
GORZ is a Marxist who has set himself the task of enunciating a strategy by which advanced industrial societies might proceed towards socialism. While he concentrates on the development of the workers' movement in the capitalist nations of Western Europe he does not ignore the necessity for a similar development in the socialist states so that those societies too can proceed towards the kind of socialism conceived of by Marx.

Gorz's basic premise is that the human misery and widespread poverty of the 19th Century which gave birth to and nurtured the mass movement for socialism at that time can not now be the basis for a contemporary socialist movement. At that time the mere affirmation of the right to life, to adequate nourishment, clothing and shelter, had an immediately apparent revolutionary content; the necessity for revolution became the same as the necessity for living. Today the satisfaction of these fundamental needs has lost its previous urgency and hence the need for basic social change can not spring from this source. The reason for this loss of urgency is not that misery and poverty have been eliminated but because they are not now experienced to such great depths and do not affect such large proportions of the population as previously. These factors must be linked with the relative isolation of the poverty-stricken, their lack of racial and social similarity, their lack of accessibility to the media and the inability of this issue to catalyse action for social change by those wide sections of the community which are unaffected.

Gorz asks the questions: "Why socialism? For what reasons will modern-day wage- and salary-earners see this as a goal worth striving for?" He is quick to point out that not only do they not see socialism as a necessary goal for the reasons outlined above but they do not see it as a realisable goal, that socialism is rather an abstract term that no longer serves as a mobilising force. Gorz's contention is that capitalism in the course of its development creates new needs for which it is incapable of providing fundamental solutions even though it often solves these problems in its own way and in due course in such a way as to make the system socially tolerable. Gorz instances the problems that have arisen from the Common Market such as the imbalance and disparity between regions, the problems of development, economic planning, job-creation, training and professional adaptation to technological evolution.

But in addition to these problems capitalism has created a model of consumption in which human priorities have been subordinated to the priorities of capital. It will be only coincidental if the investment decision reached on this basis accords with optimum social or human needs. Gorz gives several examples of where these criteria conflict one of which is the following:

In 1938 the Philips trust developed a fluorescent tube with a life of 10,000 hours. Production of these tubes would have covered existing needs cheaply and in a relatively short time; amortisation on the other hand would have taken a long time. The invested capital would have been recovered slowly and the labour time necessary to cover existing needs would have declined. The Company therefore invested additional capital in order to develop a fluorescent tube which burns for only 1,000 hours, in order thus to accelerate the recovery of capital and to realise — at the price of considerable superfluous expenditure — a much higher rate of profit (page 79).

The model of consumption typically found in advanced capitalist societies is one in which the individual aspires to the possession of a washing machine, a car and the necessary wage increase. He does this in response to a need which he has some chance of satisfying as an individual. On the other hand he has no chance of obtaining local, modern, cheap public laundry facilities or rapid and comfortable means of transport, parks and athletic facilities close to home or even suitable housing at a price he can afford. Left to himself therefore (or conditioned to regard self-reliance as a virtue) he will always tend to demand individual goods rather than collective services or facilities — to demand in other words, a market economy and a society of consumption rather than an economy and a society founded on service.

The defenders of capitalism have often pointed to the entrepreneur and the role he has played in the growth of the economy. They choose to ignore the very real social costs (such as the Queensland Government's building of new railway lines for mining companies in north and central Queensland) occasioned by such private initiative, the extent to which these social costs delay other urgent social investment, what other long-run social investment the private initiative necessarily induces and what alternate investment the entrepreneur's private decision will render possible. While capitalism does not have a solution to these problems much less a satisfactory one the labour movement has not yet been able to define its own solutions and the strategy it would use to achieve them.

The strategy typically adopted by unions and union groups in Australia to improve the living standards of their members concentrates on wages and salaries with attention focussed on the annual national wage case before the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission. But such a strategy itself is not capable of cementing a firm unity as between the various groups of wage and salary earners as evidenced by the different bases on which the two peak Councils, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations, draw up their claims reflecting the differing demands of their constituents and their members. Hence this strategy reinforces the attempts by the ideologists of capitalism to maintain an atomised society in which the citizen is encouraged to think in terms of his separateness from the other members of the society.
and the supposed uniqueness of his individual demands rather than in terms of the social nature of his existence and the common demands which he shares with many other members of society. Gorz's main criticism of the wage struggle as a strategy is that capitalism can absorb any blows which will be inflicted on it in the course of such a conflict and that from the point of view of power it is of limited effectiveness and does not in any fundamental way challenge the capitalist model of society and the values on which it is based.

Of course the unions in Australia don't rely solely on the national wage case. Awards and Determinations are continually being sought most often in an attempt to increase rates of pay or to improve conditions. But in any case the unions' concentration on the price the wage- or salary-earner receives for his labour and the conditions under which he performs it is essentially a one-dimensional approach: it sees the employee as an industrial man or woman within an economic system rather than as a social being in a complex economic and social system within which the citizen exists, not only in one dimension as a worker of the type of workers and hence needs to be aware of, and is vitally affected by, the output of other producers offering similar goods or services in the same markets. In addition to his role as a producer the employee is a consumer, he is a commuter, a member of a family, a psychological being and a political being and can be measured in so many other dimensions. Because the wage and salary earner is a social being the unions need to encourage him to consider himself as such and to consider his relationship to the society at large. To fail to do so and hence allow the wage- and salary-earner to continue to conceive of himself as an industrial man able to improve the conditions of his total existence by struggle around industrial issues narrowly conceived, is to commit the wage- and salary-earner to a strategy which cannot win. On the other hand the capitalist can usually pass on the cost of any gains made by the worker at the factory level and on the other hand to translate conditions of social (as distinct from industrial) existence into industrial issues is failing to come to grips with the real problem. But if the wage- and salary-earner can be encouraged to see himself as a social being and at the same time to see himself more clearly as an economic unit which must take account of both the income and expenditure sides of his activities just as he does, then it should be relatively simple to interest him in such questions as price, how it is set, by whom and the effects on it of a monopolistic or oligopolistic market structure, and the multi-national corporation. As tax is a component of which it follows that levels of taxation should be examined and other aspects of Government fiscal policy. This leads to an analysis of the Budget and an examination of the Government's priorities for public investment, how this figure compares with the amount of private investment and to what extent does all the investment satisfy the needs of the population rather than private needs.

So the problem for the labour movement in Australia is firstly to obtain the conviction of the union activists as to the necessity to see the wage- and salary-earner as a social being and secondly to convince the wage- and salary-earner of the fruitlessness of conceiving of himself in any other way, and thus of using his industrial power to secure his social needs. Social or collective needs can only be satisfied in a social way and hence the necessity for social or collective organisation in order firstly to articulate those needs and secondly to act to achieve them. Thus Gorz is saying not only must the issues be changed around which the battle is waged if capitalism is to be successfully challenged, but in the process of changing the issues men and women will begin to see beyond themselves as individuals and to see themselves as social beings. To the extent to which they do this they will have opposed the ideology of capitalism and will have been successful in weakening this underlying pillar of its power. In Gorz's view 'demands in the name of collective needs imply a radical challenge of the capitalist system, on the economic, political and cultural levels' (page 94).

What Gorz considers as applying in Western Europe, namely that the labour movement has not put forward goals or solutions which the population not only sees as necessary but also sees as being realisable, also applies in Australia. In this situation it is seen as being an agitator rather than a force with an achievable alternate programme which meets the needs of the bulk of the population. If such a programme were proposed then in the struggle for its realisation, whether it be at the level of the plant, the locality or the state some power over the production process, or economic power, will have been gained and the necessary political power to maintain that gain will have been established with the employer, with the workers directly involved and with other sections of the population. For this to occur the struggle to achieve the demands will have to be waged on the industrial, political and cultural levels against the traditional forces that the power-holders use such as the mass-media and its opinion-makers, the legal system, the formal educators and the State police. The struggle itself will serve an educative function in that wage- and salary-earners will see that they have the ability in their own hands to effect the transfer of power. If the transfer is conditional upon the efforts that they make both to obtain it and retain it. As this transfer occurs (and this transfer of power is at the base of socialism) socialism will be more clearly visible not as something in the distant future but as a new kind of economic, political and cultural relationship among men and women which is realisable gradually from the present onwards, which is in fact being born by their own actions but whose survival will have to be fought for continuously against reversionary tactics. The labour movement could therefore define its solutions to current and longer term problems in terms of practicable possibilities around which the population at its various levels can enthuse, act and be successful and thus feel confident that if it transfers power to the labour movement at the national level the proposed solutions to national problems will be effective and will be acted upon. Until this transfer of power occurs and in the absence of campaigns around realisable goals at the lower levels of society the labour movement is in the position of appealing for mass support on the basis that once in power a fundamental solution to all problems will be found. This is an appeal based on the population's faith in, rather than their experience of, the workers' movement in action around their needs.

From the foregoing it can be seen that the strategy being put forward by Gorz involves the progressive conquest of power by wage- and salary-earners, a strategy which does not however exclude the possibility of, or even the necessity for, a revolutionary seizure of power at a later stage. Gorz is right in this position because in his view the labour movement in Western Europe is divided between armed insurrection and reform within capitalism. Gorz is quick to point out the difference between reformist and revolutionary reforms the latter being conceived not in terms of what is possible within the framework of a given system and administration but in terms of what is necessary in terms of human needs and demands. Revolutionary reform cannot be achieved suddenly or gradually but in either case the important point is the modification of the power relations which will result in the devolution of power to the people.

This book is a mine of thought-provoking material and deserves to be read and thought about by all members of the labour movement in Australia because of the assistance it can be in helping us to find the ways of creating a more human society in terms of our own institutions, traditions and culture.

Gerry Phelan

Books, whether by marxists or non-marxists, that offer any genuine insight into the role and functioning of the repressive state apparatus (army, police, courts, prisons, etc.) within contemporary capitalist societies, are notably few. Even more scarce are works endeavouring to make a realistic assessment of the place of the criminal law in the transition to, the inequalities and repression of the society.

Struggle for Justice, a report by a working party of the American Friends Service Committee is a short, but interesting, book containing significant contributions in both these areas. Although not based on any general theory of the state, and therefore seriously defective, the book nevertheless presents us with a number of accurate and penetrating observations regarding the day to day administration and impact of the American 'criminal justice' system. Much of this applies with equal validity to the Australian instance. Of particular interest, however, is the section containing the authors' views on the proper role of the criminal law under a 'just' social order. Their challenging suggestions in this regard deserve the consideration of all progressive-minded legal theorists.

Unlike most liberal criminologists and social administrators, the authors view the criminal justice system from the perspective of those on the receiving end. Thus, they see the chaos in American courts and the growing spirit of rebellion and unrest in her prisons, not as 'problems of management' but as part of the increasing overall challenge to the legitimacy of the American power structure. They examine, at length, the inequities and repressive functions of the criminal justice system; its use to perpetuate the second-class status of minorities and the poor; to combat differing life styles; and to silence those who might challenge the status quo. Beyond this, the authors question the very notions of 'criminality' and 'justice' upon which the system is based, correctly pointing out that the actions which should be labelled criminal, because they bring the greatest harm to the greatest number, are, in fact, accomplished by governmental agencies and others in positions of power and influence.

The authors also note that, despite the obvious and growing crisis in the prisons and the growing climate of political repression, there are few signs of change in the program of those whose business it is to be concerned with the problem. These 'experts' continue to advance the well-worn, yet manifestly bankrupt reformist prescription of 'more judges etc. for the courts, improved educational and therapeutic programs in penal institutions, more and better personnel at higher salaries, preventive surveillance of pre-delinquent children, greater use of probation' etc. etc. The premise of this approach is the rather utopian notion that, basically, all the programs are on the right track and only need to be given a fair trial. In fact, it evades the heart of the problem by refusing to recognise that criminal justice is dependent upon, and largely derived from, social justice. As the authors explain 'The only solution for the problem of class and race bias in the courtroom, or by the police, or by the correctional system, is the eradication of bias from American life'. Personal prejudice notwithstanding, 'discrimination-the facto will occur as long as there are gross inequalities of status and economy in the larger society'. The commonly proposed reformist prescription serves only to iron out rough spots in the functioning of the repressive apparatus.

As an illustration for their argument, the authors seek to demonstrate that despite the benevolent sounding verbiage which usually surrounds it, the individual treatment model, 'the ideological spring from which almost all actual and proposed reform has been derived', has, from its inception, been primarily a means of maintaining maximum control over the convicted populus. The authors make no reference with the promise of 'imprisonment for rehabilitation' as opposed to 'imprisonment for punishment'. This, they claim, accounts for its enthusiastic acceptance, in the face of persistent failure, by almost all sections of opinion in every area of the administration of criminal justice — the notion implicit is the model, that lawbreakers are somehow sick or abnormal, has possibly been a means of hiding 'the mixture of hatred, fear and revulsion that white middle class Protestant reformers feel towards lower class persons who do not share their middle class Christian ethic'. Disguised as a humanitarian concern for the 'health' of the lawbreaker, treatment actually seeks to enforce conformity to this ethic of threatening sub-cultural groupings. For prison administrations, on the other hand, the rehabilitative system has provided justification for unquestioned discretionary power over those in their custody. In any event, the model is sufficiently vague in concept and flexible in practice as to accommodate both the traditional (punitive) and utilitarian objectives of criminal law administration.

The common complaint of reformers that, if this system has not worked it is because of legislative stringency and public apathy, is plainly far wide of the mark. The authors establish a compelling case for their claim that the individual treatment model is 'theoretically faulty', systematically discriminatory in administration and inconsistent with some of our most basic conceptions of 'justice'. It is quite apparent that none of the major problems at hand can be remedied by a 'realistic challenge to our values and a drastic restructuring of our social and economic institutions'. For, as the authors are at pains to stress 'the construction of a just system of criminal justice in an unjust society is a contradiction in terms'.

Still, they are reasonably clear about their conception of the ideal role of the criminal law given a redefinition of criminality and a restructuring of institutions. Above all, they urge the principle of restraint. The law is not the proper social instrument for solving most of the problems it attempts to solve. Thus, an act should be prohibited only when there is a compelling social need to require compliance with a particular norm, when there is no feasible, less costly, method of obtaining compliance, and when there is some substantial basis for assuming that prohibition would produce a greater benefit for society than simply doing nothing. Once done, they propose the reversal of the individual treatment model and a return to the earlier concept of 'let the punishment fit the crime'. The law, they argue, has no business concerning itself with the 'whole person and should deal only with his criminal act. Indeed, honesty of semantics here, with the labeling of all racial operation as a potential social necessity would emphasise rather than reduce the critical necessity of limiting its use as much as possible. It should only be a last resort, where no less stringent measures of social control and education will suffice. Sentences generally should be greatly reduced and uniformly applied.

Yet the authors do not stop at this idealistic formulation. They also suggest a number of ways of reducing somewhat the impact of prejudice and discrimination in the present criminal justice system. These include suggestions for the organisation of oppressed peoples and abased groups aiming at self-determination, suggestions for 'making the system viable', community aid centres and a prisoners' Bill of Rights. In all, then, Struggle for Justice is a stimulating and valuable little book which deserves deep consideration of all those seriously interested in penal reform in this country.

John Connor
A spectre is haunting the revolutionary left — the spectre of Stalin and ‘stalinism’.

Unfortunately, the discussion of the phenomenon of stalinism in Australia usually takes the form of trying to score party political points, rather than a real analysis of the disease. Every publication of the CPA, no matter what the topic might be, is greeted by the trotskysts with the cry that it doesn’t analyse the stalinist past of the CPA. The supporters of the SPA prefer to bury the whole topic. Within the CPA, discussion remains on the level of whether A was more ‘stalinist’ than B. The major exception in Australia to this method is J. D. Blake’s Revolution from Within.

I still believe, however, that a full analysis of stalinism must come from the CPSU, as Togliatti pointed out in his ‘Yalta Memorandum’. But this is improbable in the near future. The investigation committee into the facts surrounding Kirov’s murder (a central event in the stalinist terror of the thirties, set up 10 years ago), still has given no report, if it has not been silently disbanded. The decision of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU (1961) to build a memorial to the victims of stalinist terror remains a dead letter, as do other Congress decisions, decisions of the highest body of the CPSU, and therefore binding on every member of the party, according to the CPSU Constitution.

Roy Medvedev who, together with his biologist brother Zhores, is famous for his struggle for civil liberties in the USSR, has now written a book on the history of the development of stalinism and attempts to explain its causes. He correctly states ‘that it would be a crime to remain silent’. The author joined the CPSU in 1956, after the 20th Congress, and, in 1962, decided to write this book. It was not completed until 1968, and was rejected by the Soviet publishers to whom he submitted it. It has now been published in the West. Medvedev was expelled from the CPSU in circumstances which suggest a frame-up.

Medvedev ruthlessly attacks Stalin on a number of counts. He represents Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bukharin, and other victims of Stalin as Bolsheviks upholding sincere policies, some of which Medvedev condemns as incorrect, others of which he considers correct, but none of which he really analyses. However, he refuses to adopt the ‘all or nothing’ attitude, and admits Stalin’s positive features, where they existed in his opinion. As he writes:

‘The impression should not be created that Stalin’s activity consisted only of crimes and mistakes. It was Stalin who

and to take power from the masses, will apply the rigors of the law. But the very important question is that of freedom for the toiling masses themselves. In socialist society, there are contradictions which do not come from the class enemy, but which are produced by the structures of socialism. Different opinions arise within socialism and the political system of socialism must offer means by which these can express themselves, by which correct solutions may be found in a democratic manner, by which the confrontation of viewpoints and discussions may be fostered. It is in this framework that democratic freedoms (limited, mangled and falsified by the bourgeois regime) can take on a new dimension in socialism.

In seeking new possibilities for socialist transformation, we are aware of all we owe to the socialist countries beginning with the October revolution. We reaffirm our class solidarity with these countries. On the other hand, we have doubts as to whether it is possible on the basis of experience of certain socialist countries — however glorious it may have been — (and denying the experience of other socialist countries) to establish general, obligatory laws for the building of socialism. For, either it is a matter of generalities which everyone interprets to his taste (which does nothing to raise the prestige of our theory); or the “a priorism” of such laws can impede a decisive aspect of marxist analysis: the concrete analysis of concrete situations.

The Communist Party of Spain bases itself on the fundamental conception of Marx and Lenin of the “dictatorship of the proletariat”. The word “dictatorship” creates a problem because the usual sense in Spanish of the word “dicta-