

EDITORIAL

This first issue of *ALR* for 1972 has a completely new appearance. The main reason for this is that the cost of production is considerably lower in this format, and the financial position of *ALR*, always difficult, was made acute when the book subsidy of 20% of cost was recently withdrawn from all periodicals by the Federal Government. However we believe that the new *ALR* will not be less useful or attractive.

The aim of *ALR* has been and remains to provide a means for discussion and dissemination of ideas which will help revolutionaries in Australia to grapple with fundamentals and analyse what is happening. During the past year readers have raised a number of issues connected with our role.

One concerns language; of course, if the ideas put forward are not understood because the presentation is obscure or technical, or because the relevance and "point" of articles are not clear, these purposes of the journal will not be served. Readers have made justified criticisms of contributor and editorial failings in these respects which we are seeking to meet. We feel that most subjects which are well understood by the writer can be clearly presented, and we are seeking the co-operation of contributors in avoiding obscure language and assisting them to do so by making more editorial suggestions.

However, we would like to impress on our readers that their co-operation is also needed. Ideas, especially unfamiliar ones, are not grasped without effort. This does not mean just struggling with words and phrases with the aid of a dictionary — a need we feel we can make the exception rather than the rule — but of struggling against our own accustomed modes of thought and even prejudices, from which we on the left are no more immune than others. In particular, this involves conceptions of what subjects are, and what subjects are not, properly of concern to serious revolutionaries. For example, in issues last year questions of the processes of "socialisation" within society, and the views of a group calling themselves "anti-psychiatrists" were dealt with. To some readers this seemed an unwarranted deviation from the main concerns of the class struggle, something of interest only to intellectuals.

We disagree. In the first place, such issues are regarded as relevant by too few intellectuals as well as too few workers. In the second place, these matters are not secondary ones, to be attended to, if at all, only after the economic

problems have been solved. Simple models which take the economic as primary and determining, and cultural and value questions as derivative and secondary are inappropriate in general, and particularly in today's more complex and unaccustomed conditions.

We hold to the emphasis on "counter-hegemony", "counter-culture", "counter-values" or "counter-consensus" outlined in our editorial of October 1969. At the same time we do not share the view that "culture" is now everything or that it can be considered in isolation from economics and politics. We are therefore striving as well to give still more cogent analyses of the developments in the economy, in the trade unions and in politics, in such a way as will lead to them being viewed in interaction with each other instead of being seen as poles apart and without connection. Readers may not, of course, agree with our assessment of the relative importance and relations between topics, and we hope they will continue to communicate their views when they disagree. The ensuing discussion may well clear up obscure points and disagreements.

Concentration on themes, dealt with in a number of articles on the one issue written from different angles will also help, and need not cut across more or less permanent features that have been introduced. We will also adopt the practice of producing articles which are important, but of more restricted interest, as occasional pamphlets, which will be provided at low cost on request (one of these is advertised in this issue).

Another change we are making is in editorial procedure, something dictated by the difficulties of operating with continuous participation from people in different parts of a country of such great distances as Australia. We therefore list an editorial collective, comprising those taking a continuing and active interest in the journal, and in addition the names of those who have done most of the work in preparing the particular issue. This will include, from time to time, people who are not members of the permanent editorial collective. Because of the problems of production and sale of the issue that would normally appear about Christmas time, we are dropping that number and producing five issues at two-monthly intervals through the rest of the year.

We look forward to continued and increased help from readers in contributions, interest and assistance in building our sales and improving our standards.