
"THE VIETNAMESE NATION", the very title of Professor Chesneaux's work is an affirmation of historical truth and at the same time a denial of the current politically inspired fiction of "North and South Vietnam" as two, alien, distinct and hostile nations, separated by long tradition and mutual dislike.

In the first six chapters Prof. Chesneaux covers the history of Vietnam from the prehistoric, through the period of Chinese colonisation and rule, to the wars of liberation against China, and the expansion of the now independent kingdom into the southern part of the country, which was then sparsely inhabited by two different peoples, the Chams and the Cambodians. Until the French intrusion and conquest in the second half of the 19th century Vietnam had been a single kingdom since the expulsion of the Chinese in the early tenth century A.D. It is of course true that this kingdom was not so coherently organised as a modern state—any more than France herself, or England either, were in the Middle Ages. From 1558 A.D. the southern part of Vietnam was put under a very powerful viceroy, ruling from Hue. It was he and his successors, who made their post hereditary, who largely carried out the March to the South, the process part military, part infiltration, which expelled the Chams and the small Cambodian population of the Mekong Delta and settled this region with Vietnamese.

French Colonial policy was aimed at the old plan of "Divide and Rule". The extreme southern part of Vietnam was now called Cochin China, and annexed as a colony. Then came the middle region, the "waist" of the country, left under the nominal rule of the Vietnamese Emperor, actually closely controlled by French Residents. Tonkin, the northern province, and the old centre of Vietnamese royal power was first detached under a "vicerey" who was then soon displaced by a French Resident Superior. But Tonkin was never formally separated from the nominal rule of the Emperor in Hue. Thus, by any conceivable line of division, there has never been until 1954 a "North" and "South" Vietnam. There has always been, as in every other large area, a distinctive character both in climate and in local patterns of settlement, between one region and another.

In his chapters on the French occupation, and on the war of independence against France
after the conclusion of the Second World War, Professor Chesneaux shows with a wealth of factual cited evidence that the attempt to sustain the policy of artificial divisions in the country was the real obstacle to pacification under the colonial regime and the failure to secure an agreed settlement after the Second World War. It is as clear to any reader of the daily news at the present time that this determination to prevent the reunion of the country is still the major obstacle to peace. If the history of Vietnam is any guide it also clearly shows that although superior military power, as was exercised by the French in the 19th century or by the Americans today, can for a while force the country apart, the influences making for unity, race, language, culture and national tradition, are so strong that a new movement to achieve reunion will arise the moment the foreign occupier relaxes his grip whether from outside pressures, or reluctance to continue the thankless task.

Professor Chesneaux writes from the point of view of a marxist, and in consequence also demonstrates (with a great profusion of quotations from mainly non-communist observers) the degree to which the former monarchy and the French colonial rule equally, if in different ways, exploited the peasantry and stunted the economic growth of the country. The old Monarchy, patterned on that of China, exercised power in very similar ways; it was an essentially landlord-bureaucratic state, a term which non-communists will prefer to the ambiguous "feudal" which can mean very different things in different ages and countries. Professor Chesneaux himself (page 21) says that the term feudal cannot be applied to Far Eastern societies in the narrow sense in which it is used in the history of Western Europe. This being so, a historian may be forgiven, perhaps, for suggesting that it would be better not to use it at all for societies where the institutions of West European feudalism did not exist.

There remains a very important question, still unanswered for Vietnam as for China itself. Why was it that these advanced and civilised countries remained technologically backward from the sixteenth century onward; why did they not make the same break through to new forms of production and also of government and social organisation, as Europe achieved in these three centuries? Many possible answers, or combinations of these answers, have been put forward: the current, too popular one, that it was due to the intrusion of foreign imperialism, is not adequate. The serious incursions of western power did not affect either the economy or the state power of the Far Eastern empires until the second half of the 19th century, and were only made
possible by the fact that Europe had got ahead in the race, and the Far Eastern nations had lagged.

Nor is it really evident that the nature of the old Far Eastern monarchies was in itself a sufficient cause of this retardation. It is clear enough that in the latter part of the period it was a strong residual handicap, but the Western nations, to a date as late as the end of the 18th century had also been under (with the exception of England) the authority of absolute monarchs and their aristocratic Courts, a system more closed to outside talent than those of China or Vietnam. It is rather in further research into the origins of Western capitalism, and the reasons why this form of production did not make the same progress in the east—reasons one may suspect to be more geographic and economic than political—that the real explanation may be found.

There are few points of criticism which can be made of this clear and objective history of the Vietnamese nation. Peking was not the capital of China until the 13th century A.D. In T'ang and earlier times the capital was at Ch'angan or Loyang. The book has been updated by a final chapter written in 1962. Unfortunately much that has happened since then has modified the optimism with which Professor Chesneaux could then look to the future. It would be very desirable that in further editions, of which it is to be hoped there will be many, this last chapter could be brought down to the period of full-scale American involvement.

C. P. FitzGerald

THE BOLSHEVIK
REVOLUTION, 1917-1923,

WHAT TYPE of Communist Party? What relations with other parties? What policies in the present situation?

Such questions, now being discussed in the preparations for the coming Congress of the Communist Party of Australia, were being keenly debated in the days of the October Revolution.

The often fierce ideological struggle around them between 'Lefts' and 'Rights' (and all the trends between!) forms the major part of E. H. Carr's history of The Bolshevik Revolution.

It is at once impressive evidence of the status of the USSR in today's world and of the continuing, nay still growing, interest in the circumstances of its founding, that the Penguin publishers have issued three volumes of Carr's monumental work on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the revolution.

One never ceases to marvel and thrill at the epic story, here re-told, of how a handful of marxists, on the collapse of
Russia's bourgeois government, led the working class to power; pulled together the 200-odd diverse 'nationalities'—ranging in condition from barbarism to capitalism—overcame incredible difficulties, political, military and economic, to consolidate the world's first socialist state; and laid the foundations for catching up with the advanced capitalist states in, expressed historically, a few years.

The writer of this history spent two decades at the British Foreign Office, was assistant editor of the London Times, has occupied several top-ranking academic posts, and has 'neither a marxist nor a Russian background'.

The period covered, 1917-1923, is subjected to deep analysis from various standpoints by this trained scholar—the preparations for the Revolution, the structure of the Party and the State, relations with the former Czarist colonies; the impact of the Revolution, during the periods of 'war communism' and the New Economic Policy on agriculture, industry, the labor movement, trade and distribution, finance, and foreign policy. The whole work is thoroughly documented.

How significant, then, the extent to which this non-marxist debunks so many of the treasured 'theories' of anti-communist propagandists, still prevalent, on the nature of communism, and, specifically, its application to Russian conditions! This is the picture as established beyond doubt by Carr's many-sided research and acknowledged by him—the October Revolution came, not as some arbitrary 'creation' of the Bolsheviks, but as the consequence of the collapse of the Czarist regime and the incapacity of the Russian bourgeoisie to consolidate a bourgeois regime...

The Bolsheviks set out to make a peaceful revolution, through democratic institutions, with a gradual change in social relations, but the treachery of the bourgeoisie prevented it, making armed insurrection inescapable, but even then the take-over itself was 'almost bloodless' and took place with majority support...

The 'blood' came as a direct consequence of the counter-revolution, backed by military intervention, economic blockade and sabotage by the major and many minor capitalist States. The 'Iron Curtain' was a product not of communist policy but external capitalist actions...

'One party' rule was not a Bolshevik 'principle' but a product of circumstances, and for many years Soviet Republics were non-Bolshevik in composition, some former Czarist colonies became completely independent, and, indeed, bourgeois States, accepted and recognised by the central Soviet State.

But there are lessons here, too, for communists as well as non-communists, for the main lines of the Soviet State's development were determined in a
continuing ideological struggle between reformist, anarchist, syndicalist trends and marxism, and a battle within marxist circles against opportunists, who 'emptied marxism of any immediate revolutionary content', and sectarian, doctrinaire, dogmatic approaches, which would have doomed the Revolution to defeat.

This ideological conflict is traced in meticulous detail by Carr, within his own selected 'framework', namely, that marxists, including the Bolsheviks, based their strategy on the concept of a simultaneous revolution in the advanced countries as being essential and when that did not occur expediency took over completely in Russia and the Bolsheviks became 'capitalists' in practice.

So says Carr, plagued by the allegedly 'fatal' dilemma of the Bolsheviks in having to build socialism in one, backward country. But then he is a non-marxist, who regards communism as utopian anyhow, and really does not accept the dialectical law of development (if he even understands it).

Lenin summed it up in a statement quoted by him: "a transformation must, by historical necessity, take place along a certain broad line, that private ownership of the means of production had been condemned by history, that it would break, that the exploiters would inevitably be expropriated. This was established with scientific exactitude. We knew it..."

"But the forms of the transformation and the rapidity of the development of the concrete reorganisation we could not know. Only collective experience, only the experience of millions, can give decisive indications in this respect."

Carr established in his outline of the conflicts of 1917-23 the pre-eminence of Lenin on whom he lavished praise as a genius of theory and practice, as a dedicated constructive revolutionary... 'perhaps the greatest of all time'.

He reveals the errors of Trotsky, on such questions as coming to terms with the capitalist States and policies regarding the peasantry, even if he does appear to lean a good deal towards him and provides evidence sufficient to raise the question of reassessment in some respects.

Exposed, too, are the seeds of subsequent Stalinist excesses (the book was first published in 1950), but also of its tremendous achievements, leaving an even stronger feeling of the need for reassessment by present-day communists.

The conclusive 'arguments' in many instances are provided by life itself. The seemingly insuperable difficulties were overcome. The Soviet State was consolidated; peace was made with the capitalist States and relations normalised with them; the State soon to become the leader on such vital issues as world disarmament.
Socialism was built in one country, in 'catching up with the other States with a rapidity of which they have not yet dreamed,' because whatever concessions were made to capitalism the 'commanding heights' (Lenin) were held by the Bolsheviks. And the foundations were laid for communism, material and spiritual.

The way it was all done impinges upon many issues still 'alive' in the world communist movement . . .

How far to 'defend' a capitalist State, the concept of 'permanent revolution', peaceful co-existence in its relationship to world socialist development, national independence and the proletarian revolution, trade in capitalist markets, capitalist investments in socialist countries, the United Front, the role of the trade unions, relationships between CPSU and other communist parties, in the capitalist and socialist worlds.

Particularly, there is the current problem of China, with its peasant 'base', its initially weak industrial movement, the 'Long March' tradition of its Party, its colonial background . . . and now its pre-occupation with 'commune' development, 'Great Leaps' to bridge big gulfs, and maintenance of revolutionary fervor.

Has China's leadership failed to draw the correct conclusions from the ideological struggles of the Bolsheviks and their outcome? Does it stand, in fact, with the vanquished Russian 'Lefts' in, for instance, its striving for the communist 'principle' even if it means 'sharing scarcity'? As to its main charge against the Soviet leaders, if they are revisionists, Carr's book established that it is a deviation which dates not from the 60's or 50's but the 20's . . . indeed, back to the Communist Manifesto itself.

But another thought obtrudes: the Bolsheviks were early confronted with the problem of what to do about territories that had been claimed both by the Czarist Empire and other imperialists, including those then making China their happy hunting ground, and determined the issues on the interests of socialist development, inevitably identified with the interests of socialist consolidation in Russia. But there were then perhaps sown the seeds of friction that grew and were not automatically extinguished by the overthrow of feudalism and/or capitalism in those territories . . . .

For, as emphasised in Lenin's statement, quoted by Carr, "national and state differences between peoples and countries . . . will remain very, very long after the realisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale." Have the Soviet leaders always taken this fully into account in their dealings with other States? Difficulties flowing from it can only be settled on the basis of mutual trust between Socialist States.
and a dialectical approach with
as the starting point the consoli-
dation and further development
of socialism throughout the
world.

In setting out to learn the
lessons of the October Revolu-
tion, as laid bare in this in-
triguing work, there is a contin-
ued emphasis by Carr that is
thought-provoking . . . the influ-
ence of the specifically Russian
conditions and world conditions
of 1917-23 upon the character
of the Party (the Czarist regime
made a conspiratorial, even
small party inevitable), upon
the nature of the Soviet State
and its policies (with a working
class that literally had ‘nothing
to lose but its chains’ and de-
pendent for its survival upon a
backward peasantry) and even
perhaps upon the very type of
socialism it developed as the
first socialist State in a hostile
capitalist world.

How to distinguish between
what is fundamental in the
marxist position and what is
subject to modification in given
—and changing circumstances.
Such was the key problem con-
fronting the Bolsheviks, and
that is the problem confronting
the communists of Australia in
applying marxism to the condi-
tions in our country at this
time.

How far to go, if at all, in
changing party constitution and
practice on such questions as
disagreements, discipline, etc.?

How assess the Australian
Labor Party, its positive and
negative aspects, and its future?

How proceed, if at all, towards
the building of a ‘coalition of
the Left’?

What policies here and now
to further the cause of socialism
in Australia?

These are among the ques-
tions to be asked, and in answer-
ing which the developments in
Russia in 1917-1923—and after-
wards—have so much to offer . . .
as long as the correct approach
is made, and the big lesson
grasped that there are really no
‘short cuts’. Even Lenin under-
estimated the time it would
take to achieve communism,
even in the Soviet Union.

**Edgar Ross.**

**TRUTH OR REPOSE,**
by (Lady) Jessie Street.
Australasian Book Society,
338 pp., $4.25.

FROM early childhood, Jessie Lilling-
ston (later, Street) rebelled against
the restrictions imposed by her sex.
About the age of ten, she says, she
pledged herself to the effect that she
would never allow her sex “to inter-
fere with anything I wanted to do,
and in the future to exert all my
efforts to remove discriminations
against women and to gain for them
equal status, rights and opportunity”.

This pledge was, and doubtless still
is, the driving inspiration of her life,
and, as with many others who set
forth to remedy a deep social injustice,
it involved her in numerous funda-
mental socio-political issues.

Economic and social status allowed
Jessie Street a university education
frequent and extensive travel and time

71
and means to immerse herself in public affairs.

Endowed with an honest, inquisitive and empirical mind, a stubborn will, inexhaustible energy and an impregnable confidence in her capacity to cope with and overcome obstacles in her crusading path, such a woman would be outstanding whatever her background.

All these advantages gave her access to organisations and political circles far removed from her feminist-socialist bent, and allowed friendships with politicians, trade unionists, diplomats, women's leaders, of right, left and centre.

Her life, as she retails it up till 1945-46, falls roughly into four periods of development and activity. First, enterprising girlhood, initiation into the struggle for women's rights at Sydney University, marriage and the rearing of a family, and ever-increasing involvement in the feminist movement including involvement with the British suffragettes.

The economic depression of the thirties “turned me towards socialism”; a visit to the Soviet Union brought her full face to accept it.

In 1938 Jessie Street took her daughter on a world tour. Letters of introduction from the German Ambassador to Australia, “an enthusiastic nazi”, opened doors, during a stay in Germany, to nazi officials and institutions. The near-chattel status of German women shocked her, the “idolatory of war” sickened her.

Shortly after, with “a sense of excitement at the prospect of visiting this country which was shrouded in mystery”, she was en route to the Soviet Union in fulfillment of a promise made to the Sydney Society for Cultural Relations with the USSR.

First sights to delight her feminist eyes were women train conductors, and engine drivers, bricklayers and carpenters. Here she found a society that both affirmed equality of the sexes and was genuinely striving to make that affirmation a reality. From observations and discussions about many other aspects of Soviet life she found a “different set of moral values”, particularly concerning women, and a new vista of truths.

“I asked myself what other circumstances and characteristics of the life I was accustomed to in the capitalist world were the consequence of capitalist society with its emphasis on money making and self interest . . . I was convinced that the new way of life they were developing . . . would put an end to the exploitation of man by man, and women by man as well, and would ultimately be popular as soon as it was understood”.

Jessie Street returned to Australia filled with zeal to make this new society understood. A press interview, “the largest I had ever had”, awaited her in Sydney, but to her surprise not one word of her Soviet experiences was printed. “It dawned on me that all the misinformation given over the years about the USSR had been done deliberately . . . the press blackout indicated that I was being given the chance of becoming party to the conspiracy of silence about the USSR”.

The battle to “pull aside the Iron Curtain conjured up by the Western World” was one of the most courageous Jessie Street ever entered into. There were many Australians, however, who did want to know the facts, and in spite of powerful opposition, abuse, ostracism, insults anonymous and overt, she reached many hundreds through lectures, articles in some journals, and made many new friends, right through the difficult period of the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact till the tide turned with the German attack on the USSR and the exploits of the Red Army.
Her part in organising Medical Aid and Sheepskins for Russia absorbed only some of the energy of this indefatigable woman; there was plenty left for vigorous campaigning around conditions, wages and status of women flocking into industry and the armed services, for initiating a woman's journal, even for contesting the seat of Wentworth in the Federal Elections as selected candidate for the Australian Labor Party of which she had long been an active member.

Jessie Street was a friend and admirer of H. V. Evatt, Ben Chifley and particularly of John Curtin whom she regarded as "one of Australia's greatest Prime Ministers". She had become over the years so outstanding a public figure, including President of the League of Nations in Sydney, that her selection as member of the Australian delegation to preparatory United Nations Organisation discussions and first Conference surprised no one but herself. From then on her work expanded into the international field of UNO and the World Peace Movement.

Jessie Street's adherence to socialism had little theoretical basis, no actual acceptance of the class struggle or the role of the working class. It was her capacity for honest examination of the facts she discovered in her endeavors to serve her sex and humanity, her first observations of socialist society, (later confirmed by many other visits to the USSR) and the answers she found there to the injustices she had fought against all her life, that gave her a deeper understanding of the causes of poverty and war and influenced her consequent actions, opinions and interpretations of events.

The book is long, discursive, overfilled with personal detail and somewhat repetitious. It is for leisurely, but rewarding reading as a summary of most of the important events of the period and above all as a credo and work of one of Australia's most outstanding women.

(The terms of this review covering the period of the autobiography are in the past tense. Lady Street, during the following years chose, and still chooses, "Truth rather than Repose.")

JOYCE TATTERSELL

THE SCIENCE OF SCIENCE, Edited by Goldsmith and Mackay. Penguin, 317 pp., 95c.

WHEN FIFTEEN SCIENTISTS of world repute including three Nobel Laureates, join to pay tribute to the 25th anniversary of the appearance of J. D. Bernal's famous work The Social Function of Science, we have a reading 'must' for scientists and all interested in science.

The editors proclaim the task of the book as being the "application of scientific methods to the understanding of science itself, especially in its relations with society". The title may lead one to expect some attempt at formulating the internal laws of development of science as well as its interactions with society. However, none of the writers has been sufficiently bold to attempt the former.

The problem, according to D. J. de S. Price, is that of being "scientific about the phenomenon of science itself". A scientific approach must in essence be an historical approach, but, as Price points out, while the history of science has been written about extensively, this history has, in the past, been "used only in the internalist sense of providing an understanding of the technical subject matter".
In thinking scientifically about science itself, Bernal the marxist still fills the role of a pioneer, even though a quarter of a century has elapsed since his great work appeared. During this period science has grown 'big', so big indeed that the process of its assimilation by the State machine parallels the growth of State monopoly capitalism itself. The result is that though the principles of cybernetics, servomechanisms, electronic computers and nuclear physics may still be understood by relatively few of us yet no one, for a single minute, escapes the consequences of their practical application.

One of the striking features of the book is the world outlook which most of the writers have adopted. It is here that one discerns the influences of Pugwash and other creations of the Science for Peace movement.

P. M. S. Blackett, Gerald Piel, C. F. Powell and Alexander King all deal extensively with the role and responsibilities of science in relation to the problems of the so-called 'Developing Countries'. There are a number of incursions into the malthusian bog, but for the most part they keep their feet on the solid ground of a scientific approach to what is both necessary and possible in the way of helping the progress of these countries. Blackett shows that the gap between the 'developed' and the 'developing' countries is widening. He points out for instance that in the pre-industrial countries of Asia the rate of spending per head is actually less than the rate of saving per head in the advanced capitalist countries, and asks the obvious question of how the former countries are to achieve the rate of capital investment necessary to their development.

The nature and effectiveness of foreign aid programs come in for much discussion. Nowhere does the reader get the impression that the writers believe that the present type of 'aid' programs can solve the problem.

A number of other themes are dealt with in an attractive manner by the other contributors. Haldane, for instance, wrote a challenging piece on the proper social application of the knowledge of human genetics. Soviet physicist Peter Kapitza, FRS has a paper on the Future Problems of Science which is both technically stimulating and philosophically provoking particularly in laying down tasks for marxian scientists. Again, no teacher or researcher should miss R. L. M. Synge's essay on Science for the Good of your Soul.

A sixteenth contribution comes from Bernal himself as he looks back 'After Twenty-Five Years' on the analyses and prophecies he made in 1939. In a masterly manner he lays bare the inner contradictions of the 'technological revolution' in a world divided by the barriers of class and of nationality. "In mastering the atom", he says, "something of the full power of science made itself manifest, but what is equally obvious is that the powers which controlled humanity at the time ... were incapable of using the potentialities of science ... The technical possibilities ... that can be achieved through the proper use of computers cannot be fitted into the fragmented social frame of private interests and exploitation."

Bernal ends with a plea to scientists for contacts "with the people who can be the real beneficiaries of science". When that contact is renewed and improved we can hope to have a world where science ceases to be a threat to mankind and becomes a guarantee for a better future.

H. Silverstone.
HENRY LAWSON'S BEST STORIES, by Cecil Mann. Angus and Robertson, 273 pp., $3.75.


CENTENARY YEAR is upon us, and it is open slather for the critics, the anthologists, the admirers and the detractors of Lawson.

Cecil Mann's selection of Lawson's short stories is admirable. Your own pet favorite may be missing (though I doubt it!) but every story which he includes is a good one. Lawson's humor, irony, dramatic sense and genuine love of humanity are very fairly represented: his all-too-frequent lachrymosity is played down. As an index of this, Jones' Alley is in, and Arvie Aspinall's Alarm-Clock is out. There is a brief, reasonable and modest preface by the editor. The price works out at about ten cents per story. A bargain!

Part of Professor Roderick's book is about Lawson as short-story writer; but if you have read Mann's selection then you will know more about Lawson than Roderick chooses to say.

This is Roderick's approach: "What I wish to do is to invite you to consider how far his (Lawson's) work adheres to the fundamental principles of the short story, meaning by the term 'short story' the modern art form so called." Shades of the French Academy! Is Lawson to be judged according to the resemblance which his stories bear to the Platonic Idea of "the modern art form so called"? Actually the rest of the essay is less dreadful than this thunderous prologue promises; but it is bad enough.

The short story, or rather "the modern art form so called", according to Professor Roderick, was created by Hans Andersen, Gogol and Poe. Plain enough, I suppose, though it seems damned unfair to Merrimee and to E.T.A. Hoffmann! But what has this to do with Lawson?

Well, Poe's influence if I may continue to quote, "extended, as far as mood and influence go, to the youthful Henry Lawson... He laughed at it in The Ghostly Door". Nonsense! The 'influence' at which Lawson is laughing in The Ghostly Door is that of Deadwood Dick. Lawson says so himself.

Furthermore; "through his father" Lawson "may have caught one point in his technique subconsciously from Hans Andersen, namely the way in which he ends many of his stories". Are we to imagine Peter Larsen making verbatim translations from the Danish for his son's technical benefit? You will be relieved to know that: "I (Professor Roderick) do not know that Lawson ever read Gogol, although of course it is possible."

No mention of Kipling, whom Lawson certainly might have read. Barely a passing reference to Maupassant, some of whose stories are thoroughly Lawsonesque. No mention either of John le Gay Brereton, who knew more about Lawson's literary tastes than most people did: "At the height of his powers (Lawson) devoted more of his time to the perusal of Deadwood Dick's adventures than to anything that could be called literature. I (Brereton) remember his borrowing only one book from me in all the years of our friendship; it was Barrack Room Ballads".

No, taken all round, I don't find much of value in this essay that was not better expressed by A. A. Phillips ten years ago. Nor is Professor Roderick much more illuminating when he discusses Lawson as a poet.
The facts about Lawson as a poet are these. He wrote a great mass of verse. Some of it is good; much is rank bad. He was a poor critic of his own work; and the work was edited by various literary men whose taste was certainly no better than his own. Consider only the ten or twelve best things he wrote, and Lawson is a poet. Consider his bulk output, and Lawson is an industrious manufacturer of doggerel. Roderick elects to take up the former stance, but his advocacy is impaired by three defects.

First defect. He misquotes. He says that a line in Andy originally ran: "With Drought, the red marauder". But on the facing page he prints a facsimile proof-sheet showing the original as: "Gainst Drought . . ." In improving Lawson in this way, Professor Roderick is doing what he condemns David McKee Wright for doing.

Second defect. In refuting Dr. Todd’s views, Professor Roderick shows that both he and his adversary believe ‘rhyme’ to be the same thing as ‘metre’. I’m not quibbling: this is an important distinction. Rhythm is born of the fiery impact of metre against meaning. It is precisely the dead regularity of metre, irrespective of meaning, that makes Lawson’s lesser verse so wearisome to the ear.

Third defect. In his peroration, Professor Roderick says: "He (Lawson) was not interested in form and technique; he was interested in what he had to say, and its form followed the first impulse of his mind." That shows Professor Roderick as a prose-man; and, if true, it would show Lawson to be equally a prose-man. To the poet, form and content are inseparable. ‘What you say’ and ‘How you say it’ are head and tail of the same penny. The attitude of the man who is ‘not interested’ in the fundamental labor of giving form (by every technical means at his command) to the inchoate content in his mind, is not one that a poet can easily understand.

JOHN MANIFOLD

THE WINDS OF CHANGE IN CENTRAL AUSTRALIA, by Frederick Rose. Acadamie-Verlag, Berlin.

EUROPEAN OCCUPATION of Australia has almost everywhere destroyed Aboriginal society before this could develop by absorbing new ideas. Australia’s official policy is largely based upon the theory that Aboriginal society and its culture contains nothing of temporary or permanent value and that its destruction is a necessary stage towards assimilation into the white community. The Winds of Change is an important book because it shows how a group of Aborigines in contact with European Australian society can continue actively to support themselves while making purposeful adaptions to the new culture. Rapid changes have occurred with the absorption of a great many new activities; with modification, but without destruction of sacred beliefs and tribal practices.

Professor Frederick Rose came to make this valuable study only after circumstances had diverted him from his primary purpose of visiting Australia in 1962 to continue his studies of kinship, age-structure and marriage in Aboriginal society. The author will be known to many Australians as one who was victimized at the time of the Petrov Inquiry. Finding it impossible to obtain suitable employment in Australia, Rose took a post in the Humboldt University, East Berlin. He has since gained an international reputation as an anthropologist.
Rose's early studies had perforce been undertaken during leave from his bread-and-butter job as a meteorological officer in Northern Australia. Since he left Australia there has been a realisation of the urgency attached to anthropological studies to record Aboriginal practices before these are lost for all time.

Rose was fully aware of this need and returned to Australia in 1962 to continue earlier studies. Government authorities refused to grant him permission to visit the Aboriginal Reserves where his work may have been feasible. Despite this refusal, Rose travelled to Central Australia. Although he found it was impossible to pursue his original objective, he turned his attention to the life of Aborigines in process of transition from a hunting and food-collecting economy to one of money values and trade. These Aborigines lived at or visited Angas Downs station in Northern Territory west of Alice Springs on the track to Ayers Rock, during 1962.

The Aborigines were active in availing themselves of the possibilities open to them as a result of contact with the white man and consciously adapted these possibilities to their own use.

As elsewhere, Aborigines at Angas Downs had acquired camels and donkeys for transport which had completely revolutionised the semi-nomadic habits of the people and had made possible the transport of purchased food and other possessions. Hunting had not been forsaken but had been improved by the use of rifles. An entirely new economic development was that of trade with tourists and others. Within the short period of five years they had changed to the production of goods for sale without passing through the decades-long process of becoming wage laborers dependent on the pastoral industry.

Contact with tourists visiting Ayers Rock had promoted the production of articles for sale. Although some of the Aborigines could not speak English, they had a keen sense of the value of the goods they produced. Some change in the design and decoration of traditional Aboriginal articles had occurred and new art forms had developed.

In addition to trade, money income was obtained from pastoral work, dingo scalps, and age pensions. Food supplies were supplemented by hunting. Although the per capita income from all sources was quite small, the Aborigines had advanced economically and had money for the purchase of food, clothes and tools.

Leisure time had increased and was often filled by gambling on a card game and a match-box tossing game.

Many aspects of tribal relations had persisted in either original or modified form. Although private ownership of property existed, there was much borrowing and sharing of possessions, including camels and rifles. Aboriginal beliefs and cult life had persisted although modified and influenced by the new conditions.

Aborigines of the centre of Australia previously practised polygamy and as the wives were usually younger than the men, gerontocracy existed. Rose found that by 1962 polygamy had virtually disappeared. He attributes this to the change in economic relations.

Rose believes that polygamy in Aboriginal society was due to the need for a child-bearing woman to have the assistance of other women with food gathering. The ability to purchase flour and the use of camels and donkeys for transport had reduced the work of the woman considerably. She no longer needed assistance for food gathering, and for the man additional women became a

April - May, 1967
burden and not an asset. Hence polygamy had ceased.

Rose's approach may over-simplify a rather complex problem. The Aboriginal group studied was a small one which had ceased to preserve original tribal boundaries. It was made up of individuals from various clans and tribes. Obviously various modifications of tribal requirements have occurred some of which may be equally important in the disappearance of polygamy. Previously, when married, a woman usually left her own group and territory. In these circumstances the attachment of a young girl to an old man and his family would have allowed the young girl to become familiar with the new territory, new dialect and new food gathering regions. Similarly, it was obviously an economic necessity for a widow to be able to join the family of another man. These factors may have been as important in maintaining polygamy as those described by Rose. Changing conditions and the merging of tribes would make unnecessary the attachment of young girls to older men to gain experience in a new territory. Similarly, older widows may now obtain a pension and so find it unnecessary to attach themselves to another family.

For some, the author's claim to follow "the materialist view" will irritate. Few scientists, materialist or otherwise, will accept Rose's statement that "if marriage is simply an expression of the relationship of men and women in the work process then a change in the productive forces, or more generally expressed, in the economy of the society, can be expected to bring about a change in the relationship of man and woman and thereby a change in the marriage relationship."

Most scientists would be more likely to accept that in addition to economic factors, reproductive functions, traditional practice and psychological aspects all influence the family structure. Although Rose's theories may yet prove to be correct, he advances a personal theory under the banner of the "materialist view" as shown by a comparison of Rose's statement above with that of Engels: "According to the materialist conception the determining factor in history is in the final instance, the production and reproduction of the immediate essentials of life. This again is of twofold character. On the one side, the production of the means of existence, of articles of food and clothing, dwellings and of the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of the species. The social organisation under which the people of a particular historical epoch and a particular country live is determined by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labor on the one hand and of the family on the other . . ." (Preface to First Edition, Origin of the Family.)

This book is a stimulating study of Aboriginal transition containing much of value for those concerned with Aboriginal advancement.

A.H.

AMERICAN INVESTMENT IN AUSTRALIA, by Donald Brash. Australian National University.

RESEARCH into the ownership of the powerful industries which dominate the Australian economy was for many years a neglected field with only the late Brian Fitzpatrick, E. W. Campbell (both extremely capable researchers) and a few others producing work of lasting value.

Now the leeway is being made up with competent economic researchers
like E. L. Wheelwright, Bruce McFarlane, Hylda Rolfe, Pete Thomas—to mention only some—investigating the structure of Australian capitalism or aspects of it.

One such aspect, the degree of overseas investment in Australian manufacturing industry, has drawn the attention of the Commonwealth Government's Department of Trade and Industry, which for reasons different from those of the above writers, has published several books on this.

The latest of these is the 1966 Directory of Overseas Investment in Australia. This is an attractively produced, full-of-facts volume, but unfortunately is not for sale to the public.

Which brings us to Dr. Donald Brash, formerly of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University and now with the International Bank of Reconstruction and Development in Washington, who has made the most detailed analysis yet of United States ownership in Australian industry.

Dr. Brash's 366-page book outlines at length the growth of United States investment in Australia (this has been particularly marked since the early fifties), ownership patterns, sources of funds employed and the management, productivity and costs of US-affiliated companies. Two chapters ask and answer the questions—"Why do they invest?" (it's profitable!) and "How profitable is American investment in Australia?" (more profitable than British or Australian!). Appendixes give extensive and valuable details of all industries in which American investment is influential. A bibliography of Dr. Brash's sources is a tribute to his thoroughness and an invaluable reference. The book is very well indexed, and is worth buying.

American Investment in Australia is not an easy book to review. One cannot challenge the veritable mountain of facts uncovered nor the proof (as has been known for some time) that United States investment in Australian industry is very substantial and, if those concerned have their way, is here to stay. Dr. Brash gives facts on this.

Between 1950 and 1962 total direct United States investment abroad expanded by 216 per cent. But the value of US direct investment in Australia expanded by 446 per cent during that period. On a per capita basis, corporate American investment in Australia, which was widely dispersed, was almost four times that in Germany and was substantially greater than that in the United Kingdom.

The Department of Trade's 1966 Directory, published well after Dr. Brash had sent his book to the printers, shows just how well entrenched overseas investment (US and British) is in Australian industry. Four in every seven manufacturing firms in Australia with some degree of overseas ownership are wholly owned by foreign interests. Australian firms wholly or more than 50 per cent foreign owned total 748 and their assets are $4,515m. The assets of Australian firms apportioned to overseas associates by country of ownership are: Britain $2,368m., United States $1,874m., Canada $234., other countries $255m. It's often said that money is power. There's a lot of power here.

Dr. Brash confesses that at one time he was opposed to foreign investment but has changed his views somewhat. He admits that there is considerable sentiment in Australia (even among some heads of companies foreign-owned) against investment and control by foreign companies. He also says the people have the right to ask whether they are being exploited by highly profitable foreign-owned companies and is Australia losing control.
of its own economic destiny. He puts what he terms the economic, political, social and moral objections to foreign investment.

While Dr. Brash has shown himself to be expert at unravelling the various ramifications of American investment in Australia, his estimation of the consequences of this is not impressive and shows his isolation from political life.

Any consideration of overseas investment in Australia—all investment not American alone (is it any better to be eaten by an alligator than by a crocodile?)—must accept that many important sectors of production and distribution in Australia are largely foreign controlled. The Department of Trade's 1966 Directory shows that foreign ownership in the founding, engineering and metal working industries is $995.4m.; motor vehicles $697.5m.; electrical goods, equipment, cables $334.5m.; chemicals and oil refining (including paints, cosmetics, etc.) $1,603.4m.; food, tobacco and drink $540.8m.; other manufacturing (including paper, building materials, rubber and plastics, textiles, etc.) $559.1m.

Serious as is the situation in many of the industries manufacturing machines, plant, consumer goods and the like, it is even more so in the case of the very 'stuff' of production—bauxite, iron ores, uranium, copper, lead, zinc, tin, other minerals and coal. Alcoa (US-owned) has assets of $92m., Australian Aluminium (Canadian owned) $28m., Comalco (US-UK-owned) $89m., Conzinc Rio Tinto (UK-owned) $151m., Mt. Isa Mines (US-controlled) $145m., New Broken Hill (British owned) $47m. These are some of the foreign owned giants plundering what should be the people's wealth.

There is not much time left for the labor movement in Australia to clarify its attitude to the invasion of foreign capital which is bringing with it powerful political (All the way with LBJ), economic (Diggers for dollars) and other harmful pressures.

In the recent period, Mr. Calwell took a stand against those prepared to betray Australia's independence. In a recent article in the Australian, Mr. Whitlam wrote against "exploitation whether by local or overseas monopoly interests". Mr. Whitlam demanded the right of the Australian National Line to trade overseas, competition with the drug companies (mostly foreign owned) through the Commonwealth Serum Laboratories, repurchase of our shares in British Petroleum, the establishment of new government owned industries, especially in respect of mineral resources which he wrote were "moving into overseas hands". He called for public ownership of our national resources.

It would be good if the Labor Party worked out in more detail and publicised widely its proposals to free Australia from foreign ownership and to ensure that national development is based on what is best for the majority of the people. Those in the Labor Party who want to do this, and readers generally, will find much of interest in the documents available to the public, which will be placed before the forthcoming National Congress of the Communist Party of Australia, particularly the section on national development and democratic control.

If the facts are made known, we can reach the situation so well described in the Australian, a few weeks ago in these words:

> In the Europe of ten years ago left-wingers monopolised the slogan 'Yanks Go Home'!

Today the same cry is echoing in boardrooms and parliaments from Westminster to Strasbourg. The old blind hatred of the post-war GI's has been updated by a new fear that American big business is taking over Europe.

Ron Brown.