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WOMEN'S LIBERATION

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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>VICTIMS OF DOUBLE OPPRESSION</td>
<td>Mavis Robertson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A MANIFESTO: WHAT ARE WE COMPLAINING ABOUT?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>THE MARRIAGE-FAMILY INSTITUTION</td>
<td>Anna Yeatman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>PATERNALISM AND THE CPA</td>
<td>Judy Gillett and Betty Fisher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>DISCUSSION</td>
<td>On Abortion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Women and Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On Realism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>POST-WAR INDUSTRIAL POLICY</td>
<td>Bernie Taft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>INDONESIA: INTERPRETING THE COUP</td>
<td>K. Wann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td>BOOKS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
<td>INDEX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AUSTRALIAN LEFT REVIEW is a marxist journal of information, analysis and discussion on economics, politics, trade unionism, history, philosophy, science and art, for the promotion of socialist ideas. Published two monthly.

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Victims of Double Oppression

MUCH OF WHAT FOLLOWS here can be challenged as impressionistic but can, perhaps, be excused since too little research has been undertaken by anyone to provide hard facts on the "woman question". It is not my intention to offer this as a definitive summation of the development movement for the liberation of women but simply to indicate some of its sources and concerns and hopefully to provoke some reactions. It is no argument against this movement that most women "enjoy being girls" or don't want to be liberated.¹ If the working class, even its male component, had achieved self-awareness then revolutionaries would be almost out of business. Of course the movement has problems. There are liberationists who regard any criticisms of their actions as bourgeois or conservative, an old lefty trick which impedes consideration of valid criticisms; and there are too many on the left, especially the older left, who accept mass media versions of the movement and damn it as middle-class, adventurist, man-hating or feminist,² more old lefty tricks.

¹ A favourite mass media presentation of this problem is to ask women if they like men to open doors, light their cigarettes etc. A short answer to such superficiality came from one American liberationist who commented: "Not if it costs me $2000 a year in salary."

² According to the dictionary a feminist is one engaged in a social movement claiming political and economic equality of women with men but some on the left claim that feminists reject class struggle and are, therefore, bourgeois. The comment: "that's feminist" is assumed to be a rational answer to an argument.

Mavis Robertson is the only woman on the National Executive of the Communist Party and a member of the Editorial Board of ALR.
The liberationists need to continually re-examine their theory and practice and develop a program. It seems obvious that a mass movement won't be built out of demands which settle for nothing less than the abolition of the family, although a mass movement for genuine equality will end up abolishing the family as we know it anyway. It is unlikely that bra-burning will become a mass phenomena (it is not intended to be) or that women will cease to adorn themselves. The essential point behind the symbolic actions concerning bras and makeup may help to develop the consciousness of women to reject their use as sex objects and pave the way for the adornment of both sexes for their mutual attraction and satisfaction. Any program, if it is to avoid past mistakes of the women's movement — which has too often limited itself to effects — or present distortions, admittedly more apparent than real, must propose actions related to a total critique of the designated role of women in our society. At the same time the critics of the liberation movement on the left need to consider how much they are motivated, if they are women, by the desire to go on in the old way and, if they are men, by the desire to maintain such male privileges as exist.

About fifty years ago Andrades's Bookshop in Melbourne published a dozen or so revolutionary pamphlets. They represented some of the earliest attempts to introduce marxist theory to the Australian working class and to explain the new society introduced by the October revolution of 1917. Two of the pamphlets (which, by later standards, wasn't a bad average) were of particular concern to women, *Marriage Under Bolshevism* and Alexandra Kollontai's *Communism and the Family*. Fifty years after some of the concepts contained in the latter pamphlet, outrageous at the time, have come to be respectable. When once only revolutionaries advanced the concept of social responsibility for children and proposed that the state should provide child care facilities for working mothers now even Prime Minister Gorton agrees that such centres are necessary. It is true that John Gorton's proposed centres are still rather vague and their purpose utilitarian yet even he, in the interests of providing a growing and stable labor force for an expanding capitalist industry, makes passing reference to the "right" of women to work and the "educational value" of pre-school centres. The "right" is qualified since the same man actively impedes the introduction of the elementary right of equal pay and the "education" he has in mind may be judged by the

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3 The latter pamphlet is shortly to be reprinted by the Communist Party of Australia.
fact that he talks of child-minding centres (my emphasis) and mentions finger painting.

Nevertheless the change is dramatic. A decade or so ago most women who sought nursery school care for their children found, as today, that well run centres had long waiting lists, were expensive or were charitable institutions organised for those who had to work and not for those who wanted to work. Even when good child care facilities were available articles in the popular press, criticisms of neighbours, associates, friends and relatives, together with the thoughts of Dr. Spock, impressed on the woman who wanted to work that she was not quite a natural mum, that she was probably depriving her child and was almost certainly laying the basis for a future juvenile delinquent.

In the new circumstances the theme of the television commercial that women “have come a long way” may appear to have some validity. The former criticisms have become muted, studies are quoted to prove that the children of working mothers are not deprived and sometime we can expect that our children will be minded in centres provided by government-business (we suspect at our expense). But how far have we come?

Kollontai, expressing revolutionary concepts, was concerned both for the equality of the sexes, which when achieved would inevitably lead to the abolition of the family based on the domination of the male and the service of the female, and for the education of children in “solidarity, comradeship, mutual aid, devotion to collective life.” If, after fifty years, there is something in common between the form of her proposal and that of Gorton’s the content is remarkably different. The one concerned itself with human needs, the other with the needs of profit-making.

What is interesting is that the basic themes of Kollontai’s pamphlet, on the rights of women, the diffidence of many women to consider social responsibility free from dependence on men, sexuality, collective housekeeping and the evolvement of the family, are the themes of the modern women’s liberation movements. Fifty years later this movement, often with greater sophistication, sometimes more crudely, always with as much hope, comes to

4 “Sometime” may be a long time coming. Women in the Work Force, Department of Labour and National Service pamphlet, January 1970, states that there are 257,000 children under the age of 6 whose mothers work and there are 103,000 mothers who would work if they could be sure of suitable child care. At present the number of nursery school places is 21,000 and the average charge to parents is $10 per week.

similar conclusions. If Kollontai herself has hardly been re-discovered those marxists whose tradition she followed have certainly been sources of strength to the present movement. There is general acceptance that the oppression of women is at the same time the oppression of the system, which both exploits their productive work and relies on them to bring up a new generation to accept the norms of society, and the exploitation of women by men. Here is not the place to evaluate the work of Engels which, while describing what happened in history to explain how women came to their present inferior position does not sufficiently explain why. It should be noted however that while the strength of the movement for the liberation of women lies in its general identification with the need to end all exploitation it does, in some parts of the movement, define its enemy as men or it becomes "economic determinist" and assumes that when women are engaged in "socially necessary work" their problems will be well on the way to solution. This latter view, which ignores the specific oppression of women, is not far removed from positions adopted in the old left over the last several decades.

Early communists, however, were more attracted to policies which derived from a total critique of the position of women in society and were translated into the social practice of Soviet Russia. The decrees passed in the first months of the Soviet Republic which ended marriage discrimination, removed the stigma of illegitimacy, legalised abortion and provided for divorce on the simple ground of a breakdown in marriage together with social legislation on working women, child care and education were wel-

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6 Kollontai was the Minister of Social Welfare in the first Soviet Government and leader of the CPSU until she joined the "Workers' Opposition". She escaped the fate of many others who took the same political stand when she was appointed to the Soviet diplomatic service. She became the Soviet's and the world's first female ambassador. Some recent articles about her include: "The Woman who stood alone with Lenin in April '17" by this writer in Tribune, April 22nd, 1970 and two articles by Shiela Rowbotham in The Spokesman, No. 4 and 5, 1970.

7 A basic source of theoretical material for Women's Liberation movements is Frederick Engels: Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State, a fact which is left unexplained by those who term the movement "bourgeois".

8 Engels does not establish the extent to which the reproductive role of women limited their mobility and, at a particular historical stage, made them vulnerable. This is not to argue that anatomy is destiny but to indicate that one should not underrate, even now, how anatomy conditions destiny.

9 Some of Lenin's writings have been interpreted to strengthen this view. He stated, for example, at a conference of working women in 1919: "In order to achieve the complete emancipation of women and to make them really equal with men, we must have social economy and the participation of women in general productive labour. Then women will occupy the same position as men."
comed for their enlightenment and as grounds of hope. Later under Stalin, much of this legislation was repudiated in the Soviet Union. Kollontai's view that:

... there are no customs, nor political organisations, nor morals which remain fixed and inviolable ... the family is ceasing to be a necessity for its members as well as for the State. was replaced with new/old values:

The State cannot exist without the family. Marriage is a positive value for the Socialist Soviet State only if the partners see in it a lifelong union. So-called free love is a bourgeois invention and has nothing in common with the principles of conduct of a Soviet citizen. Moreover, marriage receives its full value for the State only if there is progeny, and the consorts experience the highest happiness of parenthood.

Such a statement, which would not be out of place in a circle of conservative catholics, was backed up with laws in the Soviet Union outlawing abortion, restricting divorce and providing honorary titles and medals for women who produced large numbers of offspring.

It is difficult to say how much the changes in the practices in the Soviet Union were directly responsible for the changes in approach of the Communist Party of Australia. An examination of material published and of practice, particularly in the years following World War II, indicate a moderate, reformist tone. The emancipation of women was defined as the achievement of equal pay, the provision of nursery schools and kindergartens, opportunities for work and education, beyond that "socialism was the answer". Going round in circles socialism was presented as a system that would ensure equal pay, the provision of nursery schools and kindergartens, opportunities for work and education. The defined role of woman was mostly ignored and seldom challenged so that the left added weight to all the concepts of woman defined by bourgeois society and accepted as "natural". If anyone spoke of

10 Although there was a considerable gap between the theoretical position and the actual situation enormous gains were made. Later there were reverses and even today Lenin's plan "for the transference of the economic and educational functions of the separate household to society" has not been realised. Domestic work, unpaid but socially necessary labour, continues to burden women in all societies. According to the Chase Manhattan Bank an estimate of an American woman's overall working week is 99.6 hours and similarly surveys undertaken by Radovan Richta in socialist countries show that on average women work 60 hours a week additional to the hours spent at work) acquiring and providing the necessities of life.

11 Alexandra Kollontai, Communism and the Family p.6 and p.12.


13 In the post-Stalin era many social rights were restored to women including the right to abortion.
the modification of the family, let alone its abolition, they were surely speaking of something way off in the future and of no concern to us. In all the favoured quotations from Marx the one about the aim of communists to abolish the family rarely rated a mention.

Society defines women as weak, tender, fragile, virginal (ideally) and above all as mother. Conversely men are defined as strong, aggressive, courageous and very rarely as father. If the left within society does not challenge such concepts it accepts them, at least tacitly to the detriment of both men and women. The difference between the way society sees women and the way the left saw/sees them is only a matter of degree. In most Parents and Citizens' organisations, for example, women do the lion’s share of the work, helping out at the school and in the canteen, making and selling the goodies for the fund-raising fair while men predominate in the official positions and make the speeches. There is a distinct similarity in many local organisations of the Communist Party. In the ordinary family the woman, whether she works in a job or not, feels it is her duty to cook and clean and care for the children; if her husband helps, he helps her. Countless magazines tell her that she has to make the home a place of relaxation for him after his hard day's work. In fact she provides that little island of escape where a man, frustrated by dull or arduous or demanding or meaningless work and an authoritarian boss can dissipate his frustrations and create the illusion that he too is a person of authority. In too many families on the left the situation is the same. The woman stays home to mind the children while the man does his revolutionary work and her duty to the revolution is defined as keeping him free from the mundane, if necessary, chores of everyday living. This is an overview, the situation is changing and there are notable exceptions, but it helps explain what too many men on the left refuse to face: the subordination of women is not simply essential to a ruling class but carries with it important privileges for men. This subordination, the ideological concepts of the central, "natural" characteristics of women can thus be sustained even if every working woman has equal pay, after nursery schools are provided and work and educational opportunities are guaranteed.

Within this framework political action for the rights and status of women can be and were accepted as "women's work", peripheral to the main stream of radical action and of concern primarily to women. Women’s organisations, initiated by communists, became the main political arena for many communist women but received no more than marginal attention from men. Although these organisations concerned themselves with questions pertaining to
the status of women and were often very militant and courageous in their actions they seldom sought causes but, like traditional reformists, acted to correct effects. In doing so they helped perpetuate traditional social views of women.14

Such an approach may also have contributed, unintentionally, to the maintenance of unequal pay. The ruling class justifies unequal pay on the grounds that women workers do “women’s work” which, by definition must be of less value than the work of men. So long as the communists and others of the left limited their demands to “equal pay for equal work” they provided a let-out. Women had to prove that their work was equal to that of men. As most women do jobs that men don’t do, the task of proving equality, within the definition of the ruling class, is almost impossible. In recent years the left has advanced the unequivocal demand for equal pay, a single rate for the job regardless of sex of the worker and the same basic rate for all workers. By and large the trade unions have not developed programs for women workers beyond the question of equal pay and, even on this, many limit themselves to a rather formal campaign confined to one week of each year. Although it is obvious that women workers who are also housewives and mothers have special problems, there have as yet been few efforts either to develop union organisation to meet the needs of these unionists or to develop demands on the employers to relieve some of the additional exploitation they face. Ruling ideology is so pervasive that one still finds examples of the term “unionist” being used to denote “male” even as recognition is given to the growth of the female component of the work force.15

A few trade unions have developed women's auxiliaries, later women’s committees. In their early development, in mining towns in association with the Miners’ Federation, these organisations introduced housewives to working class politics. Today, when so many women are workers as well as housewives, such committees tend to be little more than wives’ committees where women extend their traditional role of giving support to their husbands in their unions.

14 The Journal Our Women published by the Union of Australian Women, Centre in its first issue invited “trade unionists and their wives” to a seminar. This centre has however, developed several activities for women unionists.

15 The journal of the New South Wales Trades Union Education and Research devotes pages to cookery, fashion etc. in much the same way as any bourgeois women’s journal while on some important social issues it accepts the framework of present society. The title and the content of an article called “Family Planning” in the Sept.-Dec. 1970 issue is a case in point. These reinforce the concept that such clinics are only for married women who want to regularise the size of their families.
None of the foregoing is intended to suggest that many women did not work hard in their organisations, do useful work or receive sincere support from men, but the fact remains that when revolutionaries confine themselves within the terms of the system and refuse to make a total analysis of their situation they inevitably fall into reformist practice with reformist results. It is perhaps poetic justice that the Union of Australian Women in New South Wales, founded by communists, led by communists and with a membership predominately communist or left, decided, in the framework of the Left Action Conference of 1969 that it was not a left organisation. That is the logic of reformism. And it is ironic that a new champion of child-minding facilities for working mothers is Gorton and that the most successful band-wagon-jumper of the current prices campaign which was initiated as an anti-monopoly struggle is the monopoly firm of Woolworths.

Much has been written in the last decade on the sources of the new-left, the renewal it generates, to the extent that it rejects many of the shibboleths of the old-left, and its influence on the development of a viable revolutionary movement. The new-left is amongst other things the child of the consumer society that failed. When the ability to solve the basic human needs of food and shelter was achieved, the consumer society did not generate human happiness but a greater acquisitiveness for things. The family took on a new dimension too. How can one “keep up with the Jone’s” without competing families? When knowledge and the need for learning expanded as a response to the technological age, the young, far from being liberated as human beings, found themselves being processed to become more efficient components of a machine whose direction they could not influence and whose results they abhorred. Science and technology at the service of imperialism have neither solved human problems nor realised their potential; rather the gulf between the “haves” and the “have nots” has widened so much so that under-developed nations now appear as “never to be developed”. Technical-political power has been used to devastate Vietnam; the solution to poverty, racism and a thousand and one other ills seem as far away as ever.

The new-left stresses human values and human goals. In its evolvement some of these values have been distorted and some of the goals now on offer seem to be short of human responses, at least in the means chosen to achieve a new society, nevertheless the new-left has not lost its emphasis on concern for the individual

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16 A term coined by the Professor of Biology at Stanford University to suggest that so long as the United States with a small percentage of the world’s population uses almost half of the world’s resources the gulf will be unbridgeable.
and the need to begin to identify the future in present practice. The search for life styles and human relations which prefigure the future society has been a central concern. Little wonder then that out of this movement stepped a new women’s movement, sometimes hesitant, often brash, involving militant posturing as well as militant action, well-conceived and ill-considered campaigning, statements to provoke thought and statements to annoy and repel. But even if one only sees the posturing, the ill-conceived campaigning and the repelling statements and refuses to acknowledge the positive, it is clear that the impact of this movement has developed the self-awareness of women, dented the consensus consciousness about the “natural” role of women and as such has done more to make an issue of the equality of women than decades of more “orthodox” work.

One explanation of the “anti-man” attitude adopted by some women committed to the movement for liberation is that it derives directly from their experience in the wider areas of the new-left. Whatever else the men on the new-left were challenging, in terms of human values, they found it difficult to give up their traditional privileges concerning women and the new-left women, conditioned from childhood to accept a role which above all deferred to men, found themselves playing out their “normal” role in a new setting. It is not only in the centres of capitalist power that men make the speeches, take the decisions and use their power to attract the prettiest girls to their beds. The same scene is repeated on the left.

While the anti-man posture needs to be rejected, if only because it admits to an insoluble problem (and if that is our analysis we may as well come to terms and call a truce), the fact that the source of discrimination arises from the ideological concepts promoted by capitalist society should not be used to deny that male chauvinism is a problem or that the conditions have to be created for women to begin to free themselves from a lifetime of conditioning. It is here that those men on the left who pressurise liberation women against meeting on their own are wrong. Of course, the defined role of women also defines and demeans the role of men and children and the freeing of women will also bring long-term benefit to both men and children but women do need some opportunities to relate to themselves. This is not a call for the separation of the sexes but it is recognition of the need for some (not all) discussion of “the slaves of the slaves”, as Lenin described women, to take place without the slaves who contribute to their enslavement. Conditioning is so strong that women who have not begun to find self-awareness will usually, in mixed company, play out their traditional roles, men will advise
and direct the discussions, and worse, if sexual partners are present women will either remain silent rather than cause embarrassment to their men or make speeches to please them.

In this section I want to examine, briefly, some basic concepts of woman, changes taking place, the possibilities that arise and various responses.

**Woman is above all mother.** From childhood she plays with dolls, learns to cook and accepts an education, formal and informal, that suggests her greatest aspirations should be marriage and a family. There is no getting away from the fact that women are the essential factor in reproduction but science, no matter how unsatisfactorily, has now made it possible for motherhood to be a short-term vocation and a matter of choice.

One may question the safety of the pill, the experimentation conducted on women, the lack of research to improve the situation, the cost, the side-effects, the humbug associated with its distribution and the fact that as yet, in world terms, it is hardly available but it should be recognised that in our society it is, potentially, one of the most important factors in the development of conditions for an advance in the struggle for the liberation of women. The pill has been available for less than a decade and so its social effects are yet to be fully perceived. Although some liberationists insist that they will never have children this is hardly likely to be a mass position and is finally self-defeating since its universal acceptance would achieve what over-population, wars and pollution have not yet achieved. But if most women limited their children to one or two (a reasonable contribution to the solution of over-population and pollution, if not of war) then the life cycle of women, and families would have the potential for change. It is possible that with small families some women could be persuaded to pay ever greater attention to their precious one or two children and we might even see a revival of the old myth that “the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world”\(^{17}\). However it seems unlikely that women will consider devotion to the individual upbringing of the child as their life work. It is not only that everyone knows that the hand that rocks the cradle soon ends up empty and disorientated but also that there is a growing social recognition that the early years of a child’s life are amongst the most important. It is more likely that pressure will be exercised to develop social concern, perhaps control, over those years rather

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\(^{17}\) Should anyone still believe this myth they might try to recall what, if anything, they know of the mother of any world figure.
than leave them to women whose primary qualification is ability to give birth.\textsuperscript{18}

If childbirth becomes one of many life experiences of women it may be that greater real value will be placed on motherhood, rather than the sappy, insincere lip service of the present. Recognition should be sought for the fact that while childbirth can be made easier and can involve a shorter absence from other work, it is not necessarily a piece of cake. All those romantic stories about women in more primitve societies who leave their work to go behind a tree and give birth fail to tell you of those who die behind the tree. Continued medical research is required to alleviate problems in childbirth and there is a reasonable case for normal wage payments to continue in the period immediately before birth and in the early months of a child's life. If this were combined with the provision of easily accessible, professionally run, free child care centres a woman could, if she wished, return to her normal work with no great delay.\textsuperscript{19} If justification is needed for the payment of wages to pregnant women and nursing mothers it might be noted that there is already a long-standing tradition for workers involved in industrial accidents to be paid in their absence and to return to their jobs without loss of seniority when well again. Giving birth is not exactly an industrial accident but there are similarities. There is also a tradition that those who create the most value receive the greatest reward — it doesn't always work out that way of course — and although the production of a child isn't exactly analogous with the production of goods and services there is sufficient in common to suggest that social responsibility, in the form of remuneration to the mother, is warranted.\textsuperscript{20}

**Woman is also housekeeper.** Until now when women spent many years at home caring for children it seemed reasonable that

\textsuperscript{18} For a well argued case on the need to extend the educational experience of the pre-school child beyond his mother and home see Dora Bialestock, *The Needs of the Child in Child Care*, one of several roneoed reports available from the Amalgamated Engineering Union in Victoria. The reports were delivered at a consultation entitled "Action for Adequate Child Minding" (that word again) sponsored by several trade unions and women's organisations in May 1970.

\textsuperscript{19} Some Women's Liberation groups propose that fathers as well as mothers should receive paid leave when a child is born so that from the beginning both parents would share in the care of their child. If the idea seems outlandish it might be noted that many awards provide for leave to attend funerals.

\textsuperscript{20} No capitalist country can match even the poorest socialist country in social legislation covering maternity leave and the rights of working women and yet there are negative as well as positive experience. Early in 1970 women from several socialist countries discussed these experiences which are reported on in an article by this writer entitled: "Experimenting On How To Turn Formal Equality Into Reality" *Tribune*, July 15, 1970.
they should also do the household chores. Today this pattern persists even when women work outside the home, both in capitalist and socialist countries. The possibility exists however for both a change in attitude — where all the family contribute to the necessary work of the family — and with the aid of labor-saving equipment. The latter has made some headway in the consumer society but largely on an individual basis, which is both expensive and wasteful. It is surely not beyond the bounds of technology to devise collective housekeeping methods, laundries, home cleaning and cooking. 21 Some women’s liberationists, like feminists of the past, suggest that a partial solution is the payment of wages for women to stay at home and work as full-time housekeepers for their families. Such a solution could bring with it more problems than it solves and it suggests that women, other than those with babies, could reasonably fill a day in housewifely pursuits.22

The Sexuality of women. It is here that the biggest breakthrough from old prejudices has come. When sexual experience always carried with it the risk of pregnancy it inevitably trapped women, and men, in a system of bargaining where virginity was the price of a wedding ring and where women carried out their “duty” in return for some measure of security.

Marx placed great stress on the connection between freedom and the ability to control nature. There is an important freedom, or potential freedom, in being able to control one’s reproductive function. It is in this context that the demands for the right to abortion on request must be seen. Far from being reformist demands, as some claim, this demand as a back-up for contraceptive failure, is central to the question of woman’s ability to control her own body. In such circumstances the possibility for women to express their sexuality and not repress it becomes possible. The slogan of some American Women’s Liberation groups, with its double entendre, “out from under”, is thus well placed and even some of those actions which titillate the mass media taken on real meaning if seen for what they are. The actions of women whistling men, standing on corners making the remarks men have made for of women who want to be men but of women who insist that the generations, pinching male bottoms, invading bars, are not those distortions of male and female sexuality be replaced by equal and mutual relationships.

21 Of course it is technically possible but in capitalist societies service industries are for profit, not service, and in technically advanced socialist societies too few resources have ,as yet, been allocated to these problems.

22 Hungary is at present experimenting with a system of paid wages for individual mother-housewives. For information on this experiment see the article referred to in note 20.
Whatever the possibilities however, one may not underrated the widespread acceptance of the roles capitalism has designated for men and women. Even in the left a sexually active woman will be spoken of derisively while her male counterpart is regarded as a lucky guy and when women are difficult (as all men and women are difficult at times) one can expect that a male solution for the woman concerned is crudely that “she needs a good lay”. The difficult man isn’t so insulted. And where a woman is politically active gratuitious sympathy is often extended to her husband. “Thank God”, say his colleagues, “our wives don’t want to be liberated”.

The working women. Those who believe, simplistically, that involving women in the workforce is the key to the puzzle might ponder the fact that in Australia in 1901 about a third of all women aged 15 to 65 were in the workforce, a figure about the same as that today.\(^\text{23}\) If there is a difference now it is that the women of 1901 and indeed most women workers, until recently, have not regarded themselves as permanently involved. They worked until marriage, or if they had to, or to supplement their husband’s salaries so that specific goods might be acquired. The social conditioning of women in the home and at school trained them to aspire to jobs which repeated their home, or “natural” roles. Most women still work in offices, making tea for the boss, arranging his appointments, correcting his letters or in services as sales assistants, nurses, cleaners or in the care of children, often as teachers. Where they did other types of work it was as a temporary, reserve section of the labor force. They came into the factories in war time and left when the men came home.\(^\text{24}\) Now with expanding educational opportunities, conditioned though these are, in a situation where sheer muscle power is no longer a primary need and where the years of child-bearing and rearing have contracted, it is possible that women will recognise their permanency in the labor force and will not so readily accept the inferior status which seemed more reasonable when they were only temporaries.

It might be added here that while legislation is required to prevent physical injury to either male or female worker the myth that only men can do hard work needs to be demolished. First most men, let alone women, are not required to do hard physical

\(^{23}\) Figures quoted in a paper entitled “Action for adequate Child Minding” by Jean Martin, Professor of Sociology, La Trobe University delivered at the conference described in note 18.

\(^{24}\) Women workers have always been regarded as a “reserve” labour force by capitalism while in a political sense Stalin spoke of women workers not as a part of the working class but as “the greatest reserve of the working class”.
work today, and second the hard physical work undertaken by the farmer’s wife of last century Australia and the peasant woman of much of today’s world suggest that some women, at least, are capable of such work. It is not that equal opportunity would force women to be bricklayers but that anyone capable of a job, regardless of sex, should be free to undertake it.

There are women who want to be purists in their struggle for equality. Seeing the revolutionary potential of the movement for the liberation of women they want to draw the line at women bosses. While capitalism remains there will be bosses and it is begging the issue to insist that all bosses be men. Naturally it should not be the aim of liberationists to applaud women bosses but in the effort to attain human status for women the aim is surely to judge people, irrespective of their sex, by what they do. Mrs. Golda Meir and Queen Elizabeth stand in opposition to their working class “sisters” in company with a President Nixon and an Earl of the Cinque Ports. What is more disturbing than the possible advent of a few women bosses is the fact that the main areas of leadership of old and new left, and of government and party in socialist based nations, are so bereft of women. Madame Binh, the representative of the revolutionary forces of South Vietnam at the Paris Talks, is a welcome exception.

The woman as consumer. The inevitable result of the waste-making society is the pressure to buy what you neither want nor can afford. If there was ever a reason for capitalism to maintain and extend the concept of woman as the centre of the family, the guardian of her children, and the comforter of her man, it is the consumer fetish of this society. Every day in a thousand ways her prejudices are pandered to so that she will buy, buy, buy. She needs clothes and make-up to catch and keep her man, special foods to see that he goes to work happy and the kids don’t throw their lunches in the garbage bin, special powders to wash his shirts (poor helpless creature) and countless other things to keep her home clean, fly free, odour free and pleasant. To add insult to injury, her body is then used to catch the potential male buyer. The sexy female helps to sell anything from cars to cigarettes. Campaigns against consumer exploitation would almost certainly bring a response.

25 Many women participate in the grass roots and middle levels of leadership in socialist based countries and this is a considerable achievement. For one explanation of attitudes of both communist and non communist left men which act against the possibilities for women to exercise their abilities in leadership see “Moving From The Horizontal To The Vertical” by June Roberts (pseudonym for this writer) in Tribune, January 28, 1970.
It is many years since Marx pointed to the need for a movement which would both recognise and act to overcome the double oppression of women. For too long the concept of class oppression excluded from consideration the need to act also against the specific forms and the social structures which oppress women as a sex and thus reinforce economic oppression. It is one of those boring and obvious sayings that women are half the population and no revolution can take place without them. Having said that we usually go back to square one and nothing changes. What we have to face is that revolutions concern those social classes which are exploited but that the movement for the liberation of women is not only a question of class exploitation. Working women and working class housewives are exploited and all women, certainly in varying degrees, are oppressed as a sex. It is all too easy to ignore the latter problem, to claim that concern for such questions is bourgeois and emanates from the middle class, but to do so is to dismiss as irrelevant those structures in society which contribute most to the maintenance of stability in class society. The real point for everyone committed to revolutionary change is to accept that a movement for such change has both the right and the need to redefine everything and only then will the movement be capable of achieving human liberation, which means the liberation of men and children as well as women, from the distorted and distorting roles into which the profit system casts them.
What are we Complaining About?

OK, so you've heard it all before.
OK so you're bored.

But meantime we still get less pay for the same work as you. We are less likely to get jobs which are at all meaningful, in which we have any responsibility. We are less likely to be educated, less likely to be unionised.

The present set-up of the family puts great strains on us. Either we are struggling to combine badly paid work with bringing up a family or we are unable to do work for which we've been trained.

The manifesto printed here was produced by one Women's Liberation Group in the United States. It gives some idea of how such groups see the situation of women and the ways that situation can be improved. Contrary to the lurid pictures painted by sections of the mass media, and accepted at face value by many on the left, such groups do not project themselves as aggressive, bra-burning, man-haters.
The area of taboo on our sexuality is much more extensive and the double standard still pervasive. Some women never experience orgasm.

So what are we complaining about?

All this and something else besides. A much less tangible something... a smouldering, bewildered consciousness with no shape... a muttered dissatisfaction... which suddenly shoots to the surface and \textit{explodes}.

We want to drive buses, play football, use beer mugs not glasses. We want men to take the pill. We do not want to be bought with the bottles or invited as wives. We do not want to be wrapped up in cellophane or sent off to make the tea or shuffled into the social committee.

But these are only little things. Revolutions are made about little things. Little things which happen to you all the time, every day, wherever you go, all your life.

So we don’t know how to find one another or ourselves.

We are in different classes. Thus we devour and use one another. Our ‘emancipation’ has been often merely the struggle of the privileged to improve and consolidate its superiority. The women of the working class remain the exploited of the exploited, oppressed as workers and oppressed as women.

We are with families and without them. Hence we distrust one another. The woman with a home and children is suspicious of the women with no ties, seeing her as a potential threat to her territorial security. The single woman feels the married woman is subtly critical because she is not fulfilling her role as homemaker, her ‘function’ as child-bearer. She feels she is accused of being unable to be a woman.

They tell us what we should be. As we grow up, especially from puberty we are under intensive pressure to be ‘acceptable’... not to put ourselves outside the safety net of marriage. From small girls we are taught that failure means not being selected by men... the shame of being a wallflower.
The sign of intelligence and subtlety is a contractual bargain as we hand over our virginity for a marriage document, a ring and the obligation of financial support. Orgasm is a matter of merchandise, and remember they don’t like us to be too clever. Well she might go to university but men want someone who can cook.

The emphasis in our education tends to be much more on integration, the encouragement of active criticism, of intellectual aggression is rare. The cautious virtues predominate. We are in an intellectual double bind. We are assumed to have nothing to say, find it difficult to assert that we want to say something, are observed to say nothing, are assumed to have nothing to say.

To stray from the definition of what they want is to risk being rejected in a double sense. There is a ‘moral’ force behind this urge to conform. The girl who is critical of the stereotype presented to her can be condemned not simply like a boy as a rebel, but as a slut as well. The latter is much more difficult to cope with. There is still the whole dirty, frightened, patronising world behind slut, tart, old slag, nymphomaniac, dolly, bird, chick, bit of stuff, bit of crumpet, old bat, silly cow, blue stocking. These words have no male equivalents.

The girl who for some reason breaks intellectually is in a peculiarly isolated position. She finds herself straddled across a great gulf, which grows wider, while she is pulled both ways. A most perilous and lonely condition, comparable to that of a black or working class militant. In the process of becoming interested in ideas she finds herself to some extent cut off from other girls and inclines naturally towards boys as friends. They do more interesting things, discuss wider topics. She really defines herself as a boy. Other girls appear curious and rather boring, passive and accepting. She has little to say to most of them. The social contempt in which women are held confirms this.

They tell us what we are.

The image is constantly reaffirmed. The books she reads and the films she sees are almost invariably by men. One is simply not conscious of men writers or men film makers. They are just writers, just film makers. The selected image of women they create will be taken straight by women themselves. These characters ‘are women’.

Through this process, the educated girl probably takes her ‘emancipation’ as being beyond question. The suffragettes hap-
pened a long time ago. Men will readily accept her as different, an exception, an interesting diversion. She lives in fact as a man. There might be a hint of strain over her virginity, the discovery of a strange duplicity lurking still in men.

But no connection is obvious. She cannot see a condition of women. It is not until she becomes older, grows less decorative, has babies, that the rather deep cracks in the gloss of 'emancipation' appear. She has the rest of her life to explore the limits and ambiguities of her 'freedom'.

And what a spurious freedom.

Marxists have quite rightly always stressed that the subordination of women is part of the total mutual devouring process called capitalism. No one group can be liberated except through a transformation of the whole structure of social relationships. But subordination is not an affair of economics or institutions only. Nor is it only to do with contraception, abortion, orgasm and sexual equality, important as these are.

It is an assumed secondariness which dwells in a whole complex of inarticulate attitudes, in smirks, in offsides, in insecurities, in desperate status differentiation. Secondariness happens in people's heads and is expressed every time they assume no one would listen. It is located in a structure in which both sexes are tragically trapped. The man as much as the woman, for each time he tries to break through, he meets the hostility of other men or the conflicting demands of those women who prefer the traditional sex game. It is only women who can dissolve the assumptions. It is only women who can say what they feel because the experience is unique to them.

Only women can define themselves. To define yourself you have to explore yourself, you have to find yourself as a group before you can say how you regard yourself as a group. It is only by understanding your situation as a group that you can relate it to the system through which you are dominated.

This means a certain withdrawal into the group and a realisation on the part of the elite of a common identity. This means that just as the white middle class Cuban found he was a spic and the black PhD that he was a nigger, the privileged woman has to extend beyond her elite consciousness to learn the extent of her common condition with the underprivileged woman. Only then can women really challenge the external definitions imposed on
them, become sufficiently conscious to act and thus be recognised as being there.

The enemy is not identified as man. This is as futile as a black-white, student-worker conflict. The ally is not the woman who supports and benefits from capitalism. It is all people who are being crushed and twisted, who want space and air and time to sit in the sun.

But the oppressed have to discover their own dignity, their own freedom, they have to make themselves equal. They have to decolonise themselves. Then they can liberate the colonisers.

Men, you have nothing to lose but your chains. You will no longer have anyone to creep away and peep at with their knickers down, no one to flaunt as the emblem of your virility, status, self-importance, no one who will trap you, overwhelm you, no etherealised cloudy being floating unattainable in a plastic blue sky, no great mopping up handkerchief comforters to crawl into from your competitive, ego strutting alienation, who will wrap you up and smother you.

There will only be thousands of millions of women people to discover, touch and become with, who will say with a Vietnamese girl: “Let us now emulate each other”, who will understand you when you say we must make a new world in which we do not meet each other as exploiters and used objects. Where we love one another and into which a new kind of human being can be born.
THE MARRIAGE-FAMILY INSTITUTION

SOME INTRODUCTORY REMARKS are warranted. First, a rather uneasy integration in the paper of two critiques can be discerned: of, (1) the critique of the position of woman in modern societies: it is quite clear that her role as defined by the expectations of the marriage-family institution at present is a severely delimiting and, for the most part, oppressive one; and of (2) the critique of the marriage-family institution, both in terms of the functions it performs for a capitalist society and in terms of the proposition that institutionalisation of an intimate relationship between individuals is destructive to more or less degree. Secondly, then, it must be understood that the family is treated not as a universal idea but as an institution, a micro-system, that performs vital functions for the wider society or macro-system. It follows that if some kind of total questioning is being directed to the

1 The reason for this is that I regard the first critique as being relevant, for the most part, to short-term considerations: the second critique involves a much longer term perspective and, obviously, a more total analysis.

2 Under this generic term I include the Soviet Union and all societies that may be termed 'state-capitalist', and indeed, ultimately, any industrialized society, the power structure of which is centralized and in which individuals are denied participation in the decisions controlling their lives.

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macro-system, it must be extended to this micro-system, particularly since the latter is usually the area of the most intensely-felt experience for the individual and the area in which the individual’s ‘being-in-the-world’ is first constituted. Thirdly, this paper can only lay pretension to being provocative hypothesis. What little empirical work has been done on the family has occurred almost entirely within a behaviouralist framework. That is, much empirical work has to be done in respect of these critical questions before they can be formulated with some certainty. Fourthly, in this paper, an ideal-type will be employed: that of the conjugal, middle-class, urban family in an industrialised society — the type that is being rapidly universalised in these societies.

It is because the marriage-family institution is so taken-for-granted, appears so natural, that it is first necessary to establish just how important it is and point to the impact it has on all of our lives.

It has been sociologists, concerned to refute the contentions, of other sociologists and social moralists, that the family, regretfully, has been stripped of its functions and is doomed to eclipse by other social institutions in modern industrial societies, who have recognised the importance of the family institution to the wider society and have isolated its functions for that society. The arguments as to the decline of the family have taken two forms. First, sociological: e.g. MacIver has argued that: (i) agencies of the State have increasingly taken over the governmental functions of the family; (ii) the formal system of public education has relieved the family of its educative functions; (iii) the family has ceased to be an economic unit, as the modern factory system removed work from the domestic sphere; (iv) pointing to, e.g., the phenomenon of adolescent youth culture, recreation is no longer provided for completely within the family but increasingly provided for outside it. Second, moralistic: the Pope, clerics in general, marriage counsellors, etc., see societal ‘ills’ such as crime, delinquency, sexual permissiveness, anomic youth (i.e. student rebels) as the result of the “growing instability of marriage”, the “continual increase of divorce”, of, generally, the “decline” of the family. Against this, Fletcher, among others, shows that the above lament is misplaced: what these people are talking about is not the

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6 Ibid., ch.3.
eclipse of the family, but of one particular form of this institution. Indeed the moralists are regretting the demise of the Victorian patriarchal, middle-class family, the propagator of a morality, the Puritan Ethic, that underpinned the scarcity conditions of the accumulation of capital. Against the sociologists, Fletcher argues that the governmental and aducative functions, in particular, are not merely still extant but vital to the workings of the wider society. Indeed, he argues:

... the family is now responsible for the fulfilment of more functions than hitherto, and ... it is more tightly and more responsibly woven into the wider structure of society than was the case before the full onset of industrialization. (Emphasis in original).

So the family has become more functional not less and the caution here is not to confuse changes within that institution with the demise of the institution itself. This caution should operate when we observe or project changes in the family stimulated by the transition from a mechanised to a 'technological' economy. It should also operate in circumstances in which the role of women is clearly going to be considerably modified; that is, I agree with Berger and Kellner's argument that "sexual emancipation" and "equalitarian values" will serve to increase the viability of the marriage-family institution so far as it will become humanised and more adaptive to individual need.

We need only adduce the following points and evidence to see the importance of the marriage-family institution. First, in all western countries more people are marrying and are marrying at an earlier age. Thus, in Britain, according to prevailing trends, it was projected that, within this decade, 4 of all women under 25 years would be married and that, by 1972, only 5% of women will regain single. And, to cite Elizabeth Still, in a New Society report:

The average age at marriage is now well under 23 in Britain as against between 19 and 20 in America for women.7

The recreational function is also still extant and important: the institutionalization of the weekend and the advent of television are important factors here.


“The Fashion for Families”, New Society, 8 June 1967, p.837. The same tendencies can be seen in figures for Australia:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average age of marriage</th>
<th>1920's</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1966</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Australia in 1966, 59.6% of all females in the 20-24 age group were married; in the 30-34 age group, the proportion was 93.15%. As elsewhere, marriage among minors has also increased. Data provided in second edition of A. F. Davies and S. Encel Australian Society: a sociological introduction (Cheshire 1970), p.275.
The general reason for these trends is agreed on: "with better economic conditions, people find marriage easier, and the desire to marry seems to have become more widespread throughout the population." Secondly, while the rate of births conceived outside marriage has been increasing, most of the couples concerned marry. Greater sexual "permissiveness", symptom of what we may call the new Hedonist Ethic, is no challenge to the family institution—a point I shall develop later. Thirdly, it may be argued that relatively easier access to divorce may endanger the family institution, but, apart from pointing out that there is substantial degree of remarriage or that the rate of divorce remains fairly constant—12% in Australia—or that 1/3 of the total number of divorces over the past few decades in Britain have been childless, divorce is still, clearly, contained within the institutional structure. Divorce is one more mechanism increasing the adaptiveness of the marriage-family institution: as Berger and Kellner argue:

Typically, individuals in our society do not divorce because marriage has become unimportant to them, but because it has become so important that they have no tolerance for the less than completely successful marital arrangement they have contracted with the particular individual in question. (My emphasis). They continue and speak of "the crucial need for the sort of world that only marriage can produce in our society". This need arises because, simply, all people require a very small community of intimates with whom to express themselves and to whom they can refer for support; and the only socially sanctioned expression of such a community is the marriage-family. Consider here the very intense cultural pressures that urge people to marry and have children. Consider, also, that, with probably only the exception of the orphan or displaced individuals, all individuals live out their lives in some familial relationship. Indeed, most individuals are directly involved in this institution for all of their lives with the exception of the transitional or abnormal conditions of: (i) the independent young worker or student, (even here, probably the majority in these two categories live at home until married); (ii) the married couple childless, or as yet without children, and the widowed old. The family then is the key inter-

12 70% of all first births in Australia, a figure cited by Professor Lloyd Cox, professor of Gynaecology, University of Adelaide, at a meeting to plan a Family Planning Association in S.A., (2/12/1969).
14 That such a community within a capitalist society tends to be very small may be more a function of the nature of human relations within that society rather than of a universal need.
personal unit in modern society: it is the only alternative for "an emotionally fulfilling life."\textsuperscript{15}

To conclude this introductory section, the following statement by Fletcher may be cited:

\ldots the family is demonstrably so important a social group, so powerful a nucleus of interests and loyalties, and so fruitful a source of individual variety that it is always very conspicuously and strictly supervised and regulated by the central Agencies of authority and control in society — the state, the law, the religion. (My emphasis). (33).\textsuperscript{16}

Society, then, requires that interpersonal relations be institutionalised: while Fletcher does not ask why, the proposition, implicit in his statement, may be suggested: that it is because the marriage-family is a, if not, the, primary instrument of effective social control. At the descriptive level, this proposition is elaborated by C. L. R. James: the family is —

\ldots the whole civilisation in embryo. There the social practices, aims and ideals of the whole civilisation are not merely taught but practiced under those conditions and between individuals where human (and in all probability biological affections) are inseparably intertwined with the social disciplines of the society.\textsuperscript{17}

It is this need to institutionalise interpersonal relations that will be investigated in this paper. At this stage it is possible to propose that institutionalisation of a personal relationship spells reification to greater or lesser degree. As a working definition of 'reification' that provided by Berger and Pullberg\textsuperscript{18} will be used: "By reification we mean the moment in the process of alienation in which the characteristic of thinghood becomes the standard of objective reality." Reification, that is, is the situation in which man's actions and creations are not understood as the expression of human vital activity but are objectified and set over and above men who become merely reactive creatures.

II

What is the nature of the social system that requires this alienated behaviour? At this stage, only a schematic answer, to which further content shall be given in the rest of the paper, can

\textsuperscript{15} “Families”, paper given at WLM conference, Melbourne, May 1970, p.3.

\textsuperscript{16} Contrary to Fletcher's statement, such supervision of the family is likely to be increasingly made by the less formal or informal agencies of social control.


be offered. The nature of this system can be suggested in one word, as provided by Marcuse: "Domination" —

Domination is in effect whenever the individual's goals and purposes and the means of striving for and attaining them are prescribed to him and performed by him as something prescribed. Domination can be exercised by men, by nature, by things — it can also be internal, exercised by the individual on himself, and appear in the form of autonomy.19

Also schematically, two historical stages may be distinguished here and Marcuse further used: (1) domination by nature; (2) domination by men, and, in particular, the stage at which social domination has been "introjected" — i.e., the process by which it becomes a psychic, an internal control — by the individual. Using Marcuse directly, this historical distinction becomes that between "surplus-repression", which is "the restrictions necessitated by social domination", and "(basic) repression [which is] the 'modifications' of the instincts necessary for the perpetuation of the human race in civilisation."20

Basic repression is more operative than surplus-repression in this case cited by Juliet Mitchell:

In the Soviet Union in the 1920's, advanced social legislation aimed at liberating women above all in the field of sexuality: divorce was made free and automatic for either partner, thus effectively liquidating marriage; illegitimacy was abolished, abortion was free etc . . . The social and demographic effects of these laws in a backward, semi-literate society bent on rapid industrialization (needing, therefore, a high birth-rate) was — predictably — catastrophic. Stalinism soon produced a restoration of iron traditional norms. Inheritance was reinstated, divorce inaccessible, abortion illegal, etc . . . The State cannot exist without the family.21

The centralisation of power required for rapid industrialisation in an 'undeveloped' country, and the process — in which time will be the most scarce resource — itself demand the regulation, the institutionalisation, of sexuality and reproduction. Individual gratification and individual expression must be attuned to, i.e. modified to suit, overall social needs, in this case, the struggle against basic material scarcity.22 This kind of analysis involves the historicising of Freud's 'Reality Principle', a conceptual tool that can afford great historical insight.

20 Herbert Marcuse Eros and Civilisation (Sphere Books, Gr. Britain. 1969) p.44. When material scarcity, as an all-embracing imperative, no longer obtains, basic — and surplus — repression coexist to constitute a complex of domination, with the latter, historically in the West, having predominated as primary scarcity was increasingly combatted.
22 It is thus that I would explain the puritanism we find in Mao's China.
In the modern capitalist, 'developed' society the imperatives of basic scarcity are not dominant. There is, rather, a situation that can be described as one of relative scarcity: as control over nature has proceeded and new needs have developed, the meaning of gratification, in contrast to the former situation, has changed. Scarcity now refers to surplus consumption and it is this on which gratification in our societies centres. It is the perpetuation of this relative scarcity that is irrational for it spells a situation, in which life has become a means to consumption, to be set against the real potential of these societies for life to be seen as an end in itself, for the human, creative capacities of each individual to be expressed freely and explored. This irrational situation is perpetuated because it services the interests of the minority(ies) in whose hands power is concentrated. In a top-down, centralised structure of power the 'masses' are organised, they are adapted to the social roles entailed by this structure. In terms of an ideal-type dichotomy of behaviour and action, they behave far more than they act, and, if they act, it is principally within the framework of behaviour required. Spontaneity, or free, unpatterned, autonomous action, is therefore outlawed. So sexuality, potentially the primal urge of spontaneity must be institutionalised. Reproduction must also be controlled, not so much in terms of population needs, but in terms of socialising or adapting new members of society to the patterned and controlled behavior that services the social system. This socialisation process is not most effectively undertaken in impersonal or large institutions but in small, intimate ones in which biological ties justify and cushion the social control at work.

III

A note on Engels' analysis: The schematic and too-simple overview offered above may suggest Engels' explanation of the origins of the family as involving too narrow an interpretation of historical materialism, too literal use of the term 'economic'. He argued: "Monogamy [i.e. the marriage-family] arose out of the concentration of considerable wealth in the hands of one person — and that a man — and out of the desire to bequeath this wealth to the man's children and to no one else's."24 He

24 Sexuality here is to be understood in a broad sense, as requiring the aufhebung of the mind/body, reason/passion dichotomy, and as entailing free bodily expression that subsumes under itself genital sexuality and that makes any prescription to how sexuality is to express itself arbitrary. The question then becomes not what is sexuality — that we can only discover in freedom — but whether it is expressed humanly.

did wisely leave as a **query**: "Since monogamy arose from economic causes, will it disappear when these [particular] causes disappear?"\(^7\)

Once again, the need is obvious: for a historiography that analyses the origins of the sexual division of labour, of the family.\(^6\) Until that analysis begins, the critical analysis offered here is without depth.

IV

Before critical description of the specific functions of the marriage-family institution in modern, capitalist societies proceeds, a note should be made on the changing role of women within this institution. Fletcher, Hannah Gavron\(^27\) and Klein and Myrdal\(^28\) have all suggested ‘progressive’ social reforms that would humanise somewhat women’s lot. These reforms centre principally round the right of wives-mothers to work. This demand has become socially legitimate, though not actualised, and it is a demand very difficult to resist not only in the face of the educated housewife’s ennui that is, ultimately, socially destabilising but also in the face of condensation in time of child-bearing years and increased longevity of life. That is, the demands of Betty Friedan’s NOW can be actualised within the existing framework, and their actualisation is likely to sustain rather than imperil the marriage-family institution.

V

The following functions that the family institution performs have not been adequately conceptually integrated. At the outset, it is enough to say that they are to be subsumed under the general societal imperative of institutionalisation of human action, its conversion into behaviour. They are listed in order of increasing importance: the last three — privatisation, sexuality and socialisation — are clearly central to maintenance of this institutionalisation. The naming of these functions suggests only simple descriptive categories such as one may find in a behaviouralist presentation of the family: content is given to these categories beyond that, but, again, the deficiency lies in the failure to show how these functions come together to constitute a totality, a micro-system.

(1) **Production.** The family clearly plays a supportive role for capitalist production, for the market economy, but this role is

\(^{25}\) *Loc.Cit.*


\(^{28}\) Alva Myrdal & Viola Klein *Women’s Two Roles. Home and Work.* (Routledge & Kegan Paul. 2nd ed. 1968).
dealt with under the functions of privatisation and socialisation. What is meant by production here is the role of the wife-mother, within the family, in providing domestic labour which, as Margaret Benston shows, "constitutes a huge amount of socially necessary production." This function is not essential to the macro-system: it could be provided for outside the family by more collective or communal arrangements. This will occur in a capitalist society only so far as it does not diminish the consumption role of the family unit.

(2) Reproduction. As before, not so important in itself in respect to the existing structure of power, but obviously vital in the sense of species-survival. However, even this latter function may diminish with social anxiety as to population control. Quality not quantity will count, and thus this function must be seen in close relation with the socialisation function.

(3) Consumption. Briefly, two points may be made here. First, as Betty Friedan says: "the perpetuation of housewifery, the growth of the feminine mystique, makes sense (and dollars) when one realises that women are the chief customers of American business." The motivation researchers have analysed in too competent fashion the sense of futility and social isolation of the house-bound wife-mother in suburbia and know how to evoke its sublimation as a huge commercial proposition. Secondly, it only matters that the family buys. Accordingly, the value complex of possessiveness and privateness is evoked and reinforced to produce an incredible situation of waste: e.g. washing machines and powered mowers, etc., are used only for a slight proportion of the time they could be used.

(4) Privatisation. This function may be described as cushioning, as serving as a retreat from the general dehumanisation of and lack of communality in the macro-system. The marriage-family institution becomes the "crystallisation of a so-called private sphere of existence, more and more segregated from the immediate controls of the public institutions (especially the economic and political ones), and yet defined and utilised as the main social area for

30 It is because this labour is not recognised as productive that housewives demean themselves in their own eyes in contrast to their husband-breadwinner and suffer general lack of status.
32 This particular advertising appeal will have to change to meet any modifications in the role of women.
33 Operation of Parkinson's Law, i.e. over-use, is synonymous with waste in this context.
the individual's self-realisation".34 The complexity of the public sphere, the remoteness of key decision-making from the individual, the 'technological veil' combine to make society and its workings opaque to comprehension. Thus the individual, in having to "find a way of living in this alien world", has to secure to himself some space, to develop "human relations" such as to "modify its anonymity" and to develop enough savoir faire to survive the rat-race, to work the form-filling requirements of large, public bureaucracies. The opaqueness of the public sphere with the consequent need for private space combine to produce a situation in which large numbers of people "are quite content" that "their public involvements have little subjective importance, regarding work as a not too bad necessity and politics as at best a spectator sport."35 It is the private sphere — "the warm house, detached and insulated"36 — in which

... the individual will seek power, intelligibility and, quite literally, a name — the apparent power to fashion a world, however Lilliputian, that will reflect his own being; a world that, seemingly having been shaped by himself and thus unlike those other worlds that insist on shaping him, is translucently intelligible to him (or so he thinks) a world in which, consequently, he is somebody — perhaps even, within its charmed circle, a lord and master.37

The wife-mother, defined in terms of her "expressive function"38 meets this need in, e.g., husband ego-building. Gerger and Kellner argue further that "the public institutions have no need to control the individual's adventures in the private sphere, as long as they really stay within the latter's circumscribed limits". (7) At least there is no need for direct control; the private space is illusory for even there interpersonal relations will be overlaid by role expectations and behaviour attuned to the needs of the public sphere. The question required to be asked is what kind of human creativity can develop or express itself in such a constricted and falsely private space? What is the nature of that remnant of the world left to human beings when they see their humanity mirrored in a prize rose or decorated cake? Moreover, may not the possible frustration incumbent on such a confined search for autonomy lead to, e.g., in many cases, authoritarian parent-child relationships, particularly when the male bread-winner experiences authoritarian or top-down structures, however subtly mediated, within the work-place? The need for power in the private sphere

is likely to be intensified in the 'post-industrial' society with its degree of centralisation of the productive apparatus and with what Daniel Bell calls "the loss of insulating space" and "communications overload."

Possessive individualism and exclusiveness are inherently involved in the privatisation role of the family:

Families have helped to perpetuate exploitative systems by separating people into small, isolated units, and preventing them from joining together to fight for their common interests by training them to consider that their worries are personal and private when they are in fact social. Being trained to turn all one's affection towards a spouse and children, people suppress their need for warmth from a broader community. Families promote individualism and the false linking of identity with private property, private space etc.

Thus R. D. Laing calls the family a "protection-racket": on the one hand, "this mutual back-scratching, this esteem-, status-, support-, protection-, security-giving and getting"; on the other, the outside world conceived as a menacing 'them'. This is the ideal situation for suspicions, exclusivism of any kind — racial, class, etc. — to flourish; however, it may become less directly anti-social in a consumer, Hedonist Ethic society.

One important effect of the family's privatisation role at present is the social isolation of the housewife reflected in the pathetic dependence of such lonely women on, e.g., 'Talkback' programs.

(5) Sexuality. To restate an earlier proposition, inherent in institutionalisation of interpersonal relationships is sexual expression: the key nature of the family, the focus of this institutionalisation, is then readily apparent. Sexual repression is a necessity for any structure of 'domination' where the overriding priorities are not human but, e.g., 'efficient' and 'rational' production. That is, for a society where people must be organised, scheduled to undertake what has been defined as socially necessary labour on a planned basis. Sexuality becomes dominated by time, the most important scarce value in any system of domination: it is thus, as an intimate situation, relegated to the life corners of relaxation in which, because so dominated by the structure of organisation of time, it is apt to become routinised. More importantly, sex-

39 Linda Gordon "Families" — Published by Sydney WLM.
41 This is true, paradoxically, of the consumer society in which leisure, in terms of historical perspective, appears a very 'liberating' phenomenon. Yet leisure itself is defined in relation to work and is itself organized: predefined expectations, patterned behaviour characterize leisure as much they do work. An intimate situation of two people always has the tendency, fulfilled to some degree or other, to go beyond the established expectations and patterns; but the expectations of leisure appear to involve more intensive group interaction — the responsibility of sharing 'fun' with others.
uality in this situation becomes a scarce good. It is therefore easily convertible into a commodity in a society that commercialises leisure; once a commodity, sexuality as expression of human relations takes on an instrumental character — use by one (male) of the other (female) or, what will become more common, mutual use. Expression of gratuitous, spontaneous reciprocity between two autonomous individuals who see and welcome each other as such is precluded. Indeed, such reciprocity is precluded by the fact of institutionalisation of interpersonal relationships itself.

As earlier indicated, there are some — sociologists or moralists — who see 'permissiveness' as endangering the very foundations of the marriage-family institution. This perception might encourage those who reject the Puritan Ethic to see 'permissiveness' as the alternate. This is a complete fallacy since permissiveness as a conception is necessarily defined in relation to the already established family institution. If a free, non-institutionalised situation obtained, there could be no such concept as 'permissiveness'. Indeed, permissiveness in liberalising the institution, makes it a more effective and more subtle containing force. So far as any conception is necessarily defined in relation to the already established itself to express institutionalisation: it is only a variation on the constant theme of patterned behaviour. Clearly, then, the separation out of authentic expression of sexuality from repressed sexuality is a very difficult process for the individual, however conscious, to undertake. It is the psychology of repression of the Puritan Ethic epoch that breeds the hatred directed against the few who throw away their watches and attempt to live unfettered by the demands of inhuman, social organisation. Repression in the Hedonist Ethic epoch is likely to express itself in the individual's inability to distinguish between 'freedom' and 'license'. Free-spontaneous expression of sexuality is not synonymous with the dehumanised ritual of sleeping round, the morality of which is only too well suited to the exploitative, possessive-individualist morality of capitalism: as de Beauvoir says:

Liberty . . . does not mean fickleness: a tender sentiment is an involvement of feeling which goes beyond the moment; but it is for the individual alone to determine whether his will in general and his behaviour in detail are to be such as to maintain or, on the contrary, to break off this relation he has entered upon; sentiment is free when it depends upon no constraint from outside, when it is experienced in fearless sincerity. (Emphasis mine).

Sexual permissiveness will be encouraged in the modern, consumer society: not only used to market more goods, but one more

42 Under the Puritan Ethic this scarcity is to be conceived in absolute terms: under the Hedonist Ethic it is to be conceived in relative terms.
drug capitalism shall be pleased to administer, to stave off frightening and dangerous questions about the meaning of one's life. To be drugged mitigates against developing a human social situation: communication and expression of self are not important. As Jules Henry says:

In the metaphysic of fun, fun is what gives reality to the world; no matter whom you are with, if you have fun together all will be right and the world will hold together. (Emphasis in the original). \(^{11}\)

That, far from being a challenge to the family, permissiveness increases its viability is recognised by, e.g., Fletcher. For him, experience before marriage, will increase the chance of finding a sexually compatible partner and thus will make the marriage-family institution more adaptable to individual need. \(^{45}\)

(6) **Socialisation.** Socialisation is the process in which the individual is adapted to the macro-system, to its mode of organisation and ends. The marriage-family is not only the basic socialiser of children to the dominant value-system, to the societal structure of roles and to the 'commonsense' — or typified \(^{16}\) — conception of human interaction: it is also the primary instrument of adult socialisation. In discussing the socialisation function of the modern family institution, the emphasis here is not on specific values transmitted in the process, but on the learning of institutionalised or reified behaviour. \(^{17}\)

To consider adult socialisation first: here, marriage is the "decisive phase". \(^{18}\) Marriage is what Berger and Kellner describe as a "crucial nomic instrumentality in our society": "the essential social functionality of this institution cannot be fully understood if this fact is not perceived." \(^{19}\) Sociologists since Durkheim have implicitly recognised this in their realisation that marriage serves as a protecton against 'anomic' for the individual. The marriage-family as a likely vehicle of reified social behaviour is thus sug-

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\(^{11}\) Jules Henry *Culture Against Man.* (Social Sciences paperbacks, 1966) p.168.


\(^{16}\) "The common-sense world, then, is the arena of social action; within it men come into relationship with each other and try to come to terms with each other as well as with themselves. All of this, however, is typically taken for granted, and this means that these structures of daily life are not in themselves recognized or appreciated formally by common-sense. Rather, common-sense sees the world, acts in the world, and interprets the world through these implicit typifications." — Maurice Natanson in intro. to Alfred Schutz's *Collected Papers,* Vol.1 (Martinus Nijoff/The Hague 1967) p.xxvii.

\(^{17}\) Of course, form (structure of organization of behaviour) and content (values) are integral to each other.


\(^{19}\) *Ibid.* p.5.
gsted, since anomie refers to the breakdown or absence of the process by which the individual is successfully adapted to the nomic structure of the social system. The successfully adapted individual does not, in all self-consciousness, reflection and experience, choose his own values and mode of social interaction or, since this is impossible in such absolute terms, to restate it, there is no real dialectic between the individual and society in constituting values and modes of social interaction. The nomic structure of a social system, the defining feature of which is 'domination', precludes such a dialectic. Anomie is the condition of the individual who has learnt the expectations in respect of an ever already constituted nomic structure: i.e., he cannot attempt praxis because he wants to be directed or subsumed under some kind of organic social system. Berger and Kellner point out that marriage as a phase of socialisation, "has a rather different structure" from those of the earlier phases of childhood and adolescence:

There the individual was in the main socialized into already existing patterns. Here he actively collaborates rather than passively accommodates himself.

Such collaboration is expression of the socially produced need to surrender oneself to the social system. It is in terms of this need that we may accept as true the proposition that "married people are more stable emotionally (i.e., operating within a more controlled scope of emotional expression), more mature in their views (i.e., inhabiting a firmer and narrower world in conformity with the expectations of society), and more sure of themselves (i.e., having objectivated a more stable and fixated self-definition)."

The reified character of marriage is expressed in the familiar sociological fact that marriage, for the most part, tends to be homogamous — i.e., it involves two individuals from similar backgrounds, most obviously, in terms of region, class, ethnic and religious affiliations. Homogamy has an important stabilising function and sharing of background and of social typifications is essential to effective institutionalisation of a relationship. Thus marriage, if it is to work, is a situation in which the two individuals "have internalised the same overall world, including the general

50 In Sartrian terms, this may be stated as praxis as having given way to the domination of the practico-inert. Cf. R. D. Läng & David Cooper Reason and Violence: A Decade of Sartre's Philosophy 1950-60. (Tavistock 1964).
51 Praxis "is revealed immediately by its end", i.e. it allows ready identification of the agent with a project; praxis is "free" because it "invent its own law" as "mediation between the objectivity already given and the objectivity that remains to be produced." (Emphasis in original). Ibid. p.153.
This shared world is only partially constituted at the outset: the establishment of a common definition of reality is a process in marriage which occurs principally through what Berger and Kellner call “conversation”:

Each partner ongoingly contributes his conceptions of reality, which are then ‘talked through’, usually not once but many times, and in the process become objectivatcd by the conversational apparatus. This objectivation process is easily apt to become reified: marriage then becomes not a relationship between two individuals but a symbiotic relationship to which both surrender themselves. That is, they see their own and the other’s identity as having its focus in the overlapping area constituted by shared actions, interests, perceptions, etc. The potentially destructive nature of this symbiotic relationship is exemplified in the following two situations. In the first situation, if one partner dies, the established identity of the other still alive is threatened. In the second, if one should individually develop beyond the already agreed-on, shared definition of him or her, the overlapping area — i.e. the relationship — and the established identity of the other are threatened. One important effect of this symbiotic relationship is the “sharing of future horizons, which leads not only to stabilisation, but inevitably to a narrowing of the future projections of each partner” generally, “possibilities become facticities”.

The socialisation of children in the family is their induction into a reified existence: “a child raised in the circumscribed world of the nuclear family is stamped by it in terms of his psychological needs and social expectations.” The modern family is acclaimed as being ‘democratic’, both in the sense of being child-centred and in the sense of being “democratically managed in that husband, wife and children are all taken into account in arriving at family

55 Ibid. p.10.
56 Ibid. p.13.
57 “An absolute union between two people that has been destroyed by death can only be reconstructed as a different morphon, another Gestalt. The one who keeps living must accept a double identity which measures new experiences on mutual agreed standards but which in turn judges the validity of these standards by the force of new experiences. I had compressed an entire life cycle from naive childhood through acquisitive adolescence toward productive maturity into the twenty years since my husband’s death.” — Sibyl Moholy-Nagy Moholy-Nagy. Experiment in Totality. (MIT Press, 1969).
59 Ibid. p.17.
60 Ibid. p.19.
decisions.'"61 If this is democracy, it is more in respect to behaviour than to action: it occurs within the already established framework of values and norms of interaction with each other and the world. R. D. Laing is one concerned to establish the destructive character of this induction into a reified existence: the family "is . . . the usual instrument for . . . getting each new recruit to the human race to behave and experience in substantially the same way as those who have already got there."62 Socialisation, both in terms of the process itself and in terms of the inhuman nature of the world to which adaption is made, is, Laing argues, likely to destroy or preempt any development of the individual self, i.e., of the individual's sense of his own, particular being-in-the-world:

But the result of such adjustment to our society, is that having been tricked and having tricked ourselves out of our minds, that is to say, out of our own personal world of experience, out of that unique meaning with which potentially we may endow the external world, simultaneously we have been conned into the illusion that we are separate 'skin-encapsulated egos'."63

It is Laing's and Jules Henry's64 experience of schizophrenic and psychotic children that their 'condition' is largely the function of a familial situation that has denied them any sense of identity, of expression of self in the real world.

To conclude, the essential argument structuring this paper is that the family institution is the primary bastion of reification in modern, capitalist societies. The argument is well summed-up in this statement by Berger and Kellner:

The narrowing and stabilization of identity is functional in a society that, in its major public institutions, must insist on rigid controls over the individual's conduct. At the same time, the narrow enclave of the nuclear family serves as a macrosocially innocuous 'play area,' in which the individual can safely exercise his world-building proclivities without upsetting any of the important social, economic and political applecarts. Barred from expanding himself into the area occupied by these major institutions, he is given plenty of leeway to 'discover himself' in his marriage and his family, and, in view of the difficulty of this undertaking, is provided with a number of auxiliary agencies that stand ready to assist him (such as counseling, psychotherapeutic and religious agencies.) The marital adventure can be relied upon to absorb a large amount of energy that might otherwise be expended more dangerously. The ideological themes of familism, romantic love, sexual expression, maturity and social adjustment with the pervasive psychologistic anthropology that underlines them all, function to legitimate this enterprise. Also, the narrowing and stabilization of the individual's principal area of conversation within the nuclear family is functional in a society that requires high degrees of both geographical and social mobility. The segregated little

61 Fletcher Op.Cit., p.211.
63 Ibid. p.61.
world of the family can be easily detached from one milieu and transported into another without appreciably interfering with the central processes going on in it. Needless to say, we are not suggesting that these functions are deliberately planned or even apprehended by some mythical ruling directorate of the society. Like most social phenomena, whether they be macro or microscopic, these functions are typically unintended and unarticulated. What is more, the functionality would be impaired if it were too widely apprehended.

In the last sentence lies the rationale of this paper.
AT SOME TIME in the future it will be necessary for a theoretical analysis to be made round an idea of revolutionary change in Australia which will take into account not only the material factors but also the ideas and attitudes of men and women which are among the interchanging forces which determine the maintenance or otherwise of these factors. Specific to this study would be the working out of the sex-roles which men and women play within the imposed structure of society and the way both suffer from this, yet help to cement or to break up this basic imposition.

The authors of this article are both Communist Party activists in Adelaide.
The Communist Party of Australia has not attempted such an analysis, and is primarily held back from even seeing the need for this by not only a firm acceptance of those imposed rules, but by an even more firmly cemented encrustation of capitalism — that of paternalism.

The indulgent complacency within which a paternalistic society traps and chains women’s consciousness is reflected in the totality of the CPA’s assignment of roles within its ranks — by the methods of work over the years which encompass its attempt to state a revolutionary position regarding women’s place in society — and its failure, so far, to do this. To examine the position of men and women in society from a revolutionary point of view is it not necessary to review the means whereby revolutionary consciousness is constantly renewed? The answer must lie in the interpretation of Marxist theory in practical events, the theory and the practice giving rise to new theories, new practices.

There has been much written and printed by the various political groupings of the Left, particularly recently, on what is a revolutionary approach to this or that issue. But intrinsic to all this literature (with the notable exception of some material circulated by Women’s Liberation groups) is a general acceptance of the old roles men and women play. There has been no examination of the subtle and mostly unconscious attitudes prevalent for so long in society as a whole, and regrettably and unavoidably still in the Left, and in the CPA — with which this article is concerned.

We have mouthed heroic truths and theorised with magnificent egaliterianism, and then charged off on a wrong premise — the premise of paternalism. What is needed that will clearly expose this subtlety, this paternalistic attitude? We need an examination at both theoretical and practical levels — through research and debate — of the real position of women in society today. We believe it will be found that the past approach of the CPA to women in society has been reflected in its attitude to women in the Communist Party. With benevolent consideration and paternal interest women members were set into a triangular framework which had as its apex the National Women’s Committee (an appointed body), then via the various State (appointed) Women’s Committees, to the base of the triangle, which found the majority honoured from time to time by being asked to cater at functions, work for money-raising events, as well as canvassing sales of Tribune, leafletting, acting as “chairman” at factory gate or area meetings, and often forming the backbone of the local Branch. Secretarial ability would sometimes mean an “advice” position of trust to a selected few, whose office and organising abilities made
them essential to various National and State Executives from time to time.

Women often rose to State Committee and Central Committee ranks. And of course it was necessary to have women on these committees if only to prove that the necessary attention was being paid to “work among women”. Almost every State Conference report concluded on two notes — attention to “work among women” and to “youth work”. The highest compliment paid to a woman was that “she thinks like a man; she’s a fine politician”. And the ablest women from State and Central Committees, according to this kind of judgment, were appointed to the various women’s committees. From this setting up of women’s committees, we see the paternalistic thought pattern enacted in deeds.

We see a party committed to evaluating society from a revolutionary viewpoint encompassing half of the human species within an entirely bourgeois concept. We see men being treated as “people”, able to act in any sphere, and any situation, in the way people in a revolutionary party should be able to act. But we see women as “things”, and therefore needing a special type of structure within that same revolutionary party, because paternalistic society has always said that women have “special needs” and “special problems” and the revolutionaries have not questioned this in depth. Those women who did rise to eminence in party organisations were confronted by terrible contradictions within themselves, as well as within society, within their families, and within the party, the special contradictions inherent in being a woman. Very seldom have they stayed in these positions for any length of time, but when they have, the refining fires they have had to endure within themselves have produced people of tremendous strength of character and sustained intelligence, but also, sometimes, of singlemindedness and dogmatic approach.

And because there is such a total acceptance by both men and women of their role-playing, these “special needs” and “special problems” (so called) have been translated into a need for special organisation within the revolutionary organisation itself, which in itself negates the revolutionary character of the organisation. Thus we have not only the society paternalistically trapping and chaining people’s consciousness into enacting special roles, but we have the very organisation, which for almost the past thirty years offered the only revolutionary alternative to that society, itself trapping and chaining women within its own ranks (and thereby further emphasising women’s subordinate role) by providing a network within which they must work.
Are there any "men's committees"? Of course not! Committees which happen to be made up of mostly men are open — in theory — to people (of both sexes). Yet what single issue anywhere in society today concerns women only?

For many years such issues as peace, the rights of children, provision for child care facilities, have often been synonymous with "work among women". We have hampered and entrapped the development of women's consciousness, kept them from the broad spectrum of understanding the struggle for revolutionary change by substituting a bourgeois ideal.

It is the function of bourgeois ideology to present the character and role of women as aspects of Nature itself. It should not be the function of a revolutionary organisation to perpetuate the habits of reformist or bourgeois thought. It should be possible for the freeing of consciousness within the revolutionary organisation to be a joint exercise in practice by both men and women. It should be possible to see the need for both men's and women's liberation. That the CPA has not yet attempted this indicates quite clearly that the male members accept their roles, laid down by the bourgeois society they wish to change, to overthrow, and take these roles blindly with them into their revolutionary party, which, of course, as we said before, negates the whole thing.

The example from history which illustrates the best-known attempt by women to free themselves from this imposed role, and to raise their eyes to the broader views of both sexes, is seen in the history of the suffragette movement. Where this struggle achieved success — i.e. in the right to vote, it received support from men (who also stood to gain from this). But, on the other hand, where the demands of the suffragettes became more basic, more revolutionary, then paternalistic society confined them to the women themselves, making them appear feminist, narrow, amazonian and comical.

This is not to say that this is how the party regards women's struggles today, entirely. But where once paternal attitudes confined the movement so does the party today — not in a deliberate attempt to isolate the struggle, but from sheer neglect of the issues involved in the struggle.

Among the revolutionary left today, many young people are cynical of the characterisation of the CPA as a revolutionary organisation. Among other things, they question the attitude of a revolutionary party which still allows the organisation of women within its ranks on the basis of sex. Yet even these same young people are tending to act out exactly the same bourgeois roles in
their work as the CPA has done for so many years. Are there any more opportunities for the young women of the revolutionary left student organisations, for instance, to be much more than the coffee-makers, the “bird”, or the “chick”, comfortably there to complete the circle of the male ego?

Julet Mitchell says:

The problem of the subordination of women and the need for their liberation was recognised by all the great socialist thinkers in the 19th century. Yet today, in the West, the problem has become a subsidiary, if not an invisible element in the preoccupation of socialists. Perhaps no other major issue has been so forgotten.1

It is fundamental to a revolutionary concept that women as people be not differentiated against on the basis of sex—or any other basis. To channel women off, at a top level, into women’s committees, is to deny the total acceptance of women’s ability to play a role equal to men in achieving revolutionary change. It is looking backward over the political shoulder, seeking solutions from the past as answers to today’s needs for women’s, and men’s liberation.

What is needed is for both men and women to grasp that ideological liberation from habits of the past brings self-recognition. No limiting factors should any longer be applied to women of the revolutionary left. Of course, if there is a need in some particular sphere, and the people involved are mostly women, then obviously a nucleus or committee may operate comprising mainly women as members. But this would mean that action has given rise to the need for such a committee, not the artificial imposition of a committee for members of one sex only, because it is the policy of an organisation already in existence.

What, then, do we see as the results of the establishment of committees for women within a revolutionary organisation?

1. Their very existence indicates that the male members of the organisation must feel, quite wrongly, that they are not capable or qualified to discuss, analyse, understand or take part in issues involving women and their liberation.

2. They tend to make the women feel, also wrongly, that they alone have the answers to their problems, and that men are impediments to this.

This in fact encourages the most subtle form of feminism and divisive tactics, however unconsciously.

The existence in bourgeois society of separate reformist working-class organisations for women have meant the continued frustration and isolation and futility of women’s struggle for liberation. The

reformist view that these organisations have a part to play may be quite acceptable for the Liberal Party and the Labor Party, who have their own separate women's committees, but the qualitative difference between their attitudes and the revolutionary attitude must be that women within the organisation must have exactly the same choice of fields of work as do the men. It is imperative that this happen, in order to overcome the legacy from the past.

It is an urgent task to break down the concepts which give constant life to old habits of thinking about women and their role, and about men and their role. We will not do this immediately. Those who seek some kind of personal liberation will find, at times, that it is much more comfortable to slip back into past thought patterns, because these are so much part of the fabric of the present too. We will not solve anything by simply doing away with women's committee's because their re-structuring can take place only as understanding grows of what women's liberation is all about. At present there is a demand for the existence of such committees, from men and women in the CPA. The debate about what constitutes a revolutionary party will, we believe, bring about the demise of many encumbrances from the past. Discussion arising from an understanding of personal alienation, as well as alienations within society will broaden the understanding for the need for liberation.

To help us overcome personal alienation, we should try to understand the role of the monogamous family in capitalist society and the tyranny implicit in its function, which no less affects members of political organisations than it affects all other members of society. Many of the faults in methods of work for women's liberation, as we have indicated before, stem from the fact that we are all victims of this tyranny, and consciously or unconsciously act out our roles within it. Some communists are still terrified of discussions on sexual freedom, the oppressive role of monogamy, abortion, prostitution, contraception, and sexual role-playing, the understanding of which are fundamental to the real liberation of all human beings.

If we would hope to be fully integrated (compassionate, imaginative) revolutionaries, to be able to see another person's point of view, and then be able to see why they have it, it behoves us to really assail the bastions of past prejudices and present institutions. What are these? For women, the mould of the maternal, female role is a mighty bastion to assail. Women, from their earliest years are instructed as the only sex capable of bringing up children, the people responsible for the care of the home (even if they work
outside the home); they have the care of their husbands, to give pre-school education to the child or children, and to fulfil the role of home nurse when necessary. In the course of all this, women repeat their own mould unconsciously, and that of their husband, by instilling their own sex-roles into their children. As Simone de Beauvoir has said, “One is not born, but rather, one becomes a woman”.

For men, the paternal mould forces them into the pattern of the breadwinner, the protector and leader, the guide and aggressor, the thinker and careerist, and like women in this respect, they instil their own sex-roles into their children.

We are all familiar with the conflicts arising from these imposed sex-roles. Husbands are tied to (mainly) less educated, more frustrated, subjective partners for life, because these partners are less educated, powerless and without financial, social, physical, economic and emotional independence. They, in their turn, depend on women to care for their children, their home and for themselves. Here we have the essential conflict of the interdependence of unequal entities. The more we break down the accepted roles and inequalities, the less contradiction, the greater the unity, the closer the liberation of men and women.

How can we do this, particularly in the left (although we have no lien on the need)? Education and discussion in the widest sense involving close collaboration and alliance with the greatest possible number of organisations and individuals may help. Such an educative program should involve the close study of all current progressive, radical, revolutionary and Marxist classical literature. This should pre-suppose the publication of present and future progressive, radical and revolutionary theory, and pre-supposes the encouragement of the writing of such theory, especially that dealing with the personal realisation of the individual, and his or her role in society today.

Practical activity, and these are only the briefest suggestions, could include revolutionary demands of women, which by definition are also revolutionary demands for men.

1. Sexual independence.
2. Contraception research for males and females — since the “Pill” seems to be by no means the last word on contraception.
3. Publicising and agitation for the need for research into sterilisation of men and women — related to the population explosion (or implosion).
4. Activity and research around abortion and the paternalistic repressive reforms that now exist, where such reforms have been gained.

2 Such works as Sexual Repression & The Family by Laurel Limpus, Adelaide Women’s Liberation publication should be studied and evaluated.
5. Better understanding of the causes and results of prostitution and the role it plays in capitalist society.

6. The monogamous structure of the family and its implications in capitalist morality.

7. Direct attacks on sex-biased advertising, marriage manuals and mothercraft manuals.

8. Economic independence (the socialisation of housework; in fact, housework as a paid career). In direct relation to this are the questions of education for girls, and the careers available to them. Further, important law reforms should be considered, such as those governing inheritance, deserted wives (and/or husbands), pensions, and so on.

9. Social independence: what are the traditions regarding this, what do we accept, what discard, what from the point of view of the integrated revolutionary?

10. Political independence: here, of course the cry of the traditionalists is that “you'll get equality and liberation after the revolution — let's get on with the revolution: let's change the objective conditions” . . . and of course, while you're waiting for the changes in the objective conditions, you help to perpetuate those conditions. It is the undemocratic nature of the imposed sex-roles in society which will act as a brake on women's ability to enter any political sphere in which they may be interested. This sentences half the population to entering a new state of society (i.e. socialism) as an already oppressed section of that society which will in itself act as a further brake on the new society.

A crucial mistake made by the CPA over the past thirty years was in thinking that the task of educating women, and raising their consciousness, was the task of the women themselves. It was male chauvinism which dominated the thinking that translated the struggle for raising women’s consciousness into one for women only — apart from important policy making at the top. It is still male chauvinism, within the framework of men's sex-role in society, that is making men sentence themselves and the left generally, to an acceptance of past mistakes, and attempting to fit a vision of the new within the framework of the old. A revolution is more than a change of power: a personal revolution is needed. There is a need to understand alienation not only on a public level, but on a personal level. Until we begin to grapple with this task, to stop sniggering at women’s liberation and understand what it means, our alienations will restrict our effectiveness.
Discussion:

On Abortion

ABORTION is one of the subjects about which it is most difficult to write a disengaged, scholarly work. This is because child-bearing and rearing affects the lives of nearly everyone at a deep level and over a long period.

Any challenge to the establishment will be met with opposition — even more fiercely if it has some emotive content as does the subject of abortion. Sometimes even well-established trade union leaders will become savagely puritanical on this point, even if they fight vigorously for wages and conditions. Now, owing to the recent campaign for legal abortion, we can mention the subject in a voice a little louder than the former, furtive whisper which, even at that, could brand a woman as an immoral irresponsible.

The aspects which trouble those in power are first, whether abortion would restrict cheap labour since the supply would be less than inexhaustible and secondly whether traditional masculine comfort would be disturbed if women had a choice about their family role.

We know that abortion is available for rich women, and with a minimum of trouble but carrying with it a fairly substantial financial consideration. According to such orthodox journals as Life and Look many continental hotels are reputed to be providing this service discreetly, but with all the trimmings of specialist treatment and qualified nursing service. By contrast, a mother living in the Bronx, in a one-roomed dwelling with five children already, was refused an abortion. There was no water supply in the room nor eating and cooking facilities. Fortunately the laws of New York city have since been amended to allow abortion by request. If, however, all things were equal, the rich women, presumably with a staff to help with the chores, should be the bearers of children. My position is that all women, regardless of economic circumstances, should have the right to decide how many children they will bear without being conscripted into motherhood. The laws governing abortion were formulated when over-production of human beings was encouraged, even insisted upon. Many babies did not survive childhood and those who did were expected to be a source of highly competitive labour (or fight in wars). There was some reason then for those of the top echelons to be opposed to abortion — for others anyway.

Propaganda about abortion and birth control is directed towards women. The quite simple operation for men, to render the sperm infertile for a specified period, is hardly ever mentioned. Women are constantly informed that no-one of their sex can understand the sexual drive in men. One should reply that no man on earth
understands the terror of discovering an unwanted pregnancy.

Advocacy of abortion is sometimes attributed to emotionally, cold, unmotherly women but it shows neither sense nor devotion to advocate unplanned production of human beings.

I would suggest that in addition to supporting the current campaign for abortion on request we could make a point by writing to the United Nations requesting a world-wide moratorium on the birth of new human beings until we have inaugurated the following guarantees:

1. that parents and children have economic responsibility for each other in addition to that provided by the community, where necessary;
2. that each citizen be guaranteed enough food, clothing, shelter and heating;
3. that education at all levels be available to everyone who can benefit from that degree of study;
4. that no compulsion to motherhood should obtain anywhere;
5. that warlike or sexual aggressiveness should cease to be admired and gentleness and consideration for human welfare should be exalted instead.

E. B. Wilson

Women and Unions

WOMEN'S OPPRESSION, although rooted in the institution of marriage, does not stop at the kitchen or the bedroom door. Indeed the economic exploitation of women in workplaces is the more commonly recognised aspect of the oppression of women. This is because women have always been the most exploited sector of the industrial workforce. Child and female labour was common in the early stages of industrial capitalism but as industrialization developed and the craft jobs of men were eliminated, men entered the industrial labour force, driving women into the lowest categories of work and pay.

Male chauvinism present in the trade unions today is a reflection of an attitude, that women are the passive and inferior servants of society and men. Some union leaders and many male workers believe that women have no right to work outside the home or that they are incapable of doing difficult work. Such attitudes help to maintain a situation in which some women who need income or independence cannot work, many women who do work are unorganised, union agreements reinforce the inferior position of women who are organised and the cost of child care is seen to be the responsibility of the mother. As a result most women workers have not seen much value in organising. They have less to gain from militant fights for better wages — everytime he wins a dollar she only wins seventy five cents — and they have most to risk in organising in the first place, because of their lack of experience and skill as a bargaining factor with the bosses.

Not only are women forced onto the lowest rungs of the occupational ladder, they are the lowest income earners. The most constant injustice experienced by the majority of women workers is the income differential. Although there have been some recent victories the fight for equal pay is far from being achieved and yet it has been going on for more than fifty years. Can you imagine any issue which vitally affects male workers not being resolved in such a time?

The acceptance of specific role for men and women can and do assist capitalism. When male workers think of
themselves primarily as men (powerful) rather than as workers (members of an oppressed group) they cannot easily identify with the issues of concern to women workers. Despite a relatively decent living standard, in the material sense, all Australian workers are exploited and harassed in other ways than through the size of the weekly pay cheque. They are made into robots on the job; denied security; forced to pay heavy insurance and can rarely save enough to protect themselves from sudden loss of job or emergency. But here too women are called upon to act out a role to make up for failure in the system. It is often the second wage (at 75c of the male rate) that enables the family to eat better, to escape oppressive surroundings through a holiday and an occasional movie and to buy “luxuries”. And it is through her role as “home-maker” that a woman is required to provide a refuge from the alienation of work so that the family can forget, even temporarily, the “harsh realities” of life outside. In this role too she helps to transmit the values of hard work and obedience to each new generation of workers, and she will often urge that her husband not risk his job by standing up to the boss or going on strike.

All these attitudes act against the objective interests of the trade unions but the attitudes will persist while male chauvinism continues. Even in the internal life of the unions male chauvinism persists. Unions accept the dues from women workers but often act to reinforce the concept that females have only passive roles to play. There is reluctance to encourage vital, intelligent women to accept responsibility, let alone challenge the boss. One only has to see the attitude of many trade union officials to their female office staff to gauge how deep is the problem. The women are there to serve.

It is no excuse to claim that union rules do not debar women from seeking office and let the matter rest there. At decision making meetings one hears the strong confident voices of men in struggle but it requires considerable encouragement for women to speak simply because they have been socialised to fear aggressiveness, they lack experience in articulating concepts and they fear the ridicule of men. From childhood they are taught that it is not attractive (to men) to be strong minded and to argue with men. Without encouragement women stand very little chance of gaining positions of leadership in the unions and one wonders where the encouragement will come from. What male official would relinquish his position for a woman and thus admit, even indirectly, that a woman is equally, or ever more competent than himself?

Certain unions also contribute to the system that keeps so many women as an unskilled labour force, easily dispensed with when jobs are scarce. These unions discriminate against, or discourage, women from taking up particular work, training for skills, gaining apprenticeships or seeking promotion. It would be a move in the right direction if every union fought for such demands as: one rate of pay for the job performed; pre-school facilities for children financed from profits; part-time work for people (male or female) with special responsibilities (such as the care of young children); shopping time for all workers; maternity leave with full pay; equal opportunity in employment.

L. D.

On Realism

GORDON ADLER'S article Communists and Art (A.L.R. No 27) ought to stir up some much needed discussion among those of us writers, painters and musicians who have remained in
As a contribution to discussion I propose that we re-define some of our terms: otherwise we shall only get out of one impasse into another.

Realism, says Adler, has no special virtue. Well, whoa on! Are we talking about realism as a technique or about realism as a quality? The two are not always found together. Realism as a quality — the quality in a piece of writing that forces the reader to feel “This is real, this is true, this is exactly how people do behave in given circumstances” — can jump at you out of the most unlikely ambushes: out of the totally stylised tragedies of Racine, or out of the flippant episodes of Len­nic Lower. Realism as a technique, as a workshop method, as a mere habit of painting “warts and all”, is only one among many possible roads towards attaining the quality of realism. As a technique, it is reducible to a set of rules. In the decline of classicism, classicism itself came to be regarded as a technique, and equated with “the rules of Aristotle”. Hence the celebrated epigram: “I am delighted that Monsieur X, in composing his tragedy, has stuck so closely to the rules of Aristotle. I only regret that the rules of Aristotle should have permitted Monsieur X to compose such an execrable tragedy”.

In our own day, Elizabeth Jenkins says in an analogous case: “We do not believe some modern novelists, when, with all their apparatus of ‘realism’ they try to convince us that their puppets are men and women”. What she calls the apparatus of realism is what I have called the technique of realism; and she goes on to claim that Thackeray, for all his old-fashioned air, surpasses many moderns in the quality of realism.

In a slightly different sense, I am old-fashioned too. I still think that the quality of realism is one of the qualities that makes up the greatness of a great work of literature. Racine’s tragedies, with their all-pervading psychological realism, are alive today. Vol­taire’s tragedies, with all their technical cleverness, lack this realism and are dead. Not even their propagandistic political content saves them. It is no good “pointing the way forward” if the pointing hand is made of cardboard.

Adler calls his article “Communists and Art”, thus implying a much wider field than literature, though it is mainly about literature that he writes. He did not waste powder and shot on the notion (did anyone seriously hold it?) that the technique of realism could be applied to music or to architecture. Mossolov’s Steel-Foundry has quietly dropped off the concert-programmes even in its country of origin. And if Moscow University represents Socialist Realism in architecture, then the theory is evidently an uninspiring one. All the same, I should be grateful if someone better-informed than I am could extend the discussion to include the arts of music and architecture and some others. My own ideas about the quality of realism provide no explanation of the self-evident greatness of the Citadel Mosque in Cairo or of Mozart’s G-minor Quintet or, for that matter, of a Ming vase.

And by the way, was it our devotion to Socialist Realism or was it just bone-headed ignorance that prevented us from making a hero of the great Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier when he published The Lost Steps? People who doubt whether a profoundly Marxist novel can take a form other than the standard technically-realistic one should certainly read it.

John Manifold
THE ACHIEVEMENTS and failures of Australian communists in the trade union movement in the post-war years have some significant lessons for revolutionaries concerned about a viable strategy for social change. The trade union movement is one area above all where communist policies and methods have been tested in practice over many years and on a mass scale. It is also the area where current policies will be tested and judged.

Despite significant achievements Australian communists have not been able to prevent the growing integration of our working class into the capitalist society during the last two decades. One reason for this is that until very recently communists have not consciously tried to prevent this integration because they have not been clearly aware of it.

It is ironic that the very successes of the Communist Party in the trade union movement have contained the seeds of the failure to develop the revolutionary consciousness of the Australian working class. The successes of the militant struggles after the war (1946-48) in which the communists played a leading role improved the wages and conditions of the Australian workers and played a part in establishing the existing standard of living. Despite subsequent sectarian errors and faulty estimates, and notwithstanding the decline of the Communist Party and its mass appeal, support for the communists in the trade union movement remained at a high level. Even the chill of the cold war period did not fundamentally alter that.

The reasons for the successes of the communists were the same.
as pre-war — their devotion to the workers’ interests, their militancy, determination and hard work, their skill in the conduct of economic struggles, their high level of integrity and their honesty. Generally speaking the calibre of the communists was high. Another reason of some significance was that the work of communists in the trade unions was freer from dogmatic imposition of policies not suitable to Australian conditions than were other spheres of the work of the Communist Party. As Alastair Davidson notes, its policies “were to some extent based on a realistic estimate of the conditions and traditions of the Australian labor and socialist movement”. (The Communist Party of Australia, p. 93)

Yet in the very area where the Communist Party has been most successful, where it has been able to withstand many attacks and displayed the greatest resilience, it has failed in its basic objective — to develop the socialist consciousness of the working class. In a sense the ingredient of success in this sphere — the devotion to and gradually the narrow pre-occupation with the defence of the economic interests of the workers — allowed in the prevailing conditions of the fifties and sixties the growing pressure of ruling ideology to increase its domination over the Australian workers. The economic development and social life of the country provided favourable ground for the spread of bourgeois values and the ethos of the consumer society to all classes.

It was a tragedy that this growth was not seriously combated by the only force in the country that could have combated it. To a large measure the battlefield for the workers’ mind was vacated and left to the ruling class and its ideologists. The question must be asked, why did this happen, why did it take so long to elaborate a revolutionary strategy, why did the growth of conservatism go relatively unchallenged leading to the present situation? A combination of a faulty strategy for social change, of false estimates based on poor analyses of the Australian reality, tardy responses to growing difficulties, slowness in making tactical correction, followed by subsequent over-reaction to setbacks, brought this about.

Let us examine this in a little detail. The strategic concept which dominated communist activities in the post-war years was the dual belief that the impending economic crisis would bring about the mass radicalisation of the Australian working class and that the great challenge to and decisive contest with reformism had arrived in 1949-49. The 15th Congress of the C.P.A. held in 1948 declared: “The capitalist world, already deeply affected by the general crisis, which was worsened by the war, is about to plunge into the biggest of all its economic crises”.

The communist tactics in the general coal strike of 1949 can
be attributed to this concept. After the defeat of the coal strike, erroneously hailed as a victory over reformist ideology, there was a refusal to face up to the facts that it revealed. The Communist Party leadership at that time did not discern the ebb of the post-war movement. On the contrary it persisted with offensive tactics, which in the developing conditions inevitably led to isolation. The correction was unduly delayed for several years and as a result of this, when it finally did come, was bound to have elements of an over-correction. From offensive, exposed positions, well in advance of the workers' understanding and capacity to fight, the party swung to defensive, adaptive and overcautious positions and attitudes.

A certain retreat was necessary and justified, but because it had been delayed for too long and was carried out without a serious revaluation, it led to new errors. The retreat was made in a pragmatic fashion as a response to the situation that the party found itself in and which had led to loss of support and isolation, rather than as the result of a new analysis.* It was done in an empirical fashion which has always been more characteristic of the party's work in the trade unions than in other spheres, and went too far in some respects and became too general in others. It led to placing unity as such in the centre of much of the tactics of the party; "unity for unity's sake" gradually became, if not the theory, certainly the practice of some communists in the trade unions. Some of the necessary tactics of those days later hardened into principles, and for some the means became the aim.

As a consequence of this kind of correction of sectarian errors, conservative attitudes grew, powerfully fed by the economic developments which flowed from the continued expansion of the Australian economy, and the mineral discoveries. In fact no new strategy replaced the old one — there was simply a process of adaptation to new conditions. The very successes of this adaptation — the party regained some of the ground lost since 1949 — blinded it to the new dangers and to the real problems. The party drifted on, based on traditional methods of work. Communists continued to work well as trade union officials, they continued to gain (and regain) the support of many workers, but they also became narrower in the scope of their work at the very time when developments in our society made imperative a widening of scope and horizon. At the time when communists did little to widen the workers' horizon the ruling class was successfully setting out to narrow it.

Having burned their fingers earlier, communists tended to keep away from the fires of the revolution altogether, instead of finding

* During the following years there continued to be periodic declarations by leading party spokesmen and bodies about the impending major cyclical crisis. A special pamphlet was even published on the forthcoming crisis.
the way to stoke the fires of the revolution without getting one's fingers unnecessarily burnt. For well over a decade the political battles in the trade union movement were confined to those who were militant and who involved the workers in action on economic matters, and the 'moderates' who damped down the struggle. The militants saw themselves as fulfilling their revolutionary responsibilities by their economic militancy. This was the period when bourgeois hegemony made its real inroads in the ranks of the Australian workers. Even where communists fought bravely and vigorously it was confined to one front, the economic front, whereas the real battle was on many fronts — it was for the hearts and minds of the workers.

All this occurred whilst there was an ebb in the revolutionary movement in our country as in other advanced capitalist countries. When this ebb gradually ended in the latter part of the sixties it gave way to the beginnings of a new upsurge of the revolutionary movement in the advanced capitalist countries, catalysed by the war in Vietnam. The scientific and technological revolution brought with it new contradictions, new processes emerged, new revolutionary forces came to the forefront, creating both new tasks and new potentialities for the trade unions.

Yet even at this stage, it took a few more years before a serious attempt at elaborating a revolutionary strategy for the trade union and workers' movement was made and the process of applying it could begin. This delay was due to several reasons.

1 For a long time the old line persisted at the very centre of the communist party's leadership of this work, based on narrow economic militancy.

2 There was a general resistance to new ideas by people who had got set in the old ways. Especially there was the pressure of conservative attitudes and sentiments, the tendency to take the easy way out. Resistance to change, even where it was unconscious was extremely strong. The corrosive influence of bourgeois attitudes and values had penetrated deeply.

3 It was only when the new policies were seen in their revolutionary perspectives, as part of the overall strategy of the Communist Party, that they could be understood and absorbed and the task of applying them could commence.

But the difficulties of putting such a revolutionary strategy into practice in conditions of economic expansion remain formidable. The apathy and the subsequent relative passivity of the great body of Australian workers about the war in Vietnam at a time when other sections of the population are increasingly active against this war is perhaps the most striking expression of the problem.
To challenge the integration of the working class into the capitalist system, to successfully counteract the influence of capitalist ideology, of apathy and the spread of false values requires in the first place a recognition by industrial activists that economic struggles by themselves, no matter how vigorously conducted, do not challenge capitalist hegemony. However, the opposite view is still widely held. A whole generation of industrial activists has grown up with the firm and deeply imbedded belief that militant economic struggles challenge the capitalist system. Yet in today’s conditions this is an illusion, and a dangerous one at that. There are strong supporters of the present system and active anti-socialists who are militant in the conduct of economic struggles. When faced with this new breed of rightwing leaders in the trade union movement, socialist activists are often puzzled. They question the genuine character of this militancy, expecting in accordance with the classical pattern of the past, that these people will be militant in words only and that they will sell out to the employers at the suitable moment. Of course many rightwing leaders do exactly that, but it is quite possible these days to be an extreme rightwinger, a supporter of the war in Vietnam and a fanatical anti-communist and still fight firmly for economic advances of the workers. The experience of the American trade union movement ought to dispel any illusions on this score.

The plain fact is that with the development of modern technology it is possible for the ruling class to concede many of the economic demands of the workers in the advanced countries, to absorb these demands without weakening the capitalist system, but actually strengthen it. In these conditions the old criterion that you can tell the difference between revolutionaries and reformists in the trade union movement on the basis of their militant pursuit of the struggles for the economic demands of the workers, no longer holds good. A growing group of younger trade union activists believe that the only way for modern society to operate successfully is for organised groups to press hard for their share of the benefits of technological advances. This is the reason why economic militancy is quite acceptable, even fashionable, in circles that would not have dreamt of taking direct action a generation ago.

The old broad division in the trade union movement between reformists and revolutionaries, with groupings in between these two, no longer holds good in today’s conditions. There are now three, not two main trends in the trade union movement. There are firstly the old-style reformists, who are generally arch-conservatives, geared to the past, often inefficient, who dampen down struggle, who mostly prefer a quiet life, with the minimum of troubles and problems. There is a second broad group of various
brands of modern reformists. These people are generally younger and more in tune with present day realities. They seek an efficient streamlined trade union movement, with updated structures that cope with the needs of the seventies, as they see them. They do not oppose militant action to win industrial demands. Many of them believe that the trade unions should act as a pressure group in our society alongside other such pressure groups. They want a trade union movement that fits into modern capitalist society, which many of them seek to reform, some having substantial reforms in mind. This grouping stretches from new-style right-wingers to various leftwingers, including people who have socialist aspirations. But despite the emphasis on militancy and widening the scope of trade union work they all accept the structure of the present social system, and seek to confine the trade union movement within it.

The essential differences between these modern reformists and revolutionaries in the industrial movement lies firstly in their objectives, and secondly in their choice of issues and methods that will get the working class nearer to these objectives. Revolutionaries seek to counteract the integration of the working class into the capitalist system. They are not content to struggle for demands which the ruling class can absorb, and which can even contribute to wider acceptance of the present system by the workers. They do not want to see workers transformed into dull, conformist, gadget-ridden and motor driving servants of the ruling class, getting some of the second quality benefits flowing from our consumer society. Yet this is the pattern of capitalist development. This is the price that modern capitalism imposes on those of its victims that are rather “better off”, than its victims in the third world.

To successfully reverse this process requires a counter-hegemonic struggle that challenges ruling class ideas, attitudes and values in every sphere of life. Concretely in the trade union it means conducting struggles on such issues and in such a manner that will bring the workers up against the system itself, that will teach them in practice as a result of their experiences the need to change the system itself, not simply to reform it. These issues include workers control demands, extension of industrial democracy, participation in decision making on all issues affecting the workers’ life and future. It means challenging the bosses’ “sacred rights” to determine employment, safety and conditions.

Even the traditional demands which by themselves do not transcend the capitalist system can be posed and fought for in either a reformist or a revolutionary way. The economic struggles are always the base of all trade union activities. Yet they too can be handled in a way that questions the bosses’ “inherent” right to
determine the division of the social product according to his criteria. "Widening the scope of trade union work" can be a reformist or a revolutionary slogan, depending on how it is approached. It is quite possible to widen the scope of trade union activities and confine it well within the present system. Even on the Vietnam war, two distinctly different attitudes are possible. One can seek to discuss with the workers the need to end this war on humanitarian grounds or on its futility or its immorality, and not go on to a fundamental criticism of the capitalist system which creates and conducts such a war. Clearly a revolutionary has the objective to help the workers to such a fundamental understanding of our social system.

The manner of conducting these struggles must always be directed towards rank and file involvement, towards releasing the initiative and creativity of the workers. The more that it is done on the job directly by the workers concerned the more valuable it is for the future of the movement for socialism. Struggles must be conducted in such a manner that the workers gain confidence in their own capacities, that they develop a collective outlook, as against that of individualism which capitalism breeds. Unfortunately the trade union movement has allowed the capitalist trend of finding individual and inadequate solutions to social problems to gain much ground among Australian workers in the last two decades. Instead of seeking a social solution to inadequate public transport facilities, the working class movement in effect has gone along with the concept that individual motor car ownership is the way to cope with the problem. The same applies to inadequate health services, the worker can "solve" it individually by paying nearly two dollars a week to cover himself. In face of inadequate old age pensions he seeks to get round his problem by saving for a house and a car and making other arrangements. The trade unions often help him to get the extra few dollars to "solve" (partially) such problems for himself. Yet all are social problems. The efforts of the trade unions ought to be in the direction of social solutions rather than with capitalist individual "solutions" to the problems. All of this is part of the overall task before us — to further develop and elaborate an effective counter-hegemonic strategy in the trade union movement, which bases itself on the new manifestation of the contradictions of capitalist society, on the new tensions and new revolutionary forces which they generate and on the newly felt needs and demands which they raise. This strategy must aim to create both the need and the vision of a socialist society within the restricting confines of the present society, and to establish the conditions for breaking through these confines.
IN THE EARLY HOURS of October 1, 1965, a group of Indonesian army and air force officers, operating out of Halim Perdakasumah air force base on the outskirts of Djakarta, despatched small forces of soldiers to the city to seize seven senior generals of the Army's General Staff and take a number of key points in the capital. With the important exception that the Defence Minister, General Nasution, eluded his would-be captors, the operation was successful in terms of its set objectives. The six captured generals were all slain.

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This article is an extended review of *Communist Collapse in Indonesia* by Arnold C. Brackman. Published by Asia Pacific Press; 264 pp., $5.75.
The conspirators then broadcast an announcement over Djakarta Radio in the name of Lieut.-Col. Untung, commandant of a battalion of the Presidential guard, to the effect that moves in the capital had been initiated to safeguard President Sukarno and the Indonesian Revolution from a reactionary and American-influenced “Council of Generals” which was plotting a coup to overthrow the Government and its progressive policies. The generals were denounced for cosmopolitanism, neglect of their men, luxurious living and sabotage of the President’s program.¹

The military action of the plotters was strictly limited. They clearly aimed at no more than a show of strength which would remove the most obdurate opponents of the President’s radical nationalist policies and encourage him to press ahead more vigorously with his program. Later in the day, they announced the formation of a Revolutionary Council consisting of 45 army and civilian dignitaries which was to take temporary charge of the nation. (It subsequently transpired that none of those named to the Revolutionary Council had been consulted beforehand, other than those directly involved in the conspiracy.)

In the meantime, President Sukarno had arrived at Halim, summoned his available advisers to him, and begun to take stock of the situation. There seems no reason to doubt that, if circumstances had been propitious, Sukarno would not have been unduly upset by the removal of the troublesome generals (though he would have regarded the killings with disfavour) and would have capitalised on the situation in the ways desired by the plotters. As it happened, however, two developments gave him pause. The first was the escape of Nasution, an old adversary; the second, and more important, was the fact that General Suharto, commander of the Army’s strategic reserve (who was not on the plotters’ death list), had reached his headquarters and quickly taken charge of operations to put down the rebellion. Suharto bluntly ignored messages from the President aimed at blunting this purpose.

In these circumstances, the President declined to take a public stand. Suharto efficiently brought the capital under control and threatened to assault the air base. By the evening of October 1, the “coup” (as it has inaccurately been termed) was doomed, and those gathered at Halim scattered in various directions. Among those who fled was D. N. Aidit, Chairman of the Communist Party (PKI), who either went or was taken to Halim early that morning, but who from all accounts (including later trial evidence)

¹ These and other documents relevant to the coup appear in translation in the magazine *Indonesia*, produced by the Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, No. 1, April 1966.
was not in touch with Sukarno during the critical hours when the President's support for the plot was being solicited. Aidit flew to Central Java in company with Air Force commander Omar Dhani, who, it later transpired, had given the plotters permission to use Halim as their headquarters on the previous day.

Army accomplices of the Djakarta conspirators in Central Java had launched similar actions in a number of cities in that province the same day, but these were either foiled or collapsed in the wake of the debacle in the capital. Elsewhere in the country, no overt action of any significance took place.

It is now history that the Indonesian army chiefs attributed the inspiration for the October 1 action to the PKI, and in the weeks and months following it initiated a bloody campaign which resulted in the massacre of between half a million and one million communists and suspected communists. The Party, which under Aidit's leadership had grown to a claimed membership of 3½ million (the largest outside the communist bloc), and had represented by far the most dynamic political organisation in the country, collapsed dismally in the face of the army's onslaught.

President Sukarno, who had for years used the agitational and organisational skills of the communists as a counterweight to army power in maintaining his undisputed political supremacy, and who over the year previous to the coup had appeared increasingly disposed to secure their acceptance as the dominant factor below him in political life, refused to disown the PKI in the wake of the coup or countenance the witch-hunt against it. But the army was no longer awed by his commanding presence, and, amidst mounting accusations by rightwing army and student radicals that he himself was implicated in the October 1 affair, Sukarno was gradually stripped of his titles and powers and eventually held as a virtual palace prisoner by the army until his death this year.

The present Indonesian regime, headed by the victor of October, General Suharto, has conducted some 200 trials of alleged principals in "Gestapu". The PKI's top leaders (Aidit, Lukman, Njoto), and the Divisional Staff officers in Central Java who organised the actions in that province, were not granted the benefit of trial, however, but were summarily executed upon capture. Five years after the event, a tally of political prisoners variously estimated at between 120,000 and 250,000 remain in prisons and detention camps without trial, despite pleas inside and outside Indonesia

2 "Gestapu", as the October 1 affair is known in Indonesia, is an acronym for the Indonesian words for "September 30 Movement", the title which the conspirators gave to their group.
(including repeated interventions by Amnesty International) that those against whom no charges are to be brought should be released.

The events of October 1, and their surrounding circumstances, are the subject of a voluminous academic and journalistic literature, but there is as yet far from being a consensus upon the mechanics of the events and the roles of various actors. The problem of untangling the skein has been complicated by various factors, including the summary deaths of some of the key figures, the crusading anti-communist atmosphere in which the trials have been conducted, the control of these trial proceedings by the army victors, the unavailability of a good deal of the evidence, the fact that accused and witnesses have been subjected to pressures ranging from long periods of incarceration under inhuman conditions to outright torture, and the fact that political considerations may have dictated the suppression of evidence bearing upon Sukarno’s role in the affair.

Two main interpretations of the coup have become widely established, though it should be added that a probable majority of scholars and responsible journalists continue to adopt an attitude of scepticism regarding both. The official Indonesian Government case, briefly, is that the PKI leadership, at Aidit’s instigation, set the coup in motion early in August when it feared the possibility of Sukarno’s imminent demise and consequent army repression against the Party. Aidit, working through a Secret PKI bureau headed by one “Sjam”, utilised army and air force officers who had been won to the Party over a period of time in order to give the operation the appearance of an internal army affair.

However, the Party tipped its hand by allowing young members of its youth (Pemuda Rakjat) and women’s (Gerwani) organisations to be used on October 1 to fill out the coup forces. These PKI activists had been undergoing weapons training at Halim for some time under the aegis of the Air Force, as part of an as yet unofficial program to establish a “Fifth Force” of armed militia—a proposal which was generally seen as designed to give the PKI some counter to the army’s overwhelmingly preponderance of armed strength, and which, while supported by the Air Force and in all likelihood Sukarno himself, was strenuously opposed by the Army chiefs.³

³ Allegations by accused and witnesses of torture receive some confirmation in the diary notes of an Indonesian interrogator — see Usumah, “War and Humanity: Notes on a Personal Experience”, Indonesia, No.9, April, 1970.

⁴ Air Force prominence in supporting the Fifth Force and in the coup was due to that service’s jealousy of the army, which led it to line itself up solidly with Sukarno. The President himself hinted that he was about to authorise the Fifth Force in his Independence Day address on August 17, 1965 — Reach to the Stars!
Aidit is supposed to have directed the entire coup operation, with minor assistance from some other Politbureau members, but it is not claimed that any sizeable number of leading PKI personnel (let alone the lower-ranking members) were aware of what was being planned.\(^5\)

As against this interpretation, a number of close academic students of Indonesia and Indonesian communism have been strongly inclined to regard the September 30th Movement as basically what it appeared and claimed to be—that is, a conspiracy by subordinate army officers from Central Java to remove General Staff leaders who were considered to be undermining Sukarno's policies and possibly preparing a coup to that end, and who in addition were departing from the revolutionary national traditions of the army by hobnobbing with Westerners, apeing their ways, living in luxury while their men suffered economic privations, etc.\(^6\)

Although no detailed statement of this thesis has yet been written, a considerable amount of material has been collated from primary Indonesian sources suggesting that the plot was conceived in the Divisional Staff headquarters of the Diponegoro Division, that those involved shared service grievances and were linked with one another through their service and common orientations, and that their known views were not such as to make it likely that they were instruments or dupes of the communists.

It is generally accepted that Aidit did become involved in the plot at some point, probably through the agency of "Sjam" (of whom more later), and that Sukarno may have had some inkling of what was afoot and did nothing to discourage it; but the role of Aidit is seen not as that of initiator or organiser, but as one who was drawn into an already formulated conspiracy out of sympathy with its aims and a desire to exert some control over a situation which could easily get out of hand and place the PKI in jeopardy. Needless to say, he failed in this latter object-

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\(^5\) The most detailed account of the Government case is contained in the booklet by Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh, *The Coup Attempt of the September 30th Movement in Indonesia* (Djakarta, 1968). Among Western scholars who have endorsed this account, mention may be made of Guy J. Pauker and Justus M. Van der Kroef.

It is doubtful that other PKI leaders had any knowledge of the plot other than what was reported to them by Aidit, who obtained from them a wide mandate to use his discretion in negotiations with the army plotters.

Neither version gives credence to the plotters' allegations that a "Generals' Council" was planning an imminent coup, though there is little doubt that the army high command had drawn up contingency plans for a strike against the PKI in the event of Sukarno's sudden death or incapacitation. But, while the Government case argues that the story of the Generals' Council was a deliberate PKI concoction, others see it as one of a number of rumours of impending coup rife in Indonesia throughout 1965, which the PKI leadership was just as likely to have been misled by as to have planted. Certainly, many rightwing politicians at this time were boasting that the army leaders were ready to move against the communists at the first opportunity.

Arnold Brackman, an American journalist who has written several works on Indonesia and Southeast Asia, has entered the lists with his book, The Communist Collapse in Indonesia. Regrettably he has contributed nothing whatsoever to an elucidation of the problems of interpretation of the events of October 1. On all counts, his book is immeasurably inferior to the other listed books and articles which support the Indonesian Government's case. Indeed, were it not for the fact that he enjoys some patronage as a pundit in Establishment circles in the U.S., and that understanding of the issues involved in this episode is generally so lacking in Australia that even an authority on international relations, Professor Hedley Bull of the ANU, has reviewed this book favourably, it would be sufficient to dismiss it in very short order. As it is, however, a more substantial examination of it is called for.

The political background of the October 1965 events is of very considerable importance in obtaining any clear perspective upon what transpired. In this connection, several developments are of especial importance—the trajectory of Sukarno's anti-

7 That Aidit did play some part in the conspiracy seems incontrovertible. Quite apart from evidence from other sources, academics who have interviewed PKI members in Indonesia and abroad have found that they all accepted Aidit's involvement; the same applies to the two major emigre PKI factions, one pro-Moscow and one pro-Peking. See Rex Mortimer, "Indonesia: Emigre Post-mortems on the PKI", Australian Outlook, Vol. 22, No. 3 (December, 1968).

8 Reports to this effect appeared in various Western press articles of the period, including those by Australian correspondent Frank Palmos.

Western and China-leaning policies after the onset of full-scale confrontation of Malaysia in September 1963; the strategy being pursued by the PKI and the reactions among the predominantly anti-communist elite and the army aroused by the political gains the Party was making; and the elements of crisis (economic, political and social) which were becoming manifest in Indonesia in 1965. It would be impossible to canvass these questions here, but it is imperative to grasp that every informed student of Indonesian affairs understood at the time—namely, that in an increasingly tense and unstable situation, it was vital to the PKI, if it was to survive and eventually succeed to power, to proceed in such a way as to give the army, its inveterate and intrinsically much more powerful enemy, no opportunity or excuse for a resort to arms.

The PKI's position, despite its great size and popular influence, was far from being strong in itself. Operating in a pre-industrial society, where the relatively undifferentiated character of rural society gave few opportunities for marshalling a class-based movement, and where conditions did not favour resort to guerrilla warfare on the part of the communists, Aidit and his fellow PKI leaders had long drawn the conclusion that their only hope of survival and growth depended on establishing and maintaining a close protective alliance with the radical nationalist wing of the elite headed by Sukarno. This required of the Party a posture of moderation and patriotism, using organised pressure to advance their position within the policy framework laid down by Sukarno. The strategy paid off in terms of members and prestige, especially on Java, but the terms of the strategy prevented the PKI from imbuing their members and followers with a tough independent ideology and cohesion. The communists were shut in along the peaceful road, and despite the more favourable radical climate in the country from late 1963, PKI militancy was essentially limited to pressure tactics to cow opponents and push the Party's allies into conceding it a larger place in the power constellation.

Sukarno was doing his best to assist the Party in this respect in 1965, either out of a desire to bring it to power in his own time or merely to redress the balance of power in the army's favour. The obvious PKI fear that its patient but persistent strategy would be cut short by a violent clash with the army is one reason which has led many authorities to question the PKI's instigation of the coup, since it amounted to playing the army's game and moreover in circumstances where (contrary to Brackman) the forces available to the plotters on October 1 were very thin indeed.
Nothing of this complex picture is conveyed by Brackman. He is much more concerned to place the October 1 episode within a grotesquely overdrawn international context centred on the power dynamics in Southeast Asia in 1965. A man much given to apocalyptic visions, he presents the region as locked in a life-and-death struggle between the forces of democracy (the pax Americana) and "totalitarianism", and could, with a few changes of terminology, be likened in his penchant for melodrama, to the Sukarno whom he detests so violently. He achieves his scaremongering effect by presenting Indonesia as of greater strategic importance and wealth than China (p. 12); vastly inflating the power resources of the Sino-Indonesian alliance; blowing up out of all proportion the military significance of confrontation with Malaysia; and even treating the quickly suppressed Brunei revolt of December 1962 as a major threat to Anglo-American power.

With this fanciful backdrop, Branckman is able to characterise the failure of the October 1965 coup as the collapse of "Southeast Asia's second front" (thereby suggesting, without even establishing, a conspiratorial link with Chinese and Vietnamese "aggression") and rank it in importance with such epochal events as the Russo-Japanese war, the Chinese revolution, Pearl Harbour, etc. Not content with this awesome recital, Brackman sweeps on with unsubstantiated claims that US intervention in Vietnam partly grew out of the situation developing in Indonesia in 1965 (p. 11) and that the Chinese Cultural Revolution was probably triggered by the failure of China's policy towards Indonesia (pp. 151-2).

Brackman makes no serious analysis of the pre-coup situation in Indonesia, but his depiction of the PKI and its policies is grossly misleading. By selectively quoting and distorting PKI agitational demands for stern government action against corruptors and embezzlers in high places, he creates the impression that the Party was intent upon unleashing violence upon its political opponents (p. 63), whereas, as has been pointed out above, it was crucial to the PKI's strategy that violent resolutions of political conflict be assiduously avoided. But a writer who can treat what was between 1951 and 1965 the most independent communist party in the world (along with the CPC and the Yugoslav League of Communists) as a creature of Moscow prior to 1963 can hardly be expected to appreciate these subtleties.

With regard to the coup itself, the best that can be said of his treatment of it is that it is perfunctory in the extreme. He makes no systematic analysis of the evidence, let alone examining the points of doubt or conflict in the official account. Apart from a few references to English language summaries of the trials,
Brackman’s case rests almost exclusively upon interviews with intense anti-communists and anti-Sukarnoists, or upon some unnamed “unimpeachable source”, “the considered judgment of thoughtful Indonesians”, and the like.

Oddly, in indicting the PKI as the mastermind of the coup, Brackman does not rely at all upon the trial evidence that the army conspirators were witting tools of the PKI. It is not at all clear whether he takes for granted this allegation, the strongest part of the Government case. But in writing of Untung, who was depicted at the trials as a trained communist since 1951, Brackman suggests he was a “not especially bright” individual “of intense loyalty to Sukarno” and a “fall guy” for the communists (pp. 61-2). This if anything tends to undermine his carefully built up picture of a deep communist conspiracy.

Indeed, the only “hard” facts instanced by Brackman to sustain his thesis of PKI instigation are two: an editorial in the Party’s daily, Harian Rakjat, on October 2, giving guarded support to the September 30 movement, which it termed “an internal affair of the army”; and the participation of the PKI youth in the coup operations. The first, of course, demonstrates no more than ex post facto endorsement of the events. The second is more cogent, but, unfortunately for Brackman, the trial evidence on this point is far from consistent. At Untung’s trial, for instance, a series of exchanges between the State Prosecutor and Untung took place to establish the reasons why the conspirators decided not to employ the PKI trainees.10 There is a good case for concluding that the trainees were only used to cover the retreat of the coup forces in the dying stages of the affair, and that therefore their role was not in any way premeditated.

The main point which Brackman appears to want to make is that Sukarno was as fully involved in the October 1 affair as the PKI. As a pointer to the standards of his evaluations, it is worthwhile examining how he proceeds to establish this argument. As usual, he opens with a flourish: “Indonesia’s President-for-life was privy to the plot”, he assures his readers (p. 11). Later, it is asserted as a fact that some time between August 28 and September 14, Aidit and Sukarno conferred on the putting aside of the generals and reached agreement (p. 58). The only drawback is that there is no authority for this allegation whatsoever, and all Brackman can say of it is that it was a fact “as far as could be learned in Djakarta” (p. 58), or, somewhat more artfully, “as far as can be determined by scrupulous, independent inquiry in Djakarta in the

10 The Untung trial record: Dihadapan Mahmillub di Djakarta II. Perkara Untung, at pp.46-49.
spring of 1968” (p. 59). Unfortunately, as will be enlarged upon shortly, there are good grounds for questioning Mr. Brackman’s independence and scrupulousness, and the informants he names as sources of information are anything but independent.

In point of fact, when Brackman comes to the events of October 1, his penchant for dramatic display leads him inadvertently to throw doubt upon his own story. Hypothesising about Sukarno’s feelings when he heard of the seizure of the generals, Brackman asks: “Why did Sukarno go to Halim? Did he fear that the troops guarding the palace were unfriendly? Did the Untung pronounce­ment indicate a possible coup? Did he fear he was on the purge list? This is doubtful since the success of the movement depended on the presidential endorsement — and all concerned knew it, the Communist leadership, the ‘progressive, revolutionary’ officers, and Sukarno himself. Or did Sukarno, like MacBeth, have a vision of the bloodied generals waiting for him on the palace steps? It is doubtful if we shall ever know because it is unlikely that Sukarno can ever tell the story without compromising himself” (p. 87). Whatever these confused speculations indicate, they hardly suggest certainty in the writer’s mind that Sukarno was fully privy to the plot. To add further to the confusion, Brackman quotes Sjam, the alleged PKI secret mastermind of the plot, as saying on September 9, “If the movement meets with success, the President will surely agree to it” (p. 90). This again hardly confirms Sukarno’s prior commitment.

Professor Hedley Bull, in commenting on this book, remarked that Brackman had effectively disposed of the coup thesis advanced by the so-called “Cornell Paper”. This is a reference to a “preliminary analysis” of the October 1 affair prepared and circulated privately early in 1966 by staff and/or graduate students at the Cornell University’s Modern Indonesia Project, the world’s leading centre for the study of Indonesian politics and culture. Now it would be surprising indeed if a document drawn up before many of the presently known facts had emerged could not be faulted in some major respects. In point of fact, however, the substance of the “Cornell thesis” has if anything gained in credibility as more material has been gathered, suggesting the likelihood that the officer group involved in the coup formed an autonomous entity with no particular attachment to the PKI. The general conclusion of the “Paper”, quoted by Brackman, is as follows:

The weight of the evidence so far assembled and the (admittedly always fragile) logic of probabilities indicate that the coup of October 1, 1965, was neither the work of the PKI nor of Sukarno himself. Though both were deeply involved, it was after the coup plans were well under way. They were more the victims than the initiators of events. (p.175).
Brackman's discrediting of this thesis, which Professor Hedley Bull found so convincing, is a model of deception and distortion. On the one hand, he treats it as if it denied any complicity whatsoever on the part of Aidit and Sukarno, which it clearly does not. On the other hand, he makes play upon the comfort which the PKI leaders and Sukarno would have drawn from the Cornell Paper had they had access to it! If this is to be the standard for debate on the question, then we might as well put the late Joe McCarthy back in the umpire's seat.

Brackman makes one point of substance only in attempted refutation of the Cornell thesis. "In political terms", he argues, "a question never answered is why the conspirators felt it necessary to proclaim and instal a 'Revolutionary Council', laced with Communists and fellow travellers, among others, if the event was solely 'an internal army affair'" (p. 177). Leaving aside for the moment the issue of the composition of the Revolution Council, this is a fair comment. However, it is far from invalidating the Cornell argument, since Aidit's involvement in the coup at a stage after its conception could well have resulted in him bringing influence to bear to give the movement a more pronounced political character.

Two fascinating aspects of the October 1 affair which have come to light in recent years are worthy of note in indicating the range of possibilities still open for further investigation of the episode. One concerns the victor of October and the present Indonesian Head of State, General Suharto himself. It has always been something of a mystery why Suharto was not on the plotters' list for capture, in view of the key post he occupied in the capital's defences, or at least why no steps were taken to neutralise his headquarters and communications. At first Djakarta official sources suggested he was marked down for capture, but was not at home on the fatal morning. Later this claim was abandoned, and replaced by the proposition that, as a relatively non-political general, he was overlooked by the plotters. The real position is otherwise, and much more intriguing. In the first place, although Suharto stood somewhat apart from the General Staff clique, he was a dedicated and active anti-communist who maintained his own intelligence network attached to his Strategic Command. Secondly, all the major coup conspirators had belonged to Suharto's commands; in some cases, at least, they appear to have been proteges of his in the service and to have enjoyed his personal regard. (At Untung's wedding in 1964, for instance, Suharto was an especially honoured guest.) This would go a long way towards explaining why the general was left alone on October 1, but it would also suggest that the army conspirators had more say in the operational plans than the PKI, which was unlikely to
have been unaware of Suharto's political views or his military importance. If some critics of the present Indonesian regime, such as Sukarno's former wife Dewi, have gone further and hinted that Suharto may have known more of the impending plot than he would care to admit, and turned it to his own advantage, it can only be commented that this reflects the continuing suspicion that exists between Sukarno followers and the Suharto Government.11

Since we have entered the realm of conjecture and devious intrigue, however, a final word is in order concerning the person of Aidit's reputed secret bureau head, "Sjam". At his trial, "Sjam" confessed that he had been a secret and trusted agent of Aidit's since 1951. But an equally significant piece of information, not disclosed at the trial, was that the officer who arrested "Sjam" in 1967 stated in a newspaper interview that the detainee had been an informant for a branch of army intelligence since 1959, and that, after the coup, some of his former army controllers had helped him evade capture.12 Rumours out of Djakarta have it that, though Sjam was sentenced to death, he has been pensioned off in a quiet backwater. True or not, Sjam's role remains mysterious. Was he in fact the top PKI underground man, provocateur, double agent, or a shrewd self-server with an eye for the main chance? It is doubtful if we shall ever know, but the field for speculation is wide open.

Arnold Brackman forfeits whatever credibility his account of the coup might have by the lengthy catalogue of errors and distortions of fact in his book. Names are not his strong suit, and the book abounds with mistakes in relation to persons and bodies. The Indonesian communist youth league leader Sukatno is referred to throughout as Sukanto; the religious scholars' party, Nahdatul Ulama becomes Nahdatual Ulama; the Javanese town of Klaten is transformed into Klatan; PKI Central Committee member Zaelani appears as Zaelini. China's Academy of Sciences President Kuo Mo Jo as Ku Mo Jo, and even the American academic Frederick Bunnell loses the final letter of his name whenever it is cited.

Mr. Brackman may be able to lay these blemishes at the door of his printer and publisher, but he cannot escape his more serious blunders so easily. The many versions of the alleged "Council of Generals" are reduced to one, and that not the most common (pp. 40-41); the Indonesian land reform figures he quotes are partly early estimates which were later revised and partly

11 Dewi's attack on Suharto was reproduced in the Dutch newspaper, Vrij Nederland, 18/4/70.
12 Sinar Harapan, 13/3/67.
official claims that no authority takes seriously (p. 44); his version of Sukarno’s Nasakom concept betrays woeful ignorance (p. 44); contrary to his statement, the PKI’s unilateral land reform actions were initiated at the end of 1963, not the end of 1964 (p. 44); PKI leader Aidit was not a member of the 1965 Indonesian Afro-Asian delegation as claimed (p. 54); Njoto was not in Peking in early August 1965 (p. 54).

Brackman is almost unique in claiming authenticity for the patently false confession attributed to Aidit at the time of his capture (p. 111). The alleged PKI plan to seize power by 1970-71 relied on by him is again a crude forgery, which Sukarno’s Minister for Basic Industries, Chairul Saleh, was obliged to apologise for quoting (p. 130). It is a flagrant distortion to claim, as Brackman does, that the Harian Rakjat editorial of October 2 contained an endorsement of the murder of the six generals (p. 82). It is equally dishonest to state that regional branches of the PKI endorsed the coup attempt, and then to cite as evidence the only announcement of a PKI-affiliated body that did so — the East Java Pemuda Rakjat (p. 83). The completely unsubstantiated statement that the PKI planned a mass uprising to coincide with the coup (p. 89) is even contradicted by Brackman himself (p. 133). It is totally misleading to say (p. 87) that “Sukarno joined Aidit” at Halim on October 1, since all the evidence suggests that they did not meet together until the coup was defeated. The suggestion that the Revolutionary Council nominated by the coup group was composed mainly of “pro-Sukarno and/or pro-PKI” personalities (p. 81) is again grossly misleading; in point of fact, the body was overweighted with military men (19 members out of 45) and had not the kind of representativeness which the PKI would be likely to have chosen. And so one could go on.

When Brackman is stumped for any conceivable source for his allegations, he resorts to far-fetched innuendo. Thus a perfectly ritual statement of the period of Foreign Minister Subandrio, averring that “if we want to be great men of a great nation, we must be able to cope with great problems”, is used to suggest that the speaker was here hinting at the elimination of the army chiefs (p. 65). Aidit gets similar treatment: his talks with Chinese leaders in Peking earn this comment, “We do not know what Aidit and the Chinese Communist leadership discussed at these lengthy sessions, but it is reasonable to speculate that the decision to move against the Indonesian general staff . . . was made at this time” (p. 156—emphasis added). Reasonable to Mr. Brackman perhaps, but that is merely an indication of the standards adapted in this wretched book.
UP THE RIGHT CHANNELS, edited by Dan O'Neill and others, 244 pp., $2.00 (available from 22 St. Lucia Rd., St. Lucia, Queensland 4067).

UP THE RIGHT CHANNELS has several aims:

1. To present detailed critiques of existing courses from Accountancy to Zoology at the University of Queensland.

2. To record with some degree of permanence moves for change that have taken the form of pamphlets written by students and staff since early 1969.

3. To analyse the relationship between Queensland University (and by implication, many Western universities) and Western society.

A 230 foolscap page printed book with a hideous but unmistakable purple cover produced by about 100 staff and students, it also contains some of Petty's most incisive cartoons, in-group Left jokes, self-consciously parochial undergraduate humour, the odd obscenity and some emotional self-indulgence on the part of the editors.

For all the above, it is certainly the most comprehensive, analytical and intellectually serious critique made of an Australian university by anyone bar the cost economists of the Martin Reports. It can give some guide to planners for Queensland's third university on what not to do — build a replica of the University of Queensland. It can also inform students of widely differing courses of certain similarities in their criticism of the institution and the various responses to different (and often similar) student requests or demands. Almost certainly it will embarrass some Professors (and the Professorial Board's often arbitrary power) by exposing inflexibility to wider public gaze.

Whether it will mean that the New Left can now be taken more seriously, appear less derivative and start to form an indigenous intellectual tradition will depend on whether there is a New Left. For many of the contributors are not political animals. Their concern is education reform. It could not be disputed, however, that the editors (by introductory articles and synthesis of contents) have given the book a strong political slant. Nor could it be denied that there is considerable justification for this in many articles.

COURSE CRITIQUES

These are repetitive for someone reading all of them. They complain of lack of interdisciplinary study, lack of student participation in decision-making, arbitrary power on the part of staff, rigid methodological approaches, status quo value judgments posing as objectivity, excessive, unthinking vocational orientation in professional courses, ineffectiveness of end of year examinations (which have been replaced in some faculties by progressive assessment) and the irrelevance of certain kinds of study. Most students reading this section of UTRC would concentrate on their own and ancillary areas of study and so the criticism of monotony would be wrong-headed. The value of specific critiques is designed to overcome dismissal of the book as another Arts-oriented piece of left-wing propaganda.

The critiques vary in quality from thorough methodological analyses through to cliche-ridden name-calling, personal invective, confused reasoning...
and wild historically unfounded assertions of which the myth of the liberality of the Medieval European university is a typical case. Many just criticize; others propose detailed changes (eg. Engineering). Almost everything about faculties and departments is covered — from whether Dentistry should be a university course at all to how not to deliver a lecture. Sub-culture values are exposed (eg. Medicine) and motivations for decisions made from tutor to professor are scrutinized — often with considerable scepticism.

FROM LEAFLET TO BOOK

The histories of moves for change by students in opposition to some staff either have occurred most noticeably or are documented most fully in Anthropology and Sociology, Engineering and English. In the former one student waged a polite and well-researched paper war until students gained a 30% representation on a staff-student committee that has real power as well as succeeding in having some lecturers abolish the verbal lecture for the study guide — seminar alternative. Success here may influence moves in other courses where proposals have met with rejection or indifference. This case also belies what is claimed so often in the book — that it is only the structures that are to blame. It must be emphasized, however, that the “structures” argument has been used repeatedly by some staff to support their own lack of vision.

As well as specific intellectual “struggles” there are records of pamphlets urging comprehensive intellectual debate in the classrooms not just solely political demonstrations in the streets, a long and well-researched, if turgid, manifesto from the Revolutionary Socialist Students’ Alliance, exposes of myths about light, liberty and learning, pamphlets written by students refusing to sit for competitive examinations and write assignments under certain instructions seen as repressive, philosophical defences of political radicalism, attacks on the new disciplinary statutes, complex analyses of relations between the Third World and the Moratorium and specific disciplines with an emphasis on how many courses ignore these relations. Collected together there seems evidence to suggest that apathy has not been as all-pervasive as some of the writers claim. Sheer weight of words, however, may be deceptive. The book is certainly more emotionally and intellectually exciting than a couple of years on campus.

UNIVERSITY AND SOCIETY

The university is claimed to be too involved in the affairs of society in professional and technical courses where only lip service is paid to broad education and where everyone knows that the reason for his presence is money, social status, material goals. Conversely social sciences, arts and humanities are criticized for lack of concern with problems confronting man at this stage of his existence. The reasons may be poor educational background, fear of change, fear for personal security but the effect is to serve the existing raison d’etres of various social institutions rather than superior alternatives that would serve the needs of people more humanely.

For all the articles suggesting that the interests of many academics are professional, power-lustful, social-climbing, materialistic, decadent or just plain alcoholic rather than socially-involved and educationally-minded, there are other articles claiming such reasons are too generalized and superficial. It is not suggested that the more informed writer does not agree with these criticisms — only that he sees a need to define motivations more clear...
ly. Alienation and powerlessness can be made to mean something, it is suggested, if the cliches are explicated.

There is an attack on professional elitism when decisions are made from the viewpoint of only one approach such as cost minimization, "adjustment" or "normality". Questions such as whether people like living in houses that others consider slums are apparently considered non-professional from particular training backgrounds.

The University of Queensland Act is exposed as the work of vested interest groups — government, big business, professional associations. Where are the representatives of trade unions on the Senate? Given economic control by governments, "autonomy" is argued to be a myth. Perhaps because of this and perhaps because of certain personalities, some departments are shown to have the ethos of big business where students, even if they are not working, must be seen to be working. The ghost of Cardinal Newman is evoked against this attitude — with amusing results.

Despite some muddled reasoning, poorly researched articles and overgeneralized jargon, UTRC is a monumental work. It takes days to read. It is probably too big. Certainly it is for someone not from Queensland. But almost every section can be justified on the grounds that it will assist some people in the university to better understand feelings that they may not have defined for themselves. Almost any reader will learn about aspects of academic behaviour with which even a large circle of friends from many faculties could not possibly familiarize him. Readers from other States will gain valuable insights into the workings of their own universities.

Graham Rowlands

AFRICA AND UNITY: THE EVOLUTION OF PAN-AFRICANISM, by V. B. Thompson, $10.10.

VIOLENCE AND THOUGHT: ENGLISH WRITING IN THE TROPICAL WORLD, by A. A. Mazrui, $4.70.

THE AFRICANS: AN ENTRY TO CULTURAL HISTORY, by B. Davidson, $7.40.

THE CHOSEN TONGUE: ESAYS ON SOCIAL TENSIONS IN AFRICA, by G. Moore, $3.55. Published by Longman; distributed by Rigby Limited.

THE ALMOST absolute cynicism with which most western newspapers regard Africa is nowhere more evident than in the coverage given to recent events in Nigeria. The civil war was at first regarded as merely another African political crisis and therefore ignored, was then accorded a brief spell of sensationalism as news of widespread starvation reached the rest of the world and finally was ignored entirely. Human suffering must be more than merely present to be included in the newspapers; it must also be dramatic. Few of the papers made more than a superficial attempt to analyse the events leading up to the Biafran declaration of independence on May 30, 1967 and anyone interested in the war was forced to wait for books such as Frederick Forsyth's The Biafra Story.

The process continues, for recently the attempted coup in Togo rated about two column inches in most local papers. It is unlikely that Togo, because of its size and economic importance, will ever warrant the explanations accorded Biafra, in book form. Togo's problem is a legacy of colonialism; the balkanization of Af-
rica accomplished by the imperial powers left the Ewe peoples split by boundaries which today are a source of tension rather than an indication of logical nation states.

This is why the appearance of four new books from Longmans is important to anyone interested in the politics of Africa, for political developments in Africa demand to be considered in the continental context rather than in purely nationalistic terms.

Vincent Bakpetu Thompson's *Africa and Unity: The Evolution of Pan-Africanism* is of particular interest, for whatever one feels about the role played by Pan-Africanism in African affairs, it must be conceded that the needs which gave rise to the concept of Pan-Africanism are still present in Africa today. Separatism, the further fragmenting of existing states is almost universally regarded as an invitation to further imperialist interference in Africa. Mr. Thompson's book is the most scholarly and the most complete analysis of the history and meaning of Pan-Africanism available to date. He does cover ground explained before, when he examines the Pan-African background. However, his scholarship and punctilious regard for documentation make his text a welcome relief from the usual journalistic (and personal) approach to be found in books such as Colin Legum's *Pan-Africanism*. Moreover, Mr. Thompson's scholarship allows him to make some tentative predictions about the future of Pan-Africanism. The predictions are not made without some misgivings:

"... the Pan-African movement, if left, as at present, to the Heads of States, would become a debating society, without much vigour and purpose, it is too pessimistic to assert that the union of Africa is a dream."

Hope, nevertheless is there, for Mr. Thompson asserts that "Africa is an integral part of the world community. A time must come when a realized Africa Union will be conceived as a microcosm of a greater world order". This is not unalloyed idealism. Vincent Thompson realizes that the tangled skein that is now Africa has been too long made by considerations that are as much economic as political and too often not of Africa's making: the linking of Chad, the Central African Republic and Congo-Kinshasa, mooted in April of 1968, has had the name of one of its participants linked with the CIA. *Africa and Unity* provides the background to these problems and without emotionalism, the direction to be taken for their solution.

*Violence and Thought*, written by the Head of the Political Science Department at Makerere University College, Uganda, functions best as a companion volume to Vincent Thompson's book, for unlike *Africa and Unity*, Mr. Mazrui's volume makes no pretensions towards presenting a single thesis. Rather, the book is a collection of essays and articles originally intended to be delivered at seminars or published in journals. Too, the title is misleading. Anyone who expects Sorel-like reflections in a purely African context will be disappointed, for violence enters the book merely as a secondary theme. There are however, some sobering thoughts on the relations of particular forms of violence to African politics. The assassinations of Patrice Lumumba in January 1961 and the President Olympio of Togo in January 1963 are seen by Mr. Mazrui as significant background to the signing of the OAU charter which expresses "unreserved condemnation, in all forms, of political assassination". Unfortunately, the essay, "Thoughts on Political Assassina-
ation in Africa" which begins by linking the problem of assassination to the social issues underlying it, moves to a rather antiseptic theory that postulates that assassination is a concomitant feature of post-colonial governments, where the basis of government is both fluid and characterized by a personal leadership as a functional alternative to a weak legitimacy. The theory is seductive, simply because it is easy to apply. The roots of the problem, one must insist, surely go deeper than this. Ali Mazrui's analysis would have become valuable had he defined the term "government" he uses so loosely. The assassinations that have occurred in Africa, and, one might add, the army mutinies so often associated with them, are only thinly-veiled expressions of the discontent of the populace that are surfacing beneath them. Had Mr. Mazrui defined the government's relationship to the assassin, rather than just the assassin's relationship to the government, the essay might have taken major import. As it is, it remains an exercise in abstractions, none of them satisfying.

More to the point, is the essay "Moise Tshombe and the Arabs: 1960-1968". Here, the author retreats from the generalities that characterized the essay on assassination and attempts to explain the most contentious era in recent African history. By explaining Tshombe's dealings with the Arab world (and with Roy Welensky, the then Prime Minister of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland), the essay fits the events in the Congo into their more logical continental perspective.

Violence and Thought is an annoying book, for it raises far more issues than it is able to discuss adequately; nevertheless, it should be read by everyone interested in Africa, if only for the stimulus it provides.

Basil Davidson, who contributed the foreword to Africa and Unity has also published a new book, The Africans: An Entry to Cultural History. Mr. Davidson's qualifications are unquestionable; this is his eighth book on African history. He has also written five books on African current affairs and The Africans would seem to be a synthesis of all of his previous research. In his own words:

"I have attempted three things. First, to offer a summary of what is now known, or what it now seems reasonable to think, about the ideas and social systems, religions, moral values, magical beliefs, arts and metaphysics of a range of African peoples, chiefly in tropical Africa. Then to consider the ways in which these cultures have grown and changed from distant times until now. Lastly, to fit these aspects of African civilization into their modern perspective as the connected parts of a living whole."

In this, Basil Davidson has succeeded, for The Africans is essentially an attempt to reconcile Africa's past with its present and make some tentative predictions about its future, and as a one-volume text, it is as good as anything available today.

What Mr. Davidson finds are patterns emerging throughout the course of African history. Most interesting, is the analysis of how what were essentially religious organizations have transformed into political organizations, as the realities of the African present became apparent to the Africans themselves. In this sense, the upheavals of the sixties become understandable; Mr. Davidson quotes a Nigerian schoolteacher who rightly lamented, "we were not prepared ideologically for independence". There is ample evidence that such will not be the case for the seventies:
"This new variant of thought and action could be seen, for example, in the microcosmic territory of Guinea-Bissau, as well as in Angola and Mozambique... In Guinea-Bissau... they worked for three years after 1959, talking no longer in big words about freedom and independence but in small ones about colonial prices and taxes and corvees [i.e. feudalism]. Not until 1963 did they feel strong enough in popular support to open guerilla warfare. But then they reaped their harvest."

The main problem, as Davidson sees it, is not, however, in the few remaining areas such as South Africa, Mozambique or Angola, which have yet to win their freedom. The problem is in transforming the politics of revolt into the politics of revolution and to protect the African economy from the continuing encroachment of outside interference, economically, culturally or politically. In this, according to Davidson, lies the African destiny.

Gerard Moore's *The Chosen Tongue* may, at first glance, bear little connection to the other books under review. Mr. Moore's particular point of view makes it so. Basically, Gerald Moore advances the thesis that the English language advanced step by step with the imperial frontiers, and although the frontiers have retreated drastically in this century, the language remained behind, leaving the creative writer a medium with which to come to grips with his own values, landscape, historical experiences and so on. Sub-titled "English Writing in the Tropical World," the book deals with Africa south of the Sahara and what is now termed the West Indies (including Guyana).

The book's comprehensiveness, in this case, is a value, for most previous books dealt with a few African Writers (Moore's *Seven African Writers*) a region (like Nigeria, in Margaret Laurence's *Long Drums and Cannons*) or a particular aspect of literature (Pieterse's and Munro's *Protest and Conflict in African Literature*). These were valuable in themselves but Moore's book fills a need for a study which would allow one to relate the individual authors encountered into a larger framework (the Southern Africa section of the annual bibliography of *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, for example, excludes South Africa; the journal title demands it, with the result that the few works available from black South African writers remain unknown).

*The Chosen Tongue* is organized to a fault; Part One deals with the West Indies; Part Two with Africa as a continent; Part Three with urban literature in both areas. The last section ties up the threads, examining the interaction of literatures from the Indies and Africa.

As one might expect, it is in the last section that the major interest of the book rests. Moore points out, for example, how the inherent tensions of life in South Africa have given rise to a particular response by the creative writer, citing Alex La Guma's *The Stone Country*, a study of prison life and Casey Motsisi's sketches of location life. These he relates to the short stories of Louis Honwana, a young Mozambique writer who, although he has been jailed for his politics, has managed, through his short stories to issue a massive indictment of Portuguese rule in his country.

Not all of the literature coming from Africa (or for that matter, the West Indies) is of lasting value, but what Mr. Moore is wise enough to recognize is the fact that the need to escape cultural imperialism is as important as any other need. In defining
a new literature for themselves, writers such as those Moore discusses are also defining themselves.

Grant McGregor.


EMPIRICISM (derived from the Greek word meaning “experience”) is the view that knowledge can be gained only through sense-perception. Metaphysical speculation cannot yield knowledge. Modern empiricism modifies the doctrines of its founders, Locke and Hume, in asserting that every statement and theory contains as much meaning as can be expressed in terms of observation. This theory does not require complete definition of theoretical terms by observational expressions. But the modern view retains the conviction that observation or sense-perception circumscribes meaning.

In the book under review George Novack claims to give a marxist view of empiricism. In order to measure the success of the attempt the question as to what might constitute a specifically marxist approach must be discussed.

The epistemology of dogmatic marxism in the USSR is not very different from that of the man of common sense who believes that there are material objects. “Dialectical materialism” adds that the views of leading philosophers are meant to serve the interests of the dominant class. For the orthodox marxist understands dialectical materialism as a combination of a “dialectical” approach with a materialist one. Thus the philosophic criticism of empiricist epistemology by the orthodox marxist may not differ from that of a bourgeois materialist. So this review will consider the marxism of Marx as related to empiricism.

Marxism does not assert that sense-certainty provides truth, though it does not deny the existence of phenomena. The essential truth lies behind these phenomena. When the essence is not manifest in the phenomena, the reality is untrue. In capitalist society, man and his relations with others are reified. Man does not act as man but as something less than the concept implies. The bourgeois economy conceals the essential nature of value of commodities which is human labour.

Truth is not only an attribute of propositions, but of reality in process. Something is true if it is what it can be. Thus what appears, facticity, the given, has no authority in itself. Empiricism assumes the immediate object of perception true, whereas marxism views it as containing no truth simply by virtue of its immediacy. Appearance is to be judged not by “reason” in the contemporary, subjective and instrumental sense, but in the objective sense current until the nineteenth century. Reason is not something beyond or independent of man, something to be discovered in God, Nature or Thought. It is revealed in man’s self-development, man’s becoming what he is as the subject of history. Since the fulfilment of objective possibilities means transcending or going beyond the given, reason is a subversive force. Marxian theory is immanent and critical, and implies a categorical imperative to change the world.

Empiricists, such as Locke and Hume, banish the notion of subverting the given by assuming that universal concepts are constructs of, and therefore reducible to, the simple ideas of sense-perception. Description is constituted by “objective” observation by
the senses, while evaluation becomes subjective and irrational.

Historically, empiricism together with its close relative rationalism made the individual sovereign since nobody was innately better than anybody else in the pursuit of truth. A theory which implied the equal worth and potential of individuals could clearly serve the interests of the rising bourgeoisie. Although this is no coincidence, it is not true as the orthodox Marxist as economic determinist might have it, that the empiricists were conscious lackeys of bourgeois vested interests — a view that denies any autonomy to ideas and hence to human beings. The significant point is that the development of knowledge and philosophy is related to the development of the means of production.

How does the book under review measure up to the above criteria for a Marxist critique of empiricism?

In his foreword the author, George Novack, states that “the book is primarily addressed to students who have encountered references to empiricism and want to know what that mode of thought is all about”. That is, it is not an academic book. Novack is the author of several other books on the level of popularisation. These include An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism (1941), The Origins of Materialism (1965) and Existentialism versus Marxism (1966) which he edited.

Unfortunately Novack’s version of Marxism would be considered unorthodox by Soviet philosophers only — Novack is a Trotskyist.

In the book under review, Novack traces the history of empiricism from its beginnings with Bacon, through Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Mill, Mach, to the pragmatism of Dewey and Popper’s philosophy of science. Brief sketches of the views of the selected philosophers are given followed by the author’s counter-assertions. There is no analysis of the arguments of the empiricists. Novack’s major criticism of the empiricists appears to be that they are not dialectical materialists. However, the reader is given little by way of an account of the nature of dialectical materialism. Apparently a dialectical materialist would say that matter preceded mind and that philosophers represent the ruling class of their time.

Novack asserts that Marxism achieved a new synthesis in combining the principles of rationalism and empiricism, subjective thought and objective experience. However, Novack’s materialism is quite different from Marx’s, but akin to direct realism, the view held by most bourgeois philosophers. For Marx, both idealism and materialism were contemplative doctrines which did not grasp the objectivity of human action itself. The idealism-materialist, subjective-objective dichotomy is undercut in Marx’s concept of “praxis”.

Novack’s conception of truth is likewise non-Marxist for he fails to view reality as a process or totality.

The chief interest of this book must lie in its specifically Marxist content since Novack’s elaboration of the empiricists is very superficial. Any standard history of philosophy would be more useful than this strand of the book. But since the other strand, the “Marxist” criticism, represents at best common sense materialism, the book is of little value.

The author writes as if he had not noticed the world-wide re-evaluation of Marx that began on a large scale almost a decade ago. In contrast to Novack, Herbert Marcuse, for example, though more difficult to comprehend, promises at least a Marxist approach.

Douglas Kirsner
# INDEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Issue number</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EDITORS' COMMENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.D.</td>
<td>YUGOSLAV WORKERS SELF-MANAGEMENT</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONFERENCE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.T.</td>
<td>A STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.T.</td>
<td>THE LENIN CENTENARY</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.N.C.</td>
<td>THOUGHTS ON THE COOK BI-CENTENARY</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.R.</td>
<td>ON GARAUDY</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.J.C.</td>
<td>SOCIALIST SCHOLARS' CONFERENCE</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.J.C.</td>
<td>UNIVERSITY OCCUPATION</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNIST HISTORY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aarons, Eric</td>
<td>AS I SAW THE SIXTIES</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>60-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adler, Gordon</td>
<td>COMMUNISTS AND ART</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchward, Lloyd</td>
<td>AN EARLY ALLIANCE OF THE LEFT</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coates, Roger</td>
<td>THE EARSMAN REPORT</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coates, Roger</td>
<td>LENIN'S IMPACT ON AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davidson, Alastair</td>
<td>WRITING THE HISTORY OF A C.P.</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>74-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dixon, Richard</td>
<td>INDUSTRIAL POLICY IN THE 30's</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hobsonbwm, Eric</td>
<td>PROBLEMS OF COMMUNIST HISTORY</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robertson, Alec</td>
<td>CPA IN THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell, Bertrand</td>
<td>LENIN: AN IMPRESSION</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taft, Bernie</td>
<td>POST-WAR INDUSTRIAL POLICY</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNISM, REVOLUTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aarons, Eric</td>
<td>THE CONGRESS AND AFTER</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45-55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aarons, Eric</td>
<td>THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>51-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aarons, Eric</td>
<td>LENIN ON &quot;COUNTER-HEGEMONY&quot;</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>46-51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchward, Lloyd</td>
<td>LENIN ON REVOLUTIONARY SITUATIONS</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gillet, Judy and Fisher, Betty</td>
<td>PATERNALISM AND THE CPA</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirsner, Douglas</td>
<td>THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND REVOLUTION</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Neill, Dan</td>
<td>THE CONGRESS AND AFTER</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>56-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taft, Bernie</td>
<td>THE WORKING CLASS AND REVOLUTION</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tighe, G.</td>
<td>ENTRISM AND REVOLUTION</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>83-88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERNATIONAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackburn, Robin</td>
<td>REBIRTH OF THE FILIPINO REVOLUTION</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d'Abbs, Peter</td>
<td>INDONESIA'S POLITICAL PRISONERS</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48-52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frydman, M.</td>
<td>ISSUES IN THE MIDDLE EAST</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>89-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartshorne, Kevin</td>
<td>CZECHOSLOVAKIA — TWO YEARS AFTER</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolk, Gabriel</td>
<td>THE NATURE OF THE VIETNAM WAR</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lama, Luciano</td>
<td>ITALY IN CRISIS</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>57-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiley, Peter</td>
<td>AMERICA'S &quot;PACIFIC RIM&quot; STRATEGY</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>Issue number</td>
<td>Pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gramsci, Antonio</td>
<td><strong>SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>71-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Havel-Green, M.</td>
<td><strong>VIETNAM: BEYOND PITY</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>53-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortimer, Rex</td>
<td><strong>STUDENT ACTION – OUT OF NIHILISM</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>73-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playford, John</td>
<td><strong>LABOR AND THE HIGH COURT</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playford, John</td>
<td><strong>THE PERMISSIVE POLITICIANS</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>59-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robertson, Mavis</td>
<td><strong>VICTIMS OF DOUBLE OPPRESSION</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heatman, Anna</td>
<td><strong>THE MARRIAGE-FAMILY INSTITUTION</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker, John</td>
<td><strong>ABORIGINES — UNION RESPONSES</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundey, Jack</td>
<td><strong>TOWARDS NEW UNION MILITANCY</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogden, Max</td>
<td><strong>UNION EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>65-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiotis, Denis</td>
<td><strong>THE WORKING CLASS TODAY</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>66-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blake, Jack</td>
<td><strong>THE WORK OF LUKACS</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(review of G. H. R. Parkinson (editor), <em>George Lukacs, the man his work and ideas</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gollan, Daphne</td>
<td><strong>LENIN AND THE BOLSHEVIKS</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>33-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(review of Adam B. Ulam, <em>Lenin and the Bolsheviks</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mortimer, Rex</td>
<td><strong>MARXISM AND ASIA</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>53-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(review of Stuart R. Scram and Helene d’Encausse, <em>Marxism and Asia</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salmon, Malcolm</td>
<td><strong>VIETNAM THIRD FORCE:</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>71-75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wann, K.</td>
<td><strong>INDONESIA: INTERPRETING THE COUP</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>57-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(review of Arnold C. Brackman, <em>Communist Collapse in Indonesia.</em>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERVIEWS</td>
<td><strong>INTERVIEW WITH ROBIN BLACKBURN</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>INTERVIEW WITH MARKOS DRAGOUMIS</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>INTERVIEW WITH ERNST FISCHER</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOCUMENTS</td>
<td><strong>A MANIFESTO: WHAT ARE WE COMPLAINING ABOUT?</strong></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>STATEMENTS ON ABORIGINAL AUTONOMY</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>STATEMENT FOR THE SEVENTIES</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37-44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

79
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Issue number</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSSION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin, H.</td>
<td>DICTATORSHIP — ONCE AGAIN</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>36-37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.A.</td>
<td>LENIN, COMINTERN AND WORKERS’ CONTROL</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goss, J.</td>
<td>WORKERS’ CONTROL</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.D.</td>
<td>WOMEN AND UNIONS</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>47-48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manifold, John</td>
<td>OBITUARY: NORMAN LINDSAY</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>35-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manifold, John</td>
<td>ON REALISM</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>48-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald, Cathy</td>
<td>STATE AID — A COLD, HARD LOOK</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rudkin, A. W.</td>
<td>TOWARDS SCIENTIFIC HUMANIST SOCIALISM</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>72-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, Adrian</td>
<td>COMMENT ON OSMOND</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson, E. B.</td>
<td>ON ABORTION</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46-47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOOK REVIEWS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burchett, Wilfred</td>
<td>PASSPORT</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76-77</td>
</tr>
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Apology concerning the Garaudy Papers

In response to numerous requests, Australian Left Review is publishing four of the main addresses given by Professor Garaudy during his outstandingly successful Australian tour. Many orders have been received but the production of these papers—from tapes and French language texts—has taken longer than expected. The following papers will be available for 30 cents each, or $1.00 for the set of four.

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