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No war on China

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

8 September 2020

The capitalist media in Australia are full of news and opinion designed to create fear and suspicion of China and its so-called “communist” government. To advance this agenda, many real and alleged instances of bad behaviour by Beijing are cited. This is having the desired effect. Public opinion is shifting against China and giving the Liberal Government (aided and abetted by the Labor “Opposition”) more room to join the United States in its anti-China military manoeuvres.

And here is the link to the bigger picture. The United States has taken an increasingly anti-China stance in recent years because it is afraid of losing its global dominance. The US remains the single most powerful country by a long way, despite receding from its overwhelming superiority in the 1950s and facing a declining position in recent decades. The USSR collapsed in 1991. Other potential imperialist rivals rose to a threatening position, but their challenges faded away.

The great size of the US, its control of world institutions, its multi-national corporations and its massive rent from intellectual property forced first Germany, then Japan and finally the European Union to concede a subordinate position. Germany and Japan, being substantially smaller in population and stuck

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Retrieved on 12th October 2021 from anarkismo.net
From The Anvil, Vol. 9 No. 4, newsletter of the Melbourne
Anarchist Communist Group. To download the issue go here:
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on a lower GDP per capita figure, have no prospect of overtaking the US. The EU, though a promising project which had the necessary scale to compete with the US, has fallen victim to intractable conflicts between its constituent capitalist classes.

China is a different kettle of fish. With a population more than four times that of the US, it can surpass the United States without becoming as rich. Even if its GDP per capita hits a ceiling of half that of the US, China's total GDP would be more than double the US. Apart from exerting a stronger economic influence on the world economy than the US, it could build a stronger military with a lower share of GDP devoted to paying for it. The advantages which enabled the US to defeat previous challengers may not be enough to prevent this scenario.

This prospect is, of course, intolerable to the US capitalists. As a result, they have united against China. While US Congress is bitterly divided under the Trump regime and is stalemated on virtually every other question, the Democrats and Republicans have repeatedly combined to pass anti-China resolutions almost unanimously. This is not just one of Trump's solo frolics.

It is necessary to step back and take in the entire international picture. In order to preserve its global dominance, US imperialists are attempting to prevent China becoming a developed country and its people acquiring the standard of living that goes with that. To force China deliberately to stay underdeveloped, and so to keep the bulk of its people in poverty, would be a crime of staggering proportions. It is an objective which would probably require war. All the actions of the US and Australia, as well as the actions of China, have to be examined from this perspective.

Complaints from Australian politicians and in the media about China's behaviour have mostly fallen into two categories: complaints about genuinely poor behaviour by the Beijing Stalinists, and complaints about their violation of the rules-based international order. The repression of the Uighurs

and the Tibetans have to be Beijing's worst crimes. In both cases Beijing is swamping the local population with ethnic Han migrants who have immense privileges and establish dominant economic positions. In the case of the Uighurs, the repression amounts to an attempted cultural genocide. A somewhat lesser crime, though a total disgrace in itself, is the suppression of civil liberties in Hong Kong. Beijing's violation of the "one country, two systems" agreement isn't designed to integrate Hong Kong into the People's Republic, but to give Hong Kong the worst of both worlds – to combine Beijing's political tyranny with a billionaires' free market paradise. In the process, of course, they are blowing away any chance of a voluntary reunification with Taiwan, the province which the Kuomintang dictatorship retained in 1949 and which has subsequently had its own political evolution.

Beijing's violations of the rules-based international order are more complex. This order didn't arise in a vacuum. It expresses the institutionalised power of the United States, both in its rules and its mechanisms for enforcement. It is particularly galling to see the US complaining that China is violating the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea with its fortifications in the South China Sea, given that the US is one of only a handful of States that have refused to sign, let alone ratify, it. China's alleged theft of intellectual property is no crime at all. Property is theft and intellectual property is perhaps the worst kind of theft, since it is the legal protection of an unnatural monopoly that impoverishes the world so that capitalists can collect rent. Finally, although many of China's alleged cyber-attacks are genuinely objectionable, we need to consider what we're not being told. Anyone who thinks the United States isn't doing the same, or worse, to China is so naive they should never buy a used car. Beijing just keeps quiet about it all so that the US doesn't find out how much Beijing knows.

Certain complaints from the Australian media, though, have revealed the real agenda. China's Belt and Road initiative

has been attracting many beefs from capitalist politicians and pundits, with very thin justifications. And recently Australian media published objections to China's aid to South Pacific countries to fight the coronavirus. What they're complaining about is not China's misbehaviour, but China's development and growing international prominence.

What should Anarchists do?

The Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group believes that the US objective of preventing the development of China is indefensible. Anarchists oppose the US war drive and the anti-China campaign of which it is part. In Australia, the media are demonising Chinese capitalists for being Chinese rather than for being capitalists and Anarchists must oppose this. And crucially, we fight the Australian Government's participation in US provocations against China such as their military exercises in the South China Sea.

There is more. Unlike Stalinists (and certain Trotskyists), we don't manufacture excuses for the crimes of the Chinese so-called "Communist" Party. The MACG takes the side of the Uighur and Tibetan peoples in China who are struggling against Beijing's national chauvinist repression and the people of Hong Kong struggling against political tyranny. We point out, though, that their only road to liberation is to ally with the Chinese working class. Appealing to US imperialism is worse than useless. This would only support the US war drive against China and invite their own destruction in the process.

The Chinese working class are the primary victims of the Chinese so-called "Communist" Party and have the most to gain from its overthrow. Their liberation requires an iron commitment to democratic rights and the rights of national minorities. Only the Chinese workers have the ability to defeat the "Communist" Party – and only they have the right to say what succeeds them.

As Anarchists, we argue for workers' revolution across the world and take as our primary duty the fight against the capi-

talists where we live. Here in Australia, we must fight against the Australian Government's military alliance with the US, including the ANZUS Treaty, the 5 Eyes intelligence group and the spy base at Pine Gap. And we must fight to build a labour movement that can link up with the working class across the region to make revolution against both the capitalists and the Chinese so-called "Communist" Party. There is no other way.

FOR WORKERS REVOLUTION.