FIVE CENTS A RIDE

IN ALR 4/1966 and 1/1967 Roy Nelson and Maurie Crow discuss some of the problems of forward planning for Australian cities, in particular that of passenger transportation. The private motor car has become a major means of transport in recent years and is producing a serious crisis for our cities. It is the writer’s opinion that whatever form the future city takes, public transport must be the main means for travel.

In 1963-64 all forms of urban public transport in Australia carried 1,437 million passengers and earned $132 million, or an average of 9.1c per passenger journey. This is just over $20 per head of the urban population. Operating expenses would be slightly more, as nearly all government-owned utilities ran at a loss. About one-third of the passengers and revenue were on trains, mostly in Sydney and Melbourne. The remainder were on trams and buses.

In the same year the number of cars, station wagons and utilities licensed in Australia was 3.3 million (300 per 1,000 people). Licences and registration fees came to $137 million. In the same year about $370 million was spent on road construction alone. About half would have been spent on city roadworks.

The Australian Transport Advisory Council estimated that road accidents in 1956-57 cost $170 million or $4,000 per casualty-causing accident. These costs would have increased considerably since then and about half would arise in the cities. The annual cost of city road accidents alone must approach 75% of the running costs of public transport. Hospitals bear much of this burden. Accident victims often require difficult, lengthy and expensive treatment. This is one cause of the financial crisis facing our hospitals. The victims moreover are often young people in their most productive years.

It has been estimated that to move 100,000 people in one hour, or 50,000 in each direction, requires:

(a) one double track underground railway
(b) four lanes of trams, two in each direction
(c) eight lanes of buses, four in each direction in a roadway 108 feet wide
(d) sixty lanes of cars, 30 in each direction in a roadway 650 feet wide.

All the people in eight lanes of cars on Sydney Harbour Bridge at peak hour could be seated in five tram cars.

To help reduce accidents and traffic congestion, nearly all capital cities are planning or building major expressways with grade separation at intersections. These will certainly reduce congestion and accident rates (by as much as one-quarter), but at a price.

One and a half miles of the Warringah Expressway on the northern end of Sydney Harbour Bridge is costing $20 million with an ultimate $80 million for nine miles. By contrast the estimated cost of Sydney’s famous Eastern Suburbs railway is $85 million. In Perth the Mitchell Freeway and Narrows Interchange is costing $20
million for a distance of about one mile. The Hawkesbury-Newcastle Expressway is costing about $1.5 million per mile. These are extreme examples. Nevertheless, traffic congestion will still remain on their completion.

The case on economic grounds alone for urban passenger transport as opposed to the private car is strong. This is without considering the heavy accident toll, noise, congestion and atmospheric pollution from car exhausts which is beginning to be a serious problem in some parts of the world (e.g., Los Angeles).

There can be no doubt that planning based on motor cars for city transport suits the motor and oil industries, as Maurie Crow has pointed out. Both Roy Nelson and Maurie Crow rightly criticise the basis of many of the transport studies made in Australia to date. They also suggest alternative principles. In doing so they highlight both the strengths and limitations of planning in general under present-day capitalist society. It is difficult, if not impossible, for planning in the interests of the community as a whole to be implemented when this conflicts with the vital interests of big business. The writer believes that the progressive movement will win the day in this country to the extent it can elaborate and fight for specific constructive policies that will serve the people as a whole and not just the narrow interests of a few big companies.

However, the motor car is extremely adaptable and versatile. One can go anywhere at any time (almost!). Many people would be willing to pay a high price for this convenience. Furthermore, the sense of power and command that comes from driving a car is not to be ignored, especially in a society where most people are, and feel like, mere cogs in an organisation over which they have little control. Many youths would regard their cars (for better or worse) as a means of freedom and escape.

Nevertheless, cities all over the world are finding it necessary to expand public transport regardless of the cost. Streets cannot cope, nor can finance cope with the expenditures needed to build roads for the flood of cars, London, Paris, Milan, Hamburg, Rome, Toronto, Montreal are all building or extending underground railways. Brussels, Copenhagen and Frankfurt are either extending, modernising or undergrounding trams—they still have an important role to play. At least 15 other European cities are doing the same.

Washington D.C., USA, is considering a plan based on rapid rail transit as opposed to an earlier plan largely of motor highways and freeways. San Francisco is currently building 75 miles of rapid rail transit at a cost of $A900 million.

All authorities agree that public transport in cities must play a greater role than it does. The problem is to get people to use it. The Metropolitan Transport Trust in Perth recently introduced a 50c family fare on Sundays and public holidays. For 50c a family of any size may travel anywhere on any number of buses or ferries and return. Pensioners can do the same for 20c. Previously empty buses on Sundays now carry many passengers. This points the way.

Public transport in each major city should be under the control of a single authority. It should be made responsible for control, planning and operation of trains, buses, trams, ferries as an integrated whole as well as for financial performance. Possibly supervision of taxis, hire cars and major parking ventures could be included.

The guidelines and standards of service should be set for the authority by town planning bodies basing them-
selves on principles akin to Roy Nelson’s ‘maximum accessibility, convenience, and mobility, minimising capital investment in transport networks—while retaining the desired residential densities.’

Timetables and routes could be based on origin and destination type surveys of passengers as is done with motorists now by Main Road authorities. Vehicles should be frequent and comfortable, if necessary air conditioned to encourage people to travel in them.

A single fare of 5c should apply for all journeys with concessions for off-peak travel, and to students, pensioners and school children. This revenue would meet 30% to 40% of operating costs. The deficit could be collected by the authority from rating or land tax on the area served by the transport authority.

Such a policy would need to be introduced gradually over a number of years so that necessary expansion of public transport facilities could be made to cater for increased traffic. A reduced level of expansion or activity in the motor manufacturing and servicing industries which might result would require planned re-adjustment with compensation for workers and garage owners or lessees displaced from work.

Reduced revenues from petrol tax, a major source of road funds, would hardly affect road funds to local authorities as the level of expenditure on freeways and expressways would eventually be reduced.

The proposals above are not going to solve all the problems of our cities. They have many others. The writer still believes that whatever form the future city takes, public transport must be the main means for travel.

BARRY PETERKIN.

PRESERVING OUR SURFING BEACHES

THE GOOSE that lays our golden sand is the foredune. It is golden sand, literally and symbolically, for the eyes tell us so and it brings gold in the form of dollars to many. Yet, in our blindness and stupidity we are killing the donor which supplies this asset free. What is more, after storms, our donor will replace the sand that is lost free, once again.

Even if we have not the ability to read the seascape, beach erosion experts are repeatedly presenting the lesson to us — free again. Yet, we remain stubborn and determined to throw away our heritage, level our dune system and lose the golden sand of our beaches.

Why? Many reasons are given. The space is needed for car parking, playing fields, etc. Listen to Mr. C. Carey, MLA for Albert, which includes the Gold Coast, as he was reported in the Gold Coast Bulletin:

“Mr. Carey said he wanted to thank the Mines Department for the way sand-mining was conducted along the Gold Coast. Sandhills had been turned into very beautiful playing fields, minerals had been mined and the State had received the benefit of this export trade. The Gold Coast, in turn, had received the benefit of having the land improved, Mr. Carey said.”

The Premier of Queensland, Mr. G. F. R. Nicklin, MLA for Landsborough, which includes the beaches from Caloundra to Maroochydore on the Sunshine Coast, is of the same opinion. The Nambour Chronicle reported him as saying:

“Until recent years, beach mining was frowned upon socially as a despoiler of beaches, but the companies now operating on a big scale planned
elaborately for the restoration of dredged areas before beginning operations. By the use of new techniques for the restoration of dredged areas, dredged land, whether on ocean frontages or in back areas, is returned to a condition far better than it was originally."

Local authorities support these views, as the Courier Mail reported:

"The Gold Coast City Council will support a protest to the Lands Department about the 'menace' of the sandhills at Broadbeach, near Len non's Hotel. The Council agreed yesterday to join the Chamber of Commerce in urging the Government to level the area. The Chamber describes the area of sandhills as an 'eyesore'. The Council will forward to the Department of Health a report from its medical officer, which says that the dunes are a health hazard, being near a school.

"In a stiff wind, the sand is blown about and can cut the skin and sting the eyes. In the case of school children, it is obvious that cut lunches must be polluted", the report says.

The possibility of re-stabilisation by vegetation was not mentioned in this report.

Wherever one looks at beaches, north or south of Brisbane, destruction of the foredunes is synonymous with 'development'. Concurrently with this urgent desire of authority to eliminate all the 'ugliness', 'waste space', 'untidiness', 'health hazard', etc., is the problem of beach erosion.

Strangely, the powers in control see these two matters as quite separate and entirely unrelated. It is analogous with the primitive aborigine not associating copulation with birth. The uneducated do not see beach erosion as the result of dune removal, and this is despite the advice of experts, commissioned at the expense of the taxpayer.

The Queensland Government engaged the services of a Dutch expert, Dr. Diephius, of the Delft Water Research Laboratories in Holland, who advised that special attention be given to sand dunes protection, also minimising of pathways through the dunes. In Holland the sand dunes are so important as a buffer between the sea and the land that walking on them is entirely prohibited. This is also the case on some American foreshores where, at great expense, the foredunes have had to be rebuilt with sand pumped from a distance.

Further advice, along the same lines, entirely disregarded by most local authorities has been issued to them by the co-ordinator General's Department, in a paper entitled "Beach Preservation-Basic Principles", a document prepared for the guidance of local authorities and others interested in beach erosion problems. This is summarised with the following advice.

1 Limit permanent development works within a barrier zone behind the frontal dunes, and at all costs preserve the frontal dunes.

2 Limit the removal of vegetation from dunes and replant bare areas with naturally occurring grasses and shrubs.

3 Where dunes have been destroyed, try to assist their regrowth by mechanical means, re-vegetation, brush fences, etc.

4 Do not undertake, nor allow the undertaking of any permanent works on a beach in the nature of sea walls, groynes, jetties, etc., without thorough investigation by competent authorities.

5 Limit sand removal from all parts of the beach and the frontal dunes.

The above document was sent to local authorities in April, 1966; since
then there has been no change in the pattern of destruction. In fact, since then, on the Sunshine Coast, foredunes have been razed along the following beaches:— Kings, Buddina, Mooloolaba, Maroochydore, Mudjimba, Marcoola and Noosa, which are the responsibility of the Shires of Landsborough, Maroochy and Noosa.

Only one local authority, the Caboolture Shire Council, has implemented the advice and carried out anti-erosion works on Bribie Island, which are proving most beneficial in rebuilding the island’s beaches.

During Cyclone Dinah, in January of this year (1967), although the seas were not as destructive as in many previous cyclones, waves broke through the lowered dunes in many places. To uneducated minds this was not the result of man’s destructive practices, but shrugged off as ‘cyclonic damage.’

At Noosa, plans are being prepared for rebuilding the beach by pumping sand from the river mouth, yet, at a recent (March) meeting of the local Chamber of Commerce it was suggested that when the frontal dune was rebuilt it be used as a parking area and a toll levied on the cars using it.

Also in March, the last of the foredune was removed from Kings Beach, Caloundra, to reclaim a swampy section on the inside of the Spit, which is used as a parking space.

Some people never learn, Can they be taught?

To finish this sad story with a message of hope: there are pressure groups within the beach communities working hard and intelligently on a program of education, lobbying and research on the selection and cultivation of foreshore vegetation. The Government is conducting an offshore hydrological survey and has promised legislation to create a foreshore authority within the Department of the Co-Ordinator General.

All that will be needed then will be that rather rare attribute — the strength and determination to make good legislation effective. Time is not on the side of the conservation of our precious heritage — our golden sand beaches.

KATHLEEN MCArTHUR

ART AND THE WORKERS

MAY I be allowed space to add to some lines of thought developed by Ralph Gibson in his article on art in ALR 4/66?

Many Australian artists accept a political and class commitment, although it can be recognised that the great majority do not become active members of any party or accept a continuing commitment to political causes.

Artists of the Left, including communists, see a need to centre their art on working class attitudes and ideals and devote their talents to help the campaigns of the organisations of the working class. They follow tracks already blazed and their work develops the strong democratic and humanist strain in the Australian art tradition.

But a paradox appears to exist. The worker is not an eager participant in the art created by the Left artists nor is he a regular patron of the so-called ‘serious’ arts (theatre, ballet, graphic arts, literature, etc.).

Some artists, trying to bridge the seeming gap between the worker and themselves, have used ‘plain’ form and didactic content. Their intentions
were good but the results were often bad art.

Doesn't the answer lie in this? That the working class has been seen too often through the lenses of dogma and preconceived ideal? Seen as deprived souls with an instinctive love for the arts which is thwarted by capitalism? But there are few impediments in our major cities today to the worker who wishes to enjoy theatre, ballet, a film or symphonic concert. High prices can be mentioned (and there is a case for the right to enjoy the arts at cheaper rates of admission), but cost has not kept the worker away from the Moscow Circus or the film Sound of Music where they have appeared in Australia.

By and large we have failed to give due recognition to the fact that since 1945 the working people in Australia have grown tremendously in numbers and diversity; diverse in jobs and occupations, but also in their interests in art, hobbies, sports and intellectual pursuits. Among them must be counted great numbers of migrant workers of different cultural backgrounds and a vastly increased proportion of skilled and professional workers with higher education.

What section of this diverse mass at any one time has the Left artist tried to impress? Generally, the main approach has been to the 'established', the industrial worker. But these sections of the working people have not been seen exactly as they are, with specific tastes and cultural preferences, and this has led to failures in the work of the Left artists.

It should now be recognised that the industrial worker has no special interest in the 'serious' arts. The regular audiences for these art forms (and the artists who sustain them) would be found to come from the middle sections of the population.

The industrial worker does not generally patronise or participate in these forms of art.

Capitalism induces corruption in art and depravity in taste and these affect all classes in its society. The arts, and the development of taste, have to struggle for survival in an alien atmosphere. Classes or sections of classes only come seriously towards art when they are acting for social change or when they are struggling to establish an identity. Even then it may be a random rather than an automatic activity. The revolution in Cuba would seem to have succeeded without a parallel activity in art.

The Australian worker (in the 'accepted' sense) was more interested in art for himself and his class at the turn of the century than he is today. Among industrial workers, the position was better some time ago than it is now. There were a number of union libraries, bands, film groups and so on.

But none of this is to say that the industrial worker has no interest in art, but only to recognise that he does not have the interest in arts that the Left artists would like him to have. We must consider the great spread of the so-called 'popular' arts which is the result of technological change (radio, film, television, paperback publishing, etc.) and the fact that for great numbers of people these arts satisfy a need for entertainment and relaxation. A visit to the rapidly growing phenomena of the club-beergarden-cabaret shows how many of our industrial workers and their families now seek entertainment and relaxation after a week's work.

There are some who would condemn the popular arts to a limbo of decadence; they see these arts as capitalist instruments to stupefy and indoctrinate; and they possibly see no need for the popular arts and forms of entertainment under socialism and
believe that the future socialist citizens will shun the remnants of ‘bourgeois rubbish’ and turn voluntarily to the ‘serious’ arts for their enjoyment.

It cannot be denied that the popular arts contain much debased and vulgar content; much that is inimical to the interests of the working people because they express the ethics and mercenary values governing the capitalist system.

But should we mistake this quantity of tainted content for the form? Some Left artists would take a stand completely opposed to the popular art forms and counterpose the attraction of ‘working class’ art, offer folksong as an alternative to pop song, etc., and hope to win audiences away from ‘reactionary’ art.

Again, these artists would set up a rigid dividing line between ‘working class’ art and the popular arts and say that we cannot step over this division in form and style without betraying our artistic principles and contaminating ourselves with the ‘bourgeois poisons’.

The task of marking boundaries in art is a delicate one. We have had to pull down fences before this, with due embarrassment to ourselves. Jazz provided one occasion.

The Left artist must come to the use of the art forms that the worker enjoys and try to imbue them with a worthwhile content. Of course, some artists, recognising what the worker enjoys in the popular arts, step back in horror to cry that he is under the spell of capitalist corruption and depravity.

But don’t we often make short-sighted and prejudiced judgments on what is depraved and corrupted? Is Beatles-type music corrupt? Are all pop songs and their singers worthless? Are the Twist and its offspring depraved dances? How should we judge the Young Labor Association in Brisbane for sponsoring a Go Go dance team?

When we try seriously to study what we have meant by depravity and corruption, don’t we find that a lot of our ideas are shaped by conservative habits of thought, by tendencies to reject all that is new and original and often by fine old-fashioned prudery.

The Left artists need to gain a greater knowledge of the worker’s way of life, especially of his choice of entertainment and relaxation and his cultural likes and pleasures. This does not mean that Left artists should see their only duty owing to the industrial sections of the working people, or that they should bend all their talents to a proficiency in the popular arts.

The growing diversity of cultural interests among the working people should be recognised, and this can be contrasted with the increasing vulgarisation of the popular arts. Artists like Barry Humphries, Garth Welch and Bruce Petty might scarcely have emerged in the Australia of 1936, neither could we have foreseen the Munster Family, striptease and the James Bond films as objects of popular entertainment.

**Jack Penberthy**

**NEW GUINEA EDUCATION**

I FIND a great deal to agree with in J.C.’s article (ALR No. 2, 1967), however I feel that Mr. Cooper has not gone far enough.

Education in the Territory, to be viewed with any sense of perspective, must be seen in its historical context, i.e. the history of Australian administration in the Territory, particularly
the history of New Guinea. Papua and New Guinea were, up until 1941, two separate administrative units, the two administrations being motivated by two almost diametrically opposed assumptions.

1 Papua, under Sir Hubert Murray, being run on the late 19th Century line of development and protection of local indigenous society.

2 New Guinea, a Mandated Territory, run by an administration which without much digging, appears to have been at the 'beck and call' of powerful commercial interests, interested in the 'take over' of German commercial interests of the Territory.

To quote the words of Murray, an ardent critic of Australian Administration of the Mandate, “There was a tendency to regard the native as an asset, and not to consider the well being and development of the native race for its own sake, as being one of the principal objects to be aimed at by the Administration.” This being the case why have education?

The history of both administrations is plagued by a total disregard, on the part of the Commonwealth Government, for the financial costs of an administrating authority charged with the task of developing a subsistence society.

A reading of Murray's correspondence with his brother Gilbert, shows:

1 Murray had trouble convincing the Federal Government that there was a placed called Papua.

2 That the policy of 'Territories must pay their own way', was crippling developmental efforts.

At the same time, the view of the Federal Government seems to have been:—

1 Murray, with his policy of native protection and development, was a nuisance, and Papua an economic loss.

2 New Guinea, a new piece of 'real estate', was to be exploited to the limit, and would have to obtain its own funds for day to day administration; while to satisfy mandate requirements, nominal funds were made available for such luxuries as education, and native agricultural programs.

UNDER CONDITIONS SUCH AS THESE, HOW CAN YOU HOPE TO INITIATE AND DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF EDUCATION?

In 1930 the bulk of education was being carried by the missions in both Territories. By 1939, expenditure on education in the Mandated Territory, was £3,000. As Ralph says:

"It does not take much reading between the lines to make one realise that the main flaw in the administration of education in the Mandated Territory lay in two facts; that it was no one's responsibility, (no one was interested?), and there was little money available.”

After World War II, the new Administration took a more direct and active interest in education. However:

1 There was no basis from which to build.

2 There was still a shortage of funds, e.g. in 1950 expenditure on education was still only £303,500.

The vote to education in the year 1966-67 has risen to 15.6 million dollars, or 15.4% of the total budget. As implied by Mr. Cooper, whilst 15.6 million dollars may look a sizeable amount, the position is far from adequate. Furthermore, the figure quoted is deceiving; the money voted has to cover all education expenditure, and a good proportion of the vote is directed towards an expanding
building program of schools and teachers’ colleges.

The result is that the system is ‘bursting at the seams’. Primary education has, according to latest reports, reached the stage of self sustained growth. The reports say nothing about quality of the growth, or the stability of its tenure. The secondary system is being pressurised to take in more students, whilst being limited by:

- lack of funds
- a shortage of trained staff
- a dearth of facilities.

Libraries are considered a luxury, science teaching facilities ludicrous.

To make an education program effective in a developing society, one requires an all-over program of economic and agricultural development. The hard facts at the moment seem to indicate that the rate of indigenous development in these two sectors does not seem to be adequate to absorb the output of the educational system within the next few years.

Old attitudes and prejudices die hard, particularly in a colonial or pseudo-colonial society. To an established, commercial section of the European population in T.P.N.G., ‘a kanaka will always be a kanaka’. To understand and feel this word and what this word connotes, one has to hear it being used.

The effect of the attitudes which lie behind the word, are to be seen in everyday life in Papua New Guinea. The recommendation made recently by ‘The Highland Farmers and Settlers Association’, (made up of coffee and tea planters), “That the Administration takes steps to divert indigenous farmers away from coffee production back to the production of sweet potatoes, and other native crops,” seems to indicate that the tweeded Pukka gentlemen are having difficulty selling their produce on the world market, and do not want indigenous farmers to move in on what little share Papua New Guinea has of this market.

As Mr. Cooper implies, the future of New Guinea lies in agriculture. Because of this, more money should be made available for education, particularly agricultural education. But more important, steps should be taken to advance local cash crop agriculture, by a program of protection, direction and development of indigenous agricultural effort. At present no effective steps are being taken in this direction.

To most of the pupils at a High School, the school is an avenue away from the village; it is the road to the promised land of white collars, the land of the ‘Kuskas’. Unfortunately not all will survive the gauntlet of the educational system, and even if they did, a land with a good supply of clerks and little else, stumbles along the hard road of development.

There is little attraction for the schoolboy to go back to the village; what can he do there but go back to being a subsistence farmer? Under the present system of education he will have learnt little agricultural method, and even if he manages to grow cash crops, and establish himself on the margin of money economy, his scope will be limited.

For the indigenous, history seems to be repeating itself; to ex-patriate, commercial interests, he is still an asset, an educated asset, but then why not? It makes the asset more productive. The Australian Government has charged itself with the trust of Papua New Guinea and the substance of this trust is to give the people of Papua New Guinea the means to come into their heritage. This means economic viability throughout the economy starting at
the village farmer; while this base is missing, and under the present system it is missing and will continue to be missing, these people will not come into their own.

A.B.

IDEOLOGY OF INTELLECTUALS

IT IS ALWAYS satisfying to find that someone thinks one's views worthwhile enough to take the trouble to argue with them, and particularly so when the reply is as reasonably worded as that by Norm Docker in the April-May ALR.

Norm Docker's opinion seems to be that the industrial working class is decisive in the movement for socialism, and that the intelligentsia or intellectually trained have only a role to play in so far as they align themselves with the industrial workers. This section of the work force can have no ideology of its own, but if they adopt the ideology of the industrial workers (old style) can be effective. This is the fundamental issue; Norm Docker's quite true statement that some intellectually trained persons are self-employed or even employers of labor is beside the point. The remarks of Joyce Clark about the non-socialist nature of the newer sections of the work-force are also true; the actions and attitudes do however represent a spontaneous development which is objectively anti-capitalist, but is quite different from that of the older working class. The transformation of these spontaneous ideas into a consciously-held anti-capitalist position requires some generalisation in which Marxists might assist. But it is not likely to be helped if we refuse to examine the differences in the relationship to the productive process, and hence social ideas, of the older and newer strata of the workforce. The development of the productive forces, and the division of labor, produced a class of workers who performed simple operations, and were tied to machines. The workers were brought together into large concerns, their labor was collective, and the basis was laid for a 'collectivist' and later socialist world outlook.

The article by R. Richta in the January, 1967 issue of Peace, Freedom and Socialism makes it clear that the newer sections of the workforce stand in a different relationship to the productive process. The evolution of the worker is into that of 'a highly skilled supervisor and job setter' or that of a technician servicing a whole production cycle. With the change in his role, man develops a new outlook on the world, and a new conception of himself. It is I believe in opposition to the place allocated to him by capitalism. My article in the February-March issue of ALR tried to show how new conflicts are arising, around somewhat different issues, and how these are often fought in a different style. Clearly we need the sort of factual analysis, which Richta has made, for Australia; but it would appear that the trends he indicates are occurring in Australia and there is evidence to support this. Some of the major political conflicts now occurring in Australia show the emergence of the new strata on the political scene.

Norm Docker bases himself too much on the numbers game in his attempts to reduce the significance of the changes, although not as crudely as the C.P. Congress documents. It doesn't seem that this is altogether a new argument, for Karl Marx (in The German Ideology) points out that big industry was decisive in setting the leading trend, long before the workers in big industry were the majority.
Norm Docker has criticised some ambiguities and loosenesses in my article, for which I am grateful. However, I hope that his basic argument—that the world can still be realistically examined using only the old methods and categories—is not too widely accepted. Attempts to restrict thinking to minor tinkerings with the grand scheme laid down in the past might make the marxist position seem so unreal that political opportunism might have more appeal, and I feel sure that Norm Docker and I agree on that issue.

DOUG WHITE

MORE ON THE PILL

A few comments on Dr. Finger’s excellent article on The Pill.

More emphasis on the role of the pill in the emancipation of women could be made. Women can (within the limits of capitalism) plan not only their family, but also their careers.

As communists, we aim to prevent disease, and that includes mental ill health. A lot of mental ill health follows illegitimate births. Whilst I do not advocate pre-marital intercourse, it does occur, and we should not be so conservative as to not make the pill more readily available in an effort to reduce these unwanted pregnancies and the emotional problems that follow.

R. STANTON.

DOUBT ON AFFLUENCE

IN BERNIE TAFT’S interesting and stimulating article, it is stated there has been a rise in living standards over the past two decades. Is this statement based on the real value of the male award wage over forty hours? That the total income in the majority of households has risen I can accept. There has been a rise in the employment of married women, there has been a rise in overtime working (many men work full time and part time), and the wages of the younger generation have improved: all this contributes to the greater family income and (in my opinion) the erroneous conception of rising living standards. In the course of the article reference was made to the thirties; then most families depended on the male wage which did not include overtime.

It would be interesting to know whether there are any statistics on this, or whether I’m being subjective or objective.

J. M. MCINTYRE

FROM BIRTHDAY COMMENTS

Congratulations on your first birthday. I like the scope and breadth of the articles. I would like to see an article on the discussions between communists and Roman Catholics.

F. H., Victoria.

Should be out monthly.

J. P., SA.

I look forward to receiving each issue. One type of material we lack is the survey-summarisation type of treatment of international affairs.

J. C., NSW.

CORRECTIONS

In John Manifold’s review of Colin Roderick’s book on Henry Lawson it is stated that there has been a rise in living standards over the past two decades. Is this statement based on the real value of the male award wage over forty hours? That the total income in the majority of households has risen I can accept. There has been a rise in the employ-

ment of married women, there has been a rise in overtime working (many men work full time and part time), and the wages of the younger generation have improved: all this contributes to the greater family income and (in my opinion) the erroneous conception of rising living standards. In the course of the article reference was made to the thirties; then most families depended on the male wage which did not include overtime.

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J. M. MCINTYRE