

APPENDIX ITHE HISTORIAN AS PRIMARY SOURCE: SOME METHODOLOGICAL DILEMMAS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

such as Turner and Mortimer have gone on to become scholars in their own right, and produce written reminiscences and reflections which have provided valuable source material for others.

In handling the question of what to use in the thesis and what to omit I adopted the policy of erring on the side of caution. This is not to say that I rigidly excluded any material for which I am the source. However, such material, unless well-corroborated, has been employed only as a peripheral illustration of my main argument.

A harsh but useful rule of thumb is: do not base an argument on a statement which could be dismissed by the reader simply saying, 'You made that up' or 'that's only what you remember happening five or ten years ago'.

In anticipation of possible challenges to some of the sources I have employed, assertions likely to be regarded as controversial or dubious have been anchored in as much supporting documentation as possible, even at the risk of appearing laborious and excessive. Further, except for one interviewee, all interviews were taped.

Every effort has also been made to certify the authenticity of internal party documents which lack identifying notation. Again, these efforts may appear excessive given that one's bona fides are unlikely to be challenged. Nonetheless, no document has been used if its authenticity is not verifiable beyond all reasonable doubt. (The checks involved, which were touched upon in a paper presented to an Honours Seminar this year, will not be elucidated here for reasons of space.)

One final and perhaps platitudinous observation: for the ~~historian-as-primary-source~~ an open mind is especially imperative.

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

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

APPENDIX II

'A COMMENT ON THE ANTI-CHINA CAMPAIGN'

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

... Not only has China taken herself out of the sphere of imperialism, but it has become a great socialist country, the leading socialist country, acting as a beacon light to all the oppressed people and the very sheet anchor of proletarian internationalism ... In every respect it is our opinion that China's international relations are guided, as the Chinese put it, by Chairman Mao's proletarian line in foreign affairs and this is truly a Marxist-Leninist line ...

In Australia those who founded the Communist Party of Australia (M.L.) ... have found themselves in agreement with the line and policy of the Communist Party of China. This is, as we believe, in accordance with Marxism-Leninism. The Communist Party of China has in all respects followed a Marxist-Leninist line and we as a Party in Australia have striven to follow a Marxist-Leninist line. Of course, the Communist Party of China and its great leader Mao Tsetung are far more experienced and better Marxist-Leninists than we are. But contrary to what is commonly asserted by enemies of the working class, we did not follow a so-called Peking line (in itself an insulting reference) nor are we a Peking Party (again an insulting reference to all concerned). The simple fact is that the Chinese Communists and we Australian Communists both adhered to Marxism-Leninism and struggled to defend it ... [The article went on to endorse and praise the cultural revolution and the campaign against Lin Piao and Confucius] ...

* These extracts are taken from the ...

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

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

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

APPENDIX III

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

OVER THE BOURGEOISIE'*

(1975)

... We must be soberly aware that there is still a danger of China turning revisionist ... [The author then discusses legacies of capitalism which still exist in China, pointing out that although China has a substantial proportion of state ownership, there is still considerable ownership on the co-operative level, and remnants of private ownership. He cites Lenin to the effect that such remnants cannot be abolished at once under socialism].

So long as we still have these two kinds of ownership, commodity production, exchange through money and distribution according to work are inevitable. And since 'under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted,' the growth of capitalist factors in town and country and the emergence of new bourgeois elements are likewise inevitable. If such things are not restricted, capitalism and the bourgeoisie will grow more rapidly. Therefore, on no account should we relax our vigilance just because we have won a great victory in the transformation of the system of ownership and carried out one Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution ...

In the various spheres of the superstructure, some areas are

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

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

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

APPENDIX IV

STATEMENT FROM THE RED EUREKA MOVEMENT*

(29 May 1977)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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