Miners Vs. Utah
Czechoslovakia and
Eurocommunism

The Arms Race
Sanyo Work-in

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IN THIS ISSUE ..... 

Pete Thomas, editor of the Miners' Union journal Common Cause, outlines the history of the recent miners' strike against Utah and discusses some of its implications.

Marian Sling writes on the comparisons and relations between Eurocommunism and the experiences and policies of the Czechoslovak Communist Party since 1945. The article does not refer mainly to the Prague Spring, but to the experiences of the transition period 1945-48. Marian Sling is a British communist who was the wife of Otto Sling, one of the leading Czech communists executed during the purges of the early 'fifties.

We publish an interview with a woman shop steward at the Sanyo factory in Wodonga, conducted during the workers' occupation of the factory in July.

Beverly Symons writes about the threat of the arms race and the importance of the struggle against it.

Giuliano Procacci, an Italian professor of history and member of the Italian Communist Party central committee, writes on the case of Nikolai Bukharin, one of the many leading Bolsheviks executed in the Stalin purges of the 'thirties. The article translated from the Italian by Dave Davies, is accompanied by other relevant material.

Gerry Phelan, lecturer in Sociology at Macquarie University, writes on the future role of the trade unions.

Eric Aarons reviews John Sendy's book Comrades Come Rally, an account of the author's experiences in the Communist Party.

A review by Roger Coates of Tim Rowse's book Australian Liberalism and National Character and a comment by Doug Olive on Rupert Lockwood's Black Armada complete the issue.

CORRECTION

Due to a translation problem there was an error in the article on the West German anti-nuclear movement in the last ALR (No. 65). On page 43, first column, a sentence states:

'According to official reports, 230 injured police were receiving hospital treatment for two days afterwards.

It appears the original German text refers to 230 police-injured people; that is, 230 people injured by the police.

ALR regrets the error.
Editorial Statement

Just over ten years ago, on the night of August 20-21, 1968, a massive invasion of Warsaw Pact forces stopped in its tracks the Czechoslovak attempt to develop a 'socialism with a human face'. Seasonally, it was the end of summer, with autumn yet to come. Politically, the springtime regeneration which had lasted for nearly seven months, turned to winter overnight, covering the political landscape with a thickening blanket of grey, bureaucratic snow which gradually withered all the shoots of the 'Prague Spring'.

A decade after the events it is valuable to assess the impact of both the Prague Spring and the invasion which ended it. The 1968 events in Czechoslovakia took their place alongside other major developments in that remarkable year, such as the Tet offensive in Viet Nam and the May events in France. The Czechoslovak and French events were of particular importance to the communist and left movements in advanced capitalist countries.

The developments of the Prague Spring showed that there was no inherent conflict between socialism and democracy and that, for all the problems of bureaucracy and repression in Eastern Europe, the system could change 'from within' to a more democratic and 'human' socialism.

The democratic evolution of Czech socialism was undoubtedly supported by the vast majority of the Czechoslovak people. Large numbers of them wanted to see it go further and pushed impatiently for more change, creating difficulties for the party leadership which also felt increasingly the pressures from the Soviet Union for the changes to be stopped and reversed.

The invasion not only put an end to the wishes of the Czech party and people to build socialism in accord with their national needs and traditions. It also ended any short-term possibility of significant evolution of the Soviet bloc to a more democratic socialism which would appeal to the masses in the advanced capitalist countries.

In this respect, Czechoslovakia was a watershed for the communist movements in these countries, both by raising the practical possibility of an alternative to the Soviet model and by forcing them, after the invasion, to elaborate that model themselves, and new political strategies to achieve it. Despite differences of situation, policy and strategy, a number of communist parties in advanced countries have developed similar commitments to socialist democracy and a democratic road to socialism.

The Soviet invasion also brought to a head the conflict between the political needs of the western parties in their own countries and the decades-long loyalty to the Soviet Union. Those parties which saw their prime contribution to socialist internationalism to be the struggle for socialism in their own country had to take an increasingly independent path from the Soviet party, and to make that independence crystal clear to their own working class and people.

The invasion and the bureaucratic, centralist and repressive model of socialism it reimposed, have played a useful role for capitalism in the west. Like the denial of rights and the trials of dissidents in the Soviet Union, they serve the useful purposes of drawing attention away from the ills of bureaucratic socialism. In today's conditions, this is a key element in capitalist ideological domination. In various ways, the idea is pushed that whatever people's problems in the West they can't be as bad as the lack of democracy in the East. 'Better the devil you know than the one you don't' is the catch-phrase and, to a large extent, it works.

Ten years later Czechoslovakia itself suffers from the same problems that only the continuation of the Prague Spring could have overcome.

So long as an unwanted regime and socialist model are imposed there cannot be the social dynamism which is essential if socialism is to prove its superiority over capitalism.

Socialists in the west, while developing their own roads to, and models of, socialism should not forget the contribution of the Prague Spring, nor its leaders who, like forestry worker, Dubček, under restrictive house arrest, still suffer to this day for their attempt to do the same.
Some Notes on the Utah Strike

Let Utah Development Co., in its words (from a handbook issued to employees) define its philosophy on what it should pay workers at the Utah mines:

_The rate of pay of the individual should be adequate with regard to the functions he is performing and in comparison with others in the community, but not so great as to provoke discontent with other employees or in the rest of the community..._

Applying that principle to the Utah mineworkers in its own inimitable way, Utah has been the most massive exploiter of Australian workers. For example, with a total workforce of under 2900 (and that includes office staff, executives, the lot), Utah Development’s pre-tax profit in 1977 was equivalent to $100,282 for each employee, and even its after-tax profit worked out at over $55,000 for each employee. Those sort of figures could turn even BHP an envious peagreen.

Or take an individual example. At the Utah mines, drivers of the huge Euclid trucks take loads of around 120 tonnes at a time, and they might make 12 to 15 trips in a day. In about six of those trips, in half a day or less, a driver hauls coal to the value of his own pay for a year.

It was that situation of immense exploitation which Utah mineworkers set out, in their June-July strike, to diminish a bit — and that’s what they did.

As is well-known — and the outbursts of Fraser, Lynch & Co. made it even better known — the Utah workers, after over six weeks on strike, secured gains which, one way and another, in cash or equivalents, could add up to $95 a week, or more than double the peak Utah propositions in negotiations before the strike. Also, the gains were free from Utah’s initial odious string of extension of seven-day roster (that is, work continuing through the weekends, public holidays, etc.) in certain areas of work.

The Utah unionists’ gains are the biggest secured by a strike by industrial workers (even though, as we’ll see later, the benefits have to be put in a proper context). And the strike itself — with some 1750 workers from four different unions at Australia’s four biggest coal mines out for over six weeks — is the biggest for years in the coalmining industry, and hasn’t many parallels in other industries either.

This remarkable strike was undertaken by workers who are young and relatively new, and in circumstances of some difficulty.

The Utah mines have been in production for only ten years or less. The towns for them are in isolated areas, varying from 120 to 150 miles inland from the Central Queensland coast and are almost entirely dependent on coalmining. They are in areas which elect National (Country) Party members of Parliament.

For its mine workforces, Utah recruited workers, mostly young (even in their teens), from a variety of jobs: many of them from rural primary industry. Few of the workers
who were taken on at the mines had experience or family backgrounds in mining; some had not previously been in any union.

The Utah Style

Utah came to Australia with an anti-union record. (Not that this is exceptional among US coal companies: only half of USA’s soft coal is mined under United Mine Workers’ Association ‘contract’). Utah hoped to have docile workforces here. But Utah itself, by its arrogance and hardline style, created a clear need for strong unionism, in defence, and impelled the development of this. Utah actions produced their appropriate reactions. Some outstanding local figures arose in the unions, and the union developments were cultivated by State leaderships.

Utah, however, kept trying. One of its practices was its “one for one” system: If the workers had a stop of, say, 24 or 48 hours, then — no matter how strong the workers’ reason might have been — Utah, for no other reason except reprisal, would suspend or stand down the workers (without pay) for an equivalent period. Therefore, when workers voted for a 24-hour or 48-hour stop, this meant 48 hours or 96 hours out the gate.

In 1975, too, when the campaign was on about the unions’ claims for a new award, Utah showed its form by standing down the 1700-odd Utah workers for about three weeks.

Even when there has been no major general campaign, the frictions at Utah mines are reflected by the fact that in 1977 workers at Peak Downs mine, for instance, lost 39 days (the equivalent of almost eight weeks’ working time) in stoppages and in Utah get-square stand-downs.

Utah’s “one for one” scheme of stand-downs may now, however, have suffered a check. A decision in June by the Coal Industry Tribunal, while made in general terms and not specifically relating to Utah, implied a warning against “abuse” of the stand-down power: employers could even find that, having stood down workers and so lost the production, they could still be held liable to pay the workers.

Part of the Utah style is to demand consistent overtime, which enables it to keep the numbers of its workforces to a minimum. For Utah, the award’s 35-hour week is not enough, and there have been cases of workers being stood down by Utah in punishment for their having worked only seven hours in a day (the award time) and not doing the overtime Utah wanted.

It was characteristic that — in a propaganda document designed to “sell” the idea of seven-day roster — Utah gave various figures of potential earnings on the basis of a range of weekly hours, and the range of hours started not at the award’s 35 but at 40 and went on to 42 and 48 hours.

Over the years, for all its vast profits, Utah kept the workers’ pay at levels substantially below those which have applied at a number of NSW mines. While there is a common award wage scale in the industry in NSW, Queensland and Tasmania, workers in NSW work under a scheme of bonuses. These are based on production, and bonus schemes vary between different mines and different companies. At some mines, bonuses run as high as $100 and more a week. Against this, Utah has been paying only a $23 weekly over-award rate. Moreover, this $23 has stood still since 1972, with Utah rejecting persistent union efforts to restore the 1972 relativity of the over-award rate. The contrast between the stationary Utah over-award rates and the immense boom in Utah profits in that same 1972-77 period (from a net $15 million in 1972 to $158 million in 1977) aggravated the workers’ acute sense of grievance.

Utah mineworkers, too, viewed with sympathy the efforts of the Seamen’s Union to get jobs for Australian seafarers on the Utah bulk ships which take huge cargoes of the coal away, and mineworkers shared the seamen’s resentment and disgust at Utah’s persistence with confining the manning to “crews of convenience” and excluding Australians.

In all these circumstances, the strike from June 7 onwards was around the Combined Mining Unions’ claims but it also was an eruption of long-smouldering frustrations and exasperations.

In that respect, it had a similarity with the Mt. Isa Mines dispute of 1964-65, in which workers’ resentment against the practices of the company (like Utah, a US subsidiary) boiled over; this being followed by the months-long lockout by the company. There is another point of similarity, too: Utah’s
industrial relations chief, Mr. R. L. Livingstone, was No. 2 industrial-relations man with Mt. Isa Mines during the 1964-65 lockout. He could have been hankering for a Utah emulation of the Mt. Isa affair.

“Final Offers”

Before the Utah strike began, strong efforts were made by the unions to secure a settlement of the claims by negotiations. But Utah would not come across. Its style was to present some inadequate counter-propositions and declare that these were “the final offer”. Over a period, Utah “final offers” took on the quantity, though not the quality, of Melba farewells.

In the weeks before the strike, Utah “final offers” proposed a bonus scheme which was initially reckoned as being worth $17 a week (on top of the $23 over-award rate) and which was then increased, under another “final offer”, to $30, together with various other improvements reckoned as being worth about $12 or so a week. But, to these, Utah tied the string of seven-day roster in trainloading, open-cut examination, coal-preparation plants and some areas of maintenance.

An estimate by miners put the value of the Utah propositions for the workers at about $3 million a year, as against a benefit to Utah of $22 million from such a seven-day roster. In any case, as Utah well knew, miners’ policy is firmly against any extension of seven-day roster in the industry.

Utah’s design for seven-day roster had an industry-wide, and even national, significance. Utah already — because of the quality and nature of its coal resources, its open-cut methods and immense productivity, its scale of operations and other factors — is able to undercut most of the other mine companies and jostle them in the scramble for contracts and “spot” sales (sales which are picked up outside the normal long-term contracts).

If Utah had been able to get an extension of seven-day roster, it would have further

Utah and Its Family Tree

Utah Development Co. operates four big open cut mines in Central Creek (Goonyella, Peak Downs, Saraji and Blackwater) and has another open cut (Norwich Park) and the Harrow Creek trial underground mine under construction. It is by far the biggest producer and exporter of Australian coal (16 million tonnes in 1977, worth something like $50 a tonne).

Utah Development is incorporated in Nevada (USA) and is 89.2 per cent owned by Utah International Inc. of San Francisco. In turn, Utah International is merged with General Electric, which Fortune last year ranked No. 9 among the giant US corporations. Helped by dividend payments from Utah Development totalling $126 million in a year, General Electric’s net profit last year was over $US1000 million, including Utah International’s $US196 million.

The other 10.8 per cent of Utah Development is held by Utah Mining Australia Ltd. (UMAL which was set up for the specific purpose of holding some Utah shares. Insurance companies and faceless nominee groups are major shareholders in UMAL.

Haraji, Peak Downs, Goonyella and the Hay Point export terminal south of Mackay are operated by a 76½ per cent subsidiary of Utah Development. This is Central Queensland Coal Associates (CQCA). Other shareholders in CQCA are Mitsubishi of Japan (with 12 per cent), Australian Mutual Provident Society (7½ per cent) and UMAL (4 per cent).

Utah Development also has a one-third interest in Mt. Goldsworthy (WA iron ore), but this is overshadowed by Utah’s Queensland coal operations.

On the union side, the Combined Mining Unions in Queensland are made up of the Queensland Colliery Employees’ Union (QCEU, which is the Queensland part of the Miners’ Federation), the Federated Engine Drivers & Firemen’s Association, the Amalgamated Metal Workers & Shipwrights’ Union, and the Electrical Trades Union. Approximate total numbers of CMU workers at the Utah mines are: QCEU 660, FED & FA 550, AMSWU 460, ETU 120.
increased its cost advantage over other coal companies. These would have been compelled to seek seven-day roster for their own mines and, if they couldn’t get it, then some could have had to cut back or even close, for want of market competitiveness with Utah.

(Six years ago, it was the capture of a market in Italy by Utah from Clutha that was the immediate cause of Clutha deciding to close South Clifton mine, on the NSW coast: a decision which precipitated the first coalmine work-in in Australia, and possibly the world.)

Workers’ Actions

Meanwhile, with Utah not coming through with any satisfactory proposals in the 1978 negotiations, Utah mineworkers had been taking concerted forays into industrial action; stoppages for a day or two, overtime limits (including refusal to load the huge coal trains for the coast on overtime at weekends) and so on. These had been getting Utah off balance and, of major importance, it had been causing a diminution of the huge stockpiles which Utah likes to maintain at Hay Point and Gladstone, on the coast. (“If the Hay Point stockpile gets down to a million tonnes, Utah starts to worry”, one rank-and-file Utah man told me.)

As a result, when the strike did start, Utah quickly ran through its port stockpiles (and stockpiles at the mines were of no use to Utah when it couldn’t get the coal loaded for the coast) and so Utah’s contracted shipments had to be suspended.

One effect of the development and coordination of these tactics was a heightening of the stature of the newly-established Utah Combined Mining Unions (CMU) regional liaison committee, which was heading the on-the-spot campaign at the four mines. This rank-and-file committee consists of one representative of each of the four unions in the CMU at each of the four mines. In this set-up, the rank-and-file at each mine have four representatives and (looking at it another way) each of our four unions also has four representatives. This identity of the committee with the rank-and-file has been, and continues to be, of major significance.

Over years, Utah has tried to play unions off against each other and to needle in efforts to create divisions between them. Despite this, it was a major aspect of this whole 1978 dispute with Utah that the rank-and-file of the four unions acted throughout as one solid body, free from any bickering or narrow one-upmanship. This must have been one of the things that dismayed Utah and culminated in Utah’s ultimate capitulation. If sustained, it can be a formidable obstacle to Utah’s anti-union designs.

In the dispute, too, it was of importance that Utah produces coal predominantly for overseas markets. Because of this, a halt in Utah production does not disrupt domestic supplies for power generation and so on and does not have any disadvantageous impact on the community. This fact lessened the pretexts of the Bjelke-Petersen government for bluster and incitement against the unionists.

The Strike Begins

When Utah in May put up its latest “final offer”, with the seven-day roster tied to it, the miners’ Queensland District Board of Management and then the State CMU committee rejected the string and sought talks with Utah to get a proposition without this. But Utah hung on to the string — and the strike was on.

The actual strike decision was made by mass CMU meetings on June 7 at Moranbah (the town for Peak Downs and Goonyella), Dysart (Saraju) and Blackwater. The voting was a highly impressive 899 to 69.

The same June 7 meetings also voted on a recommendation to reject Utah’s seven-day roster proposition. Voting on this was 948 to 24: a solid No to Utah. Significantly, those in this vote (and, naturally, in all others) included FED & FA men, who themselves work seven-day roster on the giant draglines. They voted in inter-union solidarity against having seven-day rosters extended to members of the other unions.

As far as the unions were concerned, that was the end of Utah’s seven-day roster notion: there was no need for any more votes on it. It just wasn’t on.

That June 7 strike vote was for a week’s stop, with a call to Utah to negotiate genuinely. At the end of the week (on a Wednesday, at midnight) work resumed. Work continued at Peak Downs and
Goonyella through the Thursday and Friday, but Blackwater and Saraji men worked only on the Thursday because the Friday was, for them, a holiday for the Show Day in the Rockhampton area.

Then, after that 24/48 hours of work, the workers again stopped for 24/48 hours from midnight on the Sunday in order to have new CMU mass meetings — and at those meetings they voted 1173 to 7 to box on and stay on strike for another week.

Each Monday for the next four weeks, that same recommendation, for another week on strike, was put to mass CMU meetings and was carried by extraordinarily solid votes: 972 to 4, then 1158 to 6, the following Monday 1146 to 5, then 1165 to 7. The figures speak eloquently for themselves.

Yet, in those circumstances, the Bjelke-Petersen Queensland government’s Mines Minister (Mr. Camm) came out with a statement (Courier-Mail, July 3) saying: “I believe that, given a free vote, with no pressure from militant unionists directed by people in southern states, the majority of miners in this state would reject any strike action and go-slow procedures”. It was a piece of absurd nonsense only too typical of the Bjelke-Petersen government.

Methods of Struggle

The pattern of having strike votes for periods of only one week at a time was deliberate. It caused some anxiety among a few well-intentioned officials of unions who saw it as a possible encouragement to any anti-strike movement. Such anxieties proved to be unfounded.

The process of weekly meetings was, in fact, one of the great strengths. It gave the workers a full opportunity, at proper meetings, to say anything they wanted to put up, and then to have a vote on what was to be done. It was an important safeguard against any feeling among workers of being kept outside what might be happening.

Another innovation was the establishment of union centres, manned during the day, as a place where anyone — inside or outside the unions — could come for information or just to talk. Normally none of these mining towns has any full-time union organisation. The establishment of a
Manned centre was an innovation introduced at Blackwater at a time in June when the Utah strike coincided with the strike at the other mines in the Blackwater area over the Fraser government's threat to tax subsidised housing. The Blackwater initiative of a manned centre was taken up elsewhere in what the company likes to call "Utah country".

Meetings of women in the mining towns were held and voted support for the strike. As a result of women's involvement, Women's Auxiliaries were, by the end of the strike, set up in Blackwater, Moranbah and Dysart. These have important potential.

During the strike, an existing Auxiliary at Moura sent a $1000 donation for the Utah strikers' families.

The other Central Queensland mineworkers' upsurge in June against the Canberra threat to tax subsidised rentals housing reinforced the Utah workers' strike. Strikes by mineworkers in the Blackwater area at BHP's Cook and Leichhardt mines and Thiess's South Blackwater mines helped to promote an "all in together" strike spirit with the Utah strikers. Workers from Utah's Blackwater mine joined, with gusto, in the Blackwater mineworkers and community march and rally against the tax. Then Utah workers at Moranbah (Peak Downs and Goonyella) and others made common cause by organising a similar demonstration there against the tax threat: a threat from which the Fraser government, under such pressure, appears to have backed off.

In the course of the Utah strike, too, mineworkers at the next biggest group in Queensland (the BHP-Thiess-Mitsui consortium's Moura-Kianga mines) were also in dispute; in their case over long-withheld satisfaction on a bonus scheme. This produced a 48-hour strike in June. This, too, helped to give Utah strikers a sense of added dimension.

As week followed week in the Utah strike, the need for financial help grew.

Solidarity

From early in the strike, the Utah CMU regional liaison committee organised delegations to go to other mining areas of Queensland and NSW. Altogether, nine delegates came to NSW alone.

They included men from the miners. FED & FA and AMWSU. Among them were the miners' Queensland Board of Management member for the area that includes Goonyella, Peak Downs and Saraji, and the president, secretary and treasurer of the Utah CMU regional liaison committee. Throughout the Queensland and NSW areas, they received strong support, backed by weekly levies.

One notable example of support came from Broken Hill. Broken Hill is a long way from Central Queensland. Old-timers at Broken Hill couldn't remember a previous occasion when rank-and-file Queensland coalmining delegates had been there. Broken Hill isn't in coal anyway: the mines are metalliferous. But, after hearing the Utah CMU delegates, a Broken Hill CMU meeting voted an immediate $10,000 initial donation — and a cheque for the $10,000 was made out and handed over within five minutes of the meeting ending. That sort of unqualified solidarity is a characteristic which critics of some aspects of Broken Hill, ranging sideways politically across from Lady Braddon, should not overlook.

Support in Queensland and NSW was not confined to the four unions which had members involved in the strike. Those who contributed included seamen, waterside workers, ironworkers, clerks, and others, and votes of support were carried by both the Queensland Trades & Labor Council and the NSW Labor Council.

Young Leaders

The ages of the Utah CMU delegates who came to NSW illustrate the relative youth of leading Central Queensland mining unionists. Of the six whose ages I checked, two were in their 20s and the eldest of them all was 36. (Those others whose ages I forgot to ask about were also certainly within this age range.) The secretary of the Utah CMU regional liaison committee, Gary Cox, was still 24 when the strike ended. Even younger is Andrew Vickers, who is 23 — and at that age he is a member of the miners' Queensland Board of Management, secretary of the Utah miners' merger committee, chairman of the Goonyella CMU and has been secretary of the Goonyella miners' branch (with over 170 members) for four years. Those who are in their 30s include the chairman of the Utah CMU regional...
liaison committee (and formerly for four years Peak Downs miners’ chairman), Bill Coffey, who is 33.

It was men of those ages who gave the on-the-spot leadership in building and sustaining a strike that Utah couldn’t crack.

(Outside the Utah group, another miners’ branch secretary, Paul Grainger, when he turned 21 last year, was already in his fourth year as secretary of the Blair Athol miners’ branch.)

Despite the generosity of the support, things were tough for the strikers and their families. The first distribution was not possible until July 14, five weeks after the strike began, and even then it averaged only around $35 each (scaled according to number of dependants). A second distribution was made a week later (on a scale which included $50 for a man, wife and two children). So, at the time when the strike ended, total payments to a family of four had been less than $100. (A third payment was made in the first days back at work, to help tide them over.)

The continued strike solidarity was all the more remarkable in those circumstances.

Utah Cracks

As everyone now knows, it was Utah, and not the workers, which eventually cracked. The effects of the strike had been severely hurting even such a mammoth outfit as General Electric. In an unpublicised mission, a top GE industrial-relations man flew to Australia. Utah’s chief in Australia (Mr. Winterer) went to Canberra (again without publicity) to see Prime Minister Fraser. The Government then got the ACTU president (Mr. Hawke) to intervene. In mid-July, Mr. Hawke went to Brisbane and, after that, to Moranbah for negotiations. Federal and State officials of the Miners’ Federation, State officials of the other CMU unions and (very importantly) the members of the rank-and-file Utah CMU regional liaison committee all took part in those negotiations. Miners’ Queensland Board member Andrew Vickers, of Goonvella, told Common Cause (Miners’ Federation journal) that, at their very first talks with Mr. Hawke, “the message came across very strongly to Mr. Hawke about the workers’ solidarity and determination”.

Without much enthusiasm, the Utah workers on July 21 agreed to resume work to allow the negotiations to proceed in Moranbah. Their reluctance was shown by the fact that, in the voting on the “go back, for now anyway” recommendation, there was the biggest minority (95) in any vote during the whole dispute.

On the Monday (July 24), the men went to work. On the Tuesday afternoon, Utah’s attitude caused the talks to break down. Workers’ reaction was immediate and dramatic. Without even needing to have meetings to decide on it, they trooped off the jobs, less than 48 hours after they had resumed following six weeks on strike.

That was when Utah gave in: against such solidarity and spirit, Utah chiefs realised that they’d had it. Their coal shipments had been halted for weeks, their vaunted reputation for “reliability” on contracts was in a mess, and the whole situation was running contrary to what the Financial Review defined as being General Electric’s consistent policy: “Produce at any price”.

As a result, there were midnight and early-morning knocks on doors at the Moranbah motel. Hurried new talks took place (in which it was discovered that, without Mr. Hawke or the other union representatives having been told, Utah chief Winterer himself was on the scene there). Later on that Wednesday morning, the settlement terms were formalised. On being put to the Utah CMU mass meetings the next day (July 27), the terms were accepted by 1339 votes to 7. The strike was over.

The terms included a direct pay rise, by an increase in the weekly all-purpose over-award rate from the old figure of $23 to a new amount of $35: this to have a six-monthly indexing (so it won’t again, as in the 1972-78 years, stand still). There also was the ‘package of conditions’ (including some relating to living conditions), as put forward by Utah before the strike. The biggest pay rise is to be through a progressively-scaled production bonus. According to initial discussions, this bonus will start (possibly at about $30 a week) if production is only 70 per cent of the 1977 output. If production is 100 per cent of the 1977 figure, the weekly bonus would be about $55; at 105 per cent, it would be $63, and there would be further rises in bonus (without any ceiling) on any higher
production figures. Periodic reviews of the bonus scheme are to be made.

A combination of all those gains provided the publicised figure of $95 a week as the possible improvement.

Repercussions

Though the strike was ended, reverberations kept rolling. A Financial Review editorial was headed: "After Utah, a new wages game", and a National Times article, headed "Utah — winners and losers", saw the settlement as having "the seeds of serious consequences for other employers" (does that grieve you?)

Most extraordinary of all, however, was the reaction of the Fraser Government: the Government which had initiated the Hawke intervention and whose Prime Minister had immediately been informed of the settlement terms before they were publicly known. In what Opposition Leader Hayden called "a concerted attack, orchestrated by the Prime Minister", two days later, Fraser himself, Lynch and Business Affairs Minister Fife fired off a frenzied fusillade at the settlement terms: "outrageous", "a shameless money grab", etc. etc.

Obviously, they were dismayed at a prospect of the Utah settlement encouraging other sections of workers to lift their own sights. They were concerned at the possible effects on those so-sacred guidelines, by which the Government strives to confine workers' claims at the same time as the same Government agitates to deny workers even bare cost-of-living adjustments to wages.

They were, perhaps most of all, alarmed at the force of the Utah workers' example, in showing how trade unionists can challenge and beat one of the world's most powerful multinationals: an example most distasteful to Fraser & Co.

It is much to be hoped that all of these points of concern to the Government do indeed come about. If so, the credit due to the Utah mineworkers will be all the greater.

The Utah workers won: there's no doubt about that. But, at the same time, what the Utah workers now have is what Utah should have been paying them years ago. Even with this win, Utah workers will still be paid less than some workers at NSW mines where productivity and profits are below those of Utah. And, in addition, Utah has tied some of the gains to production levels.

On Financial Review figures, if the bonus gets to $63 a week, there will be a total extra $8 million payout to the workers in a year. But, after that and other costs, Utah will benefit by a pre-tax profit increase of about $21 million from the extra production which that $63 bonus denotes. This is the sort of trap, for employers' benefit, which is implicit in all "production" or "incentive" bonus schemes in industry generally.

A point for this Utah scheme, however, is that a bonus would be payable at a production figure as low as 70 per cent of 1977 output. Such a fall in tonnage is highly improbable, but it is important that a bonus would be paid without any increase in production, and even with a fall. Moreover, there is the $35 all-purpose over-award rate, irrespective of production tonnages.

Altogether, some added millions of dollars will stay in Australia in workers' pay, instead of being funnelled away to USA in Utah dividends.

While Fraser & Co. rave from the Right, there may also be some critics of the strike from the Left, who might probe for any lack of ideological quality or who may invoke that fatal word "economism". It would, certainly, be great if Australian workers generally shared the doctrines and strategic concepts of the advanced Left. The fact is that they don't — and it's the Left's job to avoid delusions and to strive to improve on that present position.

As for "economism", it was said in an address in 1865, in referring to workers' actions: "... Their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system... By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement." Would anyone call Marx (who said those things) economist-minded?

The challenge to multinationals is one such "larger movement". What Utah mineworkers — and the seamen — have been doing has been a significant contributing part in this. The real face of multinationals, without the cosmetics, is seen the more plainly in Australia because of it.
For years the world has lived under the threat of a nuclear war. Millions who grew up in the shadow of the Bomb have learnt to live with and even accept the unstable ‘peace’ of the nuclear ‘balance of terror’. The certainty that any nuclear attack by one of the Superpowers would instantly involve massive retaliation, has helped the world to get to 1978 without a second use of nuclear weapons.

But, how much longer can it last? Can the nuclear world survive into the 21st century? For the name of the nuclear strategy game has changed.

The accelerating arms race and the technological advances of the 1970s, coupled with the looming dangers of the plutonium economy, make the chances of survival seem daily more remote. Whether, in fact, a nuclear holocaust will eventuate however, depends on many factors, not least on the ability of world forces for change prevailing over imperialism. But that time is running short there is no doubt.

This year has seen a marked deterioration in international relations and increasing tensions between West and East bloc countries, and in other areas. The Middle East continues to be a major flash-point with the ever-present danger of widening conflict; on the African continent and elsewhere the struggle for ideological and military supremacy continues. And the conflict between Kampuchea and Viet Nam and China’s worsening relations with Viet Nam, are closely connected to the mutual distrust and jostling for position of China and the Soviet Union.

Ironically, it was the UN first-ever Special Session on Disarmament in May which highlighted the shaky detente between the two Superpowers, neither of whom sent their Heads of State. Instead, President Carter attended a NATO war-planning meeting in Washington and spoke of confrontation with the Soviet Union. Soon after, the outcry against the trials of the Soviet dissidents was used to further a re-emergence of Cold War hysteria and fear.

Counterforce Strategy

In the early 1960s some American hawks wanted to move from ‘deterrence’ to a position of nuclear superiority, and by the late 1960s the shift was underway. It is now clear that with the tremendous technological advances in weaponry in the 1970s and emphasis on quality rather than quantity, United States’ policy has decidedly shifted towards a ‘Counterforce’ strategy.
Translated this means an unanswerable first strike capacity.

Former Lockheed engineer and US weapons expert, Robert Aldridge, estimates that the US should achieve a first-strike capacity by the mid-1980s — i.e. in about seven years from now. (1)

Defense Secretary, Robert McNamara, first expounded the new Counterforce doctrine in June 1962. America’s “principal military objective should be the destruction of the enemy’s military forces, not his civilian population”, he said. (2) The previous year, President Kennedy had stated that “our arms will never be used to strike the first blow”, but it was clear his Defense Secretary was elaborating a plan, and retargeting his missiles, to give the US that capability.

Twelve years later, in 1975, Defense Secretary Schlesinger rephrased the doctrine. While telling a Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee that the US has “no desire to develop a counterforce capability against the Soviet Union”, he nevertheless went on: “What we wish to avoid is the Soviet Union having a counterforce capability against the United States without our being able to have a comparable capability.” (Emphasis added.) The President must not be limited to any single strategy, Schlesinger said, but must have the capacity for “flexible response”. (3)

In February 1974 Schlesinger told a Senate hearing on the military budget that “We have no announced counterforce strategy, if by counterforce one infers that one is going to attempt to destroy silos. We have a new targeting doctrine that emphasizes selectivity and flexibility”. (Emphasis added.) And on May 30, 1975, Schlesinger admitted publicly that the US would consider using nuclear weapons first to stop communist advances such as in Europe and Korea. (4)

The new targeting doctrine is designed to make limited nuclear war acceptable — after all, it sounds more humane to retaliate against military targets than population areas. But the very concept of limited nuclear war flies in the face of the inevitable logic of escalation to total force usage. As the authoritative Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) commented after Schlesinger’s announcement: “In making nuclear war more ‘flexible’ (the new doctrine) makes it more thinkable, more tolerable and consequently more probable”. (5)

The likelihood of ‘limited’ nuclear strikes escalating to an all-out nuclear war in which both sides would be devastated, means that the only plausible reason for the US developing a counterforce capability is to achieve the capacity to launch an unanswerable first strike against the Soviet Union.

The Arms Race

To understand how the US is moving towards that capacity, one needs to examine the current state of the arms race, particularly technological developments.

The size of the world’s nuclear stockpiles is staggering — representing the capacity to destroy every person on earth 24 times over. Or put another way, the US could destroy every person in the Soviet Union 40 times over and the Soviet Union could destroy every American 20 times over. These frightening, if somewhat ludicrous statistics illustrate the insanity of the runaway nuclear arms race. (Not to mention the insanity of diverting $400 billion a year away from spending on health, alleviating poverty and other pressing social needs.)

SIPRI Director, Frank Barnaby, gives the following picture of the Superpowers’ nuclear arsenals at July 1976:

**United States:** 2,124 strategic nuclear delivery systems — 1,054 land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs); 656 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) on 41 strategic nuclear submarines; 414 strategic bombers. Can deliver about 8,500 independently targetable nuclear warheads.

**Soviet Union:** 2,404 strategic nuclear delivery systems — 1,452 ICBMs; 812 SLBMs on 41 strategic nuclear submarines; 414 strategic bombers. Can deliver about 8,500 independently targetable nuclear warheads.

In addition to their 12,000 or more strategic nuclear warheads, both the US and the Soviet Union have tens of thousands of tactical nuclear weapons, mostly more powerful than the Hiroshima atomic bomb. (6)
The key point however, is not so much the number of strategic delivery vehicles (i.e. missiles and bombers) but the total number of bombs that can be delivered. And here the US is far ahead.

Most US missiles carry multiple warheads (MIRVs — multiple individually-targeted re-entry vehicles), whereas, Aldridge says, the Soviet Union “has not mastered the ability to miniaturize hydrogen bombs”. For example, of the 41 US ballistic missile submarines, 31 are armed with 16 Poseidon missiles, each missile having 10-14 MIRVs of 40-kiloton yield. “That means that each of these 31 Poseidon submarines could destroy at least 160 cities with bombs at least twice the explosive energy that ripped into Hiroshima and Nagasaki”. (7)

Andrew Mack says that the US has nearly three times more nuclear warheads than the Soviet Union, largely because of their five-year lead in MIRV technology. He also points out that US missiles “are far more accurate than their Soviet counterparts — cancelling the megatonnage/throw weight ‘advantages’ of the Soviet missiles”. (8)

From the time the US shifted its nuclear strategy from Deterrence to Counterforce, it has been modernising and developing its nuclear arsenal to achieve a First Strike capacity. The whole point of that capacity is to deliver an unanswerable first strike; to destroy the enemy’s nuclear weaponry before it can strike back. And that means having the type of weapons with the required accuracy, which can hit at ‘hard’ targets, i.e. land-based missiles in their hardened concrete silos, rather than ‘soft’ cities or industrial centres.

The US scenario for a disabling first strike was spelt out by former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in the Pentagon’s annual statement of 1970:

... The most ambitious [damage limiting] strategy dictates a first strike capability against an enemy’s strategic offensive forces which seek to destroy as much of his megatonnage as possible before it can be brought into play. An enemy’s residual retaliation, assumed to be directed against urban-industrial targets, would be blunted still further by a combination of active and passive defenses, including ASW (anti-submarine warfare), ABMs (anti-ballistic missiles), anti-bomber defenses.... (9)

Robert Aldridge details these military ‘defenses’ as the four major interacting systems the US is developing to first strike capacity. They are:

* A missile arsenal with counterforce accuracy to destroy land-based military targets;
* An anti-submarine (ASW) capability that can instantly kill the Soviet missile-launching submarines;
* An anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system and an anti-bomber system to intercept residual retaliation;
* A space-based system to provide communication, navigation, weather, and intelligence information, as well as to track and destroy Soviet early warning, communication and navigation spacecraft.

As stated above, the biggest technological breakthrough was the development of MIRVs. And the US is now developing a more accurate version — the MARV — which can be remotely manoeuvred during re-entry into the earth’s atmosphere to correct any deviation from the flight path.

The current development of the US and Soviet nuclear arsenals bears out what has always been true of the arms race, sometimes called the “action-reaction cycle”.

Thus four years after the Hiroshima bomb the Soviet Union tested their first A-bomb. This was followed a day later by the formation of NATO. Nearly six years later the Warsaw Pact was signed. In 1954 the US deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, followed three years later by the Soviet Union. In 1960 the first Polaris ballistic missile submarine was launched and five years later the first Soviet comparable ballistic missile submarine. The Soviet Union tested MIRVs five years after the first US tests — the US deployed them in 1970 and the USSR in 1975. By the time the Soviet Union had caught up with and exceeded the US in numbers of ICBMs and SLBMs around 1970, the Pentagon had already switched their emphasis from
quantity to quality improvements, in line with their shift in strategy from deterrence to counterforce.

**Trident Horror Weapon**

The Trident is the US Navy's plan for updating the sea leg of the strategic nuclear triad. It will be composed of a new fleet of submarines, two generations of missiles and a sophisticated communications system. Engineering development of Trident began in 1971. It is scheduled to be operational in 1981, with thirty submarines planned by the 1990s. Trident will be based in the Pacific Ocean with its home port in Puget Sound, near Bangor, Washington.

Trident submarines will be 560 feet long (about two football fields) and about four stories high. Each sub will carry 24 missiles, half as many again as the present Polaris and Poseidon. Its longer-range missiles will give Trident ten times as much ocean area in which to hide than Poseidon.

Two generations of Trident missiles are planned. Trident-I will have a range of 4,000 nautical miles with a full load of eight 100-kiloton warheads, while being as accurate as Poseidon is at 2,000 miles. Trident-I missiles will also be backfitted into 10 Poseidon subs as from 1980.

The much larger Trident-II missiles, due by the mid-1980s, will only fit into the new Trident submarines. They will have a range of 6,000 nautical miles, carrying fourteen 150-kiloton warheads or seven 300-kiloton MIRV warheads, with an accuracy of 300 feet. However, by using MARVs on the Trident-II missile, that miss distance would be whittled down to a few feet.

So each Trident sub equipped with 24 Trident-II missiles armed with 17 manoeuvring warheads, would be capable of striking any point on over half the earth's surface. With a typical payload of 75-100 kilotons per warhead, one Trident submarine could destroy 408 cities or military targets with a blast five times that unleashed on Hiroshima. A fleet of 30 Trident subs would be able to deliver an unbelievable 12,240 nuclear warheads — 30 times the number originally thought sufficient for strategic deterrence.

Clearly, if Trident attains the accuracies the Navy seeks, it will constitute the ultimate first-strike weapon. (10)

In a *Saturday Review* editorial the American journalist Norman Cousins pointed out that a Trident submarine commander will be the third most powerful man in the world, next to the US and Soviet Presidents. He will control more destructive
force than Britain, Italy, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, West Germany, Japan, the Philippines, India and Pakistan put together.

Australia's Role

In February 1978, US Defense Secretary Harold Brown confirmed that Trident submarines would be based in the Pacific and in June the US Navy announced it would deploy 13 Tridents in the Pacific and concentrate its nuclear strategy for the 1980s in this area. (11)

Writing from Washington, John Edwards examined the implications of this strategy in a National Times article entitled "Australia Moves Into Nuclear Frontline" (March 6-11, 1978): "Australia is to play a much more significant role in the strategic weapons planning of the United States, Russia and China," he said. "This will place Australia in the front line of any nuclear exchange between the United States and either the Soviet Union and China, both of which latter now have the capability to attack targets in Australia with nuclear missiles."

This is evident not only from Defense Secretary Brown's February statement, but also from a State Department agency announcement to Congress a week later that the Soviet Union and the US have agreed in the SALT negotiations to accept a mutual interim ban on the deployment of mobile land-based intercontinental missiles.

These two statements, says Edwards, point to the probability that:

* The Pacific will emerge as the principal theatre for the deployment of US weapons directed against Russia and China;
* The US defense communications facilities located in Australia will play a pre-eminent part in the control of at least a proportion of these weapons;
* Australia may play an increasingly important role in the protection and maintenance of the US Trident fleet, both in the Pacific and in the Indian Oceans.

U.S. Bases in Australia

It has long been known that the US facilities here were an important part of the US nuclear network, although their exact operations have been shrouded in secrecy. In 1974 a US Navy magazine reported that "classified messages to Polaris-Poseidon submarines deployed in the Indian Ocean" are sent from the North-West Cape Station. And as Dr. Des Ball pointed out in 1974, the North-West Cape base no longer performs a nuclear 'stabilising' role when the submarines it controls can deliver accurate hard-target weapons. (12)

Out of the 20-30 US military, scientific and communications facilities in Australia, the three most important are the Defence Space Research Station at Pine Gap near Alice Springs; the Defence Space Communications Station at Nurrungar, near Woomera; and the Harold E. Holt Naval Communications Centre at North West Cape, Western Australia.

The Pine Gap base, established in 1968, had its lease renewed in 1977 for a further 10 years. Built at a cost of $250 million, it is the largest and most important base of its kind outside United States territory. One of its major functions is to receive, analyse and transmit data from 647 early warning satellites, which are used to detect missile launchings, and from the 'Big Bird' surveillance satellite placed over the USSR, China, India and Indo-China. Two private American companies — TRW and F-Systems — control the Pine Gap operations.

The Nurrungar station provides a back-up function for Pine Gap. It transmits satellite early warning and reconnaissance data generated by Pine Gap via military satellite to US command centres.

The North West Cape naval communications station transmits very low frequency (VLF) radio signals to submerged nuclear missile-carrying submarines, enabling them to launch their missiles without surfacing to receive firing orders.

The strategic importance of North-West Cape will be further upgraded by a new satellite system, AN-MSC-61. When installed in 1980, it will be one of 21 new facilities around the world forming part of the latest phase of the US defense satellite communications system.

A US company was awarded a contract in 1977 to supply the satellite terminals. But the Australian people, Parliament and even the Government, were not informed about this upgrading until the information was picked up in May 1978 from a leaked US Congress memo.
The Omega navigation station planned for Gippsland in Victoria also has a significant role to play in the sea leg of the US nuclear network. Its function, in conjunction with seven other Omega stations elsewhere, is to allow world-wide all-weather navigation for all kinds of craft, both military and civilian. VLF Omega signals penetrate sea water to considerable depths, so a completely submerged submarine can be guided through any seas without revealing its position.

US bases have long made Australia a target in the event of a nuclear war. With the development of Trident as a first-strike weapon, any pretense that the bases play a defensive rather than an offensive role, is shattered. Even journalist Alan Reid, who could hardly be classified as a left-winger, recently warned of the dangers to Australia from the shift in US nuclear strategy:

... If Australia is to house a facility which contributes to the efficiency of a first-strike system, carrying atomic warheads, that is a quite different proposition from housing a facility which is part of a deterrent ... It enhances the priority that the North-West Cape base would have as a target in the event of a major conflagration. (13)

It is clear that the deployment of Tridents in the Pacific and/or Indian Oceans will make North West Cape one of the most vital strategic bases in the world. As John Edwards points out:

To achieve the accuracy necessary for a flexible response, Trident submarines will need to be positioned and the Trident-2 missile will need to be corrected in flight from land facilities. Both these operations may be conducted from Australia.

He concludes that all of these developments will draw Australia into a role as the junior partner in the Pacific and Indian Ocean nuclear competition between the great powers, so that the exhausted traditional ANZUS alliance of regional conventional co-operation will be replaced by a nuclear alliance — and one little known to the Australian people.

The Nuclear Connection

Turning from the vertical nuclear proliferation of the two Superpowers, the other main areas of concern are the increasing militarisation of the entire world through the sale and transfer of conventional, tactical weapons; and the growing horizontal nuclear proliferation through the export of nuclear power technology and materials to potential nuclear weapon countries.

Some people, including sections of the peace movement, argue for development of nuclear power for 'safe' peaceful energy purposes, which they say is essential for economic growth, particularly in the Third World. At the same time, they affirm their opposition to nuclear power being used for nuclear weapons. But is it possible to separate the peaceful and military in the real politics of our unstable world, and above all — how can the safety of future generations be assured while nuclear power reactors constantly produce deadly wastes which must be safely stored virtually forever?

In looking at the connections between nuclear weapons and nuclear power, the most obvious is the danger of nuclear weapons proliferation. But others include nuclear waste, high cost and low job creation of both nuclear industries, extreme health hazards, nuclear industrial-government connections and further steps towards a police state.

Reactor waste has received most attention. Yet in the US 90 per cent of stored nuclear waste comes from the production and breakdown/recycling of more than 30,000 stockpiled nuclear weapons. And although power-generated waste will increase over the coming years, nuclear weapons production — and therefore waste — continues to escalate.

The major concerns about the dangers of nuclear power to the health and safety of humanity, the unsolved waste disposal problem and the inadequacies of safeguards against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, have yet to be answered by the pro-nuclear power lobby. And there is growing evidence that they cannot be satisfactorily answered, at least in the foreseeable future. For instance, a recent report from the US President's Office of Science and Technology Policy stressed that it will probably be at least 10 years before any of the suggested waste disposal methods can be tested sufficiently to warrant a decision in favour of one form of disposal over another. (14)
The “second nuclear age” started when India exploded a nuclear device in 1974 (the first country in ten years to join the nuclear “club”).

In the first nuclear age, a country that wanted a bomb had to mount an expensive complex program. In the second nuclear age, a country acquires the capability to produce a nuclear weapon with relative ease — as a by-product of developing nuclear power. (15)

The US trained 1,100 Indian nuclear scientists and engineers prior to 1974 and provided the nuclear materials used to produce the Indian bomb, while Canada provided the equipment and specific technology — all in the name of “peaceful” nuclear energy.

The pro-nuclear power lobby used to argue that “reactor grade” plutonium, useable as a fuel in a civilian reactor, was not of sufficient quality to provide the material for an atomic bomb. But this was refuted last year by the US Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) who confirmed that at the Nevada test site, the US has exploded a nuclear device using reactor-grade plutonium obtained from a nuclear power plant. (16) All a country needs to utilise its uranium — U-235 — in the manufacture of weapons is an uranium enrichment facility.

As SIPRI Director, Frank Barnaby, states:

The major problem in controlling the spread of nuclear weapons is that the fissile material for atomic bombs can be produced on a relatively small scale. A 40-megawatt electrical graphite-moderated, natural-uranium reactor could, for example, produce about 20 kilograms of plutonium-239 per year, more than enough for two 20-kiloton atomic bombs (e.g. Hiroshima-size).

The components for such a reactor could be easily and secretly obtained on the open market for a cost of less than $20 million. The reactor and a small chemical reprocessing unit to remove the plutonium from the reactor fuel elements could be clandestinely constructed and run. (17)

At the end of 1976, Barnaby says, there were 173 power reactors in 19 countries, capable of producing 16,000 kgms of plutonium annually. About 30 per cent of this was in 15 non-nuclear countries: Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, West Germany, the German Democratic Republic, India, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

By the end of 1980, about 250,000 kgms of plutonium will probably have been accumulated worldwide. Austria, Brazil, Finland, Hungary, Iran, South Korea, Taiwan and Yugoslavia will also then have nuclear power reactors.

By 1984, 28 non-nuclear weapon countries will probably have nuclear power reactors potentially able to produce about 30,000 kgms annually — theoretically enough to produce ten 20-kilogram atomic bombs each day.

How safe are the “political barriers” to horizontal spread imposed by the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? About 100 countries have ratified the Treaty, thereby stating their intention not to produce nuclear weapons. However, the overwhelming majority have no capacity to do so. And many near-nuclear countries have not ratified it, thus keeping their options open. Nor have India, France and China. The biggest loophole of the Treaty is Article Ten, which says that any country can withdraw within three months’ notice if it deems this necessary in its own “national interest”. Who can say how the fascist Pinochet, or Marcos of the Philippines may interpret this?
The nuclear industry is already beset by mounting political and economic problems. In country after country people are mobilising against nuclear power; and achieving significant victories. Last March the people of conservative Kern County in California voted in a referendum 2 to 1 against the siting of a nuclear reactor in their area. The State's energy policy now excludes new nuclear power stations. And on June 30 a planned nuclear plant at Seabrook, New Hampshire, was suspended, following a 20,000-strong anti-nuclear protest on June 3.

The fight against nuclear power can be won through continuing mass opposition and the effects of the industry's own inner contradictions. The Australian anti-uranium and peace movements have a particularly important role to play. The struggle to stop Australian uranium from being mined and exported is an important national struggle to protect Aboriginal land rights, the health and safety of all Australians, our environment, our civil liberties; and against the continued multinational exploitation of our resources. It also has vital international implications as a positive Australian contribution against the arms race and the spread of nuclear weapons.

The anti-uranium movement has achieved a great deal already in its relatively short existence, including positive positions by sections of the trade union movement and the Labor Party. Above all, it has made uranium a public political issue and has mobilised hundreds of thousands onto the streets in the biggest marches and demonstrations since the Vietnam Moratorium. Providing this can be built on and the movement developed by greater involvement of rank-and-file workers and greater unity between the labour, peace and anti-uranium movements, together with environmentalists and others, the Fraser Government and the pro-nuclear lobby can be defeated.

A key aspect of strengthening the movement is to increase realisation that the struggle against nuclear power and nuclear weapons cannot be separated; that the struggle to keep uranium in the ground is also a struggle against the nuclear arms race and for disarmament.

This realisation is gradually being translated into united activities and a coming together of the anti-nuclear power and the anti-war/peace movements internationally.

At the Australian People's Disarmament Conference held in Sydney and Melbourne in April this year organised by the Australian Peace Liaison Committee, many speakers stressed the need to develop these links, including Joe Camilleri from Melbourne, Terry Provance from the USA and Sheila Oakes from Britain. At the Hiroshima Day Rallies, visiting American biologist and anti-nuclear activist, Professor George Wald, pointed to the urgency of developing unity among all anti-nuclear activists, to force not only an end to uranium mining, but an end to the nuclear arms race leading to disarmament.

As mentioned earlier, some sections of the peace movement accept nuclear power which they maintain can be used safely for peaceful purposes, given adequate safeguards against nuclear weapons proliferation. This attitude has led to some differences internationally and in Australia. The World Peace Council was for many years the principal body uniting peace movements throughout the world. However, recently many peace activists have become concerned at a tendency to think that all activities and movements should be directed by, or channelled through, one international body.

The World Peace Council's attitude towards nuclear power, expressed in Sydney recently by its President, Romesh Chandra (and in its journal New Perspectives 3/78), has led to a contradiction between its position and the most significant mass movement in the capitalist countries since the Viet Nam protests. And this is reflected among members of its Australian branch, the Australian Peace Committee. If the movement here is to achieve the potential for developing into a much larger mass movement, involving all those working for a non-nuclear world, one essential point is that no one organisation or ideology can attempt to attain a monopolistic position, and that the movement is able to reach many more people through unity around the common goal.

If the struggle against uranium mining in Australia were achieved tomorrow, the vital problem of the nuclear arms race and disarmament would still be confronting humanity. An urgent task is to deepen the
understanding of anti-uranium activists about the wider dangers of nuclear power and the present nuclear arms race, by continuing to project these issues and developing closer unity between the peace and anti-uranium movements.

For the arms race and disarmament to become relevant political issues in the Australian context, the very word “disarmament” must be translated into identifiable goals and campaigns relevant to Australia. The feeling among many socialists that disarmament is not possible this side of world socialism must also be combatted. If one accepted that, one might as well sit back with arms folded and wait for whatever disaster might befall. It is tantamount to saying that nothing can be done to curb world imperialism and that national liberation struggles or the class conflict against capitalism aren’t winnable, so why bother.

I would suggest that campaigns with the potential to involve large numbers of people can be developed around the following issues in particular:

* **An end to U.S. bases in Australia:** Such a campaign would expose the real nature of the bases and the danger to Australia in the event of a nuclear conflict; their vital role in the American nuclear network, particularly as part of a first strike strategy; their control by the CIA and the complete lack of any Australian control or even knowledge of their functions. Getting rid of the US bases would be a tremendous contribution towards disarmament and would have far-reaching international effects.

* **Nuclear-free zones in the Pacific and Indian Oceans** embodying the closure of all military bases in the region; an end to nuclear testing in the region; an end to visits of nuclear-powered ships in Australian ports and the deployment of nuclear-powered submarines (such as Trident) in the two oceans.

* **An independent and non-aligned Australian foreign policy** embodying an end to our subservience to the dictates of the US in particular, our military involvement in ASEAN, arms sales to Indonesia or any other nation for use in counter-insurgency; and a more enlightened, co-operative policy towards our South-East Asian neighbours.

* **No mining and export of uranium.** These are tangible political issues involving struggle against the Fraser Government and being part of the wider struggle against imperialism. The tasks seem immense: but so is the struggle for socialism against capitalism and imperialism. The hardest obstacle to overcome is people’s feeling of helplessness in the face of the nuclear arms race. But we must overcome it and develop mass action built on the understanding that the only force standing in the way of nuclear holocaust is the power of people united in their common struggle.

References


(3) Lens, S., _ibid._

(4) Aldridge, R. C., _op. cit._, p. 6.


(7) Aldridge, R. C., _op. cit._, p. 9.

(8) Mack, A., _op. cit._

(9) Aldridge, R. C., _op. cit._, p. 9.


(17) Barnaby, F., _op. cit._
Ten years ago the term Eurocommunism had yet to be invented, but in the spring of 1968 an attempt was being made in Czechoslovakia to apply many of the ideas about the political, economic and social qualities of a pluralist, democratic socialist society which have since been labelled as ‘Eurocommunist’. The term Prague Spring then became, as Eurocommunism is today, a convenient and popular way of referring to a particular trend in the search for a form of socialism suited to the needs of a modern industrialised society.

The points of departure are, of course, different. For the Czechoslovaks it was a matter of reforming and restructuring the ‘existing socialism’ which had been built up on the Soviet model, into a type of society adapted to the needs and aspirations of the people of Czechoslovakia — ‘socialism with a human face’. That phrase caught the popular imagination because, for the Czechs and Slovaks, the two main nationalities in this small country, the idea of independent nationhood was all-important after centuries of foreign domination, although the Slovaks, in the economically under-developed part of the
Republic, suffered both national and social oppression at the hands of the Czech bourgeoisie, and tensions also existed with the various national minorities.

Karel Bartosek, one of the marxist historians who, in the 1960s, were taking a new, undogmatic look at the modern history of the country, has written that the pre-war Czechoslovak Republic represented the bourgeois solution of the national question and that the Czech bourgeoisie held a 'spiritual hegemony' in the new state, founded on the agreement of the majority of the people. The Communist Party with its internationalist tradition never succeeded in breaking that hegemony, although in the social field it could muster mass support against the ills of capitalism. It was only when the country was faced with the threat of German fascism that the revolutionary movement was able to appear convincingly as the champion of the national interest and of a new, democratic form of state.

By then, however, it was too late. The bourgeois national state was destroyed not by the progressive forces, but by Hitler and internal reaction. The struggle between the bourgeois and the revolutionary solutions had not been resolved. During the German occupation from 1939-1945, however, national combined with social oppression unified the resistance movement, extending its demands beyond the main objective of liberation from the Nazis to include the demand for a new democratic order when victory was won. The resistance brought together workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeois, 'ordinary people' everywhere, whereas open support for the Nazi occupiers came from sections of the former ruling class — the top civil servants, large landowners and finance capitalists — bringing about a new polarisation of the population. The people were determined that the catastrophe of Munich and the German occupation should never be repeated, and given the geographical position of the country, the entry of the Soviet Union into the war was a strong influence in deciding the national outlook and the nature of the anti-fascist movement. There was, as one writer has put it, a 'popular anti-fascism', not explicitly socialist in all cases, but comparable to the 'popular radicalism' existing in war-time Britain.

The communists were the main force leading the anti-fascist resistance on the home front in the latter stages of the war. The bourgeois-democratic, nationalistic opposition to fascism, on the other hand, although it operated mainly from abroad, commanded considerable support within the country and was still a force to be reckoned with. But when the military situation left no doubt that Soviet, not Western forces would liberate the greater part of the country, the leaders of the 'national bourgeoisie', President Benes, and his government in London, had to abandon the idea of simply transferring themselves back to Prague to install some kind of improved version of the pre-war order. So they went to Moscow early in 1945 to negotiate with the communist leadership.

The struggle to decide the character of the new Czechoslovakia now entered its decisive phase. Previous accounts of the period leading up to the formation of the 1945 coalition government and the establishment of 'People's Democracy' have either seen it all as dominated by orders from Stalin and the decisions taken by the war-time alliance at Yalta, backed by the presence of the Soviet Army (socialism brought in on bayonets being the crudest version); or at the other extreme there is the orthodox communist version that magnifies the strength of the communists in the resistance and insists that by their wise policies the Moscow leadership was able to impose its will on the bourgeois politicians.

These versions reduce everything to a fight for power, with little reference to past history or the balance of forces as it developed among the people of the country during the war. When, however, we view Czechoslovakia's post-war revolution as Bartosek and like-minded historians do, that is, as a process in which the bourgeois and revolutionary forces are still contending for 'spiritual hegemony' of the nation, we can begin to understand the significance not only of Czechoslovakia's 'special road to socialism' from 1945-48, but also the reasons for the great popular upsurge of the Prague Spring. Moreover, there are, as we shall see, aspects of this post-war development which have considerable relevance to the problems of 'Eurocommunism'.

Whatever the differences in the specific circumstances, Czechoslovakia in 1945 was,
as are Italy, Spain, Portugal today, a country in crisis — political, social, economic and moral — where the issue of bourgeois or working class hegemony was still to be decided, where large sections of the population were aware of the need for structural change, and alongside the revolutionary vanguard there was a mass desire for radical, if not outright socialist policies; at the same time, the forces of the right, nationalist, capitalist and religious, maintained some hold within the country and could receive support from abroad.

How, then, did the left movement, primarily the Communist Party, handle the situation? First, it should be borne in mind that the presence of the Soviet Army was a very powerful factor, not only in terms of power politics, but also in influencing public opinion. Bartosek notes that there was really very little interference by the Soviet forces in the internal affairs of the country, and for the ‘interference’ in fighting and driving out the Nazis the people were infinitely grateful. And this had been done by a socialist power.

The situation at the end of the war was, then, very favorable for the working class movement to play a leading part in deciding the future. At the negotiations in Moscow, and later in Slovakia, between representatives of the national bourgeoisie and the socialists and communists, the only coherent program for a post-war government was put forward by the Communist Party. By providing for a multi-party coalition and being restricted to short-term measures, the program offered the basis for agreement. The unifying objective was to defeat the Nazis — it was an anti-fascist program. The new regime would not be the pre-Munich regime, it would be a people’s democracy relying on new democratic institutions. The property of Nazis and their collaborators would be confiscated, thereby encroaching on the capitalist structure. A new approach to the national question recognised Slovakia’s equal status. The mainstay of foreign policy would be alliance with the Soviet Union. Pending elections to a Constituent Assembly, the political parties had equal representation in the government. The key posts in this interim government were given to communists and non-party specialists.

Bartosek describes the solution as a compromise between the communist and the Benes positions — it was both anti-fascist and nationalist, with the emphasis on the first. The balance of forces inclined to the side of the working class; the basis for an anti-capitalist revolution existed, but it would be a new type of revolution, differing from the Russian. “The newness”, he writes, “was not, however, in the temporary cooperation with a section of the bourgeoisie which the balance of forces imposed, it was in the structure of the revolutionary front of workers, born in the fight against fascism, in which there were not only workers and a section of the farmers, but also the urban middle classes, members of the administrative and industrial apparatus and of the creative intelligentsia”. This anti-fascist unity offered a great historic opportunity to carry out socialist change by peaceful democratic means with the support of the majority of society.

So, as long ago as 1944-45, long before the ideas of ‘Eurocommunism’ or the Prague
Spring had emerged, Czechoslovakia was poised to put into practice what appear to be very similar ideas.

The international situation played a big part here. The policy of a national and democratic revolution supported by the national bourgeoisie, on which the communist approach was based at the time, was in accordance with Stalin's belief that it would be possible to continue the anti-Hitler coalition into the post-war period of reconstruction. And agreement could be reached with the national bourgeoisie because Benes and his Czech Socialist Party, while adhering firmly to the system of parliamentary democracy, had already spoken during the war years about the nationalising of the key industries and introducing some measure of economic planning. On foreign policy all the negotiating parties were aware of the inevitability of accepting the Soviet power 'umbrella'.

The coalition program was not a socialist program, and the communists were the most cautious about speaking of socialism as an explicit aim. Their leader, Klement Gottwald, defined the relationship within the coalition as follows: "We cannot rule ourselves and they cannot rule alone. They cannot rule without us and we cannot rule without them. At the same time they less without us than we without them. What remains is to co-operate with the other political group which is forced to co-operate with us." (2) After the liberation in 1945, however, there was strong popular demand for radical policies, particularly for nationalisation measures going beyond the provisions of the program for taking over all companies owned by Germans and collaborators, or where such people had sat on the boards of management (which, in fact, took in the key industrial concerns, mines, finance and banking). Similarly, the land reform started with the confiscation of land belonging to enemies and traitors, thereby breaking up the big estates and increasing the numbers of small and middle farmers. The Communist Party was careful to present these measures, as well as the democratisation of public life through local councils, works councils and workers' representation on the management boards of nationalised concerns, as part of the national and democratic revolution, not as socialism but as 'people's democracy'. Economic planning, embodied in the Two Year Plan for Postwar Reconstruction, was also part of this concept.

In 1946 the communists emerged from free elections with 38 per cent of the vote, making them the largest single party. In this period, by their cautious policy, they won a commanding position as the party most determinedly working for the national interest. And a socio-economic formation had been established which could, potentially, have developed into a new, democratic and non-Soviet type of socialist society. There was a three-sector economy, nationalised, co-operative and private, managed by a combination of planning and the market, a multi-party coalition government, strong, united and independent trade unions, industrial democracy through works councils, a farming community favorably inclined to the agricultural policies, a high degree of civil rights and freedoms, and, in foreign relations, no conflict with the Soviet Union which had withdrawn its troops from the country by the end of 1945. The society was strongly non-capitalist in character, with only 5.8 per cent of the national income going to the capitalists and estate owners at the close of 1947.

The question whether or not this was a 'special road to socialism', especially whether it was genuinely viewed as such by the Communist Party of the day, has been much discussed. The dogmatic thinking which dominated Czechoslovak work on the period after 1948 clouded the issue for some time, but in the 1960s during the run up to the Prague Spring many writers took a new look at the experience. The term special road was certainly used at the time, even by Stalin (for instance, in an interview with British Labor MPs in 1946), and Klement Gottwald used it, too, as a road not via "the dictatorship of the proletariat and soviets"; it would be a "longer and more complicated road ...", but without bloodshed. But did the communists of the day envisage a type of socialism at the end of the road differing from the Soviet model? The answer to this is not clear and, in any event, the crisis of 1948 decided the matter otherwise.

This is not the place to discuss the nature of the events of February 1948 which put a stop
to Czechoslovakia's first venture towards democratic socialism, except perhaps to say that, as so often in the country's history, international factors, in the shape of the cold war, played a large part. The stalinist regime was imposed and, with tragic consequences, held the country in its grip until 1968.

The experience of 1945-48 was not lost, however. As Michal Reiman, one of the younger generation of marxist historians has written, despite all the shortcomings and conflicts, and the incompleteness, this alternative road can be seen "as a distant prototype for some of the considerations about the nature of a socialist order growing out of a peaceful revolution which now find a developed form in many of the conclusions of fraternal parties in the West".

For those in Czechoslovakia who were seeking a way out of the stultifying conditions of Novotny's neo-stalinist regime, the days of the 'special road' also served as a source. For the people at large those days tended to appear as 'the good old days', rather glorified in retrospect as, even more so for many, were the years of the pre-war bourgeois Republic. Important, however, in this respect was the element of continuity in the national history of the Czechs and Slovaks which had been broken by the imposition of an alien system of society. The struggle for 'spiritual hegemony' remained to be resolved, but, as the Prague Spring was to demonstrate amazingly, despite all that had happened, the forces of genuine socialism were triumphant and would have remained so if the Soviet Union had not intervened.

The Czechoslovak marxists who prepared, at least to some extent, the theoretical basis for 1968 were able to assess in a more sober way than the public at large the experience of the first post-war years, and they were also to pick up the threads of a trend existing in their own party from its foundation. Carrillo has pointed out that 'Eurocommunism' has its roots far back in the history of the communist movement, and the Czechoslovak Party can claim its part in this. A leading figure from 1921, when the Communist Party won over the majority of the Social Democratic Party, was the experienced Austro-Marxist Bohumil Smeral, whose concept of a democratic workers' government was an attempt to find
a road to socialism suited to a West European type of society. Although 'Smeralism' was anathematised after Lenin's death as a rightwing deviation, the trend was not entirely suppressed. It cropped up again in 1934 in opposition to the sectarian policy of the Comintern, only to be rejected, although in face of the fascist threat the Popular Front policy was adopted soon after, in 1935. Smeral was the first of the Czechoslovak communists to formulate in 1939 to 1941 (he died in Moscow in 1941) the concept of a democratic anti-fascist revolution and an anti-fascist national front as a possible starting point for democratic socialist advance after the war. In the resistance movement, too, there were groups and individuals who visualised post-war development along similar lines. In brief, one may say that although in its pre-war history the CPC was as subordinated as any other communist party to the dictates of the Comintern, it carried within it the germs of a more independent national trend which was never quite extinguished.

When, after the election of Alexander Dubcek to the leadership of the Communist Party in January 1968, the need for a program was urgently posed, there was, as we have seen, valuable experience to draw upon. Those who were studying these matters during the 1960s were, of course, also familiar with the works of Gramsci, Togliatti and other creative marxist thinkers, and they produced some original works which provided a theoretical basis for the Action Program of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, published in April 1968. We may mention particularly the work of an 'interdisciplinary team' headed by Radovan Richta and published under the title *Civilisation at the Crossroads* (3) which was, in its day, a unique attempt to tackle the problems of 'post-industrial society' from a marxist standpoint, with special attention to the changes in the political, economic and social spheres which the scientific and technological revolution could and should bring about in a socialist Czechoslovakia.

Another team headed by Zdenek Mlynar, studied the political system of socialism, and its book, *The State and Society*, inspired many of the proposals for changing the political system in the direction of socialist democracy that are contained in the Action Program. The stifling of these and other critical and exploratory undertakings by Czechoslovak marxists which took place from 1969 onwards is a sad loss for creative marxism.

Essentially the Action Program was concerned with the first steps towards resolving the contradiction between the type of society and the political and social system which was administering it, to which Carrillo referred. It was, as its name implies, a short-term program designed primarily to free the political and economic system from the worst aspects of the old regime — to end censorship, to make the ruling party earn its 'leading role' by reason not coercion, to make the trade unions and other organisations of the people independent of party control, to introduce industrial democracy and to free the economy from the system of rigid command planning. The program was not, therefore, a blue-print for the future democratic socialist order, and questions such as the formation of opposition parties (which has been the subject of criticism from some quarters) had still to be resolved. Nevertheless, Czechoslovakia's Action Program was studied with lively interest by the socialist and communist parties in many countries because, in its underlying assumptions, it was in line with the thinking of those in the international communist movement who were, particularly since 1956, seeking an image of socialism differing from the distorted Soviet model. Many of these aims are summed up in a sentence from the program: "Socialism cannot mean only liberation of the working people from the domination of exploiting class relations, but must make more provisions for a fuller life of the personality than any bourgeois democracy."

For the other countries of Eastern Europe this approach and the events of the Prague Spring were of revolutionary significance — for thinking people in all walks of life, workers and intellectuals alike, they accorded with their own experience and aspirations (for instance, the experiences of Poland and Hungary in 1956 and later), for the leaders they represented a threat to the monopoly of power. And it was, of course, essentially that sense of danger that led to the invasion of August 1968 which was carefully timed to prevent the holding of the Czechoslovak Party Congress at which the provisions of the Action Program would
have been further developed in the direction of socialist democracy.

For communist parties in the capitalist world, insofar as they were not so hide-bound by dogma as to support the 'fraternal aid' afforded to Czechoslovakia by the invading forces, the Prague Spring was, and remains, a source of inspiration, while the shock of its crushing provided a stimulus for those seeking, or already starting to tread, their own roads to socialism. For the Spanish Party, writes Santiago Carrillo, "the culminating point in winning our independence (from Moscow — M.S.) was the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968". (4) An Italian view is given by Giorgi Napolitano: "Other facts arose (above all the events of Czechoslovakia) which dramatically forced on the PCI leadership the need to deepen and develop even further their own vision of socialism, of the relationship between democracy and socialism, of the problems of the socialist world and of the world-wide revolutionary workers' movement." (5)

In the ten years since August 1968 much has happened to advance the trends loosely described as 'Eurocommunist' — we have seen progress and setbacks in various countries of the capitalist West, while in Eastern Europe, too, there have been stirrings (e.g. Poland 1970, etc.). Czechoslovakia has been 'normalised', that is, an even more repressive system than existed in the 1960s has been imposed upon her in the name of 'saving socialism'. But the unresolved conflict remains, the tensions and frustrations are even greater and socialism is in even greater crisis than before. Yet the regime refuses to listen to the warnings issued by the signatories of Charter 77 that their course can only lead to catastrophe.

One lesson to be learnt from the history of Czechoslovakia is that any attempt to force a society into a mould that is alien to it is bound to fail sooner or later, even when that mould is socialist in name. The experience of the 'special road' in 1945-48 and again, in a new form, of the Prague Spring, also refutes the argument that although there may be peaceful roads to socialism, the ultimate goal can only be one kind of socialism, the Soviet type — an argument used today by those who insist that 'Eurocommunism' is merely a tactic for arriving at the same goal.

And finally, the lesson for the countries of the Eastern bloc is, as has been proved over and over again in Poland, Hungary and elsewhere, that one country cannot go it alone in breaking with the old order. Though their paths may differ in some respects and the solutions they seek will be adapted to the special needs of their countries, the progressive movements will have to act in some way in concert. At present we can expect no more than exchanges of ideas among the 'dissident' groups, and reports of a meeting between Czechoslovak spokespersons for Charter 77 and members of the Polish Committee for Social Self Defence on the tenth anniversary of August 1968 are an indication of what may be happening.

As far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, one thing is certain — a movement of the Prague Spring type can never be repeated. After the purging of the Communist Party, the deeds carried out in its name against the Czechoslovak people, and the disillusionment among many sections of the population with anything termed communist, or even socialist, an advance cannot come from within the party again. Although in its crude sense a 'return to capitalism' is unlikely to be envisaged by any but the most rabid anti-socialists (to return the means of production to capitalist ownership does not come into consideration), it must be said that the old struggle for 'spiritual hegemony' will have to be fought out anew. In that process people will undoubtedly turn again for inspiration to 1968. And socialists and communists in other countries can help enormously both by studying and developing the ideas of 1968 and, above all, by showing their solidarity with the groups in Eastern Europe which are seeking a new socialist solution for their countries.

References
In July this year, workers occupied the Sanyo factory in Wodonga in protest at retrenchments by the company.

The following interview with a woman shop steward was conducted during the occupation in the canteen where the workers slept at night.

It explains the background to the work-in and how the originally conservative workers developed their own understanding of the need for the work-in and of the importance of unions.

I understand there have been retrenchments since October 1977 when there were 79 retrenched, followed by 30 in November and 45 in February 1978. During those retrenchments there seemed to be very little response from the workers. Suddenly we have front-page headlines, the workers producing leaflets explaining their position, occupying the canteen. What happened in the meantime, what's happened to the workers?

Well, basically, the first couple of lots of retrenchments were accepted on the basis that, if they took some, it would ensure the security of the jobs of the people still in employment in the plant. After the second lot of retrenchments, the plant manager said there would be no more. If there was, he would be the first to go. That made people feel a little more secure.

However, just after Xmas retrenchment rumors started circulating again. In February, with no notice to the unions, just completely out of the blue one afternoon just before knock-off time, they served retrenchment notices on 45 people. This was done the very same day that management was meeting in Melbourne with union officials to ask them for help regarding the tariff situation.

Had the union officials been informed about the intended retrenchments?

No. When I was informed of the retrenchments, I immediately contacted Charlie Faure, Victorian Electrical Trades Union secretary. That was the first he had heard of it. At that stage it was about 4 p.m. and the only organiser in the district was Richard Young from SPU. We contacted him and when he arrived most of the employees had gone. We had a bit of trouble getting Richard in.

You mean the company refused to allow him in?

Yes, until he set them straight. What happened was there was nobody with any authority in the plant to give Richard permission to have access to the factory. They used that as an excuse to deny Richard access to the plant. The next day we had our organisers down from Melbourne. This was the third lot of retrenchments. It was extremely badly handled right from start to finish. It just created so many hassles with the people and they've lived constantly with it ever since.
What was the feeling of people? How were they affected by this third lot of retrenchments?

The employment situation had got worse. Mostly it meant to them that they had no job security. They lost that feeling of security and had a constant fear of being retrenched. Every pay day they sort of wondered - is this the week I’m going to get a retrenchment notice?

So, until the third lot of retrenchments, the 45 people who were retrenched in February 1978, people in the factory had not been so conscious of the possibility of being retrenched, they hadn't been so fearful of it. But after this lot of retrenchments their attitude changed?

Yes, dramatically. I think after the second lot they sort of thought it's right now, everything's going to be OK, and they put a lot of faith in company reassurances which are given fairly frequently, or were. About the time of the third lot of retrenchments, things started going rapidly downhill. Over the past few months they've had an increasing pressure of worry about their jobs from week to week. Just one instance comes to mind fairly strongly. Three or four weeks ago the Wodonga Credit Union distributed pamphlets which were in a white envelope, and stapled to the pay envelopes. It was so distressing for some people that when the leading hand went to hand them their pay, they either burst into tears, refused to take it, or stood back and said, "No, tell me what's in it first". That sort of attitude was created simply through fear for their jobs. For two months at least there've been solid rumors going around that there were going to be retrenchments at the end of June.

At that time did you notice any change in their attitude? Did they become angrier at the situation.

Yes, and I'll tell you why. Every week virtually, for two months, the shop stewards had a meeting once a week with management and every week we kept asking them, "Is there going to be any more, if there is we want to know". Every week, even up to as late as two weeks ago, we were given really strong denials.

The workers have been issuing statements for quite a few weeks now. If there's going to be more retrenchments, they're not going to get away with it again. This time we're going to stand and fight because if they get away with it this time, it's going to happen again and again, and there's not going to be anyone left at Sanyo, just a skeleton staff. What, in fact, it means is that they are slowly but surely cutting the workforce down a few at a time.

This was the sort of thing that people were discussing in their lunch hour?

Yes, sure. On the lines, in their lunch hour. They've had plenty of time to do it. Some of them have had quite a bit of spare time and they've been saying this for weeks and weeks.

Right. So now we come to the present situation. Can you tell me briefly what happened last week and what led to this situation of workers occupying the canteen as we can see them around us here tonight?

Well, two weeks ago, the union organisers were asked by the company to come down and sort out a possible demarcation problem. They came down and found that, at that stage, they were unable to do anything. They agreed that they'd come back in a month or so when things were actually set up and sort it out to their satisfaction. However, while they were down here the shop steward from the cabinet factory approached his organiser and said he'd had a problem for quite a few months and could Peter give him a hand with it. So Peter stayed over the next day to help him sort it out. This resulted in them putting a ban on some machinery and, subsequently, in a strike.

How long did the strike last?

Only the Friday and Monday. However, on the Friday afternoon they started standing down people from up here.

So the strike had only been going for one day?

It hadn’t even been going for a day, only a matter of hours, when they started standing down ETU people.
Why did they say they were standing them down?

Because they were running out of boards, casings, wraps, things like that. On the Monday all the organisers came down again and we entered into fairly lengthy discussions and it was settled on the Monday afternoon. However, by that stage a similar situation had cropped up that caused the storemen and packers to go out. This meant that we were still stood down because we were still unable to work.

These were essentially minor grievances?

They were very minor grievances and it didn’t really mean very much at all because they were both settled within a day or so. However, on the Tuesday we were issued with the statement that on Thursday retrenchment notices would be handed out and on the Friday the people would be retrenched.

And the company claimed that the retrenchments were brought on by the fact that there’d been some limited strike action?

Yes, that’s exactly right. They claimed that the strike action was responsible for it. However, it’s the opinion of all the workers here, myself included, that those retrenchment lists had been drawn up quite some weeks beforehand. The actions of the other two unions were very minor and people here feel the company only used that as the wedge to drive between the ETU and the other two unions. They were trying to divide the ETU off from the other two unions because it weakens them if they’re a more divided group.

Why didn’t the company’s strategy work?

Well, basically, they just completely underestimated the workforce. The people here are just so fed up with the garbage that comes out of the office — their constant lies. They weren’t ready to cop it. They just said ‘no, we’re not going to cop it’. ‘Let’s all get together, keep together, then at least we have a hope of winning it.’

Following that there was a committee formed?

Yes, that’s right. The committee is calling itself the Sanyo Workers’ Committee for Continued Employment.

The committee, as I understand it, came up with some recommendations to the rest of the members of all the unions. There was a combined unions committee?

Yes, there was a combined unions committee and it comprised the shop stewards plus about seven or eight rank and file members from various unions. Each union was represented.

So rank and file members constituted a majority on the committee?

Yes, about two to one.

What were the main elements of the recommendations put to the workers, and the position adopted by the workers?

Well, the committee had a good hard look at it and discussed several things, but the only answer we could seem to come up with was that strike action was of no benefit to us. We had to try something which was completely different and catch the company completely off guard. We had a think about it and came up with the idea that we would have a work-in. We would man the production lines during the day and occupy the canteen during after work hours.

Do you remember where this idea for the work-in came from, or did it arise spontaneously?

It’s just one of those things where you’re sitting there and suddenly you say, ‘Well, damn it. I don’t see why we should be retrenched. Just refuse to leave. We won’t go. We won’t accept it.’ It’s like Topsy, it just grew.

It grew from the basic idea that you were going to refuse to be retrenched and the strategy was built around that idea?

Yes.

What were the elements of that strategy? What did you hope to achieve by working in?

Well, a couple of things. Firstly, of course, we’re seeking to keep the jobs of those people that were to be retrenched. The other one was
that we need to have some job security. To obtain the job security we have to force the company to agree to give some sort of guarantee that they’re not going to sack us next week or the week after. Now, to achieve these things we also had to look at the broader issues. We realise that the company has a problem because of the tariff levels on television sets imported into Australia. Admittedly, some of these are Sanyo sets which are imported from Japan and they’re causing us a great deal of damage because we can’t compete with those markets. So, to draw the attention of the government and people of Australia, and anybody else that’s of any help, we decided it had to be something completely different, because we must get something done about those tariff levels.

So you decided on a completely new strategy, trying to gain government assistance for maintaining jobs at the same time as trying to force the company into backing down on the immediate retrenchments. When you put these recommendations to the people working here, were you confident that they would all go along with them?

I must admit it seemed such a wild idea that when I came in here on Wednesday morning and we put forward the recommendations of the committee I wasn’t terribly confident we’d get them to agree to it. When we put it forward we got almost a one hundred per cent majority and I was absolutely staggered by the response from the workers.

So everyone agreed to work in. What happened then?

Straight after work in the afternoon, a group of people stayed here while the other group zipped home to get sleeping gear and organise food, because there were two problems which we had to get straight. When the first lot came back, the second lot did the same thing. So that in a very short time we had ourselves relatively well organised.

So the strategy to work in in the daytime and occupy at night has been happening since last Wednesday?

Yes, 24 hours a day the canteen has been occupied.

And has work continued?

It continued up until Friday morning when we had a temporary lock-out which the company claims was a misunderstanding. When we went in and approached them, they let us all back in. That was straight after we had the mass resignation. We manned the production lines on Monday taking with us the people who had received retrenchment notices on Friday. All those people were allowed to work the day out including the ones who had been retrenched. Very little happened on Monday.

Tuesday, which was yesterday, we arrived at work and spent the day sitting out here. On Monday, the company had made an agreement and a commitment to us that they would carry ten workers. When we got in on Tuesday they denied they had reached such an agreement. When we put this to our members they again unanimously agreed not to go back to work until such time as those people were allowed to go back to work, or we spoke to Mr. Jones or something more concrete.

Also they informed us they had contacted the Arbitration Commission. This morning people arrived ready to go to work to find themselves locked out of the factory. So, unable to resume work, we went in and approached the management and said “Do you know what’s going on?” They said they would open the factory if the production lines were manned normally, the people that were retrenched stayed in the canteen and no union organisers were in the factory. When we came back and put it to the people, they just said no. “Tell them to forget it. We’re staying here. They’re not going to divide us. What they’re trying to do is divide the group again and we’re not going to have it. Either we all go back to work or none of us do.” There was no recommendation put forward by anybody, we just told them exactly what the company had said and all of a sudden, erupting from everywhere around the floor, were people with their comments making recommendations and making moves themselves.

That situation is quite amazing, especially for a conservative community like Albury-Wodonga which doesn’t have a great history of industrial disputation. I understand that in this plant itself, attitudes towards unionism and union solidarity by the workers have not been very strong in the past?
That's perfectly true. In fact, I wrote an article for our union newspaper a couple of years ago where I accused the workers here of being the most apathetic lot of people I had ever seen because of their lack of interest in the unions and lack of knowledge, which is not a hundred per cent their fault. On many occasions, I had people grizzling to me about having to be in the union and paying union fees.

Looking around us here, there are workers sitting at tables, playing cards, writing letters, reading books, lying in beds which they brought here. There's a general atmosphere of solidarity and friendship. What sort of effect has this strategy of occupying the canteen right through the night had on the workers here? I understand people are communicating with others from different parts of the plant now, whereas before they didn’t.

Well, the cabinet factory's never had a close affinity with the people up here because of being down the road a bit. Suddenly, all those people there are known to the people up here and lots of friendships have been formed. Different areas in the factory used to keep to their own groups, sit at their own tables and not mix very well. Now, suddenly, they're all one big group mixing together helping each other. Ones who can’t come in: at night are looking after the kids of the ones who want to come in. We had tremendous support over the week-end when we had no power. A lot of people who couldn’t come in were making soup and casseroles and bringing gas lights, gas barbecues and things like that. I think it's generally been very good from the union point of view because it’s made them understand their union a lot better.

I understand there’s been a lot of telegrams of support which have come in from other unions in Australia?

Yes. A large number of telegrams from a large number of unions, and also some women’s groups have come in and it’s been a tremendous morale booster for the people here because the very first lot of telegrams arrived when they were feeling a bit down.

Even though it’s sometimes a few words in a telegram it means a heck of a lot to these people because they didn’t really understand that unions could have such close unity.

There doesn’t seem to be much question in people’s minds as to whether they can go with it. They seem more relaxed than a few days ago. Even getting some satisfaction out of being here?

I think one thing that is quite noticeable, and is probably what you're trying to explain, is that they’ve just got such sheer determination. No matter what, they’re going to stick it out until they get the result they’re after. I think it’s this determination that kept a lot of them going because it’s not very easy for 40, sometimes 60, all in here together. We had problems sleeping for a couple of nights. But we’ve overcome all those problems and nobody seems to be having any hassles. We’ve got the food thing running smoothly. At the week-end it was very difficult because of the hard circumstances, the cold, no power and everything, but all that did was strengthen their determination and make them more united.

The amount of friendship, co-operation and civilised behavior that’s going on here is quite tremendous to see. Do you think this experience has changed anyone in their own personal attitudes, the way they relate to other people?

Yes, for sure. We had people who were anti-union and suddenly they realised why they’re paying the union fees. They understand helping each other. In fact, some are on our committee and they’re relating to the other workers. I think this is an experience that none of us is ever going to forget. Also, it’s had a tremendous effect on the people because they know now that, no matter what, nobody is ever going to put anything over them again.

How do you see the future of the solidarity of the workers in the Wodonga factory? What do you see happening when industrial disputes occur in the future?

One thing I know is that the people here now understand that a union is only as strong as the members in it, and while they remain strong themselves then they have a pretty good chance of licking whatever it is that’s the problem. I think this is fairly important because up until now they didn’t seem to realise this. This is one thing they have learnt and it’s valuable to them.
Earlier this year the joint secretaries of the Communist Party of Australia, Eric Aarons, Joe Palmada and Mavis Robertson, signed an appeal initiated by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, addressed to the Soviet government. The appeal requests reopening of the case of Nikolai Bukharin, his rehabilitation, and a public explanation of the circumstances which led to his wrongful conviction.

The initial signatories include many well known communists, socialists, and social democrats from a dozen or more countries. Among them are: Noam Chomsky, twelve British Labor MPs, Giuseppe Boffa, Paolo Spriano, Giuliano Procacci, Manolis Glezos, Michael Raptis, Lady Amalia Fleming, Simone de Beauvoir, Louis Althusser, Ernst Mandel and Dr. Gunther Anders.

The appeal follows a request from Yuri Larin, son of Bukharin, received by the Foundation and addressed to Enrico Berlinguer, leader of the Italian Communist Party. The letter of Yuri Larin appears below.

The Italian Communist Party responded on June 16 through a long article in l'Unita by Paolo Spriano and later that month in an even more detailed article by Giuliano Procacci in Rinascita. The latter article, translated by Dave Davies, is reprinted here. Procacci, Professor of History at the University of Florence, has recently visited Australia at the invitation of the Frederick May Foundation to participate in the first Australian Conference on “Italian Culture and Italy Today”. During his stay he spoke to meetings in Sydney and Melbourne sponsored by Australian Left Review.

These are by no means the first appeals on behalf of Bukharin. As his son records, he and his mother have been making appeals since 1961, the year of the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Four old Bolsheviks also made an appeal at that time. They included a former secretary of Lenin and of the Comintern, E. Stasova. According to Larin, as late as June 1977, an official of the CPSU Central Committee informed him that the verdicts against Bukharin had not been set aside.

Why rake up old sores?

This year, ALR has recorded several important anniversaries, mostly of a decade ago. We wrote of the Tet offensive in Viet Nam, the “May Days” in Paris, the birth and defeat of the “Prague Spring”.

It is not that anniversaries, as such, are important, but if the events have historic significance it can be valuable to recall things which influence present practice. This year marks the ninetieth anniversary of Bukharin’s birth and the fortieth anniversary of his execution.
Bukharin joined the Bolshevik Party when he was eighteen. He was elected to its Central Committee in 1917 and remained a leader throughout the next twenty years. During much of this time (Dec. 1917 until 1929) he was editor of Pravda. From 1926 to 1929 he was at the head of the Communist International. The communists of the '20s and '30s knew him as both a theorist and an organiser. Later, he became, with others, a “non-person”, yet in Lenin’s testament he was called “the favorite son of the party”.

As late as 1936, he had been sent abroad to negotiate the purchase of the archives of the German Social Democratic Party. These were at risk following Hitler’s rise to power and contained many writings of Marx.

He was arrested early in 1937. Together with Rykov and nineteen others he was indicted in February 1938. The trial of the “Rights and Trotskyites” opened on March 2. Present in the court were large numbers of Soviet citizens and many foreign observers. The defendants were charged with entering into relations with foreign states to gain arms, engaging in espionage, wrecking the economy and participating in terrorist acts. Bukharin was specifically accused of the murder of Gorki. It was also said that he conspired to murder Lenin. The trial lasted eleven days. One defendant was sentenced to 25 years in prison, two were sentenced to a 15-year term, eighteen were sentenced to death. They were shot on March 15.

No communist party challenged the verdict at the time. Each communist party was then a section of the Communist International which, not surprisingly, fully supported the result. It was not only communists, however, who accepted the guilt of the accused.

After 1956 the situation changed. Not only had Khrushchev confirmed the massive illegalities of the Stalin period, but a range of rehabilitations began. At least seven of the defendants in the Bukharin trial were rehabilitated.

To say that some had not been guilty is to cast strong doubts that any were guilty, since the “plot” involved all twenty-one. Moreover, in 1962 a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU told a Conference of Soviet Historians unequivocally that Bukharin was no terrorist or spy. Further, the trial record itself shows that Bukharin made few admissions. The only evidence against him is the confessions of others, some at least of whom are now admitted to have been pressured into making false admissions.

Bukharin did say that he was “guilty” in a moral-political sense, and it is widely believed that this admission was designed to save the lives of his wife and son. His last message, learnt by heart by his wife in the prison, confirms that he regarded his life as devoted to socialism and that “Pravda prints the filthiest lie, that I, Nikolai Bukharin, have wishes to destroy the triumphs of October, to restore capitalism”.

Many students of communism and many communist parties have considered the Stalin period and, in the words of l’Unita “have defined aberrant judicial enquiries, trials, condemnations and repressions for what they truly were”. Consideration of the period ended within the Soviet Union after 1964, but others, not least the Italian Communist Party, have tried to evaluate all of Bukharin’s work.

So long as the mistakes and deformations of the period are not fully faced it is difficult to conceive a flowering of democracy in the Soviet Union. Until the lessons of the past are recognised, the positive achievements of socialism will be heavily conditioned. And those who refuse to face their past cannot hope to develop a present and future practice free from authoritarianism or develop their theory free from dogma.

In this sense, Giuliano Procacci correctly titles his article “Reckoning With All Our Past” and indicates that it is necessary to re-establish historical truth not only for Bukharin but for “all those who shared that tragic fate, from Tomsky to Trotsky”.

It may be said that some would rather let the past sleep, but it will not and cannot. It is nonsense that great leaders of the Russian revolution are unknown in their own country, that their pictures cannot be displayed or their writings read. Could one understand the Russian revolution without reading Lenin? How then can one understand it, and the civil war, without reading Trotsky? And is it possible to understand the strengths and weaknesses of Soviet policies in industry and agriculture without Bukharin?

Moreover, distortions of socialism continue. Such distortions are used by the enemies of socialism not only to contain the Soviet Union but to denigrate socialism, to present socialism as a system which restricts rather than enhances social rights and, especially, individual liberty. In the past, as now, it is not a matter of endorsing all the views of those labelled “enemies” or “dissenters” but of creating the conditions where views are subject to genuine debate and to the test of practice, so that “incorrect views are detested by political means, not by administrative acts.

For such reasons it is appropriate to call for the reopening of the case of Bukharin and to commend the appeal of his son, which concludes with the last, moving and challenging, words of his father.
Bukharin and Trotsky shown as a two-headed monster labelled "The Right-Trotskyist Monstrosity". The hand holding them back bears the label "Gestapo".

Yuri Larin's letter to Enrico Berlinguer:

"Respected Comrade Berlinguer,

I am writing this letter to you on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the tragic death of my father, Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin. At that time I was only two years old and naturally was unable to remember my father. But my mother, who had spent many years in Stalin's prisons and camps, miraculously survived and told me the truth about my father. Later G.M. Krzhizhanovsky, one of V.I. Lenin's closest friends, and old Bolsheviks, who had lived through the terror and who had known Nikolai Ivanovich in one circumstance or another, told me about him. In addition I read many Bolshevik books (which are banned in our country even today and have been preserved only by chance by certain Old Bolsheviks) including books by Nikolai Ivanovich himself and the works of foreign researchers. The information which I obtained in this way helped me to fully appreciate the character and the social and political activity of my father. I understood the enormity of Stalin's crimes, the extent to which he had falsified the history of the Party, the absurdity and stupidity of the accusations levelled against my father at the Plenum of the Central Committee of February March 1937 and the trial of the so-called "Right-Trotskyist Bloc". However, on the basis of these absurd charges (espionage, treason, sabotage and murder), my father was expelled from the Central Committee and from the Party and condemned to death.

Beginning in 1961 my mother A.M. Larina and then I myself persistently raised with the highest Party-State organs of the country the question of the withdrawal of the monstrous allegations against N.I. Bukharin and his restoration to Party membership. This question was also raised with the Party leadership by the most senior of the Old Bolsheviks led by the former secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, E.D. Stasova. They died some time ago without receiving an answer and it was only last summer (1977) that we at last received some response in the form of a telephone call. An official of the Commission of Party Control of the Central Committee of the CPSU informed us by telephone that the accusations made at the trial of Bukharin had not been withdrawn as the process of examining the documents relating to the trial had not been completed; the question of the restoration of his Party membership could not, therefore, yet be resolved. This means that 40 years after the execution of my father we have received an answer, which, in effect, confirms the monstrous charges of Stalin. My approach to the Courts (the Supreme Court of the USSR) has been fruitless: the simple truth is they don't answer me.

In a country where the greater part of the population has been brought up on the mendacious "Short Course" there are many who still consider my father as a traitor and a hireling-of-Hitler although in reality the truth is that he was an outstanding fighter against fascism and in his last years he devoted all his energies to the exposure of fascism and to warnings against the growing fascist threat.

Leaving home for the last time for the Plenum of February March 1937 (from which he never returned) my father said to my mother "don't become embittered: there are sad errors in history. I want my son to grow up as a bolshevik". He looked on the events which had occurred as tragic but transient; he believed in the ultimate victory of the forces of socialism.

I am not a member of the Party but for my father the word "Bolshevik" undoubtedly means a fighter for social justice. And we are unable to obtain such justice in our country for a man whom Lenin before his death called "the favourite of the whole Party". For my mother, who lived through the horrors of Stalin's camps, who knew many of Lenin's comrades-in-arms, representatives of the old Bolshevik Party — people about whom she preserves in her memory the happiest recollections and of whom she always speaks with tenderness and love — life in such a situation is becoming more and more intolerable. It is inconceivable that people who still carry on their shoulders the burden of Stalin's crimes and have not cast it into the dustbin of history can fight for high ideals.

I am approaching you, Comrade Berlinguer, not only because you are the leader of the largest communist party of western Europe and have
thrown off this burden but also because N.I. Bukharin was a Communist-Internationalist, an active member of the International Workers' Movement. He was known to Communists of many countries: they always recalled him with warmth. Some of them are still living and working in the ranks of the Italian Communist Party. I particularly have in mind Comrade Umberto Terracini.

I am approaching you to ask you to participate in the campaign for the rehabilitation of my father, in whatever form seems to you to be most appropriate.

Not long before his death Nikolai Ivanovich wrote a letter "to the future generation of leaders of the Party" in which he appealed to them "to unravel the monstrous tangle of crimes". My mother learnt the text of this letter by heart in the dark days and after her rehabilitation she passed it on to the Central Committee of the Party. This letter ended with the words:

"Know Comrades that on the banner which you will carry in your victorious march towards communism there is a drop of my blood."

Yours sincerely,

Yu. Larin (Bukharin) 12.3.78.

Bukharin's last testament:

I am leaving life. I am lowering my head not before the proletarian axe, which must be merciless but also virginal. I feel my helplessness before a hellish machine, which, probably by the use of medieval methods, has acquired gigantic power, fabricates organised slander, acts boldly and confidently.

Dzerzhinski is gone; the remarkable traditions of the Chekha have gradually faded into the past, when the revolutionary idea guided all its actions, justified cruelty to enemies, guarded the state against any kind of counter-revolution. That is how the Chekha earned special confidence, special respect, authority and esteem. At present, most of the so-called organs of the NKVD are a degenerate organisation of bureaucrats, without ideas, rotten, well-paid, who use the Chekha's bygone authority to cater to Stalin's morbid suspiciousness (I fear to say more) in a scramble for rank and fame, concocting their slimy cases, not realising that history does not put up with witnesses of foul deeds.

Any member of the Central Committee, any member of the Party can be rubbed out, turned into a traitor, terrorist, diversionist, spy, by these "wonder-working organs". If Stalin should ever get any doubts about himself, confirmation would instantly follow.

Storm clouds have risen over the Party. My one head, guilty of nothing, will drag down thousands of guiltless heads. For an organisation must be created, a Bukharinite organisation, which is in reality not only non-existent but also non-existent now, the seventh year that I have had not a shadow of disagreement with the Party, but was also non-existent then, in the years of the right opposition. About the secret organisations of Riutin and Uglanov, I knew nothing. I expounded my views, together with Rykov and Tomskii, openly.

I have been in the Party since I was eighteen, and the purpose of my life has always been to fight for the interests of the working class, for the victory of socialism. These days the paper with the sacred name Pravda prints the filthiest lie, that I, Nikolai Bukharin, have wished to destroy the triumphs of October, to restore capitalism. That is unexampled insolence, that is a lie that could be equalled in insolence, in irresponsibility to the people, only by such a lie as this: it has been discovered that Nikolai Romanov devoted his whole life to the struggle against capitalism and monarchy, to the struggle for the achievement of a proletarian revolution. If, more than once, I was mistaken about the methods of building socialism, let posterity judge me no more harshly than Vladimir Illich did. We were moving towards a single goal for the first time, on a still unblazed trail. Other times, other customs. Pravda carried a discussion page, everyone argued, searched for ways and means, quarrelled and made up and moved on together.

I appeal to you, a future generation of Party leaders, whose historical mission will include the obligation to take apart the monstrous cloud of crimes that is growing ever hungrier in these frightful times, taking fire like a flame and suffocating the Party.

I appeal to all Party members! I am confident that sooner or later the filter of history will inevitably sweep the filth from my head. I was never a traitor; without hesitation I would have given my life for Lenin's, I loved Kirov, started nothing against Stalin. I ask a new young and honest generation of Party leaders to read my letter at a Party Plenum, to exonerate me, and to reinstate me in the Party.

Know, comrades, that on that banner, which you will be carrying in the victorious march to communism there is a drop of my blood."

N. Bukharin.

Settling Accounts with the Past
by Giuliano Procacci

The appeal which Yuri Larin, son of Nikolai Bukharin, has launched for the rehabilitation of his father has evoked a wide response in Italy. The press has featured the fact that communist scholars and militants,
including the writer, have signed it and expressed their support.

The request addressed to the Soviet government calls for a review of the iniquitous sentence of death on one of the most eminent and prestigious people in the leading group of Bolsheviks and the removal of the infamies and calumnous accusations which have weighed upon his memory for so many years. It is an act of justice which imposes itself and calls out for action.

I would like, however, to emphasise that the communist scholars certainly have not waited for this opportunity to dissociate themselves from the aberrant judgements of the Short Course of 1938 [i.e., The History of the CPSU(B) — trans.] and to approach the person of Bukharin in the spirit of historical objectivity. Paolo Spriano in his article in l'Unita has already recalled the contribution of scholars like Ernesto Ragionieri, Giuseppe Boffa and others to the study of the thought and political action of Bukharin in the framework of an analysis of the general phenomenon of Stalinism. For my part, I can recall that 15 years ago Editori Riuniti [a publishing house — trans.] published a collection of texts on the debate around the problems of permanent revolution and of socialism in one country in the years 1924—1926. As well as texts of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Stalin, a piece by Bukharin was also reproduced. Recently the same Editori Riuniti published an Italian translation of a work by Moshe Lewin in which he devotes great attention to the person of Bukharin and emphasises the topicality of his thought. I should like also to recall that we are indebted to Alberto Ponsi, a young communist scholar, for an accurate analysis of the role played by Bukharin in the preparatory stages of the 1936 Constitution.

This interest in the person of Bukharin is easily understood. Among the Bolshevik leaders who stood at the head of the Soviet state after the death of Lenin, Bukharin was probably the most gifted in capacity and richness of political elaboration, as Lenin himself recognised in his testament.

The name of Bukharin is usually closely associated with the battle he conducted in the years 1928—29 against the options taken by Stalin in agrarian and economic policy which led to forced collectivisation in the following years. Certainly, this battle was the central and most important episode in Bukharin's political career, but it would be an error not to set it in a wider framework. The political development of Bukharin goes back much further, unfolding in an extremely complex and contradictory manner.

Naturally it is impossible here to trace even a profile in summary, and I will limit myself to drawing the attention of the reader to several more important and less known points.

To Bukharin is attributed the first formulation of the process of world revolution as a conquest of the "city" by the countryside, of the metropolis by the colonies, a formula which, as is known, was taken up again in China in the years of the "cultural revolution". This latter expression also recurs in the writings of Bukharin, and one of his best-known works is devoted to it.

In my judgement, the major contribution of Bukharin in the period preceding the polemics on collectivisation consists in having been the first, along with Palmiro Togliatti, to advance the watchword of the "defence of peace" and to foreshadow the hypothesis that war could be avoided as a general strategy of foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the international communist movement. As is known, this watchword and this prospect which Bukharin and Togliatti advanced as early as 1928 were then taken up again by Dimitrov at the VII Congress of the International in 1935 and with great force by the XX Congress of the CPSU in 1956. It is very probable that the taking of this position is not unconnected with the removal of Bukharin from the presidency of the Communist International immediately after the VI Congress.

One can also advance the hypothesis that Bukharin was in a certain sense one of those who anticipated the turning point (with the VII Congress) in Soviet and Communist International diplomacy after Hitler came to power. Whatever else is certain, it is sure that once this change was made Bukharin was one of its most decisive and intelligent supporters. If one takes into consideration all his political activity from January 1933 when he returned to be a front-rank political figure as editor of Izvestia, it becomes evident that Bukharin was one of the Soviet
leaders with a clear perception of the danger of nazism and fascism and the necessity to combat and isolate them. In Bukharin's activities as a publicist, the insistence on the necessity of a political and ideological struggle against fascism constitutes without doubt one of the dominant and frequently recurring themes. To this vision and conception of international problems is welded firmly his conception of the internal problems of the Soviet Union. He was fully conscious of the dangers which menaced his country, and he used the formula of capitalist encirclement then current. He believed, however, that as well as providing for military security the Soviet Union had to prepare itself for eventualities by consolidating its internal cohesion, and that to this end it was necessary to relieve the very serious social and political tensions provoked by the traumatic experiences of collectivisation and the first five-year plan. The road pointed out by Bukharin to realise this objective was that of the strengthening of socialist democracy. In this light, we must see his final battle to introduce into the 1936 Constitution elements which would assure a major articulation of democracy in the Soviet system. It was a battle conducted with liberality and ingenuity. It was, however, a battle lost. The Stalin Constitution which was finally approved did not take up the proposals of Bukharin, and the Plenum of February 1937, was one of the most dismal pages in the whole of Soviet history, bordering on a coup d'état. It put an end not only to the career of Bukharin but also to the hopes of renewal and democratisation which seemed to make progress between the XVII Congress of the CPSU and the assassination of Kirov. After the Plenum of February 1937 came the purges and the trials which cut down the whole leading group of the Bolshevik party.

The tragic fate of Bukharin, while involving particularly touching human aspects, did not differ from that of many other Bolshevik leaders who shared or opposed his political positions, oppositionists of right or left, of Tomsky and of Trotsky. Today's demand for the rehabilitation of Bukharin is also a demand for justice for all those who shared his tragic fate, and for a process to re-establish historical truth. It seems to me that this must be said not only for obvious reasons of equity and justice, but also to dispel in anticipation the doubt that behind the request for Bukharin’s rehabilitation there are strictly incidental reasons.

There exists in fact a tendency, of which the book by Moshe Lewin is probably the most genuine evidence, to emphasise the topicality of the political thought of Bukharin and to see in him the forerunner and inspirer of the reforming tendencies which are present today in Soviet society and which found expression in the discussions on economic reform in 1965. Personally, I must say that this type of approach to history and the Soviet reality seems to me more firmly based and therefore more convincing than that, for example, which is expressed in workerist or Trotskyist tomes, such as in the works of Charles Bettelheim, to quote the best known example. In any case I believe that this kind of approach can evoke reservations and criticisms as in fact has happened in Italy. It is a matter of complex questions which we have long sought to discuss and on which the debate certainly cannot be considered closed. However, I repeat, this is not the point which is now in question. The appeal of Yuri Larin offers to us rather the opportunity to re-affirm a principle which is general and not incidental; that the history of the communist, Soviet and international movement is a great and tragic history; that to it belongs in full the right of all those who, like Bukharin, have fought in its ranks and have paid with their lives for the courage of their ideals. The re-establishment of historical truth is not only an obligatory act towards these comrades who have fallen and been slandered, but also a necessity of our movement.

I am in fact convinced that from knowledge of our past, of all our past, with its successes, its achievements, its errors, its crimes and its tragedies, our maturity and our socialist conscience will emerge reinforced.

— translated by D.D.

Who Was Bukharin

Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin was 29 when the Russian revolution broke out in 1917, and already a well-known leader of the Bolshevik party. His political development had
traversed the path of many other revolutionary leaders: the student movement, 1905, prison, exile. Abroad he had engaged in intense publicist activity, above all in theory, making an important contribution to the development of “Bolshevism” as a distinct kind of European Marxism. Among his party comrades he was one who principally concerned himself with contemporary economic and sociological thought: his book *World Economics and Imperialism* anticipated some of the subsequent theses of Lenin on imperialism. Returning to Russia in May 1917 he played a prominent part in orienting the party towards Lenin’s positions. He became a member of the central committee and took part in the insurrection in Moscow where he became the most popular leader.

On the morrow of October he led, in polemics with Lenin, the opposition to the signing of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. During the Civil War he was the editor of *Pravda*, the official organ of the party, and distinguished himself above all for his publicist activities and anti-vulgarisation. In *The Economy of the Transition Period* (1920) he justified the methods of “war communism” and in *Historical Materialism* (1921) he earned the reputation of the official theoretician of bolshevism.

With the ending of “war communism” and the launching of NEP (1921) there began for Bukharin a phase of profound re-thinking which brought him in a short time to becoming one of the most passionate supporters of the New Economic Policy.

His role in Soviet history was one of the first rank after the death of Lenin (1924), when a struggle for power commenced within the leading Bolshevik group, and when there was a deepening of differences on the mode of development of the revolution and the industrialisation of the country. In those years, Bukharin elaborated, in polemics with the exponents of the “left” (Trotsky, Preobrazhensky and subsequently Kamenev and Zinoviev), a gradualist conception of the construction of socialism based on the NEP model and on the rejection of any coercive policy towards the peasants (the “dictatorship of industry”). Rejecting the thesis of the prolongation of the class struggle into the phase following the taking of power, he defended a “pluralist” concept of the transition society. It was he who elaborated theoretically the Stalin formula of “socialism in one country”.

After defeating the left opposition, from 1925 to 1928 it was Bukharin together with Stalin who established the main lines of Soviet policy: in those years, official Bolshevism was “Bukharinist”. From 1926 he was also at the head of the Comintern where he exercised a wide international influence, energetically drawing the attention of the communist movement to the revolutionary resurgence of the colonial world.

His name, however, is linked above all with the dramatic struggle in opposition to the methods of Stalinism. When, during the crisis of NEP, the idea was advanced of a five-year plan, Bukharin (in a hard battle which involved the whole party) defended, against the forced collectivisation of the countryside, the perspective of a plan which would respect fundamental economic laws and the free self-determination of the peasants. The struggle between Stalinists and Bukharinists involved the whole world communist movement: the theses of the VI Congress of the Comintern on “social fascism” were the result of the victory of the former over the latter.

After 1929, the year of the defeat of Bukharin and the beginning of the first five-year plan, the power of Stalin was not challenged again. Beginning with 1933 and ending in 1936, following terrible difficulties of the first attempts at planning, there was formed in the USSR an underground opposition to the methods of Stalin which took up many of the concepts of the Bukharinist “right”. At the XVII Congress of the party (1934) there was a significant affirmation of the moderate wing which brought about a new balance, albeit temporary, in the party. Bukharin spoke at the Congress, and was again reinstated into several positions of prestige. The turning point of the VII Congress of the Comintern (1935) was also a result of this new balance within the leading group of Bolsheviks.

In 1936, Stalin unleashed mass terror against the party and instigated the Moscow trials against the old opposition leaders. In 1938, Bukharin was arrested and tried for improbably accusations, condemned to death and shot.

Trans. by D.D.
The Unions: What of the Future?

Gerry Phelan

It is commonly asserted especially in times of economic crisis, that unions are too powerful. It is the kind of statement which, on the face of it, is not discriminating, but when you get down to it, is directed at those unions or those sections of union membership which are actually doing something. So it is not all unions that are too powerful — only the active ones.

On further examination it usually becomes clear that the union is acting to protect or improve the wages or working conditions of its membership which is precisely the reason why it was formed. In pursuit of those aims it attempts to marshall all the power it needs in order to be successful. It will use industrial, economic, political, or legal power or public opinion. It will use film, song, and dance. In short the union will attempt to use all the instruments typically used by any group pursuing sectional interests.

The unions are a product of capitalism. They arose as a reaction on the part of working people to the power of capital and to the many ways in which that power was expressed. They continue to operate in a capitalist economic and social system in which capital is increasingly centralised, increasingly concentrated and ever so much more powerful than it was when the unions were born.

Capitalism is a system in which the powerful thrive. The weak go to the wall. To survive in the system, economically, industrially, politically or in almost any context, power is essential. Reason and perhaps moral right could be helpful but are not as important as power, and there is no such thing as too much power! Those are the rules. Trade unionists, like everybody else who lives in the society, have learnt those rules, often through bitter experience. It’s not nice. It’s not fair. But that’s capitalism.

Power is far from equitably distributed throughout the society; it is more easily and quickly brought into operation by some groups and individuals than by others and there are differences in the extent to which it can be sustained. Trade union power is more apparent than real, more ephemeral than sustained, and more reactive than initiating. For these reasons it is hardly to be compared with the major power agencies in the community if we are looking at the dominant agents of social change or powerful barriers to social change. The employment question brings this point into focus. The unions are no more responsible for Australia’s current high unemployment than they were responsible ten years ago for the reverse. If

* Gerry Phelan is a lecturer in Sociology at Macquarie University, NSW. This article is a paper he presented to the Conference of Labour Economists held in Brisbane at the end of June last.
the employee, via the machine, to the employer, limits job content (and, ultimately, trade training programs) and job availability which are issues of particular concern to school leavers. Large numbers of unemployed young people throw additional pressures onto the family as a support system and build up pressure for an increase in real wages for those parents who are employed.

Thus, the power of the corporation as it is exercised in pursuit of corporate interest reaches out into much wider areas of social life.

It is especially important to develop an understanding that these consequences of the use of corporate power are not such as can be overcome by improvements in wages or working conditions. Such improvements, though welcome, do nothing to challenge the power of those who, by design or inadvertently, produce these situations and hence do nothing to ensure they will not be repeated. While wages increase, the problems get worse. This is not an argument that wage and salary earners, through their unions or otherwise, should abandon attempts to maintain or improve their standard of living. The reduction in real wages over the period that wage indexation has been operating in Australia shows that this must be a continuing concern. But for present purposes the more important point is that, despite the best efforts of the unions in maintaining the purchasing power of those of their members who do have jobs, they are unable to do even that effectively.

If real wages are to be maintained which means, at the very least, maintaining security of employment, wage and salary earners need greater power over a much broader range of issues. For this to occur it will be necessary to develop a much greater understanding of the need for it within the union movement. Such an understanding will be more easily developed if it begins from and grows out of, the situation faced by people in everyday life.

In the face of high and rising unemployment and the need to resist it, wage and salary earners might now be willing to think about alternative product strategies, about how the plant might be used to produce different goods which might not be as profitable but which might satisfy some social need. The example of the Lucas Aerospace workers in Britain producing kidney machines is a case in point.

Of course, not all plants will easily lend themselves to alternative production and so the Lucas example might not be as readily transferable as it might at first appear. In any case, rather than imposing solutions from outside, it would be important to go to the wage and salary earners at the shop or office floor and encourage them to unleash their creative energy on an activity that, after all, would be directly in their interests. It will be easier for the unions to begin this process if they have previously developed at the workplace, some competent shop-floor organisation such as a shop committee or a combined unions committee. Such a development would also imply, among other things, that they had previously undertaken the often bitter struggle to win from the employer the right to have union organisation on the job, and it would also imply that the unions had overcome any barriers that might have prevented them from working together at the job level. The development of shop-floor organisation would also be assisted if at least some of those involved had participated in some form of union education program.

Even if these preparatory steps have not been taken, it might well be, as mentioned above, that in the face of high and rising unemployment and the need to resist it, wage and salary earners might now be willing to develop some new approaches. It may be that the ideas they come up with will be rejected by the controllers of the corporation because the rate of return might not be high enough, in which case it would be necessary to resort to industrial and political action in order to keep the plant open. Although this action would be concerned principally with job security and wages and to that extent might be interpreted as a narrow sectional approach it would also inextricably link those issues to a challenge to the employers' power to keep the plant closed when people want to work. And that is a significantly different thing.
the unions had the power often claimed of them, they would not have tolerated the high numbers of their members out of work. If overseas forecasts are any guide, it will get worse. Clive Jenkins, the General Secretary of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs in Britain, estimates that unemployment in the European Economic Community will increase from the present six million to 18 million by 1990. (1)

The unions just do not have the power to make or not to make the investment decision, the very decision which increases job opportunities or alternatively substitutes capital for labor and reduces the number of jobs available. The situation at the Chrysler plants in South Australia provides an example. Early in May 1978, the company announced plans to sack 1100 employees; altogether the workforce will be reduced from 7,000 a little over a year ago to 4,000 in 1979. The decision to install the existing plant or hire the recent workforce or produce the current models were made entirely by the company. The unions had no part in them. The success or otherwise the company has in bringing those and other factors together, as expressed in Chrysler's share of vehicle sales, is again something over which the union has little power. It is only at the point where the company begins sacking employees that the union, especially the people at the shop floor, can act. And at that point what action is open to them? At the very least they must have a meeting to discuss the situation. On the day they plan to do this the company closes the plant early, (2) issues dismissal notices and thereby frustrates any possibility of the bringing into effect of the unions' reactive power.

When compared with the giants in the vehicle industry, the unions are small fry. But on the other hand, if unionists attempt to protect or advance their interests, say, in the metal industry by means of a general nationwide wage claim, it is more than likely that many small employers would be placed in serious difficulty. To these, the unions, in their turn, could appear too strong. But then small businesses are particularly vulnerable to changes in their environment — financial, industrial or marketing. They, too, like wage and salary earners, are early victims of greater power exerted elsewhere within the capitalist system. As capital is further centralised and concentrated there is less scope for small business; it can expand only in the narrowing economic interstices. Typically small business people are encouraged to see their situation as caused solely by the immediate demands of trade unions and to utterly ignore the lessons of their own collective experience, namely, that even if they accommodate those demands they face, jointly with wage and salary earners, the greater power of capital.

What is being suggested then, is that it is capital, principally in the form of the large national and multinational corporations, which has too much power and it is time it was brought under popular control. Rather than the trade unions in Australia killing socialism, as has sometimes been suggested, the power of capital has meant that socialism has not yet been born.

As this power is exercised, as for example it is with respect to manufacturing industry in Australia, it becomes increasingly important to develop an understanding among wage and salary earners within the industry of the way the power is exercised and the effects it produces. The closing of plants within Australia and their reopening in South East Asia heralds a profound reshaping of the industry and a decline in its importance as a source of wealth and employment. For those sections of the industry which remain in Australia the application of new technology produces changes in the labor process which disrupt the traditional trades and other job classifications. The almost-completed retooling program of the British-owned heavy engineering company, Vickers Australia Ltd., (3) illustrates the point. Part of the $5,250,000 spent on imported machine tools was used to acquire computerised numerical control equipment which, when linked to vertical borers, is operated from a visual display unit and replaces up to three machines conventionally operated. But whereas we have come to expect of technological innovation that it replaces labor at the point of production, the greater significance of this particular equipment is that, in the event of equipment breakdown, the fault diagnosis normally carried out by maintenance staff at Vickers' Melbourne factory will now be carried out in the factory of the manufacturers in the USA to which the equipment is connected by direct line. The deskilling of the workforce, as control over the labor process passes from
Such an approach opens the way to further challenges, on behalf of the union membership, on where additional capital should be installed so as to provide work for unemployed members thus bringing into consideration questions such as urban stagnation, regional development and public transport facilities.

As the unions embrace these issues in their efforts to look after their members they will begin to reach out to those increasingly numerous groups in society generally, e.g. small business people, small farmers, environmentalists, who are also affected by the power of capital but who, hitherto, have been relatively isolated and kept that way, in part, by the power of the opinion-makers in the media.

The greater mutual understanding which would develop would not only ally wider sections of the population to what had, until then, been the concerns of special interest groups, but would thereby broaden the opinion-base on which all groups construct their policies.

The greater mutual understanding would begin to produce, for each group, sound knowledge, based on personal experience of other groups, individuals and issues. Trade unionists’ views, for example, of the women’s movement would then be based on direct contact and discussion rather than on mediation or distortion, by the press, radio and television. To the extent that that occurs it would challenge the power of the media to divide and isolate all those various groups who are wanting change but have not, as yet, found a basis for mutual support or compatible programs.

This is hardly a formula for instant revolution, but does indicate a way that union activity might be expanded in the light of current difficulties. The ideas are not new. For example, the Metal Trades Federation of Unions, in the very successful series of seminars held last year on the crisis in manufacturing industry, brought together a wide range of different groups which had hitherto been unconnected. In the public sector the form and content of the process might be different. For example, the Australian Telecommunications Employees’ Association (ATEA) has recently launched a public campaign which calls into question the decision of the national telephone authority, Telecom, to spend $2 billion on computerised exchange equipment known as ARE 11. The ATEA has produced a pamphlet entitled “Should you step aside for a computer?” and supported it with a paper on social and economic issues related to the new technology. Care is taken in the pamphlet to avoid the charge that the ATEA is simply opposing change and it says:

“We are not suggesting that we abandon technology and miss out on the benefits of modern science. In the past, technology has released large numbers of people from long hours, low pay and excessively hard work. Technology can also make ordinary men and women its victims through mass unemployment, deskilling of jobs and invasion of privacy.”

Concurrently, the ATEA is calling for public evaluation of Telecom’s plans for computerised exchanges. This demand is borne out of the Association’s practical experience, especially Telecom’s 1969 purchase of the common user data network for $20 million. As the Association says:

“It was plagued by technical difficulties which were corrected at the expense of taxpayers-customers ... Telecom is looking to dismantle the system in all states except Melbourne (Victoria).”

Both the manufacturing industry crisis and the ARE 11 issue reinforce the view that the kinds of problems facing wage and salary earners, whether they be in private enterprise or the public service, (1) are not such as can be solved by improvements in wages and working conditions; (2) impinge upon much wider sections of society, and thereby enhance the prospects for mutual support referred to above.

The unions’ initiating role in the process is crucial. Numerically, they constitute the biggest single interest group and speak for a population with a heavy dependence on week-by-week income and few, if any, alternative resources. For such people the issues are real and they are important. Given that the typical union in Australia is not confined to the one employer or industry but has members in many industries, the unions are far better placed than many individual employers to bring together an enormous amount of detailed knowledge. Of particular importance is the fact that they have well-
established structures and processes through which this can happen.

In the beginning, of such a process, the unions can expect to come under heavy attack from those in the community who say that unions should not interfere with employers' prerogatives, that they should confine themselves to wages and conditions issues. These attacks will have to be dealt with when they occur. The entire question of employer prerogatives reminds us of the slogan of the anti-war movement, “Peace is too important to be left to generals”. Similarly in a modern, highly industrialised, highly integrated, highly interdependent economy such as Australia's, the decisions as to what to produce, if and where, how and when, are too important to be left to employers.

As unions attempt to broaden the base of their industrial activity then from less conservative quarters the suggestion might be made that the problems can be solved at the level of the enterprise by means of something that might be called workers' participation. Undoubtedly there are changes which will be necessary to improve the situation at that level, but workers participating within narrowly-defined limits substantially set by the employer at the enterprise level is a futile exercise if the determining powers are beyond their reach. The Chrysler company provides a striking example of this. Among the vehicle manufacturers in Australia, it was the first to make a commitment to workers' participation and the commitment it made was substantial. Among many other things, it sent a three-person delegation overseas to study worker participation schemes in several countries. One of the members of that delegation was the president of the Vehicle Builders' Employees' Federation (VBU) Shop Committee at the company's Tonsley Park works in Adelaide. In the light of the company's recent decision to rationalise production and sack workers, it is clear that any participating the employees might have done did nothing at all to increase their security of employment or place any moral obligation on the company to find alternative employment. In this situation, the workers' participation scheme is simply irrelevant.

If the above outline suggests ways in which the unions might move in both advancing their members' interests and challenging the power of capital, the role of the political parties of the Left, which have traditionally influenced the unions, remains to be explored. They could do much to facilitate the process under discussion.

Capitalism has turned out to be an extremely resilient economic and social system but the various economic, cultural and ideological institutions that underpin it are coming under increasing attack. More and more the bases of power are being challenged by ordinary people in significant ways. Firstly, there is an increasing awareness of the vulnerability of power holders, that the bases on which they rest are not as unassailable as has generally been assumed. Secondly, ordinary people are becoming increasingly conscious of the power they themselves have and how they can affect outcomes by its use. The proliferation, and success of, community action groups attest to this.

These developments suggest that the historical tendency towards greater democracy is beginning to burst through the confining cage of capitalism. They signify that the time has come for much greater openness in the decision-making process. If contending points of view are not accounted for during that process there is now a much greater likelihood than previously that ordinary people who will be affected by the decision, will chain themselves to trees to prevent the destruction of parkland, will lie down in front of bulldozers about to demolish their tenanted housing or in other ways will apply a veto to decisions made in pursuit of narrow interests.

These developments are not at all partisan; they constitute an attack not only on the controllers of capital but on all powerholders including those in political parties and in unions. Not only are they necessary to meet current basic problems, but they also lay a sound basis on which any future society might be constructed.

FOOTNOTES


Tim Rowse argues that liberalism, in Australia, is a many-sided doctrine with a wide influence. He attempts to prove that it is an hegemonic ideology, and he places liberals in the role of organic intellectuals, that is, intellectuals who express the interests of Australian industrial capital.

These liberals, the argument continues, have in various ways sought to promote a consensus within a liberal framework. 'For the question of consensus is inescapable, in one form or another, and endemic to intellectual life in a society based on the exploitation of labor and the domination of society by the needs of one class'.(p.8)

Rowse’s method is basically chronological and narrative. But before he presents his case studies, he offers, in Chapter 1, a definition of liberalism. The two important elements in this definition are the individual and the community. For there to be a viable community, the individual’s values need to correspond to some general community outlook. Liberalism says that society is an ensemble of individuals and the state is neutral.

Liberalism places great stress on individual freedom, especially the freedom to do business in the market place. Most liberals believe in the equality of the individuals who make up the ensemble.

It is the author’s purpose to state all this in ideological terms, in the sense that he adopts. An individual’s ideology expresses a relationship with the world, a system of representation of the world, and the truth or falsity of the representation is not really relevant. The ideology is authentic if it is based on a lived relationship. A theoretical ideology, in the author’s opinion, is an attempt to develop a systematic world-view from this relationship. Ideologies, both spontaneous and theoretical, make people into subjects — self-conscious individuals who act out their ideologies.

Rowse presents four case studies spread over a span of fifty years. Case Study 1 deals with intellectuals who were active in or associated with the Workers’ Educational Association in Sydney before and during World War I — people such as Francis Anderson, G. V. Portus, R. F. Irvine, Meridith Atkinson and C. H. Northcott.

Case Study 2 discusses the prominent historian Keith Hancock (author of the seminal book, Australia (and such economists as R.C Mills, D. B. Copland, Leslie Melville, E. O. G. Shann and L. B. Giblin. Case Study 3 examines such post-World War II reconstructionists as H. C. Coombs, Lloyd Ross and J. G. Crawford, and Australian Institute of Political Science figures such as W. McMahon Ball and W. G. K. Duncan. Case Study 4 looks at so-called new critics such as Donald Horne, Craig McGregor, James McAuley, Leonie Kramer and Vincent Buckley; and there is an afterthought on Ian Turner.

In a short review it is impossible to do justice to the detailed discussion that Rowse offers. But the reader may incline to the verdict of 'unproven'. Some of the points don’t really fit the thesis all that well. At times, the author seems to be forcing things a little. Hares are started and not really run to ground. And the book doesn’t really flow; it is more a collection of loosely linked, fairly disparate essays and comments than a carefully constructed, comprehensive study.

A major problem is the use of the liberal label and the flexibility of the author’s usage. Admittedly, Rowse argues that within a general liberal discourse there are many views but he doesn’t sufficiently develop this point. There are ‘progressive’ liberals and ‘conservative’ liberals such as Peter Coleman, who is now leader of the Liberal Party in New South Wales.

There are liberals who are radical and liberals may be socialists. The problem is made concrete if one considers such people as Donald Horne and Ian Turner, two who come under consideration in Rowse’s book. Horne, who once described himself as a radical conservative, could quite properly now be described as a not-so-conservative radical. Turner has many of the hallmarks of a liberal but he is a genuinely libertarian socialist. In fact, many socialists are liberals. One important case, Brian Fitzpatrick, is hardly mentioned. And the omission of John Anderson is very surprising.

There are two other significant points which the author overlooks. There is no concerted discussion of conservatism as such. Rowse doesn’t really argue why liberalism should be ranked ahead of conservatism as the ruling class ideology of primary importance. Instead, the wide range of liberalism is used to embrace quite diverse ideologues, some of whom — McAuley, Kramer...
and Coleman, for example — would be better considered within a conservative framework.

Another point related to liberal/radical/socialist interaction concerns the roles of the formed intellectually trained ideologues dealt with by Rowse and the largely self-taught politically trained ideologues of the working class. How far do they interact? How far are they opposed or complementary? Or are they on quite separate courses?

This is a major issue of ideology in Australia, and it is not really unfair to regard this as something to which some attention should have been given.

Another weakness which impairs the book's force is the shallowness of some of the history. Writing of an intellectual group which founded the Victorian Labour College, he includes, without explanation, the self-taught artisan, W. P. Earsman, a founder of the Communist Party, among their number. While it is true that trade union membership grew in the 1920s, this is no indication of intensified class struggle from 1919, as appears to be suggested. Using different criteria, the opposite would probably be a sounder conclusion and the previous decade would be a period of sharper class struggle.

Similarly, while the discussion of Lloyd Ross is one of the book's virtues, the omission of any real attention to the years 1935-40 when Ross was a member of the Communist Party, leaves the reader wondering.

Finally, the general reader will worry about the appropriateness of the book's title. It suggests much more than the actual subject matter of the book. And while there are passages of good exposition, at times the book's construction and prose become an obstacle to a clear understanding of the author's meaning. — Roger Coates

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COMMENT ON BLACK ARMADA BY RUPERT LOCKWOOD ..... by Doug Olive.

Rupert Lockwood’s book Black Armada, is a significant and excellent work. It deals with the contribution made by the left political and trade union movements in the struggle of the Indonesian people for national liberation from Dutch imperialism.

This struggle and its history has important lessons for the left and progressive movements today. As one of the most important contributions made by the left in our country to international solidarity, it deserved a work as well documented and presented as Black Armada.

The author has researched his material very thoroughly. He interviewed dozens of people closely associated with the leadership of the struggle to boycott Dutch ships and to liberate Indonesian patriots from Dutch domination on Australian soil. He assembled a wealth of factual information and has put it together in a skillful way, making its reading an exciting experience.

One of the outstanding lessons of this struggle which comes through clearly in the book is how, in the right political conditions, the left-motivated sections of the labor movement can inspire the forms of mass action to influence foreign policy and the course of history.

The mass of factual information presented by the author leaves the reader in no doubt about the decisive role played by the Communist Party of Australia and the left trade unions, and just as clearly exposes the attempt of rightwing leaders of the ACTU and the Sydney Labor Council to torpedo the struggle.

While I highly commend the book and suggest it as a “must” for students of the history of the Australian labor movement and those who like historical events presented in a stimulating form, I want to correct a few minor inaccuracies.

I also feel that some of my own personal experiences, mainly associated with the struggle

to close the Dutch horror camp at Casino, may be of interest.

As to my role, until now an almost completely undercover one: in late 1944, in company with Jack Henry, I attended a meeting of the secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPA at George St, Sydney. The then National President Lance Sharkey and Vice-president R. Dixon were the secretariat members present. Dixon outlined the purpose of the meeting and of my presence at it.

He pointed out that the inevitable defeat of the Japanese in the Pacific and their forced evacuation of Indonesian territory would open up the way for imperialism, led by the British, to attempt to reimpose Dutch colonial domination on Indonesia.

The presence of the Dutch administration together with leading representatives of the Indonesian Communist Party in Australia imposed a heavy responsibility on the CPA as the main anti-imperialist force in the country.

We accepted the responsibility, he said, as our international obligation to assist in every way possible the struggle of the Indonesian independence movement.

He, Dixon, had been given the responsibility for the development of the struggle nationally, while Jack Henry had the responsibility in Queensland. He said that because of the residence in Queensland of a large number of Indonesians including many of their leaders, the leaders of the Queensland State Committee had an extra responsibility.

One of the major problems was to combat the narrow ideas of most of the Indonesian leaders who still failed to fully grasp the real nature of the struggle and harbored illusions about replacing the Dutch with a form of Soviet power. We had continually to emphasise that the struggle was an anti-colonial one for national liberation. The leadership given by the Indonesian party would largely determine how successfully the bourgeois national liberation movement could finally be transformed into a form of people's power.

One of the real problems was continuity of personal day-to-day leadership. Political security demanded that this could not be undertaken by a member of the secretariat. Jack Henry had proposed that, in Queensland, I should be given the responsibility of working closely with the Indonesian party leadership; the conspiratorial character of this work was emphasised.

From then on, until the Indonesians were finally sent home, I worked with the Indonesians under Henry's direction.

The language barrier was very real. While some of the Indonesians like Sardjono, Slamet and a few others had some knowledge of English, the conveying of ideological, strategic and tactical ideas was still very difficult. An attempt was made to rectify this by organising, in Queensland, a study of the Indonesian (Malay) language under a Chinese tutor known as comrade Albert.

Albert was recognised by the Indonesians as a leading marxist. He was a member of the resident (in Australia) Central Committee of the Indonesian party and attended all leadership meetings.

The class was unsuccessful and collapsed after only a few weeks. With due respects to Rupert Lockwood, who said in Black Armada that Jack Henry and Mick Healy both learned Indonesian, the fact is that none of us were able to communicate even one full sentence in that language.

Without Albert acting as interpreter the task of conveying our party's ideas on policy and tactics would have been time-consuming and difficult — indeed almost impossible.

In April 1945 we received word that the Indonesian prisoners at the Casino camp had refused the inadequate food served up by the Dutch. When this happened the Dutch had sounded the alarm and men raced to their tents. One Indonesian named Tarzan was shot and killed by the Dutch while another named Lenkong was wounded.

On September 12 another Indonesian named Soendo was killed by a Dutch guard with an Austen gun.

About that time we received advice that over 200 Indonesians had been confined to barracks, living in the most terrible conditions. We proposed to the Indonesian party leaders that the political conditions in Australia were ripe for decisive action on this question. Prime Minister Chifley was showing signs that he wanted to be shot of the Dutch, and action from within the camp complemented by increased agitation outside could turn the scale; force the closure of the Casino camp and free the Indonesians for repatriation to their homeland.

It was agreed that I should go to Casino, meet with the available Indonesian leaders in the camp and put the proposals to them. I was also to attempt to get into the camp, posing as a Brisbane newspaper reporter.

We met at the home of a railway worker in Casino. Although the camp was surrounded by a fence, it was not hard for a few inmates to slip out at night — except those in the inner compound. Nine members of the Indonesian party were present. I explained our views and the forms of action we considered appropriate. They greeted our proposal with enthusiasm and suggested that the best way to initiate the action would be to refuse breakfast, which would bring a possibly violent reaction from the Dutch.
Although they had practical experience of the violent way in which the Dutch guards were likely to react, when it was asked who would be the first to refuse the food and initiate the action, every one of the nine immediately volunteered. It was decided also that the next day should be used to discuss the proposed action with all the men in the camp and win their support for it.

The next morning I went to the camp by taxi, being met at the gate by armed Dutch guards. I told them I was a newspaper reporter from Brisbane and wished to talk with the camp commandant. One of the guards came back and beckoned to us to enter. I asked the taxi driver to wait for me.

The big boss was not present. His deputy was a young, very arrogant product of Dutch colonialism. I told him my paper was very concerned about stories circulating in Brisbane that the Casino camp was indeed a concentration camp that ranked with Belsen and other German horror camps. The stories said that Indonesians had been shot and that at present over 200 of them were in solitary confinement, living in inhuman conditions. My paper wished to be able to refute these stories, but in order to do so it would be necessary for me to examine the camp and the conditions of the inmates.

He assured me that the stories were lies. I insisted that unless he allowed me to examine conditions I would not be able to write a story favorable to the Dutch. He then agreed and called for a car, saying “I will take you”. I asked the taxi to follow, but the deputy said no, it must wait there.

We drove to the compound (the huts where the Indonesians had originally been housed, and was now used for “troublesome” elements) a few kilometres away. It covered about two acres of ground surrounded by a barbed wire fence 12 to 14 feet high. Hundreds of Indonesians were inside the compound, with armed Dutch guards all around. At the four corners machine gun posts were mounted, with the guns trained on the inmates. I asked were those the guns that had been used to shoot the Indonesians. Not at all, he said. We have never shot anyone at this camp. They are there for conditions I would not be able to write a story favorable to the Dutch. He then agreed and called for a car, saying “I will take you”. I asked the taxi to follow, but the deputy said no, it must wait there.

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The big boss then appeared on the scene. After the understrapper told him my story, he said yes, they were aware of these lies and were anxious for the people to know the truth. I assured him that the truth would at last be told.

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It was not until I was stepping into my taxi that he asked “What Brisbane paper do you represent?” I told the driver to get going and said “the Queensland Guardian”. He exploded.

The story I wrote on that occasion was published in the Guardian under the heading “Casino’s Little Belsen”. It was republished later in the local Casino newspaper.

Thoughts on “Comrades Come Rally”
by Eric Aarons

John Sendy writes well. He captures the flavour of time, place and situation. What it was like to be young, eager, ready for self-sacrifice for an ideal in the ‘forties; the high hopes and spirits of the communists in the early postwar period; the “feel” of Tribune selling; of sometimes hostile meetings or ones without an audience; the atmosphere of our stay in China.

Most of his pen portraits are good, some superb. Especially the one of Ernie Thornton — admittedly a person with a character as suited to interesting description as his physiognomy was to the cartoonist. A few sketches, where one’s expectations were high because of the subject’s closeness to the author (Alec Robertson for instance) are a bit flat by comparison.

John writes with humanity and compassion for people, qualities sadly lacking in not a few writers these days. He has not set out deliberately to score points or ride too hard in the “get square” stakes, though it is clear that he feels deeply a number of things and encounters during his life in the party.

He is generous, if not over-generous, in his treatment of me personally, and of some others with whom his relationships have at times been rather stormy.

I don’t know what cuts his publishers made in the manuscript, but wonder how, in speaking of Eddie Robertson, he doesn’t mention Gloria Garton. Gloria is an identity in her own right, but the happiness of these two in their all too brief association warmed many others as well as themselves.

On at least one point of fact he is wrong. Rather surprisingly, because we discussed our childhoods a lot while limbering up for our Chinese introspections. When Laurie’s and my father Sam separated from our mother, Laurie came with him to Sydney, while I stayed with mother in Melbourne.

My memory of one minor adventure of the “innocents abroad” is also different from his — though generally I wouldn’t back my powers of recollection these days. When Keith McEwan was done down in Port Said he had been enticed down the gangplank by the seductive cries of the sellers. He had money in his hand which an enterprising

Comrades Come Rally! Recollections of an Australian Communist by John Sendy. Nelson. $9.95.
hawker seized, thrusting a large box of "turkish delight" into his victim's hands. He turned the bemused Keith around, pushed him back up the gangplank, and scarpered off into the crowd. The box, when opened contained a fused, sticky layer of revolting jelly. The second layer into which Keith dug in forlorn hope was an inch-thick piece of wood.

(These dealers were rogues, as they are anywhere; but in 1951 they also fused their deceptions with the burgeoning nationalism that became Nasserism, and carried them out with great relish and panache.)

It's probably being self-indulgent to pursue the matter, but stimulated by John's re-creation of atmosphere I have to confess that I was one of the un-named two who lusted after Jan and Mimi and were so unfeelingly circumvented — doubtless on instruction — by the stolid Ching. Take it as square-off or envy as you like, but the other one (victim of a most untimely fatal heart attack early this year, I am sad to say) was the leading light. He really had good looks, and a way with him; I just hopefully tagged along.

We were sexist and sex-hungry (at least most of us, who had no partners) and, by the third year of our stay in China, could only "admire it from afar" as we crudely put it.

In that rather trying situation I, as leader, had the task of approaching the Chinese for a renewal of the originally large supply of contraceptives which the married couples in the group had thoughtfully been advised to bring with them.

My mission eventually led to an in-depth discussion with the ideological chief of the institution together with a female interpreter whose physical attributes were particularly admired. I don't know who was most disturbed by the encounter (sexual matters being hardly common subjects of discourse in that country); but anything for the revolution!

In a rather remarkable parallel with official Roman Catholic attitudes the chief said that to think of sexual relations without the aim of procreation was "bourgeois ideology" — an assertion which even I, despite my then weakened state of resistance to Chinese ideological blandishments, couldn't cop. No doubt ready to commit his country to any sacrifice to save us from that dreaded capitalist infection, he said they would keep any children born because of lack of contraceptives. Or perhaps he hadn't caught up with a new phase in the often-changed official policy on birth control, because we finally got the goods.

John's book is not analytical, but descriptive and evocative of a life in the Communist Party of Australia from the war on. I don't say this as a criticism, for the latter approach can be as valuable in writing history* as the former (and often more interesting, as many will find in this case).

Nevertheless, while not asking the book to be something it is not designed to be, it would be vacuous to ignore some political conclusions John has evidently drawn from the whole experience.

As well as having quite strong differences, John lost heart at the lack of progress of the party, as he feelingly describes when he says:

"Yet it would be quite wrong for me to give the impression that the differences are the major factor for my position. I firmly believe that they constitute only one factor. My decline is a general political and ideological one..." (Letter to National Executive, foreshadowing resignation from the Presidency, page 227. The date given is June 1972; I think it should be 1973.)

Such honesty should be respected, certainly not used as the basis for jibes. I, too, have peeked into more than one abyss.

But still, one must tackle the political issues raised. And in doing so I will try to take a leaf from John's book and do so objectively, despite the added difficulty that he puts his case discursively as befits the aim and style of his book, rather than tightly arguing it.

It is, of course, an undeniable fact that the party has declined greatly in numbers, influence in trade unions and other organisations, in revenue, Tribune sales, etc. The issues to be examined however are: the main reasons for this and the prospects over the next few years of reversing the trend.

Behind these again is the deeper question of whether the "rethink" of the last dozen or so years laid the basis for revival, or would we have done better by hanging onto more of the past. (I agree with John that we should not just rubbish our past, but that is not the point here.) There is also the related question of whether a legacy of four decades can be overcome in one.

This is not the time or place to attempt an exhaustive analysis of these difficult questions, and the answers to some of them may be more definitively revealed by events now unfolding as the previous period of expanding capitalism has been replaced by one of deepening crisis, with the former state, I would suggest, unlikely ever to recur.

I will take just three points John makes about whether the "rethink" of the last dozen or so years can be the basis for a return to the 'sixties, and make an impressionistic appraisal of the prospects as we approach the 'eighties. If, in the process, I reinforce John's view (page 219) that I "rarely admit mistakes", so be it.

First, it is clear that John believes the splits with Hill and those who formed the Socialist Party could have been avoided, and that if they had the
party would have been much the stronger as a result.

I believe, on the contrary, that there was no way to avoid the splits, except by accepting a situation which would have debilitating the party still more and prevented the development of a program, policies and methods of work more in accord with our fundamental beliefs and which at least give prospects of progress.

I concede some of John’s criticism of “excesses”, and for the sake of argument am prepared to concede them all. But I still do not believe there was any way a group like Hill’s would have accepted even half the minimum requirements for maintaining a party in reality and not just in name. John’s own account surely points to this conclusion. And in what country in the world have the Maoists been, or shown preparedness to be, so contained?

Nor would the majority of those who now form S.P.A., I believe, have been prepared to refrain from forming a party within a party, getting out their own paper and using every opportunity, and external backing, to frustrate the carrying out of decisions they did not agree with. If at any conjuncture they had ever mustered a majority they would have unceremoniously “cleaned out” their opponents.

I am not clear, either, whether John’s rather impatient and antagonistic attitude to those in the party he regards as “left” is the one he advocates we should have adopted towards the S.P.A. forces, or what he thinks would have resulted if we had.

John had the impression from his talk with chief of the C.P.S.U. International Department, Ponomaryev (page 203), that they wanted a compromise. But other C.P.S.U. representatives have made it clear in more ways than one that they regard support for those who support them as having, in general, first priority.

A number of parties and party leaders tried to compromise, or were forced to do so — for example, Dubcek and the Austrians. Where did it get them?

Some other parties have been more “patient” than we, for example the British and the Swedes. But this did not prevent eventual splitting while the French, who delayed confronting various issues, face a difficult internal situation.

A Swedish comrade I met recently, in discussing the course of their split, expressed the view that the C.P.S.U. attitude to their followers leaving or staying depends on whether they have prospects of effectively influencing in a way they want, the attitudes of a given party. If they cannot, it may be better to leave. Not much basis there for a principled compromise, it seems to me.

I don’t advance our course as a recipe for all. But neither is the reverse true. Nor can developments be understood in isolation from the Sino-Soviet split, which it was and is quite beyond our power to significantly influence. John seems to me to underestimate the depth of this split, the depth of the motivations of the Soviet Union’s invasion of Czechoslovakia to halt the process of democratisation, and the consequences of all this for the movement worldwide.

Second: we should take notice of John’s great stress on the importance of the Labor Party in Australian politics and the way this impinges on socialist prospects. But that is the easy part. The more difficult question is how should we react to that importance.

John seems to believe that the C.P.A. should have and could have saved the Labor government from itself, as it were. “There was not enough extra-parliamentary backing to give the government guts...” (page 181). Or go past it. That is true, but the reasons why are complex.

John implies that the C.P.A.’s attitude, and our weakening through the splits were the main reasons, together with our parallel failure to overcome the leftist that arose among the young radicals from the ’sixties on. (Other parties, bigger and stronger than us also find it difficult to overcome this continually recurring leftist, but that is by the way.)

But even if one grants all that John says, and accepts for the sake of argument that the issue of Labor policy is just a question of “quantity of guts”, could we have saved that government? If John thinks so I believe he completely misreads the comparative strengths of the forces involved.

The central fact was that the Labor government, and the left wing of that party, and the trade union movement, were unable to cope with the onset of unexpected economic crisis. The more advanced elements in the trade unions and mass movements were also unable to fill the policy gap. Even had we been twice as big and three times more accommodating than we were, I do not believe we could have overcome that central obstacle.

We should have given and tried harder to rally greater support for Medibank and other policies in the areas of welfare, compensation, insurance and democratic rights which played a key part in Labor’s 1972 election victory, though we could not ignore, either, the “capitalist efficiency” rationale also contained in Labor policy, or readily overcome the strong “leave it to us” pressure.

But, in any case, how could these policies, even if fully implemented, have overcome the soaring inflation and unemployment which was the basic cause of the Labor government’s downfall?

The one chance of saving that government was a sufficiently strong extra-parliamentary mass movement following the November 11 coup. It might have been a slim chance, but it was real, in a way other mass movements or conceivable movements John conjures with were not, in the
political context we are discussing. We threw ourselves fully into that struggle and in the subsequent election campaign, with the unprecedented *Daily Tribune* as the centre-piece of our effort. Hawke and other "go quietly" exponents of reformism removed whatever chance of success there was.

We put alternatives too crudely and too tardily, it is true. But the main reason for this was that far too little had been done by any trend of opinion within the party to refine and develop them. Happily, that situation is now changing and all are making a contribution now.

The policy issues posed by the crisis, and the problem of methods of struggle posed so starkly by the coup, still have to be faced by Labor. But the mainstream of the A.L.P. has not advanced much beyond where they were at the time of the Hayden budget of 1975, while the Labor left has only just begun to face the problems. We should encourage and help. But an essential requirement for this, as well as for other contributions we need to make to massing support for radical social change, is to look to our own policies and build our own strength, especially in the labor movement.

My third point concerns the "social (or liberation) movements", of which John remarks in passing "... incorrect assessments ... of the new liberation movements in western society ..." (page 222) without specifying what those assessments were, or in what way they were incorrect.

Assessment of these movements is often clouded by other questions, such as the existence in them of "extremes" or the difficulty of having them subordinated to the "higher needs" of the class struggle. But "extremes" have existed in the trade union movement, which has from time to time also exerted its autonomy against the "higher needs" as perceived by both right and left. Yet these aspects of the trade unions have not determined our attitude to the movement as such.

What is at issue is our assessment of the *substance* of the liberation movements. And I believe that they represent something deep and permanent in developed capitalist countries; something essential to social transformation and crucial to its character.

Concern with them is necessary not only from the point of view of recognising "mass movements" as decisive factors in politics. It is also a corrective to the endemic "economism" and reliance on action from the top by big state and big government, which has afflicted the whole Australian left and the trade union movement.

A more responsive attitude to them than John displays could also help overcome the narrow and dogmatic interpretations of capitalist contradictions, relations of production, class etc., on which we were brought up and which continually reappear in new forms.

A few remarks by way of overview and conclusion.

Calls for "realism" are healthy. But is it necessarily realistic, even in times of quiescence or retreat of the movement such as we have been experiencing, to reject future "upheavals" and the part they may play in developments?

Can we look today's world in the eye without seeing the accumulating material for vast upheavals and conflicts of various kinds? In the past most of these passed Australia by, it is true. But today, the dimensions and depth of the crisis, which we have continually stressed, are being recognised on all sides. Bob Hawke, Manning Clark and Brian Dixon, Victoria's Minister for Social Welfare and Youth, each in their separate ways, see upheaval ahead. (The last-named predicts a possible 31 per cent unemployment by 1984 — *Financial Review*, August 7.)

To talk about the upheavals developing conditions are likely to create is not to revert to the "re-run of 1917" syndrome, which has little currency in our party these days. The policies we now have, and the program we are putting together I regard as developing fairly directly from what we (John included) started in the second half of the 'sixties and which certainly didn't envisage an even path.

Holding to and developing this course holds the best prospects for us to ascend from the plateau we have been on for the last few years. And there are good signs about. There have been good signs before, it is true, and they have failed to "jell". But, for what it is worth, I have growing confidence they will. The strength of reactions to the budget, I believe, are of more than passing significance. Support for, or acceptance of, the Fraser government and belief that it can deliver the goods it promised have turned a corner on a downward path.

The question is will we be sufficiently advanced in policy, cohesive enough in organisation and adequately energetic in action to meet the challenge?

* Lloyd Churchward is wrong when he says (review of *Comrades Come Rally*, Tribune, July 19, 1978) that nothing more was heard from discussions in 1967 about party history or the History Commission established by the 21st Congress.

The Commission concluded, and their view was accepted, that the party should not try to produce, or have produced, any "official" history. The reasons should be fairly evident. Instead, individual people or ad hoc groups should be encouraged to make their own contribution, with whatever assistance by way of records etc. the party could give. John's book is one such contribution.
Civilisation at the Crossroads: social and human implications of the scientific and technological revolution, $4.50 (300 pp.), 1969.

Some copies of this very important pioneering work are still available. Published by ALR in 1969, the book is the work of a Czechoslovak interdisciplinary research team headed by Radovan Richta. It appeared late in 1967 in Czechoslovakia and undoubtedly resulted from the deep concern with the crisis in economy, politics and ideology which came to a head there at that time.

Its findings in turn provided the theoretical basis for the Action Program developed by the Czechoslovak Communist Party to meet that crisis.

These national aspects do not, however, detract from the universality of the problems dealt with. The book is a first-class piece of research and analysis about issues confronting all advanced industrial societies, as apt today as it was when published. Over 300 pages of text are supplemented by extensive tables and references. At today’s prices, it is selling cheaply.

Antonio Gramsci: The Man, His Ideas, by Alastair Davidson (100 pp.), 1969. $2.

This short book was one of the first works published in English about the life and work of the Italian marxist thinker and communist leader. It is still a valuable reference for those interested in Gramsci’s contribution to marxist thought and socialist politics.

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