

'AN ALIEN ASSOCIATION'

Australian Maoism and the Communist Party
of China, 1971-1977

John Herouvin

Thesis submitted as part of the Final MA (Prelim.) examination
in the Department of History, La Trobe University, 1983.

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.

.....

CONTENTS

Abbreviations	ii
Notes on Spelling and Interviewees	iii
Introduction	iv
1 An Impulse to Subservience: The Origins and Dynamics of the CPC/CPA-ML Nexus	1
2 Political Reorientation: 1971-75	22
3 Chinese Foreign Policy and the CPA-ML: 1971-77	35
4 Chinese Domestic Policy and the CPA-ML: 1971-76	50
5 'One's Natural Assumption': The Split in Australian Maoism	65
Conclusion	71
Appendix I: The Historian as Primary Source - Some Methodological Dilemmas	76
Appendix II: 'A Comment on the Anti-China Campaign'	81
Appendix III: Chang Chun-chiao, <u>On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie</u>	83
Appendix IV: Statement from the Red Eureka Movement	85
Bibliography	87

ABBREVIATIONS

AAISAG	Adelaide Anti-Imperialist Study-Action Group
<u>AC</u>	<u>Australian Communist</u>
ACS	Australia-China Society
<u>AFR</u>	<u>Australian Financial Review</u>
<u>ALR</u>	<u>Australian Left Review</u>
ANLM	Australian National Liberation Movement
<u>BCD ...</u>	<u>Bulletin of the Committee in Defence of Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung Thought</u>
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
<u>PR</u>	<u>Peking Review</u>
PRC	People's Republic of China
<u>SW</u>	<u>Selected Works</u>
<u>V</u>	<u>Vanguard</u>
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
thesis

period
of
thesis

include
to
thesis

other
aspects
of
thesis

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

-
- 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 1969⁴ 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

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

Statement of methodology

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 must be 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

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 single out the real development of its policies, and how far they were determined by its leaders ...'⁷

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 movement¹ 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

1 The literature on this topic is extensive. For a cross-section see: J. Braumthal, 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 Propagandist', Australian, 24 January 1970, p. 15. Scholarly treatments 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 international 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

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 abbreviated 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

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

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 newspaper, 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

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 secrecy¹⁸ 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

-
- 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 Senny, 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

20 Senny, 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 Tse-tung 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; Sedy, pp. 128-9; McDonald, pp. 149-50, 152-3; McEwan, pp. 60, 88; Mortimer, p. 123; Taft, p. 9.

25 Taft, p. 8; Sedy, 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), p. 1; 28 August 1969, p. 1; 20 March 1969, p. 1; 12 September

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 superlatives 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

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.

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

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 1966³⁸, 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" permeates our every thought and deed'.⁴⁰

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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' estrangement 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 Herouvin], '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

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

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

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).