Long March with Matilda: Interview with Wilfred Burchett, Manuel Azcarate Unproductive Consumption. Marxism: Lukács, Althusser: Discussion

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In this issue we publish two important interviews. One is with Wilfred Burchett, recently in Australia, who discusses the present situation in Vietnam and prospects for the future in Indochina, questions which are alive as ever.

The other interview is with Manuel Azcarate, a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Spain who was also here recently. He analyses the situation in Spain and the revolutionary strategy being followed. While based on conditions in that country, a number of the issues raised are of wider significance.

Gerry Harant, an engineer, writes a thought-provoking article on the enormous growth of wasteful and unproductive consumption in modern capitalist society, the possible connection of this with the phenomenon of stagflation, and its bearing on the nature of the struggles waged by the trade unions.

Brian Carey contributes to Economic Notes an item on the practical and theoretical aspects of inflation in modern Australia.

John Manifold, well-known poet and author, writes an interesting and entertaining account of the origins of “Waltzing Matilda” and its various versions.

Winton Higgins, a post-graduate student in Adelaide, discusses the work of the Hungarian marxist, Georg Lukacs, who died last year, carrying further our analysis of trends within marxism today.

Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley also contribute to this by replying to Brian Aarons’ discussion of Althusser’s marxism, and an editorial comment points to inadequacies in this reply. We also announce our intention to produce a special publication devoted to carrying this, and related debates, further, and we invite contributions from readers.

A report by Alastair Davidson on the International Gramsci Conference held at Washington University in February this year, and further discussion on Eric Aarons’ book “Philosophy for an Expanding World" complete the issue.
Interview with Wilfred Burchett

Five years separates the first interview granted to ALR by famed Australian journalist, Wilfred Burchett, from the one which appears below.

Tribune writer, Malcolm Salmon, who conducted the first interview, here asks Burchett to update his comments on the situation in Indochina, and in Australian politics, in the light of the history-making events of the past half-decade.

The interview was recorded in Sydney, April 6, 1973, during Burchett's most recent visit to Australia.

1. In an interview you gave me in Paris in 1968 (ALR, No. 5, 1968) you made the following recommendation in relation to Australian policy towards Asia: "For a start Australia should make a clean break with US policy in Asia, pull her troops out of South Vietnam, establish diplomatic relations with China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and get ready to recognise a real government of national union which will eventually be formed in South Vietnam. Policies should be based on authentic national interests and not on those of the tiny, but influential group of Australian capitalists who are prepared to spend any quantity of Asian and Australian blood in defending their mines in Thailand, Malaysia, and elsewhere."

In what terms would you update this comment in light of the first four months of the Whitlam Government?

BURCHETT: As for the first part of the question about Australia's pulling out of South Vietnam, this was done, of course, before the Whitlam Government came to power, and it was an example of what can be achieved when public opinion really starts moving. I think it was a most remarkable achievement that the previous government knew it would have absolutely no hope of facing an electoral contest with any chance of success while Australian troops were in South Vietnam. That is because people went into the streets and made that very clear to the government.

This is a factor which has been recognised by the leadership of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. In my most recent visit, Prime Minister Pham Van Dong made a point of this, suggesting that there must be some rather special quality, some special form of political consciousness, among the Australian people, in that, despite the type of government, despite the special relationship Australia had with the United States, a movement of such dimensions was possible and could actually have forced the reactionary government of the day to change its policy.

I think that same mobilisation of public opinion could be brought about now to achieve recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, then this would be an excellent thing and would be based on what are really the authentic national interests of Australia.

The situation is different from what it was the last time we discussed the matter. An agreement on re-establishing peace in Vietnam was signed on January 27, 1973, and among the elements of this agreement is the emergence of the PRG as one of the two legitimate governments of South Vietnam.

I think that the Whitlam Government has made a good start on the job of carving out an independent foreign policy for Australia, and one oriented on Asia. An independent foreign policy is good, but I think it also has to be a progressive foreign policy. For Australia to exert the sort of influence it could exert in Indochina, I think the Whitlam Government has to go several steps further.

It is very good that the government has recognised the People's Republic of China and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. It would be even better if it recognised the PRG of South Vietnam and the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia.

The very fact that Australian blood was wrongly spilt in Vietnam gives Australia the right to demand that the agreement to end the war should be very strictly implemented. In other words, I think that Australia has a legitimate stake in insisting on the strictest carrying-out of the agreement to end the war.

To give a concrete example of this: one of the essential elements of that agreement is the setting up of a
National Council of Reconciliation and National Conc­ord. This National Council is to comprise three equal parts, drawn from the PRG, from the present Saigon regime, and from the Third Force which was not allied with one side or the other during the war. The task of the Council is to facilitate the implementation of the agreement and, especially, those clauses providing for democratic freedoms. Also - and this is perhaps the most important task of the Council - it has to arrange mutually acceptable conditions for the holding of elections in South Vietnam which would be controlled by the International Commission of Supervision and Control. The setting-up of the Council is being prevent­ed because the Thieu dictatorship in Saigon has arrested scores of thousands of those people who could be ca­tegorised as the Third Force element, which was inten­t ed to be a bridge between the opposing sides in the war. Immediately following the publication on Octo­ber 26, 1972, of the draft agreement to end the war, in which the role of the Third Force was clearly stated, Thieu launched his military-police machine of repression against these Third Force, or neutralist, elements. Within three weeks, more than 40,000 of them were arrested, according to official figures put out by the Saigon government. Since then, the arrests have gone on, and the general estimate is that well over 100,000 people belonging to the Third Force category have been arrested, adding to those arrested over the years from 1954 onwards, most of whom were suspected of sympathies with the NLF, and some of whom were arrested merely on the grounds that they were activ­ists in the war against the French. Thus, the total number of political prisoners in South Vietnam today is somewhere close to 300,000, according to the best estimates one can find among the South Vietnamese exiles in Paris.

Now, apart from the sheer injustice of the arrests of those hundreds of thousands of people for political reasons, the fact is that the agreement itself cannot be implemented as long as these people are in the jails and concentration camps. Here is a grave impediment to the implementation of the agreement. Given Australia’s past involvement in the war, it seems to me that the Whitlam Government could legitimately protest about this impediment to the carrying-out of the agreement, and demand that that section of the agreement which provides for the release of all political prisoners within three months of the signing of the agreement -- in ef­fect, by the end of April -- should be strictly observed. It is quite clear that the elections as provided for in the agreement simply cannot be carried out while these people remain in prison. The PRG has made it clear that it is quite impossible to hold elections under these conditions. So there is something that the Whitlam Government could take up. In any case, the Australian national interest is best served by a stable peace in Vietnam and in Indochina. Even regardless of the for­mer Australian involvement in the war, the Australian government has every right to raise its voice and put pressure on the US as well as on the Saigon government to demand the strictest execution of the agreement, which is a very good one on paper.

2. How do you assess the alternation of thinly veiled threats of resumed bombing and soothing diplomatic noises which seems to characterise Nixon Administra­tion attitudes to the Vietnam settlement at the present time?

BURCHETT: It is rather difficult to know what, in fact, is in the mind of “Tricky Dick,” Richard Nixon. This has been a problem right from the beginning of his Administration as far as the Vietnam struggle is con­cerned. It is possible that all these threats are part of the business of a mighty imperialist power moving out after having had a defeat inflicted upon it once again by the peasant armies of Asia, and that Nixon wants to give the impression that this is all a very controlled operation, and is something decided on by the free will of the Nixon Administration. Of course, it is ab­solutely typical of the bullying sort of attitude the American government has adopted since the beginning of their involvement in Vietnam. Threats and bribes are the ordinary currency that they use in their deal­ings with other countries. I think only time will tell to what extent these are threats and to what extent bluff. But if they are threats, their value is depreciated once they have been employed. If Nixon wasn’t able to break the will or even influence the policy of the DRV during the 12 days of B52 bombing raids over Hanoi in December, then it is difficult to see how he can think these threats are going to have any effect now.

It is not the first time, of course, that the US Admin­istration has presented its defeats as some sort of victory. I think the real situation has perhaps been best characterised by Kissinger. In an article in the January 1969 issue of the American quarterly, Foreign Affairs, Kissinger wrote that for the United States not to win such a war as they were engaged in in Vietnam was, in fact, to lose it, and for partisan armies not to lose a war against a country like the United States was, in fact, to win it. I think that will be history’s judg­ment of what has gone on.

It is a very bitter pill for Nixon and the Pentagon to have to swallow, and I think the fact that they have had to swallow it explains some of the off-stage noises they are making while they are in fact in the process of pulling out.

3. What do you see as the main lines of action that the Australian anti-war forces can take in the new political conditions in the country to influence US policy in the direction of fully honoring the political provi­sions of the Vietnam settlement?

BURCHETT: One thing is that those political provi­sions should be quite carefully studied, and pressure put on for their full and scrupulous implementation. The section dealing with democratic freedoms is terribly important. This sort of democratic freedom was promi­sed under the 1954 Geneva Agreement -- that is to say, no reprisals against former adversaries, no political dis­crimination, and the normal sort of democratic liber­ties by which people are enabled to make free choices. These democratic freedoms have never existed in South Vietnam, certainly not since 1954. The only place
where they were to be found was in those areas con-
trolled in the old days by the Viet Minh and in this
most recent war by the NLF. So it is essential that
these political conditions embodied in the agreement
should be met.

Among concrete lines of action, as I said before, is
the exercise of pressure to ensure that Australia does
recognise the PRG diplomatically. In my view, the
Australian anti-war movement should also take up
with the utmost urgency the question of the release
of the political prisoners. It is also necessary to en-
sure that the Australian government makes a serious
contribution to the reconstruction in Vietnam.

It should be added that for such a contribution to be
effective, the government must have its own relation-
ships with the PRG, otherwise official governmental
aid is going to be channelled through the present Sai-
gon government, which means that it will never be
effective, that 90 per cent of it will end up in the
pockets of people like Thieu and his generals and the
comprador-type capitalists who have been generated
by Thieu and by the handling of American dollar “aid.”

Just for the sheer practical purpose of ensuring that
Australian governmental aid is effective, it is absolutely
essential that the PRG be recognised and that bilateral
agreements be entered into by the Australian govern-
ment and the PRG, and bilateral talks held on what
sort of aid is necessary, what the amounts are going to
be, and so on.

I believe there should also be an Australian contribu-
tion to the reconstruction of North Vietnam. That too
must be the subject of bilateral arrangements.

Australia should not get bogged down in any kind of
great multilateral organisation over which neither the
Vietnamese nor the Australian people would have any
control. I think this whole question of aid has to be
studied very carefully together with the recipients, the
representatives of the PRG and the DRV.

4. The Presidium of the Central Committee of the
Communist Party of Japan, in a statement on the
January 27 Vietnam settlement, has said that the Viet-
namese liberation forces would have secured “an earlier
and a better settlement” had it not been for the divi-
sions between the Soviet Union and China. Would you
comment on this?

BURCHETT: The divisions between the Soviet Union
and China obviously had a negative effect on the
whole conduct of the war in Vietnam. Things would
obviously have been simpler had these divisions not ex-
isted.

But on the question of the settlement. I think that
the settlement, the agreement to end the war and re-
establish peace in Vietnam, is one which was envisaged
from the beginning by both the DRV and the NLF.
That is to say, it is a logical development of the first
position taken by Prime Minister Pham Van Dong in
April, 1965, when he set forth the five conditions un-
der which a negotiated agreement could be envisaged.
That is, it had to be an agreement based on the 1954
Geneva Agreement, it had to be based on the recogni-
tion that the US was an aggressor and that the US had
to withdraw its forces completely from South Vietnam.

The agreement is absolutely in accordance with the
aims of the NLF as defined for me very soon after the
foundation of the Front by President Nguyen Huu Tho.
He told me that the NLF was fighting to create the
conditions under which the South Vietnamese people
could decide their own future without foreign interfe-
rence, and that the NLF did not demand any exclusive
position either in waging the struggle or in deciding the
future of South Vietnam. Their role was to create the
conditions under which the South Vietnamese people
could settle their own affairs. Well, the agreement em-
bodies that.

Every move, every negotiating position throughout
the more than four years of negotiations in Paris was a
steady development and further defining of those
fundamental provisions.

So I don’t think that a better settlement could have
been obtained than this agreement.

5. The experience of the Democratic Republic of
Vietnam over recent decades has been of such a unique
character that it would seem inevitable that it will pro-
duce new variants both in the form of socialist society
that will henceforth be built in the DRV, and in social-
ist foreign policy. Could you comment on this?

BURCHETT: I think this is correct: new variants of socialism have been produced during the actual struggle.
The very fact that right at the beginning of the bomb-
ings the leadership in the DRV decided that they were
going to decentralise the economy, to make every re-

gion as far as possible economically autonomous, make
even the districts economically autonomous, is evidence of
this. All this entails a great decentralisation not only of
the economy, but of administration as well. It entailed
a great deal of grassroots democracy, of people running
their own affairs at the level at which they were func-
tioning. It has been an experiment in the greater demo-


things that had to be taken into consideration. I am quite certain that just as the Vietnamese people have astounded the world in the qualities shown in their combat, in what was perhaps the greatest trial in the whole history of the Vietnamese nation, they are going to surprise us again in their approach to reconstruction and the type of socialist society they will build up in the future.

One of the features of this society will, I believe, be that women will play a relatively more prominent part in public affairs than is to be observed in most societies. This again will be a phenomenon largely produced by the war experience, in which women have played an absolutely crucial role, taking over, for example, virtually the entire work of agricultural production to free men for the front.

In South Vietnam, there are entire detachments of the PRG armed forces made up exclusively of women. The fact that women occupy the posts of Foreign Minister of the PRG (Nguyen Thi Binh) and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the PRG armed forces (Nguyen Thi Dinh) is more than symbolic: it is an accurate reflection of the role of women in Vietnam's historic war experience.

As far as foreign policy is concerned, they considered also from the beginning that in correctly performing their national task, in defending their own socialist motherland, and in lending help to their compatriots in the south, they were not only fulfilling their national obligations but their internationalist duties as well. They have a very, very strong sense of socialist internationalism, something which was inculcated in the Vietnamese people from the beginning by President Ho Chi Minh.

I think that in his Testament Ho Chi Minh has laid down the broad lines to guide the Vietnamese people in their approach to their position within the international socialist community and the outside world in general. President Ho's Testament has become an absolute blueprint not only for the leadership, not only for the continuators of the policies formulated and defined by Ho Chi Minh, but also a blueprint for action for the whole of the Vietnamese people.

Ho Chi Minh of course -- and this is expressed in his Testament -- always hoped that the struggle of the Vietnamese people would contribute to lessening the dissensions in the socialist world. In several conversations which I had with him, he expressed this hope. He said that as far as the DRV was concerned, they would never do anything which would sharpen the differences and would do everything possible to lessen them. He put it in these words in his Testament:

"As a man who has devoted his whole life to the revolution, I feel all the prouder at the growth of the international communist and workers' movement, and all the more pained at the current discord among the fraternal Parties.

"I hope that our Party will do its best to contribute effectively to the restoration of unity among the fraternal Parties on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, in a way which conforms with both reason and sentiment.

"I am firmly confident that the fraternal Parties and countries will have to unite again."

Of Vietnam's place in the world, he said: "The US imperialists will certainly have to quit. Our Fatherland will certainly be reunified. Our fellow-countrymen in the South and in the North will certainly be reunited under the same roof. We, a small nation, will have earned the signal honor of defeating, through heroic struggle, two big imperialisms -- the French and the American -- and of making a worthy contribution to the world national-liberation movement."

6. You have often emphasised on your current visit the differences between the situation in Cambodia, where war is continuing, and South Vietnam and Laos, where at least the form of a settlement has been achieved. Would you comment further on this?

BURCHETT: The situation is different in Cambodia. Cambodia also has a long history, but it is a history of unity, especially in times of trouble. The fact that they have existed as a nation for some 2000 years, and that Sihanouk, for example, is the most recent in a long and unbroken line of some 84 monarchs, represent evidence of the continuity of Cambodian statehood and history. In times of war and strife, there has always been a great degree of national unity going from the peasantry through to the monarchy, and including the Buddhist hierarchy as a very important factor.

Cambodia is a relatively small country sandwiched between two traditionally hostile neighbors, Thailand and Vietnam. In the old days, it was the Cham empire in Vietnam that threatened Cambodia with extinction and in later periods there were continuing invasions from Thailand. This history has created a national consciousness for unity, for sinking even class differences when the nation is in peril. This national consciousness for unity has been very much to the fore in the present situation. One of the apparent aims of the US in overthrowing Sihanouk was to divide Cambodia up along the Mekong River, with the part west of the Mekong to go to Thailand and the part east to go to South Vietnam. After Sihanouk was overthrown and the invasion took place, a start was actually made to incorporate Cambodian territory into South Vietnam. For instance, some of the eastern provinces closest to Saigon -- Prey Vieng and Svay Rieng -- were actually incorporated into the administration and postal districts of South Vietnam. The ferry-crossing town of Neak Luong, about 40 miles east of Phnom Penh, was completely occupied by South Vietnamese troops and was popularly -- or vulgarly -- known by South Vietnamese as "little Saigon."

This is one of the sources of the strength of the National United Front headed by Sihanouk, and enthusiastically supported by what are known as the Khmers Rouges, and, within the Khmers Rouges, by what is in fact the Cambodian Communist Party, the People's Party, or Pracheachen. You have this absolutely solid front of unity which includes all sections of the population. At the present time, the NUF controls at least 85 per cent, probably
90 per cent, of the entire territory of Cambodia, including vast areas where there is not a single trace of the Lon Nol administration. The situation is different from South Vietnam in that the NUF controls many provincial capitals and district centres. The fact that the decision was taken in late February this year to move that half of the resistance government, the Royal Government of National Union, which has been in based in Peking, on to Cambodian territory, to join up with the other half which has been based in the jungle since the beginning of the resistance war, is a sign of the confidence and strength of the Cambodian resistance forces.

Henceforth, the whole government will be based on Cambodian territory and Sihanouk himself plans an extended visit to the liberated zones. (The fact that the visit had taken place was announced a few days after this interview. M.S.) He will then take off on a Head of State visit to African countries as a preparatory move to Cambodia’s participation in the summit meeting of non-aligned States in Algiers in September.

At the time when Malcolm and I are discussing the matter, the war in Cambodia is kept going exclusively due to the intervention of US air power. After the bombing of Lon Nol’s palace on March 17, Lon Nol had to ground his own air force. He put under house arrest his co-plotters in the coup which overthrew Sihanouk, including Sirik Matak, who was No. 2 man in the conspiracy. He also arrested hundreds of journalists and political personalities, and followed this up by arresting 50 of the country’s foremost astrologers, because they were predicting the end of the Lon Nol regime by the end of April.

All these things are symptomatic of the complete isolation of Lon Nol and emphasise the fact that he represents nothing except the United States.

The future in Cambodia will be that of a Left-of-Centre neutralist regime, much further to the Left than before. Sihanouk himself does not intend to play a political role. He says that the young, the “pure,” the Leftists, who essentially directed the resistance war will have the right to direct the country afterwards. Sihanouk will remain as titular Head of State, as an honored patriot who defended the essential interests of the country, kept it out of war as long as he was in power, defended its neutrality, refused to enter into SEATO or permit the establishment of US bases on Cambodian soil, and in so doing rendered very important services to the national liberation struggle over the frontiers in South Vietnam.

The development of the war in Indochina has had precisely the opposite effect to that intended by the United States. Because of the very fact that the US extended its activity to the four elements within the Indochina peninsula -- that is to say, the air war of destruction against North Vietnam, the ground war in South Vietnam, the invasion of Cambodia and the CIA-directed operations in Laos -- the unity of the peoples of Indochina has been forged more strongly than ever before. This was expressed very clearly by the summit conference of the peoples of Indochina in April, 1970, shortly after the overthrow of Sihanouk, and has led to a coordination of efforts, to a comradeship of arms, to a unity of the Indo-Chinese peoples, which is of historic importance. Its full weight will only be appreciated as the future unfolds. What is certain is that we are going to have Left-of-Centre regimes in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos cooperating with each other and with socialist North Vietnam in a regional community which will be politically the exact opposite of what US strategy set out to achieve.

### Pham Van Dong on Women’s Role

The following comment on the role of women in the Vietnam war, and on the more general question of women’s liberation, was made by Democratic Republic of Vietnam Prime Minister, Pham Van Dong, in the Danish newspaper “Information” on May 19, 1972. The Prime Minister was being interviewed by the paper’s correspondent, Vagn Sondergaard. He said: “Throughout our entire history, women have played a decisive role. Our women are admirable. They cultivate the land; they take part in the struggle; and they take care of the children. Our constitution provides for equality between men and women, and if we are not able to bring about such equality, we will not be able to build a socialist society either. But there are still many difficulties. Full equality on the economic and political level is one thing, but the way things are done in the home is quite another. In many of the societies where women have achieved political and economic rights there are women who are extremely capable and knowledgeable who nonetheless feel in an inferior position in relation to men. This means that a struggle must also be carried out through which women can gain self-confidence and self-respect. There are still Vietnamese homes in which the man makes decisions affecting his wife or their children, but this is a problem that our women are paying very close attention to. They are because they are taking part in work on all three fronts. Our women work far harder than the men all day long. They carry out the most difficult work. If you compare the work and productivity of men and women, you will find that it is women who contribute the most. They are thus also the ones who are producing the conditions for full equality. Your women are correct to maintain that the struggle for women’s liberation must be carried out along with the economic, political and cultural struggle. Women’s liberation does not automatically come about with the taking control of the means of production. The struggle for women’s liberation cannot be separated from the remaining part of the struggle, and everyone must take part in it. One can certainly not be a revolutionary without always keeping this in mind.”
In his analysis of capitalist society, Marx clearly foreshadowed the growth of monopolies, and predicted difficulties that would arise due to the falling rate of profit associated with the rise in the organic composition of capital. He assumed that the continually falling labor content in commodity production would lead to crises of ever-increasing depth.

Whilst this pattern was certainly true in highly developed capitalist countries up to the beginning of World War 2, it was interrupted after the war, and a different one emerged, in which deep crises were replaced, after a long boom period, by a general stagnation. The relative stability of the system was initially ascribed to the replacement of capital lost in the war, and later to a variety of causes ranging from the application of Keynesian correctives to the militarisation of the economy.

All these factors have undoubtedly played some part in stabilising the economy; nevertheless, they cannot fully explain the parallel rise of inflation and unemployment as well as other features puzzling economists today.

The Nature of Unproductive Consumption

Unproductive consumption has always been a feature of capitalist production, wherever numbers of workers have to be organised into production units, supervision is required, and a certain amount of handling of commodities beyond that socially necessary has always been inherent in the anarchic nature of the market.

Today unproductive consumption includes a large range of activities such as:

1. Commerce. Most commerce today is dedicated to promotion rather than distribution, and is to that extent unproductive.

2. Transport. Similar commodities are shipped all over the globe quite unnecessarily because of the profitability of dumping products into markets dominated by cartels.

3. Wastage of fixed assets; much machinery is replaced before it is worn out.
4. Unnecessary capital expenditure (treated in greater detail below).
5. Unnecessary product design to promote "planned obsolescence."
6. Vast financial bodies such as banks and insurance and finance companies which do not add value to a product.
7. Mass media which neither inform nor entertain.
8. Public expenditure beyond essential services and administration, particularly in the military field.
9. Inefficient research and education, particularly in the tertiary field.
10. Industrial and civil superstructure.

The Rise in Unproductive Consumption

In the early days of industrialisation, rise in unproductive consumption was limited because it was subject to the normal competitive processes of the market. Further, small enterprises did not need complex overhead structures, and the apparatus required to generate surplus value was far greater than that required to realise it. The state and civil bureaucracy was incomparably smaller than it is today. Even the Prussian military machine consumed only a small percentage of total production, whilst every country today has vast military expenditure.

In 1942, Sweezy, in analysing the effects of unproductive consumption, came to the conclusion that they were not at that time of decisive importance to the development of the system. Parkinson, in his famous satirical analysis "Parkinson's Law" came closer to describing the trends of some aspects of unproductive consumption. In particular, he pointed out that the growth of the superstructure, both civil and industrial, is unrelated to either labor productivity or the GNP.

To develop an insight into certain less obvious aspects of the rise in unproductive consumption, the nature of growth and the mechanisation of technological improvement under monopoly conditions must be taken into account. In Marx's day, technological improvement was largely the result of the work of a special branch of industry, which supplied capital equipment. Technological improvements developed in this way could be evaluated by commodity manufacturers before acceptance, and incorrect selection led to financial loss.

Under monopoly conditions, which prevail in all but a few branches of industry, much technological development is carried out within the production organisation. Such developments are far harder to evaluate, as there is generally no parallel operation of old and new processes.

In particular, the amount of overhead costs generated by major steps like automation is difficult to establish. In many cases, those deciding on the purchase of such equipment are totally unskilled in this type of evaluation. It must be understood that because of high costs this type of purchase represents a major decision and incorrect selection led to financial loss. Typically, only 20% of the cost of an automotive spare part is factory cost and only some 40% of that (say 8% of the total) is direct labor and materials.

Waste

It is fashionable today to take a stand against waste and pollution, and almost invariably the items singled out are those used by private consumers. It should be borne in mind that overall consumption of materials and energy roughly doubles every 10 years in Australia and other "highly developed" countries; there can be no doubt that private consumption rises at nothing like this rate, probably no more than 10% over the same period. The waste generated by consumers is therefore small compared with that generated by industry and commerce.

Rise in Cost of Production

As mentioned, many other aspects of increase in non-productive consumption exist, particularly in the areas of finance and insurance, as well as in public spending. We therefore arrive at a general thesis:

1. The amount of direct labor has been and is declining roughly exponentially (i.e., 1, 1/2, 1/4 etc.)
2. The amount of unproductive consumption is rising roughly exponentially (1, 2, 4 etc.)
3. The cost of production, being the sum of the two, therefore reaches a minimum at a certain time, after which it begins to rise again. Whilst it is not easy to set a time at which this minimum was reached, external signs point to a period in the early sixties in Australia.

A graph typical of the factors involved is shown the process itself is of course neither as smooth nor as symmetrical as the graph.

The objection may be raised that, on realising the discrepancy between direct labor cost falls and overhead cost rises, industry would take steps to rectify this. In fact, there are always pious exhortations to do this; but it must be realised that the very people making a decision to cut back the apparatus would be amongst those services which would come under scrutiny. The day of the entrepreneur is past; all decisions are made by paid staff up to directorial level, and the contradiction between this class position and their function as representative of the now non-existent entrepreneur lies at the root of much of the "inexplicable" behavior of the entire apparatus. But that, as Kipling used to say, is another story.

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In particular, the amount of overhead costs generated by major steps like automation is difficult to establish. In many cases, those deciding on the purchase of such equipment are totally unskilled in this type of evaluation. It must be understood that because of high costs this type of purchase represents a major decision and incorrect selection led to financial loss. Typically, only 20% of the cost of an automotive spare part is factory cost and only some 40% of that (say 8% of the total) is direct labor and materials.

Waste

It is fashionable today to take a stand against waste and pollution, and almost invariably the items singled out are those used by private consumers. It should be borne in mind that overall consumption of materials and energy roughly doubles every 10 years in Australia and other "highly developed" countries; there can be no doubt that private consumption rises at nothing like this rate, probably no more than 10% over the same period. The waste generated by consumers is therefore small compared with that generated by industry and commerce.

Rise in Cost of Production

As mentioned, many other aspects of increase in non-productive consumption exist, particularly in the areas of finance and insurance, as well as in public spending. We therefore arrive at a general thesis:

1. The amount of direct labor has been and is declining roughly exponentially (i.e., 1, 1/2, 1/4 etc.)
2. The amount of unproductive consumption is rising roughly exponentially (1, 2, 4 etc.)
3. The cost of production, being the sum of the two, therefore reaches a minimum at a certain time, after which it begins to rise again. Whilst it is not easy to set a time at which this minimum was reached, external signs point to a period in the early sixties in Australia.

A graph typical of the factors involved is shown the process itself is of course neither as smooth nor as symmetrical as the graph.

The objection may be raised that, on realising the discrepancy between direct labor cost falls and overhead cost rises, industry would take steps to rectify this. In fact, there are always pious exhortations to do this; but it must be realised that the very people making a decision to cut back the apparatus would be amongst those services which would come under scrutiny. The day of the entrepreneur is past; all decisions are made by paid staff up to directorial level, and the contradiction between this class position and their function as representative of the now non-existent entrepreneur lies at the root of much of the "inexplicable" behavior of the entire apparatus. But that, as Kipling used to say, is another story.
Economic Effects

The change in the direction and rate of change of the cost of production has the following immediate effects:

1. An increase in the cost of individual commodities as related to the price of labor, despite a constant rate of profits. This forms the basis of a new form of inflation.

2. A stabilisation of an economy which has to rely less and less on the consumer market.

Nevertheless, the ability of industry to generate new products remains considerable, as the labor content in their production is generally small as pointed out.

The existence of a large, reasonably permanent unproductive apparatus, leads to a position where, contrary to classical theory, a fall in demand actually leads to an increase in price, due to the need to spread the revenue necessary to maintain the apparatus over a smaller number of sales. This explains the parallel appearance of unemployment and inflation.

The effect on the wage-earner has been such that few workers, even the skilled, can now maintain a family on a single income. The main areas in which "affluence" is generated amongst workers are those of young people without responsibility, and families with multiple incomes. A vast selling campaign is aimed directly at these "affluent" groups.

It should also be mentioned that the stability generated by unproductive consumption is not absolute but relative. Any collapse in the apparatus affecting the superstructure could lead to catastrophic breakdown, precisely because by its very nature much of unproductive consumption is not essential.

The Effect on Consciousness

One of the by-products of the stepping up of sales pressure is the reinforcement of the consumer ethos thereby also strengthening the political consensus working for the system. Even most of the organised section of workers sees the future in terms of ever greater private consumption, and believes the "consumer society" can be made to work.

The contradictions which arise from this are many.

One of the less obvious is that private ownership of complex technological items only tends to create insecurity, due to the consumer's inability to either evaluate or maintain these items, many of which fail before they are even paid for. The effect of this insecurity is not to reject consumerism, but to look for a "better" (i.e., more expensive) replacement. At no time is the consumer prepared to consider his purchase in terms of hours of labor expended by him and therefore to come to a more rational choice. His alienation is complete; he does not and cannot see his work in terms of the return it generates.

Political Aspects

As pointed out, whilst the system has entered a crisis, false consciousness generated by its massive sales efforts has gripped the bulk of the people. This creates a dangerous political situation, in which any catastrophic event, such as the total collapse of the economy, would not result in a socialist revolution, but very likely allow a form of fascism to take over.

Furthermore, even if some "socialist" coup d'état were to take place, it would not be acceptable to the bulk of the people who are still hooked on private property, unless it tried to match the performance of the capitalist system in this area. Such an attempt would destroy the best aspects of the revolution, as it has been doing in the USSR. The tackling of the twin problems of unproductive consumption and false consciousness is therefore an immediate task under capitalism.

The Reduction of Unproductive Consumption

The attitude among some of the Left which claims that "waste is paid for by the worker" cannot stand up to marxist analysis. Under the capitalist system, all the worker is entitled to is his subsistence. The difference between what the worker consumes and what he produces is surplus value, and provided it can be realised it represents profit. If this difference goes in waste, this waste is in fact unrealisable surplus value, and of no use to the capitalist except as a stabiliser of the economy. On the other hand, it would be quite incorrect to say that a reduction in waste could not benefit workers at all levels.

The question of the reduction of unproductive consumption should therefore be raised in concrete forms (see below) and pressure put on the present Government. Such propositions would, from the Government point of view, have the advantage of allowing living standards to be raised, and could lead to support not only from the organised labor movement, but also from a very substantial section of trade and industry.

This latter would be possible because, for example, it would be quite incorrect to say that US corporations are happy to pay out sums for advertising which equal or exceed their profits. True, they prefer this to price competition, which immediately cuts into profits, whereas non-price competition, if indulged in equally by all parties, merely becomes part of the cost of production and is added to product price. Nevertheless, wherever curbs are imposed from outside, these are tacitly welcomed in many cases. Note, for instance, the recent decision by Australian car manufacturers to stop participating in costly racing car building exercises after a mere expression of disapproval by a State Minister. It is quite conceivable that a curb on advertising,
particularly if graded to make individual large advertisements relatively more costly, would be acceptable to these companies. A major weapon would be the disallowance of all advertising, and with it executive perks like expense accounts for wining and dining, as tax-deductible items. Also, it would for instance be possible to grant sales tax reductions on consumer items which have been on the market for a certain time and have been left unchanged, except for proven quality improvements. This would deter unnecessary model changes.

Many companies, especially in the office equipment field, refuse to supply spare parts. Costly service bills are then used as a lever to replace perfectly satisfactory equipment with new, with a high “trade in” as additional lure. High tariffs could be placed on such equipment (practically all of it imported) to discourage such practices. Leasing of equipment is another area of waste, due to the extra administrative work involved, and should be taxed.

The irrationality of insurance companies and financial institutions building ever higher buildings on ever dearer land in the city centre has led not only to extreme cost for such office space, but in addition is ruining our cities and creating crazy traffic problems. These building programmes are generated by the “need” of insurance companies to “invest” large amounts of premiums, much of it from superannuation funds. A national insurance scheme is the obvious answer. Also, this type of activity is most easily decentralised, as, compared with industry, the amount and range of materials required for the running of such institutions is small. Tax and postal incentives could be offered to enable competitive financial and insurance organisations to be set up in less central areas.

Hire purchase also adds greatly to the cost of living. Hire purchase interest rates should be lowered to the competitive financial and insurance organisations to be set up in less central areas. Advertising is a major item of cost. High and differentiated taxes could be used to reduce the over-ration which uses packaging as promotion.

The examples mentioned are only representative of a possible range, but indicate the desired direction.

**Effects of a Policy Against Waste**

Effects may be grouped under these headings:

1. Economic
2. Political
3. Sociological (effects on consciousness)
4. Ecological

* 1. Economic. As only a small percentage of work done today is of an essential nature, a determined policy against waste would immediately affect the livelihood of many people. Retraining schemes must accompany such a policy. An immediate and progressive reduction in working hours would be both possible and necessary. A reduction of working hours to 30 per week in a three-day working week would enable two “shifts” to work 60 hours per week on a “three days on, four days off” basis with a common holiday on Sunday. This in itself would reduce waste – a reduction in transport to and from work would be linked to a fuller use of capital equipment and an increase in plant productivity per unit floor area. A reduction in capital equipment cost would also follow, as most capital equipment today is obsoleted before wearing out.

As far as industry is concerned, the economic effect would vary. On the one hand, an increase in profits in companies producing consumer goods might result; but on the other, many non-essential areas would be hard-hit and eliminated.

2. Political. The effects on companies mentioned above would tend to split industrialists down the middle. As the biggest are producers of consumer items, their interests would be likely to prevail over the smaller ones, such as printers of advertising materials who would be likely to suffer. Electorally, a stop to inflation, coupled with shorter hours, higher real income and all the other benefits springing from a reduction in waste would counteract the undoubted screams from the media. Young people especially would be likely to support such policies.

3. Sociological. A reduction in advertising in particular would greatly affect media revenue. This in turn would possibly lead to:
   a) Redundancy of radio and TV channels
   b) Reduction in size of newspapers and possible breaking of media monopoly.

These results in turn would allow further beneficial changes; for example, TV and radio channel space could be used for education.

In short, much of the false consciousness now raised as a side-effect of high pressure selling would be undermined, and consumer goods would tend to revert to their place as use-values rather than alienated symbols.

4. Ecological. Present campaigns against pollution, although important, don’t touch the core of the problem. Pollution control means further waste in disposing of waste. The real problem is conservation, the non-generation of waste. In this respect the suggested programme would assist both in reducing consumption and in raising understanding of the real problem.

**Perspectives**

Such proposals, to which the Labor Government might respond if taken up by a mass movement, would not of course overthrow the capitalist system. It could even be said that they would make it work better. This might be true in one sense, but when we consider both the present state of consciousness and the imperative need to advance more social thinking, it takes on a different aspect. It could represent a decisive break with the present tendency to see most struggles in terms of a fight between management and labor for a bigger slice of what is left of the cake after an ever-increasing portion of it has been fed to the rats.

In other words, such demands are an attempt to come to grips with the basic anarchy of the system and its total alienation syndrome, in contrast to the usual tackling of questions which fails to go beyond the ethos of bourgeois society. Struggle which either reinforces the prevailing hegemony, or fails to undermine it, cannot be revolutionary, however militant its form.

And at a time when we are faced with the task of saving the world as well as changing it, any attempt to reduce wasteful and unnecessary consumption is surely in itself worthwhile.
Q. Could you outline the main features of the revolutionary struggle in Spain today?

A. The most important development in the mass movement in Spain today is the growth of the workers' commissions. Despite our fascist government, they have been able to develop strikes and the consequent organisation of the workers to a very high level. An example of this is the recent struggle of the workers in the biggest factory in Spain where not only were significant wage increases won, but the three men who had led the struggle and been dismissed for their revolutionary activity were reinstated.

Statistics show that in 1971 the strike level in Spain was equal to and even higher than in capitalist countries where strikes are not illegal. There is of course a qualitative difference and this gives an indication of the high degree of development of the workers' movement.

Almost equally important is the student movement which now includes a large percentage of the universities' staffs -- especially at the more junior and the temporary level. These staff members have not only formed their own organisation but together with the students called the strike at Madrid University at the end of January.

Then there is the peasant movement against paying taxes, and in some of the dairying regions of the north there has been a "milk war" against the profiteering of the big monopolies. Rather than sell their milk at very low prices, the peasants have poured it on the roads. These are very high levels of struggle, for in conditions of illegality, organisation among the peasants is more difficult than in other spheres. Liberty is essential to the full organisation of the peasants.

Things are on the move among the intellectuals too. Teachers held their first strike early this year, and though the immediate demands were for better wages and conditions the strike was a highly political one because it raised the demand of the right of assembly and the right to strike. Even such moderate people as lawyers have entered the fray -- they have taken issue with the government on the elections to their new governing body in Madrid. The issue itself is not important; what is important is the fact that for the first time there is a mass campaign in the legal profession. These mass movements add up to what we call, in general terms, the forces of work and culture.

The second feature, in my opinion, is the changing attitude of the Church and of the more dynamic sectors of the bourgeoisie in favor of greater civil liberties. The reasons for this are complicated but it has created a very original position -- a convergence of revolutionary forces and a part of the capitalist forces with the specific and temporary common objective of the defeat of fascism and the establishment of democracy.

Our Party has been intensely active in fostering this sort of convergence and in many parts of Spain we have established co-ordinating bodies where representatives of different political movements are starting to have discussions. This trend towards unity, together with the development of the various mass movements, are the two factors which give substance to the immediate task of winning democracy.

Q. I gather that the Church no longer wishes to be identified with the Franco repression and so is engaging in the convergence. Are there any forces in the Church that go further? Are there any such as Camillo Torres (the Spanish priest who went to Bolivia and himself developed as a revolutionary) in Spain?

A. The Church itself, by a majority vote at a special conference of bishops last December, approved a document called "The Church and the Political Community" which calls for civil and political liberties and even for a total amnesty for political prisoners. This changed attitude can be explained by some real desire for a more modern attitude and, without doubt, an opportunistic need to show another face in a future free Spain. But then, inside the Church and Catholicism, there are some clear socialist tendencies. There are groups of young priests who take part in the working class struggles. Among them is one of the group of 10 leaders of whom I spoke, Camacho and others, who works in the building industry in Madrid. In the conditions of illegality the Spanish Party works with groups of priests and Catholics who not only are for democracy, but who both intellectually and actively favor working-class objectives. They are the Camillo Torres of Spain, for in today's conditions it is revolutionary to take part in the mass movements. I should add that some other Spanish priests have gone to Colombia to take Camillo Torres' place.
Q. What support does the Spanish Communist Party have in the various strata of the population?

A. It is very difficult to say, for under conditions of illegality -- no elections, no statistics, no possibility of consulting public opinion -- we cannot make an accurate assessment. However, I think we have very strong support in the main working-class centres and I think it is significant that traditional centres of anarchist influence like Catalonia and Andalusia are now among our strongholds. Our influence there is as great as it is among the working class of Madrid and Valencia.

Something that has surprised most Spanish observers has been the newly emerged working-class movement in the north-west, with the struggles at El Ferrol and Vigo in which our leadership was evident. And everyone knows that Asturias and the Basque country have been influenced by us for a long time. There are other Left groups, but I think it would be true to say that we do have a very strong influence in the mass movements of the working class.

Next in importance must be our position in the student movement and here our position differs from that in most countries. Our Party has been working in the student movement since the early 'fifties, directly inside the fascist student organisation. We have been able to work in a way which has led to its destruction. With one exception, we have always had a strong influence in the universities, and particularly in the main ones such as the universities in Madrid and Barcelona, and you would be surprised at the work done by our basic party organisations in these institutions. In the Madrid University, for instance, as well as circulating 5000 copies of Mundo Obrero, we publish special organs of the party committee in the various faculties.

That all this has borne fruit is shown in our influence among doctors, lawyers, professors, teachers, economists. Our influence in the universities has been projected into all these fields. This has destroyed the argument that has been used against us that it's not worth working with students because they are revolutionary while they are students, but they later become bourgeois.

We have been self-critical about our influence among women, but we believe that the potentiality in this field is strong; much the same applies to our assessment of our work with the peasants.

We are quite influential among young workers and high school students, and I think there is some possibility of activity even in the army.

Q. In view of this what is your main strategic focus? You have been criticised in some circles for advocating as strategy the overthrow of the dictatorship and the institution of capitalist democracy, rather than replacing the dictatorship by a socialist revolution. What is your reply to this criticism? Do you think that a model some­thing like the twin revolution of 1917 in Russia is a possible outcome of the struggle in Spain or do you see it more in terms of the Chilean experience? What would the strategy of the Communist Party of Spain be after the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship?

A. Although the terms may not be scientifically correct, for practical purposes we could put it like this. Our tactic is what we call a Pact for Liberty -- unity of all the forces I spoke of, including a section of the bourgeoisie, for the overthrow of fascism. Comrade Carrillo stated very clearly in his closing remarks at the Eighth Congress that our tactic is the fight for liberty, the overthrow of fascism and for democracy. But we would never call this our strategy. Our strategy is the alliance of the forces of work and culture. The mass movements described earlier are essential tactically, but they are also the basis of our strategy because already within them is the basis upon which we shall build this socialist-orientated alliance. We believe that Lenin's formulation of an alliance of workers and peasants is not adequate for a developed, or relatively developed, country like Spain. Taking into account the changes in the economic and social structure, especially those resulting from the scientific and technological revolution, our "alliance of the forces of work and culture" is what corresponds objectively to Lenin's formulation. So, I think those who criticise us in the way you have mentioned are doing so on a purely speculative level without understanding our tactic and our strategy.

Without freedom from fascism there is no real possibility of fighting for socialism. Before October there was February, and we have not had our February yet. We cannot put October before February as that sort of criticism seems to require of us.

Q. And after your February, what will you do then? A. What we are doing now is preparation for after February. You see, if in the development of this policy of broad unity we found that those groups which have a socialist dimension -- the working class, the student movement and others -- if we saw their influence and that of the Communist Party diminish we might have doubts, but the position is the reverse and no one denies this -- these groups which have a socialist dynamic are growing stronger and the reactionary forces weaker and this points to the correctness of our tactic. When we have won liberty this alliance of the forces of work and culture will provide the political basis for the struggle against monopoly capitalism and for socialist solutions. Before the event we cannot be precise about what form the struggle will take, but we say, and this is very important, that we are not afraid of liberty; on the contrary we will be defenders of liberty to the end and we believe that those who are afraid of liberty and democracy are the forces of monopoly capitalism. We will combat that monopoly capitalism in democratic conditions by the struggle for increased freedoms at every level. This is something that accords with our idea that socialism itself will be a process of higher and higher levels of liberty.

Q. It might be argued by such critics that at present you are not really raising the question of socialism among these "forces of work and culture," and that when the dictatorship is overthrown they may be confused if they had not already been somewhat prepared.

A. In theory this danger exists, but the other danger is greater today. If we try to mobilise these forces now to fight for socialism we will abandon a large part of the working class which has not yet a socialist consciousness. It is the same in other sectors. Therefore we believe it is correct to place the emphasis now on the political objective of overthrowing fascism, but at the same time to develop in the mass movements a socialist consciousness. In the student movement, for instance, it is obvious that there is no solution of their problems under capitalism. It is not only freedom that they require but a transformation of the universities, and we help the university community -- the students and staff -- to elaborate an alternative, firstly against the fascist struct-
We keep these two aspects -- the aspect of liberty and the aspect of socialism -- separate, but at the same time they are part of a real strategy of revolution. Of course we can make mistakes, but it appears that our critics have not understood that these two aspects -- our tactics and our strategy -- are distinct, although related.

Q. You have stated that the PCE rejects the classical models of the seizure of power. Would you develop this?

A. I shall try, but you must understand that these things are elaborated rather on the march -- unhappily, we are not able to undertake real theoretical work and sometimes we make these conclusions pragmatically. But what I meant is that we cannot expect a socialist revolution in Spain by way of an October 1917 insurrection, because this could only have occurred after a war with its resultant consequences on the army. We cannot have a civil war of the Chinese type either, or the Cuban model of a guerrilla centre taking over power.

Nor can we model ourselves on the experience of the various socialist countries of Europe whose establishment was dependent on the victory of another socialist power. Such models are inconceivable for us and that is why we assert that we cannot apply a classical model of this sort.

As regards guerrilla warfare, we experienced more than 10 years of this during and after the Second World War. This guerrilla activity was developed in an effort to integrate our fight for liberation in the anti-fascist war that was taking place on an international scale. At first it was a defensive measure as people went into the mountains to escape increased persecution, but towards the end of the war it took on a more political character as there was a general feeling among the people that Franco would be defeated with Hitler and Mussolini. But with the cold war, when it became evident that the imperialists were supporting Franco, the peasant masses retreated and the guerrillas were isolated and suffered terrible losses. It was these losses which led us to alter our tactics to the development of the mass movement. Today we do not think the guerrilla activity was a mistake, but we do believe that it was wrong to have prolonged it. When we ceased guerrilla war, we adopted the method of developing the political mass movement.

Q. You have also stated that you reject what you called the "diversity of powers" theory -- "workers' power," "student power," "peasant power," etc. Perhaps it is not so much a matter of posing one against the other but of combining them -- our strategy in Australia is the combining of the struggle for self-management and workers' control at all levels -- the struggle for power at all levels -- with the struggle to overthrow the central capitalist State apparatus. Isn't this necessary in order to avoid the mistakes of the existing socialist countries which have led to bureaucratic deformations and the construction of a new all-powerful bureaucratic socialist State apparatus? In other words, we need this twin, parallel, strategy in order to completely overthrow capitalism and to avoid the mistakes of the past.

A. Our position is not far from that, but when I say I am opposed to these theories I am speaking really of the "partial powers" theory which I think is a reformist conception. This concept of winning student power in the universities, workers' power in the factories, and so on, actually developed in France and I think the theory is supported by the PSU (Parti Socialiste Unifié). But we believe it is reformist because, expressed in this way, it hides the fundamental question of power -- political power, State power, which is the first thing which must be destroyed in making a revolution. Revolution is the destruction of one power and the creation of another form. But the conception mentioned hides this question, puts it in second place. We say that revolution is a question of power with a capital P, not of partial trends. This is the first point.

Where we are in complete harmony with you, I think, is in our conception of the national strike, in our conception of the workers' commissions; we believe that the workers themselves create the instruments of struggle and power which will be the decisive element of the future socialist democracy. For instance, we say that the workers' commissions will not be merely trade unions. They will represent new forms of democracy, new forms of socialist democracy. At our Eighth National Congress, speaking of the national strike, we said that the workers and people themselves create the forms of struggle that will become the instruments of power -- in all localities and at all levels. It is here that we are in complete agreement with you. The socialist State must be truly democratic -- it must express the will of the masses at every level. This is the basis of our work among the forces of culture and the forces of labor. You have to destroy the capitalist power and replace it with the democratic power of the masses.

Q. On the other hand, some marxists and Communist Parties and other revolutionary groups possibly overstate the importance of the central State apparatus, and have a preconceived idea that this in itself is people's power?

A. Our conception is different. We see things in terms of complete democracy, a pluralistic socialism, and we think that our current forms of struggle are preparation for this.

Q. Arising from this does the Communist Party of Spain have any views about the reasons for the deformations in the existing socialist countries?

A. We have published something on this, though it is not definitive, of course. But it seems to us that there the State itself contains strong residual bourgeois characteristics and is conditioned by an historic period that is bourgeois and even feudal, at times -- class structure, economic relations, etc. And unless there is a sufficient degree of real democracy, real power of the masses, this creates a dangerous state of affairs, what we call the predominance of State interest and not the predominance of the socialist revolutionary content of the revolution which has created that State. We feel that in some aspects of the policy of the socialist States there is a conservative tendency which is the expression of this State interest. But, of course, there are also other aspects that can be decisive. That is why we support the socialist States against imperialism, but at the same time make open and clear criticism when their policy reflects
attitudes contrary to the interest of our revolution or of the general movement.

Q. In your article * you speak of a period of differen-
tiation within the revolutionary movement. Why do you think this is happening and what do you think is the correct way to proceed if it is?

A. The revolutionary movement is becoming more widely spread. It embraces countries which, in their historical development, are in a pre-feudal situation but in which there is a revolutionary State, and countries which are most advanced in industry and science and so on. In the capitalist world today it is the differences which are being accentuated. Economically there is the terrible process whereby the advanced are advancing further and the less advanced are falling more and more behind and becoming more oppressed. Thus it is not to be expected that there will be a process of greater cohesion. And if the revolutionary process is to be the expression of concrete conditions in each country, it is not surprising that there is this period of differentiation.

We are fighting for what we call unity in diversity -- we fight for unity of the communist and revolutionary movement and respect the independence of each party, each revolutionary movement, which all have their own characteristics. We believe that the unity is expressed in the anti-imperialist struggle and in the socialist objective, but we consider that the diversity, the autonomy is fundamental and decisive in the revolutionary struggle. We do not accept the idea of general laws, based on the experience of some socialist countries which can be used to condemn other revolutionary processes as heretical.

Q. This unity in diversity ... would this include principled criticism of one Communist Party by another, provided such criticism does not lead to interference? In other words that there should be genuine discussion and debate?

A. We believe that it is necessary to have the opportunity to discuss problems of principle and mutual experiences, and we said so at the 1969 conference and on other occasions; but even today it is still not possible. Any criticism is regarded as an attack, so we are not disposed to open new polemics and new divisions by seeking such discussions when conditions are not ripe. We avoid criticism of brother parties and confine ourselves to general theoretical problems and avoid mention of specific parties except when the interests of our revolution are affected fundamentally. Then we express our criticism in a concrete way.

Q. You spoke of the need today for a more offensive strategy. Do you think that some sections of the movement still maintain the old defensive position of the cold war period?

A. Yes, and I will explain it by examples. The victory of the Vietnamese people has brought an entirely new situation -- the post-Vietnam phase of the general crisis of capitalism. I believe that we cannot yet measure the importance of the change. But everything is influenced by it. There has been a turn to the Left, not only in Western Europe, but in this part of the world -- the election results in Japan, in New Zealand, and here in Australia, and I think that this underlines the need for a more offensive revolutionary movement. But there are problems. Take the anti-fascist fight, the problem that affects us most: the attitude here is not everywhere offensive -- on the contrary, there is a kind of quasi-acceptance of the existence of a fascist State in Western Europe by some socialist States as normal. This, we believe, is a typical non-offensive attitude. Another instance is the question of multi-national funds and corporations in Western Europe. The workers have to find new dimensions, new instruments, in their common struggle here. Things are static in this area. We are working on it, but have been unable to create new instruments of the working class. These two different examples illustrate the general idea of the need for more offensive, creative levels of action which correspond with the new possibilities.

Q. You have quoted from Carrillo that "the struggle for socialism must be in its form a struggle for the radical democratisation of the State apparatus and of all institutions of society." Why do you think the struggle for freedom and democracy everywhere is so important today?

A. The growing authoritarian centralised tendency of the capitalist State is leading to the curtailment of the democratic character of society, and there are also bureaucratic deformations in the socialist countries. It is these factors which have led us to state clearly that our conception of socialism is based on the idea of radicalisation of democracy. This must be the answer to the new problems which are arising such as those associated with scientific and technological change. It seems to me that radicalisation of democracy is the answer to these three questions: the authoritarian tendency of the capitalist State, the bureaucratic deformations of the socialist State, and, perhaps in the most profound way, an answer to many problems posed by the development of some aspects of the scientific side of the forces of production.

Q. What do you think are the main problems that need attention in the theoretical sense?

A. For 46 of the 53 years of our party, we have worked under conditions of illegality, and it has not been possible for us to undertake much theoretical work. We are aware of this gap but we have many difficulties. However, in what work we have done the main attention has been in the areas we have been discussing here -- the problem of the State, the problems of the transformation in the social and economic structures which are being carried on by the development of capitalism; our conception of socialism, what is the relation between socialism, liberty, culture.

We are more centred on the political side of theory rather than the abstract theoretical side. While we follow the current debates within marxism, we are opposed to a super-intellectual attitude to marxism. We feel that the tendency of some marxist intellectuals is to close themselves off in books. While we don't negate their contribution to rigorous and serious study of marxism, we believe that this tendency to be enclosed in books is negative.

* See Spanish Communists Speak -- pamphlet published by CPA.
By the time this issue of ALR is printed, the January-March price index figures will be issued, and inflation and its various “cures” will be well in the news.

Some of the actual figures of price inflation as measured by the (inadequate) Consumer Price Index may be useful to readers. (Indices are up to the October-December 1972 quarter only.)

The CPI shows the average rise in prices over the six Australian capitals as 77% for the 20 years from 1952-53. For Sydney, the increase is shown as greater, 79%.

This average hides a multitude of sins, however. For example, housing costs (rents, rates, house prices) average over two and a half times their 1952-53 levels, an addition of 154% on top of original prices. For Sydney, this addition averages 178%, and in some areas it would be very much greater, where the ravages of the “developers” and land sharks have been concentrated.

Similarly, prices in the miscellaneous group, which includes fares, postal charges, motoring, smokes and beer, health and other charges, have increased by 102% for Sydney. That is, they have more than doubled over 20 years.

It should be noted that this above-average group of price rises is heavily affected by government charges and taxes, a point to which we come back below.

Surprisingly, with food prices so much in the news, average food prices as measured by the CPI do not show rises as high as the index as a whole: 73% increase compared with the overall 20-year 77% increase.

However, because items are weighted according to their importance in household budgets, meat prices in recent months have had the greatest single effect of any item on the total price level. They will certainly generate a sharp rise in the January-March figures, being awaited as we go to press, and sharpen the contradictions of the forces in the ALP which respectively seek real price control or seek to shuffle round with superficial inquiries and flirt with incomes control.

INFLATION INCREASING

One alarming fact which emerges from examining the 20-year price increases is that the rate of inflation is getting worse. This, despite the 1972 recession which should have had a dampening effect on inflation.

Roughly half the 20-year fall in the value of money took place in the past six years, and more than half in the case of Sydney.

The figures are shown in the following tables, in percentages from the 1952-53 level of prices, comparing the rises of the first 14 years with the latter six.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1 – CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FROM '52-3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six Capital Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'52-3 price level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rises from 52-3/66-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rises from 66-7/Dec.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total compared with 52-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2 -- CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FROM '52-'3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sydney prices</th>
<th>All Groups</th>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Miscellaneous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'52-'53 price level</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rises from '52-'53/ '66-'67</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rises from '66-'67/ Dec.72</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>96.7</td>
<td>60.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total compared with '52-'53</td>
<td>179.4</td>
<td>277.8</td>
<td>205.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A closer look at some of the particular increases over the past six years, when inflation has been at its highest levels, brings to light further interesting facts.

Taking 1966-7 as the base year, the items with the three highest price indexes at December 1972 are all direct government-fixed charges. Of the next seven highest rises over the period, another is also a government charge, while three others (health services, housing and rent) are closely related to deliberate government pro-business policies.

Table 3 shows the 10 items which have increased most in prices in the past six years. In that time, despite all the increases in productivity, only one item has fallen in price -- household appliances (by 0.9%).

TABLE 3 -- HIGHEST PRICE RISES SINCE '66-'67

| Local govt. rates | 100.0 | 159.8 |
| Fares | 100.0 | 157.2 |
| Motoring services and charges | 100.0 | 154.5 |
| Rents | 100.0 | 147.3 |
| Papers & magazines | 100.0 | 146.8 |
| Health services | 100.0 | 144.5 |
| Potatoes & onions | 100.0 | 142.2 |
| Postal charges | 100.0 | 141.1 |
| Housing prices | 100.0 | 139.3 |
| Footwear | 100.0 | 137.1 |
| Average, all items | 100.0 | 127.6 |

SEASONAL PRICES

Inclusion of potatoes and onions in the price index has always been a source of argument, because of the erratic behavior of their prices, both upwards and downwards, which distorts the total index.

However, like other seasonally fluctuating prices, their rises are never eclipsed by their falls, so that underneath the "seasonal" changes is a steady continuous rise. Meat prices behave similarly.

This point is also illustrated by clothing prices, which operate under semi-monopoly pricing conditions because of the government tariff policies. The statistician separates winter and summer clothing prices, and examination of the figures shows that in each case prices are jacked up in the appropriate season, and mark time at that new level in the off-season. Overall, no reductions occur.

TABLE 4 -- SEASONAL PRICE CHANGES (1966-67=100.0)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dec.71</th>
<th>Mar.72</th>
<th>Jun.72</th>
<th>Sep.72</th>
<th>Dec.72</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Potatoes &amp; Onions</td>
<td>136.1</td>
<td>129.7</td>
<td>113.9</td>
<td>116.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef</td>
<td>124.5</td>
<td>124.1</td>
<td>124.2</td>
<td>126.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamb</td>
<td>98.8</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>97.2</td>
<td>113.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer clothing</td>
<td>120.9</td>
<td>120.9</td>
<td>120.9</td>
<td>120.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter clothing</td>
<td>115.8</td>
<td>115.8</td>
<td>121.8</td>
<td>121.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures demonstrate the extent of the challenge to living standards being posed by speeding inflation, and the importance of the question of imposing price control both as an issue for trade union and mass mobilisation and as a potential for major class confrontation in Australia.

The crisis of inflation -- the debasing of our currency, and the enforced daily reduction of wage levels -- may well become the greatest single issue between the Australian workers and the ruling class, and the greatest single test of the ALP government's attitude to monopoly.

The situation of inflation in Australia is not only a major practical and political question, but also one which calls for Marxists to re-study the tenets of their political economy (fundamentally opposed to the capitalist theories and cures), and particularly the Marxist theory of money (almost wholly confined to his "Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy").

The precise role needs to be studied in modern capitalism not only of the inflation of the note issue and token coinage, well above their equivalent in gold. (For example, the US dollar, pegged at $US38=1 oz. gold, is actually selling at from $US70 to $US90 to the gold ounce). Also vital for study are the increased 20th century roles of government credit (mainly war-induced national debt), bank creation of money (cheques drawn on overdrafts) and, most importantly, the modern devices of hire purchase and credit cards, which provide much of the basis of present-day inflation, and which provide the mechanisms by which monopolists are enabled to jack up their prices without, in the main, facing the problem of unsaleable prices.

Inflation faces us as both a major practical and theoretical question.
Before we commit ourselves to barracking for Waltzing Matilda as our new national anthem, it would be as well to know exactly what we are barracking for. There is quite a list of different Matildas to choose from; and now, thanks to the devoted research of Mr. Richard Magoffin, we can put them into chronological order.

1. The original song came into existence in 1895 at Dagworth station outside Winton, Qld. Banjo Paterson wrote the words to fit a tune which Christina Macpherson played on the autoharp. This tune, which Magoffin has found in Christina's own handwriting, is quite clearly an imperfectly-remembered version of the Scottish tune, Bonnie Wood of Craigielee (or Craigielea; spellings differ).

2. This original version spread across country by word of mouth, getting gradually altered in the process. In or before 1900, it came to the ears of a musician named Harry Nathan. He was either in Toowoomba at the time, or in Townsville preparing to move to Toowoomba. Nathan wrote down this orally-altered version and gave it a piano accompaniment. By 1905 he had come to believe that he had actually composed the tune; by March 1906 he was dead of chronic alcoholism. He attributed the words to Paterson all right, but in fact the words he used are NOT exactly Paterson's. For one thing, the dreadful "jolly" has crept into the first line. Nathan's manuscript was not published before Mr. Oscar Mendelson was shown it in 1955.

3. In 1930 Paterson's publishers sold the musical rights to the proprietor of "Billy Tea", a Mr. Inglis. Evidently no one concerned had any knowledge of an existing tune. Mr. Inglis looked for a composer, and eventually asked Mrs. Cowan, the wife of one of his employees, to provide a tune to fit the words he had bought. Here an astonishing coincidence occurs! Mrs. Cowan evidently knew an orally-transmitted version. She proceeded to ignore Paterson's own text, and to write down both the words and tune of the word-of-mouth version which she knew. Inglis & Co. published Mrs. Cowan's version, piano accompaniment and all, and gave copies away with packets of "Billy Tea". Paterson ignored the whole business. This is a little odd, since Mrs. Cowan's version used a terribly altered and corrupted verbal text, and the poet would have been justified in protesting. The tune which Mrs. Cowan claimed only to have arranged, not composed, differs slightly from Nathan's and quite obviously from Christina's. Mrs. Cowan's piano accompaniment is rather more amateurish than Nathan's.

4. Around 1907, according to Mr. Magoffin, a perfectly distinct and different tune came into existence in the Winton/Charters Towers area, being sung to Paterson's own words. This is the one which I included in the
Penguin Australian Songbook under the title of “The Buderim Tune”. There is a claim that it was composed by a Miss Josephine Pene who used to play the piano at functions in Winton, but no manuscript has yet been found to prove it. It remained unpublished until 1959, I do not examine it in this essay: it is a separate subject.

5. In 1911 Professor Todd of Sydney University included the Cowan version in his Australian Students’ Song-Book. Copies of this, or of extracts from it, were distributed to troops in 1915, and thus Waltzing Matilda became known abroad. Paterson heard troops singing it at the Randwick staging-camp, and commented to Daryl Lindsay, “Well, Daryl, I only got a fiver for the song, but it’s worth a million to me to hear it sung like this!”

6. In 1916 or 1917 Mrs. Cowan died. Then for the first time, Paterson authorised the publication of his own original words. They appear in his third volume of poems, Saltbush Bill J.P.

7. In 1930 a visiting examiner from the Royal Schools of Music, one Dr. Thomas Wood, came to Winton, heard a mangled account of how Waltzing Matilda came to be written, wrote down the most mangled (Cowan) words and a still-further-mangled tune, and later published the lot. Wood was screwy enough to believe in ghosts and read into the song, but it’s worth a million to me to hear it sung like this!”

Paterson’s abstention from commenting on the various degrees of violence which the Cowan and Wood settings had done to his words and to Christina’s tune is remarkable. I think it can be explained without attributing Paterson’s silence to a guilty literary conscience as some critics have done.

In 1939 a Mr. Copping, then a student at the Sydney Teachers’ College, wrote to Paterson asking for information about Waltzing Matilda. Paterson replied:

“I wrote it when travelling in Queensland. A Miss Macpherson, afterwards Mrs. McColl McCowan, used to play a tune which she believed was an old Scottish tune but she did not know the name of it. I put words to it.”

There is one startling error in that letter. Christina Macpherson died unmarried in 1936. It was Christina’s sister Jean who became Mrs. McColl McCowan. Clearly Paterson had been quite out of touch with the Macphersons since April 1896 (the wedding day was the 16th) or earlier.

So, when Paterson in 1903 received a specimen copy of the song which he had written for Christina “McColl McCowan” to set, I think he mis-read the name of the arranger, “M. Cowan” as “McCowan”. And if he did, then some of his subsequent behaviour becomes explicable.

He had written the lyric for Christina. It was hers rather than his. If she had been obliged, for some pernickety musician’s reason, to muck his words about, then that was her look-out. She was the one and only person entitled to do so. If she had wished to muck her own tune about, then that was entirely her affair. At the same time, “her” alterations of his text had effectively robbed him of the credit which he might have claimed. Only in private, speaking as in para 5 above to a personal friend, did he claim any credit, or even mention that he was drawing no royalties on the published song.

Another thing: I have long suspected that Paterson’s “sad memories of Winton” (Jane Black’s phrase) were memories of a row with Sarah Riley over Christina.

Now we know that he was out of touch with Christina, and we may believe that this was deliberate on his part. If he believed, as it appears he did, that Christina was “Mrs. McCowan” and that “Mrs. McCowan” was Marie Cowan, then his avoidance of the Cowans is explained. He had no wish to rake up embarrassing memories when he was on the point of marrying Alice Walker. Sydney May is totally misinformed on this point.

By silently countenancing the altered words of the Cowan version, he made it harder for himself to answer the question “Did you write the words?” without telling the whole story. He did not mean to tell the whole story. But, after Marie Cowan’s death, he did publish his original text -- or, to be hairspittingly accurate, a slightly revised version of the words he had given to Christina in 1895.

Paterson died in February 1941. Almost at once the journalists, radio-commentators and literary men pounced on the unsolved mystery. Several schools of comment can be distinguished. There were the ratbags who claimed to have written the words themselves. There were the old bushmen who claimed to have heard or sung Waltzing Matilda “long before Banjo was heard of”.

There were the literary men who developed that theme, and proved that Paterson must simply have doctored-up “an old bush song”. There were those who denied or minimised Christina’s role in creating or providing the tune. There were those, very interestingly, who claimed that “the tune” (few specified which tune) was derived not from Craigielea but from a British Army song The Bold Fusilier.

I do not wish to make a Homeric list of all the attackers or of all the defenders of the thesis which Mr. Magoffin has so shingly vindicated, but I think that some of the critical points can now be finally settled.

11.

Did Paterson simply plagiarise “an old bush song”? Magoffin has demonstrated that the core of the song is history, and recent history at that. “Policemen – one, two and three” had appeared in the district only once. They were there in 1894 to disperse the shearers on strike who had just burned-down Dagworth woolshed, and to arrest the strikers’ leaders. One of these leaders was drowned in the Combo Waterhole, on the boundary of the property, while trying to escape. Please notice that this incident happened no more than a year before
Paterson visited Dagworth. No song on the refrain could be "an old bush song."

But the drowning is not the only element in the song: there is the "sheep-stealing swagman" element as well. Several known bush songs incidentally mention this proclivity of hungry swagmen: "The Wallaby Brigade" is one; "Tramp, tramp with swag on my back" is another. Did Paterson have one or another of these in mind? That would be very hard to say. Several accounts (quoted by May) agree that Paterson, riding around Dagworth with Bob Macpherson (or Bob's brother Jack) had actually come upon the carcass of a wether killed by swagmen for tucker. Surely, with this experience fresh in mind, Paterson would not have needed to grope in his mind for quotations to express himself in. He was perfectly capable of writing his own words.

The third element in the lyric is the refrain, "Who'll come a-waltzing Matilda with me?" It is basic in a way, yet it is only lightly attached to the narrative. Clearly Paterson did not invent the phrase "Waltzing Matilda." Did he invent the rest of the refrain? Did he invent "Matilda my darling?" Or is this much borrowed from some part-German swagman song which he heard in his boyhood and forgot until Jack Carter's remark brought it back to mind?

The important thing is that it took a poet to weld the three disparate elements into a poem. Whoever may have provided the raw material, it was Paterson who wrote the lyric of Waltzing Matilda. And the lyric which he wrote at Dagworth is practically identical with the lyric which he published in Saltbush Bill J.P. The Ramsay manuscript (quoted by May, pp 56-7) and Christina Macpherson's (discovered by Magoffin) make this perfectly clear.

IV.

The tune to Tannahill's little poem Bonnie Wood of Craigielea was written by James Barr and has been in printed circulation since the 1860s. In 1894 it was worked into a march by Godfrey Parker, published in Lyons' Band Journal, played by the Garrison Artillery band at Warrnambool Races, and heard (but imperfectly memorised) by Christina Macpherson. In 1895 she played what she could remember to Paterson on Dagworth station.

Her "mis-memorisation" is the tune which Magoffin has discovered. In bars 1 to 4 her tune is distinctly Craigielea. In bars 5 to 8, allowing for a certain confusion between crotchet and quaver, ditto. In the chorus, bars 9 to 12, there is less resemblance. In bars 13 to 16 her memory fails her: instead of using the new musical phrase which James Barr introduces here, she makes a reprise of bars 5 to 8.

In musicians' jargon, Christina converted the A A B C structure of Craigielea into an A A B A. Nathan's tune and Cowan's tune of The Bold Fusilier (more about that presently) are also in A A B A form. That is, they resemble Christina's tune more in structure than they resemble Craigielea. But in bars 3 and 4 all three are further away from Craigielea than Christina's tune is; and in bars 9 and 10 they are closer to Craigielea than Christina's tune is. The sum total of these points of detail is as follows:

Nathan's tune, like Marie Cowan's tune and the tune of The Bold Fusilier are very much like each other; and although any one of them might have been derived directly from Craigielea it seems much more likely that they are derived from Christina's A A B A version of it, possibly by way of a lost variant whose originator had a clearer memory of bars 9 and 10 than Christina had.

The descent of Nathan's and Marie Cowan's tunes from Christina's seems all the more certain since both preserve the attribution of the text to Paterson. The Bold Fusilier, of course, has its own text.

V.

The first verse and (presumably) chorus of The Bold Fusilier are thus given by Pearce and agree closely with the version known to the contributor to the Bulletin (23 July 1941) whose pen-name was "Dhas."

"Oh a bold fusilier came marching down through Rochester
Bound for the wars in the Low Country,
And he cried as he tramped through the drear streets of Rochester
'Who'll be a sojer for Marlboro with me?'
'Who'll come a-sojering? Who'll come a-sojering?
'Who'll come a-sojering for Marlboro with me?'

And he cried as he tramped through the drear streets of Rochester
'Who'll come a-sojering for Marlboro with me?'

Pearce's informant, Mrs Cooper, learnt the song in England as a child.

No other verses of The Bold Fusilier have been written down, but Mrs Cooper's impression was that she had heard (or heard of) others in which the fusilier and a Rochester girl held a dialogue rather like that in The Banks of the Condamine. Another of Pearce's informants, not the most reliable, speaks of "filthy" words. But please note that there is NO suggestion of the fusilier being pursued by three redcaps and drowning himself in the Medway.

Still, this first verse and chorus of The Bold Fusilier, phrase for phrase, line for line, is structurally so like the same bits of Waltzing Matilda as almost to rule out coincidence. And the structural similarity is greater with the text of Marie Cowan's version than with any other; just as the similarity of tunes is greater. You can easily test this proposition for yourself.

So it seems to me we have to investigate the relationship of The Bold Fusilier (first verse, chorus and melody) not merely to the various Waltzing Matildas in general, but to the Marie Cowan version (first verse, chorus and melody) in particular.

VI.

The Bold Fusilier is far worse documented than Crai-
A. L. Lloyd has found no trace of it in any English folksong collection, manuscript or printed. This suggests that it is not a folksong but a literary piece.

Variants of The B.F. exist (Pearce, chap. 10), but all mention the fusilier, Rochester and Marlborough. This is odd. No Fusilier regiment is territorially connected with Rochester. No Fusilier regiment was distinguished in Marlborough's campaigns, since in those days the fusil was the weapon of humble gunner-guards. And Chat-ham, rather than Rochester, was the military embarkation-port for the Low Countries.

So I consider that The B.F. is not folksong, not a regimental song, and not of the Marlborough period. It could, on the other hand, be a literary man's "improve­ment" of an earlier (possibly army) song, like When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again or the cleaned-up version of I Want To Go Home mentioned by Robert Graves in Goodbye to All That.

What then was the earlier song? Seeing the close structural resemblance noted in section V above, I am obliged to consider the possibility of its having been an "ances­tor" of the Cowan Waltzing Matilda.

Such an "ancestor" -- a variant of the Paterson/Christ­ina-Macpherson original -- could have taken shape at any time after 1895. The South African War, to which Queen­land sent a contingent, lasted from 1899 to 1902. There were many good men from the Winton area in the Queen­land contingent. There were many literary men at the theatre of war: Conan Doyle, Edgar Wallace, Winston Churchill, Rudyard Kipling and others. Even Colonel Bad­en-Powell wrote comic songs!

So much is fact. Now for supposition. Suppose an English literary gentleman at the South African War to have heard Queensland mounted riflemen singing some orally-transmitted ancestor of the Cowan Waltzing Matilda. Suppose him to have admired the melody but not the words. He might well have set out to pro­vide a more soldierly and less subversive text, using as much of the first verse and chorus as he could and drawing on his remembrance of traditional army songs (such as The Gentleman Soldier) for the rest.

This hypothetical process could well have given rise to a song very much like what we know of The Bold Fu­silier. The new song might have achieved some limited circulation among English troops, and gone back to England with them at the end of the war.

The main argument against my hypothesis is that sev­eral people claimed between 1941 and 1963 to have learned The Bold Fusilier from their parents or grand­parents. Mrs Cooper, who gave Pearce the version which I have quoted, with its tune, is one of these people. Her memory is evidently excellent, but her grandfather (her source of information) may have been less accurate. He claimed great antiquity both for The B.F. and for Ring The Bell, Watchman. Since the latter is far less ancient than he thought ("a hundred years before my time"; Pearce, p. 61), may not the former be so too?

I do not think that my hypothesis can be proved true or false before some research has been done in South Africa particularly on army newspapers, "siege" news­papers, and concert-programmes of the period 1899­1902.

VII.

No version of Waltzing Matilda could be a good na­tional anthem in existing conditions. The thought of Mr Bjelke-Petersen, flanked by his Country-Party sup­porters and police, standing up solemnly at attention to claim that they'll never take him alive, is a bit too much of a joke.

To retain the tune as a national anthem while com­missioning some hack to write new words to it would be simply a smack in the eye for Banjo Paterson, and a demonstration that official Australia cares more for respectability than for poetry or truth.

No, it is far too good a song to be blighted with the Establishment's approval. As Magoffin has so ably shown, it comes straight up out of the class-struggle. It belongs to the early history of the militant Labor move­ment. As inheritors of the militant tradition, we of the Left must save up Waltzing Matilda to be the marching­song of a new Popular Front, or Left Coalition, in which the swagman is brother-in-arms with the indus­tial worker and the radical student.

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GRANT EVANS and KELVIN ROWLEY

Brian Aarons' criticisms of Louis Althusser in the last *Australian Left Review* recognised that there has been great confusion about the status of marxism among communists since the disintegration of stalinism, and that Althusser's work is one important response to that situation. However he gives no consideration to what sort of response it is, except to imply that Althusser is an authoritarian dogmatist, struggling to shore up the collapsing orthodoxy.

In the period since 1956, many communists who had identified marxism with stalinism rejected marxism when they broke with stalinism. Others did not go so far, but claimed that marxism as it stood was inadequate and had to be injected with heavy doses of humanism, existentialism, or some variant of these ideologies. The trajectory of such movements was away from marxism as a science to an increasing concern with ethical problems. But, says Althusser, the strength of marxism lies in its scientific character; anything that leads it away from its ability to scientifically analyse the capitalist social formation weakens marxism and communism, and can only benefit the dominant class -- it is in fact an ideological incursion into marxism.

Althusser's response to the breakdown of stalinism was not to search for an auxiliary theory which could join hands with marxism and save it from its own inadequacies. He assumes that marxist theory is capable of providing the basis for regenerating itself, and so sets about critically examining the classic texts in order to clarify the contemporary fundamental problems of marxism.

We must note that in doing this, Althusser is not, as some of his critics assert, trying to maintain the old stalinist certainties in the face of new developments. To the contrary, there is no nostalgic ambiguity (which one often finds in the writings of many ex-stalinists) in Althusser's remarks about the effects of stalinism on marxist intellectuals: "Our generation sacrificed itself and was sacrificed to political and ideological conflict alone, implying that it was sacrificed in its intellectual and scientific work." (1) But, says Althusser, liberation from dogmatism has not spontaneously restored an integral marxism to us, for one can only liberate some-thing that exists in the first place. "What the end of dogmatism has restored to us is the right to assess exactly what we have, to give both our wealth and our poverty their true names, to think and pose our problems in the open, and to undertake in rigor a true investigation." (2) A reinvigorated marxism will not come to us as a gift from the gods, but is something which we will have to construct (or reconstruct) and fight for, against both dogmatists and incursions from bourgeois ideology.

With this view we agree, and it is for these reasons -- which are, in the last instance, political reasons -- that we feel we must take issue with Brian Aarons' highly misleading critique of Althusser. Unfortunately, we cannot in the space of this article give any comprehensive account of Althusser's work and its importance; fortunately, however, we are able to refer our readers to such accounts. (3) The content of this article is determined by the fact that it is a direct reply to Aarons' article.

**AARONS' READING OF ALTHUSSER**

As we mentioned above, Althusser's primary concern in his published work is one of clarification -- to establish by careful textual analysis what Marx actually meant, and so to disperse the current fog of confusion about what is and what is not marxism. This means that his work is primarily concerned with epistemological and methodological questions -- matters of form rather than content. But Aarons objects: "His method for doing this [renovating marxism] is a close reading of the *texts* of Marx, Engels and Lenin, with little reference to the external reality (human society) which is the object of analysis in these texts. Thus proof of what is and what is not correct is to be established by a careful, laborious work of textual analysis rather than by testing the theory against social reality." (ALR No. 39, p.8.) Aarons evidently believes that what Marx meant in his works is transparently obvious and involves no problems; one can proceed without further ado to the application of Marx's theory. This approach, with its implicit indifference to theoretical questions, is an effect of Aarons' empiricism -- something we will discuss in due course.
Despite his continual attacks on Althusser for dogmatism, Aarons' own discussion reveals its own particular form of unreflective conformism. Aarons is firmly embedded in what has been the dominant trend in marxist thought since 1956, the marxist-humanist trend. Central to this trend have been the concepts of reification (developed by Lukacs in *History and Class Consciousness*) and alienation (taken from Marx's 1844 *Manuscripts*). For Aarons these notions are self-evidently valid. Althusser attacks them, and so it is self-evident that he is wrong. Aarons accuses Althusser of making "bald assertions," but this is a prominent feature of his own text, which is studded with phrases such as "obviously," "everyone agrees that," "of course," etc. It is precisely the self-evident nature of such "obvious" propositions as the one that "it is clear that history is made by people and not any other entity or entities" (p. 12) that Althusser is challenging. Instead of meeting this challenge, Aarons simply restates the "obvious" truths and appeals to the dominant ideology within the socialist movement for his "proof."

This complacent appeal to the obviousness of the contested propositions is symptomatic of a total failure to come to grips with what Althusser is saying. In fact, many of Aarons' criticisms of Althusser arise out of a very limited reading of Althusser's texts. (On the evidence of his article, it seems to us that Aarons has read Althusser's critics rather than Althusser himself!) For instance, he scoffs at Althusser's claims to rigor, and says that he never clarifies certain key concepts, such as "humanism" and "historicism" -- when an entire essay in *For Marx* is devoted to humanism, and a whole chapter of *Reading Capital* is on the concept of historicism. Even a cursory glance at the table of contents in these books would have short-circuited these criticisms. Furthermore, the English editions of *For Marx* and *Reading Capital* have a glossary of terms, in which Althusser's translator (Ben Brewster) provides concise definitions of both humanism and historicism.

We will cite a particularly striking example of this cavalier attitude to what his opponent is actually saying. Aarons states that "Althusser espouses a reductionist view of science when he states (LP, p. 39) that chemistry and biology belong to the continent of physics." (p. 9). But the citation is incorrect. When we locate the relevant passage on page 42 of *Lenin and Philosophy* (4) we read: "If in fact we consider the great scientific discoveries of human history, it seems that we might relate what we call the sciences, as a number of regional formations, to what I shall call the great theoretical continents... A science like chemistry ... is a regional formation within the continent of physics: everyone now knows that it is inscribed within it. A science like biology -- by its integration with molecular chemistry, also becomes part of the continent of physics." The very fact that the argument is conducted through a metaphor indicates a lack of precision within Althusser's thought here, but the thrust is clear enough. The sciences are "regional formations" which, to the extent that they are interlocked and integrated, form "theoretical continents." There is no reason to assume, as Aarons does, that this involves the dissolution of these "regional formations."

We believe that the above demonstrates the loose, careless nature of Aarons' reading of Althusser and indicates that he has not grasped the purpose of his work. If this is so, one would hardly expect him to come up with telling criticisms of this work. His criticisms are of two sorts -- some focusing on Althusser's alleged idealist epistemology (theory of knowledge), others on his alleged structuralism and his "theoretical anti-humanism." Let us take these up one at a time.

**ALTHUSSER'S IDEALISM**

Aarons states that Althusser sees science "purely as a theory, as a mere thought process and thus cuts the link between theory and observation." (p. 8). He thus cuts the dialectical connection of reasoning with reality. Following this line of argument, Aarons protests against Althusser's concept of knowledge as a production rather than a vision -- surely, he says, science is a vision, because it must "tell us something about the real world." (p. 10).

On these points, Althusser is fond of quoting Spinoza's dictum that the concept "dog" cannot bark. Real objects are something distinct from the concepts people form about them and think about them with. The idea of the circle is not the same as a circular object. We have scientific knowledge of the real world only indirectly, via work with concepts. The proof that the circumference of a circle is 2π times the radius is a series of purely mental operations carried out upon the concept of the circle, and does not involve any practice on circular objects in the real world, even though the knowledge derived from this theoretical practice may be applied very usefully in such practice. This application then tests whether there is a correspondence between the concept and its properties and the real object's properties. It does not establish some mysterious connection which grafts the concept and the object together. The role of experiment and social practice in scientific discourse is to provide the raw materials for theoretical practice, rather than to act as a surrogate for that practice.

Let us note that Marx agrees with Althusser on this point, and so if Aarons rejects Althusser as an idealist, he is necessarily bound to reject Marx on the same grounds. Marx criticised the Hegelian dialectic for conflating the real object and the subject, and insisted that "the way in which thinking assimilates the concrete and reproduces it as a concrete mental category" is "by no means the process of evolution of the real world itself." (5) We believe that not only are Althusser and Marx right on this point, it is something which is fundamental to materialism, for what it does is allow us to think of the external world as an independent reality.

There are two possible ways of rejecting this materialist thesis. One is to subsume the objective reality into ideas and concepts -- this is how Hegel produced his idealist philosophy. The other way is to regard our knowledge as being direct knowledge of the real object in itself rather than knowledge of the concept, the "ideal object" constructed by scientific discourse. In this case, knowledge ceases to be a production and becomes a direct vision of reality. This is empiricism, an inverted variant on idealism, and is precisely the position adopted by Aarons. We can now see why Aarons had no time for Marx's theoretical efforts as such, and wanted to deal only with the question of how it reflected reality -- he has collapsed theoretical practice into a "vision" of reality.

It is ironical that there is a real basis for the charge that Althusser is an idealist. It is not that he sees scientific discourse as a process occurring entirely in the realm of thought, but that in his eagerness to drive this
point home, he forgets (at least in his earlier writings) that the preconditions for this process are not just theoretical, but also ideological, political and historical as well. Science is a specific social practice, relatively independent of other social practices, but it is nonetheless articulated with them in relations of compatibility and incompatibility, correspondence and non-correspondence. Omitting any discussion of these relations, Althusser's earlier writings present, by default, a view of science as outside history -- and this is an idealist view. (7)

But Althusser's more recent writings reveal an awareness of this problem. In the Foreword to Lévi-Strauss and Philosophy, for instance, he stresses not simply that Marxism is a science, but that it is a science which cannot be acceptable to everyone -- not for scientific reasons, but for political ones: "Precisely because it reveals the mechanisms of class exploitation, repression and domination, in the economy, in politics and in ideology, it cannot be recognised by everyone. This science, which brings the social classes face to face with their truth, is unbearable for the bourgeoisie and its allies, who reject it and take refuge in their so-called 'social sciences': it is only acceptable to the proletariat, whom it 'represents' ... class conditions in theory had to be achieved for Marx to carry out his scientific work." (8) Such statements signal a recognition of the problem, but it could not be claimed for Althusser that they resolve it.

**STRUCTURE VS. PRACTICE**

Aarons' critique of what he calls "structuralist marxism" is, in our view, based on a complete misunderstanding of structuralism and its relation to marxism. It rests on the mistaken identification of "structure" with the external restraints on human freedom and activity, whether these restraints be social or natural. Structure thus appears juxtaposed against practice.

Let us first briefly summarise Aarons' theses. Structuralism, he says, is the study of social reality "in itself," in isolation from the subject which has created this reality. This leads it to treat man as a prisoner of what he has created, while forgetting he has created it and can therefore change it. Structuralist analysis is a perfect example of reification, and leads to a denial of the possibility of human freedom or action. It is therefore an intrinsically counter-revolutionary doctrine, unless it is "balanced" by a theoretical humanism which continually reminds us of the possibilities of human activity and freedom.

It is quite true that structuralism rejects the concept of the subject held by Aarons, and it therefore denies the marxist-humanist thesis that Man is the subject-creator of his history. But this does not deny the possibility of human activity and freedom.

As for the concept of practice central to his philosophy. But unlike Aarons -- and this is a crucial point -- he does not oppose the creativity of practice and the inertia of structures. We quote Althusser: "We can assert the humanism which continually stresses the notion of the human subject, and so reminds us of the possibilities of human activity and freedom."

**DIGRESSION: WHAT IS STRUCTURALISM?**

Structuralism originated with linguists in the early years of this century (most importantly, with Ferdinand de Saussure, in his *Course in General Linguistics*, published in 1916), but it was not until after World War II that structuralist approaches were widely used in a conscious manner within the field of social science. The results have on occasions been spectacular. Claude Lévi-Strauss, for instance, has revolutionised anthropology with his pathbreaking studies of kinship systems, totemism and mythology. Noam Chomsky has completely transformed the study of language with his theory of generative grammar, while the work of Jacques Lacan is creating a similar upheaval in psychoanalysis.

(10)

Structuralism is the study of the way in which wholes are constructed -- not in the sense of finding some act of genesis or creation, but in the sense of analysing the internal articulation of the whole. It is not a matter of the individual components out of which the whole is composed, not even the more "essential" components, but of the specific way in which they are assembled and combined. Levi-Strauss states that "a structure consists of a model with several requirements." These requirements are: "First, the structure exhibits the characteristic of a system. It is made up of several elements, none of which can undergo a change without effecting changes in all the other elements. Second, for any given model there should be a possibility of ordering a series of transformations resulting in a group of models of the same type. Third, the above properties make it possible to predict how the model will react if one or more of its elements are submitted to certain modifications. Finally, the model should be constituted so as to make immediately intelligible all the observed facts." (11)

Let us make two observations on this. The first is that this notion of structure is anti-empirist -- Levi-
Strauss is in fact setting his definition up in explicit opposition to the empiricist concept of structure as simply an observable pattern and regularity among phenomena, and this is why he states that "the term 'social structure' has nothing to do with empirical [emphasis added] reality, but with models built up after it." (12) Quoted out of context, this sentence is frequently misunderstood as meaning that structure is just a convenient mental fiction, a simplified and approximate model of a complex reality -- what Max Weber called an "ideal type." Against this, we assert -- and this is our second point -- that structuralism is a materialist methodology. It is true that the "model meeting with several requirements" to which Levi-Strauss refers is a mental construction, but it is not an "ideal type." If it is to make all the facts intelligible, it is by explaining them as effects of a structure which exists in reality, to which our mental construction corresponds. We thus have the concept of a structure and a real structure (at this point, the reader may care to recall our earlier comments on the relationship between concepts and objects). A real structure, while not being a directly visible reality, is a level of reality -- it is the underlying logic of reality, "visible" to us only in its effects and consequences. An invisible reality, it is nonetheless a reality, and no more a metaphysical construct than the law of gravity (which likewise is visible only in its effects). This is why Levi-Strauss rejects all idealist interpretations of his work and insists that "structural thought now defends the cause of materialism." (13) The structuralist approach to problems follows from this general definition of structure. It consists of defining the phenomenon under study as a relation (or set of relations) between a set of elements and terms, and on this basis working out the full set of possible combinations of these elements consistent with this relation (or relations). The empirical phenomena considered at the beginning will now reappear, as one possible combination among others. The value of the approach is that it defines the limits of possible changes within this structure, as well as their content. Perhaps an example of structural analysis will help make this clearer. Chomsky's generative grammar is a set of rules governing the combination of words to form sentences. The problem in constructing a generative grammar is to find the set of rules which will allow us to generate all the sentences of a certain language, and only the sentences of this language. Any actual spoken sentence is then but the realisation of one of the multiplicity of possibilities defined by the grammar. Again, we have our distinction between the concept of the structure and the real structure. We all "know" the latter even if we are completely unaware of it -- it is inscribed in our unconscious, and comes into operation every time we speak -- and the problem of scientific practice is to construct a concept of structure which corresponds to this real structure. Just as most people who construct sentences are unaware of the rules of generative grammar according to which they do this, so too is it possible for scientists to carry out a structuralist analysis without being aware that what they are doing is "structuralism." Thus, in certain ways, we find that Marx was a "structuralist" half a century before structuralism was invented. Capital is not a descriptive account of the observable phenomena of capitalist society in the mid-19th century, and if it had been it would no longer be of any relevance to us today. But instead, Marx provided us with an analysis of its underlying structure (and then, of course, of the observed phenomena of his time as effects of this structure. It was on precisely this basis that he differentiated himself from the "vulgar economists": the "philistine's and vulgar economist's way of looking at things" stems from the fact that it is only the direct form of manifestation of relations that is reflected in their brains, and not their inner connections. Incidentally, if the latter were the case, what need would there be for science?" (14) Here Marx is making concern with structure rather than phenomena a central criterion of scientificity! In contradistinction to the vulgar (empiricist) theoreticians who manufacture vast ideological systems (e.g., neo-classical economics or sociology) by systematising visible relations, Marx discovered the "generative grammar" of social relations in the mode of production, a structured combination of forces of production and relations of production. (15) Marx's analysis thus contains structuralist analysis, but it contains a good deal more than that. Structuralism deals with single structures, studied in splendid isolation from each other. But Marx's work contains a theory of society as a structure combining elements which are themselves structures -- forces of production and relations of production are structures which are combined in specific ways within modes of production, while the economy and the superstructure are also structures which are in turn combined in a structured way, and so on. Marxism passes beyond structuralism, for it ceases to deal with single structures in isolation, and introduces concepts which allow us to think the relations between structures -- the irreducibility and relative autonomy of each structure, the asymmetrical relations between them, resulting in uneven development, contradictions within and between structures. This is no trivial matter, for by doing this, marxism has resolved in advance one of the central problems faced by structuralism. With no concept of contradiction, structuralism was robbed of any dynamic principle, and its adherents found themselves in the dilemma of juxtaposing synchronic and diachronic analysis, structure and history. Thus to collapse marxism back into structuralism would be to destroy many of its scientific achievements. This is so particularly in the case of Louis Althusser, who has devoted his theoretical labors to exactly those concepts and problems (contradiction, dialectic, etc.) which arise at the point that marxism passes beyond structuralism. For this reason we believe that Althusser is correct in stating that "the profound tendency of our texts was not attached to the 'structuralist' ideology." (16) Needless to say, this appears as a gratuitous remark to those who, like Brian Aarons, have misunderstood the notion of structure in the first place.

CONCLUSION

Let us now survey the results of our critique of Brian Aarons' article. He claims that Althusser is an idealist, but his arguments on this point show only that he himself is an empiricist. The possibility of a genuine criticism of Althusser on precisely these grounds is thus let slip. He attempts to demolish Althusser's "structuralist marxism," but fails because his empiricist problematic will not allow him to grasp the notion of structure.

Has all this been an elaborate word-game, which may be of interest to intellectuals, but is of no practical importance to communists? Certainly it has no direct and
immediate political consequences. The consequences lie in another field which, however, does have repercussions in the political arena. Brian Aarons' empiricism excludes the possibility of a marxist science. Our little excursion into abstract epistemological and methodological concerns is intended to defend the possibility of such a science. The fruits of this will be seen, we hope, not so much in this defence in itself, not in just demonstrating such a possibility, as in practising it. Scientific analysis of society is the life-blood of the revolutionary movement; without it, it flounders helplessly and dies. The practical experiences of the communist movement through the entire Stalin and post-Stalin period are in our opinion eloquent testimony to the truth of this proposition.

NOTES
(1) For Marx, Allen Lane, London, 1969, p. 27.
(2) Ibid, p. 30.
(6) Ibid, p. 207.
(12) Ibid.
(14) Marx, letter to Engels, June 27, 1867, in Marx-Engels Selected Correspondence, 2nd ed., Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, pp. 190-91; cf. also Capital, Vol. III, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966, p. 817: "Vulgar economy actually does no more than interpret, systematise and defend in doctrinaire fashion the conception of the agents of bourgeois production who are entrapped in bourgeois production relations... These relations seem all the more self-evident, the more their internal relationships are concealed from it, although they are understandable to the popular mind. But all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things coincided."
(16) Althusser and Balibar, op. cit., p. 7.

EDITORIAL COMMENT
The above article is part of a debate about marxist theory today which ALR has been promoting over a period, and one which we think is very important for the revolutionary movement. We believe this to be so despite the fact that some readers have, with justification, been critical of the tone, obscurity and abstractness of some of the articles. Already some very important issues have begun to crystallise, and, we remind readers, theoretical polemics have historically been essential to the development of the revolutionary forces. It should also be stressed that these debates in our journal are conducted among comrades in the revolutionary movement, and our aim is the clarification of principles. Any sharpness in the debates has this purpose and is in no way intended personally. It should also be realised that political differences do not inevitably, or directly, follow from theoretical differences. Those who disagree theoretically may agree on many political questions, while there may be political differences among those who agree theoretically.

* * *

As we see it, the key issues in the present debate are now to distinguish science from pseudo-scientific, what is meant by theoretical humanism and theoretical anti-humanism, and what follows from them. Regrettably, the reply of Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley to Brian Aarons largely avoids, instead of clarifying, the principles involved. It is agreed that the central point of Althusser's work is its claim to give the correct, scientific approach to, and interpretation of, Marx; but the following criticisms of these claims were raised and have not been answered:

* It is not a scientific procedure to look for the truth only by analysing the classic texts of marxism. This would be so even were Althusser's particular analysis correct, but this is also disputed. It was nowhere stated that it is transparently obvious what Marx meant, as Evans and Rowley assert, or that it is not important to read Marx. On the contrary (p.7 of last issue), it is claimed instead that in this reading Althusser "avoids any contact with social reality and events ... and espouses a (wrong) theory of knowledge which justifies this omission." (p.8).

Evans and Rowley comment obliquely on this, saying that one does not know reality directly, but only through concepts, and they quote Spinoza to the effect that the concept of a dog cannot bark. This is not disputed, but where two concepts compete one which refers to the barking characteristic of dogs would be preferred to one which does not. It is true, as Engels says, that one can include a shoe-brush within the concept "mammal" but this does not make it sprout mammary glands; and to include Althusser's theory in the concept "scientific", does not make it so.

* Taking Althusser's definition of science = mathematics and logic (and even theology!) could be taken as sciences. In the first two instances the point was made (p.8) that their difference from science is that the criteria of proof are decided by rules set up with-
in these disciplines themselves, while in science the criteria of proof necessarily also include reference to experimental data and observation. Evans and Rowley make no reply to this but add a revealing statement that the proof that the circumference of a circle is 2 pi times the radius is arrived at by "a series of purely mental operations carried out upon the concept of the circle and does not involve any practice on circular objects in the real world ...." 

Here, Evans and Rowley make a revealing blunder typical of Althusserian idealist epistemology. Pi is an empirical number, the value of which was originally determined by a series of operations on circles drawn on paper with compasses. But even had they picked a more informed example from mathematics, the crucial point is whether scientific theories of atoms, rocks, living organisms, societies, etc., could be arrived at purely from operations with concepts involving no practice on the objects concerned in the real world.

* Evans and Rowley claim that it is justified, in the circumstances of theoretical confusion, to be primarily concerned with matters of form rather than content. Concern with form may be acceptable as one aspect of a more general effort, but it is another thing to defend it, as they do, as sufficient, making no attempt to reply to the original statement that "while it is true that science can be distinguished from other types of knowledge by certain formal characteristics, these characteristics are not, of themselves, a sufficient condition to make something a science." This point is especially important, in our view, in relation to marxism today, for as well as assessment of the completeness of its theories in relation to past periods, there are many new phenomena such as the Chinese and other revolutions, the changes in the productive forces and social conditions under capitalism, the experiences of socialism in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, the problem of revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat in the West, women's liberation, etc., which, in our view, must enter into any re-statement of marxist theory today.

* To Evans and Rowley, it is apparently the essence of "science" to stress those approaches which "allow us to think of the external world as an independent reality." This is said to be materialism, but it is, at best, only a one-sided or crude materialism, as is their "correspondence" theory of truth. Developments in physics and other sciences make clearer that "observation and knowledge are processes - interactions between external reality and internal thought. At our present level of knowledge, at least, it is clear that there is both an 'objective' and a 'subjective' component to knowledge, and that 'scientific' knowledge is not merely a 'mirror reflection' of some 'objective' reality, but a result of human striving to overcome complete subjectivity, ignorance and mysticism."

We think Lenin was correct when he said that the view that conscious people "cannot divert the movement from the path determined by the interaction of environment and elements is to ignore the simple truth that the conscious element participates in this interaction and in the determination of the truth." (Collected Works, Vol. 5, p.316).

In general, what is at issue is not Althusser's stress on the importance of theory, with which we agree, but his undialectical statement of its primacy against the more correct, actually scientific, procedure: "In the sphere of human knowledge about the external world, including scientific knowledge (the dialectical view) implies a continual interaction between 'reality,' observations of that reality (data), and human reasoning as to the 'meaning' of the data, producing hypotheses which are tested in practice via new observations." (p.8). In dealing with these questions, Evans and Rowley say that in Aarons' view "knowledge ceases to be a production and becomes a direct vision of reality."

In fact, what was said was in criticism of Althusser's (and Evans' and Rowley's) one-sidedness and lack of dialectics: "Knowledge can be regarded as a production process, but it is also vision." (p.10).

Evans and Rowley have not only failed to establish the scientific character of Althusser's marxism, but also, by their failure to deal with the real arguments raised, have displayed how indefensible the Althusserian position is.

This is so, too, concerning the significance of human activity and consciousness in social development which is the key issue in the discussion of theoretical humanism versus theoretical anti-humanism.

* Evans and Rowley say that structuralism, in their view, does not deny the possibility of human activity and freedom. Perhaps for some structuralists this is so, but the real problem is how human activity and freedom fit into the theoretical framework they espouse. On this they are silent, except to quote Althusser on practice. These observations were conceded to be valuable (p.7), and it is not denied that practice takes place within a structure or structures - everything that is not complete chaos has some structure. But the question is - what is the relation between existing conditions and structures on the one hand and human activity on the other? The assertion that this problem is covered by the notion of contradiction may point in the right direction, but the concept is not defined nor does it solve the problem of how, and why, within that theoretical framework, social change comes about.

* In defence, apparently, of Althusser's claim to rigor, Evans and Rowley reject Aarons' statement that Althusser does not define key terms such as humanism and historicism. They say "an entire essay in For Marx is devoted to humanism ..." and that there is a glossary in the English edition in which Brewster concisely defines them. The complaint is, in fact, that although Althusser has written a whole essay on humanism, at no stage does he give a concise definition of humanism. In fact, it is not even clear what the essay is driving at.

If it is against the sort of "marxist humanism" which exalts man as in the CPSU slogan "everything for the sake of man" (yet sends tanks into Prague and then endorses every policy of the CPSU at every stage), then we agree with him.

If his polemic is against a waffly humanism which asserts a set of ethics without any concrete analysis of society to indicate how these can be instituted by struggle, we also support him.

But if he is making the theoretical point that people really do not make history at all, then we think he is both theoretically wrong and politically mistaken. As to Brewster's definition * (reprinted below), it is descriptive and not a definition at all. A similar criticism applies to Althusser's essay on historicism, although we would concede that Brewster's definition is, in fact, a definition. However, Althusser, not Brewster, was the subject of the original critique. And we are still awaiting a definition of that much-favored, anything but rigorous,
but it is also possible to find plenty of reasons in the
of the Chinese revolution could take place and succeed;
tions and structures of the times why the Long March
important part to play and, on occasions, a key part.
could be conflated with the existing social structures, have an
the difference between success and failure.
in actual deeds of heroism to bring it about, could make
in line with this decision will have an impact, for good
was completely determined, and that various individuals and
groups could not possibly have made any other decision.
And it seems to us that the future of this encouraging
movement depends less on structures than on conscious
activity of human beings.

* It is true enough that thinking and action take place
within certain frameworks, structures, conditions. But
this does not completely prescribe the content of that
tought and action, or prevent people undertaking the
task of creating new structures, as other people were in
volved in creating the old ones. The contrary Althusser-
ian view which eliminates this vital human factor in
“events which think themselves” is idealistic (even mys-
tical) and deterministic.

* The view that events “think themselves,” and other
versions of “inexorable laws of social development” also
lead in the direction of stilling human conscience and
abolishing human responsibility. We do not accept the
view advanced by some that the crimes of stalinism were
completely determined by structures, were inevitable,
and that different decisions and actions by various
groups of human beings at various times could not, and
should not, have been taken, realising another path of
development.

Similarly, the model of socialism to be striven for
(and there are several such models) which will be con-
structed from the available or possible alternatives, is
a matter of choice. No amount of talk about structures
or ill, on the course of development.

It is because of our conviction that human conscious-
ness and activity should be stressed in opposition to
various forms of determinism which underestimates or
neglect them, that our general orientation is towards
“counter-hegemony.” (See editorial statements, ALR
5/69 and No. 34). To this end, we seek to analyse the
structuralist school itself (and it is arguable whether
Chomsky is a structuralist at all), so there is no compel-
ling reason to adopt the Evans-Rowley definition as the
correct one. Still less is it an argument that because Al-
thusser proposes a structuralist model of capitalism, his
model must represent the real structure of capitalism.

There are various conditions which have given some
strength to recent trends towards deterministic versions
of marxism and an accompanying rejection of concern
with the role of human consciousness in the revolution-
ary movement, and the problems involved in advancing
it. Some of these are mentioned in the article of Franz
Marek in our last issue – the failure, despite tremendous
achievements, of the student movement of the late ‘six-
ties, which tended to reject science, theory and organisa-
tion, proceeding largely by feelings and what was thought
to be right.

But we believe the current trend, of which the Althus-
sen fashion is a part, is an over-reaction leading to the
opposite extreme; one which, uncorrected, could lead to
a repetition in new forms of older errors of the revolu-
tionary movement. A more dialectical viewpoint, of the
kind indicated above, is required.

* * *

This comment by no means exhausts our criticism of
Evans and Rowley, nor, for that matter, our discussion
of the whole trend in marxism which Althusser represen-
ts. There are a number of issues raised by Evans and
Rowley which need further discussion and clarification.
Moreover, the general theoretical viewpoints which lie
behind the present discussion need further elaboration.

Therefore, ALR intends to publish, later in the year,
aspecial pamphlet in which a number of articles and
comments will appear. We hope, and intend, that these
will not merely repeat old arguments about Althusser
but that they will take up key questions in an effort
to clarify fundamental issues within marxism. Contribu-
tions to this pamphlet will be welcomed.

* * *

* “Humanism is the characteristic feature of the ideolo-
getic problematic from which Marx emerged, and more
generally, of most modern ideology; a particularly con-
scious form of humanism is Feuerbach’s anthropology,
which dominates Marx’s Early Works. As a science, how-
ever, historical materialism, as expressed in Marx’s late
works, implies a theoretical anti-humanism. ‘Real-human-
ism’ characterises the works of the break: the humanist
form is retained, but usages such as ‘the ensemble of
social relations’ point forward to the concepts of histo-
rical materialism. However the ideology of a socialist
society may be a humanism, a proletarian ‘class human-
ism.’”
"The strength of every society is in the last resort a spiritual strength. And from this we can only be liberated by knowledge. This knowledge cannot be of the abstract kind that remains in one's head. It must be flesh of one's flesh, and blood of one's blood; to use Marx's phrase, it must be 'practical critical activity.'"

- GEORG LUKACS

A list of the best-known contributors to marxist theory would surely have to include George Lukacs' name in a prominent position. Yet his contribution remains shadowy and paradoxical, due not only to the fact that it spans over five decades and incorporates many shifts of fortune and party lines, but also to the fact that it spans many disciplines - philosophy, aesthetics, sociology and politics.

Lukacs was born in 1885, the son of a successful Budapest banker, and his early milieu was the upper middle class in that city. His preoccupations with aesthetics and philosophy meant that his first contact with marxism was a purely intellectual one. Towards the end of the first world war he became convinced that marxism represented the culmination of western philosophy.

There were two reasons for this. Firstly, it took over Hegel's achievement of overcoming what Lukacs calls "the antinomies of bourgeois thought," meaning the irreducibility of such categories as "is" and "ought", subject and object, etc. - categories that underpin most non-marxist philosophy and social science to this day. Secondly, marxism transcended the abstract idealism of Hegel's system itself, and thus held the promise of philosophy fulfilling itself in practice, in social change.

This realisation about marxism led Lukacs to become politically committed, since it is above all a philosophy of action, of praxis. He became politically active, and in 1919 he was Deputy Commissar for Culture in the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic. Its collapse, and his subsequent exile abroad, established a pattern in Lukacs' political career: his appearances in this arena - in the 'twenties in the international communist movement, and for a few days in Imre Nagy's revolutionary government in 1956 - were to be few, brief, unsuccessful, and punctuated by long periods of exile. His importance lies wholly in his theoretical contribution, which itself could not escape the deformations which are inevitable in the absence of practical involvement in real political struggles. From the mid-'twenties on, there was a second deforming influence on his theoretical activity: the need to follow the zigs and zags of the party line under an unfree regime in which the function of that party line was, among other things, to cover a multitude of Stalinist sins - opportunism, terror, and philistinism.

In this article I am concerned with History and Class Consciousness, which is unquestionably Lukacs' most influential book, and is the reason for the current revival of interest in him as a political thinker. This book is made up of essays written in exile between 1919 and 1922 and was first published in 1923. It is therefore the fruit of several years' political involvement, and yet it is the product of philosophical inquiry as yet free from the Stalinist terror.

History and Class Consciousness does not seek to add to the marxist tradition: on the contrary, it is a major enterprise of restoration; in it Lukacs seeks to expound its fundamental propositions and point out precisely why it represents the culmination of modern philosophy. Two major themes run throughout the work: firstly, the way in which marxism has surpassed earlier philosophical systems and remains the only system capable of comprehending history and guiding men's activity in creating history; secondly, Lukacs attacks certain vulgarisations of the tradition, such as economism and...
scientism, which were prevalent in his time -- and still are today.

This second theme represented an important corrective. Even though Marx himself had heavily criticized traditional materialism, there can be no doubt that, at the time Lukacs was writing, the mainstream of marxism had collapsed back into it, and the emphasis on dialectical method and praxis had been lost. Among important marxists, only Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky had remained entirely outside this mainstream, and the only adequate statement of Marx's historical materialism had been that of Antonio Labriola. The restorative work which Lukacs started was later to be carried much further in Gramsci's writings.

In the first part of this article, I shall attempt to summarise some of the ideas in History and Class Consciousness which come close to the problems facing us today. In the second part, I shall discuss how these ideas differ from Marx's own account. Thirdly, I shall attempt to point to the deficiencies in Lukacs' system and tentatively suggest how they are to be overcome.

I.

History and Class Consciousness is a dense and encyclopaedic work. It contains a theory of history and of the role of consciousness in the revolutionary process, a history of philosophy and an elaboration of the marxist theory of knowledge, the role of the party and the state. This attempt to draw out of it those ideas that are directly concerned with a theory of revolution cannot avoid doing some violence to the balance and completeness of the book itself.

Marxism is more than an alternative social theory or political program. It is an original and autonomous conception of the world, made up of categories which are peculiar to it and bear the stamp of its historical dimension. Lukacs sees the marxist theory of history as encapsulated in the oft-quoted aphorism from The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte: “Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they may please.” For Lukacs, history is first of all of conscious human activity. “Conscious” in this context means no more than “deliberate,” since all historical activity hitherto has been directed by a necessarily impaired vision -- a false consciousness -- of the social process in its totality. The second aspect of history is an objective one: “the succession of those processes in which the forms taken by this activity and the relations of man to himself (to nature, to other men) are overthrown.” (History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics, [H.C.C.], Merlin, London, 1971, p. 186.)

History is, then, the mutual interaction between deliberate human action and objective circumstances, and can only be grasped in terms of a dialectical method, using categories adequate to that method. Lukacs quotes Marx's dictum in his A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy:

“In the study of economic categories, as in the case of every historical and social science, it must be borne in mind that the categories are therefore but forms of being, conditions of existence.”

and notes that the essential determinants of dialectics (“the interaction of subject and object, the unity of theory and practice, the historical changes underlying the categories as the root cause of changes in thought, etc.”) (H.C.C. p. 24, note 6) apply only to social reality -- the realm of conscious human activity -- and not to nature.

The return to a dialectical perspective is basic to Lukacs' notion of “orthodox marxism,” an orthodoxy he defines exclusively in terms of method. This return leads him to emphasise two categories fundamental to dialectics -- “totality” and “mediation.”

The category of totality embodies the unity of the historical process. Marx notes:

“The result we arrive at is not that production, distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they are all members of one totality... Thus a definite form of production determines definite forms of consumption, distribution and exchange as well as definite relations between these different elements... A mutual interaction takes place between these various elements. This is the case with every organic body.” (Critique.)

For Lukacs, this concept of totality is a crucial feature of the marxist method:

“It is not the primacy of economic motives in historical explanations that constitutes the decisive difference between marxism and bourgeois thought, but the point of view of the totality. The category of totality, the all-pervasive supremacy of the whole over the parts, is the essence of the method which Marx took over from Hegel and brilliantly transformed into the foundation of a wholly new science.” (H.C.C., p. 27.)

Lukacs' rejection of economic determinism is clear from this passage, and from this standpoint of the totality he launches his attack on both economism and bourgeois thought.

But the relationships between social phenomena (which is the same as their relation to the social totality) are not immediately obvious, and the immediacy of their appearance must be overcome if the total structure is to be revealed. The category of mediation is the “lever with which to overcome the mere immediacy of the empirical world and as such is not something (subjective) foisted onto objects from outside, it is no value judgment, or ‘ought’ opposed to their ‘is.’ It is rather the manifestation of their authentic, objective character.” (H.C.C., p. 162.) Mediations reveal the relation between a thing and the totality: it reveals in social phenomena what to a marxist is their essential nature: their place in the total structure of society.

Both categories are essential for grasping what Lukacs calls the “concrete reality” of social phenomena, the structural meaning of objects. But unlike bourgeois thinkers, he denies a rigid separation between perceiver and perceived. Starting with Hegel’s formula that “truth must be understood not merely as substance, but also as subject,” Lukacs affirms Marx’s thesis that perception involved the practical sensuous activity of the perceiver, the subject, such that consciousness changes the object and does not merely reflect it. Subject and object are unified in a total process which overcomes “the reified disintegration of the subject, and the -- likewise reified -- rigidity and impenetrability of its objects” (H.C.C., p. 140.) Here, too, Lukacs distances himself from both bourgeois thought and vulgar marxist “scientism” which posit an “objective” reality free from subjective intervention.

What are the implications for the materialist conception of history of this renovation of dialectical method? To answer this question, we must refer to the statement in the Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy:
"It is not the consciousness of men that determines their social being but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.

If "social being" is interpreted passively so as to treat man simply as the object of the social process, a mechanistic (and therefore false) view of the social process results. Lukacs emphasises that man is both the subject and the object of this process, that "social being" is nothing but the practical activity of men, within social relations that are themselves a human product. The active sense of both being and consciousness is the basis upon which Marx criticised Feuerbach's materialism: "The materialist doctrine that men are the product of circumstances and education, that changed men are therefore the product of other circumstances and of a different education, forgets that circumstances are in fact changed by men and that the educator must himself be educated." (3rd Thesis).

Lukacs criticises economism for this same "forgetfulness". The above is a summary of the method Lukacs calls orthodox Marxism, or historical materialism. What is the method for? He opens his book on Lenin with the definition: "Historical materialism is the theory of the proletarian revolution." Although this is rather too simple to encapsulate its meaning in History and Class Consciousness, it is its point of departure from the formal disciplines of philosophy and history. Their irrelevance as a guide to human action was acknowledged by Hegel: "When philosophy paints its gloomy picture a form of life has grown old. It cannot be rejuvenated by the gloomy picture, but only understood. Only when the dusk starts to fall does the owl of Minerva spread its wings and fly." (quoted in HCC, p.59).

The philosopher arrives after the event -- "post festum", as Marx puts it -- and his consciousness is "subsequent consciousness". This tardiness means for Lukacs that "the real motor forces of history are independent of men's (psychological) consciousness of them". (HCC, p.47).

We have seen that man is the subject and object of the historical process, but false consciousness as to his role in the process or the nature of the process itself prevents him from achieving his subjective goals. True consciousness, on the other hand, means both self-knowledge and a correct perception of concrete reality. If truth is not only substance but subject, as Hegel says, the preconditions of a true consciousness capable of guiding (not just explaining the event) historical actions is the existence of a self-knowing, identical subject-object.

In marxist theory, the human subject materialises in the form of social classes, which are both created in the social process and are in turn the motors of it. The consciousness of a class is therefore the only historically significant consciousness in class society. Lukacs says that if the realm of freedom is to be realised "the emergence of consciousness must become the decisive step which the historical process must take towards its proper end". (HCC, p.2). Class consciousness is defined as consisting of: "the appropriate and rational reactions 'imputed' to a particular typical position in the process of production. This consciousness is, therefore, neither the sum nor the average of what is thought or felt by the single individuals who make up the class. And yet the historically significant actions of the class as a whole are determined in the last resort by this consciousness and not by the thought of the individual -- and these actions can be understood only by reference to this consciousness." (HCC, p.51).

Lukacs, with Lenin, raises a distinction between the actual or empirical consciousness of the members of a class on the one hand, and true class consciousness, the rational response to social reality, as it can be gleaned from the "vantage point" of a particular class, on the other.

By no means every class is capable of a class consciousness able to move history, for "class consciousness implies a conditioned unconsciousness of one's own socio-historical and economic conditions", so that "if from the vantage point of a particular class the totality of existing society is not visible .... then such a class is doomed to play a subordinate role. It can never influence the course of history". (HCC, p.52).

The ability to influence the course of history depends on the capacity of a class to exercise hegemony at a particular moment. It will only have this capacity if its interests and consciousness "enable it to organise the whole of society in accordance with its interests". (HCC, p.52).

A significant part of History and Class Consciousness is given over to establishing the point that the hegemony of the bourgeoisie is no longer viable, but I can only indicate the line of argument here. Essentially restating Marx's thesis in The German Ideology, Lukacs says: "For (the bourgeoisie) it is a matter of life or death to understand its own system of production in terms of eternally valid categories: it must think of capitalism as being pre-destined to eternal survival by the eternal laws of nature and reason. Conversely, contradictions that cannot be ignored must be shown to be purely surface phenomena, unrelated to this mode of production." (HCC, pp.10-11).

Bourgeois thought, then, must lack the historical dimension essential to an adequate comprehension of the age. The problem of the present is an historical problem, but as Marx says of bourgeois economics in The Poverty of Philosophy, "history existed once upon a time, but it does not exist any more".

The necessity of the historical dimension arises from the fact that only here is the dialectical motion of the total process expressible. The denial of this totality simultaneously denies to empirical social phenomena the mediation that would allow us to understand their essential reality. Denied this mediation, social phenomena remain locked in their immediacy, and retain the isolation and opacity of "things-in-themselves". For Lukacs, the isolated "thing-in-itself" -- the Kantian noumenon -- is the source of the irreducible antagonisms of bourgeois thought: subject and object, theory and practice, "is" and "ought", etc.

The immediate thinghood of these "things-in-themselves" is reflected in the reified consciousness of the bourgeoisie, epitomised in the fetishism of commodities, whereby a real social relation between men (in Marx's words) "assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things".

Economic crisis represents the simultaneous objective and subjective breakdown of bourgeois society. It is here that the "eternal" laws of capitalist production and reproduction reach their historical limits, the operational rationality of bourgeois economics is outflanked, and the reified mind is unable to perceive a pattern in the "chaos", for "the qualitative existence of the "things" that lead their lives beyond the purview of economics as misunderstood and neglected things-in-themselves ........ suddenly becomes the decisive factor". (HCC, p. 105).
When crisis overwhelms capitalist society, Lukács reveals, in messianic fashion, that class "entrusted by history with the task of transforming society consciously," since "the school of history confers upon it the leadership of mankind" (HCC pp. 71 & 76): the proletariat. For the class situation of the proletariat is both the negation of capitalist society and the only vantage point from which its totality can be understood. As Marx puts it:

"When the proletariat proclaims the dissolution of the old world-order it does no more than reveal the secret of its own existence, for it represents the effective dissolution of that world order." ("Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.")

In order to understand its own nature and role in society, the proletariat is forced to understand society as a whole. While the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are interdependent and both products and components of capitalist society, with the crisis of that society the proletariat emerges as that class whose interests are those of society at large. It is this universalism that signifies that whereas the proletariat "finds itself," history will have found the self-conscious subject-object capable of guiding society by human rationality.

But even for Lukács, the emergence of proletarian class consciousness is not so easy. The proletariat is itself subject to reified consciousness, and in the analysis of what he calls the proletariat's "ideological crisis," he comes close to Gramsci's notion of hegemony. For the proletariat to achieve consciousness, Lukács is highly problematical. The struggle for self-education, for the overthrow of reified forms of资本主义 and by virtue of this mediation." (HCC, p.330).

When it comes to the likelihood or necessity of the proletariat's bridging the gap between empirical and "imputed" class consciousness, Lukács is highly problematical. He rejects the undialectical dichotomy between "fatalism" and "voluntarism," but appears to waver between the two himself:

"The proletariat cannot abdicate its mission. The only question at issue is how much it has to suffer before it achieves ideological maturity, before it acquires a true understanding of its class situation, and a true class consciousness." (HCC, p.76).

And later we find that proletarian class consciousness is "nothing but the expression of historical necessity". (HCC, pp.73 & 208).

It is concerning the crucial question of economic crisis that the problematical nature of the proletariat's ideological maturity comes to the fore. Lukács suggests that "the active and practical side of class consciousness can emerge only in an acute crisis; but the proletariat must evidently be prepared in advance, since it is crucial whether it "experiences the crisis as the object or the subject of decision". (HCC, p.244). As the subject of decision it will not make demands "but impose an effective reality".

As the object of decision, it will see capitalist society drag on, with the attendant possibility of a descent into barbarism:

"Lenin has very rightly pointed out that there is no situation from which there is no way out. Whatever position capitalism finds itself in there will always be some purely economic solutions available. The question is only whether these solutions will be viable when they emerge from the pure theoretical world of economies into the reality of the class struggle. Whether they can be put into practice depends ...... on the proletariat." (HCC, p.306).

II.

"Organisation is the form of mediation between theory and practice. And, as in every dialectical relationship, the terms of the relation only acquire concreteness in and by virtue of this mediation." (HCC, p.330).

In the proletariat's struggle to achieve consciousness, the role played by the communist party becomes crucial. Quoting Lenin's statement that "politics cannot be separated mechanically from organisation", Lukács points out that the party is no mere technical question, but is part and parcel of the theory of revolution. The question "what then shall we do?" demands an answer in terms of organisation. Lukács relates the question to the socio-historical process in this way:

"The production of ideas, conceptions, and consciousness is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life .... men are the producers of their conceptions,
orces itself from practice, and in these circumstances, must be irrelevant to authentic praxis. Theory here div­
bases through social being, "imputed" class consciousness as "conscious existence".

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and provides an answer -- that Lukacs obscures: what is the process that generates actual revolutionary conscious­
ing school of history" rather than "the rough but stimulat­
ard the proletarians as gods. On the contrary, in the fully
developed proletariat everything human has been taken away .... Man has lost himself, but he has not only ac­
quired, at the same time, a theoretical consciousness of his loss; he has been forced by an ineluctable, irremed­
able and imperious distress -- by practical necessity -- to revolt against this inhumanity. It is for these reasons that
the proletariat can and must emancipate itself .... It is not in vain that it passes through the rough but stimulating
school of labour. It is not a matter of knowing what this or that proletarian, or even the proletariat as a whole, conceives as its aim at any particular moment. It is a ques­tion of knowing what the proletariat is, and what it must accomplish in accordance with its nature." (The Holy
Family).

"In this way Marx dethrones the Idea and replaces it with real men, abolishing Hegel's metaphysical teleology. Lukacs, however, implicitly restores this teleology as his proletariat responds to the promptings of history ("the school of history" rather than "the rough but stimulat­ing school of labour"), etc.). Marx sets up the question -- and provides an answer -- that Lukacs obscures: what is the process that generates actual revolutionary conscious­ness in the proletariat?

But Lukacs also poses a problem that does not arise in Marx: how does the proletariat come to adopt its "im­puted" class consciousness as its own -- a consciousness that arises independently of its social being? The ques­tion cannot be answered in terms of historical material­
ism, since the concept of "imputed" class consciousness itself is an idealist construct, the opposite to Marx's "conscious existence". Lacking any dialectical connection with the materialist base through social being, "imputed" class consciousness must be irrelevant to authentic praxis. Theory here divorces itself from practice, and in these circumstances, Lukacs' notion of "theory of praxis" becoming a...
Mid-nineteenth century capitalism, which provided the raw material for Marx's analysis, had certain features which distinguish it from present-day capitalism. The conditions of productivity were lower, so that industry was far more labor-intensive, and the imperative of capital accumulation forced capitalists to rely more on absolute surplus-value. In social terms, this meant large concentrations of workers united in appalling working and living conditions, as the capitalists, driven by "the gales of competition," attempted unceasingly to lower wages and extend the working day. The cyclical crises that inhere in the system were unsoftened by the stabilising mechanisms later invented by bourgeois economics, and the former increased the distress, exacerbating the system's tendency to produce an ever larger body of unemployed. The superstructures of bourgeois society, especially on the continent, were undeveloped, incapable either of absorbing the blows that dealt society by crises, or of successfully imposing a false mediation between the real conditions of life and people's perception of them. Bourgeois dominance appeared fragile.

In these circumstances, Marx's writings on the dynamics of revolution seem quite circumspect: Labriola pointed out that *The Communist Manifesto*, though written from the edge of the volcano of the 1848 revolutionary upheavals, is no prophecy or promise of revolution, but a "morphological prevision" based upon the workings of the system itself. It was, in particular, not based upon any idea of the absolute impoverishment of the working class, but on the idea of a widening gulf between the socio-economic conditions of the two major classes, itself a systematic reflex of capitalist exploitation.

However, from the late-nineteenth century on, a gradual change took place in the nature of capitalist society which altered the basis of the original analysis. The increasing preponderance of constant capital, bringing with it an enormous increase in the productivity of labor, changed the pattern of exploitation to a greater reliance on relative surplus-value, which allowed the bourgeoisie to make strategic concessions to an organised and threatening working class on the issues of wages and working conditions. Exploitative economic relations with overseas territories also provided the bourgeoisie with another source of capital. Moreover, that class reinforced its grip on society through superstructural development. The territories also provided the bourgeoisie with another strategic concessions to an organised and threatening surplus-value, which allowed the bourgeoisie to make hegemony of its "ruling ideas" at first neutralised, and altered the basis of the original analysis. The increasing pre-change took place in the nature of capitalist society which was written.

Absolute surplus-value. In social terms, this meant large capital accumulation forced capitalists to rely more on the material base (and the chances of this seemed to be diminishing), what was called for was a vanguard party for, concrete reality. This reality is relegated to the at-tic: essentially empirical questions, and ones about the lives of real people (as opposed to the abstract entities which Lukacs moves around the stage of history), including those questions concerned with actual class struggle and consciousness, are given a priori answers. Dialectic method, in An Bastian's formulation, "bases the categories of thought on the categories of reality; it may not reflect the conditions of existence in their immediacy, but it must reproduce reality in thought in order to totally perceive it." (Dissertation, p.53). This Lukacs fails to do.

The reflux that had already set in in western Europe by the time *History and Class Consciousness* was written threw a cold light on the inadequacy of pre-existing theory. It thereupon fell to Gramsci to begin a genuine advance towards a theory of consciousness. To understand this advance, we must first look at the limits of Marx's theory.

Marx's base-superstructure model is a dialectical conception which accords the superstructure a relative autonomy rather than the status of a "mere emanation" of the base. However, only the base itself seems susceptible to rigorous scientific analysis since, as Wolpe points out, Marx specifically contrasts "the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of a natural science [on the one hand], and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic -- in short, ideological forms [on the other]." (Socialist Register, 1970, p.274). As it stands then, Marx's theory cannot tell us, in relation to the development of consciousness, strenuously resisted in his lifetime, of the actual condition of the masses becoming irrelevant to party theory.

If, in this new age of imperialism, the contradictions of capitalism impinged less on man's daily experience, they found new expression in the trauma of world war. The less consolidated the bourgeois hegemony in a particular society, the less it could sustain this trauma, and in eastern Europe at least, its knell had apparently sounded in the first world war. It is from this perspective of social crisis, of what Lenin called "the actuality of the revolution," that *History and Class Consciousness* was written. The period was both a salutary reminder that only a dialectical method was adequate to the understanding of the social process, and an invitation to assume, rather than establish empirically, the objective dynamics of revolution. It explains the assumption underlying *History and Class Consciousness*, that "history" had delivered the goods in the form of a revolutionary situation, and only the "subjective factor" remained problematical.

The extent to which the book is thus dated is the extent to which it is both a defective statement of the marxist dialectic and inadequate as a guide to theory and practice today. We have already seen how Lukacs emasculated the concept of praxis; we must now take note in passing of the resulting deformations of method, as these are instructive in the project of constructing an adequate theory of revolution for our own time.

One immediately raises the central problem of Lukacs' approach by asking: what is the entry point into his system for empirical economic, sociological and cultural data? Related to this question, and even more importantly: how are we to relate consciousness to the life process -- the *experience* -- of the concrete individual in his class, his society and his time? In Lukacs' case, the short answer is that a frozen form of Marx's method has been raised above, and made no longer answerable to, concrete reality. This reality is relegated to the at-tic: essentially empirical questions, and ones about the lives of real people (as opposed to the abstract entities which Lukacs moves around the stage of history), including those questions concerned with actual class struggle and consciousness, are given a priori answers. Dialectic method, in Anna Bastian's formulation, "bases the categories of thought on the categories of reality; it may not reflect the conditions of existence in their immediacy, but it must reproduce reality in thought in order to totally perceive it." (Dissertation, p.53). This Lukacs fails to do.

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how the various superstructural elements are to be taken into account.

The groundwork for Gramsci's concept of hegemony was laid in The German Ideology, and both Lenin and Lukacs were aware of the determinant role of superstructural factors, without making any significant contribution to a theory of the superstructure. For Gramsci such a theory was indispensable for an understanding of class power in developed capitalist society, and hence, "the problems of superstructure should not be abandoned to themselves, to their spontaneous development, to a haphazard and sporadic germination." (Prison Notebooks, Lawrence & Wishart, p.247).

In order to overcome the bourgeois leadership of society, a new cultural, ethical and political counter-hegemonic initiative must be launched, and this in turn called for an analysis of all the superstructural factors at play in the development of consciousness. This counter-hegemonic initiative would have to contain many dimensions, which in sum would add up to a new and unified conception of the world, but which, seen severally, would negate the specific values and illusions upon which bourgeois leadership is founded. The ideological struggle that Gramsci called for was not to be confined to the rarefied atmosphere of high culture, but was to be conducted where people lived and worked, in the factories and workplaces themselves.

We have seen how history has added to, rather than replaced, the complexus of factors to be taken into account in the development of consciousness, and hence the challenge implicit in the Marxian concept of praxis seems more formidable than ever. If we ask what factors are relevant to our present era and how the determinacy of each and the relationship between them is to be assessed, we face the added problem of grasping, before the owl of Minerva has spread its wings, the historical significance of factors in an ongoing process.

Goldmann suggests that the era of "imperialist capitalism" (about 1900 to the present) should be seen in two phases -- "crisis capitalism" from 1912 to 1950, and "organised capitalism" from 1950 to the present. The first salient feature of this latter period is a growing complexity of class structure, which makes the use of the Marxian analytic concept of class at once more difficult, and more crucial, to apply. The second salient feature is the growth of monopolies, and connected to that, the change in the phenomenal form of the contradictions of capital: instead of oscillating between boom and -- more or less severe -- depression, the economic system is maintained in a more stable state of "permanent crisis," characterised by unemployment and low utilisation of productive capacity. The price of this "stability" is the ruling class's greater dependence on the state apparatus to keep the economy functioning "normally," and production for waste and warfare.

To these features of our present era might be added two analytic problems. Firstly, the structural necessity of imperialism for metropolitan countries poses the problem of a global, as opposed to a national, class structure. Secondly, the thesis that neo-capitalism, in order to pacify the class struggle, engineers consent by means of psychological manipulation, points to the need for research into the whole question of how social conditions and relations impinge on the human psyche, and how the latter in turn is to be located in a determinant social process.

If these aspects and their interconnections are rigorously analysed within the tradition of historical materialism, we shall have taken a long step towards a theory of the development of revolutionary consciousness which confronts the actual situation of the working class itself and of the minorities and excluded groups whose anti-capitalist struggles are so important today. Such a theory is clearly a precondition to the revolutionary project itself.

**CONCLUSION**

The argument for a restoration of the empirical content of historical materialism is not an invitation to collapse into crass empiricism. The "facts" themselves explain nothing; they can only answer theoretically adequate questions. Still less does the suggestion that the dynamics of the human psyche must be comprehended in a theory of consciousness validate psychologism in general, or the apologetics of bourgeois ego-psychology (which contrives to define the social dimension out of existence) in particular.

This said, it is apparent that the deficiencies in Lukacs' treatment of consciousness must be made up by theoretical analysis and empirical investigation focussed in three areas:

1. An economic and sociological investigation of the structure of advanced capitalist society, including crisis theory, the structural aspects of imperialism (especially from the point of view of the imperialist metropolis), inter-imperialist trade and conflict, and class structure.
2. The development of a theory of the superstructure, the differentiation of its components and their articulation. Such a theory would have to redefine and constantly revise the relation between base and superstructure, for example, in revamping the notion of the state in the light of its new role in the economy.
3. The development of a "structural anthropology," to use Sartre's term, which locates the concrete man in his class and in his society, and which accounts for his conditioning, needs and responses in that social milieu.

These foci are complex in themselves, and more complex in the totality of their interrelations. Even to approach them is to grapple with the problem of developing methods adequate -- and answerable -- to their content. Moreover, theories constructed so abstractly have strictly limited usefulness; they are only a guide to, not a substitute for, specific analyses on the national level. This conceptual complexity, however, merely reflects a complex reality -- the present seen as history. And understanding history, Labriola reminds us, is a question of "explaining the connection and the complexus precisely insofar as it is a connection and a complexus. It is not merely a question of discovering and determining the social groundwork, and then of making men appear upon it like so many marionettes, whose threads are held and moved, no longer by Providence, but by economic categories. These categories have themselves developed and are developing -- because men change as to the capacity and the art of vanquishing, subduing and transforming and utilising natural conditions; because men change in spirit and attitude through the reaction of their tools upon themselves; because men change in their respective and co-associated relations; and because men change as individuals depending in various degrees upon one another. We have, in fine, to deal with history, and not with its skeleton." ("Essays on the Materialist Conception of History, Kerr & Co., Chicago, 1908, pp. 208-9.)
St Louis reputedly has a long association with Hegelianism dating back to the middle of the last century. Recently its leading university, Washington University, has become one of the most radical "hegelian marxist" centres in the United States. The critical theorists are concentrated in the department of sociology, where they constitute a strong minority, and in political science. There appear to be two distinct wings with little overlap. The first group is associated with "Telos," whose editor, Italian-born Paul Piccone, teaches sociology at Washington University. Until recently the "无敌" for these men was the Reification chapter in Lukacs' "History and Class Consciousness" -- they regard themselves simply as hegelian marxists -- for whom theories like that of Louis Althusser are, as Piccone himself put it, a heap of horse shit, and not even worthy of intellectual consideration. The second group is less homogeneous but is broadly associated with "Socialist Revolution" (Boggs) or "I.S." (Sallach), and is more practically and nationally oriented in its socialism, without going to the "mythologising" extremes of "Radical America."

It is from these two groups that the initiative for the Gramsci conference came, as both appear to have decided that Gramsci is the most useful theoretician for both theory and practice in the United States. At first the conference, which inaugurated a joint course on Gramsci at St Louis, was intended as something regional, then national, and finally, when some money materialised, as international. It lasted from 2-5 February, and as it had been well publicised, was well attended, with an average participation at sessions of 50-70 people, most of whom were specialists in Gramsci or writing doctorates on Gramsci. Incidentally, this indicates that a "vogue" for Gramsci is now starting in the Anglo-Saxon world, just as it is declining in Italy.

From the outset two themes emerged in the conference: the first centred on the relationship between Lenin and Gramsci, the second on the meaning and status of "praxis" in Gramsci's work.

The first issue was almost inevitable (and linked to the second) because the P.C.I. orthodoxy has always been that in some sense or other Gramsci was a Leninist. The senses have, in fact, often changed, and the whole PCI thesis is, as a recent article in "Political Studies" suggested, discredited unless the normal notion of Leninism as a theory of the need for the party's pre-eminence is discarded for that of a Lenin who is a philosopher of praxis, without realising this theoretically. Sufficient to say that at the conference not only was the orthodoxy criticised from all sides, it was also treated as completely "ideological," unbased in fact and designed to stimulate a "national-frontist" politics by deviating attention from what is central in Gramsci.

At the very first session, a panel session, on which I sat, two speakers called into question the validity of the relationship and found themselves endorsed strongly by Silvia Federici from Parma and the "Potere Operaio" group, who simply denied that Gramsci was in any sense a Leninist. That evening, Piccone, who hardly sees eye to eye with Federici on Gramsci, again pointed out that Gramsci's theory has nothing to do with a Leninism which stresses "external mediation." Perhaps it is sufficient to say that by far the mildest critic of those who assert that there is a connection in the two thoughts, was the "ALR" delegate, who delivered an opening paper on the second day which also concluded against Gramsci, the Leninist.

While this affirmation aroused some resistance in the audience, especially from extreme-Left activists (one of whom produced a copy of Hill's pamphlet on the Marxist-Leninists for me), and provoked interesting debate about what Leninism is, it became clear that the bulk of the Gramsci specialists regarded this issue as old-hat, and Beverley Kahn intervened to say that it is far more important to come to terms with the Crocian influence.

This debate continued to haunt the conference, and on the second day, became mixed up with the discussion about the nature of practice in Gramsci and what form it should take for us. In particular Carl Boggs' interesting re-statement of his article in "Socialist Revolution", which pleaded for a sort of counter-culturalist policy, stimulated much debate about what we should do in an advanced capitalist society. In this debate the division between some of the "Telos" group, and particularly Piccone, and those who thought that theory was useless without practice through factory councils and workers' control, became clear. Very much influenced by the European and German mode of thinking, Piccone was to reply at one session to a question which more or less said that unless the audience could understand the theory and thus act on it, it was useless: that, quite simply, what was being discussed was marxist theory, whether they understood it or not. Both had grasped a little of the truth: marxism cannot simply be popularised because this is "democratic," and yet it must be practicable.

Fundamentally, practice was understood by most speakers, including Sallach, and a number of younger members of the audience, to be a "consciousness-raising" activity through unified action in the workplace and elsewhere, particularly among the working-class or "underfolk" as one man put it. The role of theory was as an adequate of reality and served as an impetus to action. As Gramsci put it: "the only categorical imperative in marxism is 'workers of the world unite,'" While this possibly led to pragmatism, and this issue was discussed by Arato, even despite its theoretical limitations it seemed acceptable to some of the "Telos" group.

It was at the evening session that the "Left" criticism of Gramsci, so well-known to students of Italian affairs, was first explicated by Silvia Federici. She felt that even Gramsci's theory of practice, as proposed above, was useless and "bourgeois," that in fact he was insufficiently aware of the crucial factor of political economy in marxism. Because of this he under-estimated the classical marxist categories of class in favor of a "frontism" which led inevitably to the PCI's policies, and he over-estimated the factor of work. Since the whole thesis, one common to the extra-parliamentary Left in Italy, rests on a particular set of facts, she was criticised by Frank Adler, Arato and Davidson on fac-
tual grounds. It appeared to us that the whole thesis against Gramsci was based on a mythological history of his life and times.

On the final day the paper from Budapest reiterated the general theme that Gramsci was not a Leninist and that his main theoretical contribution was to practice. David Sallach then developed a very interesting discussion of how hegemony worked in the United States, by going back, marxist fashion, to the empirical facts. He rejected strongly the incultation thesis, developing the institutional theory of hegemony and, of course, calling into question the whole theory of the "enemy" implicit in class struggle theorists of the crude sort.

Sallach's paper marked the close of the conference. By general agreement it had been a great success. "Telos" intends to bring out a special Gramsci issue as a result, in which many of the papers will be published. Some, like that of Boggs, have already appeared elsewhere.

Perhaps most impressive for an outsider was the degree of theoretical sophistication of the audience, many of whose names would be known to readers of American and British Left journals. We have been fortunate in bringing back as an example an article by one of Zeitlin's students, which discusses Louis Althusser at length. Incidentally, Althusser is regarded as "nothing from nothing" on every Left campus visited.

David Sallach then developed a very interesting discussion of his main theoretical contribution was to practice. The conference inaugurates a course on Gramsci at Washington University. Among those who will give seminars will be Genovese and Nowell-Smith; 2) that this part of the US Left are not victims of the latest fads, and the general agreement it has been a great success. "Telos" has a surprisingly high standing in the whole US movement lags very far behind the Australian movement in its activism and its impact on society generally, and that while we look to them, they look to us for guidance. Hence the prominence accorded to "ALR's" delegate at the conference. A short visit to the Teamster Union offices explained why they are so far behind!

It is pleasing to see that in the United States: 1) initiatives like the Gramsci conference are not lost. The conference inaugurates a course on Gramsci at Washington University. Among those who will give seminars will be Genovese and Nowell-Smith; 2) that this part of the US Left are not victims of the latest fads, in the way that "New Left Review" sometimes comes perilously close to being.

As a by-product of his attendance "ALR's" delegate was able to speak on a number of other campuses in the United States on Gramsci, Sartre and marxism generally. "ALR" has a surprisingly high standing in the USA and articles from it are used on campuses there (e.g. Taft's article on the Leninist party). It should imitate the way that "New Left Review" sometimes comes perilously close to being.

Kelvin Rowley's review of Eric Aarons' book, "Philosophy for an Exploding World" (ALR No. 39), raises a number of important theoretical, philosophical and political issues. However, this is not done in any analytical way but rather by means of assertions and bald statements. The issues emerge almost despite his lack of analysis; we learn more about Rowley's attitudes than we do about the inadequacies of Aarons' book.

It is not my intention here to defend or criticise the book. Instead I wish to examine several key statements by Rowley which indicate what I believe is an incorrect approach and attitude to the problems he raises.

Rowley begins with the assertion that the book is "the product of disillusionment." Now this may or may not be so. However, at best this would be an explanation for why the book was written; it tells us nothing about the merits or demerits of the book itself. Rowley seems to imply that disillusionment is a bad reason for writing a book. However, it may be a good reason. Whether the subjective psychological reason for the writing of a book has affected the book itself in good or bad ways can only be assessed by analysis of the book itself, and the issues which it raises. When we come to look at Rowley's specific criticisms we find that whatever the book's inadequacies might be he has not really found them. Rather, he demonstrates the inadequacies of his own position.

Rowley quotes Aarons on how the affluence of contemporary capitalism has meant that it has at least partly solved the problems of mass poverty with which the revolutionary Left was once concerned, yet how in doing so capitalism has only demonstrated its own appalling emptiness. Rowley does not indicate whether he agrees or disagrees with this proposition, so we are left without a real debate.

The review then moves on to the question of economic reductionism. Rowley manages to confuse two quite different arguments here. There is the question of whether classical Marxism was economic-reductionist, and there is the question of whether reductionism is correct or incorrect. Now Aarons nowhere "assumes that [economic reductionism and mass impoverishment] are Marxist theory." He is concerned to criticise these doctrines, which rightly or wrongly were taken to be Marxism by whole generations of Marxist revolutionaries. Since economic reductionism still exerts an influence, there is a point to criticising it. Whether Marxism is itself economic reductionist is a matter for some debate. It is true that the major Marxist theorists (why Althusser deserves to be listed alongside Lenin, Gramsci, Trotsky and Mao escapes me) did warn against vulgar Marxist reductionism. However, this does not mean that they all agreed or were consistent in their own evaluation of the relationship between the economy and other social structures, and the relative importance of the economy. My own feeling is that the body of Marxist theory contains many insights which point away from economic reductionism, but that the Marxist theoretical tradition taken as a whole has heavily emphasised economic analysis and has not yet made a full and extended analysis of other aspects and sectors of human society. Further, even those who opposed reductionism wrote works which lent credence to the vulgar Marxist interpretation -- with the important exception of Gramsci.

This brings us to the question of whether Marxism as it is at present can give a completely "adequate account" of contemporary society. No theory or body of thought is ever complete -- reality continually presents us with problems which our current theories cannot properly contain. If the gap between theory and reality is wide enough, we must change our theories. In my opinion Marxism is one of the most comprehensive and adequate intellectual traditions of our time, but it does have deficiencies, inadequacies and inconsistencies. These...
have to be rectified not only from within Marxism itself, but also by drawing on all that is best in the work of other intellectual schools and traditions. One criterion for the adequacy of Marxism is whether it remains an open intellectual tradition, subject to change and development, or whether it closes itself off and becomes a set of ossified dogma. There are other reasons why Marxism may or may not be inadequate. Aarons raises a number of problems which certainly don't exhaust the list. Among them are the problems of human consciousness, will and practice, and the relation between consciousness and social structure. I would not claim that the book covers these points satisfactorily nor that it is right in every detail. However, Rowley does not lead us into a profitable debate because he doesn't discuss any of the real issues which the book raised.

Moreover, Rowley is quite wrong when he contends that Aarons “does not see the doctrine of economic reductionism as fundamentally incorrect.” According to Rowley, the book is arguing that the old doctrines need to be complemented by “a new emphasis on inner, subjective conditions.” Now the book does not say that economic reductionism should be complemented with this new aspect. What emerges is that classical Marxist political economy (of the non-reductionist variety) needs to be complemented with a theory of human consciousness — how attitudes, beliefs, values and a commitment to revolution arise from the given conditions of capitalist society. The whole history of capitalism and of the revolutionary movements which have tried to overthrow it show that this is a legitimate concern. For the failure of revolution in the West is at least as much a problem of political practice and mass consciousness as it is of the dynamics of capitalist economic development. More accurately it is a problem of both these and of the relation between them. All this seems to have escaped Rowley's notice.

For him, to pose the problem of human consciousness alongside that of traditional economic analysis is “eclecticism.” Now eclecticism is a much-misused word in the Marxist vocabulary. It describes what happens when someone tries to throw together, in a confused, unsystematic way, different philosophical, theoretical and political views which are either incompatible or perhaps even contradictory. To prove that someone’s theories are eclectic one must demonstrate inconsistency and incompatibility between the various components of the theory. Rowley does not do this. He seems to imply that because Aarons raises a new perspective on human society alongside other perspectives he must therefore be eclectic. In this sense Marx could have been called eclectic because he forged his theory from three quite different traditions: German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism. Of course Marx was not eclectic; he developed his theory by drawing on a multitude of contemporary intellectual traditions (a process from which some modern “Marxists” could learn a thing or two). As Lenin noted, these three “sources” became the three “components” of Marxism.

Rowley seems to be suggesting that only a “complete” theory would be a non-eclectic one. However, as Aarons correctly points out, modern science has more or less given up the search for a unitary theory as a false and unattainable goal. Moreover, in raising various problems the book is not attempting to develop a more general theory, although doubtless this needs to be done. Hence the real issues remain: does Rowley think that the particular points and analyses of the book are wrong and mutually incompatible? If he does, let him demonstrate this by argument and counter-analysis, not by hauling out unsubstantiated labels to pin on his opponents.

One of the main points of the review is to establish that “Aarons adopts a position of idealism, of cultural reductionism.” This, it is claimed, is shown by the book’s concern with subjectivity, human values, ideas and beliefs. Rowley objects to the use of a quote from Parsons, “high priest of bourgeois sociology.” Now Parsons is undoubtedly a major ideologist of capitalism, but this does not necessarily make everything he writes wrong. For instance, his concern to develop a model of society as a system is remarkably close to that of the Marxist structuralists, despite his quite different starting point. The particular point Parsons is making is more or less correct in my opinion. Rowley is quite wrong to say that if moral standards hold a society together then 19th century Europe was a Christian society rather than a capitalist one. Clearly, the moral values and standards of capitalism were as much a part (in fact more) of social beliefs in 19th century Europe as were Christian ethics. Indeed, we might properly describe Europe at that time as a Christian-capitalist society, as opposed to, say, a Buddhist-capitalist society. There is also the question of the relationship between Christian beliefs and capitalist ethics.

In any case, this very point was made before Parsons, by none other than Antonio Gramsci, who spoke of the problem which any “conception of the world” faced: “This problem is that of preserving the ideological unity of the entire social bloc which that ideology serves to cement and unify.” If Aarons is idealist then so is Gramsci. Again, Rowley does not really tackle the issue: is it true or not that ideologies and beliefs help to keep a society together as a functioning unit? I think it is true, although there is also the question of the relation between ideological and social structures, and the question of whether people always behave according to the beliefs they espouse.

We now come to what I believe to be a central issue. Rowley accuses Aarons of denying that “capitalism is ... an intrinsically self-destructive system.” According to Rowley, Marx said it was, and he believes that Aarons has substituted an ethical judgment of capitalism for this belief in capitalism’s inevitable downfall. Now it is debatable whether Marx thought that capitalism was intrinsically self-destructive. Partly it is a question of what is meant by this phrase. But I think that Marx did tend in this direction, especially in some of his later works. [ Against this, we can counterpose statements of Marx such as “There are no permanent crises.”] However, the real question is not what Marx said, but whether the statement is true.

The great contribution of Lenin was to have been the first Marxist to resolutely oppose the determinist interpretation of Marxism which held that capitalism would inevitably collapse. He made the point that there was no crisis, no matter how severe, from which capitalism could not extricate itself if the labor movement allowed it to. Lenin’s stress on the importance of political struggle to gain the ideological support of the workers shows a similar concern with mass con-
sciousness to that of Gramsci. In this sense Aarons is following up their concerns. Naturally the book is not merely repeating Lenin and Gramsci; modern capitalism has its own features and problems which must be investigated. The book may be right or wrong in its analysis of consciousness, subjectivity and values, but this must be shown by concrete analysis, not by accusing Aarons of "idealism".

Rowley displays his own preferences when he says that in the book "Marxism is accordingly demoted from a science to a humanist ethic." As argued elsewhere in this issue, Rowley's own conception of science and Marxism is wrong and smacks of a real philosophical idealism. However, leaving this aside, it is simply not true that the book anywhere says anything like that Marxism should not be a science, and become just an ethic instead. Unlike Rowley's quite wrong formulation, the book does not pose the one against the other. Marxism is a great revolutionary tradition precisely because it combines scientific analysis with ethical aspects and does not try to artificially separate the two. Indeed, as Norman Geras points out in a telling critique of Althusser which Rowley should read again, many of Marx's scientific concepts have an ethical dimension. For instance, his concept of exploitation is both a scientific and a critical-ethical one. To rob Marxism of either its scientific analysis or of its ethical and critical dimension is to impoverish it. Anyone who tries to do this (as Rowley seems to) helps to diminish its adequacy as a revolutionary theory capable of guiding the revolutionary movement.

Thus it is not Aarons who poses "the moral problems facing humanity as a whole" against "the petty problems of history and social structure." Rowley does that, and he is just as one-sided and wrong as Aarons would have been if he had done it from the opposite point of view.

A few final comments on gross inadequacies and mistakes in Rowley's review:

* Aarons is supposed to collapse Marxism into "romantic denunciations of modernity." Where does he do this? The book is a critique of capitalism from the point of view of overthrowing it, and establishing socialism; at no point does it call for a retreat to the past, condemn technology or anything remotely similar.

* Rowley speaks of the "great ecology scare." Typically, it is not clear what he means. If he refers to ruling class use of the ecology issue as a means to blind people to the wrongs and inadequacies of capitalism, fair enough. But if he is joining with those "Marxists" who say that the ecology-environment crisis is not real at all, then he is so wrong that it's not funny. A few facts and concrete analysis would help, as always.

* He accuses the book of not having done things which it never intended to do (e.g., analyse the dynamics of the modern capitalist economy). Maybe the book should have done these things, but it should be judged on what it did do.

* Rowley states that the "conscience of humanity" is nothing! The conscience of humanity may be bad, but it is certainly not nothing. How can one explain the mass movements against the Vietnam war, perhaps the most important and radical movements of the sixties, without seeing them as the result of the outraged conscience of vast layers of people in the West? At no point does Aarons imply that the importance of consciousness and conscience means that revolutionaries should rely on "goodwill." Like so many assertions of Rowley, this too is a figment of his imagination.

*Finally, Rowley makes the contention that the practical consequences of the book are that "attempts to wage the class struggle as effectively as possible, hopefully culminating in the overthrow of the capitalist class and the seizure of power by the working class, are to be replaced by endless, fruitless appeals to the 'conscience of humanity'." This is a quite unwarranted assertion and demonstrates Rowley's misreading of the book. First of all there is the point of humanity's "conscience" made above. Secondly, at no stage in the book did Aarons say or suggest that class struggle was to be "replaced." In my view the book could perhaps have drawn its political conclusions more explicitly, but the implications are clear enough. And these are precisely in the direction of making the struggle against capitalism more effective by intervening in the social process in certain ways. The book's stance is to elaborate a Gramscian counter-hegemonic strategy on certain issues, and opposes the various brands of Marxist determinism which in fact lead to political passivity. Rowley fits in with these determinist strands and therefore I believe it is he who does not grasp the need to more effectively wage the struggle against capitalism.

Aarons may be wrong or right on these points, but Rowley needs to give us more concrete analysis of the real themes of the book in order to show this.

-- BRIAN AARONS.
the long march with matilda. interview with wilfred burchett
manual azcarate. unproductive consumption. marxism: lukacs
althusser. discussion
australian left review