structure, but whose objectives should be limited to control* and not the acquisition of power.

These could be new movements or institutions or ones that already exist, for example, the trade unions, movements of youth, of women, elected councils of local autonomy, the press, etc. which have acquired or re-acquired their real autonomy. It is important to observe that, in Hungary for example, a development in this direction would not conflict with the Constitution or with the party program and could facilitate a true dialogue between those in power and the various social strata and the working class itself. Commitment to this road could be the "historical compromise" for eastern Europe, avoiding blood conflicts and making possible the beginning of democratic development, the unfolding of a form of socialist democracy albeit particularised.

But I understand that this prospect would require from both sides an openness to agreement and compromise which is almost unimaginable today. On the part of those in power it would mean the acceptance of the birth of a certain institutionalisation of autonomous movements which are independent of their direct influence. These movements should be able to form their own point of view independently of the exercise of power, having also the possibility of influencing public opinion with their own ideas.

But that pre-supposes the renouncing of the traditional political objective of all political movements — that of attaining power — on the part of those social movements which acquire or re-acquire their independence from the party. Certainly, to arrive at such a compromise a great historical maturity and a deep understanding of the consequences of an aggravation of the situation would be needed from all concerned.

The time at our disposal for this maturing seems, however, to be extremely limited and the possibilities of success therefore small. There remains the hope, a kind of faith, that progressive rationality can at last untie the intricate knot of particular interests and drives for power.

* Control is used here evidently in the sense of "hold in check", "verify", or "regulate" rather than its alternative meaning of "dominate" or "command".

(Trans. note)

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**Transnational Corporations and U.S. Imperialism**

**David Meredith**


Reviewed by David Meredith.

In a world where the international situation appears to change rapidly, there is a great need for an historical approach to imperialism, to go back into its roots, trace its development and assist in an understanding of why present-day changes occur and what their significance might be. The title of V G Kiernan's book America, the new imperialism, from white settlement to world hegemony, is full of promise, but the work itself contains many disappointments.

In keeping with his earlier works of imperial history, Kiernan concentrates on capturing the mood of America's leaders and, to a lesser extent, the American people, at various points in their history, through literature, popular culture, and autobiography. America, the new imperialism is thus more of a history of opinion about US imperialism, than an analysis of its causes and development. Despite the description of Kiernan on the jacket cover as 'an adherent of the Marxist method of history', the work is not one of Marxist
methodology or analysis. D H Lawrence, Walt Whitman, Joseph Conrad, Rudyard Kipling, Bernard Shaw, H G Wells and Edgar Rice Burroughs all receive more prominence than Lenin, Bukhann or Luxemborg. Kiernan’s comment that ‘American capitalism has often seemed to be functioning on very much the lines traced by the theory of imperialism pioneered by Hobson and developed later by Lenin’ (209), implies a fundamental misunderstanding of Lenin’s theory. In fact, insofar as there is a theoretical framework, it is Hobsonian rather than Marxist. For example, Kiernan hardly mentions American monopoly capitalism; instead he tells us that “Big Business” influences American foreign policy by the lobby system on Capitol Hill, and that ‘...most of the criticism levelled at the US is really criticism of capitalism in the form it has taken there; it has had long enough to colour the national disposition, but need not be thought identical with it’ (270). He goes on to elaborate the Hobsonian idea that capitalism does not need empire, and that foreign adventures are thus the works of a few corporations interested in raw materials, of naïve politicians and evil-minded military leaders. The nation (separated in some undefined way from capitalism) has gained nothing from imperialism, except employment. The costs of empire are paid by the whole nation — the benefits go to a powerful few.

Similarly, Kiernan often seeks to explain American imperialism in terms of the personal failings of its leaders. On the American support for Pakistan in the war with Bangladesh, he writes: ‘It seemed as if the cult of the bayonet, determined to uphold right-wing army regimes anywhere and everywhere through thick and thin, had taken a pathological hold on the decision-makers; a grotesque parody of the law-abiding, demilitarised earth which was once the American dream.’ (237). The “American Dream” has been betrayed, apparently, but there is no discussion of the origins and functions of this “dream” as a form of social control and domestic cultural imperialism.

The work is not without some value. Its survey of events since 1945 is useful and the book is highly readable. Kiernan makes some pertinent comments on American imperialism in the Middle East: ‘No nation in history has had a more expensive and disobliging ally (than Israel)...Most of them economically underveloped, conservative, pious, the Arabs were tailor-made clients for America; by arming Israel against them Washington allowed Moscow to gain ground instead...America found itself landed with the contradictory task of safeguarding both Israel’s holy places and its own, the oil wells’ (239-40).

Looking to the future, Kiernan sees some possible cracks in American hegemony, arising from the ever increasing financial burden of empire (a truly Hobsonian concept), the consequence of propping up corrupt right-wing regimes that communism is thereby encouraged, and the creation of capitalism in America’s neo-colonies which competes with its own manufacturing industry. Not very large fissures, to be sure, and not assisted by the weakness of domestic opposition to US imperialism: as Kiernan rightly points out, Blacks, Puerto Ricans and Native Americans are highly critical, as recipients of White imperialism at home, but organised labor and middle class students cannot be counted on for sustained opposition.

In sum, this is a readable introductory survey which gets better as it comes up to the post-1945 period, but it does not contain the historical Marxist analysis one is led to expect, nor is it the definitive and comprehensive survey which is badly needed.

Whilst there is a shortage of good general surveys of capitalist imperialism, excellent case studies continue to be produced. One such collection is Norman Givan, Corporate Imperialism: Conflict and Expropriation, which gathers together for the first time six of his essays, published between 1970 and 1975. His theme is the imperialism of transnational corporations in the Third World, and he illustrates it by studies of the copper and aluminium industries of Chile and the Caribbean.

An important contribution by Givan is the model of corporate imperialism which he presents in the first essay. There is sometimes a tendency of those on the left to criticise the actions of transnational mining corporations without attempting to place them in the context of contemporary monopoly capitalism. Givan defines corporate imperialism as a system of international capitalism in which power is exercised by owners and managers of capital in order to accumulate capital through appropriation of surplus; the relationship between owners and managers of capital and other institutions and groups (eg. government bureaucracies, workers, peasants, unemployed) is one of dominance and is institutionalised in a framework of large, integrated, transnational corporations. These TNCs as a group form the base of the system. Individually, they are the system’s principal instrument of action. Their individual aim of growth and profit is the same as the appropriation of surplus and accumulation of capital which is the aim of the system as a whole. Mineral-export economies will be in conflict with corporate imperialism over revenue matters — what share of the income from the industry goes to the TNCs — over structural matters — as the exporting country’s government attempts to use ineral wealth to diversify the economy; while the TNC strives to integrate it more fully into its world system and ultimately, over power issues, — the power to decide all the other questions in dispute.
Conflict, Girvan is at pains to emphasise, changes the form of the relationship, but not necessarily its essence. Its essence lies in the power which the parent company exercises over its subsidiaries, the metropolitan centre over the periphery:

The subsidiary's integration with the parent company comprehensive: its economic dependence is therefore total, and its subjugation to external authority absolute. It is the imperialism of the parent over the subsidiary, as embodied in the power relationships and economic characteristic of the transnational firm, which, when reproduced on a world scale and transposed onto the centre-periphery pattern of the international capitalist economy, gives rise to the phenomenon that we have called corporate imperialism. (24-5).

Girvan shows how all the raw material industries in the Third World came to be foreign-owned as American and European monopoly capital expanded at the end of the last century. In copper, for example, it was the same story in Montana and in Chile — the elimination of an embryonic capitalist class and the integration of resources into the operations of a monopoly company. Mineral-exporting economies in the Third World experience periods of rapid growth of exports, but eventually a state of relative stagnation is reached as the TNC moves on to more economic suppliers, or to new end-products. Girvan asks how can mineral industry initiate a process of self-sustaining growth in the wider economy that can outlast the boom period in mineral exports. Under corporate imperialism the answer is that it cannot:

...mineral industries in the peripheral countries have conspicuously failed to act as a catalyst for the generation of self-sustaining growth...(Moreover)...this failure has occurred in spite of decades of active government intervention in these economies, using mineral-industry revenues to promote diversified development aimed at relieving economic dependence on mineral exports. Today, that goal is as far away as ever for most if not all of the mineral export economies. (30-31)

This failure results from the subsidiary which owns the mining industry being integrated with the parent company, not with the local economy. Profits are remitted overseas, linkages are few, purchases are made from the parent firm rather than locally, capital is raised by the parent firm abroad and so forth. The host government and the subsidiary's labor force attempt to bargain with the transnational for a larger share of the revenue flow. At some point in the history of the firm's investment in the country, a larger share may be obtained. After the period of formal colonialism ended in the 1960s, generally the first generation of nationalist leaders were able to "renegotiate" a better deal with the TNCs. One problem here is knowing exactly what are the profits of the subsidiaries, but if this and similar problems can be overcome, the host government may find itself with increased revenues from the mining sector. The consequence of this is that taxes from mining become the main source of government revenue, the state apparatus expands rapidly, and the power of the bureaucratic-politician class is greatly strengthened. Income from mining now finances expensive development schemes which involve imports of capital and consumption goods. At this point, attempts to diversify run contrary to the interests of the TNC and the host government leaders and public servants, who then see any threat — including militant labor demands for higher wages and/or control — to the TNC as a threat to their own position. "Growth without development" sums it up: national income increases, as do levels of investment, imports, exports — but poverty and structural unemployment remain. Having obtained a "better deal" from the TNCs and become more dependent upon mineral exports, countries producing the same raw material sometimes come together to present a united front to the multinationals and to demand an even higher share. Some of these attempts have been very successful, e.g. OPEC and the International Bauxite Association. But
the logic of the system remains: dependence on mineral exports is increased, the more "successfully" such organisations obtain price rises and other concessions. The final stage is full or partial nationalisation of the mining industry, which might or might not, depending on the conditions, leave the host government better off in terms of share of income flow and control over the industry, but it also does nothing to lessen dependence on a single mineral export.

Girvan argues persuasively that the only way out of this cycle of ever-increasing dependence is through disengagement from the international capitalist economy. Nationalisation is a necessary part of this, but must be seen as a first step towards economic independence rather than an end in itself. This strategy is not likely, of course, to appeal to the ruling class in Third World countries, let alone the TNCs, and thus he concludes a social and political revolution is necessary if the pattern of growth without development is to be broken.

The rest of the book consists of essays on particular mineral export economies and contain some important insights into the process of the integration of these economies into the TNCs empires, and the severe problems of disengagement. Girvan himself was part of a team advising the Guyanan government in 1970-71 when it nationalised the Demerara Bauxite Company, a fully-owned subsidiary of Alcoa. His account of the difficulties in obtaining reliable figures from the company, the ability of Alcoa to influence the US State Department and the World Bank on their behalf, and the tendency for Guyana's leaders to compromise and use the issue to advance their own careers, makes revealing reading.

The essay on Chile is also useful, particularly in placing the Allende government's efforts at nationalisation in the historical perspective of sixty years of US corporate imperialism. As in the case of Guyana's bauxite, when a government takes on a US TNC, it must also reckon with the hostility and opposition of the US government, the World Bank and the CIA. The US government's support was not for Anaconda and Kennecott as such, but for American transnational corporations in general: if Chile had been allowed to get away with it, the rest of the Third World might have followed in expropriating US assets and in electing radical governments. With the overthrow of Allende, the Pinochet government has returned the copper industry to its foreign owners and created a favorable framework for the TNCs. In many ways the situation resembles that of the industry in the 1920s, but as Girvan comments:

The Chilean copper wheel had come full circle. But not quite, for Chile will never be the same again. Few more comprehensive cases of imperialism associated with transnational corporations have ever occurred. Few have ended so tragically. The lessons should not be forgotten. (94).

Finally, Girvan outlines a minerals policy for the Third World designed to end dependence. As a starting point, the country must aim to disengage from the international capitalist economy rather than to become more integrated with it. Full nationalisation of the mineral industry, together with localisation of staff and ownership, is a necessary but not sufficient condition. Mineral exports to the industrialised world must be phased out: mineral reserves are finite, they have already been depleted for little or no gain to the country, and in future they should be increasingly used for local purposes and the total output reduced. The industrialised world must accept that it has not the right to the raw materials of other countries, and will have to manage without them, or with a much reduced supply. The consequences are far-reaching, and Girvan acknowledges it is impossible to separate out a strategy for minerals from other aspects of the dependence of the Third World. However, he makes some important points — that very successful producers' organisations in the long run are counter-productive, that indigenous technology and research should be devoted to developing local industries using the local raw materials and that this implies a change in consumption patterns, and that Third World countries should co-operate to engage in state-to-state transactions to by-pass the international capitalist economy.

Norman Girvan's essays are lively, readable and thought-provoking. The issues he discusses are highly relevant to the future of the unindustrialised world, and are not without significance to mineral-exporting industrialised economies, such as Australia.
Anti-Personnel Weapons

It's ironical that in war, individual suffering haunts us more than thousands killed in a mass bombing raid. One is a personal tragedy; the other only a statistic.

The graphic television reporting of the Viet Nam war — which brought the war into our living rooms — helped create an international campaign to revise the laws of war.

In the late 1960s, both the United Nations and the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross (which is responsible for ensuring that the Geneva Conventions are kept up to date) began a massive effort to update the laws of war. This work resulted in new laws, covering, for example, prisoners of war and victims in civil conflicts.

But little was done to abolish particularly nasty weapons like napalm, fragmentation weapons and high-velocity, low-calibre bullets which create extensive wounds. These weapons are receiving additional attention. New international rules may yet be devised.

Malvern Lumsden, a member of the renowned Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, has written an excellent and detailed study of what these weapons are, and what they do to people.

His book covers the history of these weapons and the significant contribution to improving them made by the United States involvement in the Viet Nam war. He then looks at the specific types of weapons, including new ones like the use of electric weapons, weapons which use sound to shock their victims, and lasers which burn out the victim's eyes.

Attempts at banning weapons are almost as old as the weapons themselves. The Second Lateran Council, in 1139, for example, attempted to outlaw the crossbow's use between Christians. The ban didn't last long.

About a century ago, when our Victorian forebears believed themselves to be exponents of a new civilisation, new attempts were made to ban barbaric weapons.

The dum-dum bullet breaks up when entering the body and not only makes it difficult for surgeons to fish out all the fragments, but also takes the wound longer to heal. The dum-dum bullet itself was banned last century. The ban remains in force.

But the Americans — and Australians — have got around it by their high-velocity, low-calibre bullet which ricochets within the victim's body. The bullet — as the Vietnamese found out — is similar to the dum-dum. But it is on this side of the legal boundary.

The laws of war in general have had more success than they are given credit for. The laws protecting prisoners of war are very useful. But attempts at banning particular weapons all have poor records.

The distinction between the combatant and his method of fighting is best seen by the oft-quoted irony of a World War II bomber pilot. The civilians killed by him weren't protected by the laws of war. But if his aircraft were shot down, then he would have the privileged prisoner-of-war status which allowed him special treatment — the regulations even explained the type of work he could do in captivity and the way in which he was to be accommodated. At first glance it seems as though generals are willing to abide by rules which protect the enemy's troops in captivity — provided their own captured troops were treated well by the enemy. But they wanted a free hand with which to kill the enemy and so refused limitations on weapons.

But the development of weapons has shown that generals don't always like new weapons. If left to themselves, they wouldn't have had submarines, bombers, tanks or mortars. These are not the gallant ways to fight wars. Instead, the new weapons have often been forced upon these men by politicians anxious for quick victory. Winston
Churchill, for example, was instrumental in forcing his generals to use "Winston's folly" — the tank — in World War I. Behind the politicians have been the scientists and arms manufacturers. These have often forced the pace of new weapons. This doesn't deny that generals like new weapons. But when decrying new weapons, we shouldn't always blame the generals automatically.

The scientists, then, play a very important role in changing the way in which wars are fought. While the grand strategy is left to politicians and generals, the scientists are busy perfecting new techniques by which people are killed. The role of the scientists in nuclear warfare is well known. We shouldn't overlook their equally significant involvement in developing non-nuclear weapons, like fragmentation weapons and napalm. These weapons may not kill but they leave the victims as near-dead cripples. There is no "peace" for them after the war ends.

What possibility is there for the abolition of anti-personnel weapons? I do not share Malvern Lumsden's hope that international lawyers will find tidy norms and neat phrases to do the job. Their past record has been bad. There is little chance of their doing better in the future.

But the situation is not gloomy. On the contrary, what international law isn't doing — public opinion has already done. Napalm, for example, is unlikely ever to be used again in a major war. Whatever military benefits there may have been for the Americans in Viet Nam in using napalm were far outweighed by the adverse public reaction at home and overseas. Every dollop of burning napalm which melted a Vietnamese helped forge the opposition to America's campaign. It is unlikely that Australians, for example, would approve of laser weapons which burn out the eyes of an enemy or their children.

As long as wars are fought, weapons are needed. The overriding aim should be general and complete disarmament.

But we needn't wait until that golden era dawns. On the contrary, disarmament negotiations can be helped by popular opposition to particular weapons. This opposition should be focused on preventing the use of weapons which cause unnecessary suffering. It should also be focused on encouraging scientists (many of whom around the world are working on the arms race) to follow alternative scientific activities.

It would be ironical — and yet possible — if popular horror at anti-personnel weapons triggered a renewed campaign to abolish weapons generally. Malvern Lumsden's book contains considerable information upon which to build the campaigns. The arms race would be napalm's last victim.

The New Politics of Human Rights

Keith D. Suter


This is an excellent though very expensive introduction to the progress being made in the international protection of human rights. Dr. Joyce has played a leading part, for almost 40 years in civil liberties and social reform movements on both sides of the Atlantic, and so he is able to write with all the confidence of some one well versed in the practical side.

The first two chapters provide an historical background. However, the book's main focus is on current developments.

The chapters include the importance of public opinion in protecting human rights, the threats to human rights from science and technology, and new organisations and methods for protecting human rights. There are also case studies on, among others, Chile, South Africa and decolonisation.

There is a concluding chapter on new areas of human rights, such as the right to economic and social development and the right to peace. It is a pity that this chapter is so brief, since it is clearly breaking new ground and further information is required.

Among the book's themes are, first, that more progress is being made in the international protection of human rights than is commonly realised.

Secondly, as some fields approach completion (such as decolonisation) so new fields of action.
open up (such as scientific and technological threats).

Third, the success of this work generally is tied closely to prevailing political thinking and the protection of human rights cannot be compartmentalised but must be viewed in the wider political context, for example, western countries were slow to criticise South Africa's racial politics partly because of their financial and military ties with South Africa.

The book should be widely read, not only by human rights activists but also by other people interested in the areas also covered, such as science and technology, development and disarmament.

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**REVIEW**

**New Guide to Marx's Capital**

Jan Bruck


At a time when activities in Marxist theory, both in the academic as well as the political sphere, have to carried out in near degree zero temperature, a Guide to Marx's Capital such as this one might help isolated groups to revive their spirits and to survive the political winter. This small but dense book, co-produced by two members of a Sydney-Konstanz collective, provides, in five essays and two appendices, a clear skeletal outline of the three volumes of Capital, assisted by a handy "systematic glossary", in which "145 key terms..."
and concepts” are briefly explained in order of their appearance — a working strategy very useful for the study of Capital in small groups, under the guidance of experienced members but not for lone readers looking for an easy way into the secrets of Capital, or a teach-yourself-guide to Marx’s economic theory.

Apart from providing a basic outline, the book enters into fundamental questions of Capital analysis and challenges the interpretations of orthodox Marxism. The authors also make an attempt to improve Marx’s ‘logical-historical’ mode of presentation by developing it further in the direction of a systematic presentation, which gives ‘every day knowledge’ its proper place in the unfolding of the systematic argument by developing along concepts step by step in a dialectic with general phenomena of capitalist daily life.

The dialectical presentation is not separated from an attempt to explain the contradictions contained in the value-form of labor and does not ignore the ‘dark’ section in the first chapter on “The Value Form or Exchange Value”, the significance of which is seen in terms of its developing a concept of money.

In the first appendix, the confusion caused by the treatment of the notion of labor powers as an industrial commodity is clarified, and the second shows how capital “requires science and stimulates its development.” The authors are aware that Capital is only a fragment of a system which is to prodive a more complex theory of modern society, and they see the systematic reconstruction and further development of this fragment as the only way to overcome the economism in marxist theory. The guide helps to provide a first step in this direction.

World Futures — The Great Debate

Keith D. Suter

This huge volume (over 400 pages) is an excellent introduction to the debate over futurology. Its opening chapters are a review of the main schools of thought governing speculation about the future.

The central chapters look at the debate in the contexts of food, energy, mineral resources, and technical change. The final chapters deal with various scenarios for the future and the dangers of the arms race.

This is not a book for general reading. It is written clearly and without the usual social science jargon. But it contains too much information to prevent easy absorption. It is more a source book to be studied by people interested in the various subjects it covers.

Its main value is the survey of all the major forecasters in social science, starting in the 19th century but with particular emphasis on those in the 1960s and 1970s. It also covers Soviet writers (who are apparently the world’s most optimistic thinkers about the future). It also contains information on what should be done, according to these people, to make the future a better world.

The book’s second strength is the attention to some critical issues. Each chapter is crammed with information. In dealing with food, for instance, attention is also given to the role of transnational corporations and predictions about climatic changes (the northern hemisphere has had for the past 25 years or so a cooling trend which has reduced the length of England’s growing season by about 10 days).

Third, the book devotes some attention to energy. This has been a neglected issue in early forecasts, whose authors expected a good supply of cheap energy for the future. The book prefers energy conservation (especially in the industrialised nations) with increased attention to coal mining and alternative energy such as solar power.

War is a subject often avoided in future studies. The book devotes a whole chapter to it. This, too, is full of interesting information. There is, for instance, a comparison of the lethalties of major weapons. We have come a long way: a sword rates 20 while a one megaton nuclear fusion explosion rates 660,000,000 deaths. The authors look at three world views and note “that all three converge in seeing disarmament as a necessary condition and consequence of a high growth, more equal world.”
The book is overall optimistic about the future. The 15 authors regard it as desirable to strive for a world in which the current extreme inequalities between rich and poor countries are significantly reduced not by a world-wide return to "primitive" living, but by increasing the standard of living in the poor world much more rapidly than in the rich world. For example, the problem of food is not so much one of physical shortage but of income distribution.

The book's main defect is its assumption of rationality among politicians and public servants. The book ends by returning to the "inherent lunacy" of the arms race and a plea for arms reduction. A world consumed with a passion for weapons is not necessarily rational enough to see the advantages of sharing its resources and working for the betterment of humankind.

However, it is well worth reading. It is a pity about the price. Get the library to order a copy.
THE POLITICS OF HEALTH AND WELFARE: A VIEW FROM THE LEFT

A series of seminars sponsored by the Australian Left Review to examine the state of health and welfare services in Australia today — why they don't serve people's needs and what can be done to change them.

October 15:
Cancer and the Environment: Warwick Pearse and Ian Lennie. The growth of cancer shown to be an outcome of the destruction of the environment through the anarchy of capitalism.

October 22:
Your work may be dangerous to your health. Ian Lennie and Warwick Pearse: The occupational health system from the workers' point of view.

November 5:

November 12:
The Food Industry and Health. Michael Burns. The link between corporate control of the food industry and western society's major health problems.

November 26:
The Politics of Doing What Comes Naturally: Rebecca Albury. Under capitalism, not even the production of the next generation is left to chance — contraception, conception, childbirth, motherhood, fatherhood.

December 3:
And Last and Usually Least — the Kids, or Take Your Problem Somewhere Else, Madam. The nature and inadequacy of children's services.

December 10:
Poverty and Social Insecurity: Sheila Shaver. Poverty is as common today as in 1880 with the majority of poor being those whose labour power is not marketable. The Australian social security system supports the poor just as it perpetuates their poverty.

Place: Inner City Education Centre, 37 Cavendish St., Stanmore.
Time: Seminar begins 7.30 pm sharp. Drinks and talk from 7.00 pm.

There will be no charge but donations to cover costs will be welcome. If childcare is required, please ring and tell us. For more information, contact Patricia Healy, 827.3598.
4 Dixon St, Sydney, Ph: 26 2161

Australias Best Left

They beat the British