



From the Archives:

E.F Hill – A Report to the Central Committee of the CPA (M-L), May 20, 1975

The following article is a report made by Chairman E.F 'Ted' Hill to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) on May 20, 1975. The report touches on many aspects, some of which might feel out of date today. We publish it as a historical document and for what it reveals about Comrade Hill's leadership of the Party ideologically, politically and organisationally. All footnotes are the work of the editors.

The situation is constantly changing. It is changing in the tendencies to both war and revolution. The trend to each is deepening. The defeat of US imperialism in Indo-China has undoubtedly had a great effect on the Australian people. On the other hand, it has caused the reaction within Australia to intensify its reactionary preparations. Thus, there is great encouragement to people's struggle and also intensification of reaction. In the latter regard, after a certain lull, there has been intensification of surveillance, preparations for provocation, Nazi activity, the woman McCallum's "demonstration", Warner, Santamaria, army and police emphasis on internal suppression.

The level of people's struggle on economic, environmental, political issues is on the upsurge. The reaction cannot do a thing nowadays of reactionary import without it being challenged. Everything comes to light. If an attempt is made to hide it, someone "leaks" it – this is a significant symptom of rising people's consciousness. It is certain that this level of struggle will grow. This is not mere propaganda, not words for words sake. It is sober reality. Sometimes our comrades read about it in *Vanguard* or *Australian Communist* but they read and do not sufficiently register and respond. These matters have been spoken and written about for a considerable time. Each time they are written about, they were correct. Now there is a gathering qualitative change sparked off by the rapidity of the victories in Indo-China, the collapse of the puppet regimes and the weakening of US imperialism. While many people will not in so many words register this, the fact is that it deeply affects broad sections of the people. It is of tremendous if somewhat intangible importance. It encourages people in the struggle against the US multi-nationals and that struggle extends beyond the workers. Even the more or less Australian capitalist monopoly Coles is threatened by the US imperialist Safeways. The Australian insurance companies are under threat from the US insurance companies. There are other examples. It is a hard trend which is developing. Hence, when we say broad sections of the people are involved in the struggle, it is correct that broad sections ARE involved in the struggle. Certainly, the leading role of the working class is fundamentally important; it should never for a moment be lost sight of. There has been quite a struggle to maintain an understanding of this (the leading role of the working class) as can be seen by the number of times the question has been returned to in our publications and discussions. It must be emphasised that it is a leading role and the leadership exists over the led. Those led include all sections except the tiny handful of imperialists and collaborators. A narrow view of other sections is wrong and arbitrary ideas of working class leadership are wrong. All sections can co-operate, all streams can run into the one central anti-imperialist stream and the central and decisive role is that of the working class. By its example, its consciousness, its strength, its



solidarity, it exerts leadership. This lies in the objective reality of its most direct (of all classes) attachment to the most advanced means of production.

The deepening of the tendencies to revolution and war emphasise the need to be at all times prepared. Our peaceful legal existence cannot go on. The trends go hand in hand. Neither can be neglected. But special emphasis must be placed on war. The contention and struggle of the superpowers increases all the time. Each superpower has a military expenditure of the order of 100,000 million US dollars. It is not necessary to go over the various focuses of struggle. Naturally, we are concerned with it all. But we live and work in Australia. The activities of US imperialism in Australia are quite conspicuous. There has been a long and solid struggle in Australia against US imperialism. Anti-US imperialist consciousness is fairly high. The US imperialists are very active in Australia. Their activities have been intensified because of their defeats in Indo-China. Soviet social-imperialist activities in Australia are not so conspicuous. Nevertheless, they are present and intensifying. The Socialist Party of Australia does quite a lot of work for Soviet social-imperialism. Its characteristic as a Party is the number of trade union officials it has and its influence on other trade union officials. Recently it has increased the frequency of its newspaper from monthly to fortnightly, it has begun an Australian magazine to popularise the Soviet Union. It runs bookshops and meetings. Its decisive membership is old in age. So far as can be gathered, it has only a few adherents amongst the young. It is heavily backed by the Soviet authorities. It is dangerous and must not be underestimated. Its leaders are less degenerate in the conventional sense than those of the Aarons group. Hence it has a certain standing over the Aarons group. But its politics are even more degenerate and dangerous than those of the Aarons group. Soviet social-imperialism is an absolute menace to the people. Again, it is not just a manner of speaking that we speak of the “new Tsars”. Soviet social-imperialism is as ruthless an imperialist exploiter and oppressor as any. It is even more so because in the era of the collapse of imperialism the struggle by an imperialist power for leadership is even more desperate than in the earlier days of imperialism. Moreover, Soviet social-imperialism flaunts the signboard of socialism and still has a certain power of deception. The Whitlam government flirts with Soviet social-imperialism. The Whitlam-Kosygin communique expressed a real Australia-Soviet position.⁴² Since then, various Soviet statements have been made which emphasise the importance of “friendly relations” between the Soviet Union and Australia. The expansion of Soviet social-imperialism from India into Asia and the Indian Ocean involves Soviet eyes on Australia. Wherever US imperialism is, Soviet social-imperialism is bound to be interested. Not for one moment do we want to underestimate this. There is a book to be published by us in course of printing. Its title is *Imperialism in Australia. The Menace of Soviet Social-imperialism*. It ought to be deeply studied and circulated. The utmost vigilance is called for.

The struggle and contention of the superpowers inevitably means war. It is impossible to put time estimates on this. We can however say that the speed of world events is rapidly increasing. Hence a shorter rather than a longer time must be reckoned with. Everything increases in speed – the rise of the Third World, the struggles of the peoples and the struggles between the superpowers. A gigantic explosion is inevitable.

It must involve Australia. None of this struggle follows a blueprint. It takes all sorts of changing shapes and forms. Its general direction can be seen but its particular features can be seen less clearly. The general struggle against it is clear enough but the particular struggles are rather more difficult.

⁴² Whitlam visited the Soviet Union in January 1975. He and Kosygin issued a communique expressing support for, amongst others, the declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.



As a Party naturally the whole of our work is directed at leading the struggle. The need to adapt the organisation to changing circumstances is constant. Increased surveillance, danger of provocation, requires preparation. Different approaches to meetings, ways of communication, all require careful consideration. Stereotypes and getting into a rut have to be avoided. At the drop of a hat we must be prepared for far-reaching change and total underground work. Summing up experiences must be constant. At the same time as this occurs, there will be greater boldness in our work. The workers are more receptive, other sections move more rapidly so the possibilities are really enormous. Capacity for infinite initiative, flexibility and resources are characteristics that have been and are developing and will be carefully nurtured. The spirit of optimism permeates everything.

Present leadership arrangements are working very well. Still they need improvement. Any organisation, not excluding ours, tends to settle in a certain self-satisfaction. With us that just cannot be. Others may be able to afford to be self-satisfied, but not us. Self-satisfaction is in conflict with the constant change that is the fact of life summed up in materialist dialectics.

The PC and CC are working well. Each PC and CC member will get this document. The comments, proposals, criticisms of each will enrich the line. Each should endeavour to contribute by comments and proposals on mass work, struggle, *Vanguard*, *Australian Communist*, leaflets, booklets etc. etc. A PC or CC member may well have far-reaching proposals. They are required. Initiative knows no end. In the past, one or two comrades constantly repeated the existence of a problem and what the problem was (it is fair enough to repeat its existence) without putting forward proposals for its solution. It is better when one sees a problem also to think of how to solve it. It must be said that there has been a vast improvement in this respect in more recent times. It is incumbent on PC and CC members to study Marxism-Leninism even more deeply than other Party members. Questions such as the nature of the state do occupy central importance. Without a thorough understanding of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat we are bound to go wrong. But this by no means exhausts study. We need a good solid group of well-equipped all-round Marxists. And we are achieving it gradually. It cannot in the nature of things be a hustle bustle job but it is urgent. Our leading comrades can contribute more and more systematically, particularly to *Australian Communist*. It is quite a good journal but it would be greatly improved by more contributors. If you take these notes and think over your Party and struggle experiences, isn't there a rather wide field for theoretical material?

It is an urgent task to widen and deepen the theory and practice of the Australian revolution. At no time in Australia's history has such an attempt as we have made, been made to solve the problems of the Australian revolution. But still there requires a great deal to be done.

And it is the comrades concerned with the leadership who have the most responsibility. A special word should be said about the younger comrades. They are a great asset and have a great responsibility to make a big effort to contribute to the solution of these problems. If each PC and CC member summed up experience in the field in which he worked, generalized it and contributed it perhaps as a theoretical article or document to be circulated, it would rapidly contribute much. Another aspect of it is to study deeply the existing Australian material so that it can enrich and be enriched. This goes for *Vanguard*, *Australian Communist*, pamphlets, booklets. It is very important to study Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Chairman Mao and it is also very important to study Australian publications. In this respect, good progress is being made in the rectification of the Party's style of work. It is a constant process.



There is the ever present problem of the Australian black people and the people of Papua New Guinea. There are very many misconceptions about this. The central problem is how to get Marxism-Leninism to them. The bourgeois concept of “help” to them constantly dogs us. But it is not a question of help in this sense. The black people are rightly suspicious of “help” in any shape or form. Personally I think the word “help” ought to be shunned like the plague. The best help we can give is to get one or two or more of these people to take up Marxism-Leninism so it can be taken to their own struggle. As an example of how far bourgeois ideology goes in our own minds, the name “Kalkadoon” was simply usurped from the black people without their permission and without anyone thinking of the implications of what was done.⁴³ Like the bourgeoisie, the name was stolen. There is “help” in the wrong sense and simple theft. Truth is that the black people are standing up. They need Marxism-Leninism just as do the white workers, working and patriotic people. It is this that is of such importance. They will conduct their own struggle more scientifically and it will coordinate with other struggles given Marxism-Leninism. How to do it is the question. It must be done through them. Patronage is right out. They will do it and the way to get Marxism-Leninism to them will be found. It assumes greater urgency today. Likewise Papua-New Guinea.⁴⁴ The battle can only be fought by the people there. They need Marxism-Leninism. Our job is to extend to them proletarian international support and paralyse our own government in its suppression activities. The central stress is on the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism. No doubt there are difficulties in both cases of illiteracy but these can be overcome by the black peoples. They will find what help they need when the enlightenment of Marxism-Leninism grips them. This is not to say that there is nothing of Marxism-Leninism in their struggle, but its need has not been seen sufficiently clearly.

Great tactical problems are presented by the Labour government. In a sense, one has to walk a tight rope in dealing with it. It is a dangerous trend to just blankly condemn it as a government of the bourgeoisie. It is that, but there are quite important differences between it and the Liberal-Country Party. That is obvious. Yet at the same time, we know that the Labour government is fundamentally anti-working class. It is certain to attack the workers in all round vicious ways. How to get our line and propaganda just correct, so that it just hits the spot, is a constant problem. Some of the contributions that come in approach this matter from the standpoint that the ALP is just a pack of bastards; then some praise it too much. Comrades ought to think this question over. It is going to get more acute. It is necessary to get it just right.

It is even more difficult than that. It seems pretty clear that Fraser has a better estimate of the possibilities of war than Whitlam. Fraser is more correct. Also Fraser is more anti-Soviet than Whitlam, no doubt because he is very close to the Americans. Still, it is a fact. We have said once publicly that on the question of the war danger, Fraser is more correct than Whitlam. This same matter complicates

⁴³ “Kalkadoon” was a bookshop run by the Party in Melbourne. Its name was intended as a tribute to the Kalkadoon people who waged a lengthy resistance against the British colonialists. Hill was probably in advance of his times in criticising as “theft” the appropriation by the Party of the Kalkadoon name. An extensive study of the need for appropriate protocols in relation to the use of First People’s identities and culture by non-Indigenous people was published by UNSW Press in 2021 (see *True Tracks* by Meriam and Wuthathi lawyer Terri Janke.)

⁴⁴ Papua-New Guinea was in the throes of declaring itself independent of Australia which, at the time Hill delivered this report to the Central Committee, administered PNG under a UN mandate. Independence was declared on 16 September, 1975, four months after Hill’s report.



the struggle against the superpowers. We do not want to drive out US imperialism to the advantage of Soviet social-imperialism. This latter statement points up the urgency of the struggle against Soviet social-imperialism.

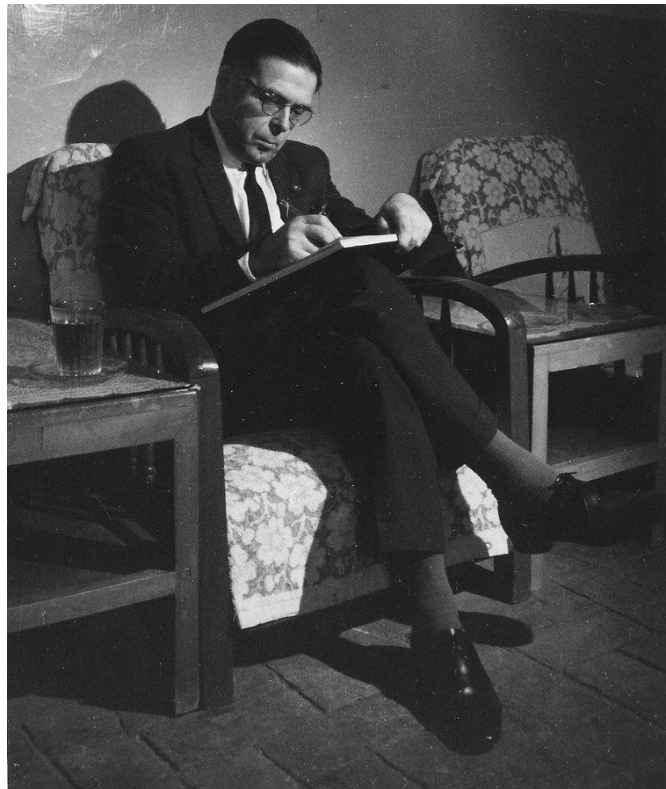
Another matter for comment too is the tendency of the left workers, particularly the young, to gravitate to the builders' labourers industry. This was a phenomenon in days of Communist leadership on the wharf and in the iron and steel industry. But it is not correct. It is based on certain trade union illusions. Our comrades ought to go to all industries and the Party ought to allocate them. In this respect there has been growing up exemplary conduct among our comrades to serve where the Party thinks best. We cannot publish details but there is a splendid attitude growing up. There have been a few examples where comrades have declined or resisted service in particular positions or changes, but these are the exception in a growing atmosphere of service for the Party and thus serving the people is dominant.

Lately we emphasised starting points on the positive in work and people and not on the negative. We did this because some gossip and slander based on negative in people was very damaging. It is fact anyway that the positive is more important, never ignoring the negative. As Chairman Mao has said, it is wrong to wholly affirm anything and everything or wholly to negate anything and everything. It is particularly important in our conditions to fasten on the positive. It is having good results ad requires vigorous and constant pursuing. It must not become merely a form of words or an affirmation in words but denial in practice.

We have emphasised finance in our publications. All PC and CC members are asked to do a special job on this. Work expands and expands. Inflation goes on and on.

These notes will be supplemented verbally.

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Comrade Ted Hill writing notes during one of his several trips to China