



**The Australian
Revolutionary
Student Movement**

PRICE 10 cents

Introduction

We are very happy to present this pamphlet which deals with the part played by students in revolutionary struggle. All over the world rebellion by the young against reactionaries is occurring and developing. No longer are young people obedient tools, no longer do they obediently do what they are told. This is, indeed, a splendid thing. It is certain to continue and develop.

This pamphlet is written by Australian revolutionary students who are actively participating in worker and student struggles. Their idea is to promote still more struggle and to give to it the guidance of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

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THE REVOLUTIONARY STUDENT MOVEMENT

In Australia, students have played a leading role in the movement against U.S. aggression in Vietnam and participated in many other struggles. Large scale mass movements against reactionary administrations have broken out in several institutions, and rebellion against the rotten education system has spread through universities, institutes of technology, technical and high schools.

The ruling class in Australia and its U.S. masters are deeply afraid of these developments and direct vicious attacks against students and against youth generally. As well as the open violence of conscription, gaolings, police bashings, etc., there are the equally important attacks in the monopoly press and mass media. A flood of books, magazine articles, films and news stories, as well as official statements by "public figures", are used to attack the youth and students. They spread the idea that young rebels are hooligans, immature, confused, drug addicts, sex maniacs, and so on. At a less crude level, "learned" commentators try to demonstrate that the young people's revolt is not really due to genuine opposition to a corrupt system but is due to such dreamed up ideas as "the generation gap", "loss of identity in adolescence" and suchlike. For example, a group of students with placards against U.S. imperialist aggression will prompt the capitalist "commentators" to discuss their long hair, the possibility of violence, or "outside manipulation" but never, never to discuss the U.S. imperialist aggression against which they are in fact demonstrating. The bosses consider it essential to distract attention away from the real issues, because they wish to make it appear that youthful rebellion is something irrelevant to the ordinary working people — something workers should be hostile to, or at least disinterested in.

All around Australia, university officials have made preparations to enforce their "law and order" on students and teachers. Disciplinary regulations have been tightened, right wing "vigilante" groups have been set up and encouraged, heavy subsidies have gone to National Civic Council organisations in the universities, police spying and harassment have been stepped up, a flood of propaganda has been released and radical student leaders have been expelled or *got rid of* by "academic" means.

All this indicates that the capitalist class takes the student movement, and youthful rebellion, very seriously. So too should the working people. The student movement is important precisely because it is NOT the unreal thing pictured by the capitalist commentators, but is a very real movement against very real oppression and exploitation in the world today.

The Communist Party of Australia (Marxist – Leninist) believes that the student movement is an important part of the people's struggles against U.S. imperialism and Australian monopoly capitalism. Internationally and historically it has been shown that the student struggles are not just a "flash in the pan" effort divorced from the class struggle. Students will play a vital role in the revolution provided their struggle is allied with that of the working people and directed against the common enemy – U.S. imperialism and its local agents, the Australian ruling class.

EDUCATION FOR CAPITALISM

In every class society, all social institutions are designed to serve the interests of the ruling class in that society. The education system is a particularly important social institution. Through it, the younger generation has imparted to it the social experience, the knowledge gained beforehand in the fields of class struggle, of production and of science, from the point of view of the dominant class in the society. The funds available for education, the selection of students, the material taught and the method of teaching are all matters of social policy closely related to industrial production and the nature of the economic system.

So in a socialist country such as China, education is geared to serve the interests of the working people and is directly controlled by them. There is no need to conceal this behind a facade of "academic freedom". In China, workers exercise their proletarian dictatorship all the way from primary schools to universities. Students are selected on the basis of their class stand and attitude towards serving the people as much as on "academic merit". Courses are closely integrated with productive work and political struggle, and graduates are taught to expect no additional privileges but additional responsibilities as cadres of the working class.

In a capitalist society such as Australia the situation is of course reversed. Education here serves the monopoly capitalists in training and indoctrinating skilled and unskilled workers for capitalist industry, and in producing administrative cadres and apologists for the ruling

class itself. For capitalist industry workers must not be taught to regard themselves as masters of their own country able to take the initiative in organising production for themselves. The spontaneous enthusiasm of children must rather be crushed in harsh classrooms through "discipline", "obedience", "training", etc. Schools teach subservience to the boss and reflect this in their own system of authority. They reflect (and teach) the competitive struggle for existence under capitalism by forcing students to jump competitively through hoops called "examinations" on the basis of "survival of the fittest". (Chairman Mao has described these examinations as a system of surprise attacks on the students and they have been completely abolished in China.)

In place of the scientific world outlook of materialist dialectics metaphysics is practised, that is, students are taught to see knowledge in terms of entirely separate, isolated subjects, learned from textbooks in classrooms into which the real world never intrudes!

UNIVERSITIES

For the "upper layers" of society slightly better conditions are required. Some initiative must be developed in those who are chosen to be the administrators and apologists for the ruling class. Universities provide this training ground for the "cadres of the bourgeoisie" – the lawyers, engineers, economists, writers; in short, functionaries who keep the system going. So in universities there is not the same oppressive atmosphere that prevails in the primary and secondary schools.

University students are taught to think of themselves as an intellectual elite, vastly superior to the ordinary working people. Constant emphasis is placed on the importance of "getting your degree" which is supposed to serve as an entrance ticket to the goodies of capitalist society, and the examinations rat-race is persisted with. However, a slight gap is maintained between the immediate needs of industry and the material taught in universities. The aim of universities is not simply to impart knowledge and skills but to instil in students a general cultural background and outlook which will fit them for their later role as cadres for the capitalist class. This job of instilling a capitalist outlook is made easier by the fact that most working class students are denied access to university by systematic discrimination in favour of high income families which exists throughout the whole education system.

To understand the special role of universities, the way they are tied up in the service of capitalism, let us look at the research they do,

the courses they teach and the way they are controlled.

RESEARCH

Some research — such as historical and literary research — is of little importance because of the general crisis of capitalist culture and ideology. Any university library contains lots of learned articles concerning topics such as Napoleon's mistresses or the frequency with which Shakespeare used certain words. Although these are not directly useful even to capitalism, anyone who has spent several years cultivating this sort of rubbish can be relied on as a loyal "bourgeois academic authority" unlikely to encourage rebellious thoughts in his students!

More important is scientific and technological research. A lot of this is directly subsidised by big companies in the mining, chemical manufacture, metallurgical and other industries, to study specific problems in those industries and use the results to increase profits made from workers' labour. In addition, grants are made to promote study of wider areas of applied research in the confidence that useful (i.e. profitable) "fall-out" will occur. Finally the capitalist class believes in doing research in an all-round way, and so is quite happy to pay for "pure" research, which may have no direct application but provides the foundations of practical work in the future by raising the general level of scientific and technical knowledge. While all research is in some way tied to capitalism it is necessary to draw particular attention to "Defence" (i.e. WAR) research. The most hideous example is research for Chemical and Biological Warfare which has often been shown to be conducted under the most innocent guises.

It is also necessary to draw attention to the fact that scientific research here, as much or more than other areas of life, is completely subordinate to the interests of United States imperialism. Apart from war research and the fact that U.S. dominated companies are the most eager sponsors of university research here, it is a fact that even pure research programs are forced into a subordinate or supplementary role to the main work being done in U.S. institutions and reported in U.S. technical journals. It is the U.S. government and the Pentagon which therefore decide the direction of research work in Australia, so that this work is not designed to build up an independent Australian economy, but a dependent one serving U.S. imperialism.

This is reinforced by constant "exchanges" of scholars which are designed to integrate Australian academic life more and more

closely with its U.S. counterpart (where "academic life" is already much more closely integrated with military and corporate affairs).

COURSES

Though research is important, it does not play the decisive role that undergraduate teaching does. The university trains aspiring defenders of the capitalist state — lawyers, economists, parliamentarians. Thus Federal Cabinet consists of "educated men" (several of them Masters of Arts), professors of economics serve on wage tribunals and as government economic advisors, and the capitalist legal system (including the secret police) is administered by "distinguished scholars of law".

The university also produces "educated" managers and administrators, ideologists and propagandists for capitalism ("witch-doctors" as they have been called). It also turns out larger numbers of highly trained technical workers in science, medicine and engineering and inculcates the reactionary ideology of "professionalism" in teachers, journalists, doctors, academics and so on.

It goes without saying that, to serve these ends, the content of university courses has a very reactionary effect. Again let us look at some examples.

According to Marx, "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle", but according to the universities history is something very different. Somehow, the labour movement, the working people's struggles which are the sole motive force of historical development, get left out. Instead students are taught the history of the ruling exploiting class, by and for that class.

In Economics (which of course is taught completely divorced from politics or anything else for that matter) attention is focused on so-called "micro-economics" — the mechanism by which a single factory operates within a given market situation in a given economy. The micro-minds responsible manage to brilliantly defeat Marxist economic theory (the only scientific economic theory) by simply ignoring it. They are concerned with training the administrators of monopoly corporations rather than analysing the forces which will lead to the destruction of the capitalist social system.

In Sociology even the pretence is dropped. Sociology is outright "special war" against Marxism. (Marxism is the only scientific social theory. The very fury of the attack upon it is proof of its validity.) At undergraduate level University Sociology provides the *more refined*

"theory" of bourgeois society, explaining how everything is working out beautifully, everybody is part of the system and all contradictions are being resolved by peaceful means. At more advanced levels sociologists advise capitalism on how to head off and sidetrack workers' struggles, how to extend imperialist domination of Asia, Africa and Latin America and how to apologise for it all in the name of Science.

In fact all these "Humanities" amount to the study of how best to exploit workers and how to provide justification for the "inevitability" of that exploitation.

Engineering and Science subjects are taught in isolation from any considerations of the nature of society. Apparently one is not allowed to think about that!

The Marxist theory of knowledge, the unity of theory and practice, materialist dialectics, are avoided like the plague; confusion and ignorance outside one's particular field of knowledge is actively encouraged.

ADMINISTRATORS

The day-to-day control of university affairs is generally in the hands of senior academics — the gowned servants of the capitalist class who are themselves products of the decadent bourgeois education system and enthusiastically promote it. But the capitalist class, well aware of the importance of universities in the ideological sphere, ensure their direct control over universities both nationally through the Government-controlled Australian Universities Commission (which, together with the State governments, has control over university development through its financial policy) and locally through the various University Councils and Senates. These are the governing bodies of the respective universities and they are without exception dominated by company directors and some reactionary professors with a sprinkling of junior staff and students to foster an illusion of "representation". Able and experienced administrators, thoroughly imbued with capitalist ideology, are in firm control of the universities. Their job is to ensure that the universities efficiently serve capitalism.

Technical schools are similar. But they have a student body largely drawn from the children of workers. Here the "trades" are taught, such as carpentry, fitting and turning, plumbing, etc. The capitalists need a certain minimum of tradesmen. Those who are cast out become the unskilled. Then these institutes are given the right to confer degrees. But the authorities are very careful to maintain the aura of superiority about the university educated man or

woman and to maintain a repressive system of administering these schools.

There is a huge reservoir of revolt in the technical schools.

It is natural that more and more students see through and reject the fraudulent teachings of universities, as the general collapse of capitalism induces a collapse of capitalist ideology. More and more students are rightly rebelling against universities serving capitalism.

"YOUTHFUL IDEALISM"

Most young people, those not infected with the cynicism of capitalism, sincerely and urgently want to take part in building a better world. They see a host of things wrong with capitalism and a host of improvements that could be made. This is a very good thing, and a major and continuing danger to capitalism. So the capitalist class spends a lot of time trying to crush this optimism and energy, diverting it into reforms and other harmless paths, or trying to harness it for their own ends.

Without going into this struggle too deeply here, it can be said, that many students are absorbed into capitalism, but many rebel against it. Within this rebellion itself, which takes many forms, there is a struggle for adaptation and diversion by capitalism and its servants.

In this struggle communist ideas have grown comparatively strong. Just like other people everywhere, the Australian student movement is rejecting reformist and revisionist ideas and developing along the revolutionary road. Like people everywhere, they are learning from their own experience that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" and the idea that "it is right to rebel against reactionaries" is being acted on in a mass way.

The students have learnt, and are learning still, many lessons in the course of struggle, and the most important is the recognition of the leading role of the working class. Thus there is growing mass acceptance of the leading idea of worker-student unity being built in actual struggle, and of the idea that a student is really revolutionary only if he is willing to integrate himself with the masses of working people and actually does so in practice.

WORKER-STUDENT UNITY

The development of the student movement in Australia (and of revolutionary struggle generally) confirms the need for and possibility of unity of workers and progressive students.

Experience shows that students can be valuable allies in working class struggles and that the student movement itself grows strong, despite the attacks on it from the ruling class, whenever it takes up issues that expose the class nature of society, sides with the workers and "ordinary people" and builds close links with them. On the other hand, experience shows that when students get illusions about "left" leaders, parliament etc., or when they engage in purely University campaigns divorced from the class struggle their movement runs out of steam and collapses.

But this worker-student unity is not an artificial thing. It grows up in actual struggle, in real life. Nobody can put forward a blueprint as to how it is to be achieved but there has been a considerable amount of valuable work done already — yielding both positive and negative experience. Both worker and student leaders have come under attack from the ruling class who hope to destroy their ideas by attacking the people holding them. But these attacks have served only to underline the essential unity of struggles over various issues. They are all in opposition to capitalism. Workers have joined in student struggles and students have joined in workers' struggles. Each welcomes the other's assistance. This unity is a part of the socialist struggle for workers' power in Australia.

In building Worker-Student Unity there will of course be struggle — against reactionaries within the working class movement and against reactionaries within the student movement. The labor lieutenants of capitalism in the trade unions will try to divert everything into harmless parliamentary and union channels or, failing this, will aim to mislead workers by using demagogic attacks on students. The student lieutenants of capitalism will put forward ideas of intellectual elitism. They will advocate that students forget about the struggle and spend their time "liberating" themselves (as though a person can liberate himself with drugs or a different 'life-style' in an oppressive society where he himself lives at the expense of others). But these diversions will fail and indeed are already failing as more and more workers and students grasp Marxism—Leninism—Mao Tsetung Thought and act on it.

With this guidance, there is no doubt that our common struggles will merge yet more closely, and that large numbers of today's students will be convinced to be good friends and servants of the *working people* in the struggle for working class state power.

Melbourne, June, 1970.