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AUSTRALIAN LEFT REVIEW

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This first issue of ALR for 1972 has a completely new appearance. The main reason for this is that the cost of production is considerably lower in this format, and the financial position of ALR, always difficult, was made acute when the book subsidy of 20% of cost was recently withdrawn from all periodicals by the Federal Government. However we believe that the new ALR will not be less useful or attractive.

The aim of ALR has been and remains to provide a means for discussion and dissemination of ideas which will help revolutionaries in Australia to grapple with fundamentals and analyse what is happening. During the past year readers have raised a number of issues connected with our role. One concerns language; of course, if the ideas put forward are not understood because the presentation is obscure or technical, or because the relevance and "point" of articles are not clear, these purposes of the journal will not be served. Readers have made justified criticisms of contributor and editorial failings in these respects which we are seeking to meet. We feel that most subjects which are well understood by the writer can be clearly presented, and we are seeking the cooperation of contributors in avoiding obscure language and assisting them to do so by making more editorial suggestions.

However, we would like to impress on our readers that their cooperation is also needed. Ideas, especially unfamiliar ones, are not grasped without effort. This does not mean just struggling with words and phrases with the aid of a dictionary — a need we feel we can make the exception rather than the rule — but of struggling against our own accustomed modes of thought and even prejudices, from which we on the left are no more immune than others. In particular, this involves conceptions of what subjects are, and what subjects are not, properly of concern to serious revolutionaries. For example, in issues last year questions of the processes of "socialisation" within society, and the views of a group calling themselves "anti-psychiatrists" were dealt with. To some readers this seemed an unwarranted deviation from the main concerns of the class struggle, something of interest only to intellectuals.

We disagree. In the first place, such issues are regarded as relevant by too few intellectuals as well as too few workers. In the second place, these matters are not secondary ones, to be attended to, if at all, only after the economic problems have been solved. Simple models which take the economic as primary and determining, and cultural and value questions as derivative and secondary are inappropriate in general, and particularly in today's more complex and unaccustomed conditions.

We hold to the emphasis on "counter-hegemony", "counter-culture", "counter-values" or "counter-consensus" outlined in our editorial of October 1969. At the same time we do not share the view that "culture" is now everything or that it can be considered in isolation from economics and politics. We are therefore striving as well to give still more cogent analyses of the developments in the economy, in the trade unions and in politics, in such a way as will lead to them being viewed in interaction with each other instead of being seen as poles apart and without connection. Readers may not, of course, agree with our assessment of the relative importance and relations between topics, and we hope they will continue to communicate their views when they disagree. The ensuing discussion may well clear up obscure points and disagreements.

Concentration on themes, dealt with in a number of articles on the one issue written from different angles will also help, and need not cut across more or less permanent features that have been introduced. We will also adopt the practice of producing articles which are important, but of more restricted interest, as occasional pamphlets, which will be provided at low cost on request (one of these is advertised in this issue).

Another change we are making is in editorial procedure, something dictated by the difficulties of operating with continuous participation from people in different parts of a country of such great distances as Australia. We therefore list an editorial collective, comprising those taking a continuing and active interest in the journal, and in addition the names of those who have done most of the work in preparing the particular issue. This will include, from time to time, people who are not members of the permanent editorial collective. Because of the problems of production and sale of the issue that would normally appear about Christmas time, we are dropping that number and producing five issues at two-monthly intervals through the rest of the year.

We look forward to continued and increased help from readers in contributions, interest and assistance in building our sales and improving our standards.

AUSTRALIAN LEFT REVIEW—MARCH, 1972
Uneven economic and political development is an absolute law of capitalism, wrote Lenin in 1915. World events in 1971 provided abundant material for this thesis. 1971 saw upheavals, reversals of policies, developing new alignments, currency revaluations and severe economic problems affecting the whole capitalist world. Foreshadowing big changes in power relations and economic balance of forces, these events were long prepared by economic and political changes, such as the resurgence of Japanese and West German monopoly capitalism, growth of the European Common Market, continued decline of British capitalism and the weakening of United States imperialism, economically and politically.

Nixon’s financial moves last August, which forced revaluations and devaluations and achieved some of his objectives, had some paradoxical aspects. The US was able to achieve an immediate if temporary advantage by using the dollar’s very weakness as a weapon. So devaluation of the dollar is a “victory” as is the increased price of gold — hitherto a basic US financial policy held to be untouchable. The 10 per cent surcharge on imports marked the virtual end of GATT, created by the USA to control world trade.

It is a far cry from the immediate postwar period, and the ’fifties, when the United States dollar appeared the eternally dominant and unquestionable international currency, as sterling was in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Though United States capitalism has made real gains, the main feature is their transience. They will solve neither American capitalism’s problems nor the chronic world trade and currency crisis.

Indeed, Nixon’s victory may well turn out to be the last time that the United States is able to force its will upon the Ten. Though it remains economically the strongest and richest capitalist power, its relative strength is declining, and its political dominance has been eroded by a whole series of defeats and setbacks. Vietnam is the most important of these, but there are many others, the latest its reverse in the Indian sub-continent.

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As so many commentators point out, the US moves affected Japan most of all. Japanese capitalism is not likely to forget or forgive, conscious of its economic power and expertise, its dependence upon world trade for almost everything, and of the cavalier fashion of revolutionary changes in US policies which affected Japanese interests most of all (not only the trade and currency decisions, but foreign policy, particularly the pilgrimage to Peking and what it may portend for the US-Japanese alliance).

Lies and U.S. policy

There was a dog-bites-man flavour in the press headline “Kissinger Lied”, and the story which followed implicating Nixon as ordering the lies (about US support for Pakistan and hostility to India). The wonder of it all is that such an item could be regarded as newsworthy—only naive innocents should be surprised, after the Pentagon Papers disclosures and many other cases, that lying is a basic tenet of US political procedure.

Revelations in the Pentagon Papers, these latest inside leaks, and others of recent years are invaluable source material for study of how the US ruling class operates. The new feature in the decay of the US ruling class is not the decline of public morality, but the inner tensions which push them into the open, the abysmal gap between reality and pretension that drives men like David Ellsberg to reveal the truth.

The India-Pakistan war and the declaration of independence by Bangla Desh have produced important changes in international relations, and reveal fascinating sidelights on world politics. The United States and the People’s Republic of China both supported Pakistan. It is gross oversimplification to say, as some do, that this means the US and China are now allies, or are moving towards alliance. Both pursued power politics—an imperialist power on the one hand, and an anti-imperialist power on the other.

Those who see only abandonment of ideology by one or both are wrong. US ideology is still imperialist domination, as interpreted through US interests (which are by no means identical with
those of other imperialist powers). China's ideology is still anti-imperialist, again interpreted through China's interests — identifying the anti-imperialist struggle with how it strengthens China. Thus, if India is regarded as a threat to China, the Yahya Khan regime is an ally since it is seen as a counter to India. This logic leads inexorably to condemnation of "subversion" by the Bangla Desh revolution, and of Indian "expansionism".

The Soviet Union presents a different stance in this conflict, for it supported Bangla Desh (though cautiously at first), backed India in the war, and was a winner. This has greatly strengthened the Soviet position in Asia and the world. Some therefore interpret this as an advance of the forces for socialism and revolution, operating in the same ideological framework, that the USSR is the vanguard of the socialist forces, therefore anything that strengthens the USSR advances the revolutionary movement.

This method of thinking leads to strange theoretical justifications and distortions of principle to fit national policies. As is so often the case, this is carried to extremes by those who support one or other of the socialist great powers. Thus, the inaugural conference of the Socialist Party of Australia, which subscribes to this theory in its Soviet variant, adopted as its sole foreign policy position a resolution headed "End Pakistan's Imperialist Aggression". Unless one rejects everything Lenin and others have written about imperialism, one thing that can be said with certainty is that Pakistan, whatever else it is, cannot be described as an imperialist power. The CPA (M-L), enmeshed in the same theory, seeing China as the vanguard power, predictably made almost identical statements about "Indian aggression against Pakistan".

It is stretching Marxism — and, more importantly, reality — beyond breaking point to describe Pakistan under the military dictatorship as an imperialist power. Equally, to see India as anything but a capitalist country, let alone either an imperialist power (or neo-socialist) also goes far beyond an objective analysis. Indian military action helped the Bangla Desh guerrillas, but its national power interests were the prime motive. During the fighting, Mrs. Gandhi proclaimed, "We seek nothing for ourselves, we claim no part of what was formerly East Pakistan and is now Bangla Desh... Our troops will not remain in Bangla Desh an hour longer than is necessary."

The bombing raids, which will continue, emphasise Nixon's determination to wage war to the bitter end, until forced to withdraw finally by a combination of military successes for the liberation armies, political defeat and ultimate collapse of the Thieu regime, and by world opinion under stimulation of a new military offensive by the anti-war forces all over the world. Coming weeks will certainly see new big military victories for the peoples of Indo-China, and probable acute sharpening of the Thieu regime's political crisis, despite Nixon's new "solution".

The peoples of Indo-China are winning new victories in the national liberation war which remains the frontline of the world anti-imperialist struggle. Nixon's selection of the Christmas period for resumption of mass terror air raids was only fortuitously the assertion of Christian values as seen by US imperialism. It was dictated by the Offensive of Khmer Rouge, Pathet Lao and Vietnamese liberation forces, which is threatening the US-puppet military position in all these countries. The fundamental military-political weakness of US imperialism in Indo-China is again exposed by the fact that its only answer to the liberation armies' offensive remains massive and indiscriminate air raids, using new horror weapons developed by the refined technology of the new barbarians.

The Soviet Union presents a different stance in the world anti-imperialist movement. The fundamental role which remains the frontline of the world anti-imperialist forces is not helped by reports that slogans denouncing US imperialism are being taken down under pressure from the West, and the fact that Nixon felt confident to visit Peking and Moscow.

There is obvious uncertainty and doubt about these two visits, on both sides of the ideological barricade dividing the pro-imperialist and anti-imperialist forces. Confidence by the anti-imperialist forces is not helped by reports that slogans denouncing US imperialism are being taken down in Peking, nor by the fact that Nixon felt confident that he could resume the bombings and still visit Peking and Moscow.

The Peking visit in particular has captured public imagination all over the world. Those
(whether in Moscow, Toyko or in the anti-war movement) who expect, hope or fear a "global deal" by Chou En-lai and Nixon, will almost certainly be proven wrong, just as US-Soviet discussions have never resolved the fundamental differences dividing the two powers.

In principle, Summit meetings, negotiations and bargaining between the great powers are necessary and can be valuable in the conditions of a divided world in which the danger of nuclear war remains. Nevertheless, there remain vital limits which cannot be crossed without harming the world anti-imperialist struggle, as some past experiences have shown. The Indo-China people's struggle, which is so crucial to the world revolutionary movement, cannot be negotiated without their participation and final decision.

This is all the more vital when the general military-political situation is so favourable to the liberation forces, when US imperialism's aggression is so universally denounced, its duplicity and immorality so exposed. The Vietnamese made their position quite clear on July 19, a few days after Nixon's visit was announced: "Nixon's policy also consists of trying to achieve compromises with the big powers in an attempt to make smaller countries bow to their arrangement. . . . But it (the Nixon Doctrine) was already out of date before it came into being, and will therefore inevitably fail."

The Australian Economy

The McMahon-Anthony duel over revaluation was the pre-Christmas celebration of the crisis of conservatism in Australia. Its sensational political aspects were naturally the most reported, but the economic implications will prove more important.

Over 20 years of conservative political domination was accomplished, if not caused, by the longest period of capitalist boom in Australian history, interrupted only by brief if severe recessions. It is unlikely that the same pattern will be repeated. The 1970 Stock Exchange crash, complete with spectacular failures and fraudulent stock-jobbing, may well mark a new phase of capitalist economic development different to the preceding 20 years.

This is because the capitalist world system is in a chronic crisis, though by no means of the old type; because the agrarian crisis cannot be resolved except by the inevitable great shake-down which will turn the drift from the land into an exodus, no matter what vote-preserving palliatives are dreamed up by the Country Party; and because the temporary features which contributed to an "Australian exceptionalism" have about run their course.

The most likely outcome of all this is a severe recession, with increasing unemployment and hardship for big sections of workers and rural people, followed by a different sort of "recovery", similar in some ways to US, British, Canadian and other capitalist recoveries. This could bring a permanent unemployment level greater than that of the last 20 years, a more or less peaceful co-existence of inflation and stagnation (for which the inelegant word "stagflation" has been coined), and a sharper struggle between capital and labor over wages, prices, social policies for development, housing, health and welfare, and many other issues.

Sophisticated credit and other measures to deal with the economy, developed of economic and political necessity, are less and less successful in finding solutions for the problems of capitalist economic development. It may well be that a deep cause of this is the economic consequences of the accelerating scientific and technological revolution, which distorts the economy as it does so many other areas of human activity. The old contradictions and tensions are intensified and also supplemented by new ones; neo-Keynesian mechanisms for adjustment and ordering the system may well become less and less effective.

The current Australian economic situation will worsen; the revaluation and other measures will place heavier burdens upon the working people because prices and unemployment will continue to rise; the palliatives for the rural economy and the aid to industry will help only the big farmers and the monopolies. Unemployment is now affecting more than manual workers; the job prospects for highly-skilled professionals and university graduates are also bleak. In this, as in so many other areas, the problems of US capitalism are "exported" to other capitalist countries, after a time lag.

The economic downturn requires a political and industrial counter-offensive by the workers' movement, developing new demands, and new forms of struggle. These new concepts are beginning to develop, taking previous experiences and workers' demands as starting points. Workers' demands and needs, occasionally regarded by some new left forces as old-hat or irrelevant to the "real" revolutionary struggle, are vital to revolutionary activity, and also very real to those who suffer from the capitalist economic instability, first of all and worst of all, the already low paid and those who suffer the most from the deep problems of the "affluent society".

Those union fines

To pay or not to pay: that was the question faced last December by the federal bodies of the three metal unions about to amalgamate to form what will be the biggest union in Australia. After years of preparatory work, consummation of the merger was threatened if the Boilermakers-Blacksmiths' and Sheet Metal unions did not pay outstanding fines which had been imposed under the penal clauses of the Arbitration Act.
Before the amalgamation could be carried through, these two unions had to be de-registered. The Industrial Registrar (Dr. Sharp) refused to allow this until all "outstanding liabilities were met" — that is, the fines were paid ($17,000 by the Boilermakers-Blacksmiths, $250 by the Sheet Metal Union). The Registrar was acting under direction of the Government, which saw this as a heaven-sent chance to force these militant unions to choose between amalgamation — of great importance and potential — or adherence to their declared policy (and that of the entire union movement) of refusing to recognise industrial sanctions or pay any fines.

On all sides, this amalgamation is recognised as one of the most important developments in Australian unionism since the war. It causes deep concern and apprehension to even the most powerful employers, and not only the Metal Trades Industry Association which is directly concerned. The new union would be a very powerful force in the key metal industries. Its success would speed the shift to industrial unionism, so needed today when a few powerful corporations, usually multi-national, confront a union movement fragmented into hundreds of unions.

The Federal Government, already planning new anti-union legislation (the projected "Lynch Law"), and always even more hawkish than most employers' associations, is known to be deeply concerned at the prospect of amalgamation. The DLP, which expresses government ideas even more openly, has foreshadowed refusal to support the new legislation unless it includes legal obstacles which could make amalgamations virtually impossible. Something much less than prophetic insight is needed to forecast DLP success in "forcing" such amendments upon a willing government when the legislation comes before the Senate, probably in late February or early March. The stage was thus set for this legal pressure for payment of the fines, forcing the unions concerned to at least appear to recognise arbitration and legal sanctions.

In the event, the federal bodies of the three unions agreed to pay the fines, though the decision was not unanimous. The AEU, not called upon to pay its fines (because it is not being deregistered — the members of the other two unions are joining it), voted 10-3 in favour of paying, the Boilermakers/Blacksmiths 6-4; only the Sheet Metal Workers' Council was unanimous. (These votes were reported by the egregious Mr. F. Wells of the Fairfax press.)

According to other reports, discussion of the issue was serious and principled, with everyone concerned at its serious implications. One viewpoint — which finally won a majority — was that there were two issues of principle involved. The first was the principle of amalgamation, which would strengthen metalworkers' capacity to fight for their demands and against penal powers. The second was the principle of rejecting penal fines under the arbitration system, established in unanimous decision by federal conferences of the three unions, and the ACTU Congress. It is understood that, in the majority view, the first principle was considered more important, overriding the second: by carrying through the amalgamation, making a temporary concession to penalties and the arbitration system, the struggle against the system could be carried forward more effectively.

The minority view is believed to have been that such a concession to pressure by government and arbitration would abandon a key position of militant unionism. Further, metalworkers' desire for amalgamation was so strong that the very real obstacles put in the way by this smart legal manoeuvre by government, the Registrar and employers could be overcome by metalworkers' unity in the workplaces and industry. Acting in this way would carry forward the fight for militant unionism firmly based upon job organisation, and workers' democracy and activity. Taking an immediate decision at top level to pay the fines was not involving the union membership in deciding such an important issue of principle.

This experience is very instructive, compressing many issues which will recur time after time as the workers' movement struggles towards new concepts of independence from the capitalist system, of workers' action that challenges the system, of developing new-type organisation so urgently needed in today's conditions.

Essentially, the question is whether or not to accept capitalist state control over the unions, either in the old form or in some new ways. There is wide recognition in many circles — union and employer, judiciary and legal profession, Labor and even Liberal politicians — that the old form of arbitration has had its day. Much thought is being given to devising new forms, even by industrial relations "experts", lawyers and judges, and others from the capitalist side. The not inconsiderable portion of the legal profession which lives off the arbitration system is divided into conservatives and reformists on this issue, dividing roughly into the "get-tough and apply-the-law school", and those who recognise the need for change if the system (and their lucrative livelihood) are to continue. The latter is now probably the larger section, realistic enough to recognise that time is running out quickly. Even Mr. Lynch and the Federal Cabinet have to pay some lip-service to the need for reform, though only to sugar-coat the bitter pill of a tough industrial law-and-order policy they are prescribing.

In the union movement itself, right, left and centre are publicly committed to "change". However, change is understood quite differently by each trend, and there are big differences even within each trend. As the metal unions' decision
shows, the differences may be (or appear to be) only tactical. In reality, they are much deeper, reflecting diverging philosophies about unionism and workers' struggle. Criticism of arbitration in the union movement ranges from those who want to reform it — and believe that the "rule of law" in industrial relations can actually benefit the workers — to those who want to smash the arbitration system because, however it may be re-formed, it will still remain essentially a capitalist legal system which will function against the workers' interests.

Even some militant left wing unionists, particularly officials who have had to work within the system while theoretically committed to its replacement, have become conditioned to its existence and the need to work within it. Accepting the limits imposed by this fact, the theoretical perspective of struggle to end the system becomes an abstract principle, which loses reality as so much of union work is directed into and contained within it.

Thus, the reality of the Arbitration Act and union registration as it applied to the amalgamation issue led to acceptance of the inevitability of paying the fines, even though this is genuinely seen as a bitter pill, and is resented. There is no need to read into this an insincerity of motive or abandonment of principle. The problem was indeed a knotty one, but what it revealed is the urgent need for open and serious debate over fundamental philosophy and perspective of the workers' movement and unionism. Outcome of this discussion will be crucial in deciding whether the new amalgamated union realises its full potential as a force for a new course for militant unionism.

The key question is the development of an independent workers' movement, whose pillars are workers' action, workers' control over and decision of the forms of this action. The movement certainly has to be free of State or Court control (which is the issue involved in rejection of penal powers, sanctions and fines), but, more than that, it must be genuinely independent of capitalism. Real independence means rejection of the ideological constraints placed upon unionism, workers' demands and workers' action by acceptance of a "rule of law" allegedly impartial as between capital and labor.

The Harco workers' struggle raised the same issues. This struggle was waged against a "sacred" right of the employers — the right to sack. The firm (owning a fairly small steel fabrication shop) dismissed six men. Instead of accepting this as inevitable, a mass meeting decided that the six men should stay on the job, all employees should work only 35 hours, and demand 40 hours' pay. The employer used every form of pressure to get the "dismissed" men off the job, without avail. They continued to work, and when the boss tried to stop them they organised production themselves. Police were called in, their intimidation failed. The firm called on the MTIA for advice, and two court actions were launched. The firm got a Supreme Court injunction to prohibit the "sacked" men from going onto the job. The men decided to defy the injunction — they were ready to go to jail to uphold their right to work.

Moral and financial support of their struggle came from all over the country because of the new issues it raised when sackings are widespread and growing. The new tactic, developed by the men themselves, captured public imagination and caused confusion among employers. It also presented some difficulties for the unions concerned, the Ironworkers and the Sydney Branch of the Boilermakers and Blacksmiths. The rightwing FIA officials opposed the tactic from the beginning; the Boilermakers and Blacksmiths supported the struggle up to the point of the Supreme Court injunction. After this, a tactical problem arose: the legal costs and other issues involved in defiance of a Court decision if the dismissed men stayed on the job. The Union Executive decided that the men should stay away.

Although there was here, too, a legitimate area for discussion and disagreement about tactics, deeper issues were certainly involved. These go to the same point — the need for new concepts of unionism, centring upon new demands that challenge capitalist "rights", new forms of action which go beyond the confines of capitalist "law", and a new level of workers' democracy in such action. As unemployment rises and dismissals increase, the need for new demands and action will become more urgent.

**Communist Party Congress**

The Easter Congress will have many important tasks, though none more important than creative development of communist activity in the workers' movement. It will analyse the rich experience of two crowded years since the last Congress, a time in which the anti-war movement mobilised hundreds of thousands of people in action against the Vietnam war; there was a qualitative advance in which the anti-war movement mobilised hundreds of thousands of people in action against the Vietnam war; there was a qualitative advance in the anti-racist movement; women's liberation developed new dimensions in women's action.

It would be blind to assert that the long struggle in the CPA over fundamentals, and the formation of a new breakaway party have had no weakening effect, just as earlier divisions internationally did. It would be a mistake to deduce from this that the CPA is finished, just as it is a mistake to throw up the hands in horror at the magnitude of the tasks confronting the party or the left as a whole.

A revolutionary movement is reality which is indestructible because the issues posed by capitalist social development impel more and more people to question capitalism and act to change it.
The Leninist concept of the party is increasingly under discussion among revolutionaries. Many who had come to reject the need for a revolutionary political party are having a second look at the problem in the light of recent experiences in the economically advanced countries. As a reaction to Stalinist practices, to bureaucratic control and to manipulative methods many revolutionaries, especially among the young, have searched for more genuinely democratic processes, for direct control of the movement by its participants and for safeguards against manipulation. In doing so they have often tended to discard parties and their structures altogether.

However, the fragmentation and divisions which have been a feature of the left especially in Western countries and the frustrations and set-backs which have flowed from them, have caused many activists to reconsider their attitude to the concept of a revolutionary party which aims to act as a vanguard, to give shape and cohesion to the revolutionary forces, to co-ordinate the diverse streams and the new forces constantly generated which are groping towards fundamental change in our society.

Certainly there are the problems of bureaucracy, of democratic control — how to combine the need for organisation and discipline with safeguards against manipulation, undemocratic control by a small group of leaders, concentration of power and decision making in a few hands and the degeneration and corruption that can result from it.

A serious evaluation of the Leninist party principle based on historical experience of the Bolshevik Party can help to throw some light on the problems that revolutionaries face today, including the problem of how to create a political party able to attract, lead and give shape to the revolutionary forces and at the same time avoid bureaucratic control and degeneration. This is true despite the obvious differences between the tasks that the Bolsheviks faced and those confronting revolutionaries in Western countries today.

In fact a sweeping rejection of all past experience and a refusal to absorb that which is valid and applicable today is as much an expression of dogmatism as the blind copying of the experience of the past. It must be admitted that the left has been guilty of both sins. Oddly, frequently the same people who in the past blindly copied foreign and inapplicable experience, tend to react by in turn rejecting all past experiences indiscriminately.

What is true of individuals is certainly true of social groups. The long period of dominance of Stalinism and its “theories” has often given way to tendencies to reject all theory and to a disdain to creatively examine past experience.

A serious examination of the Leninist conception of the party has been made particularly difficult because of the widespread unclarity and even distortion as to what this concept actually constitutes and how it was applied. There are two main reasons for this.

Firstly, some bourgeois theorists have tended to blame the Leninist theory of the party for the subsequent crimes of the Stalinist era. It is presented as the germ from which arbitrary rule, one-man dictatorship, lack of democratic liberties and freedom of debate etc., was to sprout inevitably. To justify this view Lenin’s theory of the party is presented as authoritarian, undemocratic and restrictive. This is done by confining his views to those which he expressed in *What Is To Be Done?*, (published in 1902) and the decisions of the 10th Party Congress (March 1921) which outlawed factions and which is presented as the logical outcome and final crystallization of Lenin’s views.

Secondly, Stalinist historiography, for its own reasons, does the same. It too presents the decisions of the 10th Congress — taken under exceptional circumstances and as a specific response to a desperate situation — as the acme of the Leninist view on the party, valid for all situations. Moreover, it presents even these decisions one-sidedly, as will be shown later on.

Here we have a strange meeting ground of different forces. Bourgeois theorists identify the Leninist theory of the party with the decisions of the 10th Congress because they don’t like them and want to discredit the theory by identifying it with these emergency decisions. Stalinist “theorists” have done the same because they do like the 10th Congress decisions and have a vested interest in reinforcing and institutionalizing them. The coming together of two trends re-inforcing each other, has had a considerable influence. It is little wonder that the Leninist theory of the party has been and continues to be misunderstood by many revolutionaries.

Lenin’s theory of the party

In the first place the Leninist theory of the party was not static. It evolved and adapted to changing conditions. Lenin’s pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* is treated to this day as a holy text, containing principles valid for all times by dogmatic and authoritarian forces. *What Is To Be Done?* for all its remaining value was a response to the particular situation in Russia at the beginning of the century. Its heavy emphasis on a secret organization of professional revolutionaries corresponded to the exigencies of Russia in 1902. Lenin himself criticised any attempt to hold him to all the views expressed in it. In 1908 he said:

The basic mistake made by those who now criticise *What
Is To Be Done? is to treat the pamphlet apart from its connection with the concrete historical situation of a definite, and now long past period (!) in the development of our Party. (Lenin Collected Works Vol. 15 p.101).

And again

What Is To Be Done? is a controversial correction of Economist distortions and it would be wrong to regard the pamphlet in any other light (emphasis added—BT) (ibid. p.106).

However the most significant feature of the Leninist concept of the party is its deeply democratic character. Significantly it is this feature that has been widely distorted. There was complete freedom of discussion within the Bolshevik party in Lenin's days. This was regarded as essential — as natural as the air one breathes. It was certainly practised. Lenin and the Bolsheviks regarded differences in views as a normal natural feature of a viable party. They had plenty of controversies which they treated as a matter of course in accordance with their Marxist conceptions. It would have never occurred to them that active, thinking beings with different experiences could all think alike, or that there is anything wrong about differences. Only when thought stops there is an end to differences of opinion.

It is a fact that up to Lenin's death and for a little while after there was NEVER unanimity on the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, neither in the voting on resolutions, nor in regard to the election of the leadership. Right through this period there were always minorities in the party, which expressed their views freely and publicly in the press.

These minorities were, after each Congress, represented on the leading bodies of the party, including the Central Committee.

This was quite fundamental in Lenin's practice. It changed in Stalin's day, and was distorted and replaced by a false ethos in the working class movement which has survived to this day. It is an ethos which demands a sterile and mechanical “unanimity” and which regards the existence of different views as damaging. It has led to a wide acceptance of the view that you don't wash your linen in public, that the class enemy will take advantage of differences, that those who raise differences is damaging to the party applied more strongly — yet it did not jeopardise the revolution.

Communists have been conditioned to regard differences as abnormal, as damaging to the organisation, when in fact the end of differences was inevitably synonymous with degeneration. As for the damage of airing differences in public — those who hold that view should look at the public controversies and open discussions of differences among the Bolsheviks on the eve of the October revolution, during the revolution and during the civil war. It is an eye-opener.

One can hardly imagine a time and condition when the argument that public discussion of differences is damaging to the party applied more strongly — yet it did not jeopardise the revolution, nor their victory in the civil war. On the contrary, their democracy, their frank discussion of problems, even the most serious ones was the basis of their strength and mass support. It was also the basis of their real (not formal) unity of action around decisions, democratically arrived at. They took it for granted that in a revolutionary organisation, once decisions have been made and policy decided they would be acted on. As Lenin put it, "Organisation is impossible unless the minority bows to the majority." (Vol. 20, p.319). This unity and cohesive action on the basis of majority decision distinguished them from Social-Democratic parties.

The Bolsheviks in Lenin's days guarded the rights of minorities, did not discriminate against them and did not remove them from leading party positions because of differences which arose. All this came only in Stalin's days. At the same time, they voluntarily accepted in the interest of the movement some limits to differences. It is interesting to note that as far back as Jan. 1904 Lenin wrote that:

...a normal struggle, a struggle of ideas, a struggle carried out within definite bounds is permissible but ... boycotts, refusal to work under the Central Committee direction, refusal of financial support for the central Party treasury, and so on, are not permissible. (Vol. 7 p.159).

It was later when the Stalinist syndrome became dominant that “a normal struggle, a struggle of ideas, a struggle carried out within definite bounds” became impermissible. Differences were polarized, taken to their logical conclusion, rigidly projected to fundamentals to show that they inevitably “by the logic of their position” led to fundamental, unbridgeable differences, or even worse, into the camp of the enemy. It is of course always possible to polarize differences or try and take them back to their “ideological roots”. But it is mostly wrong to do so. It is part of the Stalinist technique.

The suppression of minority rights allegedly in the interest of the rights of the majority or the movement as a whole has been followed by suppression of the right of the majority as well. This is what happened under Stalin. By contrast Lenin carefully guarded minority rights and freedom of debate, despite his often very sharp polemics. At the same time, Lenin's attitude and his democratic practices leave no doubt that he would not have tolerated any infringement on the party's independence and any attempt to interfere with its autonomous democratic processes, if he had faced such a problem. The following is a brief examination of some of the major controversies among the Bolsheviks before and after the October revolution, and the methods used to resolve them.

1. After Lenin's return to Russia in April 1917 and the publication of his April Theses, serious differences in the party became evident. The Bolsheviks at this time, despite the crucial stage of the struggle, decided unanimously to have an open discussion in the press about the differences. Lenin wrote:

In making my report, I read the theses which were published in No. 26 of Pravda on April 7, 1917. Both the
The armistice had been signed with Germany on December 2nd 1917 formal negotiations for a Peace Treaty by 28 to 9 votes.

2. On the eve of the October revolution a meeting of the Central Committee held on October 10, 1917 decided on the uprising. Zinoviev and Kamenev opposed this decision. It is true, contrary to the simplistic black or white nature of Stalinist history, that nearly the whole Bolshevik leadership had been hesitant about the proposal for an armed uprising. In fact, Lenin was getting increasingly impatient in his hideout, and accused the Central Committee of ignoring his previous communications and offered his resignation from the Central Committee in order to regain his freedom to agitate among the rank and file of the Party “for it is my profound conviction that if we ‘wait’ for the Congress of Soviets and let slip the present moment, we shall ruin the revolution” ( Letter on Tactics, April 17. Vol. 1, p.42).

He appeared in disguise at the meeting of the Central Committee on October 10. Reproaching the C.C. for “indifference to the question of insurrection” he received a majority vote of ten to two to prepare for armed insurrection.

It is characteristic of the attitude in the ranks of the Bolsheviks at the time that the Political Bureau elected to put the decision into effect consisted of seven people, namely Lenin, Zinoviev Kamenev, Trotsky, Stalin, Sokolnikov and Bukhov —i.e. it included Kamenev and Zinoviev who had just strongly opposed the decision for armed uprising. When they continued their opposition, first (on October 11) circularising all Bolshevik organisations protesting about the decisions for the armed uprising, then (on October 18) published a letter in the non-Party journal of the Left, Novaya Zhizn, against the decision, Lenin demanded their expulsion from the Party. They were not expelled, in fact they remained in the leadership of the party. Lenin did not renew the demand. Kamenev continued in the leadership of the Bolsheviks. He was elected a full member of the Politburo in 1919 and remained a member till 1926. Zinoviev was elected a full member of the Politburo in 1919 and remained a member till July 1926. However strange this may appear in retrospect, it expresses the prevailing attitude and ethos of the Bolshevik party at that time.

3. Serious differences developed among the Bolshevik leaders soon after the October Revolution about the attempts to end the war. After an armistice had been signed with Germany on December 2nd 1917 formal negotiations for a Peace Treaty opened in Brest-Litovsk on December 9th 1917.

At that time the Bolsheviks had high hopes about the revolution spreading quickly through Europe and especially into Germany.

However the German negotiators made tough demands for peace, involving Russian surrender of considerable territories.

When Trotsky returned to Petrograd for discussions on the tactics to be pursued, three trends emerged among the leadership. Lenin, who was in a minority, took the view that the German terms should be accepted, Trotsky’s view was for not resuming the war, but also of refusing to sign a treaty on the German terms, whereas Bukharin and Dzerzhinsky favoured a revolutionary war. The decision was to drag out the peace negotiations as long as possible.

After the Germans resumed the offensive the Central Committee, now in almost continuous session, remained divided. At one stage Lenin threatened to resign. Characteristically this was published in Pravda.

Eventually the decision was reached to accept the German terms by seven votes to four, but only after Trotsky, Joffe, Krestinsky and Dzerzhinsky decided to abstain, thus allowing a majority to develop.

It was indeed a very difficult decision to make. That there should have been different evaluations on how the German government would act and how the German working class would respond was natural. According to Lenin’s notes on the discussions, Trotsky had conceded that there was a 25% chance that the Germans would attack if no peace treaty was signed.

In fact E. H. Carr records that there was strong pressure within the German side to accept this unusual way of ending the war and that “Trotsky’s gesture apparently came nearer to success than was known at the time”. The Bolshevik Revolution Vol. 3 p. 49.

Even then, the 7th Party Congress held on March 6th 1918 only approved Lenin’s motion for ratification of the Peace Treaty by 28 to 9 votes.

4. The next major dispute inside the Bolshevik party occurred towards the end of 1920 and the beginning of 1921. It centred around the role of the Trade Unions in a situation of growing economic disintegration of the country, at the end of the civil war. The debate among the Bolsheviks was vigorous, as was customary among them.

Trotsky called for the militarisation of labor as the only means to get production going. Based on his successful civil war experiences and on his success in getting a Transport system that had almost come to a standstill moving again by drastic military measures (in which he had been fully supported by Lenin and the Central Committee) he now wanted the Trade Unions to be deprived of their autonomy and absorbed into the machinery of government. (I. Deutscher The Prophet Armed p.507).

Flushed with success, he threatened to “shake-up” various trade unions as he had “shaken up” those of the Transport workers. (Ibid. p.502).

Lenin came out vigorously against this slogan. The Central Committee openly called on the party to resist energetically “militarized and bureaucratic
forms of work”. In the ensuing discussions Lenin opposed the use of compulsion as the main method of getting industry going. Persuasion must be the first resort. He held that:

The trade unions ought therefore not to be turned into appendages of the State. They must retain a measure of autonomy, they must speak for the workers, if need be against the government.

Ironically while Lenin’s view prevailed in the debate at the time, it was largely Trotsky’s proposal which was subsequently put into effect by Stalin. The trade unions were in fact deprived of their independence and became unable to defend the workers’ interest against the government, when necessary.

The trade union debate was conducted with considerable heat because what was at stake was how to avoid disintegration of the economy effecting the fate of the revolution itself. Yet despite the grave nature of the issues and their crucial importance for the future course of the country, despite all the feeling which this necessarily generated — Trotsky’s “defeat” did not lead to his removal from his leading position. In fact the same 10th Congress which authoritatively rejected his proposals on the trade unions, re-elected him, along with Lenin, Zinoviev, Stalin and Kamenev to constitute the Politburo of the Bolshevik Party.

5. The decisions of the 10th Congress of the R.C.P.(B) in March, 1921, which restricted inner-party democracy, are often evoked against the earlier views and practices of Lenin and the Bolsheviks. It is presented as the real, finally arrived at view of Lenin, based on his bitter experience. In fact the whole process of the gradual destruction of inner party democracy under Stalin and the distorted conception of the Party which was developed alongside it, sought to establish its legitimacy on the basis of the 10th Congress decision.

A whole theoretical and emotional edifice has been erected on the basis of an historical distortion. A generation of communists has grown up whose attitudes have been conditioned by a view of the Leninist party which is a caricature of Lenin’s views. Unfortunately this caricature became the model on which communist parties all over the world patterned themselves. The distortion of history is two-fold.

Firstly, by presenting the 10th Congress decision as Lenin’s final word on the party, the exceptional nature of the decisions, made in response to an emergency situation, is ignored. Secondly, even so the actual decisions made at the 10th Congress have been presented one-sidedly and have been in fact distorted.

Whatever the wisdom and subsequent effect of the 10th Congress decisions — they were certainly followed by a gradual and continuous decline of democratic freedoms and their replacement by control from on top — this was not the intention of the Congress. They were clearly presented and seen as emergency decisions dictated by the dire threat to the regime at its most critical moment.

Lenin put it to the 10th Congress that the present problems present a far greater danger than the Denikins, Kolchaks and Yudeniches put together... The difficulties are enormous... (Vol. 32, p.179).

There were several reasons for the exceptionally critical situation which developed at the end of 1920. The country was in utter devastation as its economy was grinding to a standstill. It had been possible to keep up the pressure and maintain morale during the civil war, but now that it was over, a reaction set in. The people were exceptionally weary. It became increasingly difficult to maintain any discipline. The workers were leaving the remaining factories because they could not be paid and were starving. This is how Lenin described it at the 10th Congress:

Our proletariat has been largely declassed; the terrible crisis and the closing down of the factories have compelled people to flee from starvation. The workers have simply abandoned their factories: they have had to settle down in the country and have ceased to be workers. (Vol. 32, p.199).

Widespread dissatisfaction and growing opposition to the Bolsheviks developed among the peasants of Russia — the real masses. The Kronstadt rebellion in February 1921, on the eve of the 10th Congress, was an expression of it. Lenin at the 10th Congress admitted that the peasant’s dissatisfaction with the proletarian dictatorship is mounting, when the crisis in peasant farming is coming to a head, and when the demobilisation of the peasant army is setting loose hundreds of broken men who have nothing to do, whose only accustomed occupation is war and who breed banditry. (Lenin Vol. 32, p.178).

For the first time since 1917 large sections of the working class, not to speak of the peasantry had turned against the Bolsheviks — something they had never envisaged. In the midst of famine and the threat of peasant revolts, with the spectre of the Kronstadt uprising before them, with a steadily deteriorating political situation, the Bolsheviks saw no alternative but to fall back on their own party as the only reliable force to pull them through. They believed that they were acting as the historical agency of the revolution.

It was in this situation that they took unusual and emergency steps inside their own party to enable it to cope with the threat to the survival of the revolution. Lenin was quite open about it at the 10th Congress.

This undoubtedly demands of the ruling party of Communists and of the leading revolutionary elements of the proletariat a different attitude to the one we have time and again displayed over the past year. (emphasis added—BT). It is a danger that undoubtedly calls for much greater unity and discipline; it undoubtedly requires that we should pull hard together. Otherwise we shall not cope with the dangers that have fallen to our lot. (Vol. 32, p.168).

The Congress decided to tighten up. It took measures which restricted inner-party democracy and increased the disciplinary powers of the Central Committee. In light of the established practices of the Bolsheviks and their prevailing standards, these measures and their implications seemed harsh. It presented them with a dilemma. The
desperate mood of the party in this agonising situation was perhaps expressed most vividly by Karl Radek at the 10th Congress when he uttered these, as it turned out, prophetic words:

In voting for this resolution I feel that it can well be turned against us, and nevertheless I support it . . . Let the Central Committee in a moment of danger take the severest measures against the best party comrades, if it finds this necessary . . . Let the Central Committee even be mistaken. This is less dangerous than the waverings which is now observable. *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Resolutions and Decisions of Congress.* Moscow 1954. Vol. I p.540.

Even so Lenin was self-conscious about what he felt compelled to do. In asking for the adoption of rules under which a meeting of the Central Committee with all the alternate members and the members of the Control Commission were to be given the right

by a two-thirds majority to reduce a member of the Central Committee to the status of an alternate member or to expel him from the party.

He said:

This is an extreme measure that is being adopted specially, in view of the dangerous situation. (Vol. 32 p.255).

During the debate he both pleaded and apologised for the proposals.

Comrades this is no time(!) to have an opposition. Either you are on this side, or on the other, but then your weapon must be a gun. This follows from the objective situation and you must not blame us for it(!) Comrades, let's not have an opposition just now! (Vol. 32, p.200).

But in proposing these exceptional measures, Lenin tried to limit their effect and above all to maintain and guarantee freedom of discussion for differing views. This side of the 10th Congress decisions has largely been put aside. The Congress decided

Instructing the C.C. of the Party to enforce these decisions, the Congress at the same time points out that special publications, symposiums, etc., can and should provide space for a most comprehensive exchange of opinions between Party members on all questions herein indicated.

In the course of the debate Lenin kept coming back to this matter.

This, I repeat, does not cut short theoretical discussion. (Vol. 32 p.255).

Lenin was sensitive about any suggestion that he wanted to use administrative measures against the opposition. In reply to such a charge by Shlyapnikov, the leader of the Workers' Opposition, he said:

After all, Comrade Shlyapnikov and I have known each other for many, many years, ever since the period of our underground work and emigration — how can he say that I am trying to intimidate anyone by characterising certain deviations? And when I say that the stand of the Workers' Opposition is wrong, and that it is syndicalism — what has administrating got to do with it? (Vol. 32 p.197).

The 10th Congress decided on "the complete prohibition of all factionalism." Factionalism was defined in the resolution as "the formation of groups with separate platforms, striving to a certain degree to segregate and create their own group discipline." E. H. Carr adds, "Thus 'groups' were not in themselves illegitimate: 'factions' were." *The Bolshevik Revolution,* Vol. I, p.207.

Even so, there was no prohibition on different views and trends. In fact Lenin intervened against an amendment moved by Ryazanov and insisted on the right of party members to submit their platform to the Congress. Rejecting Ryazanov's amendment to prohibit any future elections to the Central Committee based on different platforms, he said:

I do not think we have the power to prohibit this. If we are united by our resolution on unity, and, of course, the development of the revolution, there will be no repetition of elections according to platforms. The lesson we have learned at this Congress will not be forgotten. But if circumstances should give rise to fundamental disagreements, can we prohibit them from being brought before the judgement of the whole Party? No we cannot. This is an excessive desire, which is impracticable, and I move that we reject it. (Vol. 32 p.281).

Nevertheless a distorted version of the 10th Congress decision became the 'norm' later. In Stalin's days, the tendency grew to treat all opposition, all differences of view, all groupings however transitory, fluid and open, as factions.

Another significant feature of the 10th Congress which has been largely hidden by the subsequent presentation, is the treatment of the leaders of the opposition.

After their overwhelming defeat at the Congress, Shlyapnikov and Kollontai, the leaders of the Workers' Opposition were re-elected as full members of the Central Committee. Saponov, the leader of the Democratic Centralism group was elected as an alternate member of the Central Committee. Lenin said, at the Congress:

I, for one, have publicly urged that it would be desirable to have representatives of the Workers' Opposition and the Democratic Centralism groups on the Central Committee. (Vol. 32 p.257).

There is a special need at the present moment to restore historical truths about these aspects of the Leninist concept of the party. In the worldwide upsurge against the capitalist system, the entrenched ruling forces are striving might and main to divert, absorb and frustrate the revolutionary movement. To encourage fragmentation and to prevent the effective organisation of revolutionaries is one of their major objectives. It is in their interest to discredit the Leninist party concept. This is quite vital for their success.

Unfortunately Stalinist 'theory' with its distortions of Lenin and Stalinist practice have helped them. The Leninist concept of the party freed from myths and distortions has much of value for those concerned with revolutionary change of our society. Young revolutionaries, especially those who have become sceptical of any revolutionary party structure ought to look at the example of a disciplined, cohesive party and its role in the revolutionary process. Older revolutionaries, often steeped in the experiences of the Stalinist period, ought to re-examine their views about a revolutionary party in the light of an objective historical assessment of the Bolsheviks and the problems of our time.
The spirit of utopia

"Communism is the positive abolition of private property . . ." wrote Marx over a century ago. By this he did not mean merely that the relations of production would be changed in that capitalists would no longer own and control the means of production. The state or the people would not own anything. In fact nobody would own anything. The very notion of ownership would not even exist. Why? Because the conditions in which the notions of "ownership" and "private property" could be applicable would have been overcome. A framework in which "private" versus "public", inequality vies with equality and ownership struggles with non-ownership would have been superseded.

Thus revolution reaches far beyond the removal of private property in the external reality. It requires the abolition of private property and its ramifications in our "internal realities," that is, intrapsychically, and in our interpersonal relations. Revolutionaries must not only smash the external state structure, but must overcome the enormous effects on their own as well as others' being of their socialisation since birth. Women's liberationists are aware of this: How can a revolutionary eulogize workers' control during the day and beat his wife up at night? The overcoming of external oppression can have a meaning only if the continuous resolution of its counterpart in oppressive personal relationships. The people of a new society would no longer see themselves and others as manipulable objects.

When society is viewed as a totality, the divisions into classes by no means exhaust the description of it. The society may be founded on one group owning the means of production while others work them, but this does not explain the operation of the society. The on-going system is legitimized and perpetuated by means of the promotion of ways of life through mystification and the consequent acceptance of these definitions of reality both consciously and, at a deeper level, unconsciously by the mass of the people. The relations of production are constantly reproduced in daily life-activity. Although there is some overt state repression of dissenters, the system is basically preserved culturally.

For present purposes, I shall make a rough distinction between what I shall call "structural" and "cultural" components of the present system of domination. Structural components include the relations of production (in the classical marxist sense), the state-system which encompasses parliament and government, the courts, prisons and the police, the public service and the military — in general the direct organs of state power. The "cultural" includes the actual ways of life of people; their modes of living and thinking; their needs, values, aspirations and view of the constitution of reality. It also includes the mass media, the education system, political and religious ideologies and the like.

Marxists have tended to concentrate on the structural aspects of capitalism to the virtual exclusion of the cultural ones. The use of the old base-superstructure model has reflected and further facilitated this emphasis — the base being "below" the superstructure. The very notion of ownership has been so etched in our consciousness that the importance of the structural aspects cannot be denied, and it would be mistaken to believe that capitalism was not sliding from one economic crisis into another. To maintain that there is little state repression of those who protest the system would be to fly in the face of the facts too. Any analysis of the present society and its future in terms of revolutionary transformation must take adequate account of structural factors.

However I am not claiming only that cultural factors have been hitherto neglected and should be considered as well as structural ones — although this in itself is true enough. I want to maintain that the cultural factors are the more important ones to be considered so far as a revolutionary strategy is concerned. I believe the only viable revolutionary approach to be one which sees revolution primarily as cultural revolution.

Revolution centrally involves transcendence. If the new society is not to be the old one in different dress, the transcendence must be total, including the transformation of forms of life. This means new men with new needs, goals, visions and perceptions. These men must come from somewhere. If they are to emerge anywhere, they must exist, at least embryonically, in the old society. They may be embryonic because even if they are not able to live in a totally new way (it would be amazing if they could given the extreme violence of socialization), they have the general form and direction of free men. These embryonic new men are transitional in that they are stationed neither in the old society which they physically inhabit, nor in the new society which does not yet exist. They stand with feet in both. They are in capitalist society, but not of it; they are of the new society but not in it. Obviously these people cannot arise from the study of the critique of political economy which reinforces the schizoid dualism of intellect and emotion, a dichotomy which is so pervasive under modern capitalist domination. That is, a theory which allows mainly for structural analyses and ignores the experiencing involved in intra- and inter-personal life is inconsistent with the development of the new man whose new needs are based precisely on his sensitivity to experiencing.

For the most part people living in our society live unthinking, automatic lives of pre-structured routine. They have internalized the norms of the society and often seek after the goals which are those of capitalism itself. Their lives are directed from outside — whether through their employers, or in their roles as husband, wife, public servant, "good bloke", etc. Their lives are conditioned by a hostile, authoritarian environment which began violating their individuality far further back than they can even remember.

In such circumstances, how can revolutionary strategies fashioned around what I have termed structural factors (e.g. imminent economic crises, the right to strike) transform basic attitudes towards living? Certainly, economic crises can, for example, precipitate some awareness of the hopeless state of capitalism (although the effects in this direction may not be lasting ones), but they normally provoke enchantment with reform rather than revolution. At best, structural factors may help to create better conditions for the possibility of the awakening of revolutionary consciousness among the masses. People under advanced capitalism are generally wedded to the system which often provides the (material) benefits it promises, and they would prefer to patch it up rather than overthrow it. It goes further than this of course because the deep roots of their being are also the values of capitalism. Revolutionary transformation of the system itself is viewed as impossible, but reform is not. Elastic capitalism can accommodate a great many changes in it without altering its basic structure, but providing the illusion of progress.

Given this situation, a revolutionary strategy will aim at demonstrating the possibility of other modes of existence. Life will be articulated in a manner that understands human possibility as the measuring rod for what is. That is, the new society which must emerge from historical possibility (which is not to be confused with what is commonly regarded as practicable) is to be the standard of judgment. Utopia, the society which is not and is not yet should be the motor of present practice. This means that new forms of living should be attempted within the present society.
If it is objected that this is impossible, some points may be made in reply. First, it may not be impossible at all. We may have been conditioned through the capitalist definition of reality to regard any transformation of the system as impossible. The French students in 1968 upset the established definition of reality by living alternate definitions: "Be realistic. Demand the impossible." What is called utopian may be historical possibility. Further, success should not be gauged solely in terms of whether or not a structure is seized. For example, there are those who view the France 1968 events as a failure because the government regained power. These people do not see the importance of the activity of the students in terms of a real breakthrough in the sense of a glimmer of new life. Revolution is a slow process and events such as those of France 1968 must be seen as foundational.

Cultural revolution must be permanent, not episodic. The fact that it involves ways of life incompatible with the present system involves a commitment of revolutionaries to other values. This life would be freer, more authentic and real than life which accepts the norms of the present system.

The last decade has seen the beginnings of cultural revolution. There is a long way to go in bringing about counter-culture which is genuinely outside the system. But when this counter-culture gathers mass support, the system will be immobilised. This is not to ignore the armed force of the state. However, it is only on the basis of a refusal of the system by the masses of people that it is possible to combat the state-system.

Cultural transformation is total transcendence. What is most needed today for such transformation is the spirit of utopia.

DOUGLAS KIRSNER

Marxism and anarchism

If the Article by Alastair Davidson ("Marxism and Anarchism") in ALR Nov. 1971 had been called "Marx against Stirner" and if it had not confused the views of Stirner with those of anarchists generally, then one would not bother to make a reply unless one was a partisan of Stirner's. A defence of Stirner could be made along the lines of showing the degree to which his critique of Feuerbach was similar to that of Marxism — and may in fact have influenced Marx — and the degree to which his discussion of the place of the proletariat in bourgeois society was in line with Marx's ideas. I will not bother with this — the interested reader will find discussions in Hook's From Hegel to Marx and McLellan's The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx; my interest is in anarchism rather than in Stirner.

When a political journal publishes an article on a philosopher who was, at best, obscure in his own time and is even more so today, one wonders just what the political intention is. Now it may well be that Davidson is merely interested in the fact that "marxism was partly worked out in a critique of Stirner", but it seems much more likely that the real intention is to show (in his words) that:

"The first point against the thesis is that, for Stirner, anarchism is a deduction from an extreme philosophical egoism which also implies an anti-social as well as an anti-state position. (The Stirnerian "union of egoists" is not so much a society as a Hobbesian "state of nature"). Marx, himself no friend of the State, was concerned to attack the egoist premises and the anti-social conclusions; this does not touch on anarchism proper which does not preach revolt against society as such but just its class forms. For instance Bakunin says:

"Society, preceding in time any development of human society, . . . constitutes the very essence of human existence."

"A radical revolt by man against society would therefore be just as impossible as a revolt against Nature, human society being nothing else but the last great manifestation or creation of Nature upon this earth. And an individual who would want to rebel against society, that is, against Nature in general and his own nature in particular, would place himself beyond the pale of real existence, would plunge into nothingness, into an absolute void, into lifeless abstraction, into God."

The second point is that although Stirner reached anarchist conclusions (among others) from egoist premises it by no means follows that the historical anarchist movement, the movement of Bakunin, Kropotkin and Malatesta, was ever dependent on these premises. Far from anarchism depending on an absolute notion of Man as an egoist and an individual who was oppressed by social fetters Bakunin was to say:

"Man is so much a social animal that it is impossible to think of him apart from society."

"The point of view of the idealists is altogether different. In their system man is first produced as an immoral and free being and ends up by becoming a slave. As a free and immortal being, infinite and complete in himself, he does not stand in need of society.

". . . the individual, his freedom and reason, are the products of society, and not vice versa."

Even if Stirner's basic philosophical position was an absolute notion of Man as an egoist and individual opposed by social fetters it by no means follows, or even is true, that other philosophical anarchists must hold this position. (Revolutionary anarchists don't anyway.) The most recent work, Robert Paul Wolff's In Defense of Anarchism, is entirely independent of egoism and argues for philosophical anarchism by refuting the arguments for the sovereignty of the state put up by bourgeois democratic theorists.

The fact is that Stirner's position was his own (or "his Own" if you like) only and died with him except for a handful of American individualist anarchists who were a minority even within the movement in the U.S.A. Although he is of certain theoretical interest, and is sometimes read for this reason today, he did not influence the historical anarchist movement and would be unknown today except for the efforts of non-anarchists compilers of anthologies of "anarchism". (The notion that The Ego and Its Own was a bible of the actual anarchist movement is completely laughable. Stirner was "Saint Max" only to Marx.) It remains then to ask whether Marx, as well as showing that "anarchist" egoism — like any egoism — must, if consistent, lead to an elitist and tyrannical position, ever made any direct attack on the core ideas of anarchism.

It seems not. Except for his attack on Proudhon's confused mixture of half-understood economics and dialectics (a mixture that embarrassed Bakunin as a friend of Proudhon's and an ex-follower), it does not appear that Marx ever devoted a work, or part of a work, to attacking anarchism as such. For what could he attack apart from Stirner's egoism and Proudhon's confusion? In essence Marxism and anarchism were in agreement. Both were revolutionary doctrines aiming at the overthrow of the state by the proletariat, the socialisation of the means of production and the abolition of the state together with class society. Their divergences were probably much smaller than the divisions which
would later grow within them. Given that, contrary to Krimm"er man and Perry, "St. Max" is a saint only to Marx and that his book is unread by most anarchists, what can be said against the proposition that anarchism is non-authoritarian, i.e. libertarian, socialist. Once anarchism is distinguished from philosophical egoism how can Marxism be called an "anti-anarchism"?

To answer the last question first one remembers that Marx started from a criticism of the theory of the state as embodied in freedom or Revolution in the abstract and proceeded to a criticism of the theory of the state as a supra-social mediator of social interests. For Marx the end of class society is the end of the state, i.e. the end of a social power separate from society. To conceal the obvious affinity of this with anarchism "orthodox" Marxists have pretended that anarchism inverts the relationship; that anarchists believe that the end of the state is the end of class society. This they can only do by neglecting the fact that for anarchism the destruction of the state is an act of revolution; the movement which destroys the state does so precisely because it is the overthrow of the old class structure with its attendant relations of domination and subordination. Even this is not sufficient to make the difference between the supposed anarchist and supposed marxist positions; they had also to neglect the interpenetration of the State and Civil Society. Having thus destroyed the "dialectical" connections between base (civil society) and superstructure (state) and replaced them by a simple "cause" and "effect", i.e. mechanical model, they could then believe that anarchists were not only undialectical (like themselves) but idealists as well because they believed that the superstructure determined the base. This vulgar-marxist criticism was all that one could expect from the degeneracy of the Second International; after Lenin's State and Revolution -- a book denounced as "anarchist" by the orthodox -- and the theoretical work of Korsch, Gramsci and Lukacs, it is much harder to see how it can be made. Marxism, in the theoretical theory of the State; it locates the state in the context of class oppression; it looks forward to the end of the state; Marxism is thus an anarchism.

If marxism and anarchism agree in that they are both an-anarchist (Proudhon's term), there are still futher similarities. The only anarchism which has played an historical role is collectivist anarchism (anti-individualist anarchism); Bakunin and the transmovers called themselves revolutionary socialists for years before anarchists took the name for the movement. In terms of intellectual genesis both Bakunin and Marx were initially impressed by Proudhon, both rejected his mutualist economics and both rejected his reactionary tendencies, e.g. his anti-feminism. On a philosophical level anarchism is anti-idealists; some anarchists are historical materialists like Bakunin, some have been scientific materialists like Kropotkin and, being overly attached to the methodology of the physical sciences, have tended less towards marxist historical and economic science and more towards science. All anarchists worth speaking of, including the "gentle" Kropotkin, have believed in the reality of class warfare. The central difference between Marx and the founder of the anarchist movement, Bakunin, was the importance to the latter of the peasantry considered as a factor in the revolution and accordingly of methods of revolution in countries which had not fully developed bourgeois institutions. This stance reflects a "geographic" determinism; Bakunin was a Russian radical in eastern and southern Europe, Marx was a German active in England.

Much is made of the so-called "fact" that marxists believe in organisation but anarchists don't. The real position is more complex. Marx attacked Bakunin for believing in the direction of the revolution by a conspiratorial movement. Marx himself believed in mass democratic organisations. This difference too flowed from a difference in revolutionary geography; Marx, in England, believed that a peaceful electoral transition to socialism was possible in the advanced capitalist countries. Bakunin was still mainly concerned with Russia and the backward countries of eastern and southern Europe. What Marx, from his perspective, deployed in Bakunin, Steklov, Bakunin's bolshevik biographer and historian of the first International, was later to applaud and claim Bakunin as a proto-bolshevik. For his part Bakunin attacked Marx for the intention of maintaining the state after the revolution and solving transitional problems by the application of State power directed by experts (authoritarianism) rather than by the initiative of the popular masses (libertarianism). To be fair to Marx, Bakunin was probably unaware of Marx's early analyses of bureaucracy and of his decision, after the Paris Commune, in favour of a form of revolutionary government little removed from Bakunin's own anarchism.

What then divides anarchists from marxists? One might as well ask what divides marxists from marxists and anarchists from anarchists. It is not "merely" practical matters since disputes over practice are not separable from disputes over theory. Nor is it that anarchism is marxism minus central control since "central control" may refer to the party before the revolution or to society after the revolution. It is known that anarchists have opposed the latter, but so have some leftwing marxists; on the former anarchists are themselves divided. (Of course if "central control" is further taken to mean hierarchical and bureaucratic organisation, then anarchists are definitely opposed.) Anarchists have always opposed party dictatorships, but then Marx himself was not committed to one.

In the above I have stressed similarities between marxism and anarchism. There are also differences, the main one being that whereas marxists claim scientific status for their doctrine anarchists merely claim that science supports their doctrine which at core appears to consist of an ethic of individual responsibility (quite the opposite of egoism). Not that anarchism would elaborate a system of ethics, of course! It is this ethical dimension of anarchism that lies behind the current "convergence".

Every revolutionary movement needs an ethical dimension. This does not mean that revolutionary theory needs to be completed by an ethical theory, nor does it mean that revolutionaries should elaborate a morality; to do so would be to return to a pre-Marxian level, to forget the characterisation of moralities as ideology. The ethical dimension lies instead in the realm of practice, in the commitment of people to the movement. It is this that western marxism has lost in the change from commitment to the movement because of its goals to commitment to the movement as an organisation by members who had no other commitments to fall back on.

In these circumstances the regeneration of the movement has come from outside. A new generation impelled predominantly by an anarchist ethic (with a strong admixture of liberal outrage) has been the driving force of the recent explosions in the west. Although speaking the language of marxist analysis — and what other language is there for the expression of revolutionary critique? — the impulse has not come from claims to scientific status. Not initially at least. One may have reservations about this development, one can question the stability of the commitment and the accuracy of the analysis, but unquestionably it is the only development of potentially revolutionary significance in the west since 1936. In this situation the study of the relations between marxism and anarchism, even the knowledge of anarchism, becomes important and it is important that such a study be conducted responsibly. To pass off an attack on Stirner as a study of Marxism and Anarchism is not good enough. Until a study is done of Bakunin the question has not even been taken seriously and the first prerequisite of a serious study is the rejection of Engels' remark that anarchism was merely a compound of Proudhon and Stirner.

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17
**marxist theories of revolution**

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Whatever else might be said about the adequacies or otherwise of marxism, it is virtually the only school of revolutionary thought to produce serious theories about the sociology of revolution. Other traditions — especially the anarchist one — have written about techniques of revolution (e.g. Blanqui) and have speculated, often very perceptively, on what a post-revolutionary society might be like, but have not produced the detailed analyses of social dynamics and the conditions for revolution which were the forte of the great marxist thinkers.

It is impossible here to examine in detail the various theories and debates of marxist revolutionaries. Rather, I will briefly sketch the contributions of the main figures, with reference to a recurring and all important theme: the determinist versus voluntarist (or spontanist versus hegemonist) argument.

Marx and Engels, the founders of the marxist school of thought, developed a whole theoretical system which was the product of, yet went far beyond, western European thought up to their time. On the basis of Hegelian philosophy, bourgeois political economy and French Socialism, and taking into account developing technology, the structure of capitalist society and the growing struggles between workers and capitalists, they worked out their system, the principle elements of which were:

1. A philosophical view of the world which has since been called dialectical materialism, although Marx himself never used the term. For our purposes, the main points of this are:
   * Matter exists independently of man, and sets man the external conditions under which he must live and work.
   * Man makes his own history as a part of nature.
   * Social processes (and, according to Engels, natural processes) proceed via "contradictions" and their resolution.

(Already in this philosophical view there are the elements of the great debates which were to take place amongst marxist revolutionaries. For the first two points raise an inevitable question: To what extent are man’s actions determined by his natural and social environment and to what extent is he free to make choices — to create a world of his own making and in so doing "make himself"? It is very easy to reply that both things happen, but the problems really arise when one attempts to examine any concrete historical situa-

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After their deaths, a period of differentiation in European marxism set in. In the main, this centred around the reform or revolution argument: Was the labour movement to seek reforms within capitalism, which would eventually lead to socialism (this gradualist reformism was, and still is, essentially a variant of determinism) or should it see a total revolution as the only solution to society’s problems? It was to be the tragedy of European marxism that it could not find a satisfactory answer to this problem. Bernstein’s “revisionism” and the subsequent victory of reformist ideas in the main workers’ parties of Western Europe were not adequately countered by revolutionary marxists, most of whom retreated into sterile slogans or a variant of spontaneism. None of them succeeded in building a large revolutionary organisation before the end of World War I.

It was in the “backward” countries of eastern Europe and Asia that revolutionary theorists adequate to the tasks confronting them were to lead successful revolutions. The reason for this is not easy to find, but it may have something to do with the fact that for these less developed societies, marxism was something of a revelation — a prefiguration of their future; whereas in western Europe, which had developed, marxism was tending to become a set of dogma whose understanding lagged behind the real and developing social situation.

Whether this is the case or not, the essential features which characterised the four main marxist theorists (Lenin, Trotsky, Gramsci, Mao — three of whom were leaders of successful revolutions) of the first half of the century were:

a) They all believed in the actuality of the revolution — its existence as a here and now phenomenon, and the possibility, given the right
conditions plus correct theory, strategy and tactics, of overthrowing the ruling class.

b) Each took marxism not as a dogma, but as a framework to be creatively applied and updated in the given conditions. Each in fact made significant contributions to theory, especially in the analysis of the social conditions of their particular country. In doing so, they all took into account not only marxist writings, but those of other social, political, economic and cultural writers.

c) Each placed great emphasis on two aspects of revolution which at first sight seem contradictory: i) The spontaneous upsurge and creativity of the masses and their urge to take power into their own hands. All saw the importance, and encouraged the development, of autonomous organs of people's power which could form the embryo of the future egalitarian socialist society. ii) The need for an organisation which can bring consciousness by injecting new ideas, trigger off and lead action, and where necessary act on behalf of the masses.

The unity of these two aspects distinguishes Lenin, Gramsci, Mao (also Ho Chi Minh) and (with qualifications) Trotsky, from both those who eschew organisation and idolise spontaneous mass actions (the anarchists etc.) and bureaucratic, reformist and Stalinist leaders who idolise organisation and in practice fear independent activity of the people.

d) Perhaps the most important common feature is an emphasis on the human will as an important element in the social process. Not only did there have to be a consciousness of the need for revolution, but there had to exist, in large numbers of people, the will to carry it out. This voluntarist element was seen as a sine qua non for revolution which could, under certain circumstances, take over from other factors and direct the social process. Here briefly are some of the main contributions of these four theorists:

**Lenin:** Without doubt, Lenin's most important contributions were his sociological analyses of the dynamics of revolution¹ and his fight against vulgar determinism. Lenin opposed the determinist conception (in both its reformist and anarchist variants) that the workers through their own struggles would "spontaneously" achieve a revolutionary, socialist consciousness. He stressed the need for an organisation which would continually inject socialist ideas into the day to day struggles of the people, providing them with an alternative to the existing structure and ideology of society. At the same time, and as a necessary part of this role, the revolutionary organisation served as a milieu for the development and dissemination of a revolutionary culture and politics, and as a "guardian" of revolutionary theory during non-revolutionary periods of general apathy or reaction.

Although he never wrote a work on political theory which set forth his ideas as a coherent whole, Lenin also emerged as probably the ablest marxist political theorist and politician yet seen. In particular Lenin's grasp of the vital importance of political struggle against all aspects of class society, and his actual conduct of such a struggle via the written word and brilliant organisational work, are perhaps his outstanding achievements.

The necessity for the development and training of revolutionaries fit to overthrow the ruling classes and then to direct the rule of the working class was also a question which divided Lenin from many of his contemporaries and opponents. This too was a point of divergence from vulgar determinism, for it implies a recognition of the role of conscious effort in the revolutionary process — a recognition that the inner dynamic of capitalist society does not "inevitably" produce a working class (or even a section of the working class) which can consciously take power and direct society in its own interests. Rather, the conscious work and effort of revolutionaries (who themselves go through a long process of developing their capabilities) is needed before even a section of such a class is produced.

Lenin was, and this view still is, accused of elitism. Now there are undeniably elitist, inhuman and undemocratic versions of "Leninism", but Lenin's views were, and still are, an incomparably more accurate empirical statement of the realities of class society than those of either his reformist or anarchist opponents, or most of their modern analogues.

**Trotsky:** A brilliant analyst in many fields (e.g. literature, military strategy), Trotsky made a major contribution to revolutionary thought with his theory of "Permanent Revolution". This theory, which seems simple enough, was actually an important blow against economic determinism. The latter held that in Russia a bourgeois revolution (to overthrow the Tsar and establish the rule of the industrial capitalists) would have to occur before the conditions for a socialist revolution would set in, and that many decades might pass between the two. Trotsky countered that, in certain conditions, a bourgeois revolution in Russia could lead straight to a socialist revolution because of the weaknesses of the Russian bourgeoisie. In the event he was proved right, for the February revolution in 1917 was followed in October by the bolshevik one. Unfortunately, many of Trotsky's "followers" since then have raised his theory to the status of a dogma which applies in all backward countries — a fate which so many such theories seem to suffer.

Because of the history of his split with Stalin, Trotsky is a little understood figure, both as revolutionary theorist and political activist. It is hard to make an assessment of his theory as a whole, but alongside his voluntarism there is also a determinism, of a kind which differs from orthodox economic determinism. This is a sociological determinism, which has been criticised by Krassov² as

¹ See for instance Lenin's definition of revolutionary situations in *The Collapse of the Second International*. For this and other relevant passages, see the chapter on 'Revolutionary Situations' in *Lenin's Theories on Revolution* by E. Aarons (Young, Sydney 1970) pp. 68-71.

² See New Left Review No. 44, also the A.L.R reprint pamphlet *Trotsky's Marxism*.
Trotsky's basic failing. While I would not agree with the degree to which Krasso takes his critique, it seems to me that there is a deal of truth in it.

Basically, he accuses Trotsky of having had, and acted upon, an abstract conception of "social forces" which clash on the historical arena to produce a resultant which depends on the relative strengths of these forces. This conception ignores the relative autonomy of ideas, politics and culture, and according to Krasso, led Trotsky to make certain characteristic mistakes throughout his lifetime. Whatever the case about Trotsky, the important point is that any theory which tries to explain all and sundry social events (even major events) purely in terms of a clash of class interests, and which sees individual historical actors as purely representative of various "social forces" is incorrect, and revolutionaries who act on such a theory are doomed to failure, at least in the long term.

Gramsci: For many years this Italian marxist, who wrote most of his books in Mussolini's prisons between 1926 and 1938, was ignored and forgotten. His rediscovery has established him as perhaps the most significant and relevant marxist for advanced capitalist societies. His main work centred around analyses of the social "superstructure" (culture, politics and ideas), which most marxists have ignored to their own cost. He developed a theory about ideas, stressing their importance, and hit out at determinism. In this he was very much like Lenin, but he took his analyses of society and culture much further.

What makes Gramsci of especial importance for us today is that he worked and wrote in a society whose structure and culture were far closer to ours than those of Tsarist Russia. Lenin's theories and political practice took place in a certain specific set of conditions, and even the most widely applicable of his writings bear that stamp. Despite Lenin's own warnings that what he wrote applied to autocratic Russia, too many western revolutionaries have ignored to their own cost. He developed a theory about ideas, stressing their importance, and hit out at determinism. In this he was very much like Lenin, but he took his analyses of society and culture much further.

Firstly, there was the stress on ideas, and on combatting rule by consensus and the hegemony of ruling class ideas. In a society advanced beyond the level of elemental material survival, mass consciousness becomes an important, indeed decisive, element. Hence the battle on the cultural front, and therefore the role of intellectuals (in a broad sense of the word — a worker revolutionary can become an intellectual in this sense) becomes extremely important.

Flowing directly from this is an emphasis on the human will as a revolutionary factor. (It is perhaps significant that the concern with conscious revolutionary activity came early in the evolution of both Lenin's and Gramsci's ideas on socialist strategy — 1902 for Lenin, 1919 for Gramsci). As with Lenin, this voluntarism never took the extreme forms which it did in Mao — Gramsci always stressed the need for careful analysis and scientific understanding. Indeed, his famous maxim that revolutionaries should possess both "pessimism of the intellect" and "optimism of the will" is an excellent summary of a dialectical revolutionary method. This maxim combats both the pessimistic and optimistic variants of determinism: revolutionaries should not be romantic idealists playing out their own fantasies in a social vacuum, nor should they succumb to defeatism and apathy.

An interesting sidelight on Gramsci's voluntarism was his polemic against the philosophical and theoretical bases of determinism in certain aspects of marxist thought. He thought Bukharin's work "suffered from determinism, mechanicalism and 'vulgar' materialism" — a criticism which is probably related to Lenin's judgment in his testament that Bukharin did not "understand dialectics". Further, Gramsci "doubted the wisdom of 'mechanically' asserting the objective reality of the external world — as though the world could be understood apart from human history.

Gramsci is raising here an extremely important point. The relation between "objective" and "subjective" is clearly bound up with that between determinism and voluntarism, and a theory about one necessarily entails a theory about the other. There can be little doubt that "objectivism" was part and parcel of vulgar marxist determinism and Gramsci's formulation is a healthy corrective which restores man (as opposed to "iron laws of history" outside of man's control) to his rightful place in the social process.

Thirdly, Gramsci developed an extremely important model of the revolutionary party and its relation to other organisations and movements of the workers. The party he saw as merely the agent of the revolution, while the workers must be its embodiment. The official workers' organisations (the trade unions) he saw as organs of capitalist society, with a specific function within that society. The socialist party ran the risk of ending up similarly. Both problems could be combatted by developing independent organs of the working class — the factory councils. The workers' councils would be important transitional organisations for the revolution, and were "the model of the proletarian state." This stress on people's organisations rooted in the social structure and independent of both traditional institutions and revolutionary parties, is of immense importance, and perhaps the single most important strategic proposition in Gramsci's work.

Finally, Gramsci (as implied by his emphasis on workers' councils) developed some affinity and friendship with certain anarchists. While not agree—

ing with the total anarchist view, Gramsci incorporated some of the better features of anarchist ideas into his theory, features which some versions of marxism (particularly stalinism) excluded at their own cost. The rapprochement of marxism and anarchism (an honest and rigorous manner, not an eclectic one) is an event long overdue. Gramsci's contribution in this respect bears examination.

Mao: Although the dogmatic adherents of Mao like to present him as the "great Marxist of our time" it was by challenging many of the basic tenets of European marxism that Mao achieved success in China. Essentially, he developed a theory of revolution in a peasant society, and a method for carrying it out (guerrilla warfare). Although he has this difference, many of his ideas are strikingly similar, given their different context, to those of the preceding three. In particular, his emphasis on democratic, autonomous institutions of the people (the peasant soviets), strong organisation (the party and the army) and the potential of the human will, all have their counterparts in Lenin, Trotsky and Gramsci.

In the determinist-voluntarist argument, Mao probably stands on a more extreme voluntarist position than the other three. Schram, in his introduction to The Political Thought of Mao Tse Tung6 brings this out very well. As he points out, Mao possessed a "natural Leninism" which led him to a firm grasp of the principle that political struggle is the key to economic struggle. This was a necessary counter to the various other trends within Chinese communism, but after 1949 Mao raised the human will to an exaggerated place in the scheme of things, so that he sometimes appears to act as if objective reality is a mere extension of human subjectivity, rather than something which interacts with subjectivity.

Mao tends to exalt the revolutionary will of human beings until it becomes not merely an important factor in history but an all-powerful force capable of reshaping the material environment in a completely arbitrary fashion.7

Contemporary marxism

With the ascendancy of Stalin in the Soviet Union after 1924, and his domination of the Comintern, marxist theory and practice entered a long period of deformation and degeneration, from which it is only beginning to recover. As in so many other fields, the theory of revolution often suffered from unimaginative and pedestrian analyses. The pronouncements of the Comintern reflected this, and also the effects of pragmatic considerations of what Stalin perceived as being in the Soviet interests. The main characteristics of stalinist theory were a vulgar economic determinism, which overemphasised the "objective" conditions and played down the essential role of the human will in the political arena, combined with periods of wild and ill-conceived "adventurism" which ignored social reality.

Only with the failure of stalinism and the rise of new social forces (the anti-war, anti-imperialist and youth movements of the west and the liberation movements in the third world) did a revival of marxist theory begin. This renewal still has a long way to go. In the third world, new guerrilla war theorists have made significant contributions (Ho Chi Minh and Giap in Vietnam, Castro and Guevara in Latin America). In particular, the successful practitioners of revolution by guerrilla warfare in the third world have evolved a political and social practice in working amongst the oppressed peasantry from which we could all (especially some misguided emulators of Mao, Ho and Castro) learn much. Strict attention to organisational detail, daring and imagination in activity, and a genuine concern for involving the people in their own emancipation, are the key factors in the success of guerrilla warfare in Vietnam, Cuba, Algeria and Angola. But it is in the advanced industrial west, where a new and rapidly changing technologpal capitalism has arisen that the real theoretical problems lie. These societies are far more complex, and therefore more difficult to understand, than any hitherto existing. There are two reactions amongst "marxists" to this problem:

One is to reaffirm the old marxist propositions in new, revamped forms ("Back to Marx"). Although many of these are still valuable, the attempt to fit a totally new social situation into a theoretical framework one hundred years old has semi-religious overtones, and in any case does not solve the problems. (The whole thing smacks of a "reification" of Karl Marx and his writings — an irony for the very person who did so much to expose and analyse that phenomenon.)

In particular, this attempt has led to a new determinism, which sees the future evolution of neo-capitalism as almost "inevitably" leading to socialist revolution. For a very sophisticated example, with many merits besides its basic faults, we can take Ernest Mandel's The Worker Under Neo-Capitalism. Mandel makes a penetrating and persuasive analysis of the various structural features of neo-capitalism. This particular paper, as with his work as a whole, concentrates on a "classical" marxist analysis of the capitalist economy, attempting to bring out "objective" contradictions which impel the workers into a fundamental clash with the system. As a necessary corrective to the other extreme position (that of a purely cultural and ideological critique often associated with disillusion, pessimism and withdrawal from struggle), Mandel's thesis is welcome, particularly in its stress on the signs of hope in the present situation. But as an accurate theory or a guide to action it is sadly deficient.

The whole tenor of Mandel's argument is too simplistic and romantically optimistic. Problems of ideological hegemony and the struggle for consciousness are glossed over, with the suggestion that the rupture of "social continuity" during a revolutionary crisis virtually solves the problem. Even
granting that a social crisis makes the masses more open and receptive to new ideas, it should be emphasised that what ensues then is a titanic struggle for correct ideas, for the dissemination of socialist ideas, culture and values — in short, for the conscious mind of the masses. The outcome of this struggle cannot be determined in advance, and will depend very much on the readiness and prior training of revolutionary movements and organisations.

Moreover, Mandel’s conclusion smacks of the “triumphalism” so prevalent in many communist parties:

... revolution is inevitable because there is such a tremendous gap between what man could make of our world... and what he is making of it within the framework of a decaying, irrational social system. This revolution is imperative in order to close that gap...

That the revolution is imperative (in the sense of being urgently necessary) we can all agree, but that it is inevitable is precisely the bone of contention. Mandel seems to come down on the determinist side of this bone, and to have therefore ignored the essential feature of Lenin’s theory, despite his reference to What Is To Be Done?

The point is that simply because there exists a tremendous gap between possibility and actuality is no proof of the inevitability of revolution — in fact there is the opposite possibility of a return to social barbarism as a reaction (even if unconscious) of the latest possibilities. The whole experience of fascism, and the long centuries of stagnation during the Middle Ages is surely proof that human society does not inevitably solve its problems and contradictions by taking a forward step. Inevitabilist theories have a certain appeal, and movements based on them (e.g., many communist parties during the Stalin era) do a certain strength. But they also led to tragic mistakes in the past, and are unlikely to provide the theoretical basis for a successful revolutionary movement now or in the future.

The other reaction is to take the marxist “classics” in a much more reasonable way: as significant contributions to a revolutionary sociology, but not the only ones. Some (although surprisingly few) of the new and neo-marxian left have avoided the first reaction and made important analyses of society and culture (Wright-Mills, Baran and Sweezy, Marcuse, the New Left Review group in Britain etc.), yet the main task still lies ahead: to understand the dynamics and evolution of western society (and for that matter, of the bureaucratised socialist states of eastern Europe) and to evolve a political practice on the basis of that understanding. In doing this, the contributions of the earlier marxists are useful as a starting point, but those who take them as a set of scriptures and ignore the very real contributions of others outside the marxist tradition, do both the “greats” and themselves a grave disservice.

Towards a new theory of revolution?

The elaboration of a theory, strategy and tactics for revolution in the conditions of neo-capitalism is no easy matter. Indeed, the first thing to understand is that we must drop all notions of theoretical certainties and of detailed plans mapped out in advance. Part of what Lenin and Trotsky called the art of revolution consists in the ability to flexibility adopt strategies and tactics according to the developing situation, to drop favourite and long-held notions which have become outdated, and to perceive and act upon new opportunities as and when they arise. Such an art is developed at least as much by practice as by theoretical contemplation. But even given the difficulties, and bearing in mind this warning, it seems to me there are certain features and outlines of a contemporary theory of social revolution which I will put forward in a sketchy form here (I hope to extend this analysis at a later date).

1. We must firstly abstract all that is relevant and useful from earlier theories and strategies. Here we must be careful neither to adopt irrelevant theories nor to miss points which at first glance may seem to have no relevance. Take for instance the Maoist theory of guerrilla warfare. Taken in its concrete application, it has no relevance to our conditions. But if we abstract from it certain general features and ideas, there is much that we can learn. Questions of urban guerrilla activity aside, there are the concepts of utilising small forces in effective ways, of surprise attacks, new techniques and activities, and of hitting the enemy in numbers of different and unexpected ways. These principles are useful and such an orientation, even in the most unfavourable circumstances, might produce quite surprising and favourable results.

2. Perhaps more importantly, we must rid ourselves of the weight of “marxist dogma”. It was Marx himself who said that “The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living.” Since (as Gramsci pointed out) the revolutionary movement is a part of history and does not stand outside of or above it, this also applies to it. Unfortunately, the whole history of the revolutionary tradition bears this out only too well. Overcoming this “dead weight” is not only a matter of rejecting the more obvious mistakes (e.g.: Marx’s theory of increasing immiseration) and the more obvious extremes (stalinism, dogmatism etc.) but of coming to grips with the inadequacies of the body of theory as a whole. Marx’s work was completed a century ago and Lenin’s 50 years ago. The changes which have taken place since then are enormous, and the pace of change is itself much greater. It is impossible for Marx or Lenin or Gramsci to provide us with answers to today’s problems, no matter how sophisticated our use of their work.

3. A new revolutionary theory of society would need to incorporate the following points:

   a) It would draw upon other schools and traditions of thought besides the mainstream marxist one. In particular, certain anarcho-marxist,...

8 The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.
anarcho-communist and libertarian-communist theories have much to contribute. Although marxism as a practical guide to revolutionary activity may be superior to anarchism, it can still learn from the anarchist tradition. The split between anarchism and marxism has had some bad effects on marxism itself, not the least of which were some of the post-October bolshevik mistakes, especially during Stalin's ascendancy.

b) There would be a strong emphasis on an attempt to understand the process of human consciousness and the role of ideas. In particular, the relation between the human brain (the bearer of consciousness) and the external world needs to be understood in a far more accurate way than mainstream marxism has hitherto.

Human consciousness should be seen as a part of the material process which is not subordinate to other factors (as some vulgar marxist "reflection" theories would have it) but rather interacts with them as a factor (and an important one at that) in its own right.

c) Related to this is a need for an understanding of the sociology of consciousness and ideas. The work of Gramsci, and Lukacs' History and Class Consciousness may well provide the beginnings of such an understanding. The main questions here are how and why people come to adopt their ideas, values and attitudes and to understand the dialectical interplay between individual, group and social consciousness. The inertia of old ideas (their prevalence long after the conditions which led to their emergence have ceased to exist) and the conditions for acceptance of new ideas and ideological frameworks are also extremely important problems.

The key point to establish, as an advance on traditional marxism, is that consciousness is not determined simply by a single dimension of experience: the economic structure of relations. It is in fact produced by a highly complex interaction of factors. All the influences on an individual, not just his place in the economy or the social structure, must be considered before a full explanation of his attitudes and ideas can even be attempted. The same holds for groups and classes of people.

d) Following the above, it must be recognised that a "social force" is not some abstraction (or to use Marx's term reification) which exists independently of men, but is precisely the collective consciousness of groups, sections and classes translated into their social activity — that is, their subjective view of, and reaction to, external conditions.

4. On the main theme of this article: determinism/voluntarism and its relation to a new theory of revolution.

The first point is to rid ourselves of any extreme determinist or voluntarist notions in the "classic" (or not so classic) texts. Thus, Marx's theory of increasing immiseration, the forerunner of a determinist strand in marxism which held that the workers would be forced to overthrow the system by their very life situation, must be seen as not only incorrect but also having false implications for revolutionary practice.

Likewise, the suggestion in Marx that the proletariat inherently espouses socialism must be seen as at variance with reality. (Indeed, it was Lenin's great merit that he recognised the falsity of this position, and saw the need to win the workers to socialism by force of argument).

Equally, ultra-voluntarist notions (particularly prevalent in some versions of anarchism, and certain trends in marxism) which exaggerate the effects of extreme actions by small groups and ignore the need for understanding the inner dynamics of society, must be also rejected.

However, it is in attempting to get beyond mere rejection of extreme positions that the real interest and problems lie.

Any theory which is to be a useful guide to actual revolutionary activity must indicate a dynamic relation between the determinist and voluntarist elements of social evolution. A useful outline of such a theory has been given by Huberman and Sweezy. They suggest that "the ratio of determinism to voluntarism in historical explanation necessarily varies greatly from one period to another." In periods when a social order is firmly established and evolves according to its own inner dynamic, individuals and groups can do little to change the course of history. Revolutionaries in such non-revolutionary periods seem caught in a pre-determined net of social structure and events, and their possibilities of action extremely limited. But when the dynamic of such a society begins to break down, crises multiply and intense struggles ensue, then "the range of possibilities widens" and revolutionary groups "come into their own as actors on the stage of history. Determinism recedes into the background, and voluntarism seems to take over".

This dialectic is a fruitful basis for elaborating a detailed theory. One thing it seems to ignore though is that even during "determinist" periods of social evolution, there are certain choices and options open to revolutionary groupings and organisations (as witness the current plethora of different tendencies in the revolutionary socialist movement, each with a different orientation to the same basic problems). It is not clearly enough recognised in Huberman and Sweezy's formulation that attitudes, policies and actions adopted perhaps decades before a revolutionary crisis, may influence the outcome of struggles far in the future. Similarly, there are determinist overtones in their position in that the contribution of the revolutionary movement towards bringing about a crisis is not recognised. The presence or absence of effective and
appealing alternatives to capitalist rule, even in periods of relative social stability, may determine whether the workers will move towards a confrontation with the system or remain passive, apathetic and disoriented, trapped within the framework of capitalist ideas and values. From this follows the essential need to develop a model of an alternative socialist society, which attracts rather than repels people, excites them and moves them to take action against existing conditions because they see that other ways are possible.

A further point, which I believe is the crucial one for us all to recognise, is that we can never know exactly what is determined and what is not. Only experience and activity, and constant updating and theoretical generalisation on the basis of these, can tell us the limits or otherwise of the possibilities in any given situation. Moreover, the possibilities open at any given future date may depend, at least in part, on previous actions and orientations. Thus the dialectical view would see the intimate connection between what might be called the preparatory phase of revolutionary activity and the actual period of revolutionary upsurge and change. Small changes and differences in the non-revolutionary phase may become magnified into decisive factors as a crisis develops. For instance, every extra individual won over to an active revolutionary position may be magnified into thousands at times of social upheaval.

Thus, what we finally end up with is the need to develop a revolutionary method which sets guidelines for propaganda and activity. The existence of capable, creative revolutionaries sensitive to all the changes and possibilities in the developing situation, together with effective cooperation, is the best guarantee that possibilities will be neither missed nor imagined where they do not really exist.

Hence, a theory of revolution becomes, above all, a theory of practice. The great revolutionaries have always been those who could translate ideas into action, and in so doing transform mere theoretical conceptions into external reality. As Lukács said of Lenin...

... his strength in theory is derived from the fact that however abstract a concept may be he always considers its implications for human praxis.  

5. The revolutionary method is the link between revolutionary theory and revolutionary activity. As the revolutionary looks out at the society around him, and moves into opposition to it in order to change it, he lives out a tension between three elements which interact in a complex process:

WHAT IS: The situation as it is, and as he/she perceives and understands it.

WHAT OUGHT TO BE: The aims, ideals and values which the revolutionary fights for, and which together make up an alternative "model" of society that enters, in his/her consciousness, into a state of tension with the perceived "what is".

WHAT PROBABLY WILL BE: If the revolutionary is to be effective, and not a mere dreamer, he must also be capable of assessing likely lines of political development, and the probable outcome of political struggle. It is fashionable to castigate revolutionary politicians for "practising the art of the possible" just like bourgeois and reformist politicians (and when the "WHAT PROBABLY WILL BE" dominates the "WHAT OUGHT TO BE" in the revolutionary's mind, his whole orientation and practice do become reformist), but this third element is undeniably present and must be taken account of in any revolutionary method. It is seeking the correct balance of the three which determines the difference between the revolutionary politician as against the reformist politician or the revolutionary dreamer.

Involved in the revolutionary method must be a stress on linking a revolutionary consciousness to the felt needs of the people, on popularising demands which the system finds it difficult if not impossible to absorb and spending much more time on this aspect than we were hitherto inclined to do.

But if we are to make a choice as to what is the task most urgently and importantly confronting us, and to make this the central point of our method, I believe it is the following: To continually challenge people's notions that all is as it should be, or will be even if it shouldn't be, and to demonstrate both in theory and practice, that there is an alternative. In a society in which possibility is so far ahead of actuality, the factor which most holds people back from taking the leap into possibility is their deeply held view (a view which the social structure assiduously cultivates, both consciously and unconsciously) that nothing else is possible, that human nature, or everybody else, or the power structure, or whatever, makes it impossible to substantially alter the way things are. At least in the present period, it seems to me that this is the most pressing problem, the one which should be at the centre of our "revolutionary method".

To put this method into practice, the movement must concentrate on the education and development of revolutionaries who can act creatively and with initiative in unexpected and unusual situations, and can effectively disseminate revolutionary ideas and alternatives amongst the people. Since it is impossible (more so today than ever before) to instruct people on what to do in every conceivable situation, revolutionary cadres would operate via an approach to problems, rather than a pre-ordained answer to them.

Operating according to this method and Gramsci's maxim, such a movement would tend to maximise the possibilities open to it, so that its intervention in history would solve in practice the determinist/voluntarist riddle.
Already the euphoria of the December settlement is wearing off. Nixon was quite happy to replace the import surcharge and "buy American" tax incentives with a revaluation and currency realignment with almost the same effects. He also got in a new protectionist measure for the American textile industry before the smoke was clear. The only real concession was a rise in the dollar price of gold, but it remains to be seen whether or not this will mean much since the dollar remains inconvertible into gold.

Although the immediate crisis has been resolved, the only thing done to prevent a similar situation from arising again was to enlarge the "bands" around which exchange rates can fluctuate without IMF intervention to 25%. As will be suggested below, this change will hardly be enough to alter the underlying mechanisms which led to last year's crisis. And the long term price of an apparent American "victory" will probably be high. This crisis has marked the end of American economic and political hegemony in the capitalist world and the West Europeans and Japanese will take a long time to forget the bruising they received from American economic brinkmanship played from a position of relative weakness . . . . especially if the Nixon strategy of exporting unemployment to win an election is successful (see below).

As pointed out in the last notes (ALR 33, November 1971), the international monetary arrangements settled at Bretton Woods in 1944 were inherently unstable and afforded no adequate basis for either changing exchange rates when necessary, or for providing additional international money to finance expanding world trade. With no mechanism for increasing international money, sterling and most importantly dollar deficits filled the breach. Now the Japanese and Europeans have billions of inconvertible (into gold) dollars from the days when the dollar was as 'good as gold' and when the Americans could run their printing presses hot and get away with it. For the present, these funds are still being held in Europe and Japan, partly because interest rates are too low in America. If the Americans are successful in reversing their balance of payments deficit, these dollars will have to be used to buy American goods. But what if they are also used to buy some American real estate and factories, either in their own countries or in the United States itself? For just as the Americans borrowed from the rest of the world to help them buy up foreign property and to fight in Indo-China, so the process can be reversed. Will Nixon allow this? He won't like it, and it's safe to predict that he will do everything he can to prevent it. Such a move by European and Japanese corporations would present a longer term threat to the position of American corporations than the present boost to their competitive position gained by the currency realignment. But suppose the Japanese and Europeans are successful in getting rid of some of their dollar holdings, who then will print the international money for future capitalist trade expansion? It is here that the crucial weaknesses of the Bretton Woods system may reveal itself once again; since the Americans have lost their hegemony, they may be prepared to see the IMF take over this role (just as Lord Keynes wanted it to do in 1944) and expand the issues of so-called paper gold — the Special Drawing Rights or SDR's. Yet even if this were achieved, there remains the question of future mechanisms for exchange rate changes.

If market forces were allowed to rule, then a system of freely fluctuating exchange rates would solve both the problem of reserves and exchange rates. But it is hard to imagine such a system being accepted by any but a handful of small countries such as Canada (and, would you believe it, Cairns has suggested it for Australia). For example, it would have meant during the 1960's that the American dollar would have devalued with the escalation of the Vietnam war — and maybe very sharply, given the attitude of Europeans to that war. It's quite likely that such an exchange rate change would have shown more clearly than Johnson could have afforded the real economic consequences of that act. As it turned out, he could perpetuate the myth that America could have extra guns and (remember) (sic) "great society" programs without increasing taxes. The way in which he paid for it was by forcing the Europeans and Japanese to lend him a bit more via increased dollar deficits, and by squeezing the poorer classes at home via stepped up inflation. An alternative solution to the exchange rate problem would be to keep the wider bands around the fixed exchange rates, changing the middle fixed rate according to the circumstances. Perhaps most likely, however, is a return to the old system with its recurrent crises; already there is evidence of pressure to narrow the "bands" at least for the European currencies. It remains to be seen whether or not exchange rates will be changed in response to underlying economic forces quickly enough to avert new currency crises; I doubt it. For to take the question of exchange rates too far outside the arena of manipulation for (attempted) economic or political gain is too much to ask. In this respect, Nixon's New Economic Policy may achieve the aim of lowering unemployment at home and providing short-term protection for American capital (thus ensuring his re-election) at the expense of increased unemployment.
ment in Europe and Japan, not to mention the Third World. (The devaluation of the American dollar increases American exports and lowers imports, thus expanding production at home. The opposite occurs in the rest of the world.) But the game can be played the other way as well, raising the possibility of competitive devaluations.... the latter prospect depends largely on how far rising unemployment and falling profits goes in Europe and Japan during 1972. The predictions for a 1972 recovery made recently by the OECD* are only rosy on the surface, leaving the question of recovery in West Germany and Japan very much in the air. More recent figures on unemployment than the OECD survey on European economic conditions (The Age, 22/1/72) confirm the over-optimistic character of the former.

Of course, there are many other dimensions to the crisis. For the New Economic Policy was a package deal with defence and trade policy (protection) negotiable issues as well. While there is no space to go into detail here, some trends seem clear: more defence expenditure by the Europeans and Japanese to offset possible reductions in direct American military presence, the intensification of struggles for competitive advantages in each others' markets (including those of the Third World), and tougher deals for Third World countries in any dealings they may have with the international financial institutions and the so-called “aid” givers. In the case of Japan, the line between self-defence forces and a developing off-shore capability becomes increasingly blurred.... the mutterings about flag following trade and investments have already begun.

In short, if the new currency parities work, there is likely to be a renewed money crisis centring around the question of how to finance expanded trade; the Europeans and Japanese will be even less willing than in the past to allow the dollar to do this. If (as seems more likely) the new currency parities only work for a relatively short time, then a new fight over the same kinds of issues as in the last crisis will emerge. In either case, there is likely to be a continued erosion of the ability of the “system” to deliver the goods via rapid growth and “acceptable” levels of unemployment.

The Australian reaction

While the leader of the Country Party, Mr. Anthony, was quietly away at his farm, the Liberals and the financial press were confident that the Country Party would accept the Treasury and Liberal line of Sticking to Sterling. However, once Mr. Anthony was in Canberra, we saw a raw display of divisions in the ruling circles. Already, the Treasury proposal to stay with sterling was a compromise; in fact, a strong case could be made for revaluation against sterling. The Country Party (also representing the mining interests) would only accept parity with sterling in return for a cut in tariffs. But the Libs would have none of this; they have a good deal of pressure exerted on them to maintain or increase tariff protection. So the result was a devaluation against the parity rate for sterling (accompanied with a bit of gobbledegook about the Australian dollar having parity with sterling, while effectively it was revalued over 2% against sterling parity by the use of the 2½% band allowed by the IMF. Since then, sterling has floated down a bit towards its lower band, wiping out some of Mr. Anthony’s devaluation).

As the 12 economics professors stated in their various letters to the press (over the year, the ranks changed a bit, but there always seemed to be 12), only a large tariff cut and/or an appreciation of the Australian dollar against sterling would have served the “community interest” — the unstated assumption being the “community interest” of a more ideal form of capitalism than exists today in Australia. The twin concerns of the professors when advocating policies to deal with the currency realignments were inflation and inefficiencies in the economy — appreciation of the exchange rate would help check inflation by lowering the price of imports, and/or lower tariffs would move capital and workers from some of Australia’s notoriously highly protected and inefficient industries. But the professors chose not to make known any detailed analysis on which their conclusions were based and they did not explain how workers could be asked to accept policies which would cost them jobs in the short-term. For as everyone knows, the assistance for compensation and retraining of displaced workers in this society scarcely exists. Nor did they explain how the farmers, mining companies, banks and most manufacturers would be prepared to accept the lower short-term profits their recommendations imply. Worse for the professors, there was no one in Cabinet to press for their ideal of the “community interest”, and as pointed out in the financial press, their cries were in the wilderness.

Perhaps their efforts would be better spent explaining the mechanisms which lead to decisions against the interests of the majority under capitalism rather than expressing hopes about what ought to be done.... but then such a critical (and more scientific) role is, not surprisingly, one they shy away from....

Perhaps the biggest surprise of all was Jim Cairns, who came out in favour of letting the Australian dollar float. An idea obviously borrowed from Canadian experience, such a move would do much to reform capitalism as it exists in Australia today, for the implications run much deeper than merely allowing market forces to decide the exchange rate. It would oring much sharper competitive forces to bear on Australian business than are allowed to operate at present, and it would be much harder to manipulate tariffs to protect industry at the desired levels. But it is precisely for these reasons that the Cairns proposal would

not be acceptable . . . short of the Yellow Peril or socialism, it's hard to think of suggestions more calculated to terrify the Australian capitalist!

What does all this mean? First, with the Australian currency under-valued, we will continue our ludicrous accumulation of reserves. Second, although it will boost manufacturing profits, help cushion mine owners against falls in prices and orders, and help the farmers pay off the banks and stock companies a bit faster, it will make Australian assets cheap to buy. Not surprisingly, in the first week in January, there was a minor rally on the stock markets as the short-term money started coming in from Europe to wait for future revaluation of the Australian dollar. Of course, the Australian capitalist does not like to have increased take-over bids or new competition from yet more overseas investment, nor do the Libs like the idea of selling off a bit more of the farm cheap in an election year. What to do? Rather than allow the economic forces to do the work they set them to do by devaluation of the currency vs. our major trading partners, the so-called believers in the workings of the free-market look around for direct controls to stop what they don't like . . . . and controls of capital movements under capitalism have about as much chance of success as removing loop-holes in our income tax laws.

But what about the budget which was designed to stop inflation and cure the economy of its ills? Maybe by accident Mr. Snedden got himself off the hook of being accused of too much budgetary contraction by going along with an inflationary exchange rate settlement. However, as already suggested, the main immediate effects of the exchange rate change will be to cushion the already highly profitable miners from relatively small losses and help the farmers to pay off the banks. As for the manufacturers, they will be better able to pass on the effects of wage increases in price increases since import prices have risen. With no up-turn in investment in sight (who said capitalists don't have enormous power over the majority of people?) the immediate effects on rising unemployment will be minimal. There could have been no better prescription for setting up the conditions for continued 'stagflation' - relatively high inflation and unemployment. The December figures on unemployment and a rate of inflation over 10% per annum serve to reinforce the prediction that stagflation more similar to North-American and European experience will become a more permanent feature during the 1970's.

Tid-bits

That Melbourne underground. Noticed the first of a new round of increased cost estimated? Up from $80 million in 1967 to $114 million (perhaps more later). But why the underground anyway? Certainly not for servicing Melbourne's public transport needs. For the problem with trains in Melbourne is that the Flinders Street yards can't turn them round fast enough. For a mere 60% less than the cost of the underground*, the yards could be extended and a decent train service could be restored for Melbourne - and a few new trains provided too. (There is plenty of space for the monuments of capitalism within walking distance of Flinders and Spencer Street stations.) Then why the underground? Certainly not for the people who use the trains, for the journey in and out of Melbourne will cost more and take even longer after the loop is installed (on either the inward or the outward journey, you will have to travel around the loop, rather than in and out of Flinders or Spencer streets . . . . a mere two or three extra stops on the way home). If the original reason for the loop lay in the vanity of the councillors and politicians who feel that Melbourne must have a flashy underground to match the flash real-estate above, the reason for their unwillingness to change almost certainly lies in the fact that too many powerful people are poised to gain from the sky-rocketer real-estate values on the proposed loop route. . . .

Are you surprised that the doctors have got their fingers in the cookie jar again? Then go and see a psychiatrist! While the Libs, cry about unnecessary visits to the doctor and make it that we have to pay more for prescriptions to stop us getting hooked on good things, they line the pockets of specialists by making the cost of a GP and a specialist visit the same for a referred insured person, thus encouraging unnecessary visits to a specialist. Like their American colleagues, our doctors are learning the advantages of "socialised" medical services where the taxpayer picks up the bill they write for themselves. The 46% increase in doctors' incomes via health funds over 15 months is made up of about a 22% increase in fees, the rest in new services covered by health insurance, reinforces the comments on the increased incidence of over-common fee charges. The AMA's answer that sometimes the doctor provides more than 'average' service so should not charge the so-called "most common fee" for the one minute check-up.

And what about all the talk about using the price mechanism being applied to achieve a sensible resource allocation in the med. biz? What about the bloke on $10,000 a year who pays less to insure himself (or his wife) for a private bed in a hospital than a bloke on $5,000 who insures for (hold your breath) an intermediate ward, not to mention medical costs for the majority of Australians who earn less than $5,000 . . . . All because health fund contributions are tax deductable - the more you earn, the less it costs to get sick . . . . sick.

DAVID EVANS

* Estimate based on Victorian Railways costing, reported by Dr. Stuart Joy (now Chief Economist for British Railways).
the motherhood myth

Lee Comer

THE EMPHASIS on the class struggle in revolutionary thinking has obscured the significance of traditional sex roles and nowhere is this more apparent than in the mistaken belief that child rearing is, of necessity, the responsibility of women. In fact, other than the optional first few weeks or months of breast feeding, there is no biological connection between the bearing of children and their rearing. Women both in and outside the Women's Liberation movement are busily mouthing this radical idea, but it is evident that as far as their own lives are concerned, and in their attitudes to others, it remains an empty ideal.

The fact that women everywhere are oppressed is not here in question. Many women have come to terms with their oppression by internalising it; they do not know that they are oppressed. Others knowingly embrace it. Thus a woman will be pleased if she's whistled at in the street and, more seriously, will defend her right to make a man, her man, happy at the expense of her own happiness. This is more than sacrifice; when she projects her ambitions and aspirations on to her children and her husband and when their achievements are embraced as her own, she is signing away her life, suspending it on an illusion which the first puff of wind will blow away. She is living vicariously, her personality atrophies and ultimately she suffers total loss of identity. Women who recognise this state of affairs for what it is do not know that they are oppressed. Others, who therefore attempt, however feebly, to reject it in their own lives, are almost certainly doomed to failure for the simple reason that it is impossible to escape the ideal of motherhood. Childless women who see no need for Women's Liberation are living in cloud cuckoo land, first because their notions about their autonomy are as illusory as the married women's who believe that sharing the housework and the decision-making means liberation, and secondly, because they feel they ought, one day, to have a baby.

Motherhood is society's golden carrot. It is a super-human woman who can live her life without a backward glance, wondering whether she can really be fulfilled or satisfied with only relation-

ships, a satisfying job and whatever else she wants out of life, without having a child somewhere along the line. And why? Because of this one central assumption which underlines everything that pertains to women, that a woman's true purpose in life and the pinnacle of her fulfilment is motherhood. The professional planners of industrial society - the psychologists, educationalists, doctors, sociologists, advertisers and the media, using the different means at their disposal, magnify and elevate the importance of the mother/child relationship. And the amateurs who tread reverentially in their wake translate these assumptions, prejudices and dubious findings into conventional wisdom, so that no-one will be allowed to miss the point. Thus we arrive at this supposedly self-evident truth; a child needs its mother and, by implication, a mother needs her child.

In actual practice, of course, a mother is not regarded highly. If she were all the special things that these people would have us believe, then surely they would take her needs into account. But this is not the case. The mother with prams and push-chairs isn't in the forefront of the planners' minds when they design every new building with flights of narrow steps. Even in what is regarded as the woman's domain, like department stores, high rise flats, etc., women with young children are simply not catered for. In fact, every aspect of our environment is designed with one thing in mind, the adult healthy male; mothers, along with the physically disabled and the very old are ignored. This is just another of the ways in which society operates a double standard. But this one has perhaps some of the most far-reaching implications, the burden of which has to be borne by the mothers.

Caring for children is a difficult and important job of work but considered in the commodity producing terms that we are conditioned to value, the mother contributes nothing of market value and as a result is not recognised economically. It must not be forgotten that it is cheaper for the establishment to recognise the woman's job in spiritual rather than economic terms and for this reason, if for no other, it is in the establishment's interest that the status quo be maintained. The most damaging way in which this is illustrated is in the desperate lack of day nursery and pre-school nursery facilities. It is worth noting here that the 1967 Plowden Report on Primary Education recommended that one of the major priorities for the Ministry of Education was the setting up of state run nursery schools for three to five-year-olds. That was four years ago and very little has been done. The most effective way of saving the state's money, of keeping children at home with mothers until they are five, is to emphasise over and over again the exclusivity and significance of the mother/child relationship. We are bombarded with this stuff from every corner and no woman is immune to it. From Bowlby to Woman's Own, it is

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everyone’s prerogative to state with absolute certainty that a child needs its mother, and, deprived of her constant and exclusive care and attention, the child will suffer unmentionable difficulties and will probably turn out to be a delinquent.

Dr. John Bowlby is the arch perpetrator of this. In his own words:

It appears that there is a very strong case indeed for believing that prolonged separation of a child from his mother (or mother substitute) during the first five years of life stands foremost among the causes of delinquent character development and persistent misbehaviour. Bowlby 1947.

What is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment. 1952

Partial deprivation brings in its train acute anxiety, excessive need for love, powerful feelings of revenge and, arising from these last, guilt and depression. Complete deprivation... has even more far-reaching effects on character development and may entirely cripple the capacity to make relationships. 1952

He admitted in 1956 that he may have overstated his case, but this was only in relation to the long term effects of institutionalisation (or, what he called ‘maternal deprivation’). However, in 1958, in a letter to the Lancet he asserted that, contrary to general professional opinion, his position remained unchanged.

Several writers have attested to the widespread influence of Bowlby’s views. In the words of Professor Yudkin and Anthea Holme, in their book, Working Mothers and Their Children:

There can be little doubt that among the major contributing factors to the general disapproval which our society extends to mothers of young children who work outside the home, and the corresponding guilt of the mothers themselves, are the theses of Dr. John Bowlby.

Bowlby’s hypotheses continue even now to provide both official and unofficial bodies with supposedly irrefutable evidence in favour of such money saving projects as closing day nurseries.

Grygier et al., in their work Parental Deprivation: A Study of Delinquent Children, state:

The responsibility for the emphasis on the mother belongs to John Bowlby, a leading authority on the results of maternal deprivation who has had a powerful influence on lay and professional people.

In view of the vested interest in keeping mothers at home, we begin to understand why it is that Bowlby’s views attract world-wide attention while his many detractors, who have presented a wealth of evidence which does not support his thesis, remain in relative obscurity. These investigators are only read by other investigators; they are certainly not read by those people who popularise scientific findings. If these findings were published they would admit that their children could do without their fathers, grandparents, school, peer group, etc., but, deprived of their mothers, the children would fall apart. If we are to believe that women yearn for security, then they must go some way towards satisfying this need in making themselves indispensable in this way. The most pathetic way in which this is demonstrated is when a mother is ill. She stags on relentlessly, often refusing offers of help. She might otherwise discover that her children can manage perfectly well without her. Similarly, it frequently happens, when a child falls over and is comforted by whoever happens to be there at the time, that the mother rushes up, whips the child out of that person’s arms and says, “There, there, Mummy’s here”. Such women are reinforcing the child’s mother-dependence and are thereby postponing the realisation that they are, in effect, dispensable as mothers.

The end result, of course, is what is known in all the text books as the normal small child, that is, a child neurotically dependent on its mother. She, being the model mother, has brought this perfect child into being by constantly reinforcing every sign of dependence on her that it displays, first its physical needs and then for its emotional needs. She puts it to bed at 6.30 p.m. so that it only sees its father for half an hour a day, she rarely, if ever, leaves it with anyone for more than an hour or so, and she reserves her ultimate contempt for any mother who does not conform to this ideal pattern.

When a child brought up in these conditions is parted from its mother and suffers distress, the social scientists, instead of throwing up their hands admitting that their children could do without their fathers, grandmothers, school, peer group, etc., admit that their children could do without their mothers, the children would fall apart. If we are to believe that women yearn for security, then they must go some way towards satisfying this need in making themselves indispensable in this way. The most pathetic way in which this is demonstrated is when a mother is ill. She stags on relentlessly, often refusing offers of help. She might otherwise discover that her children can manage perfectly well without her. Similarly, it frequently happens, when a child falls over and is comforted by whoever happens to be there at the time, that the mother rushes up, whips the child out of that person’s arms and says, “There, there, Mummy’s here”. Such women are reinforcing the child’s mother-dependence and are thereby postponing the realisation that they are, in effect, dispensable as mothers.

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When a child brought up in these conditions is parted from its mother and suffers distress, the social scientists, instead of throwing up their hands in grief at yet another example of maternal deprivation, might be better employed at critically examining the pre-separation experiences of the child.

These social scientists might also be better employed if they turn their attention to fathers. Margaret Mead stands alone in recognising that the separation and insignificance of fathers is not biologically ordered but is a direct result of industrialisation. At the third meeting of the World Health Organisation Study Group on Child Development, she said:

In very simple societies, such as the Australian aborigines, many South Sea island societies, and some African societies, the male takes a great deal of care of the young infant. But with every society that we have any record of, with the onset of what you call civilisation, division of labour, class structure, hierarchies of authority etc., one of the first things that has happened has been the separation of the human male from his own baby until any point up to two years, four years, six years, twelve years. I think one of the things that we may want to discuss here is whether this is not a condition of civilisation, and whether one of the origins of creativity in males has not been this preventing them from having anything to do with babies.

Such subversive views about the role of fathers will not be found in the conventional literature on child care. As can be imagined, Bowlby has very
different views. This is what he had to say about fathers:

In the young child's eyes father plays second fiddle and his value increases only as the child's vulnerability to deprivation decreases. Nevertheless, as the legitimate child knows, fathers have their uses even in infancy. Not only do they provide for their wives to enable them to devote themselves unrestrictedly to the care of the infant and toddler, but, by providing love and companionship, they support her emotionally and help her maintain that harmonious contented mood in the aura of which the infant thrives. In what follows, therefore while continual reference will be made to the mother-child relation, little will be said of the father-child relation; his value as the economic and emotional support of the mother will be assumed.

What Bowlby gives us is a beautiful woman's magazine image of the contented mother dispensing harmony to her thriving infant with father coming home on Friday night and smiling as he hands over the economic support and if by chance he kisses his wife, he is not demonstrating his affection but only providing her with emotional support so that the child can continue to thrive. Like Bowlby's views on motherhood, this image of the paternal role has filtered down into popular mythology. It is not difficult to see why this has happened. Just as it is in the establishment's economic interest to keep the mother of young children isolated at home, so it is to keep the father alienated at work. The system needs his labour, which is of course his time, and he needs the money he earns by that labour to buy the goods he makes, so he is advised only to participate in parenthood. He is not essential, like the mother, but useful in an also-ran kind of way. None of the lay books on baby care that I have consulted make any reference to father although I am told that one does have a 'note to fathers' at the end which suggests that he persuade his wife to bath the baby in the evening when he is at home so that he can watch. Some of the professional books on child care deny the father's role completely; when he is referred to, he is seen only as an occasional substitute mother. Dr. Spock makes a valiant effort when he addresses himself to 'parents' at the beginning of his book Baby and Child Care, but he does not keep it up, and all subsequent references are to 'mother'. Thus, in all the serious and popular literature the father's role as a parent, in contrast to the mother's, is drastically under-emphasised.

To turn now to the evidence for and against maternal deprivation. In the first place, all the original work was done on children in institutions and the reason is only too obvious; it is virtually impossible to find children brought up in motherless families, so that the evidence, such as it is, had to be gathered from the very extreme cases where the children were totally removed from their own homes. In other words, these children were deprived of many things besides their mothers, not least their fathers and love. This fact alone should be sufficient to dismiss Bowlby's evidence. As Grygier et al, have pointed out, what Bowlby and his followers were studying was not the effects of maternal deprivation but the effects of institutionalisation. These effects can be, but are not always, harmful.

It must not be forgotten that every child in an institution is there for a reason, such as death of a parent, break up of a home, or simply that the child is not wanted. Not one of these reasons can be regarded as being conducive to the child's healthy development. None of Bowlby's findings takes any of these points into account. The only criticism he does anticipate is the one least likely to be thought of. That is that the children he observed in institutions may have come from 'poor stock, physically and mentally', so that heredity alone might account for their backward development. He goes on to refute this with devastating logic, by citing the case of twin goats, one of which was separated from its mother and became "psychologically frozen" when lights were flashed on and off. He concludes this with the following statement:

This is ample demonstration of the adverse effects on maternal deprivation on the mammalian young, and disposes finally of the argument that all the observed effects are due to heredity.

Bowlby is full of such glaring errors of judgment, gross over-simplification and dogged single-mindedness. For instance, he warns observers not to be taken in by children in institutions who are, in his own words, "quiet, easy to manage, well mannered and even appear happy" because their adjustment can only be "hollow". In view of what he has to say about goats and fathers, I hope I have demonstrated that his writings do not warrant serious consideration, except insofar as they affect general attitudes.

Before turning to the other evidence it is worthwhile to refer to what Grygier et al. have to say about the workability of hypotheses in an area as emotionally loaded as maternal deprivation. These authors stand alone in questioning the validity of employing scientific method on human beings:

To determine the effects of parental deprivation a workable scientific model must be used and at the present stage of scientific development this would be an experimental model. Assumed causes must be manipulated experimentally to see how often they produce the hypothesised effects, otherwise the preconceived cause may be merely an association . . . The obstacles to the use of the experimental model on human beings weaken the predictive power of hypotheses in the social sciences, which, when compared with those of the physical sciences rank less as laws than as educated guesses . . . An hypothesis may be confirmed because it has been stated, not because it is true.

A perfect example of a hypothesis being confirmed because it has been stated is found in a widely quoted study entitled Working Mothers and Delinquency by Glueck and Glueck, who are prolific workers in this field. The subject was 500 delinquent boys matched pair by pair with non-delinquent boys of similar age, cultural background, etc. The employed mothers were divided into two groups, those regularly employed and those sporadically employed, in similar types of work (cleaning, shop work, etc.). Of the delinquent boys 54% had mothers who were full time
housewives, compared to 46% whose mothers worked, so a slightly higher proportion of the delinquent boys had full-time mothers. However, when the authors turned to the sporadically employed mothers, many of whom had themselves been delinquents, and whose husbands were frequently unemployed and where both parents were lacking in "self-respect", they found a higher proportion of delinquents. With the single-mindedness of a scientist intent on finding causal relationship between maternal employment and delinquency, and thereby proving the hypothesis, the authors disregard the other potent factors which contribute to the waywardness of these children and conclude:

We already have sufficient evidence to permit of at least a guarded conclusion that the villain among working mothers is the one who seems to have some inner need to flit erratically from job to job probably because she finds relief thereby from the burden of homemaking.

Note that there is no mention that this "inner need" might be financial, owing to the husband being out of work. In their conclusions, the authors drop their guard to reveal the moralising assumptions and cliched attitudes which underlie their work:

As more and more enticements in the way of financial gain, excitement and independence from the husband are offered married women to lure them from their domestic duties, the problem is becoming more widespread and acute. It is a problem that should be discussed freely and frankly in all communities by mothers, fathers, clergy, psychiatrist and social worker.

When these authors use terms like "villain", "luring", "enticement", "independence from the husband", their scientific objectivity must be called to serious question. Similarly, their conclusion that there is a causal relationship between the sporadically employed mother and delinquency is highly dubious. Besides the many other factors at work in the families of these boys, the authors have studiously ignored the fact that the fathers were also sporadically employed.

Many of the studies into the effects of the working mother suffer from the same lack of detachment as the Gluecks' study. Margaret Broughton in her paper Children with Mothers at Work suggested:

...for mothers who work because they are bored or lonely probably the answer would be to provide creches or day nurseries where mothers could leave their children for a few hours so that they could take part-time jobs. An occasional morning or afternoon a week would probably keep many women mentally happy.

Despite their lack of detachment, none of the studies yet undertaken has succeeded in finding a correlation between delinquency and maternal employment. In fact, as mentioned previously, the Gluecks found a higher proportion of delinquents from homes where there were full-time mothers. So also did Ferguson and Cunnison in their study of delinquents in Glasgow.

In 1965 Warren and Palmer looked into the backgrounds of 316 juvenile offenders and found that 98% were without a father or father substitu-
Another study was undertaken by Heinicke in 1956. This was a small explorative study. It dealt with thirteen two-year-olds, seven of whom attended day nursery while the rest were temporarily placed in residential nurseries while their mothers were in hospital. The author found that the residential children, after the first two days of initial adjustment to the new routine, did present disturbed behaviour, such as seeking affection, frequent crying, loss of bowel control, etc., while the children who returned home each evening presented no problems. The only point that was brought in connection with the day nursery children was that they more frequently wet themselves, although the author admits that they indulged in more water play than the residential children. The author draws no conclusion from this study as it was so small and only covered a period of nineteen days. However, Prof. Yudkin suggested that Heinicke's results:

... suggest that young children may fairly quickly adjust themselves to a new routine and to maintain a close relationship with mother during the parts of the day when they are together.

Bowlby unwittingly provided his opponents with valuable evidence when he quoted a study by Simonsen:

Simonsen compared a group of 113 children aged between one and four years almost all of whom had spent their whole lives in one of some 12 different institutions, with a comparable group who lived at home and attended day nurseries. The mothers of these children were working and the homes often very unsatisfactory. Even so, the average developmental quotient of the family children was normal — 102 — while that of the institution children retarded was only 93.

Now Bowlby gives no indication that he has appreciated the full implications of this evidence. In a paper designed to stress the harmful consequences of maternal deprivation he makes no attempt to account for the normal development of the day nursery children who were deprived of their mothers for eight or more hours a day.

The emphasis in all these studies, much as their findings support my case, is always biased towards the possible harmful effects of partial separation of the child from its parents. I would have been greatly relieved to have come across a study which set out to investigate the benefits of partial separation for the under-fives. No less important would be a study of the effects of maternal over-protection. An interesting point to consider here is mentioned in Professor Edward Strecker's book, Their Mothers Sons. He stated that the percentage of mother-fixated neurotic G.I.'s in the last war was 'catastrophic'. A study into the effects of maternal over-protection should prove as interesting as one on the effects of working fathers. Myrdal and Klein, in their book, Woman's Two Roles, had this to say:

So much has been written and said in recent years about the vital needs of children for maternal affection, and about the dangers of neglect, that many parents, in particular those who take an intelligent interest in the emotional development of their children are becoming over-
anxious on this score. Very little attention has, in comparison, been paid to the effects of over-protection, though these may also cripple the psychological development of the child.

I don't feel that, in the present climate of opinion, much research will be done either in the direction of maternal over-protection or the benefits of day nurseries, nursery schools, etc., although concessions are gradually being made towards the idea of nursery schools for deprived children. No-one in authority has yet reconciled the idea that partial separation from the mother is beneficial to the deprived child while it is harmful to the 'normal' child.

In reviewing the evidence for and against maternal deprivation, I have referred to the major works published. Most of the work was done in the late 'forties and throughout the 'fifties, when the subject was 'hot', but so effective was the dissemination of the case for maternal deprivation that it moved out of the realm of controversy into the realm of acknowledged fact; as a result very little work has since been done.

Before moving on to a statement of my own position, I will refer to Margaret Mead's study entitled, Some Theoretical Considerations on the Problem of Mother Child Separation. Unlike other workers she is able to look at the subject dispassionately and brings it admirably into perspective:

At present the specific biological situation of the continuing relationship of the child to its biological mother and its need for care by human beings are being hopelessly confused in the growing insistence that child and biological mother or mother surrogate, must never be separated, that all separation even for a few days is inevitably damaging and that if long enough it does irreversible damage. This . . . is a new and subtle form of anti-feminism in which men — under the guise of exalting the importance of maternity — are tying women more tightly to their children than has been thought necessary since the invention of bottle feeding and baby carriages. Actually, anthropological evidence gives no support at present to the value of such accentuation of the tie between mother and child. On the contrary cross-cultural studies suggest that adjustment is most facilitated if the child is cared for by many warm friendly people . . . . It may well be, of course, that limiting a child's contacts to its biological mother may be the most efficient way to produce a character suited to lifelong monogamous marriage, but if so, then we should be clear that this is what we are doing.

This article began with the statement that there was no biological connection between having babies and rearing them. Mothers are no more essential to their children than are fathers, grandmothers, or indeed anyone who loves them with the right kind of care and understanding. By the term 'love' I don't, of course, mean 'mother love', a sentiment which masquerades as the most pure and ideal form that love can take and is so ably characterised in the media by the young mother whispering sweet nothings to her picture book child as she washes up. In its extreme form the term 'mother love' implies the kind of sacrificial commitment which is thought to be seen in the animal world, with mother defending her young. (It appears, however, that among the higher primates, it is often the father who defends the young in cases of extreme need. In addition, there are several species where the father cares for as well as protects the young; see Discussions on Child Development, W.H.O. Study Group, 1955.) Instead of recognising this for what it is — the protection of the young for the perpetuation of the species — we have applied it to human female behaviour and sentimentalised it into a travesty of love.

Thus, the 'good' mother is the one who wraps her child in a blanket of love, attends its every whim, thwarts its wishes only when there is physical danger, prepares it well in advance for every possible little upset and anticipates all its needs. She sincerely believes that she is doing everything in her power to produce a happy child and then wonders where she went wrong when the child sucks its thumb, wets its bed, attacks other kids and finally, in adolescence, turns against her. The other side of the same coin may be the child who is chronically timid and so dependent on its mother that even she recognises that something is wrong. This dependency may be carried over in the adult who finds difficulty in functioning independently and who constantly seeks reassurance and confirmation of its identity in other people. Certainly this kind of upbringing is widespread and keeps the Child Guidance clinics very busy.

Perhaps the most lethal aspect of such 'good' maternal care is the conscious anticipation of the child's needs. There is confusion over the need for an awareness and understanding of the child's needs, at each stage of its development, with the anticipation of them. The mother who consciously provides for each need as or even before it arises is living the child's life for it. Instead of allowing the child to discover the world around it for itself, the mother becomes the mediator, the provider of that world. All that the child is learning is how to conform to its mother's expectations.

It should be possible to challenge all of these basic beliefs about what constitutes good parenthood without presenting a wholly negative picture. Germain Greer suggested in her book, The Female Eunuch that children don't need 'bringing up'; given that their physical needs are met, they grow up anyway. It would seem axiomatic to most people that children need the active intervention of adults in the growing up process. This is what 'bringing up' is supposed to mean. What it should mean is the presence of several "warm friendly people" who are ready to respond to the child's needs as and when they arise. This would require a conscious stepping back by the adults so that the child is allowed to determine for itself the quality and extent of the adult/child relationship. Such an approach may well result in a child who really does use its home like a hotel, giving and taking only what is necessary to live its own life in a totally independent and self-reliant way.
This method of child-rearing is not an empty and unattainable ideal. It is practised unconsciously in many families and in its mildest form has been described as 'healthy neglect'. As the term suggests, it consists more of what it is not than what it is. The essential point about it is that it avoids all the dangers of an excessive mother/child attachment. The child is thus freed from many of the burdens that a supposedly well brought up child has to bear — the responsibility of fulfilling its parents' expectations, of returning their love and sacrifice and of compensating them for their inadequacies. Instead of being bullied into being a credit to its parents the child is allowed to be a credit to itself.

For those essentially middle-class parents who have eagerly embraced the whole mythology — the strong attachment to the mother, the child's yearning for love and security, its need for constant understanding and guidance — to be told that they give too much attention to their children would be intolerable. Similarly, these people will defend to the last the myth that the basic requirement for the child's healthy development is security.

The pursuit of security must in part explain the strange behaviour that afflicts previously enlightened people when their first child is born. They no longer live in the present, taking from each day as much as it can offer; they start planning for something called the future. They buy a house, build a solid wall of insurance around it, they start thinking about a second child, not necessarily because they want one but to provide a companion for the first, and in order to keep this unwieldy edifice in repair the father's job and the prospects that go with it begin to assume an inordinate importance. In the name of providing their children with security these parents are denying them the raw material on which our experience is based, namely the unpredictability of it. In fact, security is another of the tools manipulated by society to make you stay where you are and work hard.

Security is commonly believed to be strengthened by consistency. In dealing with children many parents are preoccupied with presenting a consistent and rational front. This is characterised by those inane conversations where the adult is conscientiously explaining the reasons for his actions, treating the child as though it were a miniature adult, capable of fullreasoned thought. This is the modern equivalent of "not in front of the children, dear", our parents hissed at each other when they should have a row. Their belief in doing everything nicely and respectably matches the present belief in the efficacy of reason. Both types of parents could learn something from the one who gets cross with the kids simply because they are being naughty. That parent does not dress himself up in special clothes whenever he deals with his kids.

The respectable and the consistent parents are disguising their real selves in order to present their children with an idealised version.

The following quotation from the World Child Welfare Congress of 1958 exemplifies the attitude to child rearing which should be strenuously rejected:

... our most important task in regard to every child with whom we are concerned is to give him maternal and personal love ... we must be there for them. In fact, if we are not the visible and tangible centre of their world and if we are not the stable hub of every change all our efforts are in vain.

Is it loving a child to make yourself the centre of its universe? And is it really love that compels parents to protect and defend the child against all the minor upsets it encounters outside the home instead of allowing it to come to terms with them in its way? Most of what goes under the guise of good parental care is an elaborate rationalisation of gross possessiveness. It attempts to bind the child to the mother and provides a manipulative object whereby the parents rationalise their personal dissatisfaction. This is often consciously expressed by well-meaning parents who boast that they are giving their children what they themselves lacked. What is understood as 'loving' children is, in fact, using them.

Laing, in his book *The Politics of Experience* expressed this point very forcefully:

From the moment of birth ... the baby is subjected to these forces of violence, called love, as its mother and father have been and their parents and their parents before them. These forces are mainly concerned with destroying most of its potentialities. This enterprise is on the whole successful. By the time the new human being is fifteen or so we are left with a being like ourselves. A half-crazed creature more or less adjusted to a mad world. This is normality in our present age. Love and violence, properly speaking, are polar opposites. *Love lets the other be*, but with affection and concern. Violence attempts to constrain the other's freedom to force him to act in the way we desire, but with ultimate lack of concern, with indifference to the other's existence or destiny. We are effectively destroying ourselves by violence masquerading as love. (my emphasis)

So love lets the child be with affection and concern. A mother isn't letting her child be when she makes herself indispensable in its eyes, neither is she when she concentrates all the care in herself instead of sharing it with others. And she isn't letting it be when she projects her concern for its welfare on to it, making it feel responsible for her feelings when it 'fails' to fulfil her expectations. The woman who cuts and trims her poodle into a travesty of a dog, takes it proudly out on a leash to show off to the neighbours, only allows it to play with other poodles, is not a far cry from the mother who professes to 'love' her child.

When we have learnt to disengage ourselves from the children that we care for, liberating them from the pressure to conform to our image of them, we will be loving them without violence. In the process we will be going some way towards liberating ourselves.
THE GREENING OF AMERICA, by Charles A. Reich. Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 294pp., $7.50

In this book, a best-seller in the United States, Charles Reich, a lecturer in law at Yale, takes as his starting point the well known proposition that consciousness is the cement which holds a social structure together. He reasons that if this cement crumbles the structure itself will come tumbling down, and that the disintegration of one form of consciousness involves the emergence of another ("Consciousness 111") which will be appropriate to, and in fact create, a new social structure.

With the surprising omission of women's liberation, Reich gives a reasonably familiar description of the issues leading in this direction: disorder, corruption, hypocrisy, war; poverty, distorted priorities, and law-making by private power; uncontrolled technology and the destruction of environment; decline of democracy and liberty, powerlessness; the artificiality of work and culture; absence of community; loss of self.

He says that "the basis of a Consciousness 111 community must be agreement on major values" (p.288), and that it is necessary to relate specific issues arising to a more general value and to the problem of the modern state or modern society (p. 207).

He embraces an exalted vision of man — he "is not part of a machine, not a robot, not a being meant to starve, or be killed in war, or driven like a beast, not an enemy to his own kind and to all other kinds, not a creature to be controlled, regulated administered, trained, clipped, coated, anesthetized. His true nature is expressed in loving and trusting his own kind, being a part of nature and his own nature, developing, growing, living as fully as he can, using to the full his unique gift, perhaps unique in the universe, of conscious life." (p. 288)

So far so good; with all of this I agree. But the further Reich goes in elaboration the worse he gets. A central issue, clearly, is the relationship of consciousness and social structure, or, put in philosophic terms, the relationship of the subjective and the objective. It is simply not good enough, however justified from the point of view of redressing a previous emphasis, to substitute, as Reich does, the primacy of conscious for the previous primacy given to structure. The question is the interrelation and interaction between them. And, for one so stressing the role of consciousness it is surprisingly deterministic to state: "It is a rebellion that will keep on coming whether or not the rebels of the Left do anything: if they feel lazy, they can sit and watch it happen" (p. 147).

Of course Reich somewhat qualifies his position, but the overriding impression is that he is urging the comforting view that the best way to be a revolutionary is to do what you feel like doing, so long as it is somewhere in the area of the new life style. While there is a grain of truth in this, it is all far too easy — revolution without tears, as it were. He affirms that he is not avoiding the "hard" questions — he solves them by declaring them irrelevant (p.262).

The realities of class struggle (however classes are defined) are similarly spirited away: "The people of the Movement may grow tired and discouraged, but time and the force of the machine are on their side. And there is nothing on the other side. There are no enemies. There are no people who would not be better off, none who do not, in the depths of their beings, want what Consciousness 111 wants" (p. 290). "There is no class struggle; today there is only one class. In Marx's own terms we are all the proletariat, and there is no longer any ruling class except the machine itself" (p. 288). "And even business men, once liberated, would like to roll in the grass and lie in the sun. There is no need, then, to fight any group of people in America. They are all fellow sufferers" (p. 256).

It is no new thought that the slave owner is also a slave (see for example Angela Davis' lectures on liberation), and that some of them may join the revolution — perhaps a somewhat greater number these days. (Marx noted this long ago, though Reich attributes the opposite view to him). But this has not prevented slave-owners from fighting the most bitter ideological and physical battles to preserve the systems in which they believed, from which they profited, and from which they thought it right to profit. Reich says: ". . . a repression today would have to be one age group against another. Is there any modern precedent to such a repression? Can families be expected to turn against their own children?" (p.230). Has Reich never read historical or literary accounts of the way in which revolution does precisely that, turning parent against child and brother against brother? Has he never heard of destructive divisions within the revolutionary ranks themselves?

At the bottom of this particular illusion seems to lie a mechanical view of the corporate state, and a peculiar, oft-repeated opinion that it operates in accord with some sort of value-free rationality. It is therefore inhuman, says Reich, and one agrees. But again he ignores the fact that it is people with values who run the corporations and the state, and that there is no such thing as a value-free rationality. He thus grossly underestimates the strength of the commitment of the enemies of the revolution, and the lengths to which they will go to maintain "all they hold dear", and the system which puts them "on the top of the heap".

Even if the hard questions of organisation and politics were solved actually, instead of just in thought, by declaring them irrelevant, the sociological and philosophical questions inherent in these problems would remain; but they too are ignored. When in his own field of law, which he advances to the forefront of the sources of alienation and oppression, Reich fails to create an appropriate new consciousness. His philosophy of law seems to be rooted in the pre-monopoly past: "The ideal of the rule of law can be realised only in a political-conflict state which places limits upon official power and permits diversity to exist" (p. 92). His highest goal is a realised Judeo-Christian ethic instead of a merely proclaimed one (p. 287).

The determinism mentioned earlier — the new society will come whether people do anything or nothing — and the overcoming of "hard" questions by avoiding them is shown to be ridiculous by Reich himself when he criticises the views of SDS and various sections of the New Left whose views, he claims, will mislead people and hamper the development of the revolution. It is not a matter of arguing the rights or wrongs of the various positions, but Reich's strictures show that in fact, even in his own terms, politics and the problems of finding and substantiating philosophy, values, strategy, tactics and organisation which will serve the growing revolutionary potential and avoid setbacks, cannot be so easily disposed of, nor false consciousness so readily replaced by the true.

Reich's view of man and projections of what is desirable in future society is "good" utopia, serving as ideal and inspiration. His program for realising it is "bad" utopia because it is illusory and misleading, and likely to result in avoidable reverses for the revolution.

ERIC AARONS

Between 1963 and 1968 Teresa Hayter was employed by the Overseas Development Institute in London, which blandly describes itself as "an independent non-government body aiming to ensure wise action in the field of overseas development." In fact, ODI is financed by the Ford Foundation, by British companies with high stakes in the underdeveloped world, and, intermittently, by institutions such as the World Bank, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Nuffield Foundation. The "independence" of ODI has obvious limits which are defined by the aims and interests of the donors. There are of course some tame liberals to be found in ODI, but they merely add to the fiction of "independence". The possibility of a substantial betrayal of the aims and interests of the donors is minimised by appropriate recruiting procedures. But, as is shown in this book, these can never be perfect.

Hayter's experience demonstrates clearly that any betrayal of ODI principles will not be tolerated. Some years ago she wrote a study of French aid. It fell easily within the required ideological framework, and they eagerly published it. Subsequently, she embarked on a study of the World Bank's role in Latin America, financed by the World Bank. This time, however, she failed to come up with a public relations exercise. There was horror at ODI headquarters and in Washington when it was discovered she argued that aid was stunting rather than promoting "development" in Latin America. Pressure was applied immediately by the World Bank and attempts were made by the Director of ODI (who has since emerged as the Director of Information for the World Bank) to persuade her to rewrite the manuscript. At first the World Bank tried to have the study suppressed on the grounds that it was "distorted", "biased", and would be bad for the Bank's image. When this failed, they claimed that Hayter had used "confidential material". Finally, confronted with the need to specify their objections, the Bank resorted to raising the matter of their management relations with ODI. It worked like a dream. Obligingly, ODI produced allegations of poor "craftsmanship" to cover up its refusal to publish on political grounds. It was a classic case of the ruthless face of the paymaster behind the liberal facade. Despite its liberal posturings and conscience-salving double talk, ODI emerged as a nothing but a pathetic satellite.

Fortunately, Penguin Books recognized the worth of Hayter's study. The book consists of a sympathetic preface by the Oxford economist R. B. Sutcliffe; a preface by the author, which describes her rapid demystification since she completed the manuscript: the text, in the form in which it was rejected by ODI; and a fascinating appendix which documents in chilling detail the whole sordid business of her confrontation with ODI and the World Bank.

The publication of the book was accompanied by widespread publicity. ODI was clearly faced with a serious credibility problem. Something had to be done. In a letter to the London Times (28 April 1971), Donald Tyerman, a member of ODI's Executive Committee (as well as a director of both the Economist and United City Merchants Ltd), replied to the charges of prejudice or dishonesty. Hayter's manuscript, he argued, was simply not worth publishing: "Its judgements, we had reluctantly to decide, were not of both the world of des clercs . . . which has yet been seen" in a British university. Those opposed to Dr. Walter Adams, the LSE's Director, "have got this middle mass of liberal doves (as well as their own academic friends) on their side in the campaign. This is the trahison." (Guardian, 8 May 1959).

Although Tyerman's distaste for leftwing scholars is rather well developed, the most vituperative hatchet jobs performed on Hayter have come from a handful of "objective" academic experts on aid. For example, in a review in the prestigious journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, International Affairs (October 1971), Arthur Hazlwood of the Institute of Economics and Statistics at Oxford described the book as a "second-rate" contribution, characterized by a "dogmatic and hysterical tone", which "could do harm by casting doubt on the serious investigations of the activities and policies of international agencies" undertaken in recent ODI publications.

Leaving aside such ravings, the book — as the author is the very first to admit — is not a definitive work which is beyond criticism. In one sense, she does not reveal anything that is substantially new to readers familiar with the writings of Andre Gunder Frank, Paul A. Baran and Harry Magdoff. However, in an extensive and systematic way, she has set out truths about the nature of foreign aid in Latin America. Aid is one of the mechanisms of imperialism, used to influence the economic policies of recipients and as a means of supporting particular types.

"Leverage" has attempted to secure financial stability at the cost of liberating development, subordinated the interests of the recipients to those of donors, and tried to prevent fundamental changes in the economic, political and social structures of the underdeveloped countries. (Devastatingly, Sutcliffe quotes President Kennedy who stated in 1961 that "foreign aid is a method by which the United States maintains a position of influence and control around the world, and sustains a good many countries which could definitely collapse, or pass into the Communist bloc").

Despite the fact that Hayter demonstrates convincingly these truths about the nature of foreign aid, one puts down the book wanting more information and more analysis. In the preface she states: The study is basically a liberal critique of aid policies. It developed into an attempt to expose the inconsistencies and conflicting motivations of these policies. But, at the time when I wrote it, I was far from de-mystified." She goes on to identify one of the major weaknesses of the liberal critique: "... the assumption that the well-being of the peoples of the Third World was, or at least could become, the primary consideration in aid policies".

The title of the book is something of a misnomer. It clearly belongs to Hayter's present position as a member of the editorial board of the International Marxist Group's Red Mole. Nowhere in the text is there an account of the nature of contemporary imperialism. Indeed, imperialism is not mentioned once in the text itself. The study would have gained enormously in theoretical power from an awareness of the contradictions of advanced capitalism, from rigorous use of concepts such as exploitation and economic surplus, and from a more systematic account of the relationship between aid and other mechanisms of imperialism such as trade and private foreign investment. One misses a searching analysis of the motives of and conflicts among the aid-givers, of the classes which are supported by and benefit from aid, of the relationship 'between such classes and government, and of the pressures within the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Agency for International Development. The author admits in the preface that she has not provided us with a really satisfactory analysis. It is to be hoped that the new, demystified Teresa Hayter will fill the gap.

John Playford

Zhores Aleksandrovich Medvedev is a 46-year-old Soviet scientist. He has achieved world-wide honor and respect in biochemistry and gerontology (the study of aging). But unfortunately, scientific fields associated with biology, while being directed ultimately towards the health of the population, have not always been good for the health of the Soviet scientists. It was here that the notorious T. D. Lyssenko reigned for many years. Many of his scientific opponents finished up in prison or in menial occupations while incalculable damage was done, particularly in Soviet agriculture.

The situation improved after the death of Stalin in 1953, again following the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, and yet again after the removal of Khrushchov in 1964. But not all barriers to progress were yet removed, indeed some became worse in the late 1960’s.

This is the setting of this work, The Medvedev Papers, written mainly in the years 1967-69, with a few additions in early 1970. It was circulated for some time in “samizdat”, that is, in typed or roneoed copies produced unofficially. Soon after the appearance of the work, Medvedev had an encounter with the mental health authorities. He was sent to an institution where one psychiatrist diagnosed schizophrenia on the grounds of Medvedev’s interest in two unrelated fields – gerontology and publicism. This brought the suggestion from other scientists that the psychiatrist in question be awarded a Lenin Prize for the discovery of the “Leonardo da Vinci syndrome”. But Medvedev was released after several weeks, an unusual if not unique occurrence.

In this book Medvedev sets out to demonstrate that his country’s scientific development is hampered by artificially imposed restrictions on Soviet scientists taking a full part in the world scientific community. He writes: “Nowadays modern science permeates the life of society to such a degree and is so broad that no one country nor group of countries can provide by itself the whole complex of scientific investigations necessary for the development of society. Any serious scientific problem becomes an international one and is worked on simultaneously by scientists in different countries who each keeps careful track of what the others are doing. Isolation leads only to a senseless loss of time and funds.”

The bureaucracy requires scientific development, but it wants it to take place in its own way – a way which poses no threat to its own position. So there is progress, but it is stifled, deprived of the full potential forces of international division of labor and the socialist mode of production.

For example, one area in which bureaucracy and the interests of scientific progress clash is in the development of personal relations between Soviet scientists and their colleagues in the West. As Medvedev writes, “Between those taking part in such a project (as a scientific problem) bonds arise and co-operation is born, sometimes friendship between those who have never met, often controversy. To attempt to make these personal bonds conform to the framework of some official agreement is impossible and senseless. And if some country restricts and hinders these natural bonds, then it is the first to suffer, creating conditions in which its national science must fall far behind”.

According to Medvedev, the restrictions hampering Soviet science include an extraordinarily ramified and arbitrary system of travel fees for foreign travel, for example, which details the number of delegates to international scientific congresses, and the number of Soviet scientists involved in exchanges for study and research work. Such restrictions cannot be justified on the grounds of currency problems, nor of the possibility of a “brain drain” due to emigration. He demonstrates that such a passport system exists, and means to stop anyone from getting away with it.

In the course of his book, Medvedev touches on a number of interesting aspects of contemporary Soviet life, for example, on the internal passport system (a topic which is strictly taboo in official literature) and “samizdat”. On the latter, Medvedev says that it “is a better estimate of the worth of a book than the official literary criticism”. Samizdat relies on the quality of a work being such that the reader is prepared to circulate it, or what is more, painstakingly to type out carbon copies so that others may read it. There is no more sincere form of criticism, and no higher recommendation for The Medvedev Papers.

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