IN THIS ISSUE ..........

We pursue further two related themes which have been a central concern of ALR for some time.

Brian Aarons examines the theoretical and practical problems involved in the development of a socialist strategy for Australia. Further contributions are welcome on this subject, about which a debate within the Australian left still continues.

Michel Raptis (Pablo) discusses the main features of self-management, both as a model for socialism and in relation to the socialist struggle today, thus linking up with some of the concerns of strategy.

The socialist struggle in Australia must take special account of the ALP. The nature of the ALP and the requirement for winning its mass base to support for socialism have for decades been vexed problems for the left. The recent publication of Catley and McFarlane’s analysis of ALP policies (“From Tweedledum to Tweedledee”) has attracted three review articles from different perspectives and points of view.

International aspects of socialist struggle grow more important. In this issue, we publish an abbreviated version of a recent Japanese Communist Party statement on international affairs (especially détente). Next issue, we will publish in full a ‘Nhan Dan’ editorial which two years ago set out the North Vietnamese view on détente and revolution.

Essential to socialist politics is an understanding of the existing conditions of workers and other oppressed groups. Pat McDade, a young seaman, discusses the industrial problems and alienation of one such group - the seafarers.

Mavis Robertson reviews McNeal’s book on the life of Krupskaya, Lenin’s wife, companion in struggle and a revolutionary figure in her own right.

Finally, three discussion pieces on previous ALR articles.

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AUSTRALIAN LEFT REVIEW

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Subscriptions:
Single copies, 50 cents.
Yearly subscriptions (5 issues), $2.25
Two years (10 issues), $4.25
Surface or airmail postage must be added to overseas subscriptions.

strategy
for
socialist
revolution

brian aarons

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This article attempts to deal theoretically with the essential components and aspects of a socialist strategy and to apply these principles to Australian circumstances. It is hoped to take up some of the more fundamental theoretical questions and more specific analyses and examples in a future article.

* * * * * *

"Attention, therefore, must be devoted principally to raising the workers to the level of revolutionaries; it is not at all our task to descend to the level of the working masses as the Economists wish to do, or to the level of the 'average worker' as Svoboda desires to do ........."


Any revolutionary strategy which is not just a collection of abstract formulae must contain five main elements:

1. A theory about society and social change: a view about how changes occur in society, how they might occur in a particular society, how and in what conditions ruling classes are overthrown.

2. A political theory: a conception and view of politics which guides the day-to-day political practice of a party, its cadres and members.

3. An analysis of the specific society: for a revolutionary, both elements of this analysis – the present situation and the likely future course of events – are essential.
4. A conception (model) of the socialist society aimed for: only by a clear view of the ultimate goal of political involvement and struggle can a revolutionary movement orient its struggles and see the relation of its political practice to the given circumstances in which it works. The type of socialist society aimed for affects the strategy and practice adopted.

5. A plan of action: based on the above four elements, any revolutionary party must have a plan which guides its work, sets its priorities and gives it a yardstick by which to measure and assess its work. The plan is the strategy proper, but without the framework and analyses provided by the first four points, it means little.

All five elements are essential to, and together make up, a revolutionary strategy. In general, incorrect or inadequate strategies are characterised by omission of one or more of the above elements, by exaggerated emphasis on one or some of them and/or outright errors on one or more points.

The essence of the revolutionary strategy elaborated by the CPA over the last seven years can be expressed as follows:

"Counter-hegemony plus the possibility of (and preparation for) a revolutionary situation."

This (admittedly over-simplified) formula sums up the two essential aspects of the revolutionary process on which a revolutionary party must base itself. If either aspect is ignored or down-graded, a party falls into either idealist (or gradualist) propagandising or leftist posturing.

"Counter-hegemony" expresses the subjective aspect of the revolutionary process: the necessity for mass preparation by winning people to an alternative view of the world for which they are prepared to fight because of their discontent with the existing state of affairs. Only if a basic core force has been won to this socialist world view, and only if this world view has achieved some mass standing, will the revolutionary movement be able to utilise a crisis and win vast numbers to its program for resolving the crisis.

"The possibility of a revolutionary situation" expresses the objective aspect: the need for a sharp social crisis before the possibility of the overthrow of the capitalist class can be opened up, and the transition to socialism accomplished. Against those who in essence deny the possibility of such crises, and/or the possibility of turning them into revolutionary situations by a favourable balance of forces plus correct revolutionary intervention, we declare that such crises are both possible and essential for the transition to socialism to occur.

The manner in which such a crisis may occur cannot of course be specified, but "spontaneous" mass upsurges as in France in May 1968, or capitalist challenge to a "peacefully" elected left government are possible forms.

The combination of the two parts of this formula is as essential as each part, and should be seen in a dialectical and dynamic way, not as a static sum. What this means is that the two elements interact with each other, e.g. counter-hegemonic work helps to decide whether and how a social crisis develops.

[The socialist traditions of the French workers was an important factor in their response to the student demonstrations and the one-day general strike on May 13, 1968.]

Moreover, the relative importance of each varies with time and the given circumstances. Clearly, a revolutionary party in conditions such as the present has as its main aim counter-hegemonic work to build a mass base of support. If we act as if we already had such a base, and rely on a coming crisis, we commit a dangerous error.

Examining the five elements in more detail:

1. "To say, however, that ideologists (i.e. politically conscious leaders) cannot divert the movement from the path determined by the interaction of environment and elements is to ignore the simple truth that the conscious element participates in this interaction and in the determination of the path."

The formula “counter-hegemony plus the possibility of a revolutionary situation” bases itself on a view of the social process which recognises two aspects and components of social development: the “spontaneous” and the “conscious”. Much could be written about the definitions of, differences between and inter-relations of these two aspects, and I will elaborate in more detail on these points in a future article.

Briefly, the “spontaneous” means the more “objective” aspects of the political-social process: those processes and events which occur independent of the wishes and thinking of particular social groups (e.g. classes and parties).

What is spontaneous from one point of view is not necessarily spontaneous from another. As far as the CPA (say) is concerned, there are clearly many events which occur in our society independent of what we may wish or desire. These are “objective” processes from our point of view. On the other hand, many of these events are the product of the interactions between the conscious or unconscious wishes and intentions of various individuals and groups (in which, as Engels pointed out in his Letter to Bloch, no one person or group ever gets quite what they wanted, and may in fact achieve the opposite of what they intended). Insofar as this is the case, the given events have a “subjective” i.e. “conscious” component.

The more unconscious motivations decide the events, the more the “objective” aspect intrudes. This is also the case with the intervention of rules of behaviour enforced or promoted by society at large and the very underlying logic of the system.

The revolutionary party consciously intervenes, on the basis of its theory, program and strategy in the ongoing flow of “objective” (to it) social events. From time to time, the oppressed classes and strata will act “spontaneously” from the party’s viewpoint. In the new situation presented by the occurrence of “spontaneous” mass actions (or they may be “objective” economic events, or conscious actions, taken by the ruling class, governments, or other political parties), the party can choose to intervene in various ways. It is the nature and quality of its intervention which are the conscious element in the revolutionary process. The degree to which the actions proposed by the party are taken up by vast masses determines how effective and influential its conscious intervention will be to the subsequent course of events.

The counter-hegemonic/conscious aspect of revolutionary work also becomes, via mass agitation and propaganda, a part of the spontaneous/objective aspect because the nature, quality and influence of this propaganda and agitation will, in fact, play a part in determining the future course of “spontaneous” events. The “sowing” of revolutionary ideas, if they fall on fertile ground (and they will only do so if they express and tap in action people’s felt needs and wishes) will always be a useful activity which will often only show its results in unexpected “spontaneous” actions. Continual revolutionary mass work over a long period of time “leavens” the social ferment and thereby plays its own part in the bringing about of spontaneous upsurges.

The “possibility of a revolutionary situation” relates to the “objective” (“spontaneous”) aspect. It expresses a belief that the objective processes of capitalism are based on an underlying logic and dynamics which regularly impels the system towards objective crises of various kinds (economic, political, ideological, ecological, etc.). The occurrence of these “objective” crises make possible a corresponding “subjective” crisis, i.e. a “spontaneous” upsurge of vast masses of people. This possibility clearly relies on an analysis of the fundamental contradictions and “injustices” of the capitalist system (see point 3). It is the existence of these (due to the logic and dynamic of the system, which also includes its inability to deal fundamentally with its problems) which make it quite rational and “scientific” to conclude that such crises and upsurges are possible and likely.

This view of social change differs from that implicit in both rightist and leftist strategies. Unlike the former it teaches the revolutionary activist to expect the unexpected (i.e. crises and abrupt changes of mass consciousness); unlike the latter it teaches us not to rely on these alone, but to patiently prepare by working for shifts, no matter how small, in mass opinion, by participating with the oppressed in the experience of struggle according to the possibilities at the time.

Behind both “leftism” and “rightism” lie the same mistake: a failure to see the role of the “conscious element” (i.e. the
interaction of a revolutionary force with clear aims) as a necessary ingredient in the revolutionary process. This mistake is approached from different sides, but a common theoretical (mis)conception underlies both: a dissociation of the final socialist objective from the daily struggle. The rightist does not believe it possible to “consciously intervene” in the daily struggle from the perspective of the final goal; the leftist does not believe it necessary to do so. [For a further discussion see the Editorial Comment, ALR No. 35]

2. “In one word it (Revolutionary Social-Democracy) subordinates the struggle for reforms to the revolutionary struggle for freedom and for Socialism, as a part to the whole.”


The key feature of the above theory is that it sees revolution as a process. It starts from the given situation, but acts on that situation from the perspective of its final goal. Unlike the ultra-left, it does not have an “all or nothing” approach but sees the importance of winning positions in all areas and branches of society by “daily slogging”. But unlike the “right”, it does not confine itself to reformist movements and demands until the “great day” of an easy socialist victory arrives by itself, but seeks always to contest capitalist society in all its aspects. This means that a key criterion of revolutionary work is how effectively it shakes the existing ideological and social order. This approach does not bow down before numbers -- its aim is always to involve vast numbers, but not just on any demands. From a socialist perspective it seeks always to find, by concrete analysis and involvement in the mass movement, the demands which both articulate a deeply felt need (even if only amongst a small section) and project further than the existing level of consciousness and action. The Moratorium, the Women’s Liberation Movement, the Springbok campaign, and the Builders’ Laborers all illustrate this principle very well.

Political methods and approaches following from this strategy and guiding daily political activity include:

a) The main focus is on raising the consciousness and awareness of masses. All political activities (e.g. the contesting and winning of union positions) should be seen as means to this end, not ends in themselves. Therefore, the criterion for genuinely revolutionary work is whether it attempts to advance mass consciousness to the best level possible in the given circumstances (and naturally what is to be regarded as possible must be concretely analysed in each case -- but the analysis must include the role of the revolutionary forces).

b) An important tactical principle is to “push back the limits of the possible” [Gorz] to show that change is possible and what the conditions are for achieving change. And it is important to realise that what is possible and what is not cannot be predicted in advance with any certainty. Anyone who knows what the workers and people think will realise that the formulas and prescriptions of the left grouplets about what “must” be done are so much hot air. But those who exaggerate the low mass level, and are afraid to advance propositions and forms of action which might not find mass acceptance very quickly lapse into reformist and conservative methods of work. Between left adventurism and conservatism there is a lot of ground, in which it is possible to seek advanced action and raise advanced demands and ideas, yet still preserve a mass position whether these ideas and actions always succeed or not.

c) The political role of a revolutionary movement must be to pose and fight for the total alternative to the wrongs and injustices of the existing system and as the pole of attraction for all those discontented with the existing order.

d) We recognise the seeming “paradox” of revolutionary politics: revolutionaries need to be involved in partial and reforming movements in non-revolutionary periods precisely in order to be in the best position to influence masses in a revolutionary direction during more opportune periods. (And also because we support reforms which benefit people, because we stand for, and should be seen to stand for, a better life for the oppressed).

e) To overcome this paradox we attempt to find and raise transitional demands in the mass movements: i.e. demands which tap the deepest problems of capitalism, which seem “just” and reasonable in a reformist context yet which the system finds it very difficult to contain.
f) We reject the assumption common to much communist work in the past, that the biggest movements are necessarily mobilised by the “broadest”, lowest common denominator demands. In specific circumstances this may be the case, and a concrete analysis may lead us to mobilise such movements around such demands. But on the whole recent experience indicates that the biggest movements are often mobilised around advanced demands and advanced forms of action. [The Moratorium and Springbok campaigns are examples]. Why? Because if the demands express a real mass feeling (a necessary condition) then radical forms of action which are seen to be effective will often have more appeal than forms which are seen to be of limited effectiveness. [Thus the Moratorium occupation of the streets was seen to be more effective, and therefore worthwhile, than a week-end or evening march.]

g) It is not always true that the biggest actions are the best. There is room and necessity for advanced actions by conscious forces alongside the broader mass movement, and an advanced action by a small group of workers (such as a work-in, an occupation or whatever) must be valued for the experience it gives them, within limits irrespective of the attitude of other workers.

h) We value above all those movements, small or large, which are a challenge to the existing order. The aims and demands of a movement, so long as it involves people in addition to the existing revolutionary movement, may be as important as the numbers involved. The essential thing is the type of experience it gives those involved, and the likely future consequences. A work-in of 20 workers may actually contribute more to the building of the revolutionary movement and the spreading of socialist and radical ideas (remembering that those 20 workers will transmit their experiences and ideas to others) than a routine strike for more pay by thousands.

i) It is important to grasp that immediate success and popularity are not the only indicators of correct revolutionary work. “Failure” as viewed from an immediate perspective may be success in the longer term. It is often better to take things further, raise radically new ideas, whether this gains a favourable response or not, than to simply tell people what they are used to hearing and already know.

j) All the above is predicated on a sensible approach to mass revolutionary politics, based on a grasp of the correct methods for attracting support and interest rather than repelling it. The art of how to put ideas across is important, and distinguishes a revolutionary approach from a sectarian one, which shouts slogans at people (whether the context is appropriate or not) rather than explaining ideas to them on the basis of their own experience.

k) All revolutionary political methods are relative to time, place and circumstance. And there are two general conditions which “set the background” for a given practice: the “politics of the given period” and the “politics of the sharp turn”.

The first expresses the necessity to establish the general trend of the given period, in both its long-term and short-term aspects. Is the given period one in which offensive or defensive methods are applicable, and on a short or long term basis? Is the revolutionary movement on the ebb (or flow), or is capitalism?

The second expresses the necessity to be ready to switch abruptly from the politics appropriate to one period and set of circumstances to that of another, when the circumstances themselves change.

Each of these, of course, relies on a concrete analysis of the short and long term trends of the given period. This leads to the next point.

3. The analysis of the given social conditions and the underlying dynamics determining their direction of evolution and change is essential to a revolutionary politics which is concerned with an effective intervention in real history. The (relative) validity and all-sidedness of the analysis are as important as the fact of doing it. Those “marxists” with a wrong, or one-sided, incomplete analysis may be as dangerous and ineffectual as utopians and idealists who proceed from what they wish, not from a political interaction with the real forces of history and society.

In general, the contradictions and injustices of capitalist society throw up mass movements in various spheres in response to a particular type or example of oppression. Each
of these develops its own analysis of what’s wrong with society, and almost invariably this analysis reflects and grasps only the particular oppression and injustice with which the movement is concerned. It is the task of revolutionary socialism to understand each example in its own right, to understand the deeper causes of the oppression and the changes in the ideology, structures and values of society necessary to remove that oppression. It is also its task to relate the particular oppression to the sum total of oppression, to bring an understanding of the particular movement to the general movement, and of the general movement to the activists of each particular one. This can only be done by an all-sided and deep analysis and understanding of the social formation and social conditions, and in particular of the important and determining dynamics.

So to provide the most effective basis for revolutionary activity, the analysis must grasp all aspects of the crisis of capitalism and also bring out the main sources and springs of the crisis and of the various movements which spring up in response to it.

There are three main areas of the analysis:

a) The general features of capitalist development common to all advanced capitalist countries

b) The particular features of the given capitalist society

c) The specific political situation and context in which a particular revolutionary movement works.

In the space available, it is possible only to make a number of key points. [The documents of the last three CPA Congresses make these and other points in a more extended way and are worthy of study. Some of the points below (particularly the scientific-technological revolution) are also dealt with in a more extensive way by Eric Aarons in an article on socialist strategy in ALR No. 4, 1969.]

a) Worldwide capitalist development since the war has been marked by these features:

* The transition from “monopoly capitalism to what is variously called state monopoly capitalism, neo-capitalism, late capitalism, post-scarcity or post-industrial society. This has been marked by a qualitatively new level, and new forms of state intervention in the economy and social life generally, as an overall planning and co-ordinating centre. The state rises above the separate capitalist interests precisely to serve each and everyone the better.

* State intervention and the reorganisation of the structural features of capitalist economy and society, are a necessary strategy for the system to maintain itself against the contradictions, imbalances and centrifugal forces (economic, social, cultural and psychological) which threaten to blow it apart. Developing as a necessary adjunct to this intervention has been the increasingly sophisticated use of “social engineering” tools by economists, psychologists and social scientists who “plan for profit” and serve the interests of capital rather than of people.

* The scientific and technological revolution which has had an enormous impact on both economic and social features of industrial society. Science (basic research, applied science, technology) has become an essential factor in production and all related spheres of social life (and many others as well). Not only has this impacted the growth and development of the economy (above all by making necessary a change in the human factor in production) but it has also changed many other aspects of social life which will have an important bearing on future developments and changes. For instance, one can point to the communications revolution, made possible by scientific and technical developments in electronics, which has wrought massive changes in the forms and types of information exchange with many consequences, one of which is the ability of the capitalist controllers to manipulate mass opinion and emotions via the mass media.

* The realisation, due to economic growth and the scientific-technological revolution, of the potential to produce material abundance for all. Alongside this goes continued unequal distribution of wealth and the domination of “consumerist” priorities which operate in the interests of profit, not real social needs. The contradiction between the possibility of abundance for all and the glaring inequalities of wealth, not to speak of
the ecological and social consequences of wasteful production and consumption in many areas, is one of the major ideological problems for neo-capitalism.

The process of profit-oriented and profit-motivated growth has produced also a major unexpected “side-effect” which is assuming increasing importance: the ecological-environmental crisis. Capitalism is unwilling, and probably unable, to do anything basic to solve this crisis, since it is incapable of planning except in the interests of profit. The crisis has both an objective aspect (since society ultimately depends on nature for its existence and well-being) and a subjective aspect (since people are beginning to mobilise against environmental destruction, growth and planning for profit, and for a better quality of life and selected growth based on human needs).

In the last decade there have appeared increasing tendencies for an authoritarian “counter-revolution” to preserve the system against the objective and subjective developments which threaten it. From the coup in Greece to the Watergate tragi-comedy, the growth of repressive, authoritarian and “undemocratic” methods are symptoms of a developing crisis which can only be staved off by increasing control over all aspects of social life. The bourgeoisie always prefers to rule in a “democratic” way; the fact that it finds this more difficult as time goes on is an indication that its manoeuvre space is decreasing. This tendency also makes all struggle for “democratic” and liberation demands an important aspect of the revolutionary dynamic.

All the above developments and many more, are indications that the post-war period of capitalist expansion and consolidation is drawing to a close and has been replaced by a period of maturing crisis on all fronts. The evidence for this lies not only in “objective” analysis, but also in the growth of mass movements and struggles over a host of issues and demands.

If we are to influence these movements in a revolutionary direction we must understand two things: the fact of developing crisis for capitalism, and the main features and extent of that crisis; and the essential content of each of the movements.

The first point provides us with a general strategic orientation: whether the crisis matures slowly for quite some time or has major effects more quickly, our political practice, methods of work and habits of thought have to be attuned to the fact that the present period is characterised by problems for capitalism and growth of the revolutionary and radical forces, not vice versa.

The second point shows the need for a concrete analysis of the main features of this crisis and of the movements which have sprung up in response to it, if the revolutionary forces are to have their maximum impact.

b) The main general features of Australian capitalism is that while it exhibits all the objective and subjective trends and contradictions common to advanced capitalist countries it does so in a hitherto muted way.

Economically, Australian capitalism has been able to provide a relatively high standard of living. Australia was one of the last countries to be affected by inflation and the monetary crisis, and levels of unemployment are still very low.

Australia has never experienced (except for the depression) a severe social crisis, such as war on its territory, which would have shaken the hold of capitalist hegemony on a section of the Australian workers.

Basically, the Australian ruling class has had the ability and manoeuvre space to make concessions and introduce reforms in order to head off a more basic challenge by movements demanding change.

Australia shares many of the economic-social-cultural-political features common to other Anglo-Saxon nations. The rise of Britain as the world’s first capitalist power and its ability to conquer territories rich in natural resources led to economic might and well-being for it, and also the implantation of economically and technically developed societies in very favourable natural environments (USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand). This combination produced circumstances of relatively high living standards and a consequent tendency for the class struggle to take reformist forms, even where there was a high degree of militancy. Important also are the culture and traditions of the working class movement, passed on from the British and developing in the favourable circumstances. These traditions are dominated by reformism.
c) The specific political situation in which the Australian revolutionary socialist movement has to work is the product of the above historical and contemporary factors. The concrete application of strategic and tactical principles must proceed from the given situation, and its historical roots if a clear plan and a viable practice are to emerge.

It is no use relying on the experiences and methods of parties and groups which work in different types of societies or in different circumstances. The methods appropriate to a party which already has a large mass base will not apply directly to one which does not, and the immediate tasks will therefore be different.

The specific situation faced by the communists in Australia is one in which the stability of Australian capitalism has now become subject to the same de-stabilising forces as other advanced capitalist societies: inflation, monetary crisis (through the effects of the integrated world economy which has, and will increasingly impact local developments), the necessity to introduce OECD-type planning, and the growth of mass movements posing challenges to capitalist society on a number of levels. It is also one where there is virtually complete domination of capitalist ideology in either its conservative or reformist variants. Naturally, it is very important to distinguish between reactionary-conservative ideas and reformist ideas, for the latter express a desire on the part of workers and others for an improvement in their conditions, which at this stage they believe can be obtained within the system. Some left-reformist ideas do pose a challenge to capitalist rule, and there are sections of the working class where these ideas are strong. There is also some support for socialism. However, the fact must be faced that conservatism (i.e. outright support for capitalism) commands the support of roughly half the population and reformism commands most of the other half.

Thus the ideas of socialism and of the need for a profound social transformation have to be argued for (and demonstrated in action) from the ground up. This has to be done at two levels: the advanced and the "popular". A "base" of convinced and active support for socialism (and specifically for the program, strategy and policies of the CPA) has to be won amongst the activists and militants of the workers' and women's movements and of all the other liberation, radical and progressive movements. This first step of winning some active forces is very important in our present situation, and would pay big dividends in the long run in terms of mass connections and the ability to transmit ideas and policies to wider audiences. Parallel with this attempt to win an active force must be a concerted effort to popularise the ideas of socialism and the policies of the CPA.

Alongside this immediate task must be the preparation of the party and the revolutionary forces for abrupt changes in the political situation, either generally or in one sector (strong and deep-going action may be taken in a given sphere by workers who are generally under reformist influence). Without this preparedness to intervene in any sphere at every opportunity, large or small, the history of the movement will be one of lost opportunities.

While never ceasing this counter-hegemonic and preparatory work, whose strategic aim is always to "push back the limits of the possible" within the given situation (no matter how unfavourable this may be or seem to be), a revolutionary party must also be prepared to await the maturing of more favourable conditions before it can come fully into its own and the full fruit of its work be judged.

The specific political situation of the CPA also includes the facts of its own history, with all the strengths and weaknesses that has left us. Unlike other revolutionary groups our history has given us a mass base of sorts and a real influence in the workers' movement. On the other hand, it has left us with the legacy of past mistakes, by far the worst of which is the identification with Stalinism and with the faults of the socialist-based nations. This is a very real problem (and whatever some may say, the fact is that events such as persecution of Soviet dissidents do concern the "average worker").

This question is of great importance to us especially because of the democratic traditions of the Australian working class. Our culture and politics make the issue of socialist democracy a crucial one. There is a further reason for its importance. For whatever reasons (and I believe these were more in the nature of objective difficulties than in the subjective errors of the party) the CPA never
broke through to political hegemony over a section of the working class. This fact of history means that we are a small revolutionary party, with limited resources and limited political audience. It is therefore easy for political opponents to misrepresent our position, and doubly necessary for us to seize every opportunity to make our position crystal clear (As indeed on all issues of concern to people). This leads on to the next point.

4. It is not possible here to expand at length about the relation between our “model” of socialism and our strategy and political work. However, four points should be made:

* The majority of those who want social change today will not be convinced by abstract statements that “socialism will make it better”. They will want something more concrete and detailed if they are to be convinced that socialism represents a credible alternative to the ills of capitalism. It is not enough for us to demonstrate the inadequacies of capitalism (most workers and other oppressed strata are well aware of these); we have to show, in discussion and action, that another course is possible.

* This has been made even more necessary by the existence of “negative models”. Whatever their positive achievements, the negative features of the socialist-based countries provide convenient anti-symbols for capitalist ideologists and propagandists. There can be little doubt that this has had a devastating effect on the socialist cause in the advanced capitalist nations.

* Elaboration of the model of socialism is essential for a counter-hegemonic strategy. Great emphasis must be placed on the dissemination and popularisation of the socialist alternative to all aspects of capitalist society. However, this alternative will not be accepted simply by argumentation, debate and discussion (although these are more important than many allow). Its very strength depends to a large degree on the extent to which it links up with the everyday experience of people – that is, the extent to which it explains their problems and offers a convincing alternative in such a way that inchoate feelings, thoughts and wishes crystallise and are understood when socialist ideas are put.

What is important is not the strength of socialist ideas in isolation, nor the degree to which people’s experience by itself makes them unhappy with the status quo, but rather the dynamic relation between the two.

Our strategy recognises that without a maturing crisis in the social structure, economic relations, culture, politics and reflections of this in mass psychology and consciousness, there can be very little appeal of a revolutionary alternative. Conversely, without an alternative which is appropriate to the given conditions of the crisis, the vast mass of people will not be won over to a position of active opposition to the system, and will certainly not be convinced that they should overthrow the system in favour of something else.

* Finally, the model of socialism should express the real as well as the ideal. That is, not only should it express the ideals we strive for, but it should also express real possibilities and tendencies of development. We stand for a self-managed socialism not simply because we think that would best suit the interests and needs of the vast majority. We believe it also expresses the “objective needs” of advanced industrial society and the subjective wishes and desires of people who strive for liberation. Self-management and its associated transitional concept of workers’ control express real desires as shown in the real events of our time.

5. On the basis of all the above considerations, it is necessary for a serious revolutionary party to establish a political and organisational plan. As already stressed, this must aim to connect the goals and aims of the party to the given situation and existing struggles. It is sheer wishful thinking to evolve plans which would be more appropriate for mass parties with a large following – the plans must be based on what is “possible” (in the revolutionary sense of the word) in the given conditions. The plan must also see clearly the stages which have to be passed through on the road to a mass revolutionary party, and state the tasks appropriate to each stage.
At this stage, the central concern of the plan must be to establish the CPA as a political force. The present strengths of the party lie in it being an industrial and “movement” party, involved in and connected with all significant class and radical struggles. But it is not a political force in the sense of having mass support for its political program. Hence the main immediate task is to enter into mass activity with the aim not only of raising advanced ideas and “transitional” demands where possible, but also with the aim of popularising the CPA’s socialist policies and program.

It goes without saying that a prior condition for doing this is the developing of policies and a program which express the basis of counter-hegemony in all spheres and aspects of social life. Without these the party is politically unarmed and has little to offer apart from its (admittedly important and essential) practical guidance to the movements. Such policies can only be developed by close involvement in struggle, but they must be developed if the most is to be made of such involvement.

Once the party possesses a clear program and concrete policies, it becomes possible to make our mass connections mean something, and it gives party activists a basis and a perspective from which to work to establish the party as a political force.

The main areas of strategic importance in which such policies should be developed include:

* Economic questions -- a socialist economic policy
* Ecology-environment
* Women’s liberation and the whole spectrum of sexual and interpersonal relationships
* Anti-racism
* The distribution of power and control, and relations of authority and domination in society
* Health, seen as the total well-being of the individual
* Education and the production and dissemination of information (including the mass media).

Furthermore, attention must be given to encouraging the development of movements which express broad and challenging demands, and which link together various sectors of the working class and radical movements. This will not be easy, for the tendency to single-issue and particularist movements is strong, and revolutionaries must be involved in all these. But there has to be a strategic perspective of developing such movements.

The question of attitude to the Labor Government is evidently involved in all these issues singly, and as a whole. The only point I wish to make here is that our approach to it in general and over particular issues and events must stem from our policies and perspectives, not from a strategic concern to preserve the Labor Government at all costs. For instance, in the struggle over health policies, it would be far better if the CPA had its own socialist health policy with which to enter the debate, then from that perspective it could defend Labor’s policy against attacks from the right while advancing its own alternatives as best of all. This is the essence of a counter-hegemonic strategy as opposed to a pragmatic one. Nor is general reference to a “socialist health policy”, nationalised medicine, drug companies, etc. adequate -- any more than “equal pay” etc. is an adequate expression of a socialist attitude to the liberation of women. It must be a penetrating in-depth analysis.

On the organisational level, it is clear that our main task is to build the party quantitatively and qualitatively. Thus, much attention must be paid to winning the conscious and advanced activists. In the present situation it is worth paying a deal of attention to this task, as every recruit is a valuable addition towards the construction of a basic “force” without which our political work cannot be carried out.

In all ways, the present period should be seen as one in which the revolutionary forces are laying a foundation and building a base from which to work in the event of more favourable circumstances. Our political methods are based also on the belief that the power of capitalism is on the decline and that the revolutionary movement is once more on the upsurge, after a long period of decline. It would be a tragic mistake to either misread this tendency of the coming period or to jump the stage of our immediate tasks.
Seafarers on Australian ships whether coastal or overseas, today enjoy wages and conditions almost undreamt of a few decades ago. Wages are high; arduous work has either disappeared or is fast disappearing; accommodation aboard ship is good with single berth cabins; seafarers are much better protected from the weather than previously, being supplied free with oilskins and sometimes industrial clothing. Ships now have wheelhouses and look-out cabs, and with bridge and accommodation built together exposure is avoided going from one part of the ship to another. The number of working hours has decreased (in some cases considerably), and jobs are allocated by roster instead of choice from a line-up. Leave systems are as good as anywhere in the world, if not the best.

These conditions have been won only after consistent battling by the men in the industry and their leaders.

Since seafarers enjoy such good conditions, do they still suffer from alienation in the sense of wanting to smash machines or industrial plant, to riot or to create challenging situations, or make revolution because of dissatisfaction with their lot?

These feelings come and go, at times becoming almost overwhelming, at other times being hardly noticeable. In this regard, seafarers seem to be much the same as other sections of the working class. During the early ‘sixties these feelings reached a peak, then declined; they reached another peak in the struggle for peace in Vietnam. Since then, there has been another decline.
At present with their aggregate salaries and “swinger” leave systems providing some satisfaction, I think the most prevalent kind of alienation is of the personality kind, with some men blindly following a leader for fear of losing conditions; others simply submitting without a thought to what someone else says; a few others feeling uneasiness at being thrust out into society at large without the covering of being fed, clothed and sheltered on a ship and protected by a union; of not wanting to be a scapegoat; of concern for the future and whether they will have a place there or be unable to adapt to changing circumstances; of worry about retraining problems, and challenging the status quo.

Basically, I think the only way of handling this difficult problem lies in the early 1960s experience, when the enormous resources of enthusiasm and initiative in the rank and file were tapped to resolve the problems then confronting us.

It seems to me that because of some mistakes made in this mass movement and involvement of rank and file members (the only such experience I have had in 26 years at sea), union leaders don’t want rank and file activity unless it has been given prior approval or unless they can control it. And when the rank and file and their delegates come into conflict with officials, the officials invariably win the day, and the standing of the delegates is left in question with the men in the ships.

That certainly was not the case of the early ‘sixties campaigns. The leaders could not possibly have won those campaigns with “on top” negotiations without relying on the resources of the rank and file in the ships. Nor will they be able to solve the main problems requiring attention right now unless they do so. These problems are:

* The immediate re-negotiation of the two-year consent “closed” agreement, that has until May 1975 to run, because of the already disastrous effects of inflation which is continuing. This closed agreement gave us an “increase” of $12 over two years, but it would be more correct to say that it will give us a decrease of approximately $2000 in the purchasing power of our wages over the period.

Another aspect to re-negotiating the agreement is to involve seafarers in the 35-hour week and the extra week annual leave struggles. Some seafarers are under the impression that this agreement will give them a 35-hour week (in an appropriate form) and the extra week annual leave, but it actually does nothing of the sort. All it does is to give it to them IF the Arbitration Court grants these conditions to industry in general. The result has been to effectively remove the marine unions’ membership from participation in the struggle to win these demands. To that extent that struggle is weakened.

* Amalgamation of the marine unions, first where it is easiest. Quite apart from the political and industrial implications of amalgamation, marine unionists pay high union dues and much of the official administration of these unions is duplicated. Yet it is still a battle for the unions to exist. An amalgamation handed down from “on top” (even if it comes about) could be disastrous if mass work on the ships is not done to eliminate old antagonisms that have existed for many years, so it is absolutely essential for the rank and file to work with each other on the ships in this matter. If this task is not taken up immediately the way is clear for “sweetheart” deals to be made with shipowners by one or several unions to the exclusion of some others.

Other problems requiring attention in the near future include:

* Women as crew members. This means in all departments, from skippers to the most junior ratings. There are many precedents for this. The Stewards’ Union has for many years had stewardesses on passenger ships; the Scandinavian ships have employed stewardesses for many years; at least one British ship to my knowledge staffed the entire galley with women on overseas trading; socialist countries have employed women skippers and mates as well as in other departments.

The Seamen’s Union recently adopted a policy of accepting women as crew members on ships. It should be taken up in other unions and pursued at the first opportunity.

* More democratic control of disputes on ships. The present situation in the
Seamen's Union is that ship's crews can be suspended if they stick a ship up without the officials knowledge, or against official advice.

* The new conditions experienced on big bulk ships on long overseas tramping trips may present some big psychological and emotional problems. Some men go on voyages of four months or so, and may find on returning to Port Hedland, for example, that they are off again for another overseas stint.

The Brisbane branch secretary of the Seamen's Union, Jim Steele, has reported his experiences on such a ship in the January and February Seamen's Journals. He also comments that some men underwent character changes in these circumstances. Another factor could be that with ships of this size, shipowners may well prefer Australian crews to low-paid overseas crews because they feel they might adjust better.

* It has already been suggested by Roger Wilson, assistant secretary of the Seamen's Union in Victoria, that a pilot study should be initiated on what seafarers do in off-working times, as a guide to determining whether some of these activities can properly be called leisure, or just a wasting of time that leads to boredom, frustration and no improvement in the quality of life. This affects other workers as well, of course, but is a very important aspect of seafaring life.

**SOURCES OF ALIENATION**

The problem of alienation of seafarers is something that has its origins ashore, that the men bring to sea with them and which is aggravated by the type of life they lead and the way they fit in and adjust to the customs and practices of seafaring. Seafarers suffer pressures in different forms because they are engaged in an industry that forces them away from their families and homes and into an authoritarian, all-male environment, where very little interest is shown in them and where they, in turn, do not show much enthusiasm in the ever-changing nature of the work they do, the types of cargoes their ships carry, or to what purposes these cargoes are put -- whether they are for the community's benefit or just the shipowners' private profit.

These feelings remain from the first day a young lad ships out, right through his working life till he either retires or goes ashore for whatever reasons. They differ as he moves from one age group to the next and from one rating to another and maybe back again through demotion or other reasons. It is all a part of the general problem of people in society feeling at loggerheads with others and dissatisfied with themselves in their work and in their relationships. It is the very complex problem of alienation in society from which none of us is free.

The following is an outline of how men go to sea, what attitudes they bring with them and how these and other factors interact.

**DECK BOY**

Take the example of a man who has been at sea for 10 years and who went to sea as a deck boy at sixteen years of age, which is a fairly common experience. Not so many years ago it was common for a boy to go to sea at fourteen, but now the tendency is for him to be a bit older.

He probably comes from a family or a neighbourhood where there has been some seafaring connection at one time or another. He has probably been to a co-educational school; played sport; may or may not have had sexual experiences; may have a religious background; has mixed socially with others of his own age; had very little money to spend; had his clothes washed and ironed by his mother who probably also made his bed and cleaned up after him, and in general waited on him.

He now moves into an entirely different world.

His only interest in sport could well be the second-hand spectator's participation of the racing form guide or the football pages of the newspapers. He will have a single berth cabin which he looks after himself, he washes his own clothes, etc.

Generally, there will be no others of his age aboard and he will know nothing at all of what is going on around him. He is often the butt of the jokers about the place, being sent to get the green oil for the starboard lamp and the red oil for the port lamp, and all sorts of silly errands. He is often seasick. With all the booze on ships, he will learn to
become a seasoned drinker. He will probably get more money than his father, his contacts with girls and women are very little because of the fast turn-around of ships in port. He will not know how to assess the continual conversations on heterosexuality and homosexuality. (He is in a difficult position in establishing lasting friendships and relationships ashore with either his own sex or with girls and women.) He will learn of working class struggles that gain and protect the wages and conditions of workers, and when he goes on leave he will have more money than he knows how to handle. These early years also easily lead to a certain feeling of superiority.

Seamen, perhaps more than most, have chips on their shoulders and seem to be trying to prove something, or that they are better than others. This kind of personality is continually being rekindled by life at sea today, and sometimes results in violence. Particularly among deck ratings who go to sea earlier than others, there is the tendency to "prove" an argument or "resolve" a difference of opinion by simply saying "I've been at sea longer than you, and you don't know what you're talking about". Or, "I've been there and you haven't, so I know."

**CADET DECK OFFICER**

A cadet officer will usually be a bit older than the deck boy, with a better educational standard, probably similar family background with maybe a father or some relation who has been an officer before him and who is trying to put him on the right path. He will live on the upper deck among the officers, learning navigation, etc., and the ways and behaviour of an officer. His trade union education will be vastly different from that of the deck boy, but the pressures on the cadet in passing exams will be pretty intense and the dropout rate is fairly high.

As he gets older and passes his exams, pressures will intensify further as he studies for higher certificates, promotion and higher pay. His interests from the first day at sea to an adult deck officer will coincide in many ways with the deck ratings, yet may be vastly different in some others, e.g. adopting class attitudes to his and society's problems. He also gets conditioned to feel some superiority.

**ENGINEER, RADIO OPERATOR, SHIPWRIGHT, COOK, STEWARD, FIREMAN**

Generally speaking, all these classes of seafarers go to sea as adults. Their conditioning has been completed ashore before they came to sea and therefore they don't go through the same confusing period as the deck ratings in establishing their own standards in so many different fields. They bring with them their attitudes, customs, habits and practices, learned when they were working ashore. They may be married, single, or separated.

Of course, there is a certain degree of transferring from one job to another. Their interests will vary as to politics and political involvement, ideas on and activities within the respective trade unions and the working class generally, personal likes and dislikes, choice of radio or television programs, music, books, religious beliefs, how much they drink, their behaviour and mannerisms, morality and ability to communicate with others, etc.

* * *

It is easily seen that life on ships combining all these different elements, and with the complete absence of females, can fluctuate from the "happy" ship all of us have been on at different times in our lives, to the veritable floating hell, with casualties abounding on all sides, in the physical as well as the psychological sense. It is a moot point how many men have suicided when they felt that the pressures of society and shipboard life had become too great.

The marine unions, recognising that friction and conflict may lead to violence, have initiated moves to overcome the problems including:

* Single berth cabins instead of open foc'sles and multiple berth cabins. Recreation rooms with games and libraries, radio and television, etc. where we could relax and talk in our off-working times and have a beer in comfort, as well as many other items improving the quality of shipboard life.

One side effect of this nowadays is that as ships got bigger and bigger, crews smaller and smaller, and as each department became more confined to their different areas of the ship, and with men being watchkeepers and
asleep during the daytime, there is no-one around to talk to and the accommodation has been aptly labelled the “laminex prison”.

But we still continue to regard ourselves as A.B.’s, cooks, stewards, firemen, officers, etc, each with our own identities and characters, problems or contentment with our lot as the case may be, with not much being done to overcome one of the biggest sources of friction and division that is still with us -- that of having seven different unions, thereby maintaining the general feeling of animosity and distrust. Although this ebbs and flows from time to time especially with the better conditions obtaining, the shipowners and capitalism are not sufficiently seen as the basic cause of our troubles. The existence of widely differing socialist ideologies today and the fact that the recent big amalgamations of trade unions ashore has found no reflection in marine unions, adds to the problem.

* In the early ’sixties, as said earlier, there was a well co-ordinated liaison between Seamen’s Union officials and rank and file. This enabled the interests, aspirations and capabilities of the whole union to be channelled in the same general direction and gave members a tremendous feeling of satisfaction in having achieved some great results. That period has long since passed and these problems of such liaison are again to the fore.

* The setting up of a training school for deck boys and young engine-room ratings, so that young lads would have a more realistic idea of what they were heading into was an important move. But experience has shown it would be better to have the training school on a ship anchored somewhere and on short runs under better supervision. All marine unions should vigorously support this move of the Seamen’s Union.

* Recently, bars serving draught beer have been set up. It was felt that “wardrobe” drinking tended to be “unsociable” and that it was better to drink beer together at the bar, rather than in the seclusion of our cabins. However, I think our drinking habits may have turned full circle, because on occasions I prefer the seclusion of my cabin to enjoy a beer or some wine to the noise of the television, the radio blaring out the racing results, and men arguing with one another. If a man is not interested in horses, or television, or drunken arguments, but likes a drink himself, then obviously the recreation room with its bar and the other amenities is not the place for him.

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Generally speaking, seafaring has mostly been a young man’s work and health had to be good enough to be away from doctors for long spells. But under today’s technology a man well into his forties or fifties who has been at sea all his life is not likely to change if he can help it because of the drop in income he would suffer, the very different life-style he would move into and because he would probably be at the bottom of the labor market. All these are problems of the seafarer whatever his age, his religious beliefs, his political leanings, his marital status, his sexual preferences.

The problems of society which produce alienation are reflected aboard ships, where additional particular problems also producing alienation operate as well.

We should be making more effort to recognise the different forms of alienation of seafarers, to link them with the general problems of capitalist society today, and to develop consciousness of the need for a fundamental change to self-management socialism as the means to tackle them.
Since the Communist Manifesto was written, the struggle for world socialism has taken on extremely diverse forms, the content of the struggle varying from case to case.

The type of transitional society from capitalism to socialism that Marx (in the ‘Critique of the Gotha Programme’) or Lenin (in ‘The State and Revolution’) envisaged, has not yet been reached anywhere.

Since those days, some very big problems have arisen, concerning the content of a society evolving towards socialism — its economic, political, cultural, even its moral content.

There is very little unanimity about these problems on the part of the revolutionary Marxists or socialists of any shade.

When we talk about ‘the struggle for socialism’ we have to make a distinction. There are two separate phases: the struggle for the taking of power and the struggle for the building of socialism.

The ‘struggle for the taking of power’ is the fight for the revolution, i.e. for an abrupt qualitative change in the evolutionary process — the kind of change which, however brief, is always typical of an objective revolutionary crisis.

This kind of situation poses the replacement of the existing social order by new property relations and new social relations.

* This article is the text of a paper given to the Tenth Latin American Congress of Sociology, held in Santiago, Chile, in August 1972.
An 'objective revolutionary situation' can spring up in all kinds of ways, created by a complex process of interaction of different objective conditions; for this to occur, there is no need of a pre-existing 'revolutionary party' to act as a catalyst.

Under present concrete historical conditions an 'objective revolutionary crisis' can arise as the result of, say, a nationalist war against imperialist intervention or occupation, as a result of a serious social crisis, or as a result of the electoral victory of an alliance of parties claiming to be socialist and campaigning on the basis of an advanced anti-capitalist or anti-imperialist program.

Resistance and war can grow into social revolution. But these exceptional conditions are not the only ones which can provoke an 'objective revolutionary situation' or create a 'revolutionary opening' (i.e. a rapid evolution towards such a situation).

For several years now in several European countries, we have seen situations escalating into major national revolutionary crises, where the question of the 'struggle for power' has been posed (and thus also the possible victory of the 'revolution').

May 1968 in France, the 'hot autumn' of 1969 in Italy, the situation in Britain in 1972 during the long miners' strike, are varying examples of that kind of situation.

The common characteristic of these examples is as follows: it is the advanced capitalist countries that are involved; it is not a time of major economic crisis; but in spite of this, a conjunction of numerous interacting factors has created either an 'objective revolutionary situation' or a possible rapid evolution towards such a situation.

What are these factors?

In some cases there has been the 'confrontation' movement of young people and other new social layers (scientists, technicians, intellectuals, etc.) as well as the broad masses of the traditional working class being mobilised.

In the case of Britain there was also the civil war in Ireland and the difficulties of British imperialism in Rhodesia -- all this in the context of an economic situation where there was heavy inflation and a million unemployed. But even in Britain, the major revolutionary crisis which loomed during the great miners' strike and which brought the conservative government to within a hairsbreadth of its downfall, was not primarily the result of a major economic crisis, but rather the result of an ensemble of interacting factors which are typical of a social crisis and not simply an economic one.

But an 'objective revolutionary situation' could equally come about as a result of the electoral victory of parties claiming to be socialist, as is the case in Chile at the moment and could be the case in a country like France or Italy.

This kind of situation is both the result of a pre-existing revolutionary escalation, of a long process marked by multiform mass struggles, and at the same time the cause of a speeding-up process in the maturation of the revolution.

Even more forms are possible, inasmuch as reality is complex, rich, and is always providing unforeseen combinations.

Objective conditions, therefore, can create a revolutionary situation or at any rate a revolutionary opening, whether or not there is a subjective revolutionary factor with a mass base. But these conditions alone are not enough for the situation to evolve in some sort of automatic way towards 'victory'; they are not enough to finish off the process that has been begun, to provoke, at some given point in its evolution, the qualitative leap which is the absolutely indispensable characteristic of a real revolution.

To accomplish this leap, the masses have to build their own power in the meantime, so that they will have the means to defeat the counter-offensive of reactionary social forces, which in some form or other is inevitable.

Therefore, during this phase, the 'struggle for socialism' is summed up as the struggle for 'revolution' and 'power', on the basis of the fundamental concept, justified by history, that revolution is not a totally evolutionary process, nor is 'power' the arithmetical sum of partial conquests.

What, then, are the conditions which would lead to the victorious outcome of a
'revolutionary opening' to a situation that is really 'objectively revolutionary'? It is here that the subjective factor becomes important — the program, the tactics, the organisation.

Inasmuch as revolution is a qualitative change of social reality *towards a given end*, it is a voluntaristic project, carried out by men won over to that end. Revolution is not an aggregate of socio-economic measures, worked out and applied by a State technobureaucracy.

Revolution — i.e. the successful conclusion of a revolutionary process that has already begun — demands mass mobilisation and mass organisation, with the maximum conscious participation of the masses in all the measures which fulfil the content of a revolution.

Any government, party or union calling itself socialist has to ensure the real participation of the masses. If the masses only participate through the agency of various mediating devices that merely bear their name, they cannot effectively participate. Participation can only be expressed in the way they construct and operate their own power, in all spheres.

If this kind of process takes place, the masses can fulfil an existing revolutionary situation and move to defend it, deepen it and bring it to a successful conclusion.

But what is the meaning of ‘mass participation’, more precisely?

Let us take an example, of a basic kind — wage demands.

It is not enough for unions and political parties to formulate the demands and direct the struggles. Recent experience in both the workers' movement and other social movements (youth, women, etc.) has shown that the new generations everywhere want to be able to contribute directly, both in formulating demands and in the actual running of the struggle.

This wish is deeply held; it does not seek to deny that parties and unions are absolutely necessary, but simply to modify their function.

Their role has to be seen in terms of the help which they can and should provide for workers, young people, women, so that these social layers can participate to the full in the elaboration of demands and the management of the struggle, together with the representatives of party and union.

This, for example, is the significance of the movement of shop-floor delegates working in close alliance with the general assembly of workers, which has been characteristic of recent experience in Italy, Britain, France and elsewhere.

This, too, is the significance of the ‘student control’ which student youth would like to see applied in universities and schools — the co-management of these institutions by pupils and teachers, in the context of a radical reform of education.

This also is the more general significance of the ‘social control’ over working conditions and their social repercussions, which is sought by various social layers. Of course, this kind of control cannot be adequately fitted into the framework of a society that remains essentially capitalist and therefore hierarchic, authoritarian and oppressive.

But the tendency towards this kind of control has already been mapped out, even in societies which are still typically capitalist: capitalism is increasingly preoccupied with the problems resulting from the resistance of workers and young people to the working and general living conditions that are imposed on them in these societies.

Where a country is involved in some kind of revolutionary process, the question of mass participation becomes crucial.

Let us take two distinct types of eventualitv: a major national crisis, or the creation of a ‘revolutionary opening’ following the formation of a government calling itself socialist. Contemporary experience can supply examples of both.

A major national crisis can arise when various social layers are mobilised simultaneously, as in France in May 1968.

Schools, public services and enterprises were occupied by student youth, civil servants, workers, and working people generally. In the space of a few days a large, advanced capitalist country found itself paralysed by the effect of strikes and occupations. In some places there were limited experiments in ‘self-management’, but generally it was
a case of passive occupation. A state of dual power appeared.

From the revolutionary point of view, the problem was how to pass from the 'partial power' which the masses held to 'total power'.

This could have been made enormously easier if the masses had been ready to combine occupation of the enterprises with the management of them, under their own armed protection in the form of workers' and citizens' militias.

But there was a lack of the ideological preparation necessary to raise the revolutionary process to a higher level. In addition, the mass workers' organisations were taken unawares by the revolutionary crisis, and they made no effort to release this kind of consciousness. Quite the opposite.

The second kind of eventuality is more complicated and more interesting. This is the election of a 'workers' government' into power. A political party enjoying the confidence of the masses, if it is 'legally' elected has a certain length of time in which it is unlikely that there will be a direct test of strength with its social opponents. This can provide a 'revolutionary opening'. But for this to come about, a simple election victory in itself is not enough: there must also be a real escalation in the radical mass movement, which can somehow force its traditional political organisations to fight on an advanced anti-capitalist program, and to consider themselves bound by that program.

For example, if the British Labour Party won an election victory in a more or less 'normal' period, this would not necessarily amount to a 'revolutionary opening' in the country; in practice, indeed, it might mean simply that a political organisation with a socialist program and a base in the working class would just continue to manage 'capitalist business'.

But if the Labour Party came to power as a result of the kind of national circle that Britain went through during the miners' strike of 1972, and if the Conservative Party were forced to resign under the pressure of this crisis, it would mean the birth of a different objective conjuncture, and would force the Labour Party to undertake far-reaching anti-capitalist reforms.

There is yet another kind of eventuality, which we shall deal with more closely. This is where an extremely radical objective situation already exists, where a 'workers' government', elected in an exceptional situation, is thus endowed with a real revolutionary dynamic.

In this case, the issues revolve around the following major problem. How, once the revolutionary process has been unleashed, do you go from such a situation to a real victory? How, in other words, can the revolution be not only 'begun' but also 'achieved'?

The answer to this lies in the democratic participation of the masses, and in the kind of relationship they have with the government that claims to be 'theirs'.

To start with, this kind of government generally begins by applying the 'structural reforms' that were in its program. The most important of these are 'nationalisation' and agrarian reforms (the latter question has never yet been solved anywhere).

The aim of nationalisation is to remove the ownership of the country's principal means of production (banks, industries, commerce) from the hands of big foreign or indigenous capitalists and transfer them to the whole 'nation'.

This transfer of ownership is carried out by the state, which is supposed to represent the interests of the national community. But the state is a mere abstraction: the social reality of the state can only be grasped if it becomes concrete.

The state is not an autonomous, self-determined structure hovering over the social and property relations of a particular regime. It is the fully conscious expression of the collective interests of the dominant class in a particular society, and takes the form of an articulated series of institutions.

Therefore, to bring something under state ownership does not mean to 'nationalise' it ('nationalisation' in the sense of 'socialisation', where ownership is transferred to the 'nation', the whole society).

New property relations can only become new social relations if there are also new forms of management.
To bring something under state ownership, simply by having workers get their wages from the state rather than from private bosses, is not sufficient to transform social relations in a socialist sense. There is an additional need -- the right of workers in state-owned enterprises to manage these enterprises by themselves, through the democratic organisation of a labor collective including the entire productive personnel of the enterprise.

This is the only kind of measure which will interest working people, which will help them to understand that their social status has undergone a real revolution, and which will get them to organise their output better once their labor is really free. It is also the only kind of measure which ensures that they will defend this major conquest to the utmost, against any attempt made by retrograde forces to return to the ‘napoleonic’, authoritarian, hierarchic ‘model’ of private enterprise.

Where the agricultural economy is concerned, the case for a real transformation of social relations is similar.

In any country with an ‘agrarian’ problem, i.e. where a large amount of the cultivable land belongs to a small landowning oligarchy and there is an enormous mass of poor or completely landless peasants, the question of radical reform becomes urgent.

Agrarian reform has multiple aims: to raise the standard of living of the majority of the population; to enlarge the internal market; to procure the necessary materials for developing (especially light) industry; to avoid importing products which can be supplied by the country’s own economy; to feed the population better.

No developing country can really ‘get out of the rut’ in a balanced way without the existence of a dynamic agricultural economy.

Therefore, the necessity for undertaking a radical agrarian reform has extremely important ramifications which are both social and economic.

But what sort of agrarian reform?

If the large estates are expropriated and divided up (free or at a price) into small plots for the landless peasants, without the state helping them to regroup into co-operatives for production and distribution, then the danger is that a mass of small peasants will be created who have a low productivity and who will inevitably fall to the combined exploitation of the banks, merchants, industrialists, and the state. If on the other hand, large state farms are set up, there is the same danger -- that productivity will fall, since the peasants have no material or moral incentive for this type of cultivation. Both capitalist countries and those in the process of building socialism have given us plenty of experience of both these dangers.

If agrarian reform is to succeed, it has to be carried out with the conscious voluntary participation of the people who work the land.

It is, of course, absolutely necessary that large-scale, collectively worked farms should be set up -- but it is also necessary that they are democratically managed by their workers’ collective.

This kind of management can be defined in two ways: as self-management, or as the co-operative of self-managed production. In the first instance, the land belongs to the whole nation; in the second, it belongs to individual peasants but is still collectively worked by the production co-operative.

But in both instances, management must be in the hands of a collective, democratically organised by the agricultural workers; and it must have as much state aid as possible at its disposal.

The worst mistake of all is to transform the large estates which dominate agriculture into state-owned enterprises where the workers will simply be state wage-earners.

For the peasants to have an interest in working the land properly and increasing their productivity, they must feel that they have some direct connection with the running of things, in a moral sense as well as a material one.

The same principle also applies in the organisation and improvement of the social services and education.

One of the most fundamental tendencies of our time is the progressive incorporation of science and culture into the productive forces of society. Knowledges are permanently being recycled, while qualifications...
become increasingly necessary. Hence the necessity for permanent education and continuous training which would, however, not be merely technical or specialised, but general too.

This kind of revolution in the educational system cannot come about as the result of reforms handed down from above. It must be the result of the effective participation of teachers, students and representatives of the social collectivity.

Of course, nationalisation, agrarian reform, and educational reform are not enough to ensure the victory of the revolution and a transition to socialism. However radically these measures interact, they have to be inserted into a more far-reaching program.

But once a revolutionary process has been unleashed they can give it a tremendous dynamic. The democratic participation of the broad masses of people is the most important subjective factor in bringing about the victory of the revolution.

Of course this ‘victory of the revolution’ cannot be the simple result of a peaceful, evolutionary process within the integral framework of traditional bourgeois democracy of the old state institutions. At a given moment there will be a decisive confrontation of some form or other, where the conservative forces allied with imperialism will be obliged to transgress that traditional framework and provoke a social mutation, a qualitative change.

At this point the period of ‘dual power’ is over, the resistance of hostile social forces is broken, and the power of the working people begins to express itself not only in the form of a government that rules in their name, but also – and primarily – in the shape of institutions and organs which are directly representative of the working people.

Furthermore, the future of such a regime depends precisely on the relations between the direct and indirect forms of working people’s power.

The indirect forms are the state, political parties and unions, which take on the power of working people and citizens by delegation. The direct forms are those with which working people and citizens directly manage their social life, the enterprises, social services, the schools, at all levels.

The indirect forms are not necessarily synonymous with the real power of working people and citizens, for they are institutions managed by social groups who gradually, because of their function, acquire a special status in relation to the masses.

This status inevitably involves material and functional privileges which encourage the growth of a bureaucracy, a new social layer. This is the most serious danger that lies in wait for a state evolving towards socialism.

Of course, there are fundamental objective conditions which encourage the growth of a bureaucracy – a low economic and cultural level, and the prolonged confinement of these experiences within a restricting national framework.

But countries already involved in building socialism have shown us that there is a very important subjective factor to add: that is, the absence of any critique of the traditional idea of the state, parties and unions in their relations with the working people, and the lack of sufficient theoretical consideration of these problems.

The most widespread image of a so-called ‘socialist’ regime is one of state ownership and planned economy, directed by the ‘revolutionary’ party. Ultimately, this means the virtual fusion of state and party, with the unions reduced to the role of a transmission belt for state requirements aimed at the working people. Since the state is axiomatically defined as ‘socialist’ and the party as ‘revolutionary’ the schematic conclusion is that these institutions are the same thing as the power of the working people and citizens.

Of course, this was never the conception of Marx, or Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin or Trotsky.

The Bolsheviks, for example, had initially envisaged a multi-party system, even a multi-party government, as well as the existence of a system of ‘soviets’, of ‘councils’, which would assume some power directly. But circumstances quickly led them to govern virtually by themselves through their party, which, unconsciously but in real terms, fused with the state apparatus and restricted the soviets to a subordinate and increasingly nominal role.

Lenin’s heirs have theorised this state of fact into the ‘model’ of a ‘regime building
socialism'. However, while it is true to say that marxism is (among other things) the most suitable scientific method for understanding the sociological reality of capitalism and demystifying all its categories, values and institutions, the same critical penetration must then be applied to analysing and demystifying the sociological reality of post-revolutionary regimes too.

Truth being concrete, we can do without the kind of schematic generalisation which says that the post-revolutionary structure of the state, parties and unions is identical with the real, direct power of the working people. This has nothing to do with scientific sociology; it is an ideological aberration. New sociological strata, new contradictions and new antagonisms will subsist in these societies for a whole historical period. They cannot be wished away as mere trifles.

We must insist that marxist analysis and critique be permanent, insist on the permanent process of the socialist revolution.

In the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, the state runs the danger of becoming bureaucratised and defending the specific interests of the new bureaucratic caste, though at the same time it defends the general interests of the new social regime. In the latter respect it is partly the state of the working people, but only by delegation and mediation (and therefore in a restricted, deformed way).

Once the ‘revolutionary’ party comes to power, the danger is that it will go through a qualitative change and play the same role towards the working people as the State does.

As for the unions – if they yield their autonomy to the state and the parties, not to mention their primary role as defenders of the working people’s interests (which is necessary even in a so-called ‘socialist’ or ‘workers’ state), the danger is that they will become a virtual mouthpiece for the bureaucracy, an appendage to the state and the parties.

None of this means that one has to declare oneself against the idea of the state, political parties and unions, and take refuge in the so-called ‘anarchist’ mythology, building models of the ‘perfect’ society which are quite arbitrary inasmuch as the appropriate historical conditions for it do not yet exist. All it means is that the indirect forms of ‘working people’s power’ must not be exclusively or systematically favoured, at the expense of the direct forms. For it is the direct forms themselves which systematically favour direct management of social life, in all spheres and at all levels, by the working people and citizens in general.

This is the system of ‘self-managed socialism’.

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In the sphere of economics, self-management means that the enterprises and the land belong to the whole nation and are managed, more and more directly, by their democratically organised working people’s collective.

Manual and intellectual workers are grouped in such a way as to be able to run their units of production by themselves.

The way they organise themselves depends on the kind of enterprise it is; on the general way in which the society as a whole has evolved; and on the level of material and cultural achievement so far reached.

This means that self-management does not spring up in a ‘perfect’ form, all at once; it is a process that stretches out over a whole historical period.

At the beginning, the working people manage those operations which do not demand a very high degree of scientific or technical specialisation; for operations that do demand this, it will be simply a question of controlling them, for some time.

Self-management cannot all at once eliminate the age-old distinction between qualified and unqualified, manual and intellectual workers, nor can it get away overnight from a position where some specialists demand an exorbitant reward for their services, out of proportion with their real labor.

However, while these specialists are necessary for the running of a large modern enterprise, they will be placed under the control of the working people’s collective and will work for the collective, just as at present they work for and under the control of the bosses.

At the base of this collective would be the Working People’s Assembly, which would elect a Working People’s Council with its own executive organ: the two latter would take
up the day to day running of the enterprise on the basis laid down by the Working People’s Assembly and under the supreme control of that assembly. It must be kept in mind that the working people’s collective should include all those productive personnel in the enterprise who accept this method of organisation. The only exceptions to this are the necessary specialists who cannot be part of the collective because they exclude themselves — e.g. by demanding exceptionally high pay. Their services will still be hired at this high price, but they will work under the control of the collective as if they were working for a boss.

The labor collective will become more and more homogeneous (Marx wrote about the ‘collective worker’, referring to the gradual fusion between manual and intellectual labor, between technique and science, which he saw the capitalist economy evolving towards); and the totality of its members will reach a continually higher level of qualification. But this can only take place if the following two measures are applied from the beginning: a mode of payment based on the ‘labor supplied’; and the permanent education of the working people — education that is general, technical and political at the same time.

Where a society is in the process of building socialism but for some length of time cannot avoid using the methods of the money market economy, the mode of payment is an extremely important element.

For a mode of payment to be fair, it must be based on the ‘labor supplied’ by everyone, i.e. it must be based on the amount of wealth created by labor. This does not happen in the capitalist system, where the wage only represents a part of the wealth produced; nor does it happen in those states in which capitalism has been abolished, where pay is arbitrarily fixed, without any direct reference to the criterion of how much wealth is being produced.

Of course, the objection may be raised that this criterion (which Marx referred to in the ‘Critique of the Gotha Programme’ as the most appropriate for the period of transition) is a difficult one to establish, since wealth is actually produced by the whole ‘collective worker’, which includes not only manual workers but intellectual ones as well (qualified engineers, experts, researchers, etc.); and that since mechanisation and the automation of labor have been progressing so rapidly, as science and more organically incorporated into the productive process, value and surplus-value are crystallising an increasingly complex social labor. Nevertheless, it still holds true that wealth is the product of social labor, and that the payment of everyone must be based on the criterion of the labor supplied.

It is up to the working people themselves to determine democratically, not only the organisation and operation of labor in the enterprises, but also their pay rises, on the basis of agreements reached by the enterprise and within the framework of national agreements.

It is also up to the working people to make the necessary outlay from their income to meet the needs of the whole society.

If the wage system is to be properly abolished, the criterion of ‘the amount of labor supplied’ has to be established. The citizens and working people themselves have to disentangle the complexity of the ‘social labor’ in which the labor supplied by each individual is integrated; this can be done by means of democratic decisions, from the level of the enterprise up to the highest levels of national administration.

With this method of payment differentials will not vanish immediately. But it can help to soften them, restrict their range and make sure that the benefits of an increase in productivity are fairly distributed.

It would also be the best stimulus to productivity. Each worker would feel, both that he was being paid according to his own contribution to the social labor, and that he was automatically benefitting from the general increased productivity of that social labor.

Any arbitrarily determined method of payment that has no clear relation to the amount of labor supplied and its productivity, only serves to maintain the feeling of ‘unfairness’ and to sap the productive effort of the working people.

There is no excuse for systems which compel the workers to increase their labor by invoking the ‘ideal’ of socialism and using moralistic phraseology, without giving working people the chance to really participate in management and in the wealth that issues from their labor. Those who defend such systems are the unwitting spokesmen for privileged bureaucratic layers, perpetuating the
proletarian condition of the broad mass of working people.

The other reform which has to be applied is the radical reform of education -- again from the beginning, and again with the aim of the effective abolition of the proletarian condition.

The purpose of this is to get rid of the lack of education (inculture) of the mass of working people, to end the current division between 'qualified' and 'unqualified', between 'intellectual' and 'manual' workers, between people with so-called 'qualities of leadership' and those who simply 'carry out instructions'.

In this sense, education is the pre-requisite of a truly socialist society where it is not just the forms of property which are affected but the quality of social relations too. But education also affects the evolution of productive forces and the repercussions of this evolution in turn on the qualitative composition of the working class and working people in general.

We have already stressed the fact that the dominant trend in the evolution of the modern economy has been the gradual incorporation of science into the productive process in the form of basic research, applied research and higher technology.

Hence the necessity for constantly higher qualifications from an increasing number of working people, at the expense of the number and importance of ordinary laborers.

But in the context of the capitalist system this remains simply a trend. Its accomplishment depends upon the destruction of that system and of the principles of authority, hierarchy, subordination and dualism which puts capital in control over working people.

In a society evolving towards socialism permanent education is a viable possibility for reasons which are both fundamental and conjunctural, which touch both on the essence of socialism and on the means of achieving it.

On the one hand permanent education is necessary to help the working people to manage their social life at all levels and in all spheres (the aim of socialism).

In other words, a radical reform of education signifies the division of the time for social labor into two parts: a time devoted to direct, productive labor, and a time devoted to educational labor. This is the real 'cultural revolution' that has to be accomplished. Its development, its extent and its forms depend on the context in each concrete example.

Education must be considered an integral part of the social labor of every member of society; a distinction can be made between direct productive labor and educational labor, but both should be paid for by society.

On the other hand, only a constantly improving level of qualification can dynamise the economy, modernise it and increase productivity.

The permanent education of working people must be thought of in its overall essence, i.e. as being general, technical and political at one and the same time, so that not mere specialists are formed but polyvalent subjects, citizens developing in a balanced way, capable of controlling and managing their social life.

But the most important thing is to commit oneself to this from the very beginning, to start abolishing the proletarian condition in the field of education too.

Self-management is a 'global' system which cannot be limited to the economy alone or to the level of the enterprise, each acting on its own.

Ultimately a socialist economy might be composed of several large ultra-modern enterprises in each sector of the economy, within the framework of democratic social planning at a national level. But for quite some time it will be a question of dealing with a multitude of enterprises in each sector, working under varied conditions. It is this extreme disparity (among other things) which necessitates our still using the methods of the money market economy, and which shackles real planning (defined as the semi-automatic administration of balanced social development).
The latter kind of planning would suppress in real, economic terms (rather than in an arbitrary, administrative way) the after-effects of capitalist society in the areas of the market, money, payment for the amount of labor supplied, value and surplus-value -- that is, an economy which still needs to measure its progress, balance its development and stimulate productivity by means of the market, money and labor.

During the period of transition, the guiding line in the economic sphere must be to socialise a dominant sector in each branch of the economy by reason of its concentration, modernity and productivity, and to encourage the voluntary co-operation of the other, smaller enterprises with state aid of all kinds. When we use the term ‘socialise’, we are talking about property which is collective, and under workers’ management.

Self-management is not an aggregate number of enterprises acting each for itself and in an uncontrolled competition. Self-management is integrated at the level of the economy into a national social plan, which is applied and worked out democratically. This presupposes a radical rethinking of the rigidly centralised planning in a state-owned economy.

In the economic sphere, the purpose of the plan is to determine the general conditions under which the self-managed enterprises can act and co-ordinate their efforts in relation to the ultimate interests of society as a whole. We use the term social rather than economic plan to stress the fact that the plan seeks the balanced overall evolution of the society towards socialism, and that this affects the determination of so-called economic aims; the real aim of the plan is to satisfy the real social needs of the working people and citizens, with decisions made democratically from the bottom up and vice versa, in a process of interaction which is constantly readjusting the objectives sought, even while the plan is being executed.

Therefore, there is no absolute incompatibility between self-management, the plan and the necessary utilisation of, not exactly the ‘market’ in the capitalist sense, but the methods of the money market economy.

The function of the plan is to establish an equilibrium between self-management and the use of such methods, and to ensure that there is a general direction towards the broadest and quickest possible development of the socialised sector of the economy.

In any such plan the economic and administrative decentralisation of the country will play a very important part.

The country should be thought of as a combination of communes and regions, divided not simply for the sake of administrative control but also because they are homogeneous, coherent economico-administrative unities which favour the balanced development of the country.

The communes and regions will also be self-managed, self-governed by the working people and citizens, and will have sufficient financial means to develop their own plan within the general framework of the national social plan.

This kind of radical reform of local government would be a very important measure for the developed countries, not just developing ones.

It would lay the basis for a real democratisation of the new state, with favourable social and economic repercussions which would benefit the whole country.

Where underdeveloped countries are concerned, communal reform can be combined with agrarian reform and self-management to provide a very powerful lever so that the enormous unused mass of the peasantry can participate in local government; the stimulus will be provided by objectives which are democratically defined at commune level and which will have a direct, palpable effect on the standard of living of the local population.

This is how the overall articulation of the self-managed society takes shape, as it evolves towards an authentic socialist regime. Socialisation, not just state ownership of enterprise and farms, agrarian reform, communal reform, educational reform, democratic planning -- these are the elements of a structure which it will need a long time to achieve, but which must be tackled from the beginning, with the ‘global’ conception of them as the point of departure.

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In the light of all this, the struggle for socialism would appear to be inseparable from the struggle for self-management. The self-
management strategy, both before and after taking power, is the only one capable of mobilising large masses of citizens and working people, as it offers them effective participation in the revolutionary process through all its stages.

Parties, unions and governments which refer to the working class, to ‘the people’, to socialism, must devote themselves to the task of getting this participation to work, so that the revolution ‘begun’ will end in victory, and so that afterwards a new regime will be built that avoids the disastrous results of bureaucratic sclerosis.

It is true that the masses aspire to ‘direct democracy’, that they seek to suppress the multiform alienation which they are subjected to in their social life. But existing social relations are based not merely on having but also on knowing and being able, all of which are hoarded by small minorities; they are based on centuries-old concepts of hierarchy, authority, on the dualism between ‘leaders’ and ‘led’. This means that the masses are unable to build social self-management immediately, by themselves, at all levels of social life. For some time they will need the mediation of political parties, unions and other organs, just as the society as a whole will need, for some time, a central power, a ‘state’.

But the real objective of the social revolution is not just to change property relations, but to change the quality of social relations, the real status of productive man and the citizen in society. Effective steps towards this have to be undertaken from the beginning: the progressive application of socialist self-management, in all spheres and at all levels of social life.

This process is the apprenticeship of socialism, defined as the increasingly direct management of social life by its citizens and working people.

Self-management is the upbringing of socialism and the upbringing of itself; it teaches itself and perfects itself in being applied.

The application of self-management must not be postponed on the excuse that the working people and citizens are still not fit to manage their social life and that one has to go by stages: a first stage under the state, parties and unions which assume the essence of the masses’ power while the latter content themselves with a measure of control; and a second stage during which the masses will be ‘instructed’ and introduced to the tasks of management.

This kind of reasoning belongs with the bureaucratic deformation, where power is conquered in the name of socialism and the masses – and inevitably leads to the stratification of a bureaucracy which gradually becomes omnipotent.

The formation of a bureaucracy is a barrier across the path from a state where the masses merely control to one where they manage.

Self-management is the most direct, the most stubborn enemy of the bureaucracy, the negation of the bureaucracy par excellence.

The whole barbaric past of humanity is based on exploitation and the subordination of some people by others. This fact continues to condition our behaviour, consciously or unconsciously, quite independently of our adherence to this or that ideology. There is almost overwhelming resistance to the birth of new social relations abolishing authoritarianism, hierarchisation, subjugation, dualism.

Some of this resistance comes from the ranks of socialists and revolutionaries. This is why the struggle for self-managed socialism will be a ‘long march’, but an absolutely necessary one.

The task for those who claim to be the vanguard is to ensure that the new ‘power’ is not centralised in the hands of an ‘elite’ in the state, parties and unions, but that it is diffused as widely as possible among the mass of working people and citizens. Their task is to give the utmost systematic, clear and conscious encouragement to all the creative initiative through which the masses express their profound aspiration to become the true subjects of their own history, to manage their social life directly, by themselves.

Only then will there be a future for socialism ‘with a human face’ – and this is the only kind of socialism which will be worth the long, persevering, sacrificial struggle ahead.
Japanese communists on world affairs

This is an abridged version of the article “Strategy of US Imperialism and the Cause of the Anti-imperialist Forces in the Present Phase of the International Situation”.

This appeared in AKAHATA, April 4, 1974, and in English translation in the Japanese Communist Party’s “Information for Aborad” Bulletin No. 312.

The detente of the ‘seventies is a new aspect of relations between the USSR and the USA, characterised by signing of the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War, the re-opening of diplomatic relations between the USA and China, the conclusion of treaties between the Soviet Union and West Germany, and between Poland and West Germany, as well as improved relations between East and West Germany and the progress of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. January 1973 saw the conclusion of the Paris Agreement and in February 1973 an Agreement on Laos was reached.

Some sections of the anti-imperialist forces at home and abroad believe that US imperialism has completely changed its policy from “cold war” to peaceful co-existence and “international detente”.

But it is undeniable that the ferocity of Nixon’s war of aggression in Vietnam far surpassed anything Hitler did. It is undeniable that Nixon engineered the counter-revolutionary military coup in Chile and that he is now
engaged in new aggression in the Middle East. It will not be Nixon who brings peace to the world, but the unremitting struggle of the three great revolutionary forces – the socialist camp, the national liberation struggle and the struggle of the working class and working people in the capitalist world. Alone, none of these forces can control the course of world development. Each has its own historic mission to fulfill but, integrated in one body, it is they who can guide the process of development in the direction of peace, national independence and social progress.

It is in this context that the “detente between East and West” must be examined in order to correctly understand Nixon’s policy towards the socialist great powers in connection with his world strategy.

When he handed over the presidency to Nixon in 1969, Lyndon B. Johnson left the legacy of an unwinnable war in Vietnam. By then, the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people had made it clear that victory for the US was impossible. Thus Nixon had to devise some means of saving the “honour and prestige” of the United States without abandoning Indochina altogether. The war had already cost $350,000 million ($164,000 million in the Korean War) and this enormous expense added to a dollar crisis and the prestige of the US was at a low ebb. At the same time a broad anti-war movement was developing in America.

He was quick to take maximum advantage of the disunity of the anti-imperialist forces, particularly the dispute between the Soviet Union and China which had been growing more openly intense since the beginning of the sixties, in order to avoid outright defeat in Indochina and to grab what he could for an “honourable withdrawal”.

Our Party has defined basic US strategy since Kennedy as a dual policy of negotiations and a continuation of aggression which wears the mask of “peace” and a policy of total defeat of one small socialist country after another and the national liberation movements, too, while promoting “rapprochement” with greater socialist nations. Not only did the Nixon-Kissinger administration approach the Soviet Union, it also made secret overtures to China and at the same time demanded that its partners and allies share the US burden. During all this there was a sharp build-up of the intensity of the bombing in Indochina to the stage that in four years of the Nixon administration, 8.64 million tons of bombs (1.4 times as much as in the whole of World War II) had been dropped on Vietnam. It was while this was taking place that Nixon visited China and the Soviet Union.

He took advantage of the dispute between the Soviet Union and China and their suspicion and abuse of each other to restrain both of them. In their support and assistance to the anti-imperialist forces throughout the world, each tries not to adversely affect their relations with the United States.

Kissinger states, in his news conference of December 27, 1973 -- “The breakdown in the unity of the Communist Bloc, with all that implies for the shift of energies and resources to purposes other than a single-minded challenge to the United States and its friends, and for a higher priority in at least some Communist countries to the pursuit of national interests rather than their subordination to the requirements of world revolution.” (Foreign Policy Report 1972).

Nixon’s visit to China and to the Soviet Union showed the development of his strategy in its most naked form. In both countries he was received as if he were an “apostle of peace” while concurrently there was taking place the unprecedentedly ferocious and indiscriminate bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the mining and blockade of Haiphong Harbour.

The peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia greeted this Nixon strategy with a resolute counter-attack, and the serious significance of this struggle has a special place in the history of the international liberation struggle in the post-war period. Though the Paris Agreement on Vietnam and the Agreement on Laos won in January and February last year marked an important victory in the liberation struggle of the peoples of Indochina, it was not a final victory. US imperialism still has a foothold in Indochina from which to launch further aggression.

In his 1973 Annual Report, the US Secretary of Defence frankly states: “The three principles of strength, partnership and a willingness to negotiate are inextricably intertwined, and no one of them should be pursued at the expense of the others.”

The so-called rapprochement of the US with the Soviet Union and China is a con-
cire example of the "negotiation" aspect of Nixon's strategy, but there is also the repression of the peoples' struggle for peace, national independence and social progress.

Since the end of World War II, US imperialism has consistently adhered to the position of strength and has carried out a policy of war and aggression in various parts of the world. With 560,000 troops stationed abroad, the US still has many aggressive military alliances and a network of some 3,000 military bases, all of which directly confront the socialist countries including the Soviet Union and China, and the national liberation movements throughout the world.

From all this it is clear that the US government has made no change in foreign policy towards peaceful co-existence, rather that its intention is to maintain its own hegemony and to try to defeat its enemies one by one when the opportunity arises.

What the US really wants is to carry forward the "detente" established in Indochina in other spheres of influence. This is the real aim of US imperialism.

To quote Kissinger at the "Pacem in Terris" Conference held in Washington in October 1973:

"Co-existence to us continues to have a very precise meaning:

-- We will oppose the attempt by any country to achieve a position of predominance either globally or regionally.

-- We will resist any attempt to exploit a policy of detente to weaken our alliances.

-- We will react if relaxation of tensions is used as a cover to exacerbate conflicts in international trouble spots.

The Soviet Union cannot disregard these principles in any area of the world without imperilling its entire relationship with the United States."

To US imperialism, the status quo is the maintenance of aggression, rule and influence throughout the world as well as the network of military bases, in direct confrontation with the socialist countries and the anti-imperialist forces. And, at the same time, it includes naked aggression when and where the opportunity arises. This is what the Nixon-Kissinger policy of detente means.

Thus, it is very superficial to regard the US government's policy of detente towards the Soviet Union and China as an important realignment in the world. Such an estimation would be dangerous to the entire anti-imperialist forces throughout the world and could only bring aid and comfort to Nixon and Kissinger.

CONTINUED US IMPERIALIST "POLICY OF STRENGTH" AND THE IMPERIALIST CAMP

In the period since the signing of the Paris Agreement, the Nixon Administration has made much of Brezhnev's visit to the United States and the signing of the "Agreement on Prevention of Nuclear War", while at the same time fostering detente with China by the establishment of liaison offices in Peking and Washington and by Kissinger's visit to China. And, against a background of increased tension between the Soviet Union and China, the US has not only pursued its aims in Indochina, but has manoeuvred further for two Koreas, instigated the overthrow of the popular government in Chile, and helped Israeli aggression in the Fourth Middle East War, while extending its control of the Arab countries in the role of mediator. This is all nothing more than the machinations of the "position of strength". And throughout all this, acting on the "Kissinger plan", the US has reorganised and strengthened the imperialist camp by drawing Japan into the "western world", taking advantage of the oil crisis to strengthen the power of the dollar.

If we ignore these manoeuvres of US imperialism and underestimate the importance of the Indochinese peoples' struggle for final victory, under the miasma of "relaxation of tension" between East and West, we abandon the thesis that it is the development of the struggles of the three great progressive forces which will change the world situation.

In Latin America, in spite of the US imperialist-dominated Organisation of American States, countries such as Argentina, Peru and Panama have given virtual or open recognition to Cuba, and admitted the "diversity of ideology in Latin America", and it was in this atmosphere that the Chilean Popular Government was established in 1970.

But the recent military coup d'état in Chile, sponsored by US imperialism, was but
another example of the US policy of taking advantage of the tension between the USSR and China, while under the cloak of “relaxation of tension”, while striking at yet another democratic force, the US minimises its guilt in the eyes of the world as much as possible.

The situation in the Middle East war also manifests the US “position of strength” policy. Without the support of the Israeli reactionaries by US imperialism, the present situation would not exist. At the same time, US imperialism is making every effort to continue its control of the oil reserves in the Arab countries.

Since the conclusion of the Vietnam peace agreement, US imperialism has been trying to keep the imperialist camp together but this has only heightened its own declining role. During the Indochina war, the leaders of not only France and Sweden, but those of Great Britain and West Germany have been critical of the US in the concluding stage of the war. The “Kissinger plan” of April 1973 is intended not only to re-establish the leadership of US imperialism but also to combine the NATO countries with Japan, to make these countries share responsibility, and once more to consolidate the imperialist partnership.

“RELAXATION OF TENSION” FOR STATUS QUO AND GENUINE PEACE

When Nixon and Kissinger speak of the fundamental turn from the “cold war” to the “relaxation of tension” they have in mind particularly the Nuclear War Prevention Agreement and two other agreements on Strategic Arms Limitations concluded between the USSR and the US, a series of treaties concerning the German question and the progress of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

The Nuclear War Prevention Agreement states that the parties agree that they will act in such a manner as to exclude the outbreak of nuclear war between them and between either of the parties and other countries.

Today in the situation of what is said to be balanced nuclear forces, it is true that even the United States cannot easily undertake nuclear war. The Agreement is a statement of this fact and nothing more.

For a period after World War II, US imperialism, holding a monopoly of nuclear weapons, established a system of aggression against the socialist camp by keeping these weapons poised, but the USSR’s development of nuclear weapons checked this threat. It became clear, especially during the 1962 Cuban events that a confrontation with nuclear weapons was by no means easy for US imperialism. Nevertheless, US imperialism continues to develop nuclear weapons and so does the USSR – so the stalemate continues.

The Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War does not bind the hand of US imperialism and does not promise the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons sought by the world’s peoples. US imperialism has formed unilateral and bilateral military alliances, it has deployed its nuclear weapons in other countries and sends its nuclear submarines throughout the world. None of these actions is prohibited by the Agreement.

How then should we understand the content of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-ballistic Missiles (ABM) and the Interim Agreement on the Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms concluded in May 1972, during Nixon’s visit to the USSR?

While the ABM treaty sets an upper limit of two hundred of these weapons to be held by each side, at the time the treaty was concluded, the US possessed none of them and the USSR had only sixty-four, so in fact this treaty allows both sides to expand their armament.

The Interim Agreement on Strategic Offensive Arms is intended only to freeze the number of inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and submarine ballistic missiles (SLMB).

In fact, these agreements do not nullify US imperialism’s development of new weapons and its policy of nuclear war.

Needless to say US strategic arms are aimed first of all against the Soviet Union. This, in itself, despite the agreements, shows what the reality is concerning “relaxation of tension”.

More than a quarter of a century has passed since the world raised its voice for complete prohibition of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, the Partial Nuclear Ban Treaty
and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have been concluded and each time they have been called "an important step" toward complete prohibition of nuclear weapons or "progress" toward world peace. But they have never prevented US imperialism from developing nuclear weapons. As an example, the US has conducted more than two hundred and fifty underground nuclear tests in the ten years following the conclusion of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Thus it becomes ever clearer that an attempt to realise the prevention of nuclear war and prohibition of nuclear weapons which does not rely chiefly on international public opinion and the broad mass movement but relies mainly on diplomatic negotiations in the long run will be forced to stay within the limit imposed by US imperialism.

In this situation, our Party pointed out last July that it was necessary to return to the starting point of the world peace movement after World War II, and call for complete prohibition of nuclear weapons. We asked the communist and workers' parties to develop this struggle.

Another manifestation of "relaxation of tension" is the current negotiations on the mutual reduction of forces of East and West in Europe. The phenomenon of "relaxation of tension" in Europe by no means has a clear content at least at present. What is clear is the confirmation of the status quo. Of course, this has a certain importance in checking aggression, but it is wrong to overestimate it as a "realisation of peaceful co-existence".

At present, although they welcome the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, many European communist parties hold that they should develop the struggle of their peoples for the simultaneous dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, the withdrawal of foreign troops and evacuation of military bases on foreign territory, the overthrow of US imperialist domination in Europe and the establishment of a completely free Europe, in order to establish genuine peace and security in Europe. The development of this struggle will open the way to establish genuine collective security in Europe.

In connection with the progress of the Conference in Europe, there is increasing emphasis on the need for a so-called "Asian Collective Security System" based on the ten Bandung Principles.

In present specific conditions, if collective security in Asia envisages creation of a system of collective security and co-operation in the whole of Asia along the lines proposed by the US imperialists in Europe, where would it lead us? What would result from this except the "recognition of the status quo" of colonialist and neo-colonialist rule over Asian countries including the "divided states" by US imperialism and confirmation of a humiliating "peace" with the content of "legalisation"?

The working class and the broad masses of working people in Japan who, since 1960, have developed a great historic struggle to abolish the US-Japan military alliance, cannot accept the idea of first convening a "Conference on Collective Security and Co-operation in Asia" and then gradually dissolving the military bloc, confirming the "status quo" of Asia.

PRETTIFYING US IMPERIALISM AND SINO-SOVIET RIVALRY

A new theory of prettifying US imperialism has emerged in a situation in which it promotes a strategy for "strength, partnership and negotiation" notable for its "detente" diplomacy, while certain sectors of the anti-imperialist camp hail the Nixon administration's alleged switch from the "cold war" to "peaceful co-existence". Accompanying this new theory there is a serious development, namely the aggravation of Sino-Soviet rivalry.

According to the new theory, there has appeared in the USA a group of politicians who, on the basis of their alleged "realism" and "reasonableness", seek to accommodate themselves to the changed balance of forces in the world and bring into being the relaxation of tension. It is said that these politicians should be respected. Furthermore, there is supposed to exist in US ruling circles another group, a reactionary clique, which comprises "the top echelon of the military-industrial complex, ultra-right elements, zionists, and counter-revolutionary immigrants from socialist countries".

This new theory which repeatedly arises, does so inevitably because US imperialism is analysed from the standpoint of justifying the alleged decisive role of one's own "det-
ente" diplomacy, rather than from the standpoint of the struggle of the three great international revolutionary forces, with their aims of independence, peace, democracy and social progress. It arises from failure to take a comprehensive look at the characteristic features of US imperialism which remains the ring-leader of world reaction, the international gendarme and the main force of war and aggression. The fundamental error of the theory of alleged bi-polarisation of US ruling circles lies, more than in anything else, in its failure to take cognisance of the dual policy of imperialism.

It is self-evident that Nixon and Kissinger cannot be respected as men of reason in view of their current activities in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Europe and particularly in Indochina. That the Nixon administration represents the upper strata of the military-industrial complex is substantiated by facts.

As for the so-called change in the form of manifestation of US imperialism, it is nothing but Nixon’s “detente” diplomacy or the Nixon-Kissinger doctrine that represents such a change. Although admittedly worked out in consideration of Soviet military power, it is a strategy of extricating the US from the quagmire in Indochina by taking advantage of Sino-Soviet rivalry, to reinforce alliance partnerships and to continue the policy of defeating its enemies one by one in given conditions.

Certain people who previously criticised the unprincipled line of collaboration with the USA now say “personages such as President Nixon are preferable to social-democrats or revisionists who, when in power, take entirely different actions”. They allege that the greatest danger now confronting the world is “social imperialism”; they approve of the US-Japan military alliance under the pretext of countering it and even say it would be unavoidable for Japan to place itself under the US “nuclear umbrella”.

The argument that President Nixon is preferable to “revisionists” in power and the argument that Japan must shelter under the US nuclear umbrella -- which is a complete about-face from their earlier position of unequivocally opposing the US-Japan military alliance -- are both traceable to the theory of prettifying US imperialism to which they subscribe, alleging that the main enemy is the Soviet Union.

People representing this trend likewise have come to approve of NATO from a similar viewpoint.

The rivalry between China and the Soviet Union which began as a political and ideological rivalry has today become a grave state rivalry in which both sides deploy huge armed forces.

LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE’S STRUGGLE

The first lesson is that the Vietnamese Workers’ Party, the South Vietnam National Front for Liberation and the Vietnamese people, without harbouring any illusions about the aggressive character of US imperialism, looked squarely at its philosophy, barbarity and reaction and also took due note of its weaknesses.

The Vietnamese made their correct evaluation of US imperialism, of the balance of forces between friends and foes, and of the people’s determination to fight and thus carried on the struggle in an undaunted, wise manner. This, indeed, was the prerequisite for their triumph.

The second lesson to be drawn from the Vietnam people’s struggle is that the peoples of various countries should preserve the autonomy of the movements in their countries to the utmost, relying on their own strength more than on anything else. Had the Vietnamese people paid insufficient attention to their own autonomous judgment, had they failed to preserve their autonomy to the end, and had they given in to the views of one or other of the great socialist countries, what would the outcome of their historic struggle have been? There is no room for doubt about the answer to this question.

It is necessary to say this because there is a current opinion which describes the Paris Agreement won by the Vietnamese people as if it reflected the “detente” diplomacy that the Nixon-Kissinger team adopts vis-a-vis the socialist great powers.

The third lesson is that the socialist camp, the international communist movement and the world’s anti-imperialist forces can be successful if they unite against their common enemy no matter what other differences or disunity may exist in their ranks.
The Soviet Union and China, despite their rivalry, have continued to provide the Vietnamese people with useful material assistance. This, together with the activities of all anti-imperialist forces, indicates that if there is a will to struggle together, they are capable of attaining a certain success no matter what their differences. This, too, is a very important lesson to be drawn from the struggle of the past decade or so. However, there is reason to believe that if all anti-imperialist forces had grasped the truth of US imperialism's dual policies and united their will to do their utmost in assisting the Vietnamese people's struggle, then the Vietnamese people could have achieved a greater victory much sooner and at smaller sacrifice. It is necessary to emphasise this self-evident fact anew because some activities that could impair the unity of anti-imperialist forces are again evident.

US imperialism now intends to translate the concept of a "new Atlantic Charter" into reality with a view to reorganising and reinforcing the imperialist camp through linking the NATO countries and Japan.

It is of great importance that the workers of Japan, Italy, France, Britain and other countries should unite in struggles to wreck these plans as well as for the dismantling of the US-Japan military alliance and NATO.

An issue that cannot be left ambiguous is whether to give priority to the development of anti-imperialist struggle by the people of each country or to the support of a particular socialist country's diplomacy vis-a-vis imperialist countries, as the main task of anti-imperialist struggle.

Our Party supports the peaceful co-existence diplomacy of socialist countries. As its program notes: "The Party fights for world peace and for peaceful co-existence of states with different social systems." From this point of view, our Party supports the normalisation of our country's diplomatic relations with socialist countries as well as developing relations with these countries in economic, technological, cultural and other fields. We do not deny the possibility that a socialist country may have to make diplomatic concessions to capitalist countries. But whatever the circumstances, the socialist countries' diplomacy vis-a-vis imperialist countries should not run counter to the interests of national liberation struggles or of revolutionary struggles in capitalist countries; nor should support for such diplomacy be imposed on the struggles of the peoples. This is because the socialist countries' diplomatic policies, even if correct, cannot replace the national liberation struggles or the struggles of the working class in capitalist countries. It is only when they are correctly related to the development of these struggles that the socialist countries can force a retreat by imperialism.

Important as the unity of the international communist movement is for the democratic forces to develop their struggles in a correct direction, it cannot be overlooked that in some sections of the international communist movement there have appeared some moves running counter to this unity. Such moves derive from insistence on loyalty to a certain party as "the touchstone of proletarian internationalism and marxism-leninism", and may be seen in attempts to compel the international communist movement and democratic movements to express unalloyed admiration for the so-called "detente" diplomacy, to carry out "ideological unification" in this direction and to brand parties refusing to follow suit as "left and right opportunist", "revisionist", "isolationist" and "regionalist".

There is no need for a "vanguard" party or a "guiding centre". Each party has the whole responsibility for the revolutionary movement in its own country and struggles to develop the movement autonomously. Mutual support for each other's endeavours is required. These are the fundamental conditions of existence of the present international communist movement.

New attempts to undermine this standpoint may ruin not only the autonomous development of the struggles of the world's peoples but also proletarian internationalism in the form of the people's co-ordinated action. No matter how big a socialist country is and no matter what role it plays objectively in international politics, a single country cannot have a decisive influence on the course of the entire development of the world.

To oppose the anachronistic idea of attempting to revive a "vanguard" or "guiding centre", to wage resolute struggle in the revolutionary movement of one's own country autonomously, to unite in the common struggle against US imperialism and to stand in the van of the international encirclement of US imperialism — this is the task of the international communist movement.
The women who act for, sustain and support the men who march across the pages of history are seldom credited with being more than the good women who stand behind good men. In this framework such women are said to be powerful. This is debatable and most live vicariously through the lives of others. In general, written history ignores any contribution they make in their own right.

All too little has been written of the lives of women revolutionaries, but now a book* on Krupskaya brings to life one of the most important women of the Russian revolution. The author, Robert McNeal, does not deny that her life can be considered outside her association with Lenin, but he presents her as an individual who made a determined contribution to the revolution from her youth, before she met Lenin, till old age, long after

Lenin's death. McNeal seeks to rescue Krupskaya from any suggestion that she was no more than Lenin's companion although he recognises that this relationship determined the main arena for her contribution.

Until now, readers in English primarily know Krupskaya from her own writings about Lenin, but McNeal has availed himself of a much wider range of sources, notably materials published in Russian, including a Soviet bibliographical work produced in Moscow in 1969, the archives of the Paris office of the secret police of Imperial Russia and those of Trotsky. From these emerge the first substantial biography of Krupskaya in English.

A problem for biographers, and McNeal is no exception, is the tendency to pass contemporary judgments on the atmosphere and values of another time. In this case, the author sometimes adopts a hectoring tone to dismiss as invalid some of the sacrifices which may have been quite reasonable for a revolutionary in Czarist Russia, moreover he can be remarkably insensitive to some of Krupskaya's values.

Undoubtedly, Krupskaya was not a feminist in the sense that such a term is used today, but she came out of a tradition of Russian intellectuals, notably Chernyshevsky, who propagated the equality of women, repudiated bourgeois marriage as a form of slavery and stressed the ideal of male sexual self-denial as a sign of a new morality. In the circumstances, Krupskaya, according to today's values, probably had a mixture of "advanced" and "conservative" attitudes but the author quite misses the point, obvious to any feminist, socialist or not, when he records Krupskaya's approach to the development of youth activities in the Russia of mid-1917. Krupskaya helped to establish youth organisations which, at the time, involved young Bolsheviks, Mensheviks and anarchists. McNeal, describing their activities, dismisses them as non-political, but the politics have considerable feminist significance and accord with the socialist tradition. All members of the organisation, known as "Light and Knowledge", were required to learn sewing and it is recorded that Krupskaya overwhelmed with criticism a Bolshevik boy who objected to learning this skill on the grounds that wives do the sewing. This was not Krupskaya's idea of relations between the sexes.

Krupskaya was the child of a radical man and, for the times, an emancipated woman. Her name, Nadezhda, is the Russian for hope. Both parents exposed their daughter to their views on class oppression, religion, education and service to the people. Nadya chose to become a country school teacher and it is not without significance for feminists that her first propaganda essay begins with the following quotation from Nekrasov:

Thy lot is hard, a woman's lot
A harder lot can scarce be found.

Influenced by Tolstoy, who sought to bring culture to the downtrodden, her first social contribution was to translate the 'Count of Monte Cristo' for a cheap Russian language edition. Nadya soon tired of this rather esoteric method of bringing enlightenment to Russia and sought more practical work and theories. She became an early reader of Marx whom she found difficult, and a teacher in evening class for illiterate workers. She was already a revolutionary political worker when she met Lenin.

The marriage of Lenin and Krupskaya was in part determined by the ideological influence of men like Chernyshevsky and Czarist police laws. Marriage was often seen as a means to assist revolutionary women to escape from oppressive situations while the police laws provided for fiancees to join each other in exile. The law was used to maintain contact with exiles. Women revolutionaries volunteered as fiancees when necessary. Because the law was so used, the Czarist police demanded an alteration to ensure that actual marriages took place in exile. In Krupskaya's case, after both she and Lenin had been imprisoned and sentenced to exile, she was chosen as Lenin's secretary, but the actual marriage had not been firmly arranged. Her mother travelled with her to the village of Shushenskoe and she carried a police order for an "immediate" marriage which, after some Czarist bureaucratic bungling, took place in July 1898.

The detail of the life of Krupskaya and Lenin as told by McNeal is the detail of firmly committed women and men through difficult days and years of exile inside and outside Russia, through incredible setbacks to the triumph of the October Revolution and beyond.

Krupskaya emerges as Lenin's devoted helper, utilising her talents to maintain an organisation of revolutionaries. She did the hard and detailed work, writing letters, organising the printing and distribution of clandestine publications, keeping codes, translating texts. She became the secretary of the Bolshevik Party but at that time the status of the position was not as it is today. Through all this she maintained and pursued her own interests, particularly in respect to education.

Biographies may be read by the curious, by those who like adventure and by those who appreciate "living history", but this bi-
His subjects, rejects the view that knowledge of Lenin's death is connected with Krupskaya's hurt as the relation between Lenin and Armand developed vincingly of Krupskaya's hurt as the relationship between Lenin and Armand.

In the orthodox Soviet histories, no mention is ever made of the relationship between Inessa Armand and Lenin although there has been much speculation on this. McNeal presents the known evidence fairly and without sensationalism. He cannot "prove" beyond doubt the extent of this relationship but he does not shy away from the personal lives of his subjects, rejects the view that knowledge of personal relationships will in some way demean the great, and connects the personal with the political. It is the last question which is of considerable interest. McNeal writes convincingly of Krupskaya's hurt as the relationship between Lenin and Armand developed but pays tribute to her objectivity and close friendship with Armand and her children. He He then develops a theory that the key pressure exerted on Krupskaya to identify with Stalin in his struggle to win total control of the Bolshevik Party in the years following Lenin's death is connected with Krupskaya's vulnerability over the relationship between Lenin and Armand.

Many different pressures were exerted on Krupskaya and she held out for a long time but, according to McNeal, her endorsement of Stalin in 1927 coincided with the publication of a short novel "A Great Love" by Alexandra Kollontai. "A Great Love" is the story of an emigrant Russian revolutionary leader complete with beard and cap. His wife, like Krupskaya, is ill. His lover is younger, a woman of experience and independent means. She works for a time as the party secretary and is an excellent linguist. She chooses to leave her lover and return to Russia to work in the underground. Leaving aside the notion of lover, which cannot be proven, all the other facts fit Armand. Kollontai's story was in circulation briefly in 1927 and shortly after "A Great Love" had been published for mass consumption inside the Soviet Union, she returned to her illegal style and sent it abroad, but its publication in the 'New York Times' in October 1926 did not reach the USSR. (Krupskaya had been dead for many years when Lenin's testament was published for mass consumption inside the Soviet Union after the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956.)

By 1925, Krupskaya was moving towards the opposition, becoming openly critical that too much was being conceded away from socialism in the name of economic recovery. She suffered suppression of her own views and was subjected to heckling in meetings. In the period that followed, she signed opposition documents including the famous "Declaration of the Thirteen", initiated by Zinoviev and Trotsky, and one criticising Soviet policy in respect to the British General Strike of 1926.

In that year, after seemingly exhausting all possibilities for the publication of Lenin's testament inside the Soviet Union, she returned to her illegal style and sent it abroad, but its publication in the 'New York Times' in October 1926 did not reach the USSR. (Krupskaya had been dead for many years when Lenin's testament was published for mass consumption inside the Soviet Union after the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956.)

In various ways Stalin moved against the opposition. Zinoviev and Trotsky made a promise to end their activity in the interests of the working class but such high motives were not offered to Krupskaya. Rumours and innuendo were used to discredit her. It is in this context that McNeal judges the booklet by Kollontai. Whatever the truth of the matter, it is clear that Krupskaya was not active in the opposition after November 1926, and that her first public statement of qualified support for Stalin came in May 1927 shortly after "A Great Love" had been published. At this time, she attacked the opposition although she never completely recanted her support.

Perhaps she felt justified, too, when the Lenin testament was published in the Bull-
etin of the party congress in 1927. The circu-
lation was limited to delegates but at least it
was no longer a secret. McNeal's theory
about the use made by Stalin of the publica-
tion of "A Great Love" to win some sup-
port from Krupskaya allows for more specu-
lation. For example, Kollontai was herself
an early and outspoken oppositionist yet
she was one of the very few Bolshevik lead-
ers at the time of October 1917 who sur-
vived Stalin's purges. Perhaps this was part
of the price extracted from her. Perhaps,
too, Kollontai, an exponent of the sexual
revolution, felt little compassion for Krup-
skaya who held very conservative ideas on
such questions. Later she was to support
the strengthening of the Soviet family and
to welcome the repeal of the law which
guaranteed legal abortion. Whatever the
truth of the matter it suggests another asp-
ect of the feminism of Kollontai, which is
in general justifiably admired, that is that
then, as now, it is difficult for women in
political organisations to always determine
their priorities and to express that solidar-
ity with each other which is now called
sisterhood.

McNeal records how, in the following
years, until her death in 1939, Krupskaya
did her best to protect Lenin's memory
from the growing bad taste of painters,
film-makers and story-tellers who made him
less of a man by presenting him as a god.

Her chief political concern remained
with education and the care of children.
Although conservative on several matters
which feminists regard as essential for the
liberation of women, she often protested
the burdens of women in Soviet Russia, and
sought ways to alleviate them through the
establishment of child care centres, public
laundries and dining rooms. In education,
she fought a losing battle for a concept of
education where study and work would be
combined. At the time, the need for many
semi-skilled workers and a relatively few
specialists, for a rapidly developing industry,
determined a different form of education.
In recent times, Soviet education has de-
veloped more in keeping with Krupskaya's
theories.

In her last years she was to add the cus-
tomary number of praises to Stalin in her
speeches and writings, but she always refused
to acknowledge the myth that Stalin was
Lenin's closest comrade. She did, however,
endorse the purges while pleading the cause
of many of its victims.

McNeal offers some convincing reasons
for her support of the purges and suggests
that her motivation was similar to those who
agreed to confess in the name of some great-
er good, presented as party and working class
unity in face of the greater danger out there
(counter-revolution, foreign intervention,
fascism, war - all real enough).

He argues that Krupskaya was devoted to
an abstraction -- the ideal revolution and that
by not coming to terms with the harsh real-
ities of post-October Russia, she left herself
little alternative but to remain devoted to the
revolution regardless of the corruptions under
Stalin. Whether this is true or not, it is now
much clearer than it was in Krupskaya's life-
time that no one can, with certainty, guaran-
tee the progress of socialist development. Such
factors as the state of the economy before,
during and after the revolution, the democra-
tic experience of the working class, the inter-
national trend (for or against revolution) as
well as the integrity of the revolutionary par-
ty and its leadership must all be taken into
account. No one should underestimate the
latter point but it cannot be seen in isolation
from the rest.

In this case, McNeal hides none of the
subjective weaknesses of the Bolshevik Party
after Lenin died, and even hints that some
of the problems which later emerged could
be attributed to Lenin -- for example, some
areas of censorship -- but his admiration for
Krupskaya, and Lenin, over-ride other ques-
tions. His Krupskaya is a woman in her own
right, determined to work for humanity and
showing great strength against odds which
would have destroyed many others.

To acquaint oneself with her life through
McNeal's work, one can only agree that:

"Although she lived in the shadow of
her great husband, Krupskaya's life
is marked by a sternness and integrity
that is her own. If necessary she could
and did suffer imprisonment, break with
Menshevik friends, accept Inessa Armand
as a dear comrade, suppress undesirable
books, and risk the consequences of
smuggling Lenin's testament abroad.
Above all she was tough enough not to
be personally corrupted by the power
that her husband and his party had won,
against very long odds."

One may regret the compromises she even-
tually made with Stalin, but in fairness one
must also marvel that she held out so long and
that the compromises were never total capitul-
ation.

There are all too few revolutionary hero-
ines and even fewer presentations of revolut-
ionaries who are neither all good nor all bad.
Professor McNeal deserves our gratitude for
his Krupskaya who is both revolutionary and
human.
Tweedle dum-dee and the a.l.p.

The three following contributions comment on the book "From Tweedledum to Tweedledee".*

Although the book is strongly criticised from different points of view, the issues raised are sufficiently important to warrant the extended comment.

By WINTON HIGGINS

For the left in general, analysis of social democratic parties is a traditional area both of over-sensitivity and of extreme confusion.

This over-sensitivity and confusion have their historical roots in the unaccidental tendency for marxists and marxist parties to collapse into social democratic perspectives. The confusion is intensified by the emotional invective and internecine strife which tears the left apart whenever this tendency manifests itself. Preoccupied with the egocentric problems of "liquidationism", "ultra-leftism", and so on, the left hardly ever gets

round to a dispassionate analysis of social democracy itself -- an analysis that must have far-reaching consequences for left strategy. Only this can explain why two academics produced in five weeks what the entire Australian left has failed to produce in over fifty years: a sustained enquiry into the ALP and its “social model”.

The great bulk of this little book is a pastiche of clippings from the 'Australian Financial Review', 'The National Times', 'The Australian', and a handful of other journals. But a central thesis does emerge from the book: however ad hoc, spontaneous and even contradictory ALP policies may appear on the surface, together they articulate a complex and deliberate plan for social and economic integration in the interests of a streamlined “neo-capitalism”. The authors therefore stress the INTERCONNECTIONS between policies, for the classic ruse of social democracy is to offer the dispossessed classes certain palliatives (“progressive measures” as the are fashionably and misleadingly called by the left) with strings attached -- strings that hold together a “package deal” whereby, in exchange they surrender their effective power to demand more radical changes.

The evidence which Catley and McFarlane bring forward to support this thesis is irrefutable. Apart from the policies themselves and their obvious congruity, there is a large body of evidence as to what Labor’s overall priorities are, and the sources of its strategy to achieve them. Its first priority is a high stable growth rate, and it has gleaned a strategy for achieving this from the major international “think-tank” for capitalist planning and stabilisation, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as the more glamorous examples of social democracy at work, particularly Sweden.

Basically, two kinds of policies are used to achieve the desired growth rate. The first involves a much greater degree of government planning, including forecasting private industry’s future demands for labor, raw materials, transport facilities and so on. The second is intended to increase the productivity of labor by domesticating the workforce, making it more class collaborationist in attitude and willing to accommodate the swiftly changing needs of the capitalist class. This second type of policy necessitates the integration of the trade union movement into the state and other capitalist institutions at all levels, from cooperation of the upper echelon of trade union officialdom onto government consultative panels, right down to co-option of local militants in workers’ participation schemes. The title of the fourth chapter -- “Destroying Class Politics” -- thus sums up the ALP’s strategy towards the labor movement.

Catley and McFarlane justly dismiss the conventional left approach to the ALP which sees that party as a collection of individuals, some idealistic and some opportunists, and a random collection of policies, some good and some bad -- an approach which ends up in the tactic of putting your money on the idealists and the good policies and hoping for the best. Clearly, this approach dissolves the coherence of the ALP so that the basic thrust of its policies is lost from sight.

The ALP’s unqualified commitment to capitalism is certainly established in the book, but the suggestion in the title that the ALP and the Opposition are indistinguishable contradicts one of its major themes: the ALP was elected in 1972 by the grace of key non-working class sectors precisely because it proposed new solutions to the problems of Australian capitalism. From the standpoint of the working class, the election of the ALP has meant that its main class adversary, the capitalist state, has made a radical switch in strategy, from Liberal-inspired confrontation and even violence against the working class, to ALP-inspired undermining of that class’ organisational bases.

What is true, and what the British experience confirms, is that the crises of late capitalism reduce the range of choice available to rival parties of capitalism, so that a process of CONVERGENCE occurs. This process forces a labor party to abandon its traditional egalitarian posturing just as surely as it forces its opponents to abandon laissez-faire. As British communist Bill Warren writes:

“Wilson was election in 1964 on a platform and with an ideology in which equality scarcely figured. On the contrary, it was widely noted that the traditional Labor rhetoric of equality and social justice had been largely abandoned in favour of emphasis on efficiency, dynamism, the scientific and technological revolution as applied to Britain and so on. Alongside this went rhetorical broadsides against grouse-shooting amateurs, Tory backwoods squires, etc. which
again emphasised efficiency rather than justice as the crux of the difference between Labor and Tory.”

The analogy between 1964 Britain and 1972 Australia hardly requires elaboration. And just as the failure of traditional Tory policy turned Heath into “an orthodox social democrat” in 1972, so the Liberals’ 1972 electoral defeat has, as the recent Federal election campaign showed, turned Snedden into an orthodox technocratic laborite.

This contradiction in the book, between seeing the ALP as identical with the Opposition, and seeing it as having crucial differences from it, is symptomatic of the authors’ underlying theoretical inconsistencies. The introduction sets the pace with an orgy of eclecticism: Lenin’s 1913 characterisation of the ALP as a liberal-bourgeois party is quoted with approval, and yet we are invited to join in the old laborite’s grief on the demise of the ALP’s radical egalitarianism. In spite of a reference to the objective constraints on anti-capitalist programs imposed by the capitalist system itself, we are assured that a Labor government “could introduce socialist measures (nationalisation of corporations without compensation, under workers’ class power) to counter managerial power, and begin the long process of bringing the state under people’s power.” A little further on it turns out that it is not the capitalist system that defeats this revisionist dream, but a coalition inside the ALP of “new intellectual middle classes” and “the petit-bourgeoisie represented by small capitalists and the labor aristocracy”.

Instead of a consistent methodology, there is a mishmash of themes lifted from a variety of social and economic theories including, in the second last chapter, marxism. In the absence of a sound materialist basis, a good deal of conspiracy theory enters into the book. The greatest howler in this regard is the theory that women’s liberation is an OECD plot (p.37).

The other substantial weakness of the book - related to the first - is that it is saturated with jargon. Firstly, a lot of technical terms, from bourgeois economics in the main, are used without explanation. These terms could have been simply explained, if not dispensed with altogether. Secondly, most of the book is written in an idiom made fashionable in a very restricted circle by the ‘Financial Review’. This idiom is not only obscure: it encourages positive obscurantism. Thus, Connor’s plans to develop Australian fossil fuel resources are attributed to “Gigantomania” and compared with Stalin’s “obvious Freudian inspiration” to “litter the Soviet countryside with huge hydro-electric schemes” (p.49). A considerable number of working terms, like “Tweedle-dum/Tweedledee syndrome” and “Whitlam inflation” echo this subjectivist slant.

Nevertheless, the book has its uses for the left, quite apart from the negative one of criticising the left’s own approach to the ALP. It provides a comprehensive account of ALP policies that can be integrated into a marxist analysis of Australian capitalism and a marxist explanation of the ALP itself. Such an explanation would have to be founded on the marxist theory of the state, including the role played in the state apparatus by parties with working class electoral bases and the consequent political domination over that class by the state. Certain specific themes treated by Catley and McFarlane feed very well into this marxist project, particularly the ALP’s extremely bureaucratic style of government (in spite of all its vapourings about “open government”) and the meritocratic ideology peddled by contemporary social democrats here and overseas. In foreign policy, as the authors point out, the ALP’s falling in step with post-Vietnam imperialist strategy has added two new twists to Australia’s junior partner role to the major imperialist powers: firstly, Australia is to become the springboard into Asia as, in Whitlam’s words “an offshore factory”; and secondly, posing as a raw materials supplier, Australia is to seek admission into the Third World community as an Imperialist Trojan Horse (a role that the Israeli state has been playing for some time).

A negative virtue, but still a commendable one, is the authors’ refusal to get involved in the left’s problem of how to relate to the ALP – a problem that must be left to activists since it involves some fine judgments about working class perceptions of, and commitment to, this party. There can, as the authors imply, be no question of a working class party collaborating in the implementation of the ALP’s overall plan. The task of the left is rather to work for the defeat of that plan, and in so doing, win the working class to socialist politics. The STATED tactic of serious left groups is to mobilise around certain issues raised by the ALP, such as socialised medicine.
and the takeover of the Australian economy by the multi-national corporations, and to push those issues in a revolutionary direction. This tactic, while correct, is insufficient.

What is also required -- and here Catley and McFarlane’s work acquires its greatest relevance -- is an understanding of how Labor’s plan works, the dangers it entails for the labor movement, and the specific points at which it must be defeated. It is in this area that many sections of the left have been particularly timorous, and have shown little combative or inclination to produce the constant “political arraignment” of the regime that Lenin deemed so essential.

So what dangers does the ALP in office pose the working class? Firstly, the dropping of equality in favour of meritocracy is not a merely ideological shift. As Warren has pointed out in the British case, the first Wilson government actually reversed the trend for the share of wages in the national income to increase, it left lower income earners worse off and it deliberately pursued deflationary policies which resulted in large-scale unemployment. Had it not been for the fact that a militant working class defeated Wilson’s incomes policy and industrial legislation, matters would have been worse still. As the authors of the Cambridge University study ‘Do Trade Unions Cause Inflation?’ comment:

“It seems to be the fate of Labor Governments in Britain to tax employees more heavily (or restrain their real wages more effectively). Indeed, it almost appears .......... as if the objective economic-historical role of the British Labor Party is to do (no doubt despite itself) those things to the workers that Conservative Governments are unable to do.”

I especially commend Catley and McFarlane’s book to those who doubt that similar observations do, our could, apply to Australia.

The second, more long-term danger a Labor government poses to the labor movement is that of total absorption into the capitalist state apparatus. Catley and McFarlane quote a Swedish democratic cabinet minister as saying:

“Our aim is the establishment of a corporate state. We are aware of the abuses of the system, as in Fascist Italy, and we intend to avoid them. But corporation has succeeded in the labor market, and we believe it is the solution for the whole of society. Technology demands the collective.” (p.44).

Enough said.

In spite of what we now know about the ALP, the left may properly work to preserve it in government for the sake of enhanced openings for raising revolutionary demands, conditions for struggle and the experience of “reformism” that Labor governments afford. But it is vital that this strategy should not collapse into supporting Labor willy-nilly, or act as a prohibition on trenchant criticism of the ALP. Here, above all, the first rule of revolutionary politics applies: tell it like it is.

In recommending that people read this book, I do not recommend that they buy it: $3.50 for 88 pages (excluding appendices) in a paperback edition is outrageous. Borrow it, rip it off, or achieve the same result at a fraction of the cost in time and money, by reading the same authors’ article on the ALP in ‘Intervention’ No. 3.

* * * *

FOOTNOTES


By JANNA THOMPSON

From Tweedledum to Tweedledee, by Robert Catley and Bruce McFarlane is a book which probably expresses the disillusionment of many left wing people who
have left the ALP or remain, but without much enthusiasm. Its argument is that the ALP’s overall aim is to manage capital more efficiently and its policies contribute to this end. Thus, there is no real difference between the Liberal Party and the ALP. In fact, we are given the impression that the ALP could do more harm to the interests of the working class than the Liberals by using its influence with working class organisations to get them to accept an incomes policy and productivity deals.

The book is reminiscent of Miliband’s ‘Parliamentary Socialism’ in which the history of the British Labor Party is presented as a series of betrayals of the working class by their parliamentary leaders. Like Miliband, the authors adopt the tone of betrayed trust. They have seen through it all, and now they have the painful duty of enlightening their readers. So we are supposed to be shocked that a Labor government would plan imperialist expansion in Indonesia; we are meant to be revolted by the spectacle of Labor Ministers disguising capitalist interests under the cloak of nationalism; we are supposed to cry shame when we find out what Connor’s resource protection policy amounts to.

Righteous indignation has fuelled many a left wing movement but it is no substitute for a correct understanding of the situation. As an analysis of Whitlam’s government in action ‘Tweedledum and Tweedledee’ leaves a lot to be desired.

Behind a lot of the argument in this book is the idea that the nature of the Labor Party was altered by men like Whitlam and Hayden. Catley and McFarlane see Labor’s past as being both a Golden Age and the Stone Age. The old leaders are referred to as ‘paleo-laborites’, but at the same time, they see the Party in the old days as committed to redistribution of income and nationalisation of private power. (The authors have a touching faith in this supposed commitment, probably the result of not having a Labor government for so long.) Now, under Whitlam and his technocrats, the ALP has become a party wedded to capitalism. These technocrats have redefined equality as equality of opportunity and show no interest at all in nationalising private power.

The authors do not have much to say about why Whitlam and his technocrats were able to take control of, and alter the direction of, the Labor Party. They seem to accept the idea of Pannekoek that the entry of intellectual middle class into labor parties resulted in reformist theory and practice -- and Whitlam type policies. But exactly why these intellectuals should be interested in ensuring more profitability for capital is not explained.

The main thesis of the book is that far from advancing haphazard and unco-ordinated policies (as many people believe) the technocratic laborites have deliberately adopted goals and strategies in accordance with the recommendations of the Paris-based OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) of which Australia is a member.

They cite the following as evidence to support their thesis:

1. OECD did make recommendations for Australia (such as suggesting some tariff barriers should be removed), some of which the Labor Government has followed.

2. Labor ministers and advisers have been known to refer favourably to OECD guidelines.

3. The policies put forward by the Government on a wide range of matters fit into OECD strategy. (For instance, Labor support for equal pay, day care centres can be seen as an attempt to tap a previously under-used source of labor -- what the OECD recommends for overcoming labor power shortages which plague European capitalist societies.

None of this goes very far. Of course, it is perfectly possible that ALP ministers do follow OECD guidelines, and likely that some of them do so some of the time. But the authors have not proved that they have a master strategy supplied by the OECD for making capitalism run more efficiently. Their attempt to show that ALP policies can be seen as contributing to a more efficient, harmonious capitalism doesn’t do the job. For without too much strain on the imagination you can see anything the ALP could possibly do short of declaring the Australian People’s State as contributing to the functioning of capitalism. Giving aid to Aborigines helps to prevent costly racial strife and may help some Aborigines become skilled workers so they can contribute to an economy which needs skilled labor. Higher pensions will help relieve worker dissatis-
faction with their lot in the present system. Another problem is that the OECD guidelines which the authors mention are simply Keynesian strategies or the collected wisdom (if you can call it that) of capitalist countries who have faced similar problems (like inflation, under-production, manpower shortages, strikes, etc.). So it would not be surprising if many of the ALP’s economic policies were not in accordance with them, as would be the economic policies of similarly placed capitalist countries, whether members of the OECD or not.

Is there any evidence to suppose that the Labor Government has anything that can be called a master plan? If they do then we would expect to find from a study of the government in action some order in the way policies were put into effect: in their timing, the way they complement each other. I don’t have the impression that things happened in this way. What appears to have happened is that ministers began with some ideas about what they wanted, some ideas about what needed doing, that their ideas were modified by those of their staff and by interest groups; that ministers produced their policies without too much attention to policies of other ministers, with which they were sometimes in conflict. That these policies are coherent and compatible only in the sense that they all presuppose as given the capitalist framework. (What else is new!)

What account of Labor Government programs and strategies we should adopt of course depends on a detailed study of their decision making. But Catley and McFarlane do not attempt such a study. What is surprising and startling in their thesis is unproved. What is acceptable, namely that the ALP operates in capitalist framework, is not surprising or startling.

What is worth remarking on is the assumption underlying their thesis, the idea that the Labor Party has been taken over and re-orientated by a group of technocrats whose plans and goals determine its direction. But Catley and McFarlane toy with the idea that the direction of the Party and the Government is determined largely by social and economic ‘realities’ and not by the men who happen to hold office (“Labor is in office, it is not in POWER.”) But this idea does not enter into the main arguments of the book. Only if the technocratic-laborites are in control of the direction of ALP policy does it make sense to condemn them for failing to be radicals. Only under this assumption does it become plausible to suppose that the ALP has a master plan which determines the direction of the Labor Government.

One obvious shortcoming of the assumption is that it does not allow for contribution to government policy making by any group outside of politicians and their advisers, except in a negative way (like resisting the implementation of a policy). At one point the authors do say that WEL forced the government to agree to the principle of equal pay for women, something they were at first unwilling to do. But they also say that offering equal pay is part of OECD strategy for encouraging women to come into the work force. So presumably, it was part of Labor’s plan, too. Should the authors be allowed to have it both ways?

A marxist analysis of the course of a labor government would try to account for the direction of its activities in terms of the forces acting on the economic and social structure, the crises of modern capitalism and the need to alleviate social ills that they cause. Catley and McFarlane’s account is not a marxist analysis. At times it borders on a conspiracy thesis.

Another assumption of the authors which has to be challenged is the idea of the class struggle that lies behind many of their remarks. The class struggle, according to this idea, is the basic conflict between workers who create value and capitalists who expropriate most of it. Capitalists try to cover up this conflict by introducing or encouraging “non-class” issues: women’s liberation, consumerism, own home ownership, education reform, and trying to pretend that interests of workers and capitalists are largely the same. Many of the social movements are thus treated shortly and sharply. Consumer groups are simply contributing to the consumer ethos of capitalist society. People concerned with ecological problems are associated by the authors with the Club of Rome and Ehrlich and then dismissed as “eco-freaks” or members of “radical chic movements”. Women’s liberation is said to be all right as long as women fight as part of the working class and not just as women. Catley and McFarlane worry about the danger that those trying to split the working class might encourage women to believe that it is men and not capitalism which oppresses them. The problem with this idea is that women do often have to
struggle against particular men -- a husband, a trade union leader. Should working class women cease their struggle for equality in working class organisations for fear that this might threaten working class solidarity? The reader is almost left with the impression that it's not a good thing for women to leave the home and go into the work force -- when their doing so contributes to capitalist aims.

In their rapid dismissal of non-working class movements, Catley and McFarlane do not mention the argument of some socialists that such movements (like the ecology movements) can present a serious challenge to capitalism. I suspect that they are blinkered by a narrow view of the contradictions in a modern capitalist society. If on the contrary, we hold that the socialisation of production in a society like ours has resulted in the penetration of capitalist needs and values into all areas of life: male-female relations, the family, the schools, etc., then we hold that fighting capitalism means fighting on many fronts at once. That people sometimes join the struggle as members of a community or as women does not mean that they necessarily cease to fight for the interests of the working class -- i.e. for the overthrowing of capitalism.

One question that the book raises but does not answer is whether capitalism can be managed efficiently. Catley and McFarlane are concerned to uncover the stratagems of the ALP and not to say anything about how successful these stratagems are likely to be. I suspect that behind the authors' warnings about the atomisation of the working class is the fear that OECD policies could actually work. This fear is probably unfounded. Work done recently in political economy, such as that of Claus Offe and James O'Conner suggests that problems created by the capitalist economy create the need for welfare services and other state expenditures, and these expenditures in turn cause a fiscal crisis for the capitalist state. According to this view, governments far from pursuing a strategy are desperately trying to deal with pressing problems which cannot be solve in the capitalist framework.

A book like "Tweedledum and Tweedledee" should be judged not only for the ideas it puts forward but also for its implication for socialist practice. In this respect, it is worse than useless. The message that comes forward is that socialists should concern themselves with the real class struggle and not issues that capitalists use to divert the attention of the workers. But how does the socialist meet up with the real class struggle? The problem revolutionaries face in a society like ours is that most movements and struggles that workers and others engage in are reformist in character (at least on the surface) and thus in the style of Catley and McFarlane can be shown to contribute directly or indirectly to the functioning of capitalism or the mystification of the working class. So we seem to be faced with the choice of keeping our hands clean and doing nothing or having to worry about whether our actions aren't giving aid and comfort to the class enemy. There is no attitude which is more likely to lead to the irrelevancy of the socialist movement and a loss of contact with the workers and oppressed groups.

The title "Tweedledum and Tweedledee" suggests that there is no essential difference between the ALP and the Liberals. Indeed, both parties function in the capitalist system and both therefore have to deal with the problems of economics and society that are created by that system. But to say this is to speak in generalities. When we come down to the level where we work and live, then the Tweedledum and Tweedledee idea becomes less attractive. Although Liberal and ALP policies look much the same, our good sense tells us that Liberals would be somewhat more reluctant to spend on social services and more eager to make the poor pay, that education reforms would not have top priority, that there would be fewer qualms about increasing unemployment. These may amount to quantitative differences, but they do make a difference to those people whose interests socialists are supposed to be concerned about. To forget this is to ensure that socialist intellectuals will never gain the confidence of working people.

By PAT VORT-RONALD

The Women's Liberation Movement has existed in most States in Australia since 1968 or earlier. In that period its loose structure and the differing views of the women involved have produced varying analyses of the position of women in Australia, and various strategies for changing it. Among these, as in other mov-
ments such as the trade union movement, have been reformist and non-marxist strategies. In spite of differences, several central demands have clearly emerged:

1. The demand for women's control of their own bodies through free and available contraception and abortion, sex education and health facilities.

2. The demand for social responsibility, involving both men and women, for housework and child care.

3. The demand for an end to discrimination against women in the workforce, including one rate for the job, an end to "male" and "female" classifications and training, in the school system, in apprenticeships and on the job.

Socialist and working class women have been involved in this movement, and its first national conference was on the subject of women in the workforce. Women's liberation has played a large part in pressurising various governments, employers and the trade union movement to recognise women as workers entitled to the same pay and conditions as men, and in encouraging and supporting women who have taken traditionally "male" jobs.

In addition, it has influenced many socialist groups, some of whom now include its basic demands as part of the struggle for socialism.

Finally, it has worked in conjunction with other groups on the left: participation in the Sydney May Day rallies is just one example of this.

In view of these basic facts, it is surprising, to say the least, to read in Catley and McFarlane's 'From Tweedledum to Tweedledee: The New Labor Government in Australia: a critique of its social model' that Women's Liberation is nothing more nor less than a capitalist plot, whose aims are indistinguishable from those of OECD-inspired Labor policy. These claims, preposterous as they are, are worth examination because the book's theme is an important and valid one, and will be read by many on the left.

Women's Liberation is seen as an OECD plot on two grounds:

1. It is seen as part of OECD plans to "atomise" workers so that they turn to "non-class" issues.

2. It is seen as part of a manpower policy which plans the size of the workforce: women are to be substituted for, or used to supplement, expensive immigration schemes. (1)

The Labor Government is claimed to be supporting Women's Liberation to these ends.

One would expect a substantial argument to back up these claims, but no evidence whatsoever is given to support them. All we are told is that various sections of the capitalist class and the Labor Government are supporting a series of limited reforms to encourage more married women into the workforce. (2) Instead of serious political argument, the authors label Women's Liberationists as "libbers" who preach "sex war", (3) the same tactic as is used by the capitalist press against the women's movement. This tactic is also used by sections of the left which refuse to recognise that women are oppressed in a specific way under capitalism, that only their own struggles can end this oppression, even in the context of a socialist revolution, and that this struggle is a vital part of the anti-capitalist forces. Here, it is worthwhile remembering what August Bebel had to say about unprincipled opposition to women's struggles on the part of male socialists:

"There are socialists who are not less opposed to the emancipation of women than the capitalist to socialism. Every socialist recognises the dependence of the worker on the capitalist and cannot understand that others, and especially the capitalists themselves, should fail to recognise it also; but the same socialist often does not recognise the dependence of women on men because the question touches his own dear self more or less nearly." (4)

In addition to blind prejudice, the authors reveal an abysmal ignorance of the demands of Women's Liberation. They show that OECD policy on the entry of women into the workforce is designed specifically so as NOT to interfere with the nuclear family under capitalism (5) Any knowledge of Women's Liberation critiques of the family under capitalism shows that such reformism is incompatible with Women's Liberation strategy which aims at the abolition of the nuclear family as the basic social unit of society. One
might as well say that the struggles of workers for better pay and conditions are indistinguishable from OECD policies of job enrichment and worker participation schemes! Of course, the authors are at pains to point out the necessary antagonism between the latter two, but are blind to the fact that the same antagonism exists between the real struggles of women for liberation and OECD’s attempts to integrate them into the workforce at capital’s convenience. This blindness is the stranger in view of their unacknowledged use of an article by Margaret Benston, a well-known Marxist women’s liberationist, as a basis for their criticism of OECD “human capital” theories about the family. (6). The title of the article is given, but not the author, nor the source; perhaps it would have been too embarrassing to admit that an important Marxist critique of the family and women’s position under capitalism could come from the Women’s Liberation Movement!

Having issued such a blanket condemnation of Women’s Liberation, the authors attempt to mitigate it somewhat by isolating and praising Women’s Electoral Lobby, which they regard as the good proletarian element of an otherwise bourgeois movement. WEL is hailed as a group of “thinking working women” who, unlike Women’s Liberation, demand equal treatment for women workers. (7) Once again, this is just plain inaccurate, since Women’s Liberation was demanding this before WEL came into existence. The distortions which the authors are willing to engage in to praise WEL at the expense of Women’s Liberation are illustrated by their analysis of the “equal pay” bribe attached to the December 1973 incomes and prices control referendum. According to them, it was WEL pressure which succeeded in having “equal pay” added to the Government’s promises. If this is true (and given the inaccuracies of the rest of the section, it may well not be), it would seem to be a serious concession to a class collaborationist policy of incomes control, for very doubtful benefits, since the kind of “equal pay” promised was not specified, but government policy at that time was only for “equal pay for work of equal value”. And women, at least, know what kind of a fraud that policy was! But such a concession is hailed by the authors as “a blow for class politics! What kind of class analysis is this?

The authors not only distort the politics of the women’s movement according to their own prejudices, but they also show a complete lack of understanding of the tactics of the struggle against OECD-type reforms. As to the former: the Women’s movement already contains women of very different political viewpoints, but this does not prevent tactical alliances to achieve certain goals. Such alliances are also formed in the workers’ movement. The authors offer no principled criticism of the actual concrete politics of either Women’s Liberation or WEL; they offer instead a tissue of simplistic generalisations and downright fallacies, and ludicrous attempts to split the movement into “good” and “bad” elements according to their own confused and ill-informed criteria. Such ignorance and prejudice can do nothing but harm to both the women’s and workers’ movements.

A final point must be made concerning the authors’ tendency to imply that women should NOT enter the workforce, in view of the fact that sections of the capitalist class and the capitalist state want them to do so. This is an utterly inadequate response, since the struggle for equality in regard to work is crucial for women to gain independence and challenge the sexual division of labor. What we must do is demand to enter the workforce ON OUR OWN TERMS, which means demands at the same time for control of our own bodies, and the socialisation of housework and child care. These demands are quite distinct from OECD-type plans which in no way challenge the nuclear family under capitalism, and from strictly reformist demands based on the notion of “equality” for women within the capitalist system.

FOOTNOTES
2. Ibid., p. 38.
3. Ibid., pp. 42 and 41;
7. Ibid. p. 42.
8. Ibid. loc. cit.
SUCHTING COMMENTS

My half-column letter in the March-April issue attracted two-and-one-half columns of editorial comment. I would like to make a few remarks by way of rejoinder. I do not intend at present to pursue the matter any further after this.

1. A large part of your comments was taken up with making points on which I would have thought it clear there was no difference of opinion between us. Unconditional opposition to resolving theoretical and policy differences by administrative means, and "substitutionism" in general are examples.

By making these points at great length in commenting on my letter, AS THOUGH BY WAY OF REBUTTAL, a quite misleading impression of the views represented by my letter may well have been given to some readers. At any rate you certainly made very much easier the task of anyone who wishes to misrepresent those views.

Similarly, I assumed it to be obvious that my reference to "the repression of people for thier political and ideological beliefs", especially when taken in the context of the example I gave, did not mean what various passages in your comments more than merely insinuated they meant, namely, people's being subject to repression "merely because they believe in the old system, in religion or some other non-marxist system of beliefs" etc. etc. OF
 COURSE, I primarily meant beliefs as expressed in actions of a sort likely to affect the basic viability of a revolutionary order. To that extent, we seem to agree again.

(Nevertheless there are actions and actions. What would you say, for example, about the use of privately owned media to spread false information and inflammatory opinions in circumstances which could endanger a genuinely socialist government? Or the continued employment of major functionaries in the old state-apparatus where perhaps what is in question are not concrete actions but potential ones? The case of Chile can again furnish materials for examples.)

2. If you went on at great length about matters concerning which it is not clear that there is any difference between us, you virtually abstained from saying anything at all on what I clearly pointed to as the CENTRAL question of my letter, on which there is obvious disagreement between us. This is the matter of defending a policy by reference to “human rights” rather than from a class standpoint. Though more abstract than the issues raised above, it is also more immediate, for it is relevant to the way in which a whole range of theoretical and policy questions are posed and answered.

You continue to affirm the “humanistic” view (to give it a name which no doubt you would warmly approve of). Now Marx and the classic marxists have always explicitly rejected this sort of advocacy. (See, to take a couple of examples from many, Marx’s position on the Irish question of his time and the American Civil War.) Of course, this itself does not automatically oblige marxists to do likewise. But it does put the onus on them to produce a justification for not doing so.

I cannot find any such justification in either the original editorial or in your latest comments. You do observe that the concrete application of the class standpoint is often very difficult. And so on. But nothing much is going to be resolved by appealing to banalities of this sort.

Marx and the rest did not reject the “humanistic” standpoint for no reason. To begin with, it is unnecessary to use it. For example, the crimes of Stalin were not against “human rights”, but against genuine socialism, which is totally incompatible with massive deception, arbitrary arrest, nation-wide coercion, bureaucratic privilege, and so forth. (See Trotsky’s ‘Their Morals and ours’.)

But not only is it unnecessary, it is positively dangerous. Why? Briefly, because it works to blur politically crucial differences, to DISARM, whereas the class standpoint does the opposite. Let Marx have the final word here. The antithesis between private property and working class interests, he writes in ‘The German Ideology’, is absolute:

“If, then, the theoretical representatives of the proletariat wish their literary activity to have any practical effect, they must first and foremost insist that all phrases be swept aside which tend to dim the realisation of the sharpness of this opposition, all phrases tending to conceal this opposition and giving the bourgeois a chance to approach the communists for safety’s sake on the strength of their philanthropic enthusiasms... it is... necessary to resist all phrases which obscure and dilute... the realisation that communism is totally opposed to the existing world order.” (p.529)

— Wal Suchting

ULSTER IN PERSPECTIVE

Ruaric Dixon’s analysis of the Northern Ireland situation is certainly useful, especially his insistence that the sense of separate identity experienced by the Ulster Protestant community has been historically determined. But, in the first place, he misjudges the historical forces which gave rise to this sense of separate identity, positing them in the specific nature of capitalist DEVELOPMENT in Northern Ireland and, secondly, his concentration on just one aspect of the situation leads on to a “blinkerized” analysis of the situation as a whole. Consequently, the suggestions he makes for the realisation of socialism in Ireland are utterly unrealistic.

The political climate in Ulster was alrea-
dy set in the pattern it has long since retained as early as the 17th century. The separatism of the Scotch-Irish has its origins in the Ulster Plantation, in their determination to hold on to the land that they had acquired and their fear of the dispossessed native Irish, who naturally resented such a massive influx of population. An ‘us-them’ psychology was thus immediately created by this net transfer of economic resources. Undoubtedly the particular form of capitalist development in Ulster, especially in the 19th century, considerably strengthened the Protestant sense of separate identity but it was not its cause. Its REAL ROOTS lie in the original and persistent fear of the Scotch-Irish that their recently, and in time not so recently acquired economic predominance might at any moment be cynically and ruthlessly destroyed by an outburst of Catholic fury. Indeed not only their property but their very lives were at issue. This was no imaginary fear, as the events of the 1640s amply illustrate. Obviously, this fear diminished as their security and numbers increased and the famous or infamous Battle of the Boyne in 1690 was indeed decisive in this respect for it confirmed the Cromwellian settlement and, more importantly, was almost immediately followed by the enactment of the Penal Laws which effectively squashed native Irish resistance, for the foreseeable future at any rate. Catholic resentment nonetheless persisted.

Sectarian strife had existed in one form or another throughout the century and became particularly acute in the 1790s in the southern Ulster counties, especially Armagh. The most important cause was a keen competition for tenancies, resulting from the sharp rise in population. Protestant farmers feared that they might be ousted by Roman Catholics, whose lower standard of living enabled them to outbid Protestant competitors. They organised themselves into armed bands which terrorised the local Catholic population in an attempt to make them leave the countryside. The latter reacted by setting up a counter-organisation -- the ‘Defenders’ -- and clashes between the two groups were frequent and often fatal. It was also at this time that the Protestants, after a victorious encounter with the Defenders, set up an ‘Orange Society’ to protect their own immediate interests and to perpetuate the protestant ascendancy. Moreover, when the insurrection of '98 took place, inspired by genuinely Republican principles, it was essentially a protestant affair in the North. In the South, the rising was largely confined to the County of Wexford where Father John Murphy led the rebels. This leadership gave the rising an essentially religious character; and though the rebels had the support of a few protestant radicals, they regarded protestants in general as their enemies, to be attacked, plundered and even slaughtered, simply for being protestants.

There would appear then to be some grounds for the thesis that the phenomenon of protestant sectarianism is essentially derivative, dependent for its existence on a threat from subversive Catholics, be the element of subversion the Whiteboys, the Defenders or the IRA. Reconciliation then would seem to depend on eliminating this threat. But what this thesis fails to take into account is the institutionalisation of protestant sectarianism caused by the establishment of the state of Northern Ireland and its consequent transformation into a positive force. There can be no doubt that the institutionalisation of sectarian attitudes considerably strengthened them. With the creation of Stormont, there now existed a concrete embodiment of protestant predominance for all to see and it was expressly recognised as such by protestant politicians and people alike, and indeed by the native Irish.

The importance of this feedback from the specifically political and institutional has not been sufficiently stressed by Irish historians. The main effect of the Government of Ireland Act (1920) was to raise the self-esteem of the protestant worker, who tended thereafter to conceive of himself as a fully fledged member of the ruling class. As a result of 50 odd years of Unionist domination, he has now acquired a positive Ulster identity which exists in its own right and is no longer simply reactive, i.e. dependent on the existence of a tangible Catholic threat. The creation of Stormont thus greatly diminished the chances of sectarianism simply fading away with time and with the development of a new style of capitalist enterprise. (I have in mind here the transition from the paternalist to the monopolistic managerial style of capitalism which Paul Nursey-Bray describes in his article, p.38). Considered in terms of its ultimate effects, the passing of the Government of Ireland Act was perhaps the most reactionary event in Irish political history for it effectively precluded the possibility of genuine working class solidarity emerging.

If this analysis is correct, then Nursey-Bray’s estimation of the manipulatory powers of the bourgeoisie is at least exaggerated. In its origins, sectarianism (or racialism in clerical garb if you prefer) was very much a grass roots affair. Of course it has on occasion been deliberately fostered by the bourgeoisie to fragment the working class movement, but to focus unduly on this ‘exploitative’ aspect of sectarianism, is to run the risk of missing the real source of its strength. Un-
fortunately this means that we can take only very cold comfort from Nursey-Bray’s assertion that

"the capitalist classes in Britain and Ireland no longer have any interest in fostering the false consciousness of sectarianism ...." (p.46).

As far as the British Government is concerned, the preservation of the status quo in Northern Ireland, however advantageous to British capital in the past, is no longer worth the expense. This fact finds concrete expression on the streets of Belfast when British army violence is directed at Protestant workers anxious to retain the existing order and not just at Catholic workers, anxious to undermine it. But the consequence of all this has been a reinforcement and refinement of Ulster Nationalist sentiment, which now exists for the first time in an undiluted form.

Dixon speaks very glibly at times as if the Northern Catholics simply weren’t there, or are so small numerically as to be politically insignificant, whereas in fact they constitute nearly 40 per cent of the population. With incredible and dangerous naivete, he suggests that:

"Recognition of the right of Ulster to exist outside the Irish context may allow Protestant fears surrounding what amounts to Ulster’s ‘national question’ to submerge.” (p.51).

But recognition by whom of what? Does he seriously think that Ulster Catholics will ever recognise the right of their Protestant overlords to impose second class citizenship on them or that the Provisional IRA will sacrifice its aim of a Gaelic Republic or that the Marxist Official IRA will conveniently cease to strive for an all-Ireland Socialist State?

The best that can be said for Dixon’s analysis is that it would have been appropriate in the early phase of the civil rights movement. The latter was a mass movement by Catholics, with some radical Protestant support but the crucial point about it was its implicit recognition of the legitimacy of the state of Northern Ireland. The catchcry was “British rights for British citizens”. Northern Ireland then was the proper context for understanding the situation at that stage.

At that stage in the development of an ongoing situation, Dixon’s analysis would have been directly pertinent. Northern Ireland was indeed the proper context for an appreciation of the problem. We could agree that recognition of the right of Ulster to exist separately might allow Protestant fears to subside, hence facilitating the emergence of real social issues. For a while, this seemed a real possibility. But circumstances have altered drastically since then. The Orange faction in the Unionist Party succeeded in ousting the reformist Prime Minister, Captain O’Neill and this ultimately brought about a resurgence of Republican extremism. To assert the right of Ulster to an independent existence now means in effect that IRA activism must be permanently smashed, and this is quite impossible. Republican extremism can never be wholly suppressed. For better or worse, the Irish dimension is now a reality.

Does the fact that most Northern Irish workers conceive of themselves as being either Irish Catholic or Ulster Protestant rather than as working class mean that they are in a state of false consciousness? Obviously, in one sense they are, since their preoccupation with the question as to whether the state should or should not exist precludes any serious focussing on social issues of common concern; yet in another sense they are not, for their concern with ‘national’ liberation, as conceived by both groups, is no less real than that of the Vietnamese peasant struggling against American imperialism, even if the socialist content of their national aspirations is considerably less. Regrettably, we must recognise the difficulty of focussing attention on social matters of real import while the national questions remains unresolved.

If socialism is to be achieved in Ireland from what kind of perspective should the polarity in the Irish working class be viewed? We have to make a choice as to which context, the Irish or the ‘Ulster’ is more appropriate. I would argue in favour of the former. The best, indeed the only, hope for socialism lies in a dismantling of the political apparatus of Protestant sectarianism and the setting up of a United Ireland. Such a course is of course fraught with formidable difficulties, the main one being the certainty of bitter Protestant opposition, but then what course isn’t? If it took nearly 50 years for Northern Irish Catholics to begin to accept the political status quo in Ulster, we can at least hope that the Protestants might become reconciled to the new regime, if it should ever materialise, even sooner, given the fact that they would be deprived of the hope, which the Northern Catholic always had, of intervention on their behalf by a sympathetic neighbouring power. It was this hope which kept Republicanism alive in the North during fifty years of Unionist domination but it would appear that if Ireland was united politically, Britain would assuredly grasp the opportunity of extricating itself from the Irish bog once and for all, thus leaving the
Ulster Protestant community with no option but to accommodate itself, sooner or later, to the new regime. For the moment, then, it may indeed be a false analysis, as Dixon points out, to regard the Ulster Protestant workers as a sub-species of the Irish working class, but ultimately to so regard them may be the only way to achieve working class solidarity, and hence socialism, in Ireland.

-- B.T. Trainor

MARXIST THEORY OF CRISIS

In ALR (March 1974) P. Vort-Ronald discusses the marxist theory of economic crisis. She develops Marx's view that with capitalism there is a tendency for the rate of profit to fall. For Marx, the rate of profit is the rate of return on total outlays, or --

\[
\text{Rate of Profit} = \frac{\text{Profit or Surplus}}{\text{Outlays for capital} + \text{Wages}} \times 100
\]

In explaining the tendency, Marx assumes that profit and wages rise at the same rate but outlays for constant capital rise at a faster rate than outlays on wages, i.e. the value of capital used per worker increases.

With these assumptions, since outlays for constant capital are rising at a faster rate than outlays on wages they will also rise at a faster rate than profit -- wages and profit are seen as rising at the same rate.

From the equation above, it follows that there will be a tendency for the rate of profit to fall. There are counteracting tendencies. This is why Marx talks of a tendency for the rate of profit to fall. Since profitability (the rate of profit) is the motive force in capitalist economy, a fall in the rate of profit will lead to lower levels of output and employment and economic crisis.

The destruction of capital values during the crisis restores the rate of profit and thus the resumption of capital accumulation, another cycle of recovery, boom, crisis, recession.

In the article, problems of realisation are seen as secondary to those of production.

I have no doubt that there is a tendency for the rate of profit to fall. In this letter, I want to make two points. I will endeavour to show that problems of realisation play a key part in Marx's explanation of economic crisis. Secondly, I will express disagreements with the analysis given of capitalism since 1945.

Marx discusses the tendency for the rate of profit to fall in Vol. 3, Chs. 13-15. If this letter encourages a reading or re-reading of these stimulating pages, then it will be worthwhile.

In discussing the falling rate of profit, Marx divides the process of production into two stages. (3) The object of the first stage, "direct production", is the creation of surplus value. The only limit to the expansion of capital at this stage is "the productive power of society" (3) i.e. the labor and capital available. Why then does the boom always end in economic crisis? After surplus value has been produced, there comes what Marx calls "the second act of the process" (3); "The entire mass of commodities ...... must be sold" (3). "If this is not done, or only partly accomplished" the production of surplus value may yield no surplus to the capitalist, or only "a portion of the produced surplus value". (4)

Periodically, "Too many commodities are produced to permit of a realisation of the value and surplus value contained in them under the conditions of distribution and consumption peculiar to capitalist production, that is, too many to permit of the continuation of this process without ever recurring explosions". (5)

Marx writes:

"The last cause of all real crisis always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces in such a way, that only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit." (6)

We can now gather together the strands in Marx's theory of economic crisis. In the first stage of the productive process the more rapid growth of constant capital (instruments of production) relative to variable capital is favourable to the further accumulation of capital. What is involved is measures to cut costs e.g. through more advanced technology.

At the second stage of production, the main thing is a sufficient rate of growth in demand. Measures to cut costs (e.g. real wages as a lower percentage of rising levels of output) are favourable to capital accumulation at the first stage in the process but at the
second stage they depress demand and therefore the possibility of realising of value and surplus value on the market. While investment in new projects (and income payments) and proceeding in the recovery-early boom stage the tendency to over-production is hidden. It comes to the surface when the capital goods are produced and increase productive capacity. Then the exploitative conditions under which capital is accumulated becomes a barrier to the expansion of the accumulation process.

It is valuable to compare the effects of an increase in capital goods and productive capacity in a capitalist and a fully socialist society. In a capitalist society the increase in capital goods always leads to an overproduction of capital and an overproduction of goods, overproduction not in relation to the needs of society but in relation to capitalist property relations. In a socialist society an increase in capital goods and productive capacity will result in reduced hours of work, reduced prices, and/or higher real wages and welfare provisions.

I now want to use Australian experience to test the theory that the process of capital accumulation, of investment, runs up against the barrier of consumption. The following table gives figures relevant to the four recovery-boom-crisis recession cycles since 1954:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>% increase in consumption</th>
<th>% increase in gross private investment</th>
<th>% increase in employment</th>
<th>% increase in G.N.P.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-66</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Start of the recession or “downturn” is underlined.

Trend rate this column = + 4.6%.

In each case, two years before the recession, i.e. in the boom, the indicators such as GNP are increasing at near or above trend rate. In the year before the recession the rate of increase in consumption declines, followed by recession. This is consistent with an analysis showing that in each of the three recessions since 1959 the turn from boom to recession has seen a build-up of excess stocks.

The pattern is thus increased investment leading to an “excess” of capital and commodities, a fall in the rate of profit, followed by reduced levels of output and employment.
CAPITALISM AND ECOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

Either surplus value is reinvested on an ever-expanding scale -- or there is an economic crisis. Thus the nature of capitalist accumulation leads to depletion of scarce resources, pollution, and consumerism. The analysis shows the need for an economy based on human, rational control and needs for ecological as well as economic reasons.

P. VORT-RONALD ON POST-1939 CAPITALISM

The developing contradictions of capitalism, indicated by Marx, led to mass unemployment and the general crisis of capitalism of the 1930s. The last 30 years have seen a return to high growth rates in "developed" capitalist countries and relative to full employment. How do we explain the change? The above analysis suggests that since 1939 there must be some NEW offsetting factor or factors to the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

The main single factor has been the increased role of government, particularly the massive increase in government spending, including spending on wars and the aftermath of wars, e.g. the cold war and the reequipping of West German and Japanese industry after the Second World War. Discussing the way in which military spending has had the effect of ending mass unemployment, J. Robinson comments "the cure, most of us would agree, is even worse than the disease". (9)

Between 1929 and 1969, in the US, consumption expenditure as a percentage of GNP declined by 12.9 per cent. The compensating factor was a rise of 14.5 per cent in government purchases as a percentage of GNP. (10)

P. Vort-Ronald argues against this analysis. She agrees that government spending may have a stimulating effect thus aiding certain sections of capitalists, it may provide the infrastructure, etc. But, "overall, government expenditure prevents the growth of total social capital". "It prevents capitalist accumulation in that it uses surplus value that would otherwise have been available to capitalists for further accumulation." Government expenditure is seen as "unproductive" because it does not produce any surplus value.

The argument suggests that if there was no government intervention, any surplus available for reinvestment would in fact be reinvested. But the earlier analysis established the fact that periodically capitalist accum-

ulation produces an excess of capital and of surplus value seeking profitable investment.

In the 1930s, this was a chronic condition. Why the change since 1939? A new offsetting factor to stagnation developed -- vast increases in government spending.

Experience shows that to the extent that it is financed by taxes on loans from capitalists, i.e. from surplus value, state expenditures "in the form of armament orders and ancillary expenditure ... play today a leading role in the functioning of modern capitalism." (11).

I agreed with the emphasis placed in the article on government expenditures as contributing to inflation. The war in Vietnam is a case in point. But a discussion of causes of modern inflation requires some treatment of the influence of monopoly.

Summed up, I think the article is a clear explanation of what I see as one side of Marx's explanation of economic crisis -- and it is a basis for further discussion. I do not think the article takes adequate account of problems of realisation and the new features of capitalism in this century.

- C. Silver.

FOOTNOTES:

1. This is Marx's constant capital.
2. This is Marx's variable capital.
4. ibid. p. 286.
5. ibid. p. 303.
10. Shapiro: Macroeconomic Analysis, p. 123, brought up to date.