DISCUSSION:

THE NATURE OF MARXISM

Mr. Carr makes five main points of criticism:

1. He denies that marxists have been slow to analyse changes in post-war capitalism and that there has been "a certain stagnation in marxist thinking in the forties and fifties" as I had claimed, and goes on to say that "people who leave out of their calculation the subject of change can be discounted as marxists... (on them) argument would be wasted."

Unfortunately it is one thing to talk about the need to take changes into account and to recite the relevant law of dialectics; it is quite another thing to actually do this in analysing different aspects of social life. This is not so easy, even for marxists who try to take changes into account.

The facts are that during the first quarter of the present century, marxist economic theory was developed (by Lenin and others) in various new directions, taking into account the changes in economic life since Marx's analysis was made (e.g. Lenin's Imperialism), while bourgeois economic theory stood virtually still.

During the second quarter of the century, however, bourgeois economic theory has developed in various new ways (Keynes and others) whilst marxist economic theory has tended to stagnate.

Only in the last few years have there been any serious attempts by some marxist economists to try and analyse the new phenomena in economic life, which have developed particularly in the post-war years.

2. Mr. Carr's chief criticism is directed against my statement that marxists should "examine new phenomena free from dogma and pre-conceived ideas". This, Mr. Carr claims, is to demand that the "investigation is to be made with entire neglect of the marxian dialectical reasoning... is to use the metaphysical approach..."

This is a strange way of 'defending' marxism. Marx and Engels spent a lifetime struggling to establish a method of investigation which was free from dogma and pre-conceived ideas.

"Our teaching is not a dogma, but a guide to action, Marx and Engels always used to say." (Lenin: Selected Works. Eng. Ed., Vol. VI, P. 32.)

They held that "the materialist standpoint means... to comprehend the real world—nature and history—just as it presents itself to anyone who approaches it free from any pre-conceived idealist fancies." Engels, Feuerbach. Chap. 4, emphasis added.)

To be free from dogma and pre-conceived ideas is not to be "free from everything" as Mr. Carr claims. Quite the contrary. It is only when we are free from pre-conceived ideas and prejudices only by "conceiving nature just as it exists without any foreign admixture" can we make a correct scientific examination and draw valid conclusions. Such conclusions led Marx and Engels to a strong partisan position in favor of the working class. But this was—as it should be with us today—the result of an objective examination of the world "as it exists without any foreign admixture", i.e. free from dogma and pre-conceived ideas.
Evidently Mr. Carr is confusing partisanship and a firm commitment, which marxists embrace, with dogma and pre-conceived ideas which marxists reject.

3 Mr. Carr challenges the view that "Marx placed economics on scientific foundations and was characterized by a challenging attitude free from pre-conceived ideas and blinding class prejudices". He comments "As though Marx would waste his great intellect to make a science of bourgeois economics!"

The facts are that Marx did place economics on a scientific foundation. Without attempting to argue this here, this was certainly how Marx, Engels and Lenin viewed it.

"Classical political economy, before Marx, evolved in England, the most developed of the capitalist countries. Adam Smith and David Ricardo, by their investigations of the economic system, laid the foundations of the labor theory of value. Marx continued their work. He rigidly proved and consistently developed this theory."

(Engels, Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism, emphasis added.)

Engels stated: "Classical economics had got into a blind alley. The man who found the way out of this blind alley was Karl Marx."

(Introduction to Wage, Labour and Capital.)

4 Mr. Carr states: "Mr. Taft is also in error when he says 'periodic crises occurred every eight to twelve years' " . . . He goes on, "Marx made no assumption regarding the appearance of crises every eight to twelve years. The fact that they appeared to repeat themselves in this way was purely an exterior fact, a matter of chance. Crises may repeat themselves every five, ten or twenty years in accordance with the formula presented by Marx in his three volumes of Capital and also presented by Engels in Anti-Duhring . . .""

In the very Anti-Duhring mentioned by Mr. Carr, Engels says the opposite. "And in fact, since 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, the production and exchange of all civilized peoples and their more or less barbarian dependent people have been dislocated practically once in every ten years."

(Engels' Anti-Duhring, part III, Section II, emphasis added.)

5 As for Mr. Carr's claim that "Marx . . . viewed capitalism as a class society absolutely incapable of providing anything for the solution of human problems," it is difficult to make out where Mr. Carr derived this view. Certainly not from Marx' writings. He surely must know that Marx and Engels had an entirely different view about the dynamic role that capitalism played in man's history.

It may be that Mr. Carr's view of "Capitalism, absolutely incapable of providing anything . . ." throws some light on his curiously negative attitude to day-to-day struggles whilst the capitalist system still exists.

He seems to suggest that the working class movement should not elaborate positive policies in the interests of the working people under capitalism, but should stand by and watch the system collapse so that the masses will wake up and revolt. If indeed this is what Mr. Carr has in mind, such a policy, despite his undoubtedly sincere intentions would condemn socialists to sterility, would isolate them from the people. It would provide the opponents of the working class with a first-rate weapon to prevent genuine socialists from making any headway towards our aim of establishing a socialist society.

B. TAFT.
WHAT IS A MARXIST APPROACH?

MR KEN CARR (ALR No. 1, 1967) puts heavy obligations on such as B. Taft who aspire to draw attention to changes in capitalist development. He requires them to strongly condemn, even to disqualify from the marxist fraternity, those economists deemed deficient in their observation of change and to refrain from wasteful argument with them.

Taft's proposal to "examine new phenomena, free from dogma and preconceived ideas" is firmly rejected. Instead the approach to a scientific task is to be partisan rather than objective; in the manner of Marx, according to Mr. Carr. The factor of change is to be given great weight in the calculations but should not appear in the conclusions. These impressions of Mr. Carr's arguments may not correspond with what he intended to convey, but several readings of his letter strengthen them.

His position is consistently absolute. It is an attitude that for all its invocation of "the marxist dialectic" recognises nothing of shades, stages or degrees.

B. Taft and Alf Watt, despite their differences on economic theory, are both consigned to outer darkness since both propose that contradictions within capitalism can be the grounds for valuable agitation and organisation that, in the event, probably will fall short of decisive social change.

Taft spoke of the gap between what capitalism could provide and what it does provide, Watt of a workers' policy to counteract the effects of capitalist instability and crisis.

Elsewhere in the Review in which Mr. Carr's letter appears, and again in the documents and preparatory discussion for the Communist Party Congress, proposals are made for a transitional policy to include such issues.

Your correspondent pursues his undeviating line into the international arena.

He would persuade the Soviet Union to issue an ultimatum to the United States on Vietnam: "Not a step further—or else!"

Altogether, it seems to me that an ultimatum fixing the two super powers in belligerent stances and then setting them on collision courses would be the worst possible method of helping Vietnam or world peace. If the Vietnamese ask for more help it would be best given unannounced.

The most valuable development would be for China to join with other countries of the socialist bloc in a declaration of joint support and assistance.

K. DONOVAN.

COUNTER-ESCALATION?

SOCIALISTS everywhere, and all friends of Vietnam, are profoundly moved by the savagery of the onslaught upon this small people by the barbarous forces of aggression, led by the US militarists and supported by the Australian Government. The extent and depth of the political opposition movement throughout the world bears witness to this.

But is enough being done? Does not socialist, and even ordinary human solidarity demand that in some way, more direct assistance be rendered to this small nation struggling so gallantly against fantastic odds to preserve its right to exist as an independent nation and to determine its own future free from foreign dictation?
Various proposals have been made ranging from the Cuban proposition for an international brigade, to demands that the socialist countries, and in particular the USSR, should 'counter-escalate' the war, to the point of direct military confrontation between the USA and Soviet armed forces in Vietnam. The latter view sponsored by Jean-Paul Sartre and others finds expression in the article by Ken Carr and the former in that of Nicholas Origlass (ALR Feb.-March 1967). Such views are widespread, both in west and east. In France hundreds of people and in the Soviet Union hundreds of thousands have volunteered to fight in Vietnam. However, in the complex situation that prevails around Vietnam these simple solutions need critical scrutiny. There is, first of all, the position of the Vietnamese themselves. The writer can testify from personal participation in discussions with the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam that they firmly reject proposals for the entry of foreign units (Soviet or Chinese) into the combat. What they ask for and are receiving is the material and equipment that will give them some measure of military parity with the foreign invaders. The provision of food and small arms by the Chinese and of massive aerial defence by the Soviet Union is not in dispute. All the equipment that has been asked for has been supplied, including the most modern aircraft; the only limitation being the supply of trained personnel to fly them. What, then, is involved in further 'counter-escalation'? Does it mean pressure upon Vietnam to accept military forces from the Soviet Union or China? And would China, with its present violent anti-Soviet orientation, permit the transit of Soviet or other military forces across its territory? There are persistent and well authenticated reports of considerable Chinese obstruction to passage of equipment at present.

The only other means by which direct intervention could be carried out by the USSR would be by sea from Vladivostok to Haiphong, across oceans dominated by United States naval power. It is difficult to envisage any responsible military leadership committing large forces to such a project, with an unfriendly China holding all of the land supply routes, and the United States the sea routes of forces fighting thousands of miles from their home bases.

The political key to the problem is the basic question of unity of action amongst the socialist countries. The USSR, backed by most of the world socialist movement, has proposed time after time joint action by all of the forces supporting the people of Vietnam; and the Chinese leadership has sharply rebuffed all such proposals. The fact of the matter is that the Chinese leadership will not co-operate willingly in any project which includes the Soviet Union, and they justify their refusal on the grounds of alleged Soviet collusion with the USA, to betray the Vietnamese people, a view firmly rebutted by the Vietnamese leadership itself.

The Chinese leadership sees the conflict in Vietnam as a verification of their basic concept of direct struggle between the forces of imperialism on the one side and of national liberation on the other, from which the forces of national liberation must emerge victorious. Any intervention by European ‘revisionist’ forces on the side of national liberation is a contradiction of their basic political position.

While they continue to hold this view any talk of counter-escalation by the socialist forces can have only one meaning—unilateral action by the Soviet Union involving the threat, and should that fail the use, of nuclear armament; a Soviet-US and most likely a world nuclear conflict.
Those whose thinking on ‘counter-escalation’ tends in this direction have, it seems, a one-sided, over-simplified view of the role of the Soviet Union in world politics. It is a fact that as the most developed industrial socialist power the Soviet Union has the responsibility, which it accepts, to give every form of assistance possible to peoples attempting to win their independence or to establish or safeguard a socialist regime.

As Castro said, the Soviet Union risked its very existence to guarantee the continuance of the socialist regime in Cuba. But the Soviet Union is also one of the two great nuclear powers, and the only significant socialist nuclear power. It has the heavy responsibility to play the leading part in ensuring that the provocation and aggression of imperialism do not force nuclear destruction upon the world. Is it entitled to engage in a nuclear confrontation with the USA in the existing circumstances, with all the terrible consequences that could ensue?

The alternative and, in fact, the only real policy is the continued and expanding supply by the socialist countries to Vietnam of the most modern and efficient means of defence, and simultaneously the ‘escalation’ of the efforts of the peace forces throughout the world to increase the isolation of the aggressors, and mobilise the growing sentiment of opposition to the dirty war. This ‘escalation’ too should not be thought of solely or even mainly in terms of more militant actions by small groups, valuable though these are, but activity aimed at changing the views of the large numbers misled by the official propaganda of prejudice and fear. This is the only form of ‘escalation’ that has any validity for Australia.

To substitute for our own efforts one-sided demands on the Soviet Union for military escalation is a form of adventurism whose consequences could well be not the salvation of the Vietnamese people but the extension of the present conflict into the disaster of world nuclear devastation.

Bill Gollan.

THE PIPES OF PAN

WRITE A BOOK in this country, or make a film, and someone is bound to review it. Create a musical instrument of comparable quality, and what happens? Dead silence. It’s not fair. It’s doubly unfair when the new instrument is as good as the new ‘Pan’ recorders.

These recorders have nothing to do with tape; they are the instruments that Hamlet called for; instruments of the flageolet family, played by thousands of children and adults today. Being considered a ‘school’ instrument, and often being badly played by children, the recorders are rather sniffed-at by many professional musicians. The ‘sniffy’ attitude is unjustifiable. There is as much difference between good and bad recorders (and recorder-players) as between good and bad violins (and violinists).

I do not claim that Mr. Pan of Melbourne—whom I visualise as wearing goat-skin plus-fours—is actually Stradivarius reborn. But I do claim that he has now produced recorders that are superior to most of the imported brands. So far I have seen sopranino, descant, treble and tenor recorders of his making, and have actually played the sopranino and the tenor.

All the new Pan recorders are beautifully shaped from a pinkish, fine-grained timber which I take to be a gum of some kind. The shape is more streamlined than usual, and very easy on the eye: a modernised-18th-century, not a Renaissance design.
The tone of the Pan tenor is extremely pleasing: full, broad and clear as the best of the English makes, with none of the effeminacy of the German tenor. We paired a Pan with a pre-war English tenor, one by Robert Goble, and found that balance was almost perfect over the whole two-octave range.

The sopranino survived comparisons that were still rigorous at the Armidale summer school of music held by the University of New England. In the actual recorder-class it balanced and blended admirably with really good English and German recorders, and with harpsichord. Outside the recorder-class, playing in groups of mixed instruments, it compelled the respect even of people who had previously inclined to be 'sniffy'.

One extremely critical moment occurs in Haydn's March for the Prince of Wales as arranged for small band by Rodney Hall. At the climax, while clarinets, horns and trumpets are shouting out the melody, the sopranino recorder enters on a high, sustained trill three octaves above middle C. The effect is perfectly simple, but perfectly electric! Crystal-clear, without being shrill or harsh, the little Pan rode the melodic wave like a surfer. Even the ranks of Tuscany—even the horns and the trumpet—could scarce forbear to cheer!

Given a sufficiency of such fine instruments, at the present very reasonable price, young Australians will have a decent chance to show that we are not an unmusical nation.

JOHN MANIFOLD.

ARTISTIC FREEDOM

DISCUSSION in your magazine has revealed an awareness of the significance of the best contemporary marxist thought about art. Leading lights in the formulation of this attitude have been the well-known critics John Berger and Ernst Fischer, who believe implicitly in the worth of art and instinctively distrust and condemn dogmatic formulae and bureaucratic unimaginitiveness. Here are some of the ideas put forward by them, that must form the basis of any discussion on art and marxism: that,

1 art can enrich each individual's experience, provide nourishment for the whole man, stimulate;

2 the withdrawal of artists and writers from society has made it easier for increasing quantities of barbaric trash to be unloaded on the public by the entertainment industry;

3 the content (significance rather than subject matter) of a work of art is more important than the form;

4 it is necessary for an artist to adopt the historical viewpoint of the working class, and accept a socialist state as a matter of principle;

5 the artist has a social responsibility to improve society.

It is the last of these points—coupled with the question of State domination of the artist's outlook—that I wish to discuss in further detail.

If the artist's role is to improve society, it goes without saying—or rather, should—that this improvement means change. Any advance heralded by artists, or new intellectual climate fermented by artists, or vision of society prophesied by artists, must mean a desire for a change in the status quo. Consequently, artists must be free to measure this change in terms that they understand—that is, in terms of art.

They must be free to make technical and aesthetic discoveries, advances or statements, such as are made in other spheres—town-planning, space research, biology, mathematics,
for instance. This does not necessarily mean that an artist abandons social realism, but it might well mean this. In such instances this new vision — new intellectual socialism it is called by non-artists — may be as optimistic about the socialist future as any conventional social realist.

In other words, a mathematician working with abstract formulae and an 'abstract' artist may be equally socialist in outlook although neither works with symbols nor produces final statements which can be automatically recognised and understood by everyone.

This is an unfortunate situation, perhaps. It is the legacy of inadequate educational facilities, planning and opportunities for the many, and the consequence of the specialisation of modern times. But sometimes, too, this lack of communication is a lack of trust on the part of the observer who dogmatically refuses to share in any experience which on the face of it appears to be outside his own immediate experience.

It is the responsibility of members of a socialist society to see that everyone has the opportunity to reach his educational capacity — not to see that intellectuals are forced to seek the lowest common denominator. This, of course, is as true of art as any other sphere of knowledge. And it is my belief that until marxists accept this important fact then there is little chance of artists, either as dissatisfied liberals or critical intellectuals, forming a part of the new base which is so obviously the need of socialism in this country, and towards which the ALR appears to be moving.

GRAHAM CANTIENI.

TALENT OR TREASON?

K.L.'S SUGGESTION (ALR No. 1, 1967) that Sinyavsky and Daniel were jailed because they had talent is fantastically inaccurate. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the criticisms of their sentence, one should at least have a due regard for the truth. And the truth is that they were jailed for collaborating with a force that would like to have reduced socialism to a heap of radioactive ashes before now, and would do so tomorrow if it could.

Sinyavsky and Daniel's writings were smuggled out to a 'Literary Institute' in a Paris suburb, which handed them to Radio Liberty for broadcasting over its 16 stations. Radio Liberty, says the New York Times, is a CIA enterprise. The Literary Institute also handled the output of three Polish writers who stood trial at about the same time as Sinyavsky and Daniel. The Polish writings were handed to Radio Free Europe, another CIA enterprise, whose counter-revolutionary stuff is beamed to the socialist countries of Eastern Europe.

Two brothers, Giedroyc, run the Literary Institute. One of them held a high position under the notorious pre-war Polish Government of the colonels. The Polish press expressed the opinion that their outfit was backed by foreign intelligence, and the brothers Giedroyc themselves, in an interview with Time magazine, spoke of the "intricate network of couriers" operating between their Paris chateau and the socialist countries. They said they had been smuggling 'explosive' literature out of the socialist lands for 20 years, and had also been smuggling writers out.

Only a very naive person would believe that collaboration with such an outfit was an emanation of 'talent'. But perhaps the revelations of CIA subsidies to various student bodies will lead K.L. to question his belief that all that glitters in the world of the intellectuals is golden.

ALF WATT.
MORE ON ART

WHILE WELCOMING and agreeing with a great amount in the article by Ralph Gibson, the points regarding criticism are dangerous ground. Until very recently much avant-garde art has been almost forced towards the "pessimism that becomes cynical and inhuman" by a surfeit of continued *ill-informed* criticism. This, unhappily, is one platform where communists and bourgeoisie have danced a too-long and energetic pas-de-deux. Passionate ideals cannot be expressed via glorified posters — the classical idiom can rarely interpret adequately the 20th century. The attacks on the great Picasso — from both sides — is sufficient witness. Here is an artist who has worked in many media, accepting the challenges and problems of each—and proving himself invincible. Combined with this, he has been for many years a committed communist. Yet, this was insufficient protection from myopic, bureaucratic, destructive criticism.

However, unlike correspondent K.L. I feel that circles in the Soviet Union *have* moved away, very far away, from the truly ludicrous positions of several decades ago with reference to artistic and literary matters. 'L'homme revolte' is now openly applauded—particularly by sections of the youth who are seeing the discrepancy between the ideals of communism and the unappetising bureaucratic heirarchy which had proliferated during the Stalin era. Certainly, we must regret the Pasternak affair—but not only the attitude within—the 'capital' greedily seized by outside reactionary cliques was definitely not in the best interests of either the author or literature. With reference to the poets mentioned I can only say that I have gathered, mainly from Esperanto journals, that these and others such as Yesenin are now widely read and enjoyed in the Soviet Union.

Experiment is necessary—to press ideas and media to the ultimate. All that is worthwhile in a trend will continue, constantly adapting to new conditions and influencing future trends. Those which become rigid will remain academic interests for posterity if they are worthy—forgotten if not. Artists themselves are usually their own severest critics!

It is because of the wider-context agreement between Ralph Gibson and myself that I feel able—and also view it as important—to comment on the few sentences which are disturbing to the artist.

Firstly, 'retreat from the world' is sometimes necessary for periods of not always predeterminable lengths—a form of reappraisal of subjective/objective positions. While being aware that this may not be necessary for the more effervescent extrovert beings, it is vital for the very people the party wishes most to attract. The section least likely to need 'retreat' of any kind most likely will be found as the devotees of the capitalist charade.

Secondly, the rather unsatisfactory vagueness in the remarks that some art has been of interest 'only to a small coterie'. As one who has at various periods explored many possibilities in the gamut between representation and complete abstraction, I would suggest that valid comments on life and problems can be made in all. Obviously, as humanity is composed of diverse degrees of understanding, the comprehension of very varied—and admittedly sometimes obscure—artistic statements must also vary. Originally, the appeal and understanding of Picasso, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Chagall and Klee were of interest to "a very small coterie".

Artistic comments at given periods, taken out of context, could also be labelled 'pessimistic'. Dali's *premonition of civil war*, Chagall's *gate of the cemetery*, Tavoularis' *new leader*.
Miro’s *nightbird*, to mention but a few, all interpret aspects of the inarticulate apprehensions and distress which plague millions of people. But, to me, these are quite justifiable, ‘pessimistic’ comments. Cannot optimism, per se, *more* likely win acceptance for the world as it is? Both Goya and Matisse are needed.

No—not *more* criticism! A little more encouragement is overdue—especially towards those who have harmed themselves professionally through their ‘unpopular’ views on serious matters. Let artists *not* be ‘skeletons in the cupboard’ about which leftist members feel they have to apologise. As artist and militant I have felt this attitude perhaps more keenly in Australia than elsewhere. Therefore, I feel extremely happy about all the newest developments, and at last am able to express views which I know are shared by many. That only gain will ensue from broad discussion I feel confident.

LEJEUNE.

UNION AMALGAMATIONS

ONE CAN AGREE with much that Arthur E. Wilson says (ALR No. 1, 1967) about re-organisation of the trade unions. Amalgamations of unions is not a new idea. Far-sighted unionists of the last century called for industrial unionism and it has been the aim of the Australian Council of Trade Unions for more than a quarter of a century.

Today, more and *more* people are being forced to think about it because of the growing monopolisation of industry and the great technological changes that have occurred and are yet to come.

Some amalgamations have already taken place such as the Boilermakers and Blacksmiths in the metal trades, the two Printing Trades Unions and an amalgamation of the Building Workers’ Industrial Union with the Painters’ and Plasterers’ Unions is proposed. These amalgamations are not to be seen as ends in themselves, but as steps towards the eventual formation of industrial unions.

It would be idealistic to think that the unions would agree on the instant to their dismemberment or dissolution so that industry unions could be formed. Obviously the process of forming such unions will be long drawn out. However, where the formation of an industry union becomes a practical possibility, craft unions will have to face up to releasing some members to the new union. In my opinion, there are many unions, including my own, which would not stand in the way of such development and would encourage their members to join the industry union.

The National Working Committee for the amalgamation of the BWIU and the Painters’ and Plasterers’ Unions has stated that: “Reasons why these Unions are willing to work for their amalgamation include:

“In this modern technical age, craft unionism is unable to adequately cope with the problems of defending and advancing the rights and interests of their members.

“With the development of automation, increasing mechanisation, new materials, methods and trends in the building industry, some old skills are going out and new skills are being developed. Lines of demarcation, once very clear-cut, are now becoming blurred. An amalgamated Union will be better able to cope with these new problems.

“With the increased productivity of the workers there has not been a relative increase in the size of the work force and again, an amalgamated Union would be better able to deal with this problem.
"To attain workers' just demands, their demands for full employment, for social and economic advancement—to defend and advance their interests, the unity of the workers is indispensable.

"With the formation of an amalgamated Union, campaigns in support of workers' needs and interests can be more effectively co-ordinated and developed. Such campaigns as, for example: safety in the building industry, long service leave for building workers, a 35-hour week, higher wages, etc., are more sure of success when the workers act in a firm, united way.

"With the formation of an amalgamated Union, much can be done to eliminate unnecessary duplication of work and equipment which is so wasteful. Union officials would organise among the workers and represent them without distinction. No longer would it be necessary for upwards of six union officials to turn up for a job that one could do. This would enable more attention to be paid to the enrolment of non-unionists and develop 100 per cent financial unionism. There are thousands of workers eligible to be enrolled in the Building Unions, thus adding to their strength. Most important of all, the amalgamation would unite the workers, irrespective of craft or calling, in support of their common demands."

The above quote is, in my opinion, based on the reality and current-day needs for the building unions and with modification could be applied to other industries.

FRANK PURSE.

WORKERS AND INTELLECTUALS

MR. WHITE, in his article (ALR No. 1), has rightly drawn attention to the very changed conditions of today and the need to re-think our attitudes. The struggle to destroy capitalism and replace it with a just social order will be a complicated and difficult one. We must welcome the new forces for social reform that are emerging and work to unite all the progressive forces in a powerful movement which can accomplish this momentous task.

But there are a number of aspects of the article with which I do not agree. One of these is his method of stating a fact and then making an assertion which does not follow from it. This makes a logical analysis difficult, so I shall take only a few points.

Mr. White says that an era begun in 1890 is at an end. He does not define the characteristics of this 'era' or indicate in what respect it is ended. Is he simply joining the chorus of anti-labor newspaper stories which tell us periodically that the days for a militant Labor Party are finished, or has his statement some deeper significance?

Then Mr. White declares that the election result discredits the 'old argument' that "the swinging vote can be won when the labor movement is united and actively and vigorously campaigning on a policy which constitutes a clear challenge to the Liberals". (Quoted from L. Aarons, Labor Movement at the Crossroads.) Does he really think the labor movement was united with their divisions and disunity a main feature of the anti-labor press campaigns? Or that the labor movement fought vigorously for the left platform? Even if it had been campaigning in a united way, it could hardly expect to make basic changes in the attitude of the electorate overnight. As Mr. Aarons points out in the pamphlet quoted, it is necessary for the ALP to campaign boldly over a period for its platform. I think the election result is an argument for Mr. Aarons' assessment, not against it.
Another point in Mr. White's argument that workers are swinging away from labor is that the Liberal Reform group polled better in 'middle class electorates' than in 'more working class areas'. Does Mr. White regard the Liberal Reform group as part of the labor movement? The new left? While this group is progressive in its attitude to the war in Vietnam, it is still essentially anti-socialist. Perhaps in the anti-war struggle many of its members and supporters will come closer to the progressive forces and become involved in the wider struggle. But at present it only offers a limited opportunity for Government supporters to protest about one aspect of Government policy.

It seems to me that Mr. White tends to identify any opposition to any aspect of Government policy with a readiness to seek a changed social system.

I wish I could share Mr. White's rosy view of the intelligentsia 'as a group'. There are many recent examples of fine militant activity for salaries, conditions, for an increased say in control. But these are still minority trends. They will grow. Monopoly capitalism, by constantly expanding the sphere of wage and salary labor, brings growing numbers of intellectuals closer in status to the industrial workers. At the same time the scientific and technological revolution is bringing about very deep changes in the working class. Many intellectuals will be brought into action on questions of educational opportunities, morals, culture, etc., and they will make a great contribution to the struggle. But to suggest that the ideology of these 'modern individualistic rebels' (Mr. White's term) is adequate for the powerful, self-conscious movement needed to wrest power from the strongly entrenched monopoly capitalists and to build a new society seems to be entirely unreal.

Mr. White to me underlines the unreality of his argument by quoting 'as typical of the viewpoints and actions of this social group' the anti-conscription hero, Bill White. I have the greatest admiration for the stand Bill White took, and feel diffident about taking it upon myself to discuss his beliefs, but the subject has been introduced.

Bill White is not a protagonist of social change. He has always accepted the decisions of his superior officers in the Department of Education. He is entirely uninterested in politics. He has no quarrel with our social system. He simply believes that it is wrong to kill, and therefore he personally will not be coerced into taking any part in killing. And this stand is very much in advance of that taken by most young teachers who have been conscripted.

Mr. White raises important points in his article, but it seems to me his exaggerations negate the value of some of his propositions.

Joyce Clarke

INDIVIDUALISM AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

IN HIS ARTICLE (ALR No 1, 1967) Doug White writes: "The issue of conscription and aggression against a small and freedom-seeking nation were primarily issues of individualism . . ." and raises the commendable stand of Bill White as sufficient proof that such individual actions are "... typical of the views of members of the social group which is now the government's main concern . . ."

Experience has shown conclusively how concerned a government can become when groups of people united in their purpose, upset or challenge the established order of things — e.g. demonstrations against Johnson; Mt. Isa strike; French elections, to mention a few recent events.
Would Doug White place the actions of seamen in refusing to transport bombs to Vietnam in his ‘utopian’ category? These seamen are industrial workers and as an ex-seaman I can also vouch for their working-class internationalism which is, of course, proven in their actions.

What is important is that working people as a whole whether industrial or white-collar, the rebellious individual or the organised unionist, must act in unison for the fulfilment of common aspirations—and foremost for a change in or defeat of government policies. This, I believe, will be of the greatest concern to the government.

D. Dawson

‘EMERGENCY SITUATIONS’ DISPUTED

IN HIS ARTICLE ‘Socialism: Only One Party’, Eric Aarons refers to ‘emergency situations’ as moments justifying the use of socialist-state coercion. To my mind, this opens Pandora’s box.

Examples

1 USSR, Moscow Trials, 1938. See Louis Aragon, A History of the USSR, pp. 328-9. Note steps taken to rectify past errors set out by this author at p. 532 (reform of the courts and legal system).

2 Chinese People’s Republic—present so-called cultural revolution and criticism directed at Chinese Party by Waldeck Rochet at French Communist Party Congress.

3 What a capitalist state does, does not justify coercion under a socialist state. The violations of socialist legality under Stalin and currently under Mao-Tse-Tung stand in stark contrast with the temporary measures adopted in the USSR during the Civil War and Intervention period under Lenin (1917-21). The argument that ‘every state, capitalist or socialist’ does such and such a thing by implication would justify the Holt Government applying the recent amendments to the Commonwealth Crimes Act to the Communist Party of Australia for its opposition to the war in Vietnam. The section ‘Comment’ at pp. 4 and 5 of ALR No. 4 justifiably points to this danger.

Where the author discusses the Popular Front in France (pp. 36-37) I feel he should have discussed the Popular Front years of 1945-47, the socialist-communist coalition following the liberation of France. It would have been useful to see a discussion of the successes and failures and the nature of the Popular Front at this time. He also fails to discuss the moves towards a broad coalition of the forces of the Left during 1966 and the agreement reached on a common platform and the agreement that socialists and communists will not oppose each other in selected areas in the 1967 elections. There is also the matter of the current theoretical discussions going on in the Socialist Party in France.

In connection with Italy, I would have liked to see a discussion of the Italian experience as that of one of the first countries to suffer fascism (putsch of 1922) the lessons of which were drawn by Gramsci and Togliatti. See an article by Lelio Bosso in the Socialist Register, 1966, written from a left-socialist viewpoint.

I do not believe the Finnish example is a good one because of this country’s proximity to the USSR both geographically and from the viewpoint of working-class history.

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