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BRIEFINGS

CHILE

1983 marks the tenth anniversary of the brutal military coup in Chile. On the 11th of September 1973 the democratically elected "Popular Unity" Government was overthrown and Chile's President Dr. Salvador Allende was murdered.

The world was horrified by the savage repression which followed. 40,000 of Allende's supporters and sympathisers were killed.

Sports stadiums, abandoned mines and holiday camps became the sites of concentration camps. Those arrested by the secret police DINA, and its successor, the CNI, have been brutally mutilated and tortured.

Today in Chile, as the United Nations Human Rights Commission reports, torture is used routinely by the security forces.

Opponents of the regime continue to be murdered, as in the case of trade union leader Tucapel Jimenez, or expelled from the country as was Hector Cuevas, Building Workers' Union President, and Manuel Bustos, National President of the Central Trade Union Confederation.

Rudolfo Sequel, President of the Copper Workers' Confederation remains in prison following his arrest on June 15th, despite international protests.

Chile's monetarist economic model imposed by the Junta under the advice of Chicago economist Milton Friedman, has brought mass unemployment, poverty and destitution to large sections of the population.

The sustained economic crisis has greatly weakened General Pinochet (self-appointed President until 1996) and has strengthened the determination of the Chilean people to resist the junta by confronting its repressive forces in the streets.

1983 for the Chilean people marks the tenth year of steadily growing resistance to the Junta which is now more isolated inside the country than at any time since the coup.

The regime's response to increased opposition and protests is harsher repression. International Solidarity is therefore very important for the Chilean people at this stage of its struggle for democratic rights.

The Chile solidarity Committee has launched a major financial appeal throughout Australia to raise funds for the resistance movement.

These funds will be sent directly inside Chile. This is a special appeal of the utmost importance for which we seek your financial assistance.

Andrew Ferguson, Chile Solidarity Committee PO Box A690 Sydney South Sydney 2000.

BUDGET

The substance of the first Hawke Budget has no doubt, by now, been accepted (albeit grudgingly) by Australians well accustomed to the perennial "cigs, beer, fuel hit" headlines.

For some, Hawke's Budget answered all their fears and suspicions.

However, for many socialists, it poses serious questions. It highlights Labor's lack of a clear alternative to the conservative "austerity" approach of the corporate sector and its loyal servants in the public bureaucracy.

Pre-budget speculation (fostered by dire warnings from various Cabinet ministers) that the Budget would simply be "Fraserism with a human face" were not borne out. At least, not borne out fully.

New increases in indirect taxes (via indexed excises) and large increases in defence and secret police services (ASIO & ASIS etc) clash head-on with Labor's pre-election commitment to undo Fraserism and to redistribute the burden of the crisis away from its victims.

By the government's calculations, the excise increases will raise $1.05 billion in 1983-84 — a hike of 31.7% and equivalent to a three percent increase in personal income tax.

These increases will mean that lower income earners will pay out a higher proportion of their money in taxes. In that indirect taxes also fuel inflation, they particularly affect those on fixed incomes — pensioners, unemployed and welfare recipients.

The absence of any real capital gains tax (despite widespread support even from business!) and the failure to increase com-
pany tax or tax on higher income brackets indicated, at best, a terminal timidity.

Without tax changes, one starts to suspect that the government could intend taking, with one hand the wage increases it passes on with the other, through indexation.

There have already been several detailed breakdowns showing both the selectivity and timidity of several of the Budget's "innovations".

One of the more ominous indications in the Budget is the 22.4 percent increase in public debt interest payments — from $3,378 million to $4,133 million. When this increase is coupled with increasing debt interest payments from the states arising from the "consensus" reached at the Premiers' Conference, the actual costs of the current recession on the State will be starkly clear.

It seems extremely likely that the relaxation of Loans Council controls over state borrowing will see various state governments "putting their money where their mouth is" and going into debt to finance job creation.

The decision to "deregulate" state borrowings was probably the most significant single phase in Fraser's "New Federalism" policy and will prove a severe handicap in developing co-ordinated national economic policies between states.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that Keating's Budget is simply a product of the Treasury camarilla.

In some areas, such as housing, student allowances and the environment some increases represent a real boost to funds beyond the scope of a non-electioneering Fraser Budget. About 30 percent of the increase in Labor's budget deficit has been estimated as "stimulatory", while 70 percent was necessitated by the costs of the crisis.

Clearly, the Budget represents a typical Hawke compromise between the rigid line pushed by Treasury and the corporate sector, and that more expansionary "Keynesian" approach emanating from sections of the manufacturing industry, state governments and from some unions.

Perhaps, as some say, it is still "too early" to expect substantial reforms from the government. However, labor's long-standing opposition to the effects of Fraser's class war on the poor imposed a moral (if not economic) obligation to begin, at least, redressing the worst inequalities. This Budget did nothing like that.

But the real failure of the Budget concerns its failure to arrest sackings and stimulate new socially-useful jobs. The Budget itself admits that, despite the "recovery" being hatched in the USA, unemployment here will increase to around 11 percent next year.

The government's limp response to the high-handed sackings announced by GMH during Budget week itself would indicate little prospect for decisive government intervention directly to prevent sackings.

Labor's Budget forces socialists to ask how seriously the government views the ALP/ACTU Accord? Or perhaps, more importantly, we could ask how serious were the unions in their commitment to those sections of the Accord which went beyond centralised wage-fixing and indexation?

Despite the rhetoric, too many unions still see their work in getting better retrenchment deals. Some are even justifying the rationalisation schemes of their former members' employers.

No one on the Left believed that the Accord guaranteed the reforms it hinted around. Rather, it was seen as a platform for further action, a framework for building mass campaigns and intervening in the areas of economic policy.

However, for many unions, the central tenet of the Accord — if not its raison d'être — was its line on wages.

Government support for indexation, full CPI rises and the arbitration system have, for many unions, been the essence of the Accord's fulfillment. In practice, Neville Wran's three objectives of "Jobs, jobs, jobs" run a pretty poor second to the old stayers of "cash, cash, cash".

There has been little consultation (remember superannuation?) and even less progress on many of the planning processes foreshadowed by the Accord; every day EPAC appears more cosmetic; while the "Price" end of the "Prices and Incomes Accord" seems to have dropped off somewhere.

If the Accord is to be more than the "social contract" imposed on British unions in the early '70s, the document's interventionist scope must be considered an integral part.

Union initiatives around taxation policy, industry programs and job creation are all legitimate areas of concern under the Accord. Surely, the alleged inequities of the "superannuation swindle" which prompted such a vehement union reaction are comparable with the regressive nature of indirect tax increases.

As the Accord itself testified, an alternative economic policy involves creating jobs, expanding the social wage, improving the quality of life, and fulfilling social needs.

Or is it, like many socialists fear, that the government's current lack of a coherent alternative economic strategy simply reflects a corresponding lack within the labor movement?

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Peter Ormonde.

**False Consciousness?**

There has been some concern expressed that the graphic used on page 7 of ALR number 83 to illustrate John Alford's article, "The Myth of False Consciousness", could easily create the wrong impression in the minds of readers as to the approach used by Tribune.

The ALR collective recognises the unique role which Tribune plays in providing news, information, analysis and commentary to assist people in the socialist, labor and progressive social movements. By the use of the caption and graphic, no criticism of Tribune was intended.

In recent years, Tribune has consciously moved away from a crudely "propagandist" approach typified by many other Left publications.

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**Australian Left Review 85**
DISCUSSION AND REPLY

The recent publication of Dianne Menghetti's The Red North has provoked much interest including a review in Australian Left Review 83 by Carmel Shute. In this article, Doug Olive recollects his experiences of party work and events in North Queensland during the period covered by The Red North. Olive makes a number of comments, criticisms and commendations of Menghetti’s work.

I have just read Dianne Menghetti’s The Red North and, despite any criticisms I might offer, I regard the book as excellent. The author has captured the spirit of our Party, its broad methods and style of work, approach and attitude that characterised it in the North at the time, and enabled communists to become an integral part of the daily lives of those with whom we lived and worked.

Some errors occur that deal mainly with names, places, events, etc., but do nothing to weaken its political content. However, there are some important shortcomings. One very serious mistake which must be corrected, not only from the point of view of history, but also the correct presentation of our Party’s position, occurs on page 129. The author says, “In Mundingburra, the C.P.A. secretary Alex MacDonald contested the seat in 1935, standing as an Independent, while Ayr secretary Doug Olive stood in 1938”. (my emphasis)

Alex MacDonald was based in Brisbane, not Townsville. He did not contest the Mundingburra seat in 1935. Albert Robinson was our Communist Party candidate, and received approximately 250 votes. We never even attempted to present Party members under a false label. In fact, we drew our strength from the fact that we always advocated, and taught, our members the absolute need to keep faith with the people, to be honest with the people, never to try to deceive them, at all times and in all conditions possible to present openly the face and identity of the Party.

We stand Communists as Independents would, in 1935, not only have been an easily-seen-through deception, but also a violation of our fundamental principles, method and style of work. I did stand in 1938, and received 850 votes. In 1941, when the Party was illegal and it was not possible to stand as Communists, we contested the seat again with myself as candidate standing as an Independent Socialist, which deceived no one. We doubled out 1938 vote.

It is important to remember that the election took place two months before Hitler attacked the Soviet Union, and followed such horrific political events as the Soviet-German Non-Aggression pact, the Soviet invasion of the Baltic States, the smashing of the Finnish Mannerheim Line, the declaration of the Party’s illegality, and Mussolini’s entry into the war.

These events, as shown in the book, made it very difficult for the Party. However, because we refused to retreat, but fought back, because of our well-known long history of struggle against war and fascism, and our close ties with the people, we more than held our own right through that troubled period.

Albert Robinson, in his most informative pamphlet Robbie Remembers says that when he left the North in 1940, the Party had 600 members, mostly under 30 years old. That is a considerable advance on 1938. Our votes in Mundingburra, and the adjoining seat of Bowen, in April 1941 showed clearly our increased public support. By 1943, our state membership had grown to 4,500 members, out of an Australian membership of 24,000.

These facts of increased Party membership and electoral support, even following the terrible political events referred to, as well as the conditions of illegality, present a somewhat different outlook from that of Dianne Menghetti.

I must say I was surprised to learn.
after all these years, that we had in that period achieved the politically much-aspired-to Popular Front. I do not recall any leading party committee in the North or elsewhere, or any leading party member, claiming we had built the Popular Front.

From the 1935 Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, the Popular Front Against War and Fascism became the policy and aim of communists world over. Few achieved it. There is a big difference between policy, aim and actual achievement.

We learned before 1935 to work in a broad democratic way, to strive to involve in forms of united action the widest sections of the people.

The very nature of the struggle in the sugar industry demanded that we rely heavily on the rank and file. When you fought, you fought on two fronts — against the C.S.R., millers and farmers, and against the A.W.U. bureaucracy. The C.S.R. at that time was Australia's second most powerful monopoly. The A.W.U. was the most powerful union bureaucracy in Queensland. It dominated the Labor Party and government. It was virulently anti-communist, ardently supported arbitration, opposed all strikes — the C.S.R. was God, and communism the Devil Himself.

So struggle always had to be organised in the most democratic way from below, on a rank-and-file basis, with a rank-and-file leadership. This took painstaking, patient and consistent work. One had to communicate at meetings, in leaflets, and especially by personal contact, discussing, clarifying, winning people to our point of view.

This broad rank-and-file method of work began to make its mark on every aspect of work we undertook. We succeeded on lots of issues in building the basis of a popular front, namely, the united front of working class action. The Weil's Disease struggle was an example, as was the wages strike on the Burdekin at Ayr and Home Hill, and many other struggles. We even succeeded in getting wide agreement and joint action with Labor Party branches.

Robbie Remembers deals with some in Townsville, and the resultant expulsion of the Labor Party branches concerned, and their joining the Communist Party. From Ayr, Con O'Clerkin used to cycle to Home Hill every Saturday to sell the Workers' Weekly, and he and Arthur Olive built wide relations and joint action on several issues with Labor Party branches. However, the united front received a setback when the majority of these ALP members were recruited to the Communist Party.

H owever, only on one issue — not mentioned in the book — did we succeed in involving a significant section of small sugar farmers who, of course, constituted a large proportion of the popular masses in the sugar area communities. I refer to the Communist Party's Sugar Program, again dealt with in Robbie Remembers. This program was drawn up by small grower Arthur Olive on behalf of the Home Hill Communist Party Branch. It was later endorsed by the District Committee.

It was discussed widely with individual farmers, and a meeting of growers was called in Home Hill to discuss it. Only the big growers opposed it, and it was finally adopted by a large majority. The big farmers said it was illegal.

The meeting decided to invite Fred Paterson to examine the program and advise them at a special meeting. Here, Fred pointed out that anything affecting the status quo which was not favourable to the Sugar Board would be declared illegal. However, he showed that, provided they were united, determined and organised, they could win the aims of the program, which meant long-needed justice for small growers.

The program was later taken to a pre-seasonal mass meeting of cane cutters where the rare sight of workers supporting farmers was seen.

The CPA Sugar Program was the basis for Fred Paterson's support from sugar areas Home Hill and Proserpine which were decisive in his election victory in Bowen in 1944.

A nother important omission from the book was the anti-racist struggle waged by the Ayr branch of the party following Mussolini's entry into the war in June 1940. Facts about this were published in our illegal paper Spark. This, in the view of the party at the time, was the best example of how to fight racist chauvinism and maintain our party prestige.

When Mussolini's decision was announced, the racists had a picnic. They succeeded in winning support from many workers, including some sympathetic to us. So much so that they convinced a group of A.W.U. members to convene an open meeting to discuss action.

We were ostracised — at a packed meeting attended by R.S.L. leaders,
business men, solicitors and other staunch suppressors of trade unionism, plus about 1,000 genuine workers.

The resolution went straight to the point. It reeked of the poison of racism. "We refuse to cut cane with enemy aliens and other Dago Bastards". It brought the house down. It was seconded by a garage proprietor, a very capable inflammatory demagogue who soon had the majority of the audience intoxicated with chauvinism.

Our task was to try to head the struggle in an anti-fascist direction. Each time we jumped to our feet there were shouts of "Sit down. Throw the Commo bastards out", etc. The racists raved on and on. Finally, a pause came and I demanded of the chair, with whom I had been friendly for many years, "You have let known supporters of Menzies, people who have never ever supported a workers' cause, take up most of the meeting. We, as consistent unionists over many years, demand the right to present another point of view."

Against howls and roars from the racists and a considerable number of workers, we finally succeeded in presenting an amendment which was: "We refuse to cut cane with or for any known member of a Fascist organisation regardless of nationality". We went on to point out that not one Italian worker known to us supported Mussolini. The vast majority had left their native land to escape the fascist terror. At the same time, many wealthy Italian farmers and others were, in fact, fascists, yet under the resolution, anti-fascist workers would be victimised, while fascist farmers would escape retribution.

We showed that it was not in the ranks of the working people where traitors were to be found, but among the wealthy, their political stooges and the top brass. The racists in the audience yelled " Lies, lies. Sit down, Commo traitors". I appealed to the workers, "See how the non-unionists hate the truth". However, only one non-party member voted for our amendment, and he was its seconder.

Before the meeting closed we were successful in moving that, as the strike had to be organised, a meeting open only to strikers be held next day to elect the strike committee, etc. At that meeting I was proposed for election to the strike committee. I said "The majority have decided by democratic vote to support strike action. I'm opposed to what I consider the anti-worker aim of the strike, but because I and my comrades believe in democracy, we will respect your decision. I will accept nomination to the strike committee, but I and my colleagues, while still respecting the majority decision, will do all in our power to turn the strike into a progressive, working-class, anti-fascist direction."

This was appreciated by the workers. For a week we worked day and night, visited confused workers' homes, talking to them personally, explaining our position, exposing the reactionary character of the racists. At meetings we continued to press our
point. Finally, we reckoned the situation was right for a test vote.

About that time, Joe Bukowski, local A.W.U. official and, later, state secretary, approached me and said "Doug, don't you think the bloody strike has gone far enough? The A.W.U. officials had played no part in the strike. I said "Don't you think it's time you got off your fat arses and did something about it?" He said "We're calling an official meeting of the union on Friday night. District secretary Tom Dougherty will attend."

I should be interested in racism, only — the C.S.R. which would affect his lord and master areas and lead to a general struggle position and was relying on my influence to get the strike washed up.

Dougherty offered little opposition to me. His strongest points at that time was his attitude to the promotion of Henry's strongest points at that time was his attitude to the promotion of the workers to leading party committees, and his absolute insistence on the organisational independence of the women and the youth organisations. He was sharply critical of any party member who attempted to take over these organisations. He strongly advocated the right of such organisations, who had their own independent constitutions and rules, to make their own mistakes. He insisted that the role of party members working in women's and youth organisations was to carry out activity in accordance with their constitutions and rules, and to assist them to learn from such activity and from their mistakes, and thus raise their level of class consciousness.

Jack Henry never personally went near the women's (or youth) organisations, so how his shyness or otherwise with women could influence their independence is beyond comprehension.

It has been asked why the influence of the party in North Queensland has evaporated so dramatically over the years. There are several reasons. The denuding of sugar towns of local party leaders in the late 1930s and early '40s — Jack Henry, Jim world demand and the price of sugar. As a consequence, small debt-ridden farmers were able to meet and pay off their mortgages, small impoverished farmers were transformed into affluent and often wealthy farmers.

The canecutting machine finally replaced the cane-cutter, the most militant section of the industry. The Cold War, the split in the Labor Party, the rise of the DLP, all played an important part in weakening political consciousness and militant activity. These factors, together with the split in the world communist movement, including our own party, were, in my opinion, some of the main reasons for our decline in membership and influence.

Doug Olive worked as a canecutter in North Queensland between 1924 and 1941. He first came in contact with the Communist Party through the Workers' Weekly In 1927, and joined the CPA in 1933. He contested state electoral positions for the party twice. He was elected to the Townsville District Committee in 1938, and to its executive in the same year. In 1941 he became full-time Secretary and District Organiser.
Steve Cooper comments on Brian Aarons’ article “Labor Rules OK” and Bernie Taft’s “Marxism is Open Ended” which were published in ALR 83.

I would like to comment on a couple of matters which puzzled me in the March issue of ALR.

In the article “Labor Rules O.K.” there was no analysis of why, despite the downswing in the economic cycle which began in 1974 and was deepening again in 1982, the decline in the left (as distinct from labor or labor left) has continued. For example, the Senate vote for the CPA in South Australia was about one in a thousand voters and the SPA Senate vote in New South Wales was somewhere in the same order. Shouldn’t such an analysis be made in a left journal? I think that the Senate vote in 1949, in the depths of the Stalin era and after some years of the very morbid first cold war, was about 1.8 percent. Support during the war (the period of 1941 to 1945) was undoubtedly higher.

The second puzzling matter was the impression created by Bernie Taft that the reading of Marx was not encouraged in the “old” days (“little” encouragement). This is not true in relation to CPA leaders, even though, in retrospect, they moved within limitations connected with the awestruck acceptance of Stalin’s opinions, especially from 1930 to 1956.

Symptomatic was that CPA headquarters was not known as “Stalin House”; but as “Marx House”; while the central education system was “Marx School”.

Whatever their shortcomings, and these were serious, Miles and Sharkey, and the three successive administrators of Marx School in the mid and late 40s (a formative period for several older present leaders) expressed delight on finding students who diligently studied Marx and Engels in the original. In Melbourne, Blake and others took a similar position. This does not mean that all students were diligently reading Marx and Engels in the original. But this is a cultural thing. Many were not of that bent, or found Marx and Engels hard to follow.

During the Second World War, not much material by Marx and Engels came to Australia from Soviet publishing houses, but there was a stockpile left over from 1939 for the twenty thousand new members. Also reprints were made on newsprint of basic material such as the Manifesto, Wage Labor and Capital, Value Price and Profit, Origin of the Family etc. Basic books such as Capital were available through libraries, or the CPA’s own library. The Communist Review did not ignore Marx and Engels either.

Immediately after the war bookshops received adequate numbers of cheap reprints of Capital, Anti-Duhring, and very cheap paperback editions of the Manifesto, the economic pamphlets, The 18th Brumaire, Critique of the Gothic Program, Origin of the Family and other writings. There were also impressive volumes of Lenin’s works.

All these existed. Members were encouraged to read them. Who then discouraged them? Who didn’t encourage them?

In my view the problem was that there was a co-existence of these with such “bibles” as Stalin’s Foundation of Leninism and the Short History of the CPSU(B) and a sectarian interpretation of some of Lenin’s works. There was also a mechanical application, the “forgetting” of some of Marx’s views where these conflicted with Stalin’s and a playing down of Lenin’s efforts against bureaucracy, although that effort had succeeded in the 1920s. It might be more accurate to say that the writings of Marx and Engels were befuddled rather than little encouraged.

Note: Steve Cooper also wrote that it was wrong of ALR to term George Orwell an “international brigader” since he was not a member of the International Brigade and that because Orwell’s book Homage to Catalonia, written after his time in Spain during the Spanish Civil War, was pessimistic in outlook.

Steve Cooper is a research worker for the AMFSU.
WITH BANNER UNFURLED by Issy Wyner. Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1983. $11.96 (paperback).

Issy Wyner has done a good service to the labor movement with the publication of With Banner Unfurled because he has tackled a little known area of history. The publication is also timely given the recent press notoriety levelled at the focus of the book, the Ship Painters and Dockers Union (SPD).

The basis of the book is broadly in two stages — the early history centred on the Balmain Labourers Union and then its evolution, with some fits and starts, into the SPD.

The author does a creditable job of research and manages to encompass a number of other issues that revolved around the suburb of Balmain at the time. Historically, this comprises a look at the Morts Dock Company, the development of Cockatoo Island, the beginnings of the Labor Electoral League and issues concerning the Labor Council.

Wyner postulates on some of the activities of one William Hart and seems to think that this individual played a significant role inside the SPD and in labor affairs in general. He manages to dwell a short time on William Lane’s ‘New Australia’ utopian exercise and weaves this expedition into the lives and work of Balmain and the dockworkers.

Much of what the author has to say remains principally unstated; he relies heavily on very large appendices to allow readers to peruse original documents and form their own opinions. Some may think this is not in the character of a definitive historical exercise but I think Wyner has made full use of the known facts and, unashamedly, makes calculated guesses based on a stated class line and a knowledge of general working class activities. He states his own views clearly and yet allows readers the room to move and, if they so desire, to initiate their own investigations.

With Banner Unfurled is a very readable book which may become a good starting point for other labor histories of the dock industry.

A number of small criticisms could be levelled. Realising that the work is sub-titled “The early years” I still expected that a small potted history or chapter on the SPD in other Australian states would have been in order. Secondly, I think the social conditions of the labourers could have been added to, and the good socio-political point of the ‘craft’ unions vis-a-vis labour unions somewhat extended.

These remain both minor and subjective suggestions and, all in all, the book is a refreshing example of a good narrative written by an extremely active member of the Australian labour movement. There are too few accounts written by activists who have a sense both of the need for continual struggle to maintain working conditions, and to develop political organisation. And while a lot of unanswered questions remain about the early Australian labour movement, this book is a good example of how to answer some of them.

Barrie Blears is a member of the ALR editorial collective.
Most disarmament activists believe that Australia will remain on the nuclear firing line so long as there are foreign military installations on our territory. The problem is how to remove those installations. PHILIP HIND proposes a debate on strategy and offers his ideas.

United States bases have emerged as the major focus of the disarmament movement in Australia, at least among its more militant sections.

The bases are seen by many as the most concrete Australian expression of the more general threat of nuclear war — the closest thing we have to missiles in our own backyard. They also have quite demonstrable links with the "warfighting" arsenals and strategies of the nuclear powers. Last but not least, the removal of bases is seen by some as the most militant of the demands that an Australian movement can make.

The bases are not just a nuclear issue. Challenging the presence of the bases is also seen as a means for confronting head-on the forces of US militarism and reaction in Australia. Simultaneously, so the argument continues, this challenge will expose the inherent weakness of social-democratic solutions.

However, while this approach has great appeal to the left, it has failed thus far to answer the central political question which any movement must face: how, in the concrete circumstances of today, can a concrete strategy be devised capable of achieving its aims. More specifically, how can we break the deep ideological and cultural identification that the great mass of Australians have with the bases, ANZUS and the Western Alliance?

We need a thorough-going analysis of the political and social context in which the bases issue has to be put forward. The prescription of sloganised solutions is simple; the path to mass activity is complex and more qualified.

There are three premises which I take as fundamental for such an analysis and for a real reckoning of where the movement must head:

- Without mass popular support the bases cannot be removed either individually or collectively. Support for their removal at present does not exist in anywhere near the right measure, despite the relative strengths of the recent Australia-wide disarmament mobilisations. Hence we must look to the building of support through a 5-10 year program, a minimum at best.
- There will be many steps and stages along the way to reaching our objective. Clearly, our ultimate objective is the removal of all nuclear-related bases from Australia. But a strategy based on existing, concrete realities and oriented towards generating ever higher levels of public support is essential. It is illusory to think — as is suggested by some people's blind faith — that a wave of mass protest will emerge which will drive the Americans into the sea, or force a government to order the bases shut overnight. If we fail to enunciate what intermediate steps must be taken, we will have no bearings by which to gauge the success of our campaigns or to help people face the difficulties we will unavoidable face.
- The movement must find its expression within the formal and parliamentary political arena, as well as beyond. While it is necessary to theorise and organise for the development of a mass movement as a broad and political independent phenomena, this is not sufficient. The movement must ultimately fight for changes and implementation of particular policies within governments. Alienation from, and hostility towards, this arena will likely find the movement frustrated at later stages. In particular, then, we must determine how the movement will be able to
influence a Labor government and now it will judge the actions of the same in the meantime.

Starting from these premises, it is difficult to find common ground with those people who pose the debate about strategy in terms of unswerving adherence to the slogan: "US Bases Out". The slogan, in fact, becomes a substitute for a strategy. It poses (falsely) only one possible demand at any point in time: anything less represents a "sell-out". Furthermore, the question of removing the bases can then be reduced (by the same adherents of this position) to mere "mechanical" considerations of whether violence or non-violent direct action is the best "method" by which people can be won over. In crude terms, the basic line of reasoning becomes: when enough arrests have occurred, enough heads have been batoned and enough agitation has taken place, the day of the big showdown will come. The slogan will become reality: US Bases Out!

At one level at least, there is no real argument in the movement: the removal of nuclear bases is the explicit objective of the greater part of the disarmament movement. The only substantive question (and difference) revolve around the question — how can the bases be removed?

A campaign to remove the bases will surely be a long one. It already has a twenty-year history — another ten may be looking at things optimistically. To sustain the movement, we need to develop intermediate and achievable targets. We need to avoid creating an all or nothing situation — urgent and necessary though the removal of all bases is.

I have identified four possible intermediate steps, or what might better be called "campaign directions". All deserve far more detailed thought and debate within the movement than they have received so far. In some cases they have scarcely been considered at all; others have fared only slightly better. None may yet prove to be appropriate; still others might be added.

The building of greater support beyond those who already accept opposition to bases as an article of faith — is essential. It requires an opening of horizons, and a challenge to old ideas, that are deep set within the Australian popular consciousness.

Here are some possible campaign directions:

- A moratorium on the bases.
- A single-base focus.

In this case the movement nationally would focus on a single base and make that the frontline of attack and key mobilising point for the movement.

A focus of this sort could have two purposes: (i) to bring special awareness and concern in popular consciousness about a single installation, and (ii) to pick on a base which seems to be the "weakest link".

North West Cape is not the only possibility. But it does suggest itself, in ways that others do not, in terms of its overwhelming strategic importance and clear-cut connections with the arms race.

It is a prime communications base for nuclear submarines; a vehicle for first-strike strategy; a priority nuclear target; an installation that has strategic significance for the Indian and Pacific Oceans; and it plays a nuclear role which is relatively easy to explain.

North West Cape has already been acknowledged by the present Labor government as a problem requiring special measures to make it more acceptable. Statements of reservation and concern have been expressed by leading ALP spokespersons and some state branches. Reservation has specifically centred around the possible "derogation of Australian sovereignty" associated with the base; specifically the fact that communications involving war alert and command could be signalled without invoking all Australia's knowledge (as occurred during the Yom Kippur War in 1973). Unfortunately, this real problem has been momentarily pushed aside with the Hawke government's somewhat amusing plan (now agreed to by the Americans) to place an Australian liaison officer in the Pentagon. I don't think anyone will be surprised if this poor soul isn't consulted prior to the start of WWIII!!

On the more promising side, a recent statement by Senator Ryan said that a base like NW Cape has already been acknowledged by the present Labor government as a problem requiring special measures to make it more acceptable. Statements of reservation and concern have been expressed by leading ALP spokespersons and some state branches. Reservation has specifically centred around the possible "derogation of Australian sovereignty" associated with the base; specifically the fact that communications involving war alert and command could be signalled without invoking all Australia's knowledge (as occurred during the Yom Kippur War in 1973). Unfortunately, this real problem has been momentarily pushed aside with the Hawke government's somewhat amusing plan (now agreed to by the Americans) to place an Australian liaison officer in the Pentagon. I don't think anyone will be surprised if this poor soul isn't consulted prior to the start of WWIII!!

On the more promising side, a recent statement by Senator Ryan said that a base like NW Cape could only be supported insofar as it serves to maintain "deterrence".

There are gaping holes in the publicly stated justification of NW Cape which the disarmament movement — if it exploits them carefully — ought to be able to drive a
would be well placed to play an active part in just such a process. Indeed, whether the proposal became a reality or not, its serious debate in the Australian political context would serve to open wholly new ground for the movement. Several things could develop in the course of such a campaign:
(i) it would give an anti-bases campaign a very positive and active disarmament content and would also link us internationally to a solution to the arms race, rather than simply “opting out”;
(ii) it would help pull the rug out from under the US in terms of their public legitimation for Pine Gap and Nurrungar. It would tend to force into public argument the “warfighting” capacity of these bases (as opposed to “war-deterring” roles); and behind that their CIA functions;
(iii) it would be a very useful counter to A campaign to review the alliance might base itself initially around a demand for a public inquiry or national debate in which the two conditions — non-nuclear functions and Australian sovereignty — become the terms of reference. Alternatively, one might envisage a scenario in which a progressive Labor government is encouraged to fight an election campaign based on a commitment to renegotiating ANZUS along these lines.
This would be a radically different exercise than the “review and strengthening” of the ANZUS Treaty conducted by Prime Minister Hawke in Washington recently. It would reject the notion of “nuclear deterrence” and distance Australia from the Big Brother approach to questions of global and regional security.

The underlying basis of such a campaign’s success would lie in its ability to tap the anti-nuclear, nationalist and independence aspirations of the Australian people. But it would need to do so without simultaneously feeding people’s real fears about a “defenceless” Australia; or of the Soviet threat; or without throwing into question Australia’s long-standing cultural and economic links with the West.

In the broader view of things, it may become apparent over time that it is only possible to launch such a campaign simultaneously with putting forward a strategy for an alternative and independent defence policy for Australia. If this were so, the peace movement will need to become part of an effort to build a “progressive consensus” in the community along these lines. In short, a campaign to remove the bases and to renegotiate Australia’s role in the ANZUS alliance would also be a campaign for an independent Australian defence force and posture. (Such a defence capability could arguably be built along conventional lines around the concept of “Fortress Australia” and might also incorporate some elements of the more unconventional “social” defence approach.)
Many people on the left and within the more militant sections of the disarmament movement are fervently pushing for the whole question of the alliance, and our unconditional withdrawal from it, to be placed high on the movement’s agenda now. In one sense, this is nothing new: it has always been part and parcel of left programs and a recurring theme within the peace movement since World War II.

Despite the current growth of the disarmament movement, the gap between demands, programmatic exhortations and protest actions on the one hand, and the real attachments that the broad mass of Australian people feel towards our nuclear Big Brother, on the other, is yet to be seriously bridged.

To find a way out of this contradictory reality demands fresh thinking about some well-established principles. The movement needs to assert certain fundamentals which can readily gain wide support, without being side-tracked into a blind anti-Americanism or taking on board more ideological baggage than is appropriate to the circumstances.

I would suggest the fundamentals which are capable of winning mass support and breaking down the Big Brother syndrome include the following:

(i) opposition to the nuclear arms race — Australia’s express desire not to contribute to its further escalation and our commitment to its reversal;
(ii) our sovereign right to determine when, whether and how war is made on our soil;
(iii) our belief that the ANZUS Treaty of 1951 carried within it no necessary compulsion for Australia to accept a nuclear servicing role “in exchange” for our defence; and
(iv) a belief that the dangers associated with the presence of US bases on our soil are inconsistent with our real defence needs and threaten the livelihood of all Australians.

Against this sort of background, there could be some real thinking about strategic directions and concrete actions for the movement. Without it we remain confined within the antinomy of a pious, yet ineffectual, leftist; we risk parenting a disarmament movement with vision but little long-term support.

Let the debate begin in earnest.

Philip Hind is a disarmament activist who has worked in a full-time capacity for the peace movement.
Demonstrating for disarmament in Amsterdam. 21 November 1981.
Negotiations about nuclear missiles in Europe take place behind closed doors in Geneva. As the deadline approaches for the new generation of missiles to be deployed, the movement is growing and debating its options.

One of the most active centres for disarmament is the Dutch Interchurch Peace Council (IKV). It discusses the issues, describes the movement and offers a solution towards nuclear disarmament.

In recent years the European peace movement has grown tremendously. In 1981 it organised the largest anti-nuclear weapons demonstrations ever held in Europe. It has won massive support from all layers of the population. It has succeeded in winning some important political parties to its views or to positions close to it. In several countries it is very close to the churches. And it has forced two NATO governments to postpone a decision to deploy new nuclear missiles on their territory. Nevertheless, the aim to begin a process of nuclear disarmament, through independent first steps by European countries, has not yet come about.

Increasingly, energy is absorbed by efforts to stop a new generation of nuclear weapons from coming into Europe rather than getting the existing ones out. This struggle is heading for a climax at the end of 1983.

A new and hopeful factor is that the peace movement now realises that it is part of a worldwide mass movement that is operating on an international scale to halt the madness of the nuclear arms race. Two important examples are the churches in the GDR (East Germany) which have taken new initiatives, and the growing movement in the Pacific to stop French nuclear tests.

In Europe, the rapid rise of the US Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign has been welcomed with particular enthusiasm. From its very beginning we have been in close contact with it. We have been impressed to see how it found massive support among the American people in a very short time, irrespective of social and political differences. Fear of nuclear war, concern about new weapons developments in both East and West, which signal the trend toward nuclear warfighting, uneasiness about bellicose rhetoric and disenchantment with arms control-as-usual are common elements of our movements.

Deadlines in Europe: 1983

We see the ‘Freeze’ as a time-urgent proposal. Its immediate goal is to stop the new generation of nuclear weapons which is in the making in both East and West, and which will put a hair-trigger on nuclear war. We in Europe feel the pressure of time very directly. In December 1983 NATO wants to begin the deployment of the first US Pershing II and cruise missiles. For the first time in history, Western Europe will serve as a launching platform for extremely accurate US strategic missiles targeted at the Soviet Union.

Should these missiles be deployed, the prospects of achieving a US-Soviet freeze on all new nuclear weapons will be seriously undermined.

In December 1979, NATO made its so-called double track decision: to deploy 572 US missiles in five Western European countries and to offer negotiations to the Soviet Union. This led to a series of protests in many European countries, which climaxed in the unprecedented mass demonstrations in the autumn of 1981, when three million people marched the streets of Western European cities.

Since then, opposition has continued to grow. Some examples: peace camps were organised at many nuclear weapons storage sites. In Sicily, where the first cruise missiles are due to arrive by the end of 1983, more than a million signatures (more than half of the adult population) were collected within two months in 1982. In
Women from the Greenham Common Peace Camp stage a 'die-in' outside the London Stock Exchange on 7 June 1982 during President Reagan's visit.
December 1982, in a symbolic action involving non-violent civil disobedience, some 30,000 women ‘embraced’ the cruise missile base near Greenham Common in England to protect the world from its evil.

In West Germany, the Social Democratic Party has gradually shifted to a much more critical position with respect to the Euromissiles question and ‘the Greens’, who reject deployment unconditionally, won a number of seats in Parliament in the recent elections. In Belgium also the peace movement keeps growing, and in the Netherlands, government leaders have publicly stated their doubt that a deployment decision could be implemented without lasting damage to the cohesion of society.

In those NATO countries where no missiles are to be deployed, opposition has also grown. In Canada, the plan to test US cruise missiles is strongly protested. In Denmark and Norway, the public unrest about the missiles became evident in their parliaments; Denmark voted to withhold the payment of their share of infrastructure costs of the NATO program, in Norway the same proposal lost by only one vote. Greece refuses to agree to the deployment paragraphs in NATO communique and promotes initiatives for a nuclear-free zone in the Balkans.

In Denmark, parliament forced the government to step out of line when all NATO countries were supposed to vote no to a Freeze resolution in the United Nations. (In the Netherlands a similar resolution failed to pass in parliament by only the smallest margin.) Moreover, the Danish parliament recently voted not to agree with deployment as long as the Geneva negotiations are still under way.

Permanent testimony of the public resistance in Europe appears in the various opinion polls. Opposition in the various European countries to the NATO decision was substantial from the beginning and has been growing considerably ever since.

"But what else is there to do other than demonstrate again and again .... that the majority of people do not want these new missiles?"

In the Netherlands, a poll which was taken in November 1979, before the NATO decision, showed some 37 percent of the population in favour and 25 percent against deployment of the new US missiles in Europe. When the nature and implications of the decision became better known to the public, opposition against deployment increased dramatically. In all the polls there now appears a hard core of 40-50 percent of the population which rejects deployment unconditionally. About 30 percent prefer to make their answer dependent on the arms control negotiations in Geneva. Faced with a direct question (yes or no to deployment), half of these reject deployment as well. This means that about two-thirds of the Dutch population (more than 60 percent) oppose deployment.

In the other four deployment countries the opposition has also grown considerably in the past two to three years. In Great Britain, according to Marplan (The Guardian, January 21, 1983), 61 percent of the population disapprove of deployment of cruise missiles and 27 percent are in favour. Unconditional opposition in that country doubled in the course of 1981 (from 23 percent to 46 percent). A similar process can be seen in the Federal Republic of Germany. Unconditional opposition increased from 29 percent in July 1981 to 47 percent in January 1982.

According to Der Spiegel magazine, the Bonn government has an unpublished study by the Sinus Institute in Munich in which 61 percent of those polled favour postponement of deployment if, by October 1983, there is still no agreement in Geneva. In June 1983, a poll by ZDF television showed that the percentage favouring postponement had increased to 72 percent. In Italy, in October 1981, 60 percent opposed the new missiles on the basis of a simple yes or no question. A poll in July 1983 again showed 60 percent against. In Belgium, (L’Evenement, 1 October, 1982) in 1981, 50.2 percent were against deployment of new missiles on their territory, whereas in 1980 this figure was only 41.7 percent.

As to other NATO countries: in Norway (December 1982), 69 percent opposed deployment in Europe. In Denmark, despite very biased and misguided phrasing of the questions in the poll (Gallup, January 17, 1983, Berlingske Tidende), 51 percent thought it wrong to deploy new US missiles as an answer to a Soviet threat.

Democracy

Why is it that these figures are so little reflected in the official politics of the European governments? In only one of the five NATO countries where, according to the December 1979 decision, new nuclear missiles were to be deployed, this decision was subjected to proper parliamentary debate prior to the decision. This was the Netherlands, and there parliament voted against it. However, in NATO unanimity is traditionally considered a political imperative of the utmost importance. For instance, late in 1982, Western European governments even had to officially endorse President Reagan’s newest MX missile deployment plan because not to do so would be seen in Moscow as a sign of division within NATO and — more importantly — the Reagan administration needed European support against growing opposition within the US. Virtually no European government really liked the Reagan plan, but none dared to say so.

The NATO double track decision has gradually become the main test case for demonstrating the unity and resolve of the alliance and thus serves a political rather than a military purpose. Many Western European politicians who were in power in 1979 and are no longer today, now admit that the NATO decision was a mistake. But these governments cannot afford this luxury and will be most reluctant to drop the commitments of 1979 to deploy new missiles, despite the inevitable high political costs. The people in Europe will become more and more alienated from the political process as leaders continue to disregard sincere convictions and concerns.

The peace movement believes in democracy. But what else is there to do other than demonstrate again and
again, in the polls and on the streets, that the majority of the people do not want these new missiles? The talks in Geneva cannot stop them. Governments are paralysed by the demand of unanimity in NATO. The movement must now count on the help of the American people to make democracy work. The Freeze movement in the USA supports the European struggle to stop the new missiles; while also calling on the Soviet Union to reduce its intermediate-range missiles aimed at Europe.

The movement appeals to the American people to urge Congress to oppose the funding of testing, production and deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles and to halt all efforts to begin deployment of the missiles in December 1983.

The argument

Originally, the reason for NATO's modernisation plan was not the growing offensive force of the Soviet Union (particularly the SS-20 missile) but its increased defensive potential, in particular its air defence. NATO said its aging bombers could no longer penetrate. By 1979, the official arguments underlying NATO's 'double track' decision had shifted. At that time the most prominent argument was that there had grown a substantial asymmetry in Europe with respect to land-based systems for the intermediate range.

Because of the parity between the Soviet Union and the USA in strategic systems, to be codified in Salt II, this regional imbalance was seen as undercutting the credibility of the West's nuclear deterrent and as a potential cause of political blackmail by Moscow. This argument focused on the replacement of the almost 20-year old Soviet SS-4 and SS-5 missiles by the SS-20, a multiple warhead (MIRV) missile of greater range and accuracy. NATO claimed to have no 'answer' to this threat, although already, before the first SS-20 appeared, the US sea-launched missiles so far 'countering' the SS-4 and SS-5 had been 'Mirv'ed. Later, when public resistance to deployment grew, the official argument changed again. Originally, the negotiation 'track' had been added to the deployment 'track' to make deployment acceptable by public opinion. Now this was reversed. Going on with deployment was called necessary for the success of the negotiations. (The outcome would, of course, be the same: deployment.)

The peace movement in Europe has consistently expressed its opposition
to the SS-20 program. It also opposes the current and equally impressive modernisation plans of French and British nuclear weapons. All current nuclear weapons modernisation in Europe (Soviet, American, French, and British) point towards nuclear warfighting and the SS-20 is clearly one of the most threatening of today's missiles. But "response" to this new Soviet modernisation round makes the situation even more dangerous, for a number of reasons.

- It is again one more step in the nuclear arms race between the superpowers that has been going on for too long already. It will not bring more security in Europe. If American cruise missiles and Pershing IIs will be deployed, the Soviet Union will respond again with new weapons on its side. Such reasoning reflects a dangerous fixation on comparisons between various weapon systems and playing the 'numbers game', although there are already far more nuclear warheads than conceivable targets.

- Qualitatively, this new step is even more dangerous. This new generation of nuclear weapons of extreme accuracy changes the strategic situation of Europe and feeds Soviet anxieties about the trends towards a US first strike capability. The Pershing II, once deployed, will be the most accurate missile in the world, the first ballistic missile of the coming generation of 'first strike' nuclear weapons. The trend towards nuclear warfighting postures, which is the guideline of the current modernisation both in East and West, is a special cause of great uneasiness in Europe. To see Europe as the theatre of a possible 'limited' nuclear war is utter nonsense.

- That the deployment of US Euromissiles is a response to European concerns is only partly true. Long before such concerns were expressed (for instance late in 1977 by Chancellor Schmidt), the US Air Force was already planning to deploy ground-launched cruise missiles at three NATO bases. Today, the issue of the Euromissiles must be seen as part of the overall strategy of the US administration to develop a position of military superiority towards the Soviet Union. The peace movement in Europe is certainly not anti-American. But it is very concerned about the ideological, moral, even religious rhetoric which the Reagan administration uses to underline its foreign policy and its relation to the Soviet Union in particular. Whatever the movement may think of the socio-political system of the Soviet Union and the policies of its leaders — and the peace movement in Western Europe expresses its criticism in this respect quite frankly, which has led some Soviet officials to call us CIA agents — defining the relations with the Soviet Union in terms of "a struggle between right and wrong, good and evil", talking of the Soviet Union as "an evil empire", and considering a continuation of a forced arms race and economic sanctions as appropriate means to get the Soviet Union on its knees, is endangering world peace. New efforts for detente are of vital interest for Europe. The deployment, for the first time in history, of such extremely accurate US missiles in Europe targeted at the Soviet Union means further escalation of tension and confrontation.

- In strictly military terms there have always been doubts about the real need for deployment of cruise missiles and Pershing IIs in Europe. Since, after the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, the US replaced its land-based missiles with bombers and missiles on submarines, the Soviet Union has had a virtual monopoly in Europe with respect to land-based intermediate range missiles. NATO did not find reason at that time to 'match' this threat with land-based missiles of its own. Its potential in submarine and air-based systems was considered an adequate compensation; this potential has continuously been, and is continuously being, modernised and expanded.

- From the beginning, the political arguments were the most important: NATO's desire to show resolve and cohesion after some nasty conflicts between President Carter and Chancellor Schmidt. But, in fact, the NATO decision has proved to be one of the most divisive issues in its history.

- Deployment of Euromissiles as scheduled for 1983 will also be a serious setback for the American peace movement because of the qualitative dimensions and the fact that verification will be much more difficult to achieve. Cruise missiles are difficult to count and can't be used with either conventional or nuclear warheads.

**Geneva**

For a number of reasons, the peace movement in Western Europe has been, and still is, very critical and sceptical about the possible outcomes of the Geneva talks.

- It is acknowledged in many (semi) official reports that in 1979 the negotiation 'track' was added to the deployment 'track' to pacify public opinion and to legitimise deployment.

- Contents and timing of the various proposals that have been made (zero-option, interim-proposal) all suggest that their purpose continues to be to appease European public opinion rather than to achieve real results. The outcome will be deployment, full or partial.

"In reality, these talks do not aim at controlling the arms race but at controlling public protest against the arms race."

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targeted at Europe. This approach was purely propagandistic; it was certain that Moscow would reject it because it now added the Soviet missiles targeted at China to the equation and continued to exclude all French and British missiles targeted at the Soviet Union.

In December 1982, Andropov responded in kind with what he called "a really honest zero-option": no new US missiles, no Soviet missiles to counter them, only (!) 162 Soviet missiles to counter the 162 British and French missiles. Although this proposal entailed the dismantling of several dozen SS-20s, its acceptance was equally unlikely because of its explicit link with the British and French nuclear forces, thereby (politically) trying clearly to uncouple Western European security from US security.

For the peace movement, both approaches are unacceptable. Both kinds of a separate 'Eurostrategic balance' would mean a new, separate Eurostrategic arms race. The one would introduce a new generation of US missiles, the other would legitimise both the SS-20 and the British and French nuclear programs. Britain and France are even planning to have more warheads on their missiles in the 'nineties than the total Soviet SS-4, SS-5 and SS-20 force of today. Andropov clearly had this in mind when, in March 1983, he offered to count not only missiles but warheads as well, thereby hardening his position; to match the French and British modernisation programs, Moscow will need more than 162 3-warhead SS-20s.

Reagan's 'interim offer' (March 1983) does not change the basic position at all. It means: the US will deploy as many new weapons as the Soviet Union wants to keep. So, the US will go up (in land-based missiles) to the level where the Soviet Union will go down. The only thing worth noting about Reagan's newest offer is that it should finally end the illusion, so cherished by governments and many political parties in Europe, that Geneva can produce 'zero' (no deployment). Already, since 1979, the framework agreed upon by NATO means that any outcome of Geneva will mean the coming of a new generation of missiles. Given this framework, to negotiate means to deploy. Only the numbers are negotiable. In December 1979, many supporters of the double track decision said that deploying 572 new missiles was, of course, too much, but the negotiation-track could bring the number down to some 300. Reagan's newest offer is widely understood in that meaning: let's settle for some 300. The peace movement despairs of governments and many politicians who, for years, have been paralysed by 'Geneva'. They called for 'zero' and, at the same time, since 1979 they have agreed to a negotiation approach which makes certain that both without and with an agreement the deployment of new missiles will start in December 1983!

The fact that nothing has happened in Geneva so far, however, does not mean that nothing will happen in the coming months. Both parties have an interest in some kind of 'arms control' deal: NATO and the US to sell deployment to public opinion (which has been the purpose of the negotiations since 1979), and the Soviet Union to get things moving in the START talks and not to have to carry out its own threats, like suspending all negotiations (in any case, START and INF) after the first deployments, and deploying missiles in closer range of the US (though not in Cuba as in 1962), also deploying more missiles in East European countries, etc.

Suspension

Whatever the outcome of Geneva, the peace movement continues to reaffirm its unconditional opposition to any new missile deployments, even as part of an 'interim solution'. Instead, it calls for a suspension or delay of any further implementation of the NATO decision (of both of its tracks because both lead to deployment) in order to create time for establishing a new negotiation framework in Geneva. Several leading politicians have suggested creative alternative approaches which, so far, could not be discussed at government level because of 'Geneva'. Any alternative proposal is seen as 'undermining' the US negotiation position. Moreover, the weapons issue should be discussed in a wide context of East-West problems in Europe. Detente and disarmament have to be linked.

The current framework in Geneva can only lead to further escalation (a separate Eurostrategic balance) and to confrontation. The deployment of the first new missiles in December 1983 may even derail the whole East-West arms control process for at least several years. Geneva is speeding up the arms race because so many officials now say: the sooner we start deployment, the sooner Moscow will make concessions. In reality, these talks do not aim at controlling the arms race but at controlling public protest against the arms race.

Negotiations are needed, but their framework should be such that they can produce steps towards a solution. The movement is asking European governments to stop being paralysed by 'Geneva', to respond to the majority, and to finally take initiatives to prevent the crisis of 1983. The movement asks the Soviet Union to make a start with dismantling its missiles, both old and new. And we ask the US people to urge Congress to prevent the deployment of this new generation of US missiles.

The Dutch Interchurch Peace Council (IKV) is one of the most active centres working for disarmament in Western Europe.

Dutch posters against the neutron bomb.
James Dunn dispels many commonly held misconceptions and presents the most complete picture available of how and why the events of the last eight years have transpired, from the injustice and suffering inflicted on the Timorese people to the dismal failure of the international system, and of Australia and the United States in particular, to respond to their appeals for help.

"... Dunn has written what is probably the most historically sweeping account of the Timor story, and he has done so from the point of view of an unabashed and vehement critic of both Indonesia and Australia...."

The National Times, August 12, 1983

The Jacaranda Press

*subject to change

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No-one would argue that the manufacturing industry is in crisis. DON SUTHERLAND, a metal worker, argues for trade union intervention in the production side of the economy. This will require a "new" unionism and a range of activity in areas usually ignored by trade unionists.
Many unionists believe that the destruction of Australia's metal industry is a problem for the employers to solve because the employers brought the problem about. They believe there is nothing that can be done about industrial development. Although the problems of the metal industries are a result of the private enterprise system, it is vital that unionists — in and out of work — ensure that industrial development policy is the priority item on the agenda of class struggle. This would include the introduction of job protection measures into logs of claims.

It is possible for unionists to intervene and beneficially alter the present priorities of industrial development. This would involve a 'new unionism', although it does tap into a minority viewpoint in the history of Australian union ideas. Essentially, this course is necessary because it is the most effective means whereby unionists can take responsibility for their brothers and sisters who face a lifetime on and off the dole. It is infinitely preferable to a succession of governments which maintain, or try to maintain, an eight to ten percent level of unemployment, in which 'job creation' schemes massage people into and out of work in order to manage their dissatisfaction with the economic system. It is a 'new unionism' that enhances the capacity of the worker of the future to meaningfully participate in the democratic management of a socialist society.

I have not addressed myself to important aspects of the crisis in the metal industries. I have not touched upon the breakdown by sex, race and skill of employment, nor have I examined the third arm of the Prices-Income Accord program on industry development — Training and Re-training, and its relationship with technological change. I have not discussed the emerging crisis in the relationship between 'the active unionist' and the rank and file, and I have not fully explored the effect of unemployment on the capacity of the working class, or even significant sections of it, to pursue any political program.

My purpose is to examine some of the issues emerging in the debate over the obvious crisis in the metal industries.

...Australia is becoming a vast quarry, supplying minerals for their (the transnational corporations) overseas manufacturing industries. This is producing a basic shift in the Australian economy and is having far-reaching and shattering consequences for wage and salary earners .... multinationals now prefer centres in Asia and Latin America for their investment in manufacturing industry.

This was the perspective advanced by the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union (AMFSU) in its publication Australia Uprooted, in 1977. It was a controversial argument at the time, rejected by significant (and not so significant) sections of the labor movement. Despite its clear warning, Australia's manufacturing industry unions have not been able to effectively counter this direction, even though some workers have tried, and are still trying, to do so. Fundamentally, this is because of the discipline imposed upon the capacity of workers to struggle by unemployment.

However, it is also because the dominant tradition in the union movement is to focus struggle on the distribution of wealth, thus leaving matters such as investment, levels of import and export, what is to be produced, and so on, to the employers and, to a lesser extent, the government. Australia's long post-war boom did not drive unionists, through necessity, to such considerations.

But let's look at where the metal industry is today.

Over 100,000 workers lost their jobs in the 12 months from May 1982 to May 1983. This is a 17 percent reduction in employment in the industry. In the same period, employment in South Australia's metal and engineering industry fell by 19.7 percent. Between 1972-3 and 1981-2, employment in the industry in that state fell, as a percentage of total employment, from 22.3 percent to 9.4 percent.

These figures come from the metal industry employers' regular surveys into the state of the industry. They tally with the reality that is talked about in union schools and meetings, but do not convey the personal experience of that reality by workers and their children.

Even if the predictions for a slight upturn in the economy come true, there is no indication that the unemployed will get new and lasting employment. In fact, the employers' latest survey indicates that there will be a further 2.2 percent drop in employment in the industry, on a national basis, and, in South Australia, a slight fall of 0.7 percent.

This situation was discussed at a joint forum organised by metal industry unions and employers in Adelaide on August 3.

Generally, the forum failed to examine key issues, especially the central factors at work in the destruction of Australia's manufacturing capacity. Discussion on subjects like transnational corporations, foreign investment, profits, wages, was taboo. In four hours, over 200 people were allowed less than 30 minutes for questions and discussion — all of it in general session. The forum was dominated by 'heavy' speakers who each sought to 'push their pet proposals while agreeing on the gravity of the situation.

John Bannon, Labor Premier, encouraged the joint approach of metal industry employers and unions on an employment scheme for out-of-work apprentices. He also praised the AMFSU's Industry Sector Committees and urged the introduction of tripartite industry committees for the vehicle and heavy engineering sectors.
Figure 1. Wages and Profits as a percentage of GDP at factor cost. This graph was presented by the M.T.I.A. in its submission to the national economic summit.

Figure 2. Comparison of share of all wages and salaries as a percentage of GDP compared with the share of all profits as a percentage of GDP. These graphs were prepared as a response to the M.T.I.A. graphs (see figure 1 above) for A.M.F.S.U. members attending the S.A. joint forum.
Des Gray, Ironworkers' (FIA) secretary, and president of the Metal Trades Federation of unions, concentrated on a defence of protectionist policies. He also advocated the introduction of tripartite planning mechanisms for the economy which "go beyond consultation" and which are committed "to a diversified manufacturing sector".

Alan Swinstead, director of the employers' organisation, defended the principle of competition and the introduction of "non-visible assistance schemes" for employers. He also said:

"Until now the Metal Industries Association directed a great deal of its energies to arguing for employment, for maintaining it, and for creating more of it. I doubt that we will spend much more time on this line of argument."

Paul Free, from the federal Department of Science and Technology, defended the introduction of new technology and criticised the former government's reliance on market forces to generate technological change. He argued that new technology would generate higher employment through increased productivity. He also described the Industries Assistance Commission's most recent report as "preferring to leave the industrial future to the boardrooms of New York and London".

Lyn Arnold, South Australia's Minister of Technology and Education, argued for a reorganisation of the education system so that education could become a lifetime process enabling people to keep up with the introduction of new technologies at work and elsewhere. He said that the workforce of the future had to be "technologically literate" and that the central issue was equity of access to the benefits. If this wasn't obtained there would be an "increasingly polarised workforce".

Kevin Smith, Director of the Department for State Development, presented a pathetic summary of what the other speakers had said. He focussed on the lack of what he called "marketing skills" in management and expressed support for "entrepreneurial skills". He said there was "no shortage of funds for capital investment", a point which was then disputed by others.

A common thread running through all the major speeches was the lavish support for the fact that employers and unionists had got together to address the problems. This image of class harmony received uncritical emphasis from the media. It was not reflected in the questions and brief statements from the floor of the forum, nor in the informal discussion afterwards, but the domination of consensus in the major speeches meant that vital issues were not explored and problems not addressed. How could they be addressed when Australian employers see their salvation as growing up to be just like the foreign corporations that are squeezing them out. That means to shed labour, cut wages and seek government sanctions against unions should that be necessary and, on top of that, to clamour for more protection and handouts from governments.

The employers' strategy is not new. Left unexamined at the forum, it was clearly stated at the National Economic Summit:

"...the whole thrust of our submission is based on the need for the metal and engineering industry to become internationally competitive. This cannot be achieved by industry development policy alone."

They go on to argue that wage inflation has deprived companies of the "cash flow necessary to finance expansion and employment".

To support this argument, they present a picture of the profits-wages relationship in graph form. (See figure 1.) The problem (for them) is that the figures used to construct the graph are dishonest and the technique used to represent them is misleading.

A report distributed to union members at the Metal Industry forum points this out:

"...what they have done has been to compare the value of all wages, salaries and supplements (value I) with the value of only part of the profits earned in Australia, that earned by trading companies. Unincorporated enterprises, public enterprises, financial enterprises and so on also have wages bills which are included in value I and, if we are to include wages and salaries earned by their employees in the graph, we should also include the profits earned by them ...."

There are other weaknesses. The dotted lines at the end of each graph are meant to show a continuing divergence of wages and profits, in favour of wages. However, there is as yet no statistical evidence to show what has happened. We do know that wages have not moved in the metal industry since June 1982.

The graph also uses a scale which artificially exaggerates the difference between wages and profits. Figure 2 is a graph based on the same statistics as figure 1 but drawn to a different scale.

Further serious analysis of the actual changes in the economy before and during the period shown in the graph reveals even more flaws in the employers' conclusion that wage inflation is the major problem. (See the report prepared for AMFSU shop stewards on the MTIA Submission to the National Economic Summit.)

"Employers possess and manipulate economic information to strengthen their hold upon capital .... No employer will cede that sort of power easily."

The key question of what has been done with profits made in the industry is not explored in the metal employers' submission, nor was it considered at the forum. It is common knowledge that plant and machinery in Australia's workshops is run down and very much out of date. So it is accepted that there is not significant re-investment to keep up with contemporary production methods.

This provoked a question to Alan Swinstead at the forum: "What did the MTIA's most recent Commonwealth Bank Survey reveal about members of the employers' organisation being engaged in shifting into 'Off-shore Free Trade Zones' using profits made in Australia for such investments and importing back into Australia?" Mr. Swinstead answered that the Commonwealth Bank survey doesn't address itself to that question. That same question was put to the metal industry employers by the unions in September 1982 when they used a similar bank survey to justify their claim for a wage freeze at that time.

The question evinced the same answer. Why does the MTIA not examine this vital issue?
AMFSU bus protesting recent S.A. sackings. Inset: GMH tent city protesting retrenchments, April 1983.
The question goes to the major problem confronting manufacturing industry unions — namely, its restructuring on a global scale and the relationship to that of the penetration of transnational corporations into the Australian economy and the development of some Australian companies into transnational corporations.

This process has been graphically described in a major article by John Alford — Australian Labour, Multi-nationals and the Asia-Pacific Region — published in the November 1979 issue of the Journal of Australian Political Economy.

Given the situation described above (and elsewhere), what sort of response is possible for the unions and their supporters.

The boundaries of what is possible are defined in the final analysis by what the membership of the unions understand to be the problem to be confronted, their understanding of what their role is, and their actual capacity to adopt that role in the conditions of a recession-gripped economy. The essential social force capable of reversing the policies imposed by the domination of the Australian and regional economies by transnational corporations is the working class.

The public endorsement by the Labor Party and the Australian Council of Trade Unions of a Prices-Income Accord, which includes a significant section on Industrial Development Policy, presents some new possibilities to metal industry unionists. The policy is not fully sufficient, of itself, to rescue Australia’s manufacturing capacity. It does, however, present opportunities to develop towards a much stronger and more effective strategy against the transnationals because it reduces private enterprise’s control over industrial development (or lack of it).

Essentially, the Industry Development Policy of the Accord argues that full employment can only be gained on the basis of a diversified manufacturing industry. Diversity is expressed in a geographical framework (that is, against a small number of highly concentrated manufacturing regions) and an industrial framework (that is, against a small number of manufacturing industries).

The key instruments to achieve this would be: planning mechanisms, protection policies and employment training and re-training.

Planning: The Accord rejects the domination of the economy by market forces. Instead, it proposes an integrated system of tripartite councils in each industry sector, operating at national, state, regional and firm levels. Tripartite means that representatives from employers, government, and unions sit on the council or committee.

After this, the Accord leaves many questions unanswered. Will the system be established by statute? Will it have statutory powers? How will representatives be decided? by ballot? What sort of regulations, if any, will apply regarding access to information and its further distribution? What happens if any party refuses to participate or abide by the decision-making of the tripartite committees? (On some of these questions the Accord is more specific in its intentions for Transnational Corporations) What will happen in firms or industries where there is a low level of unionism? Such questions are important since they relate to the actual capacity of industrial development to be broken from the straitjacket imposed by the domination of private enterprise.

The general thrust of the Hawke government is to define the tripartite relationship as a harmonious and consensual one. This is based on the false notion that the ‘partners’ participate on an equal footing. But this is not true. Unionists do not have the information that employers have and which governments have some access to, for very good reason. In a private enterprise system employers possess and manipulate economic information to strengthen their hold upon capital and its resources (including the workforce) to make more profit. No employer will cede that sort of power easily.

Unless the appropriate access to information legislation is introduced, unions will continue in a weaker situation. Essentially, they will be forced to react to what is placed before them. It is paramount, therefore, that unionists assess their mode of participation in the proposed tripartite process.

A priority would be for unions to establish or arrange formal relations with information and research centres similar, products imported from other countries. They have been a central element of Australian economic policy for many years and are linked to the development of the Australian arbitration system.

In recent years, powerful sections of the employers, especially the transnational corporations, won support from the Fraser government to upgrade the means of protection which government provides as direct financial support for industries; and to run down protection measures based on trade barriers or restrictions, e.g. tariffs.

Consistent with this new direction, the Fraser government established guidelines for the Industries Assistance Commission which set its industry inquiries along a path that led inevitable to recommendations that were consistent with it.

Australian manufacturing unions have traditionally supported protectionist policies, holding the very strong view that to reduce protection puts people out of work. Australian manufacturing firms have been strongly for protection, publicly for the same reasons as the unions, but actually because it has built up the capacity for making profits in a country
where economies of scale for production are comparatively small. (Economy of scale refers to cost per item and recognises that it is less for a large, or long term, production run than it is for a small, or short term, production run.) An essential point, not yet properly addressed by the manufacturing unions, is that protection is also a cost — a cost borne most heavily by wage and salary earners (for more detail see articles by Peetz, Hopkins and Curtain in the Journal of Australian Political Economy, No. 12/13, June 1982. They establish convincing arguments that unions cannot continue to take an uncritical attitude towards protectionist policies.)

An approach that is gaining some favour among unionists and which offers some potential to arrest the decline of the metal industries, suggests that the unions advocate that strings be attached to the provision of protection: that public equity, including majority ownership, where applicable, be introduced into any firm which receives protectionist support. It is an urgent task for the unions and government to address themselves to the mechanics of this principle and to build popular support for such measures.

It is urgent because an outstanding feature of Australian manufacturing industry is the outdated state of the means of production. On simple 'good capitalist' terms, this is one of the most important reasons why Australian industry is not 'competitive' internationally. And those manufacturers who clamour loudest for protection and assistance from the government may well get it, not on the basis of employing more people, but on the basis of employing the newest and most up-to-date production technologies.

At the Metal Industry Forum, employer spokesperson Alan Swinstead pushed strongly for "non-visible assistance schemes":

... highly visible assistance policies are not winning first prize in international industrial development programs. Similarly, those countries experiencing rapid industrial development have highly developed and complex non-visible assistance schemes.

Swinstead did not explain what "non-visible assistance schemes" are. However, the Accord agrees that the existence of such schemes with our trade competitors "are noted". (The question not asked or answered by the Accord, and which is relevant to unionists, is: are such schemes more hidden from public accountability — argued for in another part of the Industry Development Policy of the Accord — and less subject to public equity arrangements.) More recently, an ACTU bulletin characterised such measures as financial incentives and cheap loans to industry, the subsidisation of exports, tax concessions, preferential treatment by government of domestic suppliers, discriminatory use of trade, labelling and production standards, restrictive customs requirements and more. This description strengthens the case for public equity and accountability.

It is worth noting also that there is little evidence that the Hawke government will honour its commitments as expressed in the Accord (nor the modest accountability which accompanies it), without active pressure being exerted on it by the unions, especially by the membership. A recent meeting of AMFSU shop stewards was told that the Fraser government's phasing out of protection programs on a wide range of goods in the metal industry would continue under the Hawke government. Yet the Accord says: "that neither current economic conditions, expected future trends, nor balance of payments constraints justify reduction in protection in the foreseeable future."

The future of manufacturing industry in Australia centres upon capital — who has got it, and who controls it. Capital is necessary to provide for jobs and the needs of the society through industrial development — it is necessary to modernise a decaying industry, or to create a new one, to diversify an economy or to specialise it. Overwhelmingly, in the world and Australian economies, capital is owned and controlled by transnational corporations. It is the basis of their power and allows them to laugh at the boundaries of nations, the physical barriers of time and space, and to undermine the relative power and authority of duly-elected state and federal governments.

This problem is one that can be overcome with a political and industrial program, and expressed through active working class support. It involves measures which would expand the access of government, in the name of the people, to existing capital as a means of creating new capital. It would require measures which would control the movement of capital, especially across national boundaries.

The Accord's Industrial Development Policy does advocate a modest program through which unionists and government can begin the regulation of transnational corporations. It is a program which should be supported while recognising that sterner measures are required to control the capacity of transnationals to shift capital at their will. It is necessary for unionists to establish and campaign for measures which would hold capital in Australia, and direct it towards investment in the rejuvenation of Australian manufacturing industry.

The state of the metal industry and the enormous strain that structural, long-term unemployment is placing on the lives of thousands of workers and their children demands new responses from the unions. The struggle for jobs will depend on the capacity of unionists to intervene — using traditional and new forms of industrial action — on the production side of the economy. It requires a new unionism which surpasses the preoccupations, some of the traditions and priorities of the past. It emphasises the need to overcome the fractures within the working class which are based on sex, skill, age and race. It must give a new and dynamic meaning to the tradition of working class solidarity.

Don Sutherland is a member of the South Australian State Committee of the CPA. He is a metal worker.
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Thirty years after the 1950-53 war, Korea remains split into two hostile, competing halves: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (north) and the Republic of Korea (south). At least 10 million Koreans are estimated to have been parted from members of their families by the division of the country. Today, 40,000 United States troops with over 1000 nuclear weapons are permanently deployed in the south, which has rejected the north's latest proposals for peaceful reunification. The DPRK says south Korea is being turned into "the biggest powder keg in the Far East" with the US seeking to introduce the neutron bomb and theatre nuclear missiles. Tension along the military demarcation line is growing.

These pictures, taken by Chris Ray on the northern side of the demarcation line, show:

(this page) At a village near the DMZ — "Drive out the US imperialists and reunify the country";
(opposite page, top to bottom) transplanting rice; North Korean village; US watch tower at Panmunjom on the DMZ.
CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROCESS

It is very difficult to work out the roles of organisations such as the Labor Resource Centre (LRC), perched somewhere between the political and industrial wings of the labour movement. While being committed to Labor governments believing they can in fact change real things for real people and open up possibilities for change, we have decided to do something other than become an outside arm of government.

What can be done in the labour movement to move things along a bit — practical things? The vanguard, economism, the inevitable decline of capitalism, have all been knocked on the head. Luckily, we haven't been concentrating our efforts on these things. What do you do these days though, if you think things should change?

What we are talking about and working on at the LRC is addressing and trying to resolve some of the problems we face today in a way that extends the spheres of society that are subject to the democratic involvement of people. That is what we are actually trying to do — and it is not easy. It is clear to us that if the movement concentrates on the wage struggle and not on how the cake is baked, we do not have a force for change. Our work is basically about developing people's capacities and orientations within the traditional working class to enable them to take part in the democratisation of their workplace — where they spend a lot of their time. I think that is important.

I feel it is a self-imposed criticism that we concentrate on the traditional working class. It is not because we are unaware of other parts of the labour movement (as that is what we are attached to, that restriction is given), rather, they are well organised and progressive. This really points up a major problem for progressive change. It is important that we try to come to terms ourselves with the subjective problems: that white collar workers have good working conditions, are well educated, have good promotion prospects, good salaries and are anti-union, hence don't need to know about how their industries work as 'I'm all right thank you very much'. Of course, none of those things are true and a close look at the objective conditions quickly shows that. Basically, I think, we can get around this problem and if we are seriously going to try to understand the complexities of modern capitalist society, we will have to.

We have obviously been wedded too long to the idea that the industrial proletariat constitutes the subject for social change. However, when it comes down to actually going out and developing processes for social change, we are faced with the problem of the world working class — skilled male labour, being the best organised. Therefore some of the work in terms of developing capacities and understandings is done for you if you don't have to start at basics and begin organising. This approach unintentionally disenfranchises not just white collar workers but also women and the unskilled. This is a very difficult problem if you work with the organised labour movement.

Over the time I have been thinking about strategies for the '80s, challenging capitalism and building socialism, I have got confused about priorities. Not surprisingly everything seemed enormous, inter-connected and nothing I read really helped me think about what to do in the here and now in
A better way. The primary problem I faced, however, was the interconnection between capitalist accumulation and the prospect of the end of the world because of the arms race. Our work has really been premised on the prospect of continued economic growth — how else are we going to provide jobs. This was one of those blind alleys that seem to be constructed to prevent you doing anything as everything is too difficult.

It seems, however, that the question of growth really cannot be challenged until there is a commitment and understanding by working people of how income distribution can be changed. There is no doubt that this currently is not on the agenda in any real way.

What we are trying to do at the LRC is to closely work with groups of stewards in various industries. Our major aim is to develop our own view of the industry, to increase the capacities of the people who work in those industries, to try to get some view of the whole so as to be able to challenge management's view about what is produced, how it is produced, and how much of it. The contradiction is that we will all become good managers, that their way is the only way to run privately-owned enterprise. On the other hand, the experience of greater democracy on the job, of knowing how things are done and challenging them, the struggle to learn the whole and challenge the division of labour, and having more humane working conditions, puts working people, who are also the ruled, let's not forget, at the forefront. Only by concentrating on issues that are realistic and reasonable will people think about taking steps that lead to social change — that means changes to their livelihoods and values.

We have come so far in developing an understanding among the stewards of why it is a good idea to have a look at their industries and to play a role in changing them. A small amount of financial information and education has gone a long way. Although this has not immediately challenged how much is produced and who by, managerial prerogatives and private property relationships are in fact being confronted in a direct way. However, it is not in a way that is outside these people's capacities or foreign to their experience.

For example if we were to now launch out into the need for planning agreement, consultative structures and all the other bureaucratic structures being designed to challenge the prerogatives of private investors, we would lose these people. It seems to me very important that we don't move ahead quickly in this way now that the Labor government opens up the opportunities, as fundamentally the labour movement does not have a clear understanding of how to change this very complex industry structure for the better. So it's not a question of the vanguard — of clever boys or even girls — as we will lose the people we are working with. Their capacities will not be developed and any chance of an alternative view of how industry should be organised with commitment from those who work in it will be impossible.

I am not saying the strategy we are pursuing constitutes a generalised strategy for social change — although the key issue of expanding people's capacities is obviously crucial. However, expanding those capacities in the area of industry is obviously an important part of that strategy.

We have to remember what it is in fact that we are trying to build. Social change is more than a leap of faith and is also more than a form of intervention in the production process. If socialism is about the ability of people to have greater control over their lives, then in the broadest sense we have obviously left a number of areas of life untouched, consumption being the most obvious.

There are also other problems — what do you do when people don't think their work is important, or alternatively, control of the work is in the hands of technology. I don't think

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Workers in the sheet metal production industry in the western region of Melbourne. The photos were taken for a Labor Resource Centre project.
this is enough to negate what I have said but they are further questions to be answered.

Because of the labour movement’s incredible lack of resources these efforts will continue to be very difficult to sustain — also because most of the labour movement is still tied up with the wage struggle.

I think it is the case that the extension of democracy within the enterprise is a special case of the more general objective of allowing individuals and groups to share the decisions which affect their lives. However, democratic change in this area will also change the face of our economic institutions, and then possibly changes in production and consumption will occur. We don’t want to end up with an authoritarian planning structure as a way to cope with the changes and restructuring that is occurring.

W hat does the dismantling of capitalism and the building of socialism involve? It is all too clear that spontaneous uprising is not around the corner. Planned insurrection is also only a dream in some people’s heads. We are talking about transformation of people’s capacities, and through that and at a similar pace, the economic institutions of capital. Where a lot of people spend most of their time. There are other areas of life that are very important that I haven’t touched on and this process is not to exclude them. Other people are organising in them.

Jenny Macklin is co-ordinator of the Labor Resources Centre In Victoria.

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TRIBUNE! You can’t be left without it!

Tribune recently published its 60th anniversary issue.

That Tribune received a good deal of coverage in the press and on radio. Articles appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald, The Age and the Australian; we even made a brief appearance on Channel Nine’s 60 Minutes!

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The Aboriginal people have suffered much at the hands of white Australians. HERB THOMPSON argues that the increased activity of mining companies in the north of Western Australia opens a new and insidious phase in the disruption of the lives of Aboriginal people.
For the purposes of this article it is simply necessary to recognise that an efficient legal process exists for the state government and mining companies in their pursuit of mineral development in Western Australia. This process specifically excludes reference to Aboriginal people, as a group, uniquely disturbed and uprooted by mining activity; and excludes any positive statement for compensation being made to a people who have, and continue to be, denied access to any benefits flowing from mining development. Therefore, we must look elsewhere for statements and strategies in the political and economic spheres to discover the relationship between the state, corporations and Aboriginal communities in the Northwest.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MINING ACT OF 1978

In Western Australia, mining tenements are divided into three major divisions under the Mining Act of 1978: prospecting licences, exploration licenses and mining leases.

A prospecting licence not exceeding two hundred hectares is given to applicants who have marked out the land in accordance with the regulations. No more than ten prospecting licences may be granted to any one person without the approval of the Minister. The licence remains in force for two years and enables the holder to enter the land with employees, vehicles, machinery and equipment; to carry out necessary works such as pits, trenches, holes, bores and tunnels; and to extract or remove a prescribed amount of ore.

An exploration licence may be granted for an area of land not less than ten square kilometres nor more than two hundred square kilometres. The licence remains in force for five years and enables the holder to the same rights and privileges outlined above for the prospecting licence.

Those persons holding prospecting and exploration licences then have prior rights to apply for a mining lease. Any one mining lease may not exceed ten square kilometres, but the applicant may be granted as many as are necessary. The leases remain in force for a period of twenty-one years.

In Western Australia a mining company requires a lease before it can start mining. Once these agreements are signed with representatives of the state government, the company will be capable of resisting pressures from any party interested in challenging mining activities or altering the terms of agreement.

The covenants and conditions of a mining lease include: paying the rents and royalties due; using the land only for mining; complying with expenditure requirements; making periodical reports; and promptly reporting details of all minerals of economic significance which are discovered. The mining lease enables the holder to work and mine the land, take any minerals found and dispose of them; do all that is necessary to effectually carry out mining operations; and assume legal ownership of all minerals lawfully mined.

The Mining Act itself makes no specific reference to the rights and obligations of mining companies with respect to Aborigines; nor does the Act, in any way, consider the effects upon, or the rights of, Aboriginal people who may be physically or socially affected by mining activity. With reference to compensation, the Act specifically excludes the payment of compensation to any lessee of land leased for pastoral purposes. During parliamentary debate before passage of the Act it was noted that this particular exclusion of compensation rights would affect Aboriginal people. Although the point was noted the Act was not changed. The only fact which appears to be clear is that the terms and conditions of the granting of a mining tenement on an Aboriginal reserve and the conditions of entry thereon are matters for decision by the Minister for Mines and Community Welfare. Should these two ministers fail to agree then the decision would be made by the Cabinet.

It has also been pointed out during parliamentary discussion that the Act has been designed so as to assist large corporations and hinder individual prospectors in their search for minerals. The leadership within the Liberal Party has argued that the Act was essential to increase the efficiency of mineral development in Western Australia. It is clear that while most of the large corporations operating in the state support the Act, prospecting organisations, individual mining entrepreneurs (such as Lang Hancock), and even the local branch of the Australian Mining Industry Council are seen to be opposed to the Act as it stands.

THE AUSTRALIAN MINING INDUSTRY COUNCIL (AMIC)

In its Declaration of Policy, 1981, the AMIC established a number of guidelines for mining companies to consider when encountering...
Aboriginal people during their exploration and feasibility programs on mineral claims. James Foots, Chairman of Mt. Isa Mines, put these guidelines into an industry perspective when he said that the mining industry supported the need for clearly and fairly defined rights for Aborigines which would guide governments, mining companies and Aboriginal communities. He elaborated on this point by saying:

We need to reach agreement about which sites may be of special significance to Aborigines, how they might best be protected and under what circumstances mining might occur in their vicinity. While the mining industry was in no position to bear the full responsibility for Aboriginal communities in remote areas it recognised that allowances should be made for cultural differences. Many of the Aborigines' social and economic problems had their origins long ago and this industry should not be expected to carry the nations' burden for events in which it had no part.3

Other than allowing for 'cultural differences' and refusing to bear 'full responsibility for Aboriginal communities', it seems that Foots is asking for efficient administrative procedures and clearly specified guidelines which can be agreed upon by mining companies, governments and Aboriginal communities. The likelihood of this occurring must be based on a presumption that harmony and mutuality of interests exists between these three sectors of the Australian community. History has shown us that the opposite has been the case in too many instances to be exceptions, irrespective of the fact that there may have existed individuals with good intentions. From Bougainville to Weipa to Argyle, the interests of Aboriginal people have been in direct conflict with the interests and strategies of governments and corporations in the pursuit of development. This does not mean we should dismiss the good intentions of individuals or scoff at the guidelines of the AMIC. It does mean that we must seriously compare the rhetoric and declarations with the activities of mining corporations in the field.

Of importance to Aboriginal people in the Kimberley, the area to which our attention is directed, the guidelines in the Declaration of Policy provide the following information to mining companies:

- Pay particular attention to legislation relating to Aboriginal sites and artifacts. If a Register of Aboriginal Sites exists, obtain a copy for the area. The traditional owners or custodians will usually be prepared to discuss the presence of significant sites, and if so their location should be identified in discussion with the Aborigines concerned;
- Ensure that all persons associated with the exploration programme are aware of the legal requirements and other procedures including techniques to be used and the locality of the work;
- Determine which Aboriginal groups have traditional links with the land and contact them, whether or not they reside on that land. Where possible identify on the ground and record important sites of significance.
- Offer employment to local Aborigines, if practicable. In any case, encourage the presence of an Aboriginal guide;
- Take care not to disturb Aboriginal sites;
- Remember that Aborigines will be
particularly concerned with two matters: protection of the Aboriginal community and protection of sites of significance;

- Discussion should be carried out with patience and with continuity of personnel on the company's part. A company officer should be clearly nominated as the liaison officer;
- All company and contractor's employees should be kept fully informed of the relevant sections of the agreements reached with the Aboriginal community. Failure to comply should result in instant dismissal from the projects;
- During the course of the work programme all contact with the Aboriginal community should be through the nominated company representative, and all decisions taken recorded in a manner understood by the Aborigines.

Mr. H.M. Morgan, President of the AMIC, in an address to the Academy of Social Sciences, has further amplified the issues raised in the Declaration of Policy. According to Mr. Morgan:

"... the Mining Industry has consistently supported the desire of the Aboriginal community to have access to traditional areas of land and the industry has no desire to either wilfully or unwittingly, destroy traditional sites of cultural importance .... AMIC companies working in remote areas have established sound principles for contact with Aboriginal communities.

He went on to point out that the Declaration of Policy stresses the importance of early approval to hold discussions directly with the relevant traditional community or their appointed representatives or agents; and that while understandings reached with Aborigines may or may not be legally binding, the company should in any case record agreements in writing and have them signed by the parties or their representatives. Should any damage to the land surface or loss of its use be directly caused by a mining company then compensation should be negotiated. Mr. Morgan concluded the specific discussion of the guidelines by saying, "I doubt that any responsible organisation would allow its employees to pursue any course other than that suggested by them (guidelines)."

After a fairly detailed discussion of the guidelines, the tone of Mr. Morgan's address appears to change quite dramatically. He then goes on the offensive to argue quite strongly that:

"It is a matter of grave concern to my industry that we, more than any other, are expected to bear the cost of the legislation designed to implement those principles, and the Mining Industry is often expected to bear the whole community's welfare obligations .... The industry cannot and should not be asked to bear alone the obligations of funding Aboriginal welfare. The industry already pays substantial taxes in the form of royalty taxes, company taxes, freight taxes and taxation of employees and also contributes many benefits to communities in the form of services."

This speech was the opening barrage of a frontal attack on what the AMIC considers to be an increasingly dangerous 'land rights movement'. The AMIC has decided to try a two-pronged public relations assault which on the one hand emphasises its good neighbour policy in the guidelines; and on the other hand attempts to persuade the public that the 'land rights movement' has not only gone far enough and should be stopped now, but that some of the decisions already made should be reversed. The major intention is to try to swing public opinion against the operation of the Northern Territory Act; but the campaign would have obvious ramifications on Aboriginal struggles for compensation and land rights recognition in other parts of Australia as well. Mr. Morgan continues:

The industry requires that maximum access to land must be maintained for exploration and mining purposes .... That can be on land occupied by Aborigines or where Aborigines have had an historical association.

Further, to exemplify the suspicions and the paternalistic nature of the AMIC with regard to the land rights issues, Mr. Morgan continues:

Important Aboriginal sites should not be 'discovered' after the discovery of the orebody.

and

Where land councils and traditional owners are in disagreement the company must carefully determine who represents the traditional owners .... Time has little significance to many Aboriginals. Therefore, any discussions or understanding reached with Aboriginals will be slow.

In preparation for this public relations campaign the AMIC's Aboriginal affairs committee commissioned attitudinal research in southern cities and found, according to AMIC's assistant technical director, Mr. Ken Paterson, "an easily detectable growing cynicism towards land rights". Mr. Paterson also said "we've come to the conclusion that politicians won't make changes until..."
there is an intellectual change in public opinion".8

In taking its case to the public the AMIC presented another document entitled Aboriginal Land Rights: The Need for a National Consensus; and in presenting its case draws heavily on nationalist and patriotic concepts.

In its opening paragraphs, the document argues, "In AMIC's view the continued operation of the Federal Land Rights Act in its present form may only assist in dividing the nation, thereby creating a legacy for future generations of Australians for which they may not be grateful". In fact, as reported by Anne Summers, these same words were used by Roderick Carnegie, chairman of CRA Ltd., at an AMIC board lunch with Senator Baume, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs in 1980. Senator Baume had just assumed the portfolio and was invited by the mining companies to an informal private lunch.

Similar sentiments were also expressed by Mr. Morgan in his paper:

... too much attention (has been) given to the efforts of a minority to create political advantage from proposals to explore for minerals on land to which Aboriginal communities may lay claim ...

Aboriginal communities may lay claim .... We cannot afford to advance one at the expense of the other, but we can reach a national consensus on the issues we have been discussing. The search for that consensus should be directed at ensuring that the future of Australia and the future of the future generations is not left with the legacy of a divided community.9

The ideology of consensus, nationalism and development are combined well to assault both the humanitarian concern for Aboriginal welfare and the Aboriginals well-voiced concerns over their survival and self-determination through control over their land. To show concern over the future legacy of a divided community, and not recognise the divided community which exists in Australia at present, appears hypocritical, to say the least.

In comparing the rhetoric with the facts, let us take one simple example of an issue that existed and was reported during the same month in which Mr. Morgan's address was being presented. The Aboriginal people in Turkey Creek, a community in the Kimberley close to the Argyle diamond development, continued to be disturbed by the activities of some mining and exploration companies near sacred sites. The chairman of the Warmun community, Mr. Bob Nyalcas was reported as saying that one sacred site had already come close to desecration; and a company exploring for diamonds had made no effort to ensure that its activities did not disturb areas of significance to Aboriginal people.

Mr. Nyalcas said the community was also worried about the disclosure that Gem Exploration and Minerals had discovered more diamond deposits in the Argyle area. The Aborigines feared that the exploration would require a significant amount of earthmoving. "Gem has been actively exploring the Durack Ranges and has even built a road through the area", Mr Nyalcas said. He also pointed out that the community, with the support of the W.A. Museum, had contacted 30 companies with tenements in the area. They had outlined to the companies the need to undertake site surveys and to keep the community informed before exploration commenced. Only three companies up to that point had held talks with the community.10

It is evident, from the above situation, that while the Mining Act is being properly adhered to, the AMIC guidelines are being totally ignored by most of the companies in the area.
Further, it is clear from the history of mining activity from Noonkanbah to Argyle that this is the rule rather than the exception.

In taking its case to the public there is no doubt that AMIC will gain enthusiastic agreement with the proposition that the land rights movement has gone too far, from much of the European population in the northern Territory and in parts of Queensland and Western Australia. But AMIC is aware that the people it has to persuade are those Europeans in the southern centres of the population. As the AMIC report asks, "Would it be in Australia's best interests if a similar situation (as exists in the Northern Territory) were to be brought about in the other States as well?" That indeed is the issue! Upon distribution of the AMIC document, Senator Susan Ryan, then Opposition spokesperson on Aboriginal Affairs, attacked AMIC's paper as being "an irresponsible document full of unsubstantiated statements" and said "that far from wanting to promote a consensus, as the document is subtitled, the miners were seeking a confrontation with Aborigines".

The fact is that legislation granting land rights to individual groups has been made to operate in the United States without detriment to the interests of large mining companies. Many Aboriginal groups within Australia would be quite happy for exploration and development to take place on their land with proper consultation and satisfactory compensation. The Mining Act of Western Australia 1978 does not provide for the satisfactory resolution of Aboriginal claims against mining company activities.

The Kimberley Warden, in a case raised by an Aboriginal community to object to applications to mine on a pastoral lease held by the community, in dismissing the objections said:

I have written at some length rather than summarily dismiss the matters raised by the objectors. It would be insensitive not to recognise the sincere and deep interest of these Aboriginal people in the land they see as theirs. It is clear that they are worried, and, to a degree, feel threatened by the mining development in the area. This concern and worry has manifested itself in the objections made to these claims. It is a matter of comfort that this manifestation has taken a lawful, as distinct from an illegal and hostile, form.

If only as a matter of self interest, the Government, the mining companies and the community at large would do well to look at the issues raised in these proceedings, and take positive steps to attempt to abate the concern expressed by the Aboriginal people.12

THE MINING INVASION WILL CONTINUE

A team from the World Council of Churches visited Australia in June and July, 1981. Their criticism of the treatment of Aboriginal people was publicised worldwide and became somewhat embarrassing for Australian politicians at both the state and Commonwealth levels. The team included Bena-Silu of Zaire, Pauline Webb of the U.K., Elizabeth Adler of West Germany, Quince Duncan of Costa Rica and Anwar Barakat of Pakistan. In their report they said:

In the top of the Northern Territory and Kimberley region of Western Australia, Aboriginal communities are living in fear of the impact the massive mining development will have on their life styles, their freedom, their culture, their land and sacred sites.

In the Kimberley region of Western Australia, mining development is becoming a direct confrontation between the growth economy and the human rights of the people. The West Australian Government in its actions in support of or on behalf of the mining companies is showing a callous disregard for the people. The mining development in Western Australia should benefit primarily the people on whose land it is occurring and who are being affected by the development; and secondly, benefit the people of Australia. The high level of foreign investment actually means that such developments are not only failing to benefit the Aborigines but also the Australian people.13

The committee also argued that the Kimberley Land Council was an invaluable agent for the Aboriginal people. They recommended that the West Australian government should recognise the KLC as an official Aboriginal organisation and adequately fund it without compromising the Council's independence.

Daryl Kickett, ex-chairman of the KLC, outlined some interesting plans for land councils in Australia's north when he said: "We're going to pass into a very important stage, because it's time the Aboriginal people got a slice of the cake. It's time we got into areas other than pastoral." The 'stage' about which Kickett was talking had to do with a group of Aborigines associated with Aboriginal land councils lobbying for the establishment of an Aboriginal-owned mining company. The company, to be called Abminex Pty. Ltd., would negotiate profit participation with selected mining
companies; engage in mineral exploration on Aboriginal land; and provide a vehicle for land councils to secure mining rights over their lands. Chairmen of land councils would become directors and councils would be invited to take part. In this way there would be a firm commitment that all activity generated would have an over-riding emphasis on Aboriginal involvement. According to Kickett, "Financially, profits will return to the various land councils through Abminex. In this way the royalty or hand-out system of payments will become a thing of the past."14

However, within the political context of Western Australia, even the Kimberley Land Council faces severe and continuous criticism at the state and local government levels. Mr. Peter Kneebone, president of the West Kimberley Shire, said that the "Kimberley Land Council should concern itself more with law and order, health, housing and education of Aborigines, instead of confrontations with mining companies".15

The KLC, which is not recognised by the state government, was being accused of creating disharmony between blacks and whites. Kneebone's comments stemmed from a meeting at the end of July, 1981, at Fitzroy River which was attended by about 100 Aborigines including 40 from the Mowanjum community near Derby and the Jungjuwa community of Fitzroy Crossing.

There was a squabble at the meeting over a number of issues. But one of the major underlying differences had to do with Aboriginal involvement with mining companies. The Jungjuwa community was negotiating with Home Oil over its exploration drilling east of Derby on lands formerly occupied by the Jungjuwa people; and, as mentioned above, the Mowanjum people have been negotiating with the Mitchell Plateau Bauxite Company.

A few Aborigines have been employed by both companies and the co-operation has been hailed by Derby people, including Mr. Kneebone, as the best way to resolve the question of mining on areas with which Aborigines are involved. Mr. Kneebone said that "the economy of the area was resource-based, and both Aborigines with capital to invest were upset by reports of confrontation".16 The confrontation Mr. Kneebone refers to is simply the KLC, in the absence of any guidelines, arguing for a better deal for Aboriginal people in the area. As Mr. Kickett has said, "there have been no known attempts to approach the mining question from the Aboriginal viewpoint".17

During the past year Aborigines have walked off at least five East Kimberley cattle stations, alleging bad treatment by station owners. Personality conflicts were cited in walk-outs from three stations in the Halls Creek area; and conflict over wages was cited by Aboriginal stockmen on two stations in the Turkey Creek area.

Aborigines from the Djuuru tribe from Nicholson, Sturt Creek and Alice Downs stations near Halls Creek are considering moving to areas of tribal significance near their formal settlements. A spokesman for the Nicholson station group. Mr. Ribgnna Green, said "Aborigines are frustrated by their total dependence on station management for food and money. They also want control over the land on which they live".18

This movement off the stations indicates the very unsettled nature of Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley. Tribes are moving off the stations for a variety of reasons, but at least three can be identified:

- Aborigines, like many other Australians are confronting their employers with demands for higher wages and better working conditions. Along with this there is an increasing concern among the more traditional people that their children are slowly losing their skills of "living on the land";
- Along with this concern for the land, is the fear of the increased activity of mining companies in the area. News travels fast, and the destruction of sacred sites along with the "white people's invasion" at Argyle has led to a large number of elders wanting to move back to areas of tribal significance so as to protect and defend them;
- Some Aborigines have heard of pay-offs by companies to various Aboriginal groups and are moving in that direction in the hope that they will be able to participate in whatever benefits may exist.

It is evident that, even at the exploration and feasibility stage, the mining companies are disrupting the traditional activities of Aboriginal people in the area; and directly affecting their decisions surrounding notions of settlement, mobility and economic survival. This is happening irrespective and independent of the direct threat and disruption to sacred sites in the area. Movements of Aborigines toward and away from significant mining activity are indirectly caused by the mere existence of feasibility and exploration operations in the area. The mining invasion of the 1980s in the north of Western Australia will be the most disruptive influence on the lives of Aboriginal people since the arrival of the first Europeans in the area.

REFERENCES

1. Western Australia, Mining Act, No. 107 of 1978. With reference to mining tenements see sections 40-85.
2. Ibid., Part VII, sections 123-126.
6. Ibid., p. 8.
7. Ibid., pp. 9-12.
11. Anne Summers, op.cit.
16. Ibid.
17. Christopher Jay, op.cit.

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ALR SPRING 83
BEST BOOKSHOPS

ADELAIDE

PEOPLE’S BOOKSHOP
255 Angas Street, Adelaide

BRISBANE

PEOPLE’S BOOKSHOP
291 St. Paul’s Terrace, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane

PERTH

PEOPLE’S BOOKSHOP
75 Bulwer Street, Perth

SYDNEY

INTERVENTION BOOKSHOP
4 Dixon Street, Sydney

WOLLONGONG

INTERVENTION BOOKSHOP
12 Station Street, Wollongong
HISTORY

SLACKY
FLATS

The entire business of the dole was disgusting. As a single man I drew 7 shillings and sixpence a week; married men drew 9/6d. — so a wife was worth two bob a week! An insult to womanhood to say the least. Married men also received an extra 2/6d. for each child.

I have forgotten many of the prices but I can remember bread was 2 pence a loaf; 1/2 lb. of butter was 9 pence, rice and sugar were each tuppence (two pennies) a pound, and one tin of golden syrup cost 5 pence. I usually bought three loaves of bread, 3 pounds of mutton chops, 1/2 pound of butter, 1/4 pound of tea, 1 pound of rice, 1 pound of sugar, 1 tin of condensed milk, 1 tin of golden syrup and 1 cake of sunlight soap. These nine articles cost all of my dole, 7/6d.

The first Communist I had met on the track was really comical and he was a died-in-the-wool Communist. He never missed giving us a daily lecture. I noticed he was very tactful any time he came up against strong Lang supporters. He could get around a point and prevent bitter arguments or making enemies. One day I had the opportunity to have a long conversation with him, when he gave me his history. He had come from party headquarters in Sydney and was making his way to Brisbane, on foot like the rest of us, to become party leader there. One thing was for sure — wherever he camps he will keep every other swagman there amused.

Sunday 29 May 1932 I left Parramatta and walked 20 miles — 5 miles short of Campbelltown. Next day I walked through Campbelltown and Appin and made camp on the George's River after covering 15 miles. There was an old wooden bridge across the river and it was a good camping place with plenty of water, bush and rabbits.

In the morning I set off along a narrow gravelly winding road. Every two or three miles I would meet a bagman coming from the coast. I stopped and yarned with all of them as they approached me one by one; seldom did you see two together. I made it my business to find out all I could about the coast. The main topic was, of course, where was the best camp site.

They told me all about Bulli. The things that mattered in those days were, was it a good camp? Was there plenty of water? Was there wood for the fire? But the main concern was would the Council and the Police let a body stay there more than one week? In many places the swagman had to move on in a week or two, always for some trumped up reason or another. Vandalism was a reason. Theft was another. Other reasons were invented. So all of us swagmen had to suffer. However Bulli had everything good in the eyes of the swagman — plenty of trees for shade and shelter, water, wood and good company.

After walking about nine or ten miles...
I came to another wooden bridge which also crossed the George's River. I got into contact with a bloke I met at the bridge. He was full of information. The "Pass" was only a couple of miles off. Only half a mile after the bottom of the "Pass" was a really good camp at Slacky Flat. He also told me that if I got there by 4 o'clock to find Mr. W. Dennis to get registered for a local ration. I reached the top of the pass by three o'clock that afternoon. What a wonderful sight it was. That was the first time I had looked over Bulli Pass and I'll always remember it, 31 May 1932. I had never before seen anything so spectacular. Because it was a beautifully clear afternoon I could see along the coast for miles.

I realised I would have to hurry to get to Slacky Flat by 4 pm. I dumped all my luggage in the bush and set off with just my bike. I still had to walk because the pass was much too steep for me to ride. Luckily I got to my destination in time for Mr. Dennis to register me for the next dole day; no questions asked.

Then all I had to do was walk back up to the top, pushing my bike along as I walked to where I left my gear at the top. That last drag made me pretty tired. I had walked just on 20 miles that day and made the 55 miles from Parramatta to Bulli in two and a half days. In those days the road was very windy and my estimation of 55 miles is pretty accurate.

The top of the pass, from where the Service Station is today to the Pass Road, was covered with plenty of thick bush, which was just as well. By the time I reached there a cold westerly wind got up and without shelter, it would almost blow your head off. As there was no rain I didn't have to pitch the fly. Instead, I wrapped it around me, no wind could penetrate that. Lying on top of my two blankets I slept snug and cosy.

I woke up bright and early to find the wind had dropped, but I was faced with a real problem, namely, how to get down that steep pass with a big load and no brake on my bike. While having a bite to eat I gave it some thought and came up with an idea. I cut the top off a sapling and tied it behind the bike and let it drag along behind me. It worked quite well and the bike and the load came down really easy. I threw the bush away when almost to the bottom and managed the final descent down Bulli Hill without my emergency brake.

By the morning of Wednesday 1 June I was established at Slacky Flat. I found a tree with plenty of bush around it for shelter. Not only that, there was plenty of firewood around and water was not far away. What more could a man want? I pitched my fly there and made a permanent camp. As it turned out, my camp was about 10 yards away from "Bendy Sam" in one direction and about 10 yards from Redman and his Scottish mate in another. At the time, this didn't register because I knew no one in the camp at Slacky Flat.

On Thursday 2nd I went into Wollongong and got my last track ration. By rights you should pick up a "track ration" once a week and then move on to the next place. Most police didn't insist on this. Local residents picked up their dole every second Tuesday.

It didn't take me long to get to know some of the fellows in the camp, especially the ones nearby. Redman was an Englishman and a hot-headed Communist. His Scottish mate, Mac something-or-other (I've forgotten his name) was a much younger man in his early twenties. Both of these men were involved in the Bankstown eviction fight. This incident was caused by landlords evicting people from their homes because they couldn't pay the rent. Communists and militant workers took up the fight on behalf of the people concerned. They barricaded the houses with anything and everything they could get. Then the police arrived and proceeded to smash up the barricades and the fellows as well. Some of them finished up in hospital. Redman was one of them who got hurt. The police had jumped on his stomach as he lay on the ground, injured. And that wasn't all. The defenders of the barricades were also rewarded with a twelve months suspended sentence. While this was hanging over their heads the police could pick them up at any time.

This was during Mr. Lang's session.
as Premier and was one good reason for the Communists to hate him so much. Of course he made many more mistakes. In later years, I noticed, Mr. Lang came round quite a bit and appeared to favour the rebels. He gave some good lectures at the University. However you might recall Mr. Chifley did the same sort of thing after he had the Miners' leaders arrested in 1949. It seems that most politicians like to make a name for themselves before they die.

Now I was a "local" so I picked up my first local ration at Bulli Tuesday 7 June. It gave me an opportunity to meet some of the "locals". The local ration was worth fifteen shillings for the fortnight. I went straight to the Cooperative Store and cashed in my ration. We could get anything in that store and didn't have to stick to the ration card. That suited me fine. After about a week in Bulli I found I was beginning to like it.

Redman left in a couple of days and I walked into my new home. Like the song, I felt 'Everything's coming my way'. Later on this camp was to become the Communist Party Headquarters.

There was no fireplace so I set to work to build one — on to the end of the tent and I made a doorway in the side. Soon I had the whole place very comfortable. The new fireplace meant that I now had warmth against the cold westerly winds as well as improved cooking facilities.

I joined the Communist Party in June. Every Communist I came into contact with was sure the revolution was just around the corner. I did not know which corner, but I thought I had better get in and give them a hand. The party meeting was held in a fairly big camp that belonged to Laurie Gardner and his mate Shorty. They had enough room for six of us to sit around the table. As well as these two and myself, the other members were Scotty Bell, Len Tracey and Small Un. Small Un and Scotty were married. Small Un was so called because of his small stature. He used to be a jockey. His wife was just as tiny. Of the six of us, none were locals. Like myself, they weren't too bad a mob to get along with.

Mr. Lang's staunch supporters whom we called "Lang-ites" used to wear a button on the lapel of their coats. The words on the button stated "Lang is Right". The wearers were mostly pig-headed Catholics and luckily they were few enough for us all to have had some good fun.

About this time things were getting serious, politically. Hitler was becoming stronger as were the New Guard who were getting very cocky and threatening to jail all the Communists and do heaven knows what with them. There were eviction fights. Troubles piled upon troubles. To keep their jobs, many weak and scared workers were forced to join the New Guard. Some employers became really fanatic, especially once they scaled into the higher ranks of the bosses. They supported Hitler and Fascism to such an extent they not only read Mein Kampf but had Hitler's picture hanging in their bedrooms. They weren't game to hang them elsewhere where all and sundry could view these pictures.

I do believe these people actually thought then that Hitler was going to fix everything — even come here to Australia and clean up the radical elements and all the Communists. So the scare was on. We lost party members one after the other. They disappeared, mostly to Sydney. It finished up with just Len tracey and myself. Gardner left and I took over his paper run round Slacky Flat. Len looked after the miners, the people round the town and the dump. My busy days were just starting. After a couple of months, in October 1932 I had to do the lot — papers, magazines, whatever. Len went to live half way up the Pass with Browns and took over the Thirroul units to strengthen that section of the Communist Party.

In the middle of that same month I got on the electoral roll — another good reason that started me off on a pattern of work for the Communist Party that was to continue for three years. The routine was as follows: Every Thursday I went into Wollongong to pick up the papers, pamphlets and various other publications and take them back to the camp. At about mid-day Friday I would walk up to Bulli Pit to distribute the literature to the afternoon shift going in and then wait there until three o'clock when the day shift came out. Every week for three years, mind you.

There was one good thing about it, though, I used to have a shower with the miners every Friday.

One of the first things I did when I started my literature run was to make a stall out of pit-props up there at the pit top so as to be dry on wet days as well as to be protected from the cold westerly winds when they blow. That structure stood there unmolested all that time. Even the management didn't interfere. I could not guarantee that to happen today.

In the big tent at the camp at Slacky Flat the young fellows such as Jim Flood, Bill Johnson and Joe Cassidy used to gather to play cards and argue all day and all night. I had the idea of giving them a game that was much quieter. I gathered a few saplings and settled down to carving a chess set. They knew nothing about this till I took the finished product over to their camp.

Only Flick Martin, Jim Flood and Bill Johnson knew the least thing about the game; but getting them started on chess was one of the best things that could have happened. Days and nights were quiet and within twelve months they could all play — and some played very well.

We had to find some other avenue for
extra food. Our next trick was to go up to Robertson. It was thirty miles either way, walking five miles up that very steep Macquarie Pass for just one sugar bag of potatoes. We could only carry one sugar bag each on our handle bars. We would walk up the pass from about 10 pm until midnight, have a spell and then start “bandycooting” — an expression used to explain digging potatoes out by hand and stealing them.

On such expeditions we would occasionally hear the dogs bark. We would stop and listen for anybody approaching. When each man had his bag full we started to walk down the pass. We used to get home about 3 am, tired and dirty. About two or three of these trips a season was enough hard work. However had we been given money instead of a dole ticket we would have been able to buy a bag of potatoes. Not a little sugar bag, but a corn bag full of potatoes would have cost only two shillings. The farmers could not sell their crops because people on the dole got no money and people with back yards grew their own potatoes. Many farmers had to feed them to the cows.

As time went by I got more and more customers for the paper “The Worker’s Weekly”. The papers were only a penny each but some of my customers didn’t even have that to spare. They paid me with the penny stamps parents had sent them to encourage their writing home.

Time passed very quickly indeed. In no time it was 1 May 1933. What a May Day. It was the best I have ever seen. There was a free train to Wollongong. Miners, women and children were all there. Each miners’ lodge had its own magnificent banner. A very big procession went down Crown Street and finished up at the Showground. There were various speakers who took up an hour or so; sporting activities, beer for sale, free ice-cream and drinks for the kids turned it into a real picnic atmosphere.

During the depression days we used to have some wonderful Communist orators. Tom Paine used to come from Sydney to Bulli at election time and speak at the Russell Street corner for a couple of hours. On a cold, still, winter’s night his voice would ring out like a bell. I have not heard his equal. He must have had a fine pair of lungs.

From the unemployed camp at Port Kembla came such gifted speakers as Mealey and Jack Delaney. I can recall Mealey speaking on one occasion for four hours. The relief speaker didn’t turn up. Since it was a Friday night and late shopping lots of people were out and about. A crowd of some three hundred had assembled. After three hours Mealey asked the crowd if they were prepared to listen to him all night. So he spoke for another hour at which time people started to drift away home. So we had some iron men in those days with no cars to take them home after such mighty efforts.
Early in the morning of Friday 7 July 1933 I had to shoot my dog, Rixo. He was barking incessantly and all the fellows in the camps around me kept calling out "Shoot that b... dog", "Hit him on the head", because they couldn't sleep. When I went out to the dole office to listen to the dog, he didn't even know me. He had been poisoned. At midnight there was no way I could help him, so I had to destroy him. Had it been daylight I might have been able to help the dog, but then again, it might have been too late.

I was very upset about the whole affair. The dog was only two years old and I had reared him from a pup. He would have been a really good sheep dog had he been trained. However it isn't easy to keep a dog in a camp for a long time, especially with so many people around. Besides I was so busy I could seldom be in the camp to share the old companionship that Rixo and I had in our travelling days.

On 26 June 1933 we started doing relief work. Maybe we did two hours but mostly we leaned on our shovels and mattocks. Another good thing about it was the amount of Communist propaganda we could disseminate on the job. A few men working together would start arguing about politics. When it got too hot the ganger would come and split us up, or shift us to another place. I used to sell Worker's Weekly on the job. That started the arguments again, especially with the men who were hostile to the Communist Party.

Our job was to clean up the gutters and level off the footpaths by chipping off the grass with a mattock. This implement was not at all suitable. It was never sharp and we had to take the top soil with the grass. The work scheme ended in about three months because, as usual, the government had run out of money. Work ended 22 September 1933 and by 28 September 1933 we got the rest of our money; the other person seemed to suffer from other stomach complaints.

This situation was quite understandable. The unemployed had to eat a great deal of rubbish. We could not afford good nourishing food. Lots of fellows were batching and did not know how best to cook what food was available. They would have had to be first class cooks to camouflage some of it.

The idea of going to Sydney to see a herbalist or dietician occurred to me. I couldn't get the shivers wondering who would be next to lose his job. Once it was past three o'clock we felt pretty sure we didn't do much work on relief work. Maybe we did two hours but mostly we leaned on our shovels and mattocks. Another good thing about it was the amount of Communist propaganda we could disseminate on the job.

We started relief work again just after New Year, but only until 25 January 1934. We were paid on 31st so we had about 7 months work. Then it was back on the dole again. We got our dole cards back on Thursday 1 February. I started to fix up my bike and it was no sooner done than the Communist Party put more work on me. Very few people, least of all Party members had a bike in those days. So I became the transport section. I had to ride to Wollongong to pick up four bundles of literature. One went to Curnock in Corrimal, one bundle was mine, for Bulli, the third for A.B. Jones of Thirroul and the fourth for W. Davis at Coledale. There were many people, now gone and forgotten who did some really good work in their time. We started relief work again just after New Year, but only until 25 January 1934. We were paid on 31st so we had about 7 months work. Then it was back on the dole again. We got our dole cards back on Thursday 1 February. I started to fix up my bike and it was no sooner done than the Communist Party put more work on me. Very few people, least of all Party members had a bike in those days. So I became the transport section. I had to ride to Wollongong to pick up four bundles of literature. One went to Curnock in Corrimal, one bundle was mine, for Bulli, the third for A.B. Jones of Thirroul and the fourth for W. Davis at Coledale. There were many people, now gone and forgotten who did some really good work in their time.

Wherever we went we had to walk. Party members time and again walked into Wollongong and back to meetings. I hope we are never again reduced to that.

About the middle of 1935 I started to suffer from a stomach complaint. I used to eat porridge or rice with condensed milk, thinned down with water as my breakfast. I couldn't retain even that for very long. Soon it dawned on me that I had an ulcer. They were not uncommon in those days. Every other person seemed to suffer from stomach complaints.

This situation was quite understandable. The unemployed had to eat a great deal of rubbish. We could not afford good nourishing food. Lots of fellows were batching and did not know how best to cook what food was available. They would have had to be first class cooks to camouflage some of it.

The idea of going to Sydney to see a herbalist or dietician occurred to me. There would be some problems to solve — who would care for my paper run and my camp? Seeing that Hack Hamilton owed me a good turn I asked him to take over the responsibility of my papers. I showed him the routine and handed over the lot. He promised to continue my good work so that was one problem taken care of.

My next worry was my camp. Would it be safe to leave? Would it be there when I got back? I was in luck again. Old Wally Forscutt came along and wanted to know if I could give him one of my camps for a while. When I told him "Yes, take mine" the measure of his surprise was a delight to see.

At last I was free to move out knowing all was being cared for. In June 1935 I went off to my friends at 107 Lawson Street, Paddington. That weekend, while with my friends, a fellow named Johnson suggested I go to Luna Park on Monday morning where building was in progress and men were being employed. He offered to lend me a few tools but no saw. However he advised me to borrow a saw from the saw doctor in Sussex Street. I took Johnson's advice. The saw cost me ten shillings deposit.

On Monday, off I went with the saw and a few tools in a sugar bag and a few hopes in my heart for at least a week's work. Well I got a start. So did a lot of others. We worked all the week, including Friday, when some got paid off. The following Monday more workers were put on but come Friday still others were put off. The next Monday morning there were more new faces. This was the pattern. By using this method the contractor was able to get rid of the weaker workers, but a man had to be incapable to be put off mid-week. Every Friday most of us used to get the shivers wondering who would be next to lose his job. Once it was past three o'clock we felt pretty safe for the rest of the next week.

One of my pastimes in Sydney was to go to the Domain on a Sunday afternoon to listen to the Communist speakers. I can recall being there the day Kisch was on the platform, and he was still on crutches.

Kisch was a big man. He had come to Australia by ship, but the authorities would not let him land because he was a Communist. So he jumped from the ship onto the wharf, broke his leg, was hospitalised but he was ashore. He did
it the hard way — especially for such a big man.

One other afternoon I recall at the Domain, the speaker on the Communist platform, Rivet by name, dropped dead as he was speaking. Lance Sharkey was there and he took over the platform when Rivet was taken away. He said Rivet would not have wished for a better time and place to die. Nevertheless it was a sad afternoon. The speakers had no microphones and yet, so strong and powerful were their voices that they were easily heard. Joe Keenan was one such wonderful speaker with a keen sense of humor.

It was about this time I returned to Bulli. I had heard nothing of the place so I took my tools and the few pounds I had saved up. It was three months since I came to Sydney. The time had flown by. Besides it wasn’t easy to knock back work and money. It was just on five years since I had any money in my pocket. Each week I expected to be paid off and each week I wasn’t and so time passed.

When eventually I arrived back at Bulli and Slacky Flat I was in for a big surprise. Half the fellows had gone — even my old carpenter mate Jim. He had gone to Sydney. Old Forscutt had locked up my place and gone to Melbourne. Upon making some inquiries I met hostility, even abuse. Some people, especially the Lang supporters, blamed me for running away from a protest fight about which I knew nothing.

When I left Slacky Flat for Sydney there was no sign of evacuation. On my return people told me that the miserable council engineer, with a constable to protect him, had gone around all the camps and given the people notice to get out and leave Slacky Flat for ever. Most of them were timid and left like good little boys.

I was back only a few days when the engineer and the constable paid me a visit. The engineer stuck his head in the camp and told me I would have to go. “Where to?” I asked him. “Anywhere” he replied. “Thanks” I told him and off they went.

Karl Strom was a communist militant in the unemployed workers’ movement in the 1930s.
What made a communist of the 1940s and '50s 'tick'? BETTY REILLY writes vividly and with humour of the years when the communist party was illegal. She suggests there are lessons to be learnt, and promises more in the future.

When Karl Marx died in 1883, Frederick Engels, his buddy and work-sharer from their early twenties, commenced the graveside farewell thus: "On the afternoon of the fourteenth of March at a quarter to three, the greatest living thinker ceased to think."

Comparatively few people then cottoned-on to the full range of that remark which later sprang into planetary significance, and had all but the loot-laden rich rejoicing following the 1917 socialist revolution, whereby the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin triumphed, and the all-powerful economic, political and social interests of capitalists and landlords over one-sixth of the planet expired.

This world-famous turnaround for Russia's Tsar-oppressed, multi-national millions — geographically described by Lenin as "a new era in the history of mankind" — magically lifted the expectations, and fuelled future struggles, of all exploited humankind for social change; and like mushies after rain, dedicated marxist parties emerged internationally, grimly determined to emulate this stimulating young socialist state, protect its independence and sovereignty, and accepts its tenets.

From its inception in 1920, with a fervour bordering on Papal infallibility (i.e. the USSR cannot err), defence of the Soviet system was inextricably woven into CPA policies, activities and organisation.

This euphoric fervour later reached grandiose proportions when, to me and others then living in Cloud-Cuckoo-Land, Stalin appeared God-like, and the world at large waited impatiently for the advent of Soviet-style socialism.

Such infantile views weighed heavily then on the ability of communists for factual evaluation of socialist progress in the USSR and in the formulation of our own independent path to socialism.

But experience, accumulated knowledge and collective wisdom eventually made nonsense of cult figures, and socialist formulas went hopping. New problems arise now because of the diversity of parties and political movements all basing themselves completely, or to some extent, on marxism; and debates abound around the validity today of the laws of social development discovered by Marx last century.

In today's topsy-turvy embryonic "Star Wars World", Lenin's analysis of 1917 that "a new era in the history of mankind" had commenced, is mirrored internationally by the conflicting political interests of two different social systems — basically a class struggle — illustrating how the ideas of Marx have changed the world; and in non-socialist countries by class struggle at the point of production, and with powerful working class and communist-influenced labour movements struggling for social change.

This is no dogmatic assertion that socialism is bound to replace capitalism in the world totally. It is merely an acknowledgement that the marxist system of ideas and methods of approaching social problems seems to me the truest yet evolved by history.

Otherwise, why would a political novice (a-panting for the revo's opening date) have left the hearth and home in 1939 to work in communist ranks, Friends of the Soviet Union branches flat out fostering cultural links with the USSR, and militantly-led trade unions enthusiastically explaining the revolution's special
significance for the Australian working class?

Who, now, boarding the three score years and ten express, could forget the drama and excitement surrounding ARU secretary Lloyd Ross, early in World War II, moving a "Hands Off Russia" resolution and splitting delegates at a NSW Labor Party Conference; the NSW executive's subsequent sacking by higher-ups; and, early in 1940, the new Labor Party (State of NSW) piloted by Wal Evans and John Hughes making its inspirational but short-lived landing?

I'll never forget, as a Glebe ALP member, attending a specially convened branch meeting expected to endorse the new party, jubilantly voicing my support and becoming less politically naive and more dismayed by the second, as about half those present (dinkey-dyed-in-the-wool official laborites) breezed indignantly out.

Life early in 1940, with Menzies' dictatorial rule from Canberra, wasn't easy for communists, "fellow travellers" and other opponents of the then imperialist war.
Popularly known as Pig Iron Bob for authorising sales of scrap iron to Japan for bombs which later devastated Darwin, and the Dog Collar Act whereby wharfies refusing to load the scrap could have their licence to work revoked, Menzies hated our guts with a psychotic intensity.

Repressive and prohibitive war-time censorship regulations played holy havoc with all party propaganda and agitational outlets. Public speakers like popular anti-war activist and communist Phyl Johnson (widely known as the girl in the green hat) were legally tongue-tied, but refused to be silenced. For speaking against imperialist war, Phyl was lured by cops from the stump in Chatswood, charged, and sentenced to several weeks in Long Bay slammer.

The editorial collective members were biting their nails down to the elbow each week as Tribune returned in tatters from the censor’s venomous blue pencil, until finally banned in May 1940 by the federal Minister for Information, together with other progressive publications like World Peace issued by the League for Peace and Democracy. Old timers will also recall demos at the concentration camp outside Sydney demanding the release of Max Thomas and Horace Ratcliffe, incarcerated for being in possession of allegedly illegal printing gear.

But bans and legal frustrations couldn’t stop our determined gallop. A mini-Tribune appeared weekly, while branches and district organisations quickly adapted to trusty old flat-bed printing techniques.

With party supporters supplying meeting places, printing and distribution centres, we were rearing to go when PIB’S National Security (Subversive Associations) axe fell in June 1940 ... a memorable month when federal cops pounded with impunity into Australian homes, progressive bookshops and party premises, confiscating private property in a willy-nilly search for so-called seditious documents and printing paraphernalia.

Somewhat apprehensively each week, I’d choof off to a political haven in Kingsford to one-finger-type South Sydney District Committee bulletin stencils. Once getting wind of a possible cop blitz, I hung the stencils awaiting pick-up on a nail outside the upstairs window of my caboose, to find, on checking from outside, the dangling bundle clearly visible in the moonlit brown-out; and memories flood back of nervous spine-tingles when helping to distribute illegal Tribs to depots around Sydney.

But branch morale didn’t falter despite spook raids, constant harassment, and the enforced absence of top Party Hats. Glebe party branch members were into diverse political activities, and socially into the beating heart of the city. Tribs, collected finance, printed leaflets, chalked-up, pasted-up, and most of all spoke-up.

Friday night street meetings at Paddy’s Market, outside the Glebe Post Office and veteran communist Tom Paine’s boot-repair shop in the main drag, attracted the committed few, plus stray leg-cocking dogs, locals jingoistically advising us to “go back to Russia”, and bored-stiff wallopers in cars taking notes. I often wonder if stenograms of those meetings still survive? But ability to pound and stir the wax was definitely upgraded as we denounced the war, canvassed support for party legality, spoke in defence of the USSR and spilled happily away on international and local topics.

With few qualms, and less knowledge about newspaper management, letalonebells, we collected paid adverts, wrote copy, edited and distributed Forward newspaper, once issued by a Glebe unemployed organisation. All was apples until wisdom tailed enthusiasm, following Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour, Darwin and Broome, with publication of a juicy morsel dobbing in Dr. Foley, a Glebe Council heavy, for shady deals in air-raid shelter construction. The Doc responded with a nasty missive threatening libel action against the publisher — yours truly. Happily, second thoughts about suing a doughless publisher and an illegal organisation member prevailed, and the matter grounded.

Hitler’s invasion of th Soviet Union in June 1941 reinforced our deep commitment to defend the USSR. Still officially incognito, party tall poppies like “the old man” (general secretary J.B. Miles), president Lance Sharkey, secretariat member Dick Dixon and others, surfaced publicly. Addressing enthusiastic jam-packed public rallies, they outlined the changing global situation, characterising the conflict now as a people’s war for democracy.

To defeat fascism meant unstinted support for the Soviet Union including a much-needed accelerated war effort. Appeals at these gatherings for communists and supporters to enlist, saw many on-the-spot volunteers for the armed services. The phenomenal and unprecedented growth of party membership (peaking at around 2,000 between 1941-45) and organisation in the army, navy and air force, began with enlistments at these rallies.

Preoccupied with his ‘reds under the beds’ tirades, the planetary significance of Hitler’s new barbaric crusade appeared lost on Pig Iron Bob. Politically pathetic remarks suggesting Hitler didn’t know how to honour a contract (reference to the Non-Aggression Pact between the USSR and Germany) and that “the Russians couldn’t fight their way out of a paper bag”, were crazily out of tune with the rapidly changing tide of public opinion.

Pig Iron Bob met his Waterloo in August 1941 when forced to resign by his more politically astute parliamentary cronies. In October 1941, Canberra-ites, tuned-in by radio to Parliament House, would astonishingly have heard ecstatic ALP pollies singing “The Workers’ Flag is Deepest Red” as Labor leader John Curtin became Australian Prime Minister.

Communists and “fellow travellers” celebrated, too, as public support for the Soviet Union kited, and a new era of record membership and organisation dawned for the CPA.

TO BE CONTINUED!!!!

Betty Reilly, a veteran communist, joined the CPA in 1937. She still takes an active interest in politics, the women’s movement and the movement for peace and disarmament.
Stuart McIntyre looks at the history of capitalism and revolutionary movements since Marx. He argues that although many of the social movements that have developed recently cannot be simply reduced to questions of class, class refuses to go away. For McIntyre, Marx's science of history remains relevant to the Australian labour movement today.

On the 14th March, at a quarter to three in the afternoon, the greatest living thinker ceased to think. He had been left alone for scarcely two minutes, and when we came back we found him in his armchair, peacefully gone to sleep—but for ever.

The words are those of Frederick Engels spoken at the graveside of Marx four days after his friend's death. Engels went on to say that

An immeasurable loss has been sustained both by the militant proletariat of Europe and America, and by historical science, in the death of this man.

Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history.

That comparison with Darwin, and that statement—"Marx discovered the law of development of human history"—immediately gives us a cultural context. Marx belongs to that group of thinkers who in the Victorian age laid the foundation of our modern areas of knowledge: in addition to Marx and Darwin we can think of Charles Lyell (geology) or James Murray (philology and etymology), James Frazer (anthropology) and many others. These men have more in common than the fact that they were bearded patriarchs. Mostly operating from the universities, they were essentially solitary gentlemen scholars of independent means (and despite his poverty, Dr Marx fits into this category) who devoted their lives to their particular science. They were universalists, heirs both of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the mechanical age in which they lived, seeking a system of thought, categories and laws that would enable them to comprehend the broad sweep of their subject and its place in the order of things. Engels' reverence is not just the reverence for an intimate friend and comrade, it is reverence for someone he deemed to be "the greatest living thinker".

Why does Marx stand out from this gallery of pioneers? Why are Marx's writings read and discussed as having a continuing meaning when we regard his contemporaries either with curiosity or awe? Partly because his area of knowledge—the law of development of human history and also what Engels called 'the special law of motion' governing the capitalist mode of production and the bourgeois society that the capitalist mode created—retains its relevance. And partly, of course, because Marx produced something more than a philosophy or a science, namely a social movement. He was both a thinker and a revolutionary activist.

To quote Engels again

Science was for Marx a historically dynamic, revolutionary force.

For Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and its needs, conscious of the conditions of its emancipation.

We commemorate Marx a century after his death because of his association with the momentous changes that have taken place since then. He died, as it happened, at a lowpoint in the fortunes of the revolutionary working class. He had seen and experienced personally the defeats of the 1848 uprising in Germany, France and elsewhere; he
had seen the massacre of the French Communards in 1871; and then the capture of the First Socialist International and its collapse in the 1870s. He died, in fact, during the heyday of European capitalism, when the leading capitalist powers had weathered the social and economic crises of initial industrialisation and seemed secure, when they were subordinating all other parts of the world to their rule and creating the international capitalist economy. Engels was more fortunate: he lived long enough to see the creation of the Second International and to take an active part in its growth.

I want to consider his legacy from the perspective of the progress of the Marxist movement — and its setbacks — in the past hundred years, and in doing so I want to consider some of the changes that capitalism has thrown up. In the light of this historical review we can come back to Marx himself and assess his modern relevance.

Let us jump forward a third of a century from the Highgate Cemetery to Russia in 1917. For better or for worse, the Russian Revolution remains the most important example of a revolution by Marxists. I don’t think it is necessary to rehearse in detail Lenin’s explanation of why revolution should have occurred there rather than in the advanced capitalist societies — Germany, France or Britain. But we can point to three essential elements.

First, there was his analysis of capitalism as a world system, a system of imperialism whereby the spoils of colonialism and superprofits reaped from pre-capitalist sectors enriched the metropolitan powers and gave them a stability. Coupled with this was his criticism of workers’ parties in Western Europe who, he said, had turned Marxism into a doctrine of evolutionary socialism so that the transformation to socialism had to await the maturation of capitalism.

Second, there was the appreciation that Russia’s uneven development — a fragile and immature capitalism imposed suddenly on a despotic social and political order — allowed special opportunities.

But third, there was Lenin’s expectation that while Russia might anticipate the major capitalist countries because of its special circumstances, made more opportune by the crisis engendered by defeat in the First World War, that same war crisis would precipitate revolution in Western Europe. If the Bolsheviks could seize power, take in hand the first steps towards emancipation, and hold out for two or three years, he thought they would be joined by the rest of the working class.

As we know, he was mistaken in this expectation. The major capitalist powers weathered the political crisis of 1917-1920; by resorting to fascism in more vulnerable countries, they weathered the great economic crisis of the 1930s. The Marxists in the Soviet Union were thus left to construct a socialist order in circumstances they had not anticipated and in the face of unremitting capitalist hostility. They survived and they survive at great cost.

What has happened?

These are real problems. In the second period of working-class advance associated with the Second World War and the post-war decolonisation, Marxists in Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, Vietnam and elsewhere have encountered the intractability of these problems first encountered in the Soviet Union. Where revolutionaries have come to power in exploited and economically backward countries, countries with large non-capitalist sectors and social elements, after protracted conflict and against unremitting hostility from the capitalist world powers, there is no easy way to construct socialism.

This raises afresh the course of events in the capitalist heartlands. I don’t think that I am guilty of heresy in suggesting that capitalism has displayed greater resourcefulness, greater longevity than would have been thought possible in the second half of the nineteenth century. Certainly in the Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels anticipated that the final crisis of capitalism could not long be delayed. Even in Capital and other later works, Marx looked forward to deepening crises, increasing impoverishment of the proletariat, growing polarisation of the bourgeoisie and proletariat, and heightened class consciousness on the part of the working-class majority.

What has happened?

We have certainly seen recurrent capitalist crises, we have seen the enormous wastefulness and destructive power of capitalism, but we have also seen it weather the major crises. Not least, there has been the extension of capitalist relations into new fields and the development of new commodities — from motor cars and microchips to leisure industries and the commercialisation of blood. These
Socialists have to be aware of the actual possibilities of an historical situation. In Russia in 1917 special circumstances and opportunities enabled the Bolsheviks to seize power. But elsewhere major capitalist powers have weathered political and economic crisis. Above: Workers of the Petrograd Arsenal during the July 1917 demonstration.

Social movements such as the environment movement, peace and nuclear disarmament movement, and the women's liberation movement, have developed which can not be reduced, simply and only, to questions of class. Yet class refuses to go away — unemployment and obscene contrasts of wealth and poverty make this clear. Above left: Residents demonstrate against the building of the F19 freeway in Melbourne in 1977. Top right: The 'Embrace the Base' demonstration by 30,000 women against the siting of USA Cruise missiles at Greenham Common airbase in England. Bottom right: Wollongong Out-of-Workers Union commandeers the merry-go-round at the civic centre in Canberra, 23.8.83, during demonstrations for higher dole payments.
devices have at the very least delayed the declining rate of profit and given the capitalist fresh fields of exploitation.

We have seen also that the capitalist state has taken on a new complexity and effectiveness. It commands and disperses a huge proportion of the gross national product; it regulates the economy through fiscal and other mechanisms devised in this century; it employs directly a large part of the workforce and provides work for many more. Furthermore, the political mechanisms that Marx was able to observe in the United States, Australia, New Zealand and, to a lesser extent, in Western Europe — mechanisms based on democratically elected legislatures, and the modern executive — have been carried through. With them the process of political legitimation rests on a quite different basis than when the state was overtly undemocratic and repressive.

Finally, the class structure of capitalism remains complex. Certainly we have a class that owns or controls the means of production, and certainly we have a working class that relies for the means of subsistence on the sale of its labour-power. But we also have a large and growing category of middle strata — not just the professions and self-employed, the petty bourgeoisie, but notably a salariat of white collar workers and the like and those performing the distributive, administrative, information-procession tasks which occupy a strategic place in modern economic life.

With the erosion of the classical proletarian we have the development of ideologies and social movements that are not based on work (even through they raise issues about work), and are not centred on class and production. I refer here to movements based on ethnicity and nationality, those concerned with the environment since the creation of nuclear weapons, and especially over the past decade, peace movements and demands for nuclear disarmament, and, above all, the women's movement.

I am not saying that these are unrelated to questions of class and production — they are — but it is clear that they cannot be reduced to questions of class in the way that Marxists sometimes try to reduce them.

So what are we to say about Marx's law of the development of human history, which Engels summarised at the graveside as follows:

_the simple fact, hitherto concealed by an overgrowth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.; that therefore the production of the immediate material means of subsistence and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art, and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of vice versa, as had hitherto been the case._

Tho doctrine of historical materialism has had as much ink split over it as any part of Marx's doctrine. On the one hand we have had attempts to use the metaphor of base and superstructure to suggest the ultimate dependence of politics, art, science, religion and so on on the forces and concentrating on the forces that impinge on social groups, since it gives free play to the forces of resistance and revolt. There is a corresponding risk here of losing sight of the constraints. If we have anything to learn from Marx's legacy, and from his own battles with what he called the reactionary petit bourgeois socialists (like Sismondi) and the conservative or bourgeois socialists (like Proudhon), it is that socialists have to be aware of the forces that press on them and the actual possibilities of an historical situation.

For after we have acknowledged the emergence of the new political forces and our neglect of issues such as race and gender, it remains the case that class refuses to go away. Nowhere is this more true than in Australia, with new levels of unemployment and obscene contrasts of wealth and poverty. Yet the Labor government

"... after we have acknowledged the emergence of the new political forces and our neglect of issues such as race and gender, it remains the case that class refuses to go away."

relations of production; on the other we have that tradition associated particularly with continental critical theory which emphasises the dialectical aspects of Marx's thought. A similar difference of emphasis can be observed among Marxist historians. One school of interpretation insists on relations of determination, the structures in which human activity is contained and their effects on historical practice. This was a tradition in which most Marxist historians worked up to the 1960s; we can think, for example, even of Brian Fitzpatrick who produced the most substantial historical materialist account of Australia's past, in which the crucial process was Australia's part in the world economy, and especially British imperialism, and the effect of the capitalist mode on social and political relations.

The other tradition rejects such determinism, and in the case of its most polemical exponent, Edward Thompson, is fiercely critical of structural explanation. It places the emphasis on the class struggle, on the mobilisation of men and women, and on human agency. This has had the salutary effect of restoring a balance against the over-fatalist effects of

_began its summit discussions with representatives of labour, capital, and all the other interest groups, committed to the task of national reconciliation. Every Australian, the Prime Minister tells us, has to learn to live with each other: the mission of his government is to be national reconciliation. Truly, Marx's science of history has a relevance for us and a relevance to the Australian labour movement._

Stuart McIntyre is an historian currently working at the Australian National University.
A considerable amount of research dealing with aspects of social stratification in Australia has been done over the last decade. Much of it has been produced for official enquiries, the best known being the Henderson Report on poverty. Some of it is the fruit of the private research of academic sociologists. Both the bureaucratic and the academic streams of research have been much alike — highly empirical, eschewing difficult theoretical problems in favour of data-processing. Both have usually aimed at the sort of “scientific objectivity” that comes from statistics and a supposedly value-free terminology. The consequence has been that some of the central (and, of course, controversial) issues in the study of social stratification are ignored. Paradoxically, they are buried in a welter of information.

John Western, Professor of Sociology at the University of Queensland, has attempted to synthesise this research. He has produced a book that is very useful, but which reproduces most of the weaknesses of empirical sociology in Australia. The prose is dry and unengaging, academic in the bad sense. The approach is what C. Wright Mills called “abstracted empiricism”. In reality, sociology is about people, but this is one of those books that appears to be about statistics instead. More serious than this is Western’s inability to connect theory and evidence. The data he has gathered simply piles up, without yielding a coherent argument. When he comes to present a conclusion the book collapses into the vaguest of generalities.

Western does attempt to establish a theoretical framework in his first chapter. This is intended to establish clear, generally-accepted definitions of the terms used in analysing social inequality. Western thrashes around for 30 pages without arriving at any. He points out that while there is some complexity in the writings of Karl Marx and Max Weber this is “hardly sufficient to warrant the hopeless confusion that the literature on class, status and parties currently exhibits”. In the name of scientific vigour, academic sociologists have stripped their ideas of empirical and historical content in the hope of establishing a “general” theory, and have arrived instead at the most barren abstractions. Since he is concerned with trying to further refine and clarify abstract definitions, Western does nothing to restore the lost content, and is unable to penetrate much of the fog of obscurantism produced by half a century’s grand theorising in this area. Nor is he able to link these debates to his empirical interests.

When he turns to describing the pattern of stratification in Australian society, he appeals to “self-evident facts” rather than the preceding theoretical discussion to establish the framework of analysis. The instincts of the empiricist prevail over the logic-chopping of grand theory. Although he presents no real justification for it, Western in fact adopts a pretty orthodox Weberian framework of analysis. This is hardly surprising, since he rejects Marxism (or rather, the usual hand-me-down caricature) — interestingly, using such neo-Marxist epigones as Nicos Poulantzas to discredit classical Marxism. And acceptance of orthodoxy rarely needs much justification anyway.

The second chapter of the book is devoted to an empirical discussion of the Weberian trinity — class, status and power — in
Australia. Class is taken to refer to the broadest groupings of the occupational hierarchy, rather than groups based on property relations. In the first chapter, Western describes three main classes in Australia, an "upper middle class" — nobody, least of all orthodox sociologists being so bad-mannered as to describe the dominant class in democratically-minded Australia as simply an "upper class" — a "lower middle class" of white-collar workers and a "working class" of manual workers. When he actually examines the statistics, he adds a fourth class, "farmers and farm workers". The old middle class of small businessmen, scattered across the upper manual and service occupations, don't rate a mention as a distinct group in this scheme.

Since the myth of a classless egalitarian Australia dies hard, attempts to document the dimensions of class inequality are always useful. Western reviews the meagre statistics available in Australia on such central issues as the distribution of income and wealth, education, housing and health. By examining patterns of social mobility, he takes inequality of opportunity as well as of condition into account. The overall conclusion that emerges is that class is one of the most powerful factors shaping the life-chances of Australians. Although Australia is somewhat more egalitarian than most advanced capitalist countries, it is recognisably of the same genus.

Most neo-Weberians like to emphasise the "multi-dimensional" nature of social inequalities. The hierarchies of class, status and power, at least in principle, are distinct. Logically, this is no doubt correct, but it does not take much real-world observation to notice that they normally tend to adhere to each other — wealth is always insecure unless protected by power, people that acquire power rarely stay poor for long, and both wish for deference and respect from those they exploit and dominate.

Since "status" is concerned with subjective attitudes, and patterns of deference in inter-personal behaviour, rather than the objective economic realities of class, it is particularly resistant to the sort of broad, aggregate statistical analysis favoured by Western. This is why most of the useful research on status has come out of community studies, and one reason why attempts to study it at the "macro" level so often muddle status and class. Western, to his credit, is aware of this danger, and in summarising the Australian literature, attempts to treat status separately from class.

The results do not bear out the neo-Weberian thesis of the independence of the hierarchies of class and status, at least in the Australian case. It is well known that most Australians respect success and money, and despise snobishness. Attempts to command deference on the basis of attributes other than wealth and power are usually ridiculed as "putting on airs". This is confirmed by the academic labours summarised by Western. He concludes: "Status or prestige operates at a less fundamental level [than class], at what we might call the outer limits of privilege .... as a structural principle, class is more important than status in Australia." One could, I think, go further than this, and assert that the principal source of status in Australian society is position in the class hierarchy.

Turning to the dimension of "party", Western reviews the activities of political parties, trade unions, business lobbies, religious organisations, and other pressure groups. His conclusion is not startlingly original. These groups, he informs us, represent "cross-cutting sectional interests" and "advance or attempt to advance their members' interests". Some seek to maintain their existing advantages, others to win a larger slice of the cake.

But to leave the analysis at this point is to accept empty pluralist slogans and ignore the substance of politics. Where interest groups conflict, which one has the power to successfully impose its preference? At the level of practicality rather than formality, there is all the difference in the world between "advancing the interests of one's members" and "attempting to advance the interests of one's members". This is an issue Western does not confront. Instead of an empirical analysis of the distribution of power among the various groups he lists — no doubt something better achieved by case-studies and historical analysis than by the tabulation of statistics — he contents himself with mouldy pluralist cliches. He thus sidesteps one of the central issues in the political sociology of advanced capitalist societies: to what extent has the distribution of resources been the product of political power as distinct from purely economic forces? Most of these societies have given rise to mass parties based on the working class, and the issue is posed most sharply when such parties come to office promising to redress the balance of advantage in favour of the working class. Can the political power of labour prevail over the entrenched power of upper class privilege in a capitalist society? With the ALP's recent
electoral victory, this question is by no means a purely academic one. But one will search a book such as Western’s in vain for any attempt to deal with it. Western examines social and economic bases of these political interest groups. Overwhelmingly, he finds that they are formed to advance economic interests, and that the most potent (though not the only) influence on party political preference is class membership. Here, unfortunately, Western contents himself with reviewing the evidence, and does not confront the views of David Kemp and others who have argued contrawise. The main contours of political life, then, are shaped by class conflicts—or, as Western prefers to put it, the political order is “derivative” of the class order. Here is one more nail in the coffin of neo-Weberian “multi-dimensionalism”.

In the next four chapters, Western is off the safe ground of the Weberian trinity, and the failings of abstracted empiricism become more evident. He reviews a mass of material, showing the differences in life-chances between man and women, Aborigines and whites, immigrants and native-born Australians, and people of different ages. On this basis he decides that gender, ethnicity and age are all sources of social inequality and independent of class, status and power. The information is useful, but the analysis worth little. Western fails to distinguish the question of inequalities between individuals from that of inequalities between recognisable social strata: or rather, he assumes that any statistical category represents a distinct social stratum, and any differences between them are a measure of social inequality. Thus, for example, statistics reveal substantial differences in the economic situation of dependent children, working adults and the elderly retired. From this Western concludes that age is an independent base of social inequality; most would conclude that it represents different stages of a life-cycle through which all people (with the apparent exception of Cliff Richard) pass. Fundamentally, it represents a biological process, although this may be handled in different ways by different social groups. Western is unwilling to acknowledge this, for as he points out, “biological determinism” is unfashionable in liberal academic circles these days. In addition, it would require shifting the focus from simple statistical measures to the study of complex social processes.

A similar problem haunts the chapter on “gender”. Compiling statistics on male-female income differentials does not determine whether these are based on inherent biological differences, on a co-operative division of labour in which men participate in the paid workforce more than women, or on the exploitation of women. Nor is the relationship of class and gender exhausted by showing that the notion of “women as a class” is nonsensical. Class situation, family structure and sex roles are inter-related in myriads of ways that Western does not even begin to consider.

Likewise, Western points out that there is a small proportion of Southern European immigrants in the professions, and an insignificant proportion of Aborigines. He concludes that these groups are “under-represented”, and that this shows that ethnicity is an independent source of social inequality. But ethnicity is not independent of status—surely ethnic or racial discrimination is a classical example of status-group exclusivity? Nor is it independent of class — the lower average incomes of Aborigines and immigrants are surely connected with their concentration among the lower rungs of the class hierarchy. But there is no real attempt to investigate these interconnections, or even to control for them in making the statistical comparisons. The only conclusion we can reach from this concerns the limits of such crude statistical methods, and the apparent eagerness of some social scientists to dismiss out of hand any issue that is not amenable to easy quantification.

There is one issue central to the whole book that Western has not tackled. The concept of “equality” is a notoriously elusive one, but it is central to any analysis of inequality. We may, according to the theologians, all be equal in the sight of God; but while we are on this earth we live with complex institutions, specialised tasks, and differentiated rewards, and it is in this context that the issues of social inequality have to be settled.

Should people be rewarded equally for unequal efforts? What exactly does equal effort mean where people perform quite different tasks? Should people with different needs be treated uniformly? Is income derived from ownership rather than effort the fruit of exploitation? Where is the dividing line between the reward for extra responsibility and the exploitation of the power of office? There are no easy answers to such questions. But they lie at the heart of arguments about social inequality, and the justice of economic and political institutions. To discuss these issues without addressing such questions is not being “scientifically objective”; it is to evade the main point of the exercise.

Without some answer to these questions, one man’s “equality” is another person’s inequality. Western’s approach to equality focusses not on ownership and control, or productive activity, but on consumption and living standards. He defines it simply in terms of “access to resources”—meaning income, consumer goods, legal protection, social services and the like. Where these are not equally available to everyone, irrespective of what they actually do, or need, social inequality is said to exist. Such a mechanical statistical notion of equality can guide some useful empirical research, but it cannot come to grips with any of the key problems.

This book is a convenient synthesis of the results of a large volume of research of central features of Australian social structure. But most of the research has been mediocre, and Western’s own processing of it is systematic but uninspired. The central questions of social science have to be tackled with an intellectual armoury more sophisticated than a pocket calculator.

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Reviewed by Mavis Robertson

THE SPIRIT OF THE PEOPLE
by Keith McKenry. Published by Bunyip Bush Enterprises.

Keith McKenry has put together a limited edition of modern Australian folk songs and verses. Where appropriate a musical score is included. As has been said elsewhere, the temper is democratic and the bias is Australia.

The author is a Canberra bureaucrat who claims to be the only person to have recited "MacArthur's Fart" at a reception on the 30th floor of the United Nations building in New York, and "The Spirit of the People" in the foyer of the Australian High Court. Councillors of Northcote, Melbourne, are honoured because they voted to fly the Eureka flag from the Town Hall while many sacred cows are given a much-needed thumping. Try "The Great Australian Defence Strategy" or "The Sell Australia Party". Published by Bunyip Bush Enterprises, 5 Bonney Street, Ainslie, ACT. Price $8, post free.

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