, p. 4. Vanguard reprinted material by Mao and Chinese material in which he was ubiquitous. Articles about Australian politics constantly referred to him. As well, in 1967-8, Vanguard published forty-three articles concerned solely

stodginess of the alternative offered by the Soviet bloc and its

allied communist parties. According to Barry York, who joined the

CPA-ML as a university student in 1969 and remained a member for

twelve years, there emerged a 'cultural identification with Maoism

as a style'.[37]

The Vietnam war, described by Vanguard as the 'central issue

in Australia' as early as 1966[38], provoked widespread revulsion,

sparking a quest for alternatives in tens of thousands of young

Australians. It was a time when Peking Review approvingly cited

Bob Dylan's anti-war lyrics and showered unequivocal praises on

the student-instigated revolt which shook Paris in 1968.[39]

The cultural revolution infused the CPA-ML with an iconoclastic

energy which dovetailed into this youth-student radicalisation.

In the tumult of protest, hope and soul-searching, many an angry

young man was drawn to the party by its very extremism, its undeviating,

uncomplicated, undiluted denunciation of capitalism and all its

sacred cows. The party's new mood is captured in this statement:

'"Rebellion", "revolution", is a whole way of looking at things,

every day happenings ... The Australian revolutionary road can only

be traversed if "rebellion" permeats our every thought and deed'.[40]

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37   Taped interview with Barry York, Melbourne, 3 February 1983.
      See also: Jules Archer, Mao Tse-tung, pp. 177-8; Australian,
      14 June 1968, p. 9; Sydney Morning Herald, 1 February 1970,
      p. 2; Taft, p. 9; Sendy, p. 182; Geoffrey Fairbairn, 'The
      Left Intellectuals and Peking', Quadrant, vol. 11, no. 5
      (September-October 1967), pp. 59, 64.

38   V, vol. 3, no. 4 (February 1966), p. 1.

39   PR: 1 April 1966, pp. 30-31; 24 May 1968, pp. 18-19.

40   'China's Proletarian Cultural Revolution Helps Us', AC, no. 24
      (March 1967), p. 10.

This mood converged with that of the most militant campus rebels, who were centred at Melbourne's Monash and La Trobe Universities. For many young activists their support for the GPCR and Mao predated interest in the CPA-ML.[41] It was to this party, however, that they naturally gravitated if they were to formalise their commitment to Maoism. The CPA-ML was, after all, the Maoist party in Australia.

Others, such as York, were drawn to the party by its militant posture:

> The outrage against the war in Vietnam led to many young people wanting to identify with the most militant form of opposition to it ... The outlet for my moral outrage found expression, frankly, in the people who were prepared to throw rocks rather than just wave placards. At that particular time they happened to be Maoists.[42]

The CPA-ML was the only party to categorically endorse student attacks on the U.S. Consulate in Melbourne in 1968.[43] Vanguard not only endorsed the students' actions but egged them on, showering praises on Albert Langer, Australia's most celebrated student Maoist: 'For our part we wholeheartedly support the rebellious students.

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41   As it did for: former CPA-ML member C, (taped interview, Melbourne, 18 April 1983); former CPA-ML member D, (taped interview, 23 August 1982); current CPA-ML member A (taped interviews, Melbourne, 10 December 1982 and 3 April 1983). See also Humphrey McQueen, 'Some Comments on "Australia's Maoists"', Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies, vol. 9, no. 1 (March 1971), p. 68.

42   Taped interview with Barry York, Melbourne, 13 January 1982. Rob Bennetts (taped interview, Melbourne, 15 April 1983) expressed very similar views regarding what attracted him to Maoism. See also: David Grumont, 'The Rise and Fall of the WSA: Maoist Dead-End in Victoria', Australasian Spartacist, April 1974, p. 8; P. J. Knowles, 'Peaceful Coexistence and Maoism', Socialist Review (Carlton South, Victoria), no. 3 (October 1971), p. 12.

43   V, 11 July 1968, pp. 1, 3. Cf. Häggmann, p. 12.

There is plenty to rebel about and the more rebellion the better.' [44]

The context was Australian, the temper Chinese. Were it not for the cultural revolution the CPA-ML would, at the very least, have withheld support from the student rebels. One former Maoist student leader recalls:

> I remember Hill saying to me that most of the party leadership didn't approve of what we were doing but he did, and that the cultural revolution was what was leading them to realise that this was o.k.[45]

The cultural revolution provided the link between what one commentator has described as 'Mr Hill and his aging associates ... and the would-be boy bomb-throwers ...'[46] The conflux was in many ways quite fortuitous.

Perhaps nowhere else in the western world were student Maoists as prominent and influential as in Australia. They formed the Worker-Student Alliance (WSA) and the secret Young Communist League (YCL), both of which provided recruits for the CPA-ML. By 1972 WSA had a nationwide network of seventeen branches and several thousand

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44   V, 23 May 1968, p. 1. A comprehensive exposition of the CPA-ML's attitude to student struggles can be found in the pamphlet The Australian Revolutionary Student Movement (June 1970). On Langer see, for example, V: 25 September 1969, p. 4; 4 March 1970, p. 1; 18 November 1971, p. 1.

45   Former member C. Hill has made similar statements to a number of people, including the present writer who has had them confirmed in conversation with other party leaders.

46   D. W. Rawson, 'Communist Split Poses Puzzle', Canberra Times, 11 May 1972, p. 2. See also McQueen, loc. cit. and the CPA-ML pamphlet (1967), E. F. Hill's Speech to University Students on China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. During this period Maoists all over the world were conspicuous for their ultra-leftism. (See, for example: 'Interview with a West Bengali Trotskyist', in Socialist Review, no. 3 [October 1971], pp. 50-51; W.A.C. Adie, 'China's Diplomatic Breakthrough', World Review, vol. 10, no. 2 [July 1971], p. 24; Diggins, p. 173; Häggmann, pp. 3-15 passim.)

active members and supporters.[47] Prior to its absorption of Maoist

youth the CPA-ML had been a party largely in name only.

A number of the party's new members visited China, where first-

hand observation of the fervour of the GPCR served to bolster their

own revolutionary ardour. Many more adopted Chinese cultural as

well as political accoutrements. York comments:

> If you look at fashion, culinary pursuits, travel interests
> and artistic tastes, many of the people who I associated with,
> say from 1969 to '72, were Sinophiles. They ate Chinese food,
> had Chinese pictures and wall hangings on their walls and
> sometimes listened to Chinese music ... Mao jackets and Mao
> caps were very popular ...[48]

Irrespective of the role attributable to China in initially

attracting people to the CPA-ML, new members entered a socio-political

milieu in which the omnipresence of China was regarded as normal.

They studied the history of the Chinese revolution, acquired a fluency

in Mao's quotations and came to know more about China than any other

foreign country. Generally inexperienced in political activism,

they derived education and sustenance from a paper which brimmed

with Chinese information and analysis.

Apart from constant references to China in _Vanguard_ articles

on a variety of topics, the paper reprinted Chinese theoretical

and policy statements; promoted, praised and endorsed Chinese actions;

hailed and applauded Chinese anniversaries and victories; reported

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47   This statement is based on interviews with former CPA-ML and
      WSA members, the writer's personal experience and a study of
      the WSA newspaper _Struggle_. See also: Alastair Davidson,
      'Australia', _Yearbook on International Communist Affairs_,
      (1973), p. 411; Grumont, p. 7.

48   York interview, 3 February 1983. The same point was made by
      former CPA-ML member E (taped interview, 28 January 1983),
      and a number of others attracted to the CPA-ML during this
      period.

and campaigned for Sino-Australian diplomatic, sporting and cultural

ties and condemned comments and activities hostile to China. Readers

were counselled to study Chinese publications and tune in to Radio

Beijing, and the People's Republic of China (PRC) was endlessly

lauded as a bastion of socialism.[49]

Maoist veterans and newcomers alike were communists for whom

China was communism incarnate, embodying Marxism-Leninism _per se_

and not merely a Chinese version of it. In their proselytising,

China was incessantly marshalled as _the_ proof that socialism was

both superior to capitalism and capable of achievement. Accounting

for its apparent preoccupation with China, Vanguard explained:

> Certainly the Communist Party of Australia (M.L.) pays a great
> deal of attention to the achievements and policy of People's
> China because they are the achievements and policy of a genuine
> socialist country; they demonstrate in life and practice what
> Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought means.[50]

Indeed, a statement in the CPA-ML's draft constitution that

the party was part of the international communist movement headed

by the CPC was only removed at Chinese insistence. An internal

party document, explaining the removal of the offending clause,

explained: 'It is not correct to write into the programme the leading

position of the CPC. The CPC itself disavows it ...'[51]

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49   325 such articles were published in Vanguard between 1971-7.
      This figure excludes Vanguard's international news coverage,
      which consisted almost entirely of reprints of Xinhua items,
      and articles in which China featured but was not the main subject.

50   V, 24 February 1972, p. 4. For a fuller and typical CPA-ML
      comment on its relations with the CPC see Appendix II.

51   Untitled internal party documents, [? Melbourne, late 1972],
      in writer's possession. The overwhelming evidence is that the
      document cited was written by Ted Hill. This episode is also
      mentioned in [Albert Langer], 'Blind Faith in the Communist
      Parties', Discussion Bulletin, no. 5 (30 July 1979), p. 7 and
      in a self-criticism written by Ted Hill in 1978 and read by
      the present writer.

CPA-ML members and publications even adopted Chinese modes
of expression quite alien to the Australian vernacular and, indeed,
the whole English-speaking world. Enemies were denounced as 'paper
tigers' and 'running dogs of U.S. imperialism', while Trotskyists
were described as 'demons and monsters'. Ted Hill wrote that 'the
ruling circles ... tremble at the mere rustle of leaves in the wind
...'[52] Performances by the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra and
the Guangzhou Acrobatic Troupe were patronised by party members
who otherwise had little interest in orchestral music or gymnastic
virtuosity.

CPA-ML members were involved in pro-Chinese activities as
a matter of course. They controlled the Australia-China Society
(ACS), which they saw as an extension of and front for party work
and an arena for potential recruits.[53] ACS functions were regularly
addressed by Ted Hill.

The varying degrees of enthusiasm for China-friendship activities
were reflected in an informal division of labour. The older party
members tended to be involved in the ACS while the youth attended
to the exhilarating pyrotechnics - the meetings, propaganda work
and street demonstrations which had drawn so many to Maoism. Some
young Maoists' interest in China was not as indiscriminate as Vanguard's.
To those impatient for revolution, ACS activities, while politically
irreproachable, seemed fairly uninspiring and unproductive. The

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52   V: 29 November 1973, p. 3; 29 April 1971, p. 4; 6 April 1972,
      p. 4; 19 October 1972, p. 4.

53   Interviewees were unanimous on this score. They were responding
      to a question which specifically asked how they saw the ACS
      at the time when they were loyal party members.

party's preoccupation with the PRC even became mildly and occasionally annoying.

These feelings, however, had little practical significance, and rarely went beyond a vague sense of the ACS being a 'soft option form of revolutionary politics', akin to a Maoist 'retirement villa'.[54] The WSA newspaper, Struggle, unceasingly promoted and defended China, and the CPA-ML more than once relied on WSA members to swell the numbers at ACS meetings where the party's control was threatened.[55]

Maoist youth activists still saw the PRC as a shining example of revolutionary communism in practice, and there were extremely few (if any) fundamental objections to the party's relations with the CPC. Although some of the pre-eminent China rhapsodists were perceived as respectable and conservative 'small m' Maoists, this was the mildest of undercurrents and had little effect on the young activists' unequivocal commitment to their party and its Maoist philosophy of struggle.

Trips to China by party members of all ages, often free or heavily-subsidised, were commonplace. Organised through the ACS they were designed to inspire and sustain party members. On his return from China one member met with Ted Hill, who greeted him by asking: 'are you fortified?' Returning from one of his own regular visits, Hill wrote: 'I often speak of being uplifted by experiences in China. I really think "uplifted" is the correct word'.[56]

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54   Former member E and York, loc. cit. Similar comments were made
      by former CPA-ML members: B; C; F (taped interview, 28 January
      1983).

55   Interviews with current member A (loc. cit.) and former member C.

56   York interview, 13 January 1982; V, 13 February 1975, p. 3.

Party members received their theoretical education from Chinese editions of the Marxist-Leninist classics. Party bookshops were packed with Chinese publications and consumer goods and even derived their name, East Wind Bookshops, from a CPC slogan. These shops also functioned as conduits for the Chinese financial aid which underwrote the CPA-ML's propaganda machine.[57]

Hill's Chinese visits and contacts contributed substantially to his prestige both inside and outside the CPA-ML. His standing in China was 'very, very high ... Wherever you went in China people knew about Hill ...'[58] Having the authority of the Communist Party of China behind him made Hill a big fish, especially in a pond as small as the CPA-ML. An ostensible confidant of the great Mao Zedong, Hill had addressed a crowd of one and a half million in China and been described by the Australian press (whose frequent requests for interviews he disdainfully rejected) as Mao's 'unofficial, official emissary in Australia ...'[59] In Parliament the Prime Minister claimed that Hill's prior approval was required before visas to China would be issued.[60] According to a founding CPA-ML CC member, this claim

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57   Taped interviews with current CPA-ML member B (Melbourne, 22 August 1982) and former member D. The writer's own experience is that in the mid-1970s, 1000 of the 4800 Vanguards printed were sold to China. See also: van der Kroef, pp. 97, 114n.; AFR, 15 February 1971, p. 8.

58   Founding CPA-ML CC member, 2 June 1983. See also: van der Kroef, pp. 108-9; 'Zugzwang', p. 9. The status accruing to communist party leaders as a consequence of their international contacts is also dealt with in Upward, p. 178.

59   PR, 7 October 1966, p. 23; Australian, 13 May 1971, p. 2.

60   Age, 21 April 1971, p. 5. See also K. S. Inglis, This is the A.B.C., pp. 282-3.

certainly held true for recalcitrants within the party's ranks.[61]

Hill's vicarious prestige buttressed his hegemony over Australian Maoism. He was 'in the know', privy to information the possession of which tended to both establish and reinforce his importance. He referred repeatedly to his numerous discussions with Mao and other Chinese leaders, using them 'to great effect to consolidate his authority within the CPA-ML and to attract members to it ...'[62]

Hill's Chinese connections were but one manifestation of the close association between the two parties. Before Sino-Australian diplomatic relations were established in 1972, the office of Vanguard editor Duncan Clarke doubled as 'an unofficial Chinese Embassy and Consulate in Australia ...'[63] After 1972 Vanguard personnel regularly undertook research tasks for the Xinhua correspondent in the Chinese Embassy and otherwise facilitated his work, while Clarke had frequent discussions with him in Canberra and Melbourne.[64] The Vanguard office also produced the weekly New China News, described by one person as 'the Vanguard editor's meal ticket'.[65] Further, the office collated

61   Founding CPA-ML CC member, 10 March 1983. Hill denied that
      he was in a position to exert such influence. (V, 29 April
      1971, p. 3. See also V, 3 May 1979, p. 4.)

62   Former member B. See also Hill's following writings and speeches:
      V, vol. 1, no. 1 (September 1963), p. 3 and 19 June 1969, p. 3;
      Class Struggle Within the Communist Parties ..., pp. 20-21;
      'Speech by E. F. Hill to Melbourne Memorial Meeting [for Mao
      Zedong]', AC, no. 80 (September 1976), p. 27; 'The International
      Significance of the Chinese Revolution', AC, no. 87 (February
      1978), p. 28.

63   AFR, 15 February 1971, p. 8. See also National Times, 22-27
      February 1971, p. 33.

64   Taped interviews with: current member B (loc. cit. and 13 March
      1983); former member D. The writer also has extensive personal
      experience in this regard.

65   Taped interview with former CPA-ML member G, Melbourne 18 April
      1983. New China News was first published in 1964

and despatched a host of Australian technical journals requested
by Government departments and other organisations in China.

Australian Maoists returning from China with slides and first-
hand experience acted as ambassadors-at-large for the PRC. Party
members hosted visiting Chinese athletes and exchange students and
mobilised in support of China over issues such as the screening
of Michelangelo Antonioni's 'vicious' and 'despicable' film, China.[66]

Within the CPA-ML, then, support for China was enthusiastic
and automatic. The party was located on the extreme left fringes
of Australian society, and most Australians who encountered its
intractable brand of ultra-revolutionary politics found it either
unconvincing, repugnant, alien or lunatic. The bond of fraternity
with the CPC in large measure compensated for CPA-ML members' estrange-
ment from their own society. It provided them with roots, vicarious
victories and shared successes, a perspective in which 'we' could
stand for almost 1000 million people.

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66 'A Vicious Motive, Despicable Tricks', PR, 1 February 1974,
pp. 7-10. See also, for example: Age, 11 June 1974, p. 1;
V, 6 June 1974, p. 1.

CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL REORIENTATION: 1971-75

The ninth CPC congress in 1969 inaugurated a period of re-examination and rectification in China. Over the next few years the domestic and foreign policies of the People's Republic of China were methodically reoriented away from the fervent ultra-leftism of the 1960s.

As a campaign against the anarchistic and ultra-egalitarian excesses of the cultural revolution unfolded, the Mao cult was systematically dismantled, the Red Guards were demobilised and many officials and experts felled by the cultural revolution were reinstated.[1]

The shift in foreign policy was equally far-reaching. The PRC's erstwhile abstinence from the tainted world of diplomacy was supplanted by an orgy of diplomatic relations. The prominence formerly accorded to the revolutionary struggles of the world's peoples was assigned to a united front of nations, and a much greater emphasis was placed on peaceful co-existence. The Third World became the motive force in the international struggle, and both superpowers became the target.[2]

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1   See, for example: articles by various authors in Bill Brugger (ed.), China: The Impact of the Cultural Revolution, pp. 161-8, 176-87, 209; C. L. Chiou, 'Chinese Communist Leadership Crisis and New Foreign Policy in the Aftermath of the Cultural Revolution', World Review, vol. 11, no. 3 (September 1972), pp. 16-17; Ross Terrill, 800,000,000: The Real China, pp. 71-8, 202; Edgar Snow, China's Long Revolution, pp. 66-7, 144-5.

2   The primary literature is vast. For representative pieces see PR: 29 January 1971, pp. 6-7; 30 November 1973, pp. 4-6. Relevant secondary sources include: C. L. Chiou, Maoism in Action: The Cultural Revolution, pp. 118-20; Greg O'Leary, 'Chinese Foreign Policy - From "Anti-Imperialism" to "Anti-Hegemonism"', in Brugger (ed.), pp. 203-52 (esp. pp. 220-22); Terrill, pp. 157-62 passim, 178; Snow, pp. 137-40.

These changes scuttled the assumptions upon which CPA-ML members had based their approach to international affairs and 'dented some of their simplistic certainties'.[3] The Chinese and Australian parties had for years condemned the USSR for its dealings with reactionaries.[4] Now Chinese foreign policy metamorphosed villains into allies, downgraded the importance of guerrilla warfare and adulterated the revolutionary purity of its former approach with revisionist notions of real-politik and diplomatic circumspection.[5]

In April 1971 Vanguard editorially endorsed the 'widespread movement of rebellion' in Ceylon, a position it reiterated several times. In May, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai condemned the uprising as a 'chaotic situation created by a handful of persons' and provided moral and material support to the Ceylonese government.[6] Vanguard fell silent, recanting a year later. The Ceylon episode came to be regarded by party members as a debacle. It marked a traumatic turning-point

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3   Taft, p. 8.

4   E.g.: PR, 17 May 1968, pp. 24-6 and 15 August 1969, pp. 29-30;
     V, 2 October 1969, p. 2; E. F. Hill, 'Speech of E. F. Hill to
     Central Committee, Communist Party of Australia, February 1962',
     in Hill, Australia's Revolution ..., p. 193.

5   Cf. PR: 17 March 1967, pp. 28-9; 3 January 1969, p. 17; 27
     October 1972, pp. 15-16. On Africa cf. PR: 24 July 1964, p. 29;
     1 February 1972, pp. 15-17; 28 April 1967, pp. 35-6; 26 January
     1973, p. 8. On Asean cf. PR: 17 May 1968, p. 25; 3 December
     1971, p. 25.

6   For Vanguard's support of the Ceylonese uprising see V: 22 April
     1971, p. 2; 29 April 1971, p. 8; 6 May 1971, p. 3; 13 May 1971,
     p. 1. Zhou Enlai's statement is quoted from the Ceylon Daily
     News, in Taft, p. 11.

for a party which for years had bristled with rebellion.[7]

The CPA-ML also spoke in tandem with China on the 1971 civil war in Pakistan. Again, in isolation from the broad left, it opposed a popular uprising.[8] Although most party members had regarded support for the uprising as 'the logical and correct thing', they nevertheless toed the line.[9]

The visit of U.S. President Nixon to China in February 1972 produced further confusion in the party's ranks. It was a great shock to see this 'ferocious warmonger' and 'chief butcher'[10] shaking hands with Chairman Mao. Ceylon, Pakistan and the Nixon visit jarred with the canons upon which party members had been reared. Some party members, and a greater number of sympathisers, became disillusioned enough to abandon Maoism. Nonetheless the new line was accepted, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, by most members.[11]

This acceptance was facilitated by an abiding militant tone

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7   The recantation appeared in V, 18 May 1972, p. 4. Vanguard
      republished a series of articles by N. Sanmugathasan, General
      Secretary of the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Ceylon,
      which rationalised the CPC's role in the affair. (V, 8, 15, 22
      June 1972, pp. 8, 2, 7 respectively.) The Ceylonese reversal
      made a lingering impression on party members. It was a well-
      known episode even among members who joined after 1972. Almost
      every interviewee raised it, quite unprompted, at some stage.

8   See: PR, 17 December 1971, pp. 15-16; V, 7 September 1972, p. 1.

9   Former member A.

10   PR: 21 November 1969, p. 25; 16 April 1971, p. 14.

11   York interview (13 January 1982).
      See also: Knowles, p. 13; Albert Langer, 'Notes on Mao Tsetung',
      in AAISAG (eds), Mao Tse Tung: On the Fourth Anniversary of His
      Death, September 9 1980, p. 69; AFR, 29 May 1972, p. 2.

in CPC and CPA-ML justifications of the new line:

> Nixon, world-wide leader of the campaign to isolate People's
> China, has now himself become so isolated that he is crawling
> on hands and knees to visit China. Like a beaten dog with
> its tail between its legs, Nixon visited the mighty socialist
> People's Republic of China.[12]

China's admission to the United Nations was also represented as
a crushing blow to the U.S.[13]

Numerous theoretical articles appeared reconciling the pragmatic
manoeuvres of the present with the revolutionary imperatives of
the past. They argued that the PRC was skilfully utilising the
contradictions endemic to imperialism in order to hasten its demise.[14]

The dampening of domestic ultra-leftism in China coincided
with developments in Australia which took some of the wind out of
the CPA-ML's sails. With the youth-student ferment already subsiding,
the Whitlam Labor Government was elected in December 1972. Among
its first measures were the withdrawal of Australian troops from
Vietnam and recognition of the PRC.

The CPA-ML had abandoned its reflexive support for any and
all overseas rebellion as a consequence of the embarrassment it
suffered over Ceylon, Pakistan and the Nixon visit. Now that the

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12   'Defend China's Foreign Policy from Counter-Revolutionary Attacks',
       AC, no. 51 (April 1972), p. 56. See also V, 5 October 1972, p. 3.
       The CPA-ML also dealt with the questions of Ceylon, Pakistan and
       Nixon in Trotskyism and Revisionism: Teachers by Negative Example,
       pp. 7-8. An important justification and defence of Chinese
       policy was provided in Jack A. Smith, Unite the Many, Defeat
       the Few: China's Revolutionary Line in Foreign Affairs. This
       pamphlet was sold in CPA-ML bookshops and widely read by party
       members. Regarding Ceylon, Pakistan and Nixon see pp. 28-36.

13   E.g.: Ibid., p. 2; PR, 29 October 1971, p. 6; V, 28 October 1971,
       p. 8.

14   E.g. V: 10 June 1971, p. 3; 12 August 1971, p. 1; 12 October 1972,
       p. 6. Also: 'Peaceful Coexistence: The Leninist Principle and
       the Revisionist Distortion', AC, no. 50 (February 1972), p. 26;
       'Defend China's Foreign Policy', p. 53

rebellious spirit was dissipating in both China and Australia, the

party acknowledged that many of its new members had been attracted

to it by emotional factors and the spirit of the times. These members,

it said, 'are now faced with a different situation'.[15]

As the tributaries which had fed the upsurge of youth Maoism

evaporated and the ultra-leftism of the cultural revolution receded

in China, Maoist students found that they were no longer their party's

cause célèbre. The CPA-ML relapsed into the customary antipathy

of communist movements towards intellectuals.[16]

Since the cultural revolution, debate among Australian Maoists

on the question of students and intellectuals had been couched in

Chinese terminology, and revolved around interpretations of the

following quotation from Mao:

> In the final analysis, the dividing line between revolutionary
> intellectuals and non-revolutionary or counter-revolutionary
> intellectuals is whether or not they are willing to integrate
> themselves with the workers and peasants and actually do so.[17]

This statement became pivotal in a bitter but indecisive inner-

party controversy about the role of party intellectuals and, in

particular, the desirability of their 'going to the masses' by taking

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15   'Uphold Principles of Marxism-Leninism', AC, no. 61 (November 1973), pp. 16-17.

16   For examples of this tradition see: V. I. Lenin, 'How to Organise Competition', in Collected Works, vol. 26, p. 412; Daniel DeLeon, quoted in Diggins, pp. 29-30; PR, 30 August 1968, pp. 4, 5 and 23 January 1970, p. 7; Ian Turner, 'My Long March', in id., Room for Manoeuvre ..., p. 122; McEwan, p. 78.

17   Mao Tse-tung, 'The May 4th Movement', in Selected Works (hereafter abbreviated to SW), vol. 2, p. 238. Cf. [Albert Langer], 'On Studying "The Orientation of the Youth Movement"', fourteen-page YCL discussion document, 30 November 1970, cyclostyled, in writer's possession.

up factory jobs.[18]

The ebbing of ultra-leftism in China and Australia also served to mute the former shrillness of CPA-ML propaganda, and was accompanied by an unprecedented emphasis on unity and broadness and an explicit (albeit highly-qualified) admission that the party had overstated its position in the past.[19] As the cult of Mao's personality was quelled in China, CPA-ML members put away their Mao badges and little red books. The more egregious manifestations of Sinophilia receded and a greater concentration on Australia emerged.

The end-product was a new strategy for revolution in Australia, the first systematic exposition of which appeared in May 1973:

> Our view is that the Australian revolution is a continuing revolution by stages. The first stage ... is the anti-imperialist ... stage which involves the unity in struggle of all Australian anti-imperialists led by the workers and aimed at expelling the imperialists, defeating the local collaborators with the imperialists, socialising their factories, mines etc.[20]

Three months later Hill published his first book in eight years. He wrote that 'the thread that runs right through Australia's

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18   A selection of pertinent illustrations of the debate: ibid.;
      'Leading Role of Working Class Under Attack', AC, no. 47 (July
      1971), pp. 27-9; 'The Intellectuals and Australia's Revolution',
      AC, no. 70 (March 1975), pp. 54-60; V, 25 April 1974, p. 6
      and 18 July 1974, p. 3; articles submitted for publication to
      Vanguard by the writer and a former CPA-ML member, in writer's
      possession. Cf. Alain Touraine, The May Movement: Revolt and
      Reform, pp. 218-19.

19   E.g. the following AC articles: 'Building the Anti-Imperialist
      United Front', no. 53 (August 1972), pp. 36-8; 'The Struggle
      to Free Australia From Imperialism', no. 57 (April 1973), p. 46;
      'Trade Unions and Revolution', no. 59 (August 1973), p. 69.

20   From pp. 23-4 of the keynote article, 'Continuing Revolution
      by Stages', AC, no. 58 (May 1973), pp. 23-9. This article was
      also issued as a pamphlet.

history from white settlement to the present time is the struggle for independence from imperialism ...'[21] The national, anti-imperialist stage of Australia's revolution was described as separate and prefatory to the socialist revolution. The following year the Eureka Flag was adopted as the symbol appropriate to this stage.[22]

Opposition to the multifaceted domination of Australia by the USA and advocacy of national independence had been longstanding themes in CPA propaganda.[23] The CPA-ML was formed at a time when the CPC stigmatised the USA as the number one enemy, and it took up these themes with unmatched stridency.[24] From the beginning, however, its patriotic agitation exhibited a conspicuous Chinese dimension. Writing about Australia's independence struggle in 1966, Clarrie O'Shea said: 'We can learn much and find much inspiration from the revolutionary experience of China ...'[25]

The notion of a united front directed at imperialism, then, was not unheard of. But the postulation of a separate, anti-imperialist stage in Australia's path to socialism was. It is crucial to understand the backdrop to this theoretical metastasis.

Factors sketched briefly at the beginning of this chapter had rendered the CPA-ML's cultural revolution style unfitting. The

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21   Hill, _Australia's Revolution ..._, p. 4.

22   Ibid., p. 44; _V_, 11 April 1974, p. 5.

23   **See, for example, Gibson, pp. 127-8, 262-4; Davidson, The** _Communist Party of Australia ..._, p. 101; L. L. Sharkey, _Australian Communists and Soviet Russia_, pp. 17-20.

24   E.g. _V_: vol. 2, no. 4 (October 1964), p. 4; vol. 2, no. 36 (July 1965), p. 1; vol. 2, no. 43 (September 1965), p. 1; 28 September 1967, p. 4.

25   _V_, vol. 3, no. 36 (September 1966), p. 4. See also _V_, vol. 3, no. 35 (September 1966), p. 1.

space vacated by the formerly all-embracing concept of 'rebellion' required filling. In the early 1970s Mao's writings on the united front and the need to isolate enemies one at a time, to broaden the base and narrow the target, were promoted in China.[26] They provided an allegorical justification of the changes in Chinese foreign policy. The CPA-ML's new line on national independence fitted comfortably with all three tiers of the revised Chinese estimation of world trends: 'countries want independence, nations want liberation and the people want revolution'.[27] Anti-imperialism located Australian revolutionaries in the Chinese picture of the 1970s, just as rebellion had done in the 1960s.

The CPA-ML's two-stage revolution line abrogated the appraisal adopted by the party's second congress in 1971 that the revolution in Australia was a proletarian revolution with socialism as its immediate aim. This position was now described as erroneous.[28] In internal documents which reconsidered the party's position in 1972, Hill spoke of Australia's 'semi-colonial' position and referred repeatedly to Mao's writings on the united front, drawing attention to 'important similarities' between Australia and China.[29]

By way of partial explanation of the change, the party leadership

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26   E.g. PR: 27 August 1971, pp. 10-13; 25 February 1972, pp. 10-12.

27   PR, 7 January 1972, p. 8.

28   Congress Report, [1971], internal party document in pamphlet form, in writer's possession, p. 16; 'Continuing Revolution ...', p. 25.

29   Untitled internal party documents, [late 1972]. A party leader brought these documents, or documents very similar to them, to Rob Bennetts's party cell for discussion-cum-adoption in 1972. (Taped interview with Rob Bennetts, Melbourne, 30 July 1983.)

told one member that

> the Chinese had suggested that they have another look at [the
> question of independence]. 'Have another look at it' was
> taken to mean that they were to adopt an independence sort
> of line as distinct from socialist revolution ...[30]

The keynote article, 'Continuing Revolution by Stages', said

that Australian communists 'can learn an immense amount from China's

revolution ...'[31] In 1976 Hill revealed that discussions with Chinese

leaders of 'the theory of continuing revolution by stages ... were

such as to make it easier for us to draw conclusions about Australia'.[32]

Certainly the onomatology of the new line was adopted straight

from Mao. Hill wrote of Australia's 'national democratic revolution'

establishing the 'people's democratic dictatorship'. Australian

capitalists, potential allies in the anti-American united front,

were 'vacillating and hesitant'.[33] Australian companies economically

tied to American concerns were labelled 'compradors'.[34] The fact

that the CPA-ML's policy of national independence appeared on the

stage garbed in a Chinese costume is one of the palpable ironies

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30   Former member C.

31   'Continuing Revolution ...', p. 28.

32   E. F. Hill, 'Comrade Hill's Tribute to Life and Work of Comrades
      Chou En-lai and Kang Sheng', AC, no. 75 [early 1976], pp. 90-91.
      Hill visited China in November-December 1971 and January-
      February 1973.

33   Id.: Australia's Revolution ..., pp. 7, 45; The Labor Party?
      Dr Evatt - The Petrov Affair - The Whitlam Government, p. 16.
      Cf. Mao Tse-tung: 'The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese
      Communist Party', in SW, vol. 2, pp. 326-7; 'On the People's
      Democratic Dictatorship', in SW, vol. 4, pp. 411-23 passim;
      'Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society', in SW, vol. 1,
      p. 16. Cf. also Häggmann, p. 9.

34   V, 23 March 1972, p. 3. Cf. Mao, loc. cit., pp. 13-14. See
      also Bill Brugger, 'The Historical Perspective', in id. (ed.),
      p. 31n.

of that party's association with the CPC.

As previously noted, the CPA-ML had advocated Australian independence from its inception. This advocacy had been consistently ensconced in the priorities of Chinese foreign policy, the hub of which, in the 1960's, was the expulsion of U.S. imperialism from Asia and the exaltation of guerrilla warfare.[35]

In the 1970s, Chinese policy focused on the governments of the Third World as the central force in the international struggle against the hegemonic superpowers.

The CPA-ML's newly-systematised patriotic program facilitated the party's self-location within the new Chinese emphases. It spoke of upholding the banner of Australia's national liberation and described Australia's interests as lying parallel to those of the Third World.[36] The mounting anti-imperialist mass movement in Australia, wrote Vanguard in 1973, 'corresponds to and is merging with the growing and powerful struggles of the people in those countries belonging to the third world. These countries ... are developing countries like Australia.'[37]

This trend reached its apogee with the publication in the Australian Communist of an article entitled 'Australia is Part of the Third World'.[38] Significantly, the article took the CPC's

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35 See, for example, V, vol. 1, no. 14 (May 1964), p. 4. The dogmatic derivation of CPA-ML domestic policies from the CPC's foreign policy line is comprehensively addressed in the following chapter.

36 'For Independence Smash Imperialist Fetters', AC, no. 50 (February 1972), p. 31; 'Special Insert' to V, 14 December 1972; V, 14 June 1973, p. 1.

37 V, 8 February 1973, p. 3, emphasis added.

38 [John Herouvim], 'Australia is Part of the Third World', AC, no. 72 [mid-1975], pp. 15-21. The article was written after extensive discussions with another leading member of the writer's

analysis as its point of departure. Its text began with this statement:
'The Chinese Communist Party has described various countries as
being members of the Third World'.[39] After dealing with the four
categories into which it classified these countries, it said:

> If we accept that all of the nations mentioned in the brief
> preceding analysis, as the Chinese say, are part of the Third
> World, then it appears that the lowest common denominator
> for Third World membership (ie. the minimum definition of
> a Third World country) would be as follows: a country where
> the primary antagonism for the peoples of that country is
> that with imperialism in general, and the superpowers in
> particular.[40]

Australia, it continued, was obviously not part of the First
World, comprising the two superpowers. Further, the wielding of
state power in Australia by the USA (an article of faith among Australian
Maoists) disqualified it from membership of the Second World of
'independent, capitalist countries'. After describing numerous
facets of Australia's subordination to U.S. imperialism and rebutting
several arguments against the designation of Australia as a Third
World country, the article concluded that 'Australia is a Third
World country ...'[41]

Although the article strove to adhere scrupulously to the
letter of Chinese global analysis, it departed markedly from its
spirit. Contextual analysis of Chinese statements clearly indicated
that the superpowers constituted the First World, other industrialised
nations the Second World and developing countries the Third World.
For four months, however, Australia remained a Third World country

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39   Ibid., p. 15.

40   Ibid., pp. 16-17.

41   Ibid., pp. 17-21.

according to the CPA-ML.[42]

In September this view was repudiated. Australia was now depicted as 'a developed capitalist country that exists between the superpowers and the Third World', and to which the concept of national liberation was inapplicable. This description was congruent with that adopted by the party's third congress earlier that year.[43] Pressed for an explanation of the sudden change, Vanguard editor Clarke cited 'international complaints'.[44]

The adoption and subsequent rescinding of the third world position, although surrounded by considerable fury and drama, was hardly an earth-shattering occurrence. The storm it provoked raged and died within the political teacup of CPA-ML theoretical controversy.[45]

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42   E.g. V, 26 June 1975, pp. 1, 8.

43   V, 18 September 1975, p. 4; 'Report on the Work of the Central
      Committee for the Third Congress of the Communist Party of
      Australia (M-L)', AC, no. 70 (March 1975), p. 27.

44   This remark was made to the writer by Duncan Clarke in the
      Vanguard office, Melbourne, at the end of August 1975 in a
      discussion in which Clarke conveyed to the writer the party
      leadership's decision to revoke the third world position.
      When the writer asked if 'international complaints' meant
      complaints from China, Clarke merely repeated that there had
      been 'international complaints'. A detailed critique of the
      third world position was not published until three weeks later.

45   The positions which were adopted and the acrimony which existed
      in the debate over the 'third world' and 'national liberation'
      line are reflected in the following WSA and Australian National
      Liberation Movement (ANLM) internal documents in the writer's
      possession: 'Worker-Student Alliance and Australian National
      Liberation Movement', three-page photocopy, [Adelaide, late 1974];
      'The Australian National Liberation Movement - (A.N.L.M.): What
      We Think', cyclostyled manifesto, Melbourne, [mid-1974]; 'A
      Short Paper on Moving Forward the Anti-Imperialist Movement',
      cyclostyled, Melbourne, October 1975. See also V: 22 August
      1974, p. 4; 13 February 1975, pp. 4-5; 4 September 1975, p. 2.

Nonetheless, the episode underlined the extent to which Chinese

policies bestrode Australian Maoism.

The period 1971-5 was, then, a time of political reorientation

for the CPA-ML in which it wrestled to adapt its policies to altered

Chinese and Australian exigencies. On the whole, however, the party

maintained the hard-line tenor which had been its hallmark since

its formation. The intractable revolutionary purity of the positions

which the party had taken up during the Sino-Soviet split - and

which had been reinforced by the cultural revolution - remained

the essential foundation of its outlook and modus operandi. Bolstered

by the resuscitation of GPCR policies in the mid-1970s, it was to

persist in this adamant (albeit less frenzied) ultra-leftism until

China decisively repudiated it.[46]

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46   Regarding the re-emergence of GPCR policies see chapter four.
      The reversal of the party's ultra-left stance is dealt with in
      John Herouvim, 'Politics of the Revolving Door: The Communist
      Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)', Melbourne Journal of
      Politics (forthcoming), vol. 15, (1983-4).

CHAPTER THREE

CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY AND THE CPA-ML: 1971-77

Before the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 Chinese

foreign policy portrayed the Soviet Union as a counter-revolutionary

lackey-cum-accomplice of the USA. From the late 1960s, however,

the Communist Party of China saw Soviet power waxing while that of

the erstwhile number one enemy waned. It adjusted its emphases accord-

ingly.

The adjustment involved three main periods, each drifting into

the next. After Czechoslovakia CPC propaganda spoke of Soviet social-

imperialism (socialism in words, imperialism in deeds). It held

that the two superpowers contended and colluded with each other for

world domination and was more or less even-handed in its denunciations

of the USA and USSR. Between 1971-6 the contention between the super-

powers was pushed to the fore and their collusion faded from the

picture. The particular menace posed by Soviet ambitions received

increasing emphasis. In 1976 the USSR explicitly supplanted the

USA as enemy number one.[1]

The PRC's mounting preoccupation with the Soviet Union was

accompanied by a rapprochement with the USA, a rapprochement more

far-reaching than suggested by a literal reading of Chinese propaganda.

While faithfully echoing each revision of Chinese policy, the CPA-

ML was initially blind to the diplomatic subtleties involved, and

remained manacled to its virulent anti-Americanism.

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1   Cf. PR: 18 February 1966, pp. 5, 20-21; 25 October 1968, p. 8;
     18 September 1970, p. 7; 14 January 1972, pp. 16-17; 22 June
     1973, p. 18; 8 August 1974, p. 11; 28 May 1976, pp. 29, 31;
     15 July 1977, pp. 4-10.

A 1972 <u>Australian Communist</u> article testified poignantly to the
party's lack of discernment. The article was ostensibly devoted
to a defence of China's new foreign policy priorities. Yet it defined
the primary international contradiction as that 'between U.S. imper-
ialism and the world's people', a formulation abandoned by the CPC
three years earlier.[2]

When Australian opposition leader Snedden returned from China
in 1973 claiming that the Chinese wanted a U.S. presence in Asia,
Hill's reaction was as ill-advised as it was withering: 'All thinking
people in Australia know that Snedden is an ultra-diehard reactionary
... In addition he is an incompetent fool'.[3]

This dysfunction, however, was largely attributable to the
CPA-ML's ingenuousness. The party was oblivious to the pro-American
undercurrent in Chinese diplomacy. Amidst an avalanche of evidence
that China was moving away from its former revolutionary zeal[4] the

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2   'Peaceful Co-existence: The Leninist Principle ...', <u>AC</u>, no. 50
       (February 1972), p. 29.

3   <u>V</u>, 26 July 1973, p. 8. For Snedden's comments see, for example,
       <u>Australian</u>, 18 July 1973, p. 11.

4   See, for example: Terrill, pp. 148, 157, 186, 196-7; Lin Piao's
       report to the ninth CPC congress in <u>PR</u>, 30 April 1969, pp. 31,
       34 and cf. Chou En-lai's report to the tenth congress in <u>PR</u>,
       7 September 1973, p. 24; Adie, p. 24; Knowles, pp. 16-17, 24;
       Carlos Rossi, 'China's Foreign Policy: A Critical Appraisal',
       in <u>Alternate News Service</u>, no. 59 (20 June 1976), pp. 15-20;
       Stephen FitzGerald, 'Impressions of China's New Diplomacy: The
       Australian Experience', <u>China Quarterly</u> (hereafter abbreviated
       to <u>CQ</u>), no. 48 (October-December 1971), pp. 670-71; <u>AFR</u>,
       29 May 1972, p. 2; <u>National Times</u>, 2-7 August 1971, pp. 1, 16.

CPA-ML registered only the familiar: the sustained anti-American and apocalyptic tone in official Chinese statements.[5]

An inability or refusal to countenance any but official Chinese sources, and an insensitivity to the implicit message behind the rhetoric in such sources, are recurring themes in the study of CPC/ CPA-ML relations. In the early 1970s one party member, in conversation with Hill, noted with approval the major shift to the right in Chinese foreign policy. Hill said that no such shift had taken place. York comments that the party was notable for its 'amateurism, lack of skill and lack of talent ... Often it took months for them to realise the inevitable implications ...' of Chinese policy.[6]

This evidence suggests in part that despite his frequent visits to China, Hill's discussions with Chinese leaders were conducted in reassuring generalities. It took the CPA-ML some time to wake up and accommodate itself to the increasingly pro-American implications of Chinese policies.

The Chinese preoccupation with the USSR, on the other hand, was unmistakable, and the CPA-ML quickly synchronised its concerns with China's. In 1972 Vanguard warned that Soviet imperialism was reaching out to Australia. 'The danger', it cautioned, 'should not for one moment be underestimated'.[7] The following year the superpowers were depicted as 'twin devils', and a seminal Australian Communist article announced that anti-Soviet and anti-American

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5   E.g. PR, 7 January 1972, p. 8.

6   Interviews with: former member C; York, 13 January 1982.

7   V, 12 October 1972, p. 1.

struggle were equally important.[8]

Soviet and American flags now burnt side by side at Maoist demonstrations.[9] The CPA-ML's student members and supporters, still the most visible and ardent wing of the party, successfully moved the adoption of an anti-Soviet plank in the platform of the Australian Union of Students.[10]

By 1975 superpower rivalry and the attendant danger of world war were firmly established as the pivotal themes of Chinese foreign policy. The mechanical transposition of this perspective to Australia produced a bizarre analysis of domestic political developments. Vanguard pontificated: 'At the root of the chaos and upheaval in Australia lies the contention and struggle between the superpowers ...'[11] The struggle for Australian independence was now defined as a broad united front against both superpowers, and its success was presented as vital if the nation was to avoid embroilment in the threatened war between them.[12]

By attempting to swaddle the Australian body politic in the off-the-peg gown of superpower contention, the CPA-ML produced some particularly outlandish political fashions. Amongst the most exotic was its explanation of the dismissal of the Whitlam government by

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8   V, 26 April 1973, p. 1; 'Soviet Social Imperialism Endangers Australia', AC, no. 56 (February 1973), p. 44.

9   This practice was instituted in 1974 and became a ritual for the remainder of the 1970s. See [Albert Langer], 'Soviet Flag is Now the Flag of the Class Enemy', V, 25 July 1974, pp. 2-3.

10   V, 27 February 1975, p. 7.

11   V, 7 August 1975, p. 1.

12   V, 8 May 1975, p. 3; E. F. Hill, Imperialism in Australia: The Menace of Soviet Social-Imperialism, p. 134.

Governor-General Kerr in 1975.

Interpretations of this event differ. It has been variously described as an unavoidable measure aimed at resolving a constitutional imbroglio, a blow of dubious legality struck by the Australian establishment at a reformist government and the final act of a conspiracy hatched by the media, the conservative opposition and the American Central Intelligence Agency.[13]

Initially, the CPA-ML attributed the 'semi-fascist coup' to a desperate ruling class petrified by popular opposition to growing economic hardship.[14] Vanguard highlighted the chanting of anti-American slogans by demonstrators protesting Kerr's action.[15] A week later a front-page article introduced the notion that 'a powerful motive' in the coup was the American need 'to meet the challenge to U.S. control of Australia (and elsewhere) that is coming from the imperialist Soviet Union ...' Yet an editorial on the same page claimed that the coup was provoked by the economic and political crisis of Australian and world capitalism, and made no mention of the superpowers.[16]

The ensuing weeks saw the coup ascribed to domestic exigencies and superpower contention, sometimes alternately, sometimes simultaneously. In the midst of this exegetical muddle, however, the Whitlam

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13   For an overview see Michael Sexton, Illusions of Power: The Fate of a Reform Government.

14   'Defeat Fascism', special supplement to V, 13 November 1975. The supplement was a two-sided leaflet produced for mass distribution.

15   [Duncan Clarke and John Herouvim], 'Great Fighting Spirit of the People: To Pussyfoot Now Could Bring Disaster', in Ibid.

16   V, 20 November 1975, p. 1.

government was increasingly represented as having been favourably disposed to Soviet imperialism.[17]

The line finally adopted in 1976 postulated a remarkably rapid metamorphosis. In 1973 Vanguard had portrayed Whitlam as a fawning American puppet. Parliamentary obstruction of his legislative programme was attributed to the stubborn opposition of reactionary diehards to even mild reforms.[18] Yet when the same forces instituted a parliamentary manoeuvre which unseated him, Whitlam's demise was ascribed to his hobnobbing with the Russians.

The Whitlam government was sacked, wrote Hill, 'because that government took up a mildly anti-U.S. position in favour of U.S. imperialism's rival, Soviet social-imperialism'.[19] Another party publication showed even less restraint:

> Only the publications of the Communist Party of Australia (M-L) exposed the real reason for the dismissal of Whitlam, U.S. imperialism's anxiety over the growing challenge to its domination of Australia by the Soviet Union. Whitlam ... was developing many and varied contacts with Soviet social-imperialism and thereby encouraged an extension of Soviet social-imperialist influence in Australia ... It was primarily Whitlam's association with Soviet social-imperialism that prompted the real masters of the country to act.[20]

The CPA-ML's determination to kneed the reality of Australia into the mould of superpower contention was breathtakingly unabashed.

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17   The confusion can be followed in V: 20 November 1975, p. 8; 27 November 1975, pp. 1-2, 8; 4 December 1975, p. 6; 11 December 1975, p. 3; 18 December 1975, pp. 1, 8.

18   See, for example, V: 25 October 1973, p. 5; 25 April 1974, p. 1.

19   E. F. Hill, The Great Cause of Australian Independence, p. 54. See also ibid., p. 122 and id., Australia and the Superpowers, p. 104.

20   Introduction to E. F. Hill [John Herouvim (ed.)], A Guide to the Writings of E. F. Hill, p. 1.

Its attitude to the construction of the Newport power station in Melbourne provides an excellent example. In 1972 the station was designed to 'serve the growing number of American and other foreign monopolies' in the area. In 1974, 'U.S. war aims' were behind it. By 1976 Newport's construction was attributed to the effects of 'superpower contention'.[21]

Indeed, superpower contention seemed to be behind everything, including government spending cutbacks, declining wages, uranium mining, teacher unemployment and the timing of the 1977 federal election.[22] When academics Eysenck and Jensen visited Australia, the left unanimously stigmatised their educational theories as racist. The CPA-ML condemned their theories in an article entitled 'Jensen, Eysenck Visit a Product of Superpower Contention'. Incredibly, not a solitary mention of superpower contention was to be found in the article.[23]

The responsibility for this ludicrous preoccupation with super-power contention, which proved so inimical to the party's credibility, cannot be traced to Chinese counsels. More likely it was a product of the CPA-ML leadership's desire to demonstrate that they were more royalist even than the king. Indeed, Duncan Clarke would often return from his regular visits to the Chinese embassy less prone to explain everything that happened in Australia by reference to superpower contention or the mounting influence of Soviet imperialism

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21   V: 30 November 1972, p. 1; 5 December 1974, p. 1; 28 October
       1976, p. 4.

22   V: 12 February 1976, pp. 3-4; 19 February 1976, p. 1; 4 November
       1976, p. 8; 10 March 1977, p. 7; 27 October 1977, p. 1.

23   V, 29 September 1977, p. 10.

on the Australian ruling class.[24]

Regardless of this, as China came to identify the USSR as the driving force in superpower contention, corresponding shifts occurred in the CPA-ML's domestic emphases. The Soviet imperialists became 'even more dangerous than the U.S. imperialists. They are on the offensive. U.S. imperialism is on the defensive'.[25]

Although Soviet influence in Australia appeared negligible, argued Vanguard, 'that should not for a minute lead anyone astray. SOVIET SOCIAL-IMPERIALISM IS VERY ACTIVE.'[26] Hill reminded his readers that the British and Americans too had 'comparatively small beginnings' in Australia.[27]

The familiar Maoist jargon was stripped of its anti-superpower attire and clad in the latest anti-Soviet fittings from China. 'Superpower contention', which had stood for global rivalry between mankind's two main enemies, was now used as a catchphrase for Soviet expansion and the defensive posture adopted by the United States in relation to it. 'The united front' remained, but its target was now Soviet social-imperialism. 'Australian independence' was still the immediate aim, but the main enemy in this struggle was now the Soviet Union. U.S. imperialism, to be sure, still had to be fought; but not in ways which could be manipulated by the USSR for its own sinister purposes.[28]

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24 Interviews with current member B (13 March 1983) and former member D. The writer's experience confirms this observation.

25 [John Herouvim], 'Understanding the Nature of Soviet Social-Imperialism', in Hill, Imperialism in Australia ..., p. 141.

26 V, 16 October 1975, p. 1, emphasis in original.

27 Hill, ... Superpowers, p. 82.

28 See, for example: id., The Great Cause ..., p. 88; 'Class Struggle is the Key Link for Us', AC, no. 77 [mid-1976], p. 53.

In its eagerness to demonstrate the rapid headway which Soviet imperialism was making in its penetration of Australia, the CPA-ML even discovered Russian fifth-columnists in the upper echelons of Australia's establishment. For Hill, the meaning of the National Country Party's interest in Soviet-Australian trade was patent: 'they have thrown in their lot with Soviet social-imperialism'.[29] When newspapers controlled by the Fairfax press conglomerate criticised hawkish elements within the American leadership, Vanguard detected the ominous significance of these articles. While it allowed for vacillating loyalties, is noted that the Fairfax press, 'as a whole ... has supported Soviet social-imperialism ...'[30]

Party activists trained their sights on new targets. They broke up meetings addressed by Soviet diplomats and academics, protested at Soviet trade exhibitions and demonstrated outside the offices of 'comprador' Australian companies which traded with the USSR.[31] The Soviet menace was even mentioned in leaflets directed against McDonald's hamburgers and Disneyland's cultural imperialism.[32]

The Maoist leadership of the Builders Labourers Federation, in its continuing disputes with the Building Workers Industrial Union, stressed the pro-Russian orientation of that union's leadership.[33]

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29   E. F. Hill in V, 14 October 1976, p. 3. See also id., The Great Cause ..., pp. 122-3.

30   V, 8 September 1977, p. 12.

31   See reports of demonstrations in V: 22 April 1976, pp. 3-4; 7 October 1976, p. 6; 12 May 1977, p. 6; 9 June 1977, p. 8; 20 October 1977, p. 9.

32   The leaflets were quoted in V, 22 January 1976, p. 4 and 3 June 1976, p. 4. They were written and distributed by party members and supporters. Cyclostyled copies of the originals are in the writer's possession.

33   E.g. V, 11 August 1977, p. 9.

Several stages were involved in the CPA-ML's transition to
this new line. The transition was accomplished by the gradual insinuation
of the new priorities into the pages of Vanguard. The paper unfolded
the changes step by step. This process was consciously aimed at
acclimatising members, over a period of time, to positions which
the leadership had already adopted. The process is described by
a former party member: 'After a while you began to pick up on little
suggestions made in Vanguard and then you'd realise this was the
beginning of something big'.[34]

Manifestations of Soviet activity in and around Australia
were assiduously marshalled to establish the deadly menace facing
the nation. The party pointed to Soviet tourist liners in Australian
ports, the Soviet fleet in the Indian Ocean and Soviet fishing and
oceanographic vessels prowling Australia's coast.

The Soviet Union proposed a joint Australian-Soviet radio
communication facility; trade relations were booming; the Moscow-
Narodny Bank was involved in land development projects in New South
Wales and Queensland, and was the main intermediary in the Whitlam
Government's furtive negotiations for overseas loans; Soviet ambassador
Basov 'covetously' referred to the mineral-rich Pilbara region as
'a pearl in Australia'.[35]

All this information was selectively gathered and publicised
by Vanguard. The paper became obsessed with cataloguing even the

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34   Former member B. Exactly similar comments were made by former
      CPA-ML member H, (taped interview, 24 August 1982).

35   See, for example, Hill, Imperialism in Australia ..., pp. 110-111
      and V: 4 September 1975, p. 1; 22 January 1976, p. 5; 29 April
      1976, p. 7; 30 September 1976, pp. 6, 8; 22 September 1977,
      p. 11.

most innocuous Soviet activities in Australia. The danger of Soviet imperialism permeated the whole paper and thus the consciousness of those who relied on it for information and inspiration.

Party publications used a combination of explanation and admonition when addressing those Maoists who still encountered difficulties in adjusting to the changing line. Doubters were reminded that transfigurations in the international balance of power were invariably reflected in Australia, and that the ideological level of those who were incapable of keeping up was suspect.[36]

The party's organisational structure facilitated the rank-and-file's assimilation of the changing line. Contact with the party's leading bodies was rare, forums for internal party discussion unheard of. Canvassing of party matters outside one's cell was strictly forbidden. Vanguard was the main centripetal element in party life.[37]

The shared adherence to Vanguard's line was therefore the foundation of party members' sense of community. The party's very clandestinity served to emphasise to members that they belonged to something special. In this context, strictures against inter-cell contact were regarded as a measure of the party's seriousness.

Members' dependence on Vanguard for political guidance was attended by a corresponding rejection of non-party sources of information. 'Without any real pressure one voluntarily imposed blinkers

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36   E.g.: V, 3 June 1976, p. 2; 'Soviet Social-Imperialism is the Greatest Menace to Australia', AC, no. 85 (September 1977).

37   Interviewees were unanimous on these matters. See also: [Flo Russell], p. 7; 'The Building of a Marxist-Leninist Party', AC, no. 11 (March 1965), pp. 4-6.

on oneself', explains York.[38] The knowledge that the Australian devotees of the Maoist world outlook were small in numbers was all the more reason for them to huddle together. Believing Vanguard was itself an act of fellowship.[39]

Moreover, the CPA-ML prided itself on its strictly qualified and selected membership.[40] To be a party member was to be a person of a special mould, privy to insights which were, for the moment, denied to the masses.[41] Vanguard was the repository of these revelations. To reject its line was to forfeit one's claim to being special, to lose the family in which the truth of one's views was seen as self-evident, to be utterly and irrevocably orphaned in a world which regarded one's opinions as extreme or idiosyncratic.[42]

The commonplace pressures for conformity operating within any organisation or belief system also served to secure acceptance and internalisation of the anti-Soviet line. Most members were accustomed to following the party line and wanted to believe what

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38   York interview, 3 February 1983. This self-blinkering is a
      common practice among communists. (See, for example:
      McDonald, p. 149; Mortimer, p. 117; Turner, 'My Long March',
      pp. 120-21.)

39   This sense of belonging is also dealt with in: Ibid., p. 105;
      Upward, p. 71; Sharpley, pp. 112-13.

40   Hill, ... Superpowers, p. 68. See also Some Ideological
      Questions, pp. 7-8, 16-17.

41   McEwan (pp. 24-5) makes a similar point regarding his outlook
      while a member of the CPA. In declining an offer of CPA-ML
      membership, it was not unheard of for party sympathisers to
      plead their unworthiness. (Interview with former member D.)

42   These matters are also dealt with in: McEwan, pp. 24, 62-3,
      85, 118; Upward, pp. 14-15, 33, 52, 174-84 passim; Turner,
      loc. cit., pp. 125, 129, 139; id., 'The Long Goodbye', in id.,
      Room for Manoeuvre ..., p. 143; Fairbairn, p. 60.

Vanguard said. Rejecting the party line could entail losing friends,
social contacts, the respect of one's subordinates in the party
hierarchy and even institutional positions. The potential consequences
of pursuing one's misgivings were daunting. One could be cut adrift
from the embattled minority which had provided one with a frame
of reference, joining instead the pusillanimous ranks of those who
fell off the chariot of history every time it hit a bend in the
road.[43]

Further, party members were steeped in the need to subordinate
their personal interests to the revolutionary cause. The organisational
expression of this was the principle of democratic centralism, in
which the decisions of the party's leading bodies were binding on
the party cells and members.[44]

Membership of the CPA-ML entailed acceptance of a self-elected,
self-perpetuating leadership. The members' loyalties had to be
particularly durable, their confidence in the leaders almost inexhaust-
ible. Each day of continued membership was a reaffirmation of the
member's unquestioning trust in his or her leaders.[45]

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43   In accounting for their continued loyalty to an ever-changing
      party line, most interviewees raised these sorts of considera-
      tions. Similar points are made in a letter from Barry York
      to Ted Hill, 22 February 1981, in writer's possession.

44   Amongst countless examples are: Some Ideological Questions,
      pp. 1, 5; 'Being a Revolutionary is a Full Time Job', AC,
      no. 62 (February 1974), pp. 29-30; Hill, Australia's Revolution ...,
      p. 40. The importance of democratic centralism in communist
      parties can also be gathered from: Upward, p. 80; Sharpley,
      p. 50.

45   Deference to the leadership is another communist tradition.
      It is mentioned by McEwan, pp. 96-7 and Upward, pp. 165, 178.

It was clear that the party's anti-Soviet clamour was further isolating it within the Australian left. But, when all was said and done, why should members of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) be perturbed by isolation? Hadn't the party been isolated since its foundation because of its insistence on the inviolability of Marxist-Leninist principles? In many ways Australian Maoists gloried in their isolation. Being 'out front', as the very name of **Vanguard** signified, was nothing new.

In any event, the notion of isolation was regarded as an extremely relative one by people who felt that they were actuated by an outlook shared by a quarter of mankind. **Vanguard** repeatedly presented its analysis of Australian events as congruent with the Chinese appraisal of world developments.

Party members accepted China's foreign policy. A typical attitude is described by York, who points out that he saw China as

> a genuinely socialist country which had scholars, diplomats in other countries and the knowledge and expertise to gather information and interpret it from a socialist viewpoint. So the conclusions that the Chinese would arrive at on international matters would be far more accurate than those I could arrive at ... In other words my attitude was, 'Well if they say it I'm prepared to go along with it'.[46]

Non-Maoists' sympathy for China was not as blinkered, and certainly did not automatically extend to the CPA-ML. Still, China retained considerable prestige among people who felt a diffuse disenchantment with Australian society. It provided a co-operative contrast with Australia, unblemished by soulless technology-worship and consumerism. To many the PRC seemed to be genuinely persevering with

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46   York (interview, loc. cit.). A very similar attitude was
      expressed by Bennetts (30 July 1983).

a successful utopian experiment, the underlying idealism of which

provided an inspiring counter-model to the rat-race, economic instability,

cynicism and corruption of western society.

Viewed against the background of this fund of sympathy and

goodwill towards China, the devotion and respect of those with a

heartfelt political commitment to that country is even less surprising.

This commitment naturally extended to China's foreign policy, which

was seen as being correct by virtue of being Chinese. The CPA-

ML, which bore the CPC's stamp of approval, was naturally regarded

by its members as being ideally positioned to interpret Australian

events in the light of this policy.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHINESE DOMESTIC POLICY AND THE CPA-ML: 1971-76

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution had dealt a devas-
tating blow to the CPC's right wing. The 'capitalist-roaders' none-
theless proved remarkably resilient, and a see-saw contest for power
between the moderates and radicals raged within the Communist Party
of China throughout the mid-1970s.[1]

Three major mass campaigns dominated Chinese domestic politics
during this period: the criticism of Lin Biao and Confucius; the
study of the dictatorship of the proletariat; and the struggle against
attempts to reverse the 'correct verdicts' of the cultural revolution.
These campaigns were presented as life-and-death encounters with
domestic capitalist elements who, by their very nature, would never
be reconciled to defeat. At stake was China's continued adherence
to the socialist path.

A recrudescence of the style and tone of the cultural revolution
emerged: 'What joy it is to struggle with heaven!', exalted Peking
Review. 'What joy it is to struggle with earth! What joy it is
to struggle with man! Certainly communism will be realised amid
struggle!'[2]

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1   The terms 'moderates' and 'radicals' are employed here for
     brevity's sake. For informative interrogations of the divisions
     within the CPC leadership see: Andrew J. Nathan, 'A
     Factionalism Model for CCP Politics', CQ, no. 53 (January-
     March 1973), pp. 34-66; John Bryan Starr, 'From the Tenth Party
     Congress to the Premiership of Hua Kuo-feng: The Significance
     of the Colour of the Cat', CQ, no. 67 (September 1976),
     pp. 479-88.

2   PR, 22 March 1974, p. 13.

Like the cultural revolution which preceded them, the three

mass campaigns were explicitly aimed at preventing capitalist 'retro-

gression'. CPC propaganda lashed out at the reactionary Confucian

virtues of moderation and self-restraint, and denounced those who

dwelt on the need for stability, efficient administration and technical

expertise.[3]

For the CPA-ML this propaganda was reassuringly familiar.

Australian Maoism had been quite literally born and bred on Mao's

theory of continuous revolution. Its precepts were a central theme

of the Chinese polemics during the Sino-Soviet cleavage, and were

repeatedly taken up by the CPA-ML.[4] This theory held that after

the victory of socialism an incessant ideological struggle was required

if the multifarious pressures towards capitalist restoration were

to be stemmed.[5]

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3   A fairly comprehensive grasp of the Chinese radicals' views
can be acquired from Selected Articles Criticising Lin Piao
and Confucius (2 vols) and the following pamphlets: Yao
Wen-yuan, On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-Party
Clique; Chang Chun-chiao, On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship
Over the Bourgeoisie, (for extracts see Appendix III);
Marx, Engels and Lenin on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.
For the moderates' side see the appendices in 'Chi Hsin',
The Case of the Gang of Four, pp. 201-95.

4   E.g.: PR, 26 July 1963, p. 20; 'Lessons of China's 15th Year
of Socialist Successes', AC, no. 8 (November 1964), p. 8.

5   For a representative exposition of Mao's views see Mao Tse-tung,
'Speech at the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee',
in Stuart Shram (ed.), Mao Tse-tung Unrehearsed - Talks and
Letters: 1956-71, pp. 188-96. Useful scholarly treatments
of Mao's ideas include Chiou, Maoism in Action ..., pp. 45-65
passim; Klaus Mehnert, China Today, pp. 186-94; Steve Reglar,
'Mao Zedong's Theoretical Legacy: The Gang of Four and
Differences in the Post Mao Leadership in China', in AAISAG
(eds), China in Transition: Where to Next?, pp. 70-76 passim.

In 1973 the CPC's tenth congress confirmed and extended the
power of the Shanghai radicals who had spearheaded the cultural
revolution. The criticism of ultra-leftism which had been unfolded
in the wake of the cultural revolution now itself came under attack.
The anti-Lin and Confucius campaign contained back-handed attacks
on Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai, the most securely-entrenched and
powerful of China's moderates.[6] By late 1974 the GPCR was no longer
referred to in the past tense, but was described as an on-going
revolution aimed at opposing and preventing revisionism.[7]

The moderates nonetheless exerted a steady countervailing
pressure, the effectiveness of which was not as immediately obvious
as the efforts of the radicals, given the latter's control of the
CPC's main propaganda organs.

In 1973 Deng Xiaoping, former CPC General Secretary and erstwhile
'number two capitalist-roader' was rehabilitated. By January 1975
he was sitting on the CPC's top body, the Standing Committee of
the Politburo. In the same month China's 'parliament', the National
People's Congress (NPC) met. It reiterated the vision of China
as a powerful, technologically-advanced nation by the end of the
century, a plan first adopted by the NPC in 1964 but shelved during
the cultural revolution.

'The four modernisations' - of industry, agriculture, national
defence and science and technology - preoccupied the moderates,

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6   E.g. PR, 15 April 1977, p. 29. One scholar, while acknowledging
        that the anti-Zhou analysis of the campaign had wide currency,
        offered a dissenting view. (Merle Goldman, 'China's
        Confucian Campaign', CQ, no. 63 [September 1975], pp. 435-62.)

7   E.g. PR, 8 November 1974, pp. 6-9 passim.

just as 'class struggle' preoccupied the radicals. Both catchphrases were indispensable parts of the Chinese communist lingua franca and their use was incumbent on all factions.

But while the pages of Peking Review in 1975 were weighted heavily towards class struggle, inside China the moderates' star was rising. A salient illustration was the incarceration of unruly radicals, former shock troops of the cultural revolution, during that year.[8]

Their release the following year was equally significant.[9] The pendulum swung back to the radicals, its momentum rendered all the more irresistible by Mao's personal intervention. 'You are making the socialist revolution', he admonished,

> and yet you don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party - those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist roaders are still on the capitalist road.[10]

The recalcitrants who were obstructing the continuation of the GPCR were now identified as 'those capitalist-roaders who were exposed and criticized during the Cultural Revolution ...'[11] One 'unrepentant capitalist-roader' in particular was alluded to. On 7 April 1976, following a large pro-moderate demonstration in Beijing, the man in question, Deng Xiaoping, was once again stripped of his

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8   L. Ladany, 'Condemning the Gang of Four', Social Survey, vol. 27, no. 1 (February 1978), p. 16. During a CPA-ML tour of China in 1977-78, in which the writer participated, Chinese officials repeatedly cited 1975 as the year of a concerted counter-attack led by Zhou Enlai. This is corroborated by a diary of the tour kept by Peter Vodicka which is in the writer's possession.

9   Ladany, loc. cit.

10   Mao Zedong, quoted in PR, 12 March 1976, p. 4.

11   PR, 19 March 1976, p. 9.

posts. The relatively unknown Hua Guofeng's appointment on the same day as Premier of the State Council and First Vice-Chairman of the CPC was presented by the western media as a compromise measure adopted by a deeply divided leadership.[12]

The CPA-ML's response to the developments sketched above was conditioned by an outlook as myopic as it was self-imposed. Basing itself entirely on official CPC propaganda, which was dominated by the Chinese radicals[13], the party was buoyed by the apparent inexorability of Mao's triumph over the capitalist-roaders. Where other observers saw a tug-of-war between radicals and moderates, the CPA-ML saw only the rout of the latter.

This ineptitude is hard to understand. The CPA-ML had been repeatedly embarrassed by its inability to read between the lines of Chinese propaganda, yet it obstinately refused to entertain the analyses offered in 'bourgeois' sources.

Towards the end of 1966 Hill had scoffed when told by a CPA-ML CC member who had returned from an extended stay in China that Liu Shaoqi was the 'number one capitalist-roader' in the CPC.[14] In 1967 Liu's theory of self-cultivation, the cornerstone of his book How to be a Good Communist, was still being promoted by the CPA-ML. Hill's informant, of course, was right and soon Vanguard was

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12   For a typical example see Canberra Times, 13 April 1976, p. 2.
     Stimulating scholarly discussions are: Bill Brugger, 'Conclusion',
     in Brugger (ed.), pp. 253-79; Jurgen Domes, 'The "Gang of Four"
     and Hua Kuo-feng: Analysis of Political Events in 1975-76',
     CQ, no. 71 (September 1977), pp. 473-97.

13   Brugger, loc. cit., pp. 267-8, 270-71; PR, 21 January 1977,
     pp. 14-17.

14   Founding CPA-ML CC member, 24 March 1983.

busy denouncing Liu and his theories.[15] The party's inability-cum-refusal to grasp the connotations of Chinese foreign policy, discussed in the preceding chapter, is a further illustration of its ineptitude and obstinacy.

It would appear that the party leadership was familiar with academic and journalistic accounts of divisions within the CPC in the mid-1970s. However, although bitten more than once, the CPA-ML had not yet learnt to be shy. Party publications repeatedly dismissed such accounts as 'bourgeois nonsense' and 'rumours and scandal-mongering'.[16]

In the event, much of the bourgeois nonsense and scandal-mongering proved quite perspicacious. Viewed in this light, there is considerable irony in Hill's remark in 1970 that his many mistakes had taught him 'to be careful in making absolute statements'.[17]

The cock-sure tone with which the CPA-ML dismissed China-watchers' analyses is eloquent of an inability to grasp Mao's ideas and method beyond the level of platitude.

Mao's majority on the CPC CC at the beginning of the cultural revolution had been unsteady[18] and the three mass campaigns conducted

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15   Self-cultivation was promoted in Some Ideological Questions, p. 17. It was denounced, along with Liu, in V, 18 May 1967, p. 3.

16   'Great Advance of People's China', AC, no. 54 (October 1972), p. 25; V, 15 April 1976, p. 5. Cf. National Times, 27 October-1 November 1975, p. 36.

17   V, 8 October 1970, p. 5.

18   Mao Tsetung, 'Speech to the Albanian Military Delegation (May 1, 1967)', in Joint Publications Research Service, Miscellany of Mao Tsetung Thought, reprinted in BCD ..., vol. 3, no. 1 (February 1983), p. 17.

by the Chinese radicals in the mid-1970s clearly demonstrated that the deep rifts obvious during the cultural revolution were by no means healed.

For Mao Zedong the class struggle under socialism was a dynamic, tortuous and epochal process. The journey to the classless utopia of communist society was fraught with the constant danger of capitalist restoration.

The CPA-ML yielded to none in its repetition of these Maoist tenets. But its practice suggests that they were understood as Platonic categories, canons in a catechism rather than insights into the dynamics of socialist society. It is easy to become glib about 'life-and-death struggles' when they occur endlessly, and on the whole Australian Maoists viewed China as monolithic. The capitalist-roaders were there, to be sure, but Chairman Mao had them well under control.

Vanguard 'hailed', 'saluted' and 'rejoiced in' each and every twist in the Chinese domestic power struggle.

When Lin Biao was designated Mao's successor in the CPC Constitution[19], Vanguard eulogised him.[20] Party bookshops were adorned with posters of Lin, on his own and standing beside Chairman Mao. Little yellow books of quotations from Lin Biao adorned the shelves.

Then Lin vanished from public life. While the international press speculated about the meaning of his disappearance the CPA-ML, in a literal case of 'here today, gone tomorrow', expunged all traces

19   PR, 30 April 1969, p. 37.

20   V, 11 June 1970, p. 1.

of Lin Biao from its bookshops.[21] After official Chinese announce-
ments that Lin had died in a plane crash following an abortive coup
attempt, Vanguard described him as 'nothing but a cheap lickspittle
for US imperialism and Soviet revisionism ...'[22]

Deng Xiaoping's rehabilitation was treated similarly. As
it was unaccompanied by any fanfare in China, Vanguard made no official
statement endorsing Deng's re-emergence. He simply took his place
amongst the Chinese leaders repeatedly quoted in the paper.[23] Deng's
re-purging in 1976 was not such a low-key affair. Accordingly,
the CPA-ML responded with a cable of support to Mao Zedong and the
CPC CC.[24]

Nor did the CPA-ML restrict itself to endorsing and applauding
the changing CPC leadership line-up. It republished Chinese communiques
and statements and effusively welcomed the mass campaigns waged
by the Chinese radicals.[25]

Moreover, Vanguard's exhortations to study and learn from
Chinese material were unremitting. The documents of the tenth CPC
congress were deemed worthy of study 'by all Australian revolutionaries'.
Another article said that the Peking Review had published 'a series
of particularly fine articles' on criticising Lin Biao and Confucius,

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21   As testified to by the writer's personal experience and that
      of Rob Bennetts (15 April 1983).

22   V, 7 February 1974, p. 1.

23   E.g. V, 1 August 1974, p. 8.

24   V, 22 April 1976, p. 1.

25   See, for example, V: 6 September 1973, p. 8; 14 February 1974,
      pp. 7-8; 24 October 1974, p. 5; 30 January 1974 [mislabelled:
      actually 1975], p. 1; 20 February 1975, p. 3; 15 April 1976,
      p. 5.

which everyone should read.[26]

According to <u>Vanguard</u> the Chinese campaigns enriched the whole gamut of Marxist-Leninist theory. 'Our Australian revolutionaries must learn from the Chinese revolutionaries', wrote the paper.[27] Consistent with past CPA-ML practices, 'learning' was construed as the mechanical transplantation of Chinese concepts and terms quite alien to Australia.

One <u>Vanguard</u> article, after urging readers to study the material published in the campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius, dealt with Australian union spokesmen who advocated the settlement of strikes by arbitration. Such people, it said, were disciples of Confucius. 'They want the workers to ... restrain themselves and meekly beg before the tribunals of the bourgeoisie, that is, "return to the rites ..."'[28] The <u>Australian Communist</u>, addressing itself to the question of intellectuals in the revolutionary movement, characterised one ex-Communist intellectual's supercilious attitude towards the workers as 'true Confucianism'.[29]

The abiding cultural revolution emphases of Chinese propaganda underpinned the CPA-ML's unyielding militancy and zeal through the mid-1970s. The party's strategic and tactical profile was grounded in Mao's often-invoked maxims that 'revolution is the main trend

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26   <u>V</u>: 24 January 1974, p. 3; 14 February 1974, p. 6.

27   <u>V</u>, 19 June 1975, p. 3.

28   <u>V</u>, 28 March 1974, p. 3.

29   'Intellectuals and the Revolutionary Movement', <u>AC</u>, no. 69 (February 1975), p. 5.

in the world today' and 'class struggle is the key link'.[30]

The CPA-ML's Marxism was, above all else, a theory of action. Vanguard carried the militant style and posture of the cultural revolution into the 1970s. Taking the hard line was seen as simply the Maoist way of doing things:

> The example of the Red Guards, particularly to the younger people in the party, was one that we never forgot. We were keen to remember phrases from Mao such as 'it's right to rebel' and 'bombard the headquarters' which called forth militant actions, that advocated us being out front ... Our style was very much in the mould of the cultural revolution.[31]

The question of 'complete independence from all imperialism' remained 'the essential immediate question in the real politics of Australia', and the CPA-ML described itself as 'the only Australian patriotic party ...'[32] The defiant national self-assertiveness with which party propaganda was infused interlocked with the 'new nationalism' of the Whitlam years, acquiring 'much greater respectability' than had seemed possible in the late 1960s.[33]

Parliament continued to be regarded as 'simply a talking shop' and 'a figleaf for coercion'.[34] Armed revolution was seen as

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30   'Revolution is the main trend' comes from a statement by Mao, 20 May 1970, in PR (Special Issue), 23 May 1970, p. 8. Cf. 'Revolution is the Main Trend', AC, no. 66 (July 1974), pp. 21-8 and no. 67 (September 1974), pp. 22-30. 'Take class struggle as the key link' was a central slogan of the anti-Deng campaign in China. Cf. 'Class Struggle is the Key Link for Us', AC, no. 77 [mid-1976], pp. 47-58 and 'The Key Link is Always Class Struggle', AC, no. 80 (September 1976), pp. 87-90.

31   Former member A.

32   E. F. Hill, The Great Cause ..., p. 79; V, 22 January 1976, p. 6.

33   Van der Kroef, p. 111.

34   E. F. Hill: Revolution and the Australian State: A Socialist Analysis, p. 94; The Great Cause ..., p. 36.

indispensable if Australian society was to be fundamentally altered.

'The perspective for Australia is that all struggle must flow into

armed struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of imperialist domina-

tion and for the establishment of an entirely new democracy', wrote

Hill.[35] Thus when Aboriginals armed with rifles and spears occupied

a remote mining airfield Vanguard was ecstatic.[36] The photograph

of the armed blacks appeared time and again in Vanguard and other

Maoist publications.

The depiction of orthodox trade unionism as 'a major prop

of capitalism in Australia' remained a consistent theme of party

propaganda.[37] Hill had first systematically tackled this question

in 1965, and the struggle against 'tame cat' trade unionism had

taken off in earnest during the cultural revolution.[38] When Ford

workers in Melbourne rejected union strike settlement proposals

in 1973 and attacked company buildings, Vanguard acclaimed their

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35   Id., Australia's Revolution ..., p. 141. See also id., The
      Great Cause ..., pp. 127-8. Cf. Häggman, p. 9. The concept
      and term 'new democracy' were taken from Mao. (See Mao Tse-tung,
      'On New Democracy', in SW, vol. 2, pp. 339-84.) According to
      one interviewee, when Hill wrote of armed struggle he 'was
      writing ... for overseas consumption'. (Founding CPA-ML CC
      member, 10 March 1983.)

36   V, 22 January 1976, p. 5.

37   Hill, loc. cit., p. 34. See also id., Looking Backward: Looking
      Forward - Revolutionary Socialist Politics Against Trade Union
      and Parliamentary Politics and Australia's Economic Crisis -
      The Way Out, pp. 58-9.

38   E.g.: 'Old Forms of Trade Unionism Must Be Thrown Of [sic]',
      AC, no. 35 (May 1969), pp. 38-9; Lew Hillier & Harry Bocquet,
      Which Course for Workers? Class Struggle or Class Collaboration?,
      June 1970. Cf. Häggman, p. 10. For a contrast with the
      orthodox Australian communist attitude to trade unionism see
      L. L. Sharkey, The Trade Unions, esp. pp. 11, 13-14, 35, 41,
      86. See also D. N. Rawson, Unions and Unionists in Australia,
      pp. 108-9.

actions in a front-page article entitled 'A Wonderful Example'.[39]

Blanket approval was given to any militant outburst. The

tame, ritualistic nature of May Day marches was scathingly attacked

in an article calling for 'a militant, defiant May Day ...' Vanguard

praised GMH workers who staged a sit-in, Maoist students who drove

reactionaries off campus and broke up conferences attended by agents

of imperialism, and demonstrators who defied police orders to march

only on the footpath.[40] It gloried in the smashing of windows belonging

to U.S. companies and scornfully rejected allegations of Maoist

thuggery. It endorsed Maoist-led industrial sabotage and physical

attacks on union officials at a Chrysler automobile plant in South

Australia.[41]

The outrage provoked by the sacking of the Whitlam government

provided fertile soil for the planting of Maoism's militant seeds.

Commenting on one demonstration against the Governor-General, a

Vanguard editorial said:

> The moans and howls about the violence of the demonstration
> against Governor Cur show the terrible fear of the ruling
> circles of people's violence ... We welcome the demonstration
> and the so-called violence ... Violent means must be used
> against violent reactionaries. The greater the people's violence
> the more likely it is to be successful in combating reactionary
> violence.[42]

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39 V, 21 June 1973, p. 1. See also the CPA-ML pamphlet Learn From
    the Ford Strike.

40 V: 10 May 1973, p. 4; 21 June 1973, p. 3; 13 September 1973,
    p. 4; 15 August 1974, p. 7; 27 February 1975, pp. 5-6.

41 V: 15 May 1975, p. 3; 10 July 1975, p. 4; 12 May 1977, p. 3;
    30 June 1977, p. 3; 21 July 1977, pp. 1, 5; 4 August 1977, p. 12.

42 V, 17 June 1976, p. 1, emphasis in original.

For the CPA-ML these actions were undertaken and endorsed
within the perspective of imminent revolution unflaggingly postulated
by the party since its inception. According to Vanguard Australian
capitalism was on the brink of collapse[43], a rather sweeping assertion
which, however, looked temperate beside the paper's claim that Australia's
salvation depended on the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-
Leninist).[44]

The CPA-ML had always been able to rely on the attraction
of its furious activism to 'those who wanted to DO things'.[45] Members
recruited during the mid-1970s cite the party's uncompromising militancy
and its concentration on action as the Maoist attributes which they
found most appealing.

They were drawn by its total rejection of capitalism and its
emphasis on the destruction of the system, root and branch. Despite
the re-orientation discussed in chapter two, the CPA-ML still offered
a heady dose of revolution very alluring to red-hot radicals impatient
with half-measures and sterile, ineffectual theorising. Moreover,
its programme for independence suggested that the party had made
a down to earth and systematic Marxist analysis of the obstacles
to the Australian revolution. The Maoists, in short, appeared 'fair
dinkum'.[46] For its part, the CPA-ML declared its ranks open to

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43   E.g. V: 29 August 1974, pp. 1, 8; 17 June 1976, p. 1.

44   V, 9 October 1976, p. 1.

45   Taft, p. 9, emphasis in original.

46   Interviews with: current members B (22 August 1982) and A
      (10 December 1982, 3 April 1983); former members B, A, D, F;
      Peter Vodicka, (taped interview, Melbourne, 18 February 1982).
      Cf. interview with a former Swedish Maoist in Häggman, p. 13.

'all those who earnestly accept revolution'.[47]

During this period, according to York, the party also attracted a pathologically militant group which he describes as 'Maoists who want to be Maoists':

> They were imitators, a strata which had missed what I would call the _really_ intense period, the period of real politics, and who were attracted to the established Maoist groups by reputation. It would have been o.k. had they been involved at a time when the political climate enabled Maoists to exist with some relevance ... but in the post-1972 period ... the Maoist rock-throwers were people who wished they had been around earlier, who had missed out for various reasons and who had become weird caricatures.[48]

The new recruits entered the fray with the fervour characteristic of all novices. _Vanguard_ both spurred and vindicated their militancy.

Although Melbourne remained the hub of Maoist activity and influence the CPA-ML was no longer confined to Victoria. By 1976 its newspaper had grown from a four-page fortnightly into an eight-page weekly and it supported a nation-wide network of seven bookshops.

Student Maoists had considerable sway at the Universities of La Trobe (Melbourne), Flinders (Adelaide) and New South Wales. The prodigious activism of its youth members secured for the party an influence far greater than its numbers (probably about 600-800) would suggest, while the unquestioned prerogatives of the leadership within the party organisation and the didactic tone of _Vanguard_ ensured that party members thought, spoke and acted in unison. Moreover, the party's rigorous recruiting standards meant that for every CPA-ML member there were at least two strong and usually active sympathisers outside its ranks.

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47   <u>V</u>, 13 November 1975, p. 1.

48   York interview, 3 February 1983, York's emphasis.

The CPA-ML also retained a significant power base in the trade union movement, the mainstays of which were the federal Builders Labourers Federation and the Melbourne branch of the Waterside Workers Federation. Further, Maoists exercised an important, sometimes decisive, influence among car workers, teachers, maritime workers and public transport employees and had a visible presence among Telecom workers, metal workers and the ACT Trades and Labour Council. Control of Melbourne's community radio station 3 CR provided another important power base.

The CPA-ML's presence, to varying degrees, carried weight in most of the campaigns undertaken and supported by the Australian left.[49] As long as the radicals remained ascendant in China, Australian Maoism continued to bear the militant, zealous, millenarian imprimatur of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

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49   This sketch of the extent of the CPA-ML's influence has been
       assembled from a reading of numerous Maoist, non-Maoist and
       anti-Maoist publications, including a host of leaflets, rank-
       and-file bulletins and internal documents in the writer's
       possession. Among the few secondary sources in any way worth-
       while are: Nation   Review, 9-15 May 1975, pp. 771, 774; Angus
       McIntyre, 'Australia', Yearbook on International Communist
       Affairs, (1975), pp. 277-82; Direct Action, 30 September 1976,
       p. 6; Advertiser (Adelaide): 10 September 1976, p. 1; 20 September
       1976, p. 5; News Weekly: 16 June 1976, p. 7; 23 June 1976, p. 6;
       30 June 1976, p. 4; 1 September 1976, p. 4; 29 September 1976,
       p. 7; 20 October 1976, pp. 4, 6; Keith Richmond, 'Minor Parties
       in Australia', in Graeme Star, Keith Richmond & Graham Maddox,
       Political Parties in Australia, pp. 365-6.

CHAPTER FIVE

'ONE'S NATURAL ASSUMPTION': THE SPLIT IN AUSTRALIAN MAOISM

Mao Zedong died on 9 September 1976. The Chinese press kept warning about the danger of capitalist restoration.[1] On 6 October Jiang Qing (Mao's widow), Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan - the 'gang of four' - were arrested. With China's most prominent and powerful radicals removed, Hua Guofeng was appointed Chairman of the CPC.

The CPA-ML had repeatedly backed the radicals.[2] Consistency required that their incarceration be condemned. Indeed, it initially appeared that the first dissonant note in the party's relations with the CPC was about to sound.

Pamphlets by Yao and Zhang, the gang of four's theoreticians, were shifted to positions of greater prominence in the party's Melbourne bookshop.[3] Vanguard reprinted a pro-radical article by Ted Hill.[4] While CPA-ML members waited for an official statement from their party, Hill convinced the leadership - most of which wanted to issue a statement supporting the gang of four - to wait until he had visited China.[5]

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1   E.g. PR, 3 September 1976, pp. 5-7.

2   See, for example: V, 19 February 1970, p. 4; Hill, 'Speech
     ... to Melbourne Memorial ...', pp. 22, 29.

3   Current member B, 13 March 1983.

4   E. F. Hill, 'Chinese People Struggle to Consolidate Proletarian
     Dictatorship', V, 28 October 1976, pp. 3, 8. First published
     in V, 24 June 1976, p. 3.

5   Document by E. F. Hill circulated within the party leadership
     and read by the writer and current member B. (Interview, loc.
     cit.)

Hill did not arrive in China until December 1976. By that time, the CPA-ML was already committed to support of the new Chinese leadership. This commitment was contained in a _Vanguard_ editorial published on 4 November and written by Hill on 27 October in London, _en route_ to Albania, after he had read the official Chinese denunciation of the gang of four.[6]

The decision to perform this precipitate _volte face_ was thus taken by Hill alone, oceans away from the rest of the party leadership and on the strength of a demonstrably self-serving official Chinese article. Given the party's history, the prospect of an open rift with China would have appeared catastrophic, and this partly explains Hill's eagerness to clutch at the arguments advanced by the Chinese press.

At a banquet in his honour in China, Hill reiterated his condemnation of the 'Wang-Chang-Chiang-Yao anti-Party group' and his endorsement of Hua Guofeng, whom he described as a leader 'of great Marxist-Leninist stature ...'[7]

When Hill returned to Australia, therefore, the party's new position was a fait accompli. 'We never had a real opportunity of debating', says O'Shea, then a party vice-chairman. 'It was the Chinese party decision and we were expected to accept it.'[8] Welded to Hill's leadership in the crucible of the Sino-Soviet split,

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6   E. F. Hill: _V_, 4 November 1976, p. 1; Class Struggle Within the Communist Parties ..., pp. 1-2. Also, People's Daily, Red Flag and Liberation Army Daily editorial departments, 'Great Historic Victory', 25 October 1976, in Great Historic Victory, pp. 8-16.

7   PR, 10 December 1976, p. 7.

8   O'Shea interview.

the party leaders acquiesced, some more readily than others.[9]

Eleven years earlier Ted Hill had written: 'The days for blind acceptance or blind loyalty are over. Things must be thought about independently.'[10] This statement provides a useful contrast with Hill's assertion, in a pamphlet justifying his acceptance of the new Chinese leadership, that 'one's natural assumption ought to be that the Chinese Party is correct ...'[11] The monolithic conception of 'the Chinese Party' disclosed by this statement betrays an astounding ignorance of Mao's writings on the presence of the bourgeoisie 'right inside the Communist Party'.

Most party members, with varying degrees of conviction, rallied around Hill and the party leadership. But for others the gang of four events seeded the clouds of long-standing dissatisfaction.

The leading dissident was Albert Langer. Critically-minded and steeped in Mao's theory of continuous revolution, Langer saw in Chinese developments the actualisation of Mao's warnings that capitalist restoration was a real possibility:

> As an orthodox Maoist I always took what Mao and the Maoists
> were saying very seriously and therefore was not in the least
> surprised when it turned out to be perfectly true. My
> identification was with the revolutionaries in China, the
> 'Gang of 4' etc. and not with whatever happened to be written
> in Peking Review.[12]

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9   See decisions of the enlarged meeting of the CPA-ML Political
     Committee, V, 24 February 1977, p. 1.

10   V, vol. 2, no. 39 (August 1965), p. 3.

11   Hill, Class Struggle Within the Communist Parties ..., p. 10.

12   Albert Langer, 'Why the Cultural Revolution was Defeated',
     in AAISAG (eds), China in Transition ..., p. 90.

The gang of four question acted as a catalyst. It united
in opposition to Hill's leadership those Maoists who for several
years had been disenchanted with various facets of their party,
viz: its authoritarian structure; its inane preoccupation with
Soviet imperialism; the 'bourgeois nationalism' of its independence
policy; its dogmatic and uninspiring propaganda; its automatic,
unanalytical calls for militancy and its parroting of Chinese foreign
policy. The ranks of the oppositionists were further swelled by
the brazen cynicism which underlay the proclamations of loyalty
to the new Chinese leadership and the viciousness with which the
party responded to those who questioned the new line.[13]

'Intra-communist conflict', Rex Mortimer once wrote, 'is invar-
iably bitter and sordid'.[14] The dissidents were reviled as
'Trotskyists and other bourgeois elements' and 'a handful of enemies
... windbags and humbugs ...'[15] Slandered as Soviet agents and
described as 'scum' in inner-party circulars, the apostates were

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13   Fifteen anonymous CPA-ML members (including past and present CC
      members), 'Letter to all Members, Central Committee/Communist
      Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)', [Melbourne], cyclostyled,
      29 May 1977, in writer's possession. Also interviews with:
      current member B (loc. cit.); former members C & G; a former
      CPA-ML CC member (taped interview, Melbourne, 18 April 1983);
      York (3 February 1983). See also Appendix IV.

14   Mortimer, p. 123.

15   V, 24 February 1977, p. 7; [E. F. Hill], 'History Has No Mercy
      for Those Who Desert to the Enemies of the People', V, 22
      September 1977, p. 3.

isolated and removed from the CPA-ML.[16]

Following a statement by Hill that 'all the riff-raff will be exposed and driven out of the revolutionary movement'[17] Langer was publicly assaulted by several of Hill's supporters, an event described by Vanguard as 'this relatively trivial incident ...'[18]

Tellingly, the first schism within the CPA-ML was triggered by events Chinese. Although Hill lost about a hundred members - including the majority of the younger people on the Central Committee - he retained the loyalty of most Australian Maoists.

This loyalty, however, leaned heavily on Hill's and the new Chinese leadership's assertions of the continuity of the policies of Mao Zedong in China. The subsequent course of Chinese developments rendered such assertions increasingly untenable, and lent all the more credibility to Langer's stinging polemics.

The association between Ted Hill and Albert Langer is a microcosm of the elements which made Maoism a force on the Australian left. Theirs was an unlikely marriage from the beginning, yet they had much in common. Both excelled in their academic careers; both were drawn to China by its tenacious and inspiring fidelity to revolutionary Marxism-Leninism. Each represented the most outstanding example of his type: Hill, the hard-line Comintern Stalinist par excellence,

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16   Most interviewees active in the party during this time supported Hill and opposed Langer. However, when interviewed, all subjects agreed on the sort of treatment meted out to the dissidents. See also 'Zugzwang', p. 10. Pertinent documents in the writer's possession include: an untitled letter of protest on his suspension from party membership by a former CPA-ML CC member, [Melbourne], 4 December 1977; an untitled speech by the writer to a meeting of CPA-ML members and close associates, [Melbourne, mid-1977].

17   E. F. Hill, in V, 17 November 1977, p. 3.

18   V, 1 December 1977, p. 1.

the archetypal 1930s communist; Langer, the rebellious campus Maoist
of the 1960s, eyes set defiantly on the future.

Yet they were destined to be Australian Maoism's odd couple.
Ships in the political night, they parted ways when the context
which had made their association possible passed out of existence.
Central to that context was China's Great Proletarian Cultural
Revolution.

CONCLUSION

Thirty years before the CPA-ML was formed, two traditions
had become rigidly entrenched among Australian communists: one
was the tradition of obedience to a leading foreign party; the other
was the rigorously-disciplined compliance of the party membership
with its leaders' decisions.

These traditions constituted the twin pillars of the CPA-ML's
reflexive and fawning subservience towards the Communist Party of
China. They were inculcated into those who swelled the party's
ranks from the late 1960s, most of whom were young in years, political
experience, or both.

The CPA-ML's very emergence is attributable to a foreign development,
the Sino-Soviet split. The China link was umbilical, and in many
ways the CPA-ML's raison d'etre. Reflecting on the party's history,
a former member says: '... it was a branch of the Chinese party
... and it saw itself in those terms. No matter what else it was
doing it had never, ever broken away from that'.[1]

In trimming its sails to the Chinese wind, the CPA-ML produced
a grotesque parody of Maoism. Mao's slogans, tactics and policies
were wrenched from their Chinese context and grafted onto Australia.
This betrayed an inability to assimilate the creative flexibility
with which Mao approached his own society, and it produced some
particularly bizarre Australian political hybrids. The preoccupation
with China, and the mechanical transplantation of Chinese foreign
and domestic policies to Australia, was eloquent of the dogmatic

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1   Former member D.

rigidity and political dependence which hamstrung the Communist Party of Australia before the Sino-Soviet split.

There is no evidence that the CPC required the CPA-ML to so crudely and slavishly adopt and eulogise the former's policies. On the contrary. Even before the Sino-Soviet split, CPA cadres had found Chinese admonitions to study the concrete situation in Australia a refreshing contrast to the inelastic orthodoxy of the Soviet party.[2]

Rather, the CPA-ML appears to have been desirous of more guidance than the Chinese were disposed to provide. Hill illustrates the point:

> I recall once making a suggestion to Chairman Mao about the Chinese Communists writing something on parties like the Labor Party. He was quite courteous about it, but he said China never had a Party like that; it is Australian Communists who should write about it.[3]

If anything, as suggested in chapter three, Chinese tutelage militated against the CPA-ML's adoption of caricatures of CPC policies.

In 1980 Beijing Review quoted a Vanguard article for the first time in two years. Significantly, the article was an editorial exhortation to Australian Marxist-Leninists to concentrate on Australia and not be obsessed with Chinese developments. One party member interpreted this 'as a polite non-interfering attempt to drop a hint ...'[4]

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2   Sendy, p. 90; McIntyre, 'The Training ...', pp. 415-16.

3   E. F. Hill, in V, 20 May 1982, p. 3.

4   'Our Revolutionary Arena is Australia', V, 17 July 1980, p. 1, reprinted in Beijing Review, 25 August 1980, p. 12; Barry York, letter to Ted Hill, 13 December 1980, in writer's possession, p. 2.

The act of disavowing the policies of the CPSU, to which they had been loyal for so long, suggests a capacity for independent action among the CPA-ML leadership. The lefter-than-thou positions adopted by the central figures in the party's foundation were not a product, but rather the basis, of their attraction to the Chinese side in the Sino-Soviet dispute.

Yet after 1977, as the CPC systematically repudiated the cultural revolution and the Maoist axioms which had inspired it, the CPA- ML obligingly fell into line. A more thorough reversal would be difficult to imagine. 'We are more a Party of automatons', observed York in a letter to the party chairman, 'responding immediately to every change in Chinese policy ...' Party members fell away in droves.[5]

We need to account for the actions of those within the CPA-ML who were prepared to jettison the principles which their party had unswervingly upheld. Obviously a multiplicity of interwoven factors is involved.

One explanation is particularly suggestive. A small and isolated party, steeped in the logic of subservience, has a compelling need for an overseas patron to confer the illusion of substance on it. When those who formed the CPA-ML broke with the CPSU they rushed headlong into the comforting embrace of another patron. Thus they never overcame their reliance on some form of alien association to provide them with kudos and security.

The period of the Sino-Soviet split and the cultural revolution was a time of political and diplomatic isolation for the CPC. The

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5   York, letter, 22 February 1981, p. 7. For an account of the
     CPA-ML's post-1977 fortunes see Herouvim, 'Politics of the
     Revolving Door ...'

CPA-ML was one of the few western parties to support China. Until 1971 'China's only political contact with Australia was a warm relationship with the Communist Party led by E. F. Hill ...'[6] The two parties shared a self-righteous sense of mission which was reinforced by their isolation and fueled by the political and social turbulence of the late 1960s. These factors served to obscure the essential unnaturalness of a close relationship between a great power like China, and a relatively inconsequential sect like the CPA-ML.

As China discarded the ultra-left attributes of the 1960s it outgrew the friendships which accompanied that period. China's diplomatic re-emergence was attended by a downgrading of relations with Marxist-Leninist parties and third world liberation movements.

Although the ramifications of China's changing priorities for Australia's Maoists were clear, the CPA-ML was stricken with the blindness of those who, as the proverb has it, will not see.

A prominent historian of Australian Communism, Alastair Davidson could not have been more mistaken when he speculated in 1973 that 'we can expect the CPA(M-L) to meet some success as Australian relations with China become closer ...'[7] In fact, the period of increasingly friendly Sino-Australian relations throughout the 1970s coincided with the party's growing irrelevance to both the CPC and Australian politics. While the CPA-ML had rendered a number of quasi-diplomatic and other services to the PRC, as shown in chapter one, it was never a diplomatic surrogate of any stature in China's foreign policy considerations.

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6   Stephen FitzGerald, p. 673.

7   Davidson, 'Australia', p. 412.

As a force on the Australian left the CPA-ML is now defunct. Although the most palpable evidence of its decline emerged after the downfall of the gang of four, its political decomposition should **really be dated from the early 1970s. It was then that the conjuncture** presented by the ebbing of the ultra-left tide most pressingly demanded a re-evaluation by Australian Maoists of where they were heading. The party's failure to undertake such a re-evaluation is not surprising. It is doubtful if the question 'where are we heading?' was asked in the first place.

APPENDIX I

THE HISTORIAN AS PRIMARY SOURCE: SOME METHODOLOGICAL DILEMMAS

For two main reasons this thesis has presented the writer
with methodological dilemmas not normally encountered by the historian.
First, the CPA-ML has always been shrouded in secrecy; secondly,
and most importantly, the writer has been an active and loyal party
member. What follows represents the outcome of the ruminations
provoked by these dilemmas, and is an attempt to present something
like a methodological balance sheet.

The CPA-ML is fantastically secretive and deliberately inaccess-
ible. Party members have until recently refused to be interviewed
on internal-party matters. Internal documents are few and far between.
Most have been destroyed or returned after being read, in accordance
with established party procedures. Tokens of membership such as
cards or badges are not issued, and the names of the party's CC
members have never been published. For the historian, who is usually
on the outside looking in, there are obvious difficulties associated
with writing about a party so enveloped in clandestinity.

The present writer was spared these difficulties. I was a
member of WSA between 1971-4 and of the CPA-ML between 1974-80.
I worked on Vanguard for seven years, wrote hundreds of thousands
of words for party publications and developed intimate personal
relationships with several party leaders, especially Duncan Clarke.
For two years I was a member of a party cell comprising myself,
Clarrie O'Shea and a CC member. I attended regular briefings in
which Hill conveyed and explained changes in the party line, and
in turn passed these changes on to other party members, both directly

and through <u>Vanguard</u>. I was political spokesman for a party tour
of China in 1977-8, and had regular contact with the Chinese Embassy
from 1976. Because of the strategic position I occupied on the
party press I knew more about the party than the overwhelming majority
of its members, and many of its leaders. It should be stressed
that I was fanatically and dogmatically loyal to the party, and
especially to Ted Hill.

The primary-source value of my experiences, however, is obviously
qualified by the potential for subjectivity and conscious or unconscious
distortion.

I commenced my researches already intimately familiar with
the party's mentality, policies and slogans. Inasmuch as the historian
is concerned not merely to document but to recreate and make intelligible
his or her field of concern, to reproduce the texture and flavour
of the topic, having circulated as a participant in the topic is
a manifest advantage.

The methodological predicaments presented are equally manifest.
To illustrate with an example: Duncan Clarke said to me on numerous
occasions that, as a consequence of the Ceylon debacle, the party
leadership had decided to refrain from comment on international
events until the Chinese line had been ascertained. The leadership
stuck to this position despite periodic appeals to do otherwise
from myself and other members. For me, therefore, it is an iron-
clad fact that in the 1970s the CPA-ML consciously and deliberately
echoed Chinese foreign policy and just as consciously and deliberately
abstained from forming independent judgements on international matters.
But is this an iron-clad fact for the reader? Certainly the CPA-ML
leaders would outrightly deny such a proposition if it were put

Experiences such as the above are valuable as anecdote, ASIO briefing or journalism in the 'I was a teenage Maoist' vein. Historians have to be fussier. Given my privileged position, I have to take care in providing a feel for the topic. In the absence of such a careful approach, and given the general ignorance about the CPA-ML, the reader who relied largely on my testimony could end up feeling only what I felt, or only what I want him or her to feel.

A further basis for caution is the fact that, as an insider, I was ipso facto denied the perspective of an outsider. While researching the thesis, I sometimes overlooked angles which should have been obvious. On several occasions my supervisor raised questions which dwelt in the blind spots of my familiarity with the topic. Moreover, the testimony of interviewees opened up for exploration whole fields which I had not previously considered.

Other party members were an obvious source to consult. Apart from the historical worth of their experiences, they could provide insights into just how representative, and therefore how academically useful, my own experiences were. My access to these sources was in turn a welcome by-product of my past political affiliations.

However, an immediate problem arises with such sources. Only those who have parted company with the CPA-ML are prepared to be interviewed. They bring with them not only primary information, but a variety of axes ready for grinding. Thus, circumspection had to be exercised in handling interview material.

Similar problems have been encountered by others who have written the history of communist parties (or any other organisation for that matter). Nonetheless, many scholarly works draw on the recollections of the disillusioned. Indeed, former Australian communists

such as Turner and Mortimer have gone on to become scholars in their

own right, and produce written reminiscences and reflections which

have provided valuable source material for others.

In handling the question of what to use in the thesis and

what to omit I adopted the policy of erring on the side of caution.

This is not to say that I rigidly excluded any material for which

I am the source. However, such material, unless well-corroborated,

has been employed only as a peripheral illustration of my main argu-

ment.

A harsh but useful rule of thumb is: do not base an argument

on a statement which could be dismissed by the reader simply saying,

'You made that up' or 'that's only what you remember happening five

or ten years ago'.

In anticipation of possible challenges to some of the sources

I have employed, assertions likely to be regarded as controversial

or dubious have been anchored in as much supporting documentation

as possible, even at the risk of appearing laborious and excessive.

Further, except for one interviewee, all interviews were taped.

Every effort has also been made to certify the authenticity

of internal party documents which lack identifying notation. Again,

these efforts may appear excessive given that one's bona fides are

unlikely to be challenged. Nonetheless, no document has been used

if its authenticity is not verifiable beyond all reasonable doubt.

(The checks involved, which were touched upon in a paper presented

to an Honours Seminar this year, will not be elucidated here for

reasons of space.)

One final and perhaps platitudinous observation: for the

historian-as-primary-source an open mind is especially imperative.

Opinions grounded in personal experience can be particularly obdurate. They should be held as tentatively as possible.

All things considered, I believe that my direct involvement with the CPA-ML has enhanced rather than detracted from my research and writing on the party.

APPENDIX II

'A COMMENT ON THE ANTI-CHINA CAMPAIGN'

(Vanguard, 1 August 1974, pp. 1, 8.)*

... Not only has China taken herself out of the sphere of

imperialism, but it has become a great socialist country, the leading

socialist country, acting as a beacon light to all the oppressed

people and the very sheet anchor of proletarian internationalism

... In every respect it is our opinion that China's international

relations are guided, as the Chinese put it, by Chairman Mao's pro-

letarian line in foreign affairs and this is truly a Marxist-Leninist

line ...

In Australia those who founded the Communist Party of Australia

(M.L.) ... have found themselves in agreement with the line and

policy of the Communist Party of China. This is, as we believe,

in accordance with Marxism-Leninism. The Communist Party of China

has in all respects followed a Marxist-Leninist line and we as a

Party in Australia have striven to follow a Marxist-Leninist line.

Of course, the Communist Party of China and its great leader Mao

Tsetung are far more experienced and better Marxist-Leninists than

we are. But contrary to what is commonly asserted by enemies of

the working class, we did not follow a so-called Peking line (in

itself an insulting reference) nor are we a Peking Party (again

an insulting reference to all concerned). The simple fact is that

the Chinese Communists and we Australian Communists both adhered

to Marxism-Leninism and struggled to defend it ... [The article

went on to endorse and praise the cultural revolution and the campaign

against Lin Piao and Confucius] ...

*

At the time of Nixon's visit to China some people had doubts
about China's policy. Since then, some have said China has gone
soft or revisionist ... Or it is said that the Chinese Party now
tolerate revisionists ... And there are whispers about this or that
aspect of China's foreign policy or her leaders or some or other
aspect.

Naturally people must make up their own minds about this.
We as a Party have carefully considered it and concluded that the
Chinese Communist Party is correct ... At no time has China gone
soft on U.S. imperialism. Her reliance upon the Leninist principle
of coming to terms with bandits, not to share in the banditry but
to disarm the bandits is correct ...

We love and respect infinitely socialist People's China and
the Chinese people and their great leader Chairman Mao Tsetung precisely
because they are the supreme example in practice of socialism and
the truth of Marxism-Leninism. We do and will continue to do everything
in our power to popularise People's China's socialist achievements ...

APPENDIX III

CHANG CHUN-CHIAO: 'ON EXERCISING ALL-ROUND DICTATORSHIP

OVER THE BOURGEOISIE'*

(1975)

... We must be soberly aware that there is still a danger of China

turning revisionist ... [The author then discusses legacies of capitalism

which still exist in China, pointing out that although China has

a substantial proportion of state ownership, there is still considerable

ownership on the co-operative level, and remnants of private ownership.

He cites Lenin to the effect that such remnants cannot be abolished

at once under socialism].

So long as we still have these two kinds of ownership, commodity

production, exchange through money and distribution according to

work are inevitable. And since 'under the dictatorship of the proletariat

such things can only be restricted,' the growth of capitalist factors

in town and country and the emergence of new bourgeois elements

are likewise inevitable. If such things are not restricted, capitalism

and the bourgeoisie will grow more rapidly. Therefore, on no account

should we relax our vigilance just because we have won a great victory

in the transformation of the system of ownership and carried out

one Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution ...

In the various spheres of the superstructure, some areas are

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*   The author was senior Vice-Premier of the State Council, member
        of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, Director of the
        General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army
        and First Secretary of the Shanghai Party Committee. He was
        arrested as a member of the gang of four. The pamphlet from
        which these extracts are taken is among the most comprehensive
        expositions of Mao's theory of continuous revolution.

in fact still controlled by the bourgeoisie which has the upper
hand there ...

Historical experience also teaches us that, as the dictatorship
of the proletariat wins one victory after another, the bourgeoisie
may pretend on the surface to accept this dictatorship while in
reality it continues to work to restore the dictatorship of the
bourgeoisie. This is exactly what Khrushchov and Brezhnev have
done. They changed neither the name 'Soviet', nor the name of the
party of Lenin, nor the name 'socialist republics'. But, accepting
these names and using them as a cover, they have gutted the
dictatorship of the proletariat of its actual content and turned
it into a dictatorship of the monopoly capitalist class ... Similar
things have happened in China ...

APPENDIX IV

STATEMENT FROM THE RED EUREKA MOVEMENT*

(29 May 1977)

Comrades! Re-read 'Bombard the Headquarters. My Big Character Poster' by Comrade Mao Tsetung. Especially note the section: 'They have stood facts on their head and juggled black and white, encircled and suppressed revolutionaries, stifled opinions differing from their own, imposed a white terror, and felt very pleased with themselves.'

It is happening here. A Cultural Revolution was needed in China. Something similar is needed here. We call for a rectification movement to fight the revisionist line within the C.P.A.(M-L), re-establish a Marxist-Leninist line and leadership and rebuild the Party as an organised fighting vanguard of the working class, capable of leading the Australian revolution to victory.

For some time we have been concerned about certain problems in the revolutionary struggle in Australia, but until recently did not see it as a question of the Party line. We now see it as involving revisionism in the Party, which has influenced us as well as everyone else.

We are determined to break from this revisionism and unite the Party against it.

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*   These extracts are from a statement circulated by the Red
      Eureka Movement (REM), cyclostyled, in writer's possession.
      REM was formed after the failure of attempts to secure an
      internal debate on the CPA-ML's endorsement of the new Chinese
      leadership in 1976. The REM Statement was attached to, and
      is largely the same as, the letter to all members of the CPA-ML
      CC referred to on p. 68n.

The catalyst in forming our views has been the denunciation of China's 'gang of four', the arbitrary way that this was imposed on the Party, the enthusiastic support given to what appear to be **bad developments in China and the publication of the revisionist** pamphlet 'Class Struggle Within the Communist Parties' ...

The line in 'Vanguard' pays only lip service to the Australian revolution, and tolerates a bourgeois nationalist trend. 'Struggle' for independence is taken as a thing in itself and not as part of the Australian revolution. Superpower contention has been taken as the key link, not class struggle ...

The Party leadership has flatly refused to discuss criticisms properly and has instead attacked those who disagree, both through rumours and public insinuations in 'Vanguard' ...

The two-line Party struggle will have to go on outside the 'Proper channels' because those 'proper channels' just do not exist. If such channels are re-established, then this will no longer be necessary.

We see the struggle as having some similarities to the way in which a variety of mass revolutionary rebel organizations arose in the Chinese Cultural Revolution to fight revisionism in the party. There will be great confusion and turmoil here as there was in China. At first the rebels will be in a minority. But, 'Going against the tide is a Marxist-Leninist principle'. There is nothing to be afraid of ...

We must rid our minds of blind faith. It is time to bombard the Headquarters.

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