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On the occasion of the first anniversary of the liberation of Saigon and the end of Vietnam's long struggle for independence, we publish an article on the significance of this victory, its impact on world affairs and the postwar tasks in Vietnam itself. The article is by Malcolm Salmon, who lived in North Vietnam on two separate occasions and is well known for his writings on South-East Asia.

We are happy to publish, for the first time in English, a document of the Communist Party of Spain ('For the Liberation of Women') adopted at its second national conference last year. Given that Spain is a country where the oppression of women and discrimination against them is amongst the worst, and the 'machismo' ethic of men is very strong, this document has particular significance.

Richard Walsham, an organiser for the NSW Teachers' Federation, examines some recent struggles of teachers which went outside the 'normal' bounds of wages and conditions.

The ecological crisis continues to develop and there is no sign that capitalism is either willing or able to make the fundamental changes of social organisation and goals which are necessary for solving the problems. Jack Mundey argues that changes are also needed in the thinking and activity of socialists on ecological and environmental questions if the problems are to be effectively met.

Our regular features (Comment, Economic Notes, International Notes) continue, with examinations of aspects of the political, economic and international situations.

Two discussion pieces (on Italy and Australian Aboriginals) complete the issue.
As working class militancy explodes in an upsurge of struggles for better wages and conditions, the details of the ruling class plan for an offensive become clearer. The various sections and policy-makers and advisers of the ruling class are all offering their own 'solutions' to the problems of the system. Indeed, within the confines of agreement on general principles and of not saying too much in public, there is a veritable 'democratic' debate amongst the ruling class and its supporters as to the best way out of the present malaise.

In newspaper editorials, feature articles by, or quoting, 'experts', government and employer statements and inspired leaks from inside the government, there is recognition of the difficult problems facing the system and of the need for political as well as economic solutions. And there is also detectable an increasing realisation by the establishment that the economic and political solutions are very much related.

Marxists have long understood that the problems of the capitalist economy stem from deep underlying causes: economic crisis is part and parcel of the very dynamics of capitalism - an objective factor which asserts itself irrespective of subjective will, choice or political decision so long as the system remains. Equally, there is political struggle as to the solution, or the best solution, for particular classes and groups, whenever a crisis strikes. (Capitalists and their politicians and advisers can hardly be expected to see the most simple and permanent solution of all: abolish the system.) Therefore, from the point of view of the ruling class not only must they seek to find 'scientific' solutions to the objective problems of their sick economy, they must also find 'political' solutions to contain the response of the working class and others who also fight for their own interests, and are a force to be reckoned with sometimes more difficult than the objective economic problems.

The debate within the establishment therefore takes place on two fronts: how to nurse the economy back to good health and with what measures, and how to sell the various schemes and policies to the workers; or, if this is unsuccessful, how to contain and defeat the workers and their organisations as a necessary part of solving the crisis in the interests of capital.

That the need for an offensive on the second front is as pressing as solutions on the first is shown by the massive upsurge of workers' struggles in the last few weeks. Nurses in NSW hold their most militant meetings, marches and pickets ever, and adopt on-the-job tactics in place of strikes which might hurt patients; meatworkers adopt offensive tactics reminiscent of the NSW builders' laborers' strike in 1970 by going into food stores to demonstrate against scab meat supplies; woolworkers fight out an eight-week struggle involving sit-ins; teachers in NSW conduct a series of struggles around unemployment of teachers and the quality of education in schools. At another level, the AWU, one of the most conservative and rightwing of Australian unions, decides to fight a case before the High Court challenging the wage indexation guidelines. Many other sections of workers and unions are showing restiveness and willingness to engage in unusual levels and forms of struggle.

What is particularly striking about many recent struggles is that they have involved workers who have not been renowned for their
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militancy. Almost spontaneously, these sections have organised and shown willingness to engage in different and advanced forms of struggle, going beyond what has, up till now, been the norm for other, traditionally much more militant, sections.

A second important feature of these struggles has been the semi-spontaneous way in which they suddenly erupted, taking governments and employers by surprise. Just as Fraser was preparing his main blow against the traditionally militant unions and was even so confident as to attack indexation, a quicker and stronger response came from the least expected quarters. These were not long-prepared struggles, planned by a few experienced militant leaders, but the response of ordinary and often inexperienced workers to the real situation they found themselves in. The realisation that 'God helps those who help themselves' has spread to wider and wider sections as they take stock and read the signs of what Fraser is up to. Ironically for Fraser, his own method of grabbing for power probably helped to spread and instil that realisation. Many workers, deprived of what they saw as 'their' government by a blatant 'breaking of the rules' have rightly concluded that to be organised and strong and to take action is the only way to defend their interests.

And on the economic front things look no better. All the surveys and forecasts point to more of the same - for how long nobody knows. As the *Financial Review* put it, in big bold type, in an advertisement for a coming series of articles on inflation: Everyone knows the problem, but no one seems able to solve it. This was under the unsmiling visages of Malcolm Fraser, Harold Wilson and Gerald Ford, not looking especially like three wise monkeys, although Wilson looks the wisest and quite clearly is, since he got out. One has the mental image of him taking a close look at Britain's books one night, deciding that all was lost and that someone else should preside over the demise of British capitalism while he retired to the ivy-covered cloisters of a university to watch the fray from afar and perhaps pen a line or two about it.

Even the computers are getting in on the act. These days every dynamic corporation apparently has one and gives it little riddles to solve like whether it will be profitable to invest in this project or that, and when and how. But in apparent confirmation of the theory that basic laws govern all parts of the universe, the transistors and diodes and electric wires don't seem to be able to come up with a different answer to those provided by the neurones and synapses of the best business and bourgeois economist brains. What the computers tell business, with a 'quality of financial and economic analysis now much higher than it has ever been in the past' (*The Australian*, April 8), is that it is not profitable, or not yet profitable under current conditions, to invest in various projects.

Or, to put it in more acceptable, 'human' terms:

"In general, Australian business is not about to spend its way out of the recession, because the men who are running it can see no logical reason to risk other people's money (read: their own money - in a capitalist society it is not unusual for the needs of PR to dictate that one says the exact opposite of what one means - B.A.) in the attempt."

Of course, they would very much like to be able to risk 'other people's money', as for instance with Fraser's 40 per cent investment tax allowance which takes taxpayers' money and gives it to business, but unfortunately, even that is not good enough at the moment.

"Liberal government or no Liberal government, says business, the realities of the situation determine the decisions to be taken. And reality in this sense means the outlook for profits, because profitability is the only genuine yardstick of efficiency in any economy .... " (*John Hallows in The Australian*, April 8.)

A better statement of the capitalist view could hardly be imagined. Hundreds of thousands may be unemployed while many social needs go unattended but business, individually and collectively, will not invest in projects, much needed by society or otherwise, unless profitability is guaranteed in advance. A different view of things, which puts social needs ahead of those of profit, would lead to a different way of doing things. Social capital would be made available for socially useful projects, with profitability a secondary, though in the long run not unimportant, consideration. Paradoxically, this would also generate the economic activity needed to bring the whole economy out of its decline and stagnation.
But it is precisely this wider view which capitalism is incapable of adopting, economic 'spin off' or no. Still less is it capable of implementing such a view and course of action. The very nature of the system makes this impossible except on a small scale. For what is needed is a planned and social approach to problems which looks at things from the overall view of social needs and invests or not, accordingly. This is only possible if at least the main means of production are socially owned. Individual capitalists, to whom profit is paramount, and who in any case would go out of business if they did not make profit, simply cannot proceed in this way. The logic of the system dictates that each separate corporation or business must make a profit or cease to exist. Therefore, none are capable, in a recession, of breaking the vicious circle. Each waits for the others to set the pace and create a new situation where it will be possible for them to make a profit. Thus the economy remains stagnant, until stocks are sold off or one sector of business is able to invest with assured profit, or government action in some way (by means of investment funding or government projects which provide contracts to private enterprise) creates a favorable climate.

Unfortunately for Australian capitalism, such a climate appears a long way off yet. As the above-quoted article by Hallows puts it:

'... the best business brains have come to the conclusion that the entire world economy is in for a long period of flat activity - and that in those circumstances the high-cost Australian economy as it now stands, with its soaring wages and inflation outstripping its foreign competitors, is in long-lasting trouble.'

There are two important aspects of the crisis mentioned here. The world capitalist economy, on which Australian capitalism is heavily dependent, is experiencing a combined recession for the first time since the thirties. And the Australian economy itself has particular weaknesses, due in large part to the heavy share of primary products and mineral exports in the total economy. Manufacturing industry is especially weak, as revealed in the Jackson report amongst others. This report, by more enlightened sections of the establishment, paints a sick picture of Australian industry. Since many of the factors responsible will not be easily rectified within a capitalist context, it can be expected that the problems will remain for a long time and will therefore make necessary dramatic policy initiatives by the ruling class.

In response to the individual situation and to the obviously long-term nature of the economic problems, ruling class strategy is shaping up along two lines which, at first sight, seem contradictory but which, more and more, are being seen as parallel and complementary. One is the 'stick' line, involving an offensive against workers, unions and the underprivileged. The other is the 'carrot' line, involving elaborate plans for workers' participation and attempts to somehow 'integrate' the interests of workers and bosses.

Sir Eric Willis, NSW premier, in a policy statement for the State election, expressed this dual approach succinctly when outlining a new industrial policy:

"which would not only tighten controls on unions but increase the involvement of employees with their companies. We are working on plans that will not only encourage employees to become shareholders in the company that employs them but also provide incentives to the company to do so."

The two lines are seen as parallel and complementary by some, but others are more partial to one or the other. Such differences represent little in real terms, being very much by way of strategic and tactical differences within an overall agreement as to aims. But what is noticeable is that it is not only the 'soft-liners' and reformist ALP politicians who are pushing the 'carrot' of workers' participation. Hard-line rightwingers such as Willis and Fraser have also recognised the need for something which can tie workers into the system more, make them feel a part of it, more happy and contented. This recognition has also been accompanied by a realisation that the more obvious and traditional tactics will also have to be carried out with greater sophistication. This is very much forced by the strength of the organised workers' movement which has to be 'conned' as well as contained and attacked.

The new policy on the Prices Justification Tribunal is an example. In his policy speech, Fraser said he would abolish it, then promised Hawke, as a 'peace offering' that he would reconsider. Introduced by Labor and never
much more than a justifier of price rises, the PJT was nevertheless regarded as a nuisance and an intrusion into sacred rights by many big and small companies. But now the Tribunal is not only seen as a useful smokescreen and legitimiser of price rises, but also as a positively necessary part of the industrial relations landscape. A survey of the major companies by Dr. Neville Norman showed that all companies favored abolition of the Tribunal 'some time in the future' but that a big majority said 'it would be industrial relations suicide to abolish the tribunal at this stage'. (The Australian, March 27. My emphasis - B.A.). It is of course relevant to note that 'Most companies polled had said that since 1974 the tribunal had taken a softer line and presented less of a nuisance than it did in its first 12 months of operation'.

As with so many reforms introduced by a Labor government, the ruling class at first opposed the PJT, then discovered it wasn't quite the bogey it had thought and even had its uses; then found the ways to integrate it into the system of things and finally found that politically it was essential, at least for a time.

Then there is the question of indexation. Introduced by Labor to bring down the rate of inflation and prevent militant strikes by workers, indexation was nevertheless disliked by many sections of business. Hardliners in the ruling class would like to get rid of it altogether or else make it work even more in their favor. The Fraser government has taken this line too, opposing the full flow on of CPI increases and calling for the Arbitration Commission to 'take economic conditions into account when fixing rises' and claiming that the guidelines do not oblige the commission to grant full cost of living increases. In other words, as The Australian put it, the government wants to place more emphasis on the state of the economy than on industrial peace.

But other sections of the ruling class think that the alternatives to indexation would be less advantageous to their interests. This approach stems from appraisal of the upsurge of industrial struggle which suggests that indexation may be the lesser of two evils, etc.

This new approach has been forced by the realities of the upsurge of industrial struggle which not only makes it difficult to attack indexation but makes it clear that indexation is the lesser of two evils. Indeed, there is a very strong push from within the union movement in the opposite direction: indexation should go or should be seen as a minimum, not a maximum, goal because the workers could get more by collective bargaining. In this situation, sections of the ruling class are saying to the government that indexation must be preserved as the only way to keep the situation under control. The more clever are even advising that some settlements should be made with workers outside the guidelines if necessary, to avoid too great industrial strife. An editorial in The Australian on April 3, titled 'We are at the crossroads on indexation' said:

"If the commission cannot settle a few major strikes under indexation guidelines, let the strikes go on: better that than the onset of wholesale industrial anarchy and economic catastrophe, which will appear if we return to the rule of industrial muscle clawing for ever-higher wage rises out of spiralling inflation."

"And that, make no mistake, is the most likely alternative to the indexation system. It is hardly realistic to believe, as some government members fondly imagine, that the end of indexation would mean wage rises lower than inflation in any circumstances other than an economic crash."

And further on, the editorial concludes:

"A clear attempt to persuade the unions of the advantage of the combination of wage and tax indexation might even now save the cause."

Notable here is the added recognition that tax indexation of some sort should be introduced without delay as part of the 'package' offered to workers. The aim is to offer workers a stabilisation of their real incomes so that they are unaffected by inflation. For the moment at least this much should be conceded (and imposed) to avoid strife and difficult questions such as whether workers should in fact get a larger share of the cake than they have at present. At first sight tax indexation might seem a big concession to workers but in reality it, at best, takes money away from social service spending and puts it into the private consumption sector. It would reduce government income, but with an openly pro-business government which gives big handouts to industry, this would simply mean less spending on education, health, unemployment benefits, and so on. Thus,
workers would gain on the swings but lose on the roundabouts. Moreover, since increased spending on consumer goods is what business wants as part of a recovery the gain is also to the benefit of business. That is one reason why the economic struggle, if narrowly conceived, tends to keep within the system. Only when social priorities are discussed by workers, in terms of where social effort is directed and what is produced by labor, can the economic struggle assume a wider, more challenging nature.

And when workers begin to demand a say in these matters, as part of a slate of demands, their struggle will take on a more political aspect.

The ruling class debate also takes place on questions of 'industrial relations' which is the name given to the study of how best to keep workers in their place. Again The Australian steps in with some sage advice. In its editorial of April 12 titled 'The pitfalls of confrontation', it devotes considerable space to a discussion of whether confrontation gets anywhere. It poses the question:

".... both sides (unions and government - B.A.) should ask themselves whether the politics of confrontation ever really succeed - at anything below the level of full scale revolution (!!) and then only at enormous cost."

The question of course is really posed for Mr. Fraser - The Australian has never been noted for sincere advice to unions. The editorial, for Fraser's benefit, then goes on to analyse the fate of Edward Heath's confrontation with British unions. It points out that Heath thought he held all the political cards when really he didn't, and that the strikes he brought on by his tactics 'further weakened the economy he was striving to improve and brought his government down'. The alternative was a more sophisticated strategy:

"How much better the British situation would have developed if Mr. Heath, instead of uniting the union front against him and losing national support in the resulting industrial crisis, had tried to work with the moderate unions to seek an overall compromise solution. Mr. Heath might still be in office and the unions' members might face better prospects today." (read: "Mr. Heath might still be in office and business might face better prospects today with an integrated and less militant working class."

Even B.A. Santamaria, from the extreme right of Australian politics but closer to ordinary people than the millionaire grazier prime minister, weighs in with his bit. His regular weekly column in The Australian of April 2 is called 'The risk of war with the unions'. He warns that even a government with such huge majorities in both houses as Fraser's could find itself in serious political trouble a year from now unless it adopts different policies.

"It (the government) will find that both the instinct for a 'fair go' and the hard facts of industrial survival will jam the moderates in the trade unions together with their enemies of the extreme left."

Therefore, there should be a policy of 'equality of sacrifice'; otherwise the government's difficulties 'will mount rapidly'. This means, according to Santamaria, a few relatively cheap concessions such as higher unemployment benefits and increases in child endowment benefits from the third child upwards. (The latter is just, but it also plays nicely to Santamaria's catholic gallery and would stave off the economic aspects of the ordinary catholics' growing restiveness with Church birth control policy.)

All this is of more than passing interest. Capitalist establishments throughout the world are striving desperately to find a new social policy which can meet the needs of the modern crisis. They are looking for a new equilibrium for the system and will attempt full-scale reorganisation of it if that is thought necessary. While the crisis poses very difficult problems, such a reorganisation which does establish at least a partial equilibrium cannot be ruled out. It would probably involve increased authoritarianism (of the state and civil society) together with schemes like participation to buy off some sections of workers and middle strata.

The left should therefore follow the ruling class debate very carefully and be ready to respond effectively to all aspects of the new social policy which is emerging from the debate and being tested in various ways. Confrontationist attacks will have to be countered (and their defeat by workers and others is by no means a foregone conclusion) but so too will the less obvious but also dangerous policies like participation.
Vietnam: One year after
by Malcolm Salmon

April 30, 1976, marked the first anniversary of the end of the Vietnam war. But it cannot be said that serious analysis of the meaning of this event has yet gone very far. Stereotypes such as "world-shaking victory of the national liberation movement" and "dangerous advance of the forces of communism in Southeast Asia" amount not to analysis but to little more than special political pleading by those who supported one side or the other in the conflict.

One of the most interesting observations on the matter that I have seen was actually made in 1969, well before the end of the war and about two years before his own death, by the veteran Hungarian Marxist George Lukacs. Lukacs said: "The defeat of the USA in the Vietnam war is to the 'American way of life' rather like what the Lisbon earthquake was to French feudalism."

Michael Lowy expands on Lukac's comment in an article in New Left Review (No. 91, May-June 1975): "The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 triggered off an extraordinary ideological crisis in Europe, particularly in France. The deadly and absurd event (total destruction of the city and 20,000 deaths) challenged Leibniz's optimistic (and conformist) ideology 'We live in the best of all possible worlds', Alexander Pope's 'What is, is right', as well as the whole concept of divine Providence. Voltaire made his Doctor Pangloss, the philosopher of smug optimism, die in the Lisbon earthquake. Thus, for Lukacs, the consequence of the Vietnam war was, by analogy, as follows. Firstly, the end of optimistic illusions in an 'era of peace' on a world scale - illusions which he himself had harbored since 1956. Secondly, the decline of what he called 'cybernetic religion': blind faith in machines, computers and electronic instruments, omnipotent and provident fetishes, substitutes for the God of the eighteenth century, which were all defeated by the NLF. Last, and above all, the appearance of an enormous crisis of values, a radical challenge to imperialist ideology, which could, in future, erupt in a massive revolutionary upsurge of international dimensions."

It is still far too early to estimate how accurate Lukacs' prophecy will prove. As Lukacs himself recalled, Lisbon was destroyed in 1755 and the Bastille not until 1789. But signs of the depth of the changes wrought in American attitudes by the experience of the Indochina war are plain to see even at this
early stage. The most obvious one is the effective paralysis of recent US interventionist attempts in Angola. The Angolan liberation forces thus owe as direct and immediate a debt to the Vietnamese revolution as those of Algeria did in 1954: Vietnam's victory over French colonial power at Dien Bien Phu in May of that year was the direct detonator of the Algerians' eight-year struggle for independence from France which began less than six months later, on November 1.

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The first anniversary of the end of the war is a good opportunity to examine, with the hindsight of the intervening months, the nature of the process by which Vietnam's epic struggle was finally brought to an end.

While the media in the West concentrated almost exclusively on the role of North Vietnamese regular armed forces in the process, the Vietnamese media on the revolutionary side described it as one of "armed attacks and people's uprisings". The Western formula is clearly inadequate, a somewhat pathetic survival of mid-sixties' State Department thinking. But the Vietnamese formula, to my mind, is not all that much better. Both completely fail to capture the complex and largely unforeseen interplay of political and military factors which actually took place, and determined the outcome of the conflict.

Certainly, military action played a decisive role. Moreover, it was military action at the highest level of regular warfare ever attained by the revolutionary armed forces in Vietnam. The bombing on April 28 of Saigon's Tan Son Nhut airport by revolutionary pilots flying captured US A-37 bombers was highly symbolic in this respect: it was the first and only instance of the use of concerted aerial bombardment by their side in the whole war. The closing moments of the war were, therefore, a striking confirmation of the three-stage strategy of people's war espoused by the Vietnamese since the days of the war against the French: from guerrilla, through mobile, to regular warfare.

General Vo Nguyen Giap and his deputy, General Van Tien Dung (pronounced "Zoong"), are the joint authors of a lengthy analysis of the "Ho Chi Minh Campaign" which brought the war to an end. Published in Hanoi on July 7, 1975, their account attributed victory to "speedy tactical movement" (expressed elsewhere, more philosophically, as "effective use of time and space in warfare"), and the "classic military siege".

On the first aspect they say that one of the keys to victory was "good preparation of rear areas and transportation". Here they note a feature of the Ho Chi Minh Campaign which, like the Tan Son Nhut raid, was an entirely new thing in the practice of the Vietnamese revolutionary army, and contributed greatly to the quick success of the Campaign: "Troops rode to battle in trucks and thus were able to move quickly to new battlefields when the opportunities were present." The aspect of "classic military siege" related especially to the tactics employed in the capture of Saigon, Vietnam's largest city, intact.

They said: "After our big victory in the highlands (the "strategic withdrawal" of the Thieu army from that region in mid-March which, incidentally, was described by the..."
Voice of America at the time as "a wise strategic decision" - VoA March 20, 1975 - M.S.), the party quickly recognised the new situation and the new opportunity, and immediately advocated the carrying out of the anticipated plan - an all-out drive to capture Saigon. We made the correct assessment: the enemy was facing the danger of complete disintegration and our capabilities of winning final victory had rapidly matured. Each day the revolution in our country was making advances such as took 20 years in the past."

As the North Vietnamese troops continued to rout Saigon forces, the possibility of American intervention was weighed again by the military and political leaders. Giap and Dung say: "Our party asserted that even if the United States dared to take part in the war again, we would determinedly advance to win because we had all the conditions to secure final victory."

The two generals said victory was hastened by poor American and Saigon intelligence. They go so far as to say that if the Americans had not made wrong calculations, "they might have had two more years in South Vietnam". "It was because of their poor intelligence that they were taken completely by surprise when our general offensive started," they say. They noted that in 20 of South Vietnam's 44 provinces, no heavy fighting was necessary for victory. (To keep this claim in perspective I should recall that a senior Vietnamese army officer told me during a visit I made to Saigon in the first 10 days of last June that the revolutionary armed forces lost some 20,000 men killed in the Ho Chi Minh Campaign, with four or five times that number wounded.)

It is perhaps only to be expected that the analysis by the generals dwells much more heavily on the military aspect of the process than on the political, even though they repeat often enough the ritual formula "armed attacks and people's uprisings".

The role of "people's uprisings" in the process varied greatly in importance from place to place and from time to time. It was extremely important, for example, in one early stage of the process - the fall of the major highlands centre of Ban Me Thuot in early March. A correspondent of Agence France-Presse in Saigon at the time, Paul Leandri, highlighted in a despatch the insurrection by local montagnards (tribesmen of minority nationality) which touched off the events leading to the fall of the city to the revolutionary forces. Incensed, the Thieu authorities, who maintained that only "North Vietnamese invaders" were involved, called him to police headquarters and demanded to know the source of his information. His refusal to divulge it led to a series of fast-moving events culminating in his death from a Thieu police bullet in the police headquarters courtyard a few hours later.

But as the momentum of the advance of the revolutionary armed forces increased, the aspect of "people's uprisings" certainly diminished in importance. The "people's" political role became increasingly that of protecting economic installations and public utilities from the sabotage attempts of the fleeing Thieu troops.

This is not to deny the continuing importance of political factors in the process which led to victory for the revolutionary forces, even if it is to dispute whether these factors are adequately described by the expression "people's uprisings". Indeed, it is an interesting fact that the most important political element in the process of Vietnam's victory is still, a year later, not widely acknowledged for what it was. It was not the uprising of the urban masses against the hated Thieu regime to which revolutionary romantics, and some others, had for years looked forward. It was the collapse of the morale of the Thieu army and administration, a phenomenon as intensely political in nature as the disintegration of the Napoleonic armies on their retreat from Moscow. This was the prime political factor in the rapid victory of the revolutionary armed forces. In the extract from their analysis quoted above the generals implicitly say as much when they emphasise (first factor) "the enemy was facing the danger of complete disintegration" and (second factor) "our capabilities of winning final victory had rapidly matured".

The war did not have to end in the way it did. Counter-revolutionary armies have been defeated before in history without the wholesale disintegration that overtook the Thieu army. Even if this army had had a Taiwan to flee to there is no indication that it would have been capable of doing so in anything like the order achieved by the Kuomintang forces in their flight in 1949. (Nor, incidentally, was it likely that, given the state of mind prevailing in
the US at the time, it would, either at the time or subsequently, have enjoyed the protection of the Seventh Fleet.)

The manner in which the war ended in fact expressed certain peculiar features of the dynamics of the Vietnam conflict. Following the withdrawal of the US and other foreign forces from Vietnam in 1973 under the Paris Agreement, US Secretary of State Kissinger claimed that the war had now become a "civil war". The Vietnamese revolutionaries hotly denied this, pointing to the obvious facts of the continued US funding of the Saigon war effort, the continued presence of US advisers alongside the Thieu forces, and so on. But, looked at purely from the angle of the nationality of the combatants, Kissinger's claim was correct. This fact was to prove of heavy consequence.

The Vietnam wars, French and American, from the very beginning, insofar as they concerned Vietnamese, have had the character of "intra-familial" wars. Throughout Vietnamese society, but especially among the country's numerically small but highly influential French-trained elites, families were divided in their allegiances. It was not uncommon for brothers or cousins, due to similarities in their training, to find themselves working as opposite numbers in the ruling machineries of Hanoi and Saigon. As well as direct family relationships, there were thousands of cases in which members of the ruling groups at the two ends of the country were personally acquainted. I have often been regaled by Hanoi officials with stories about the former Saigon president and vice-president Nguyen Cao Ky, for example, whom they had known from his student days in Hanoi. Most such tales concerned student Ky's amorous adventures, and clearly reflected close personal knowledge. This is not to mention the other thousands of cases of people actually changing sides in the course of the Vietnam wars. Such people came to possess personal knowledge of leading Vietnamese figures in both Hanoi and Saigon.

One result of all this was that, particularly in the recent war, US personnel in Saigon had a nightmarish time worrying about who, among their Vietnamese "friends", just might be a double agent. They worried with good cause, for Saigon was host to double agents in plenty. I myself met one of them. He had worked for years, and was still working in June 1975, in the Saigon bureau of the major US newsagency Associated Press.

But much more important was the fact that there was a degree of interpenetration - one is tempted to use the word symbiosis - of the two Vietnamese sides which probably has few parallels in the history of war.

The Hanoi publicist Nguyen Khac Vien expressed aspects of this phenomenon in an interview granted in July last year to an Algerian journalist from the magazine Jeune Afrique. The Algerian had just returned from a visit to Saigon. He said: "In the towns the masses apparently took little part in their liberation, there was no insurrectionary situation in the towns." Vien replied: "In our time you should not picture the people's movement like the marches and mass demonstrations of the 19th and early 20th centuries, mounting open attacks on the organs of power. The means of repression at the disposal of the fascist regimes are nowadays so great that one would only be courting futile massacres. It is the combination of armed struggle with political struggle that decides victory ... As much as the tanks and guns of the liberation forces it was the work of persuasion, agitation, education carried on for years by millions of people which brought about the disintegration of Thieu's troops. What South Vietnamese had not a brother, a friend, a cousin, a classmate or a son in the puppet army or police? And even before the liberation forces launched their attacks this work of undermining had already been done by millions of people. The liberation tanks moved against units and garrisons that had already been thoroughly worked over politically ..."

Another aspect of this "symbiotic" relationship between the two Vietnamese sides must be noted: they were never even remotely equal in terms of national moral and political authority. This fact too was well understood, even if only privately, by both sides. Thus, to an unusual degree in "civil war", the eventual outcome of the struggle was known in advance, especially to the principal actors, on both sides.

Various foreign observers have commented on this aspect of Vietnamese politics. Writing in the French paper La Tribune des Nations as early as July 15, 1955, the journalist Claire Barsal achieved something of a classic of under-statement when she wrote of the then...
Saigon ruler Ngo Dinh Diem: “Diem labors under a basic handicap in a country which he claims to be leading to complete independence - that is, that he is not the man who conquered colonialism. That man was and is still, in the eyes of the people, Ho Chi Minh, the victor in the colonial war ...”

Three years before, Philippe Devillers, a man with close connections with the French colonial administration and police, had been much more damning in his book *Histoire du Vietnam 1940-52*. On the problem of what social support remained for the French in modern Vietnam, he said: “What was left then? The Catholics? Would it not be the ruination of Catholicism in Vietnam to compromise it again, as in the 19th century, with ‘foreign imperialism’? Then there remain only, to side with France, ‘nationalists of the piastre, ambition or revenge’, those who out of lust for gain or honors, out of anti-communist passion or simply to assuage some personal grudge, are prepared to make themselves auxiliaries of a policy opposed to the interests of their people and directed against the freedom of their country ...

He went on: “There is not a shadow of doubt that Ho Chi Minh has retained the ear and the confidence of the Vietnamese people and that the great majority of the ‘men of worth’ in Vietnam have rallied to his cause. If one man today can pretend to bring about ‘national unity’ in Vietnam, to take the helm of the country and bring it to harbor, it is certainly Ho Chi Minh. It is above all with him, and with his men, that the Vietnam of tomorrow will inevitably be built. Nothing lasting or great will be done in this country without them or against them.”

It is only with an awareness of this moral, political and psychological background that it is possible to understand the totality and speed of the collapse of the Thieu regime. For Vietnamese on both sides of the conflict it was the moment of truth - a moment delayed for decades by brutal foreign interventions - but a moment all knew had to come.

When the last Saigon President, General Duong Van Minh, in his speech of welcome - and surrender - to representatives of the revolutionary armed forces in Saigon’s Independence Palace on April 30, 1975, said “The revolution has triumphed” he used words which every member of the Saigon governmental elite had known for years in his heart of hearts would one day be uttered by one of them. It was just a matter of by whom and when.

All this is not to deny the genuineness of the fear of “communism” that gripped much of the rank and file of Thieu’s army, and a part of the civilian population, in the closing days of the war. Macabre events such as the action of Saigon army soldiers clinging to the undercarriage of planes taking off from Da Nang on March 29, 1975, only to drop within seconds to their deaths, are not to be forgotten. One thing they prove is that the billions of dollars of US taxpayers’ money spent on anti-communist “psywar” operations in Vietnam were not spent entirely in vain. But such events have only the most marginal significance in the history of Vietnam. Perhaps more than anything else they show that in South Vietnam, as within the USA itself, it was the poorest, least known, least influential people who suffered most from the war. Compare the differing fates of Richard Nixon on the one hand and 19-year-old Lance-Corporal Darwin Judge, a former carry-out boy at a supermarket in Marshalltown, Iowa, on the other. Nixon, the author of the December 1972 bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong and the arch-criminal of the Watergate affair, has been granted a full pardon by his hand-picked successor as President, and now lives in comfort at San Clemente, California. Lance-Corporal Judge became the last American to die in action in Vietnam - the 55,567th - at Tan Son Nhut airport on April 29, 1975. Or compare the fates of the fear-crazed rank and file Thieu soldiers at Da Nang with that of Lieutenant-General Dang Van Quang, who had the remarkable distinction of being known as the most corrupt general in the whole Thieu army: he was lifted out of the US Embassy grounds by helicopter and flown to safety on April 29.

To close this examination of the process of Vietnam’s victory it might be useful to recall this comment on the ultimate futility of the French and US interventions in Vietnam by Jean Sainteny, the veteran French diplomat who negotiated with Ho Chi Minh following Vietnam’s August Revolution of 1945, and was the first French “delegate-general” in Hanoi following the Geneva Agreements of 1954.

Speaking in a Paris radio interview on May 5, 1975, a week after the fall of Saigon, M. Sainteny declared:
Mammoth signboard in Hue reads “Hanoi-Hue-Saigon” demonstrating the linking together of the three major cities.
"We are witnessing the birth of a power possessed of formidable weapons, the best infantry in the world, and heavy equipment of Soviet origin and American material which has been captured. There will be a very exceptional power in South-east Asia.

"The recent events are the outcome of the dominant idea of Vietnamese policy for 30 years - first of all independence, which has now been won, then reunification.

"I believe that the French war in Indochina could have been avoided at the price of concessions which may have seemed considerable then but are negligible in today's context."

He added (my emphasis): "It is probable, if not certain, that things would be much as they are today, but we would have made the considerable saving of avoiding that war and the other that has followed it."

A "considerable saving" indeed!

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With the euphoria of victory passed, "the most important task now is to wipe out, to liquidate, the deep, innumerable consequences of a powerful and brutal neo-colonialist intervention" - so said Nguyen Khac Vien in the interview quoted above.

The South Vietnam Provisional Revolutionary Government's Foreign Minister, Nguyen Thi Binh, for her part, told foreign correspondents in Moscow recently: "If you come back to Saigon now, you would realise that the atmosphere has completely changed. But, if you go deeper, a lot of things have to be done to change the life of the people there - to make radical change.

"In South Vietnam now - in spite of the fact that the war has stopped, that there is no more American presence, that there are no more US bombs - the sequels of the war are felt daily, hourly, and they are weighing heavily on our country. And the situation will last for a long time."

She said that there were still three million unemployed; food shortages were still being exploited by speculators; despite all efforts, only 300,000 people had been resettled from the cities in the countryside and the false urbanisation created by the war remained a massive problem; the PRG was still grappling with the problems posed by tens of thousands of orphans, of women who had been forced to live by prostitution, of beggars and of drug addicts; the PRG's power was secure throughout South Vietnam, although a small number of CIA-linked opposition elements had engaged in sabotage.

David Shipler, of the New York Times Moscow bureau, who was at the interview, noted: "Mrs Binh spoke softly. She did not seem like a victor, but like someone sobered by a long battle, confronted now by a further, different struggle." (Australian Financial Review, March 8, 1976.)

Awareness of this sombre background is the essential starting point for all thought and action about South Vietnam from now on.

More aid is certainly needed from the United Nations and other agencies. But central to the whole problem is the responsibility of the United States to assist in overcoming the problems created by its years-long intervention in Vietnam. This responsibility is clearly expressed in Chapter VIII, Article 21, of the Paris Agreement of 1973: "In pursuance of its traditional policy, the United States will contribute to the healing of the wounds of war in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and throughout Indochina." Yet the US has not spent one cent in this direction since the end of the war. On the contrary it has placed a vindictive embargo on all trade with the two Vietnams. It is not only a moral and humanitarian question, it is vital to the practical solution of South Vietnam's major current problem, economic recovery: US-equipped factories left over from the former regime, and there are not a few of them, cannot be effectively operated without a guaranteed supply of spare parts from the USA.

US Vice-President Rockefeller, when he came to Australia for his recent bicentennial visit, was surely reminded that Australians have forgotten neither Vietnam nor the continuing and undischarged responsibility of the US government to provide Vietnam with reconstruction aid.

As for our own Fraser Government, its intentions in this respect were made clear in a little-noticed passage in an interview granted by its Foreign Minister, Andrew Peacock, to Michael Richardson of the Sydney Morning Herald (February 2, 1976). Richardson asked Peacock "will civil aid programs to the countries of Indochina be continued at their
present levels?” Peacock replied: “We will continue to provide aid to Vietnam and Laos.” The omission of any reference to “present levels” in Peacock’s reply could not have been more eloquent. Clearly, at least some of the Indochina aid programs developed under the Whitlam Government are slated for the chop by the cold-blooded axemen of the Fraser administration. The Labor Opposition should be probing to find out which programs they are and how their scrapping is justified. In doing so, the Opposition should be using for all it is worth the reported fact (Australian Financial Review, March 12) that its own Foreign Affairs Department recently urged upon the Fraser Government “the provision of economic aid to the new governments of Indochina in a generous way” (my emphasis).

By the time this article appears there will have been elections held (April 25, 1976) for a single national assembly for the whole of Vietnam.

But we should be under no illusion - the process of Vietnam’s reunification is still in its very early stages.

There is simply no quick solution to the problems created by the different evolution of the two halves of Vietnam over the past 30 years.

Just to take the political problem: there is a real difference between acceptance by South Vietnamese of the rule of the PRG, and a positive desire on their part for reunification with the North. North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong alluded to this situation when he told a group of visiting overseas Vietnamese, in Hanoi for the 30th anniversary of the DRV last September: “If we can convince 50 per cent of the South Vietnamese that reunification is an urgent need, that’s good; if we can convince 60 per cent, that’s better; if we can convince 70 per cent, that’s perfect.”

The problems involved in reunifying the two economies have been canvassed often enough. The report (Australian Financial Review, March 12) that the South will build a “five-tier economy - private, joint private-State, State, collective and individual”, and that this economic policy is held by the PRG as “a long-range one”, is only the most recent indication that the problems of economic reunification are so substantial as not to be rushed.

But notwithstanding all difficulties, “Vietnam is One.” However long it takes to consummate reunification, it is certainly Vietnam’s wave of the future.

It is up to foreign friends of Vietnam to be aware of the difficulties, and to be as patient as the Vietnamese appear to be as they work for their resolution.

Whether it has two governments or one, Vietnam is now “independent and free, free and independent forever” - to quote the words of Workers’ Party leader Le Duan at the Hanoi victory celebrations of May 15, 1975.

It seems fitting to close this article on the first anniversary of Vietnam’s victory by looking a little more closely at the concept of independence and how it is understood in that country.

Examining the reasons for the political success of the Vietnamese communists in his 1954 study The Vietnamese Nation - Contribution to a History, the French historian, Jean Chesneaux, finds the most important factor to be “their total independence in relation to the various powers that have dominated the Vietnamese people at the various stages of their history: Japan, France, China.”

He goes on: “This amounts to saying that the leaders of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam find the secret of their strength within their country itself, among the 20 million Vietnamese themselves.”

While the number of Vietnamese is now more like 45 million - despite everything their various foes have been able to do in the way of killing Vietnamese since 1954, the nation has succeeded in generating a continuous baby boom - Chesneaux’s point is as valid today as it was 22 years ago.

The American scholar Frances FitzGerald wrote after her visit to North Vietnam in early 1975: “The word ‘independence’ is the starting and finishing point for any ideological discussion in North Vietnam. It comes up most frequently in relation to the Chinese ... As the Vietnamese present the matter, independence comes first, and if there is a conflict the other imperatives, such as that of Socialist unity,
must be reconciled with it, rather than vice versa. Independence is the only issue that the North Vietnamese can be said to be fanatical about ... Independence is, to be sure, a complicated notion in this day of global economics and global politics, and it is particularly complicated for small countries. But for the North Vietnamese it has at least one specific meaning, and that is the liberation of the South from American influence, and the unity of the whole country." (The New Yorker, April 28, 1975.)

Ms FitzGerald's article hit the streets in New York less than 48 hours before the first part of that twin goal was achieved on April 30. The world may now expect to see Vietnamese independence displayed more vigorously than ever before. After all, if they preserved their independence through all the excruciating years of the war, why should it not be affirmed more strongly now that victory has been won?

The first instance in which an independent Vietnamese position may be expected to impinge on world opinion is in relation to the Paracel and Spratly islands, which are claimed by both Vietnam and China. This issue is undoubtedly the most "neuralgic" of all Vietnam's problems with its neighbors. The sudden Chinese seizure of the Paracels from the Thieu regime in January 1974 has not been forgotten or forgiven by the Vietnamese. Their tit-for-tat action in seizing the Spratlys from Thieu control immediately after the fall of Saigon was an indication of how deadly serious they are on the issue. A North Vietnamese statement in January 1974 appealed for negotiations on the problem, but began with the firm statement "Preservation of its territorial integrity is a sacred cause for every people". Although it has never been publicly referred to by either side in the dispute, a struggle for control of offshore oil resources gives a special edge of bitterness to the Paracels-Spratlys issue.

Another major manifestation of Vietnamese independence will be the country's progressively closer identification with the non-aligned movement and the Third World in general. Despite all their wartime dependence on socialist-country aid, the Vietnamese never saw themselves as fundamentally aligned. They take great - and sometimes, one suspects, faintly malicious - pleasure in recalling that the success of their revolution in August 1945 predated by more than four years the success of the revolution in their great neighbor country to the north. They also have a vivid recollection of the fact that for the first five years of the life of the DRV their country was not only "non-aligned", it was absolutely on its own. It was not until their big Border Campaign of 1950 which swept French forces from the region of their frontier with China that they gained access to the friendly rear provided by China, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Vietnamese independence will also be displayed in a series of bold joint-venture agreements with foreign capitalist concerns as they get fully underway with their quest for new technologies. They have already made their intentions clear in this respect, explaining that they are seeking not just technologies that are more advanced than their own, but those that are the world's most advanced in each particular field of their interest. With such a perspective, they will obviously in many areas have to go beyond their traditional socialist-country sources of technological assistance.

The Vietnamese in developing such policies are certainly demonstrating a desire to distance themselves from the Sino-Soviet conflict, and to lessen the pressures to which they are subjected as a result of this conflict. But it would be wrong to think that this is their prime motivation. I personally doubt whether their current policies would have been very different if this conflict had never arisen.

As was said at the outset, it is still far too early to know whether Lukac's prophecy of "a massive revolutionary upsurge of international dimensions" will come to pass as a result of the US defeat in Vietnam. Certainly no major post-Vietnam political development anywhere in the world has as yet put Lukac's idea out of court. There are even signs of confirmation of it in Africa and, with all allowance made for the differences in conditions of the countries concerned, in Western Europe.

What can be said with confidence here and now is that independent Vietnam is set to do many things that will mock old conceptions of socialist/capitalist/non-aligned divisions. It is set to make interesting and unique contributions to world political developments in the last quarter of the century.
Towards the Liberation of Women

a document of the Spanish Communist Party

The liberation of women is central to the struggle for freedom in this agonising period we are experiencing under the present regime in Spain.

The brutal and scandalous extremes to which discrimination against women has been carried by the regime is the primary reason for this. The other critical factor is the change which is taking place throughout Spanish society - the profound cultural revolution against conformism, reactionary traditions and established customs, which places great emphasis on the demand for equality of the sexes. It is the recognition of the discrimination against her that is motivating the Spanish woman to take an increasingly aggressive part in the social and political struggles in the fight for democracy.

In the latter part of 1975 the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) held a Conference where it adopted the final text of its Program-Manifesto. A draft of this document had been circulated and widely discussed in the period following the VIIIth Congress of the PCE. At the same time the Conference adopted a policy document on the liberation of women. This document has been published together with the program for circulation inside Spain. Its positive evaluation of the movement for the liberation of women and its self-critical tone has evoked wide comment in Europe.

This, the first English translation, is published here for the information of readers.

More than 64 percent of Spanish women are housewives while working women represent only 24 percent of the workforce. These figures illustrate the magnitude of the problem.
Women entering the workforce start from behind scratch. Because their education has been different from that of men, they lack professional training and are channelled into jobs which are typically "female". They usually do not have as much money and authority as men and are conditioned to regard work as a mere stopgap between childhood and marriage.

The Labour Ordinances are discriminatory and this legalised discrimination is aggravated by the regulations of the employers. As well, the Work Contract contains vexatious conditions for married women; they must have the consent of their husbands to get a job and be paid for their own labour. Discrimination is even greater against women who work at home - they are paid minimum rates and have no social security - and against women in domestic service and peasant women. The underlying element in female labour, that it is used as a reserve work force according to fluctuations of the capitalist economy, gives rise to other forms of exploitation.

The number of women joining the class struggle will be in direct proportion to the priority the communist party and the workers' movement as a whole gives to struggle against the super-exploitation of women. Communists must exert themselves to ensure that increasing numbers of women occupy leading positions in the working class movement. Women's capacities are frequently underestimated because of atavistic ideas of women's 'inferiority'. The militancy and the qualities of leadership shown by women in the recent trade union elections illustrate their qualities and these will be enhanced as the level of struggle against all forms of discrimination is raised.

In spite of certain reforms in recent years, discrimination against women is still firmly based in Spanish law - in the Civil Code, the Penal Code, in Commercial Laws and others.

The original Napoleonic Code, and the long list of fascist adaptations incorporated in it, restricts the legal standing of women, subordinating them in the final analysis to the over-riding authority of the male.

The recent legislation dealing with the legal position of married women - the "Rights and Responsibilities of the Husband and Wife" - far from introducing any important modification, has endorsed the spirit of the Civil Code, which, when promulgated, affirmed: "The authority which nature, religion and history assign to the husband." The Penal Code legalises a double moral standard; adultery is for women a crime carrying a six years' gaol term. It is not an offence for men.

The Communist Party considers that before there can be true democracy established in Spain, all discriminatory legislation against women must be eliminated and their right to hold any professional or public office established. This democratic demand reflects the consensus in Spanish society today. A stronger and more systematic campaign for the elimination of these anachronistic aspects of Spanish law is necessary. It is vital for millions of women.

Laws and economic-social conditions are not alone responsible for women's inferior position. Children are conditioned to this idea from babyhood. It is something instilled in them at home and in their earliest schooling. Education is thus one of the principal factors
in converting the supposed "superiority" of men into something that appears "normal", the "common sense" accepted by men and even by many women. From childhood the small girl is confined to certain colours, certain toys, her role is drilled into her and she becomes accustomed to the double standard of morals. All this conditions her to accept the idea that she is an inferior being.

This bias is continued in the curricula of the segregated schools and in the establishments of higher education. There are very few for females and the courses are oriented towards the supportive roles - secretary, teacher, nurse - and tend to be extensions of the home.

This social and educational conditioning is reflected in the progressively fewer numbers of girls in the later years of higher education and their almost total absence from the field of technical education. Only a minute number of women finish technical courses and they then face great difficulties in practising their professions. An important point in the Communist Party's program for democratic reform in education is the eradication of all aspects which lead to discrimination against women.

At the same time the party recognises that changes in the education field, however important they may be, will not solve the problem. The exploiting classes have a decisive interest in maintaining discrimination against women, not only, as we have seen, because women are super-exploited in production, but because of their work at home. Women in the home do a day's work for which they receive no remuneration (those working outside the home as well do a double shift), but this work is essential for the maintenance and reproduction of the work force and without it production would come to a standstill.

Discrimination against women starts in the traditional family home, economically, socially and ideologically and it is expressed in the clear division of roles. Men are responsible for the economic maintenance of the family and this brings them into direct contact with the outside world. Women's basic functions are the domestic tasks, a form of coarsening slavery, which isolates them and keeps them from social labour. For thirty-nine years the fascist regime has eagerly propagated the myth that the domestic slavery of women is a "feminine virtue".

The incorporation of women into the work force, in spite of the conditions they face in capitalist societies, is a step which helps them to break away from their isolation and to come into contact with society. It up-grades the need for amenities which can lighten the burdens of home. There is a grave lack of child-minding centres and today powerful mass action among women is being developed on the demand for child care centres and schools.

Currently, despite reactionary laws, in Spain as in the rest of Europe, a crisis has developed in the traditional and authoritarian family. This has brought to the surface the need for legal reforms in conformity with scientific and social advance in order to develop the quality of the relationship between men and women, ensuring for women self-determination and, between the sexes, greater equality.

The Communist Party declares itself in favour of legalising the use of contraceptives and that contraceptives be a charge on social security. With every respect for those who may have different views on this matter, the Communist Party considers that divorce should be considered as a civil contract. When a marriage has broken down to compel a couple to continue to share married life has a bad effect on every member of the family.

Franco's Penal Laws make 1,100,000 women delinquents, according to figures issued by the Prosecutor of the Supreme Court for 1973-800,000 for using contraceptives and 300,000 for abortion practices. These figures show that abortion is a serious social problem which cannot be solved by some Article of the Penal Code. The Communist Party advocates the abolition of anti-abortion legislation and maintains that it is the right of the people concerned to determine the number of children they will have. There are many different opinions within society today on the problem of abortion; democracy will permit a scientific exposition of its true significance and the masses themselves will decide the legislation to be adopted on this matter.

The fight against the most brutal discriminations to which women are subjected, under the law, at work, in the schools and at home is a very important part of the struggle of our people for freedom and socialism.

The end of the fascist dictatorship will create
new conditions which will be much more favourable for women's liberation.

When Spain becomes socialist many of the lingering structures, discriminatory against women, will be destroyed.

At the same time, experience shows that the full liberation of women does not automatically follow the winning of freedom and socialism. Even in socialist societies, in spite of their achievements, women are discriminated against in a number of ways and many people in those societies still consider it "natural" for women to remain inferior to men in certain spheres.

Unlike Utopian Socialism, Marxism is the first theory to make a profound analysis of the roots and causes of the thousands of years of subjugation of women. It is the first theory to postulate incisively the need to struggle for the complete equality of women and men. However, some of the basic Marxist tenets have either been forgotten or set aside. The pressure of a society in which men are superior to women has been felt even within organisations based upon Marxism. There is an apparent reluctance to face new aspects associated with the problems of women's liberation.

At the same time, we see an upsurge of radical feminist movements in various countries, generally based upon Marxism, although the conclusions drawn are incorrect in that they are narrow and one-sided. The Communist Party underlines the importance of the feminist movement and concurs with its objective, the achievement of equality for women. In this sense we are, we must be, a feminist party. We are the party of women's liberation.

In general, the mistake made by the radical feminist movement is that women's problems are seen in isolation - apart from the political and social struggle for change - as if they could be solved in a straight out man-woman confrontation. Minority abstract solutions can divert masses of women from the most effective path in their struggle for liberation.

We recognise that the women's liberation movement is a diversified mass movement which must have an open, legal organisation capable of correctly assessing the backward conditions of women. It should be oriented towards unity with the fighting fronts of other mass movements and at the same time work to develop in them a greater understanding of the women's dilemma. The diverse forms of organisation and the wide variety of theoretical views within the women's liberation movement are paralleled in the broad general mass movement where the action is.

The Communist Party is self-critical as it was in its VIII Congress on the question of women's liberation. We are aware that there is discrimination against women within our own ranks and that many communists still have reactionary ideas on the subject. To overcome this problem it must first be recognised and this must be followed by a revolutionary change in our thinking. Eradication of discrimination against women is basic to communist thinking.

The creative potential of women has been limited for thousands of years. The extent of this loss of the full capabilities of more than half the human race is incalculable.

With communism a new woman will emerge - truly equal to man. Human life will reach a higher level. A new quality will emerge in the relations between the sexes - in love, in work and in the arts and sciences.

Our policy today, our ideal for tomorrow is to have great masses of women in the ranks of the Party. Women's political might is great and it will increase. Today most women still have no political conviction. We have to demonstrate to them that, along with solutions for their most immediate problems and a perspective of complete liberation, their place is with us in the struggle for freedom and socialism.

First we must promote a campaign to recruit women into the Party on a basis of equality with men. Women's militancy cannot be one-sided. The flexible forms of organisation demanded by their present situation must be seen not only as reflecting the injustice to which they are subject but also as an instrument with which to fight against that injustice. The Party must pay particular attention to the development and promotion of women cadres. This will benefit both the party and the broad mass movement of women. It must become the concern of all our organisations. Finally, although women themselves will provide the major force in the struggle for women's liberation, this struggle is a fundamental revolutionary task for the whole Party. We intend to hold a special Party Conference which will make an in-depth study of the range of problems evoked by the women's liberation movement.
Economic Notes

by Terry O'Shaughnessy

On April 1, the Fraser government set up a top level committee to review the operations of the Trade Practices Act. Within hours it came under strong attack from Mr. Mick Young, Labor spokesman on industry and commerce.

The committee has been given wide powers to investigate and report on all aspects of anti-trust legislation. It does not include a representative of any consumers' organisation, or of the trade union movement.

Its members are: Mr. T.B. Swanson (chairman), former deputy chairman of Imperial Chemical Industries of Australia and New Zealand Ltd.; Mr. J.A. Davidson, managing director of Commonwealth Industrial Gases Ltd.; Professor A. Kerr, professor of economics at Murdoch University and a former chairman of the WA Consumer Affairs Council; Mr. H. Schreiber, a Sydney solicitor, and Mr. A.G. Hartnell from the Department of Business and Consumer Affairs.

"The chairman of the committee", Mick Young said, "has been associated with a company that has been embroiled in several investigations by the Trade Practices Commission involving massive price discrimination designed to destroy competition by selling goods below cost."

Commonwealth Industrial Gases (CIG) currently has three applications for clearance and authorisation before the Trade Practices Commission. One concerns technical information sharing arrangements it has with a US company; another concerns a similar agreement it has with a UK company; and the third is about conditions the company attaches to the sale of particular containers, namely that the gases should not be resold.

CIG also made an application to the commission which, if accepted would have prevented a new competitor entering the industry. The application opposed the agreements between BHP and Linde for the supply of gases to the new market entrant.
“Another member of the committee”, Mr. Young also charges, “is a partner of the Minister’s (Mr. Howard’s) brother in a huge Sydney law firm which acts for many business organisations who since the inception of the Trade Practices Act have been opposed to it.”

The committee has been given 12 weeks to report on:

- Whether the Act is “achieving its intended purpose of creating a free and fair market, and whether consumers are benefiting”.
- Whether the Act is “causing unintended difficulties or unnecessary costs to the public, including business”.
- Whether “in the current economic circumstances any part of the Act inhibits economic recovery contrary to the objectives of the government”. And “how the Act can be improved”.

It does not take much reading behind phrases like “the objectives of the government” or “intended difficulties or unnecessary costs to ... business” to see the approach the government expects the committee to take.

Young and the Minister, Howard, also clashed on the purposes of the Act. “The purpose of trade practices legislation is to give effect to the broad economic philosophy and objectives of the government”, Mr. Howard said in announcing the committee.

“The Minister mis-states the purpose of the legislation”, Mick Young replied. “The Trade Practices Act was never designed or intended ‘to give effect to the broad economic philosophy and objectives of the government’ or any other government.”

“Competition is the main purpose of the Act. The Act is designed to strengthen the competitiveness of private enterprise for the benefit of the public as ultimate consumers.”

While it is clear that the Fraser government is trying to draw any teeth the Trade Practices Commission has that offend its big business backers, this commitment to “free competition” itself merits criticism.

It is unrealistic, or hypocritical, to extoll the merits of “free competition” in the way that both the Liberal and Labor parties do without coming to terms with the degree to which the Australian economy is dominated by monopoly capital, and will remain so despite a hundred Trade Practices Commissions.

YOU’D THINK WE HAD A MONOPOLY

Industry in Australia, as in other advanced capitalist countries, is dominated by a small number of giant firms. In the latest available Manufacturing Census conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for 1972-73, there were 36,437 manufacturing “establishments” owned by a total of 30,389 “enterprise groups”.

Two hundred of these “enterprise groups” or companies, however, outweigh the other 30,189. Although they make up only 0.68 per cent of the number of “enterprise groups”, they control 8 per cent of manufacturing “establishments”. These, in turn, account for over half - 54 per cent - of total manufacturing turnover.

These two hundred enterprise groups contributed 51 per cent of value added in manufacturing industry, although they employed only 44 per cent of workers in industry. In other words, value added per worker was higher in these big firms than in industry as a whole.

These firms also accounted for 49 per cent of wages and salaries paid, which shows that their average wage level was slightly higher than in the rest of industry.

We can compare value added with wages paid per worker for the largest 12, the largest 25, the largest 50, the largest 100 and the largest 200 enterprise groups. (See Table 1.) In the 12 biggest firms, value added per worker was $9537, while the average wage was $5230 (remember this is 1972-73). This gives a ratio of value added to wages paid of 182 per cent.

For industry as a whole, value added per worker was only $8109 - 15 per cent less, but wages were also lower and stood at $4392. In fact the ratio of value added to wages paid was almost the same and came to 185 per cent.

The most dramatic indicator of concentrated economic power is the way investment is dominated by the largest firms. The twelve biggest enterprise groups, although they made up only 17 per cent of turnover, 15 per cent of value added, 12 per cent of employment and 14 per cent of wages paid, accounted for 25 per cent of all fixed capital expenditure.
TABLE 1
Value added per worker, average wage paid and the ratio of value added to wage paid in industry as a whole, and in the largest companies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry as a whole</th>
<th>The largest companies</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>largest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value added per worker($)</td>
<td>8109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average wage paid($)</td>
<td>4392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratio of value added to wage paid (per cent)</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest 200 firms accounted for 54 per cent of manufacturing turnover but they were responsible for 61 per cent of investment. In other words, these big firms are the ones that are accumulating capital and growing most rapidly, so their domination of the Australian economy must increase, not decrease over time.

This trend is shown by changes between 1966-69 and 1972-73. The 200 biggest firms' share of value added grew from 49 to 51 per cent, their share of employment from 42 to 44 per cent and their share of fixed capital expenditure from 57 to 61 per cent.

No legislation, and especially no talk about the importance of 'small business' and 'free competition' arrested this tendency, and we can be sure it is continuing today.

FOREIGN CONTROL

Eighty-seven of the largest 200 enterprise groups are foreign controlled. Foreign control and industry concentration tend to go together. Both industry concentration (measured by the dominance of the largest 20 enterprise groups) and foreign control in the largest 20 enterprise groups were above 60 per cent (based on value added) in the following industries: tobacco products, basic chemicals, petroleum refining, non-ferrous metal basic products, and motor vehicles and parts.

These 87 foreign-controlled firms accounted for 45 per cent of the value added of the largest 200 enterprises, and 23 per cent of the value added for all manufacturing industry. Foreign control in the largest 200 firms was mainly from the UK and USA (11 per cent and 8 per cent respectively of total manufacturing industry value added).

Additional information on industry concentration is given in annual surveys carried out by the Industries Assistance Commission. While these surveys have a smaller coverage than those carried out by the Bureau of Statistics, they include information on capital structure and profitability.

This allows us to investigate the mechanism that generates monopoly control of the economy and to evaluate strategies - on the part of the working class, or non-monopoly sections of capital - that seek to check this tendency.

Results of the latest survey, carried out for the financial year 1973-74 and published in the IAC's 1974-75 Annual Report, show a wide range of profit levels. Operating profit as a percentage of funds employed for manufacturing industry as a whole was 12.6 per cent, while it ranged from 3 per cent in the 'meat products' sector, to 31.2 per cent in the 'soap and other detergents' sector. Most sectors had an operating profit between 10.5 and 17.5 per cent.

It is clear that there are many factors that determine profitability, and our problem is to see if there is a relation between monopoly control of a sector of industry and profitability in that sector.
The answer appears to be that monopolisation of a sector will allow exceptional profits, but will not ensure them. Thus manufacturers of ‘soap and other detergents’ obtained high profits in a sector where the largest five firms accounted for 71 per cent of sales and the largest ten firms 90 per cent of sales.

In a similar way, tobacco manufacturers obtained a profit of 28.3 per cent, the highest of all sectors in the ‘food, beverages and tobacco’ group. Five tobacco manufacturers account for the whole output of this sector.

However, other highly concentrated sectors had below average profit levels, including ‘glass and glass products’, ‘motor vehicles’, ‘petroleum refining’ and ‘rubber products’. Sales of the five largest firms in each of these sectors accounted for 93, 84, 80 and 73 per cent of the total in each case. Respective profit levels, though, were only 7.8, 8.9, 7.0 and 8.5 per cent.

While we cannot here go into the special factors which determine profit levels in all sectors, and while comparisons between sectors from quite different industry groups might have little meaning, a pattern does emerge if, for example, we look at one industry group. The ‘food, beverages and tobacco’ group has the largest number of sectors, and if we rank them in terms of the percentage of total industry sales accounted for by the five largest firms we obtain a clear trend. (See Table 2.)

VALUE, PRICE AND MONOPOLY PRICE

Above average profits can be made in monopolised sectors because of the way commodity prices are formed in a capitalist economy. The operation of this mechanism has implications for the capitalist class as a whole, and hence for the capitalist state. It also affects the working class, though not in the simple way that many ideologists of ‘free competition’ and ‘an anti-monopoly alliance’ assume.

The value of a commodity is created in the labor process and equals the amount of socially necessary labor time required to produce it. Under conditions of simple commodity production and exchange we would expect commodities which take a similar time to be produced to be exchanged for each other.

Under capitalist commodity production, however, capitalists purchase both labor power and means of production and exchange the commodities that are produced. Commodities embodying identical amounts of labor might have required the application of vastly different quantities of the means of production. A capitalist in a sector of industry that requires little constant capital would then enjoy greater profits than his rivals if he could exchange his commodities at their value.

In fact, this does not happen because capitalists, seeking the greatest profit, will move out of low profit sectors and crowd into the high profit industry. This will produce a

<table>
<thead>
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<th>TABLE 2</th>
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<td>Profit in the ‘food, beverages and tobacco’ group, by industry sector.</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sector:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meat products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beverages and malt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flour and bread products</td>
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<td>Fruit and vegetable products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food products nec</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milk products</td>
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<td>Confectionary</td>
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<td>Margarine, oils and fats nec</td>
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<td>Raw and refined sugar</td>
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<td>Tobacco products</td>
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glut, and so force prices and profits down until a general, roughly uniform rate of profit is established.

Meanwhile, the few capitalists who remain in the former low profit sector will take advantage of reduced competition and continuing demand for their products to raise their prices until they, too, obtain the average rate of profit.

This means commodities from sectors which require a smaller than average quantity of constant capital will in general sell below their value, and vice versa.

This mechanism clearly depends, however, on the free flow of capital from one sector to another and consequent price competition between capitalists in the same sector. If, instead, capitalists in one sector are able to agree to raise their prices together, and at the same time are able to prevent competitors from entering the market, they can continue to obtain above average profits.

They can do this by relying on the massive amount of capital required to start from scratch in some new industry; by pressuring suppliers or customers not to do business with the newcomer; by using political influence to block the newcomer’s plans, and by many other means.

Everyone else, of course, then has to pay these monopoly prices. While workers can struggle to increase their money wages to preserve their standard of living by going on strike, for instance, capitalists in the non-monopoly sector are stuck with the situation. They have to pay the same wage increases to their workers that are won in struggles against the more profitable monopolies, who can often be persuaded to buy industrial peace. At the same time, these capitalists must pay increased prices for commodities they buy from the monopoly sector.

The result is the formation of two rates of profit: above average in the monopoly sector, and below average in the non-monopoly sector.

While it is clear that capitalists in the non-monopoly sectors will have a continual bone to pick with their more powerful rivals over this differential, it is not obvious how this struggle will be resolved. Given the economic and political domination of monopoly, we might expect the interests of this group never to be taken into account.

In fact, the state is forced, acting in the interests of the capitalist class as a whole, to intervene. The key here lies in the problem of accumulation. Where newly accumulated capital is invested matters not just to the capitalist concerned, but to the capitalist class as a whole.

The capitalist class seeks, through investments in new, more efficient plant, to lower the amount of labor required to produce the needs of the working class. It is also interested in cheapening the raw materials it requires in the same way.

If newly accumulated capital cannot be invested according to strictly 'economic' criteria, this aim is frustrated. Thus, the state intervenes to regulate particular monopolies and to help plan investment. While ideological and political support for this policy can be enlisted by appeals to the non-monopoly sector of the capitalist class, and even to the working class, the aim is not to further the interests of these groups but those of the capitalist class as a whole, in which the monopoly sector is dominant.

The existence of two rates of profit involves the division of the country’s total surplus product amongst the capitalist class; as such it does not determine the rate of exploitation which depends on the real historic standard of living the working class has been able to win from capital and on the size of the social product.

While monopoly pricing may be part of the process that leads to this division of the product, it does not determine it. Money prices, like money wages, do not matter in the end, and while the monopolies can sometimes decide their pricing policy (and even this within limits) they cannot decide the outcome of the subsequent struggle with the working class and with other sections of capital.

Thus a ‘free competition’ or ‘anti-monopoly’ strategy for the working class contains serious weaknesses. Firstly, it tends to overestimate the autonomy of monopoly pricing. Secondly, it misunderstands the role the state plays, and can play, in regulating monopolies. Thirdly, it ignores the identity of interest between the monopoly and non-monopoly sectors of capital in increasing the rate of exploitation. It is precisely when the state intervenes to regulate monopolies that this identity of interests is being expressed.
New Teacher Militancy
by Richard Walsham

The offensive by the ruling class against the workers and progressive movements is reflected very much in the attitude of conservative governments in Australia towards education. In New South Wales, the Liberal-Country Party State government has set out to prune back expenditure in education, public transport and other social services. This has been reflected in other states as well. The NSW government has also tried to curb the strength, independence and influence of the teachers' organisation - the NSW Teachers' Federation. Its policies have entailed deliberately creating a pool of unemployed teachers, cutting back on building programs and other areas of education expenditure.

NSW has some 3,000 unemployed teachers. A reactionary offensive is currently being whipped up against progressive developments and advances in education that have developed in the last 8-10 years. There is a fresh attempt to reimpose the old authoritarian relationships, to question teaching methods that brought about more rights for the students in some schools, which projected forms of workers' control in the school situation, which relied more on the real needs of the student and attempted to assert more autonomy at the school level. NSW has, without a doubt, the most authoritarian education system in Australia, yet even the small changes that have come about here have been too much for some of the reactionaries in the Education Department hierarchy and government. Attempts have been made in the media to claim that problems of illiteracy, numeracy and knowledge in basic skills have been brought about, not by traditional methods of education, but by the so-called "permissive" attitudes of teachers and educationists. The attempt is very much on to push back those small yet significant advances that have been made.

It should be stressed that the demands of teachers in the present period are non-economic demands. There is very little action by teachers, certainly in NSW, on the question of salaries. Teachers are concerned about a deterioration in the quality of education available to the students caused by such factors as unemployed teachers, continuance of large class sizes, cutbacks in building programs and other areas.

Teachers are also frustrated by their dual role. They are expected to obey the procedures of the school, to heave the accepted, respectable, middle class mind onto children whatever their background, particular community or interests. The child has to be trained for the examination system. The child and teacher are not allowed to educate each other, they must keep inside the narrow gauge of the syllabus created by others who are called superiors. If they break, they are both labelled failures, misfits.
NEW TEACHER MILITANCY

The teacher is not at school to serve the local community but is contracted as the agent of repression in a social machine out to exploit and mould children to suit the ends of a brutal system which serves the profit-makers. The child is seen statistically as mere raw material to fill up the functions for making profit. The teacher is delegated the job of persuading or coercing the child to sit quietly and contentedly at a job which will give him/her no chance to control his/her own life, only to produce, consume and live “normally”. Unless the teacher is struggling against this political-ideological role, there is no dignity or respect in the teacher’s job.

The teacher-student relationship couldn’t be better expressed than in this poem by a 14-year old London schoolboy:

“How much class work
Too much home work
Laugh at his jokes
Not at your own
I do not like him
He does not like me
We are both even
Except he has a belt
That is my teacher.”

There has been a dramatic radicalisation of the teaching profession compared with, say, ten years ago. A substantial majority of teachers (60-70 per cent) in our schools today are under the age of 30. They have been impacted and politicised during the Vietnam war period and after. They have quite different attitudes to teaching and to the necessity for militant action than their older colleagues. While not all are this way inclined, a significant proportion are, and it is this section which has had a marked effect in the teacher unions.

The recent dispute at Warilla High School in a working class suburb of Wollongong, where teachers remained on strike for a period of four weeks, “marked a watershed in the industrial activities of the Teachers’ Federation. I believe it will lead to a reappraisal of campaigning methods and of how to handle disputes. It was easily the most prolonged strike undertaken by a group of teachers in NSW, and it was characterised by some new and significant features.

The dispute concerned a demand by the staff for the appointment of an additional teacher to the school to reduce class sizes and to provide a numeracy program for the
children. The teachers argued that the fact that the school was in a Housing Commission area and was classified as disadvantaged necessitated such a program.

The Department adopted an extreme hardline attitude and engaged in strike-breaking, attempts to manipulate the tremendous support coming from the parents, talks to other schools by departmental officers to try to undermine support for the Warilla teachers and an attempt to “ride out” the dispute, hoping to weary the teachers into submission. They also hoped to break the will of the teachers after a number of them, unused to such prolonged and intensive action, succumbed to the pressures and returned to work. In this connection, it’s worth noting that the women teachers on the staff were extremely solid - some 80 per cent of the women teachers compared with 40 per cent of the men remained on strike for the full four weeks.

The Federation surrounded the teachers of Warilla with support from other schools both in the form of finance and industrial action. Some $15-20,000 raised enabled all the teachers to be paid strike pay in every week of the dispute. The industrial action included area-wide and school rolling strikes in the Illawarra area and some parts of the metropolitan area.

The really decisive factor, particularly in the closing stages of the dispute, was the support of other workers. Under the leadership of the South Coast Labor Council, the maritime unions took industrial action to hold up the port of Port Kembla while ironworkers, metalworkers and other sections of the trade union movement were mobilised to move into very strong industrial action in support of the teachers. In the final analysis, it was this action, and threat of action, that forced from the Education Department and the State Public Service Board the compromise which led to the return to work by the teachers.

This action also shows the value of trade unions going beyond the immediate issues of wages and conditions and involving themselves in campaigns around quality of life issues such as education.

One would be mistaken in believing that all teachers have been impacted by the need for militant action. One of the features of the struggles this year has been the unevenness of the action taken. In some areas, teachers have not felt impelled to move into action. Conservative ideology, ambition within the promotions system and middle class prejudices all play a role in inducing many teachers into a state of inertia.

The Warilla dispute will have an impact far wider than the teachers of Warilla itself. It will lead to a new approach by teachers in this state towards industrial action. There will be a more determined approach, a preparedness to fight, and fight hard.

There will be a reassessment of the hitherto liberal attitudes to strike-breakers. The one major negative feature at Warilla was the use the Department made of strike-breakers. Lessons have been learnt from this for the future.

With the Liberal government back in the saddle in Canberra, and if the Willis government is returned in NSW, we are in for much sharper conflicts. There will probably be more polarisation among teachers between conservative and militant views and tactics.

The other main tactic that has been promoted this year is the work-in. Teachers have long been frustrated by the knowledge that, though a teachers' strike has a strong ideological effect as witnessed by the near-hysteria from Liberal politicians, it has no economic effect. As a result, more creative forms of action to be taken by teachers have been sought. The scandalous, deliberately-created unemployment problem this year prompted the idea of developing work-in tactics. It is particularly effective in our field because it enables teachers to easily demonstrate that teachers are needed and are available to do necessary and essential work in schools. The Education Department and the State government have reacted very strongly to talk of work-ins.

The best experience has been a situation at Bankstown Girls' High School where an unemployed school counsellor worked-in for two days with the full co-operation of the staff and the principal. The tactics were very carefully worked out in consultation with the staff and the Federation, and the counsellor was given a great deal of work while there. The Federation, in conjunction with the staff, decided to publicise the fact that she was working-in prior to the third day. The Department reacted very strongly, obviously
realising that here was a challenge to their "sacred" right to determine what goes on in schools. It put very heavy pressure on the principal - after all, she hadn't exactly carried out the role expected of her, the Department's agent in the school! Having made the point, it was decided to mobilise the parents and students in support of a campaign around the demand for a permanent school counsellor at Bankstown Girls' High School. This support was keen and enthusiastic but would not have been there if it had not been for the initial work-in tactic which was seen as a bold and constructive initiative.

This brings us to the question of parental support for teacher action. In the past a favorite conservative argument has been that militant action would alienate parent and public support from teachers. Our experience has been that where teachers have taken industrial action, parental and public support has been strongest.

Already mentioned is the fact that the parental support at Warilla was so effective that the Department itself made special efforts to white-ant it in an effort to isolate the teachers. At Bankstown, a record meeting of some 50-60 parents turned up to the normally dormant Parents' and Citizens' Association and gave unanimous support to the action of the teachers.

At Forest Lodge Public School, in a working class inner city suburb, the parents rallied to support teachers who were taking action over the deplorable physical conditions of the school. Here, the teachers invited the parents to visit the school at the time they were actually undertaking the action (minimal-supervision). This action opened the parents' eyes to what was going on in the school, led to them taking a very strong stand and gaining considerable publicity which severely embarrassed the Education Minister.

This alliance at a new level will undoubtedly develop if the Fraser government tries to push through its cuts in the education sphere. The Federal Labor government's injection of funds into the schools has helped change the level of expectation of teachers and parents in terms of what sorts of things could be done in the schools given the finance and the ability to have some say over how it is spent. The signs are there that the Liberals are going to make savage cuts in the forthcoming budget and, if they can get away with it, before.

Already, they have displayed their true class position by the attack on the Children's Commission, on pre-school and after-school centres that the Labor government was planning should be funded by the Federal government. Here, children of working class parents are those most affected. It also reinforces the reactionary view that it is the mother's responsibility to take care of the child.

Senator Carrick, Federal Minister for Education, has given out strong indications to the teachers' and parents' bodies that savage cuts are on the way. The Federal government is also seeking to emasculate the Australian Schools Commission under the guise of "federalism". In fact, this policy seeks to strengthen the hand of the state bureaucracies, particularly the unenlightened NSW one. It seeks to tighten up the authoritarian, top-down control that was, to some extent, loosened up under Labor. For instance, the Innovations Program which encouraged teacher-initiative bypassing bureaucracies was the first to be slashed by the Fraser government. Likewise, the in-service and disadvantaged programs are under fire because they, too, entailed direct grants to the grass roots.

To prepare the way for these cuts an effort is being made by sections of the media to question progressive developments in education and to attack teachers. The Murdoch press in particular has decided to highlight crude sensational stories about teachers often on the most trivial subjects while at the same time blacking out reports of serious problems confronting the schools.

I believe that if and when such cuts occur, teachers will react in the strongest terms. The education movement is entering a particularly vigorous period which could lead to some major and very determined struggles by the teachers to both maintain and improve the education system in this country. One of the biggest problems for the left to consider is the need to see this movement not in isolation, but as an integral part of the developing mass movement against the reactionary policies of the Fraser government. In this, there is the great need to develop the widest and most effective support in the workers' movement against attacks that will be made not just on teachers but on the education of working class children.
Ecology, Capitalism, Communism
by Jack Mundey

As the relatively small Communist Party of Australia prepares for its 25th Congress in June 1976, it is interesting to note that this Communist Party is one of the very few parties in the international communist, socialist, revolutionary movements which really believes there is a global ecological crisis, notes this, and at least tries, in a modest way, to advance some socialist ecological policies and possible solutions to the most urgent political problem of all time.

MARX AND HIS 19th CENTURY EXPOSE OF CAPITALISM

Socialists generally consider Marx's analysis of capitalism to be not only correct, but to be brilliant in its analysis in the 19th century. The basic tenets hold good 125 years later.

At the same time, many people question whether the USSR, which is now nearly 60 years old, and the People's Republic of China, born 27 years ago, have fulfilled the hopes, dreams and aspirations of millions of communists, socialists and their supporters throughout the world in advancing the general concepts enunciated by Marx and Engels, as well as other revolutionaries of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

This main vision was for a humane society, in which genuine egalitarian values would be fought for, poverty and capitalism abolished, and the working people would be decisive in helping to fashion such a new socialist society, which would usher in a period in which the possibility existed for an all-round social, political and cultural development of human beings.

WHY HAS ECOLOGY BEEN NEGLECTED BY REVOLUTIONARIES?

It is true that many revolutionaries, in advancing a political viewpoint, often adopt a gospel like quotation mongering of Marx, Lenin, Engels, Mao Tse-tung (and even J.V. Stalin at a certain stage in history). Others quote Trotsky with equal fervor and religious-like dogmatism.

I contend that all strands of revolutionary thinking have been essentially economist in character, with a concentration on aiming to win control of the means of production, with insufficient consideration as to the ends of production, the social nature of labor, and almost total neglect of ecological consequences of the use of workers' labor, and of industrial development.

There has been a certain "plenitude" and "quantitative" mentality, with a minimum of
revolutionary theory and practice in examining the finite nature of the planet and its resources, a balance of population as well as consideration of other species, and a respect for all aspects of ecology and the future of this small planet on which we all live.

In discussing ecology prior to the 24th Congress, some in the CPA advanced that "within the ecology movement there is still a great need to combat liberal and reactionary ideas, that rely upon such myths as overpopulation, absolute shortage of resources, the 'necessity' of maintaining underdeveloped countries in backwardness, etc.". With them, I believe that the last "myth" is morally and politically wrong, but the previous statements fly in the face of reason and evidence. It is obvious that resources are finite; uncontrolled population is a tremendous problem which needs urgent and immediate attention. These problems are not mythical.

Too many revolutionaries speak of "conquering" nature, or or "using" nature, "harnessing" nature for man's benefit, arrogantly ignoring the need to harmonise with nature's delicate ecological balance. There has been a tendency to believe that a massive use of science and technology in a socialist framework would produce abundance for all, and solve all other problems.

Alas! How far from the truth - as cities, lakes, rivers, even seas and oceans have all been poisoned and pollution increases alarmingly.

Of course, science and technology both have a potentially positive role but only if such roles are seen in regard to the planet as a whole, for a global appreciation of the myriad problems.

Humanity is, for us, a very important part of the world, but it isn't the whole world. Other species and nature must be considered if humankind is to survive long in a civilised way, and the delicate balance between them must be maintained if humankind - possibly even organic life - is to survive at all.

THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION

This term was used over and over in the early post-war years, by communists, socialists and others, in expressing a hope that the profusion of goods which accompanied the idea of the "scientific and technological revolution" would dramatically alter the productive processes and humankind's control of nature's resources.

In the Fundamentals of Marxism Leninism, USSR scientist V.A. Obruchev in 1958 said:

"It is necessary; to prolong man's life to 150-200 years on the average, to wipe out infectious diseases, to reduce non-infectious diseases, to conquer old age and fatigue, to learn to restore life in the case of untimely, accidental death; to place at the service of man all the forces of nature, the energy of the sun, the wind and subterranean heat, to apply atomic energy in industry, transport and construction, to learn how to store energy and transmit without wires to any point; to predict and render completely harmless natural calamities; floods, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes; to produce in factories all substances unknown in nature: harder than diamonds, more heat resistant than fire-bricks, more refractory than tungsten and osmium, more flexible than silk and more elastic than rubber. To evoke new breeds of animals, and varieties of plants that grow more swiftly and yield more meat, milk, wool, grain, fibres and wood for man's needs; to reduce, adapt for the needs of life and conquer uncompromising area, marshes, mountains, deserts, taiga, tundra and perhaps even the sea's bottom; to learn to control the weather, regulate the wind, and heat, just as rivers are regulated now; to shift clouds at will, to arrange for rain or clear weather, snow or hot weather", etc.

Again, in the mid-sixties Civilisation at the Crossroads opened up the many perspectives of an industrialised society, and the potential for an industrialised society under socialism. Re-reading this book, one is struck again with the scant attention given to ecological problems. Again, there is a preoccupation with science, technology and economic growth.

THE WIDENING GAP

It is only in the last decade that there has been a growing popular awareness of the
serious ecological crisis and the need for a basic energy and resources policy on a global basis.

When one considers that China, in feeding and clothing close to 1,000 million, uses less total energy than the USA uses on air-conditioning alone, it gives some indication of the frightful imbalance in energy and resources usage.

The disparity in the consumption of food is similarly dramatic. For example, the USA and France together consume more food than China and India combined. And when one also considers the extent of poverty existing within the advanced industrialised countries, it makes the gap even wider in human reality.

250 million "westerners" consume the same quantity of protein as 1,500 million people in the Third World. Almost two-thirds of the world's population is malnourished, and in the Third World, the distribution of income is even more polarised than in the advanced industrialised societies, as the rich elites tend to orient their consumption patterns to those of their counterparts in the advanced capitalist countries, consuming more and more foreign goods and requiring more and more expertise and technology.

Overall, the trade imbalance and financial inequalities between the two sectors - the advanced and Third World - and between rich and poor in the Third World is growing. Capitalist development inevitably produces development at one pole and underdevelopment at the other. The advanced capitalist countries and the underdeveloped countries are not separate worlds: they are the top and bottom sides of one and the same world.

THE ROLE OF THE MULTINATIONALS

Jon Tinker, in the New Scientist summarises the role of large companies in the mechanism that leads to the plight of the Third World countries in the following way:

"Since 1950 the trans-national corporations have steadily grown at a rate of two to three times faster than the most advanced industrial nations, at which rate they will, by the turn of the century, control over half the world's goods and services. In particular, trans-national corporations dominate the world commodity markets, controlling both the extraction of raw materials and the end products made by them.

"Typically, a raw material is extracted by a trans-national in a developing country, and sold to the same trans-national in an industrialised country, where it is processed, manufactured and distributed.

"The highest grade ores have largely been extracted leaving the Third World without the cheap raw materials which historically provide economic take-off for Europe and North America."

So the use of the power of the multinationals directly aggravates the worsening position of the Third World in just about every way.

IS A NEW ETHIC POSSIBLE?

It is possible only if a majority of people realise how late in the day it is and that humankind's survival is on the agenda, that even the most sophisticated form of capitalism is incapable of effecting a sufficiently required change because of its intrinsic "economic growth" and "predatory expansionism" character.

SOCIALISM MUST BE DIFFERENT - AN ECOLOGICAL SOCIALISM!

Existing socialist societies and socialist ideologies generally must alter their present priorities, and more particularly, their values, if a sane, socialist, humane, ecological world is to come into being.

I contend that the "developing countries" are not "developing" and cannot do so in the present world system. Furthermore, the "developed countries" are on a suicide course that will, at least, destroy their way of life, and quite probably the whole of civilisation within the course of the next few decades - if there is not a fundamental change away from the destructive, acquisitive, consumerist societies which control the world and its resources now.

Although we may repeat that the present world crisis has been caused by capitalism (so far it has been the only significant influence) there is not much evidence to show that industrial socialism has contributed towards a suitable ecological solution.
WHY ARE SO FEW SOCIALISTS ECOLOGICALLY AWARE?

Did not Marx and the other socialist theoreticians say that poverty and scarcity were managed by capitalism? That the communist society would be one of abundance? Did they not attack Malthus and neo-Malthusians for suggesting that there was a limit on growth of population apart from those produced by capitalist exploitation. At that time maybe it was understandable. The total population of the world in Marx's day was the same as China's present day population. Three-quarters of the world was still almost virgin. North America, Australia and Siberia were only just opened up. Africa was still an unknown continent. Marx put his finger on the immediate restrictions: limitations caused by resource shortage and the finite extent of land, central to Malthus' theory were problems for the distant future. In particular, it is only in the last 30 years that it has become possible to gauge the dimensions of the resources problem, as is now generally known and accepted.

Marx, however, was not completely oblivious of the restrictions of nature:

"The first premise of all human history, of course, is the existence of living human individuals. The first fact to be established then, is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relationship to the rest of the nature."

Further, he stated:

"Communism as completed naturalism, is humanism, and, as completed humanism, naturalism. It is the genuine solution of the antagonism between man and nature and between man and man."

It is quite understandable that Marx was less concerned with the relations between man and nature than those between man and man. This emphasis was inherent in the production of the works that remain an inspiration over a century later.

But the scientific character of the marxist method has, too often, been breached by later socialists. Marx once said (in exasperation) that he was not a marxist, a remark he would wish to repeat many times if he were alive today. It can hardly be doubted for example, that he would revise his opinions about some aspects of Malthus' theory.

Although he might not reverse the priority of man-man over man-nature relations, he would certainly pay much more attention to the latter, and to their integration into the whole theory of his idea of scientific socialism. Such must be one of the major tasks of his followers in spirit rather than in the letter.

FINITE WORLD? - YES
INFINITE WORLD? - NO

In 1970, Paul Ehrlich brilliantly commented -

"To raise all the 3.6 billion people of the world to the American 'standard of living' would require .... 75 times as much iron as is now extracted annually, 100 times as much copper, 200 times as much lead, 75 times as much zinc and 250 times as much tin .... "

Except for iron, such resources are just not available, and even if they were, world consumption of these and other metals would be 6-8 times the present value, so that the primary consumption would be enormous even if re-cycling occurred at a unrealistically high efficiency of 90 per cent. A further factor would, of course, need to be included to allow for the doubling of the world population, and of rich world per capita GNP by the year 2000, but we have already listed quite enough impossibilities to be going along with.

WHAT CHANCES - GLOBAL HARMONY?

The impossibility of a "USA type industrialised world" is abundantly clear. Nor, of course, is it desirable. However, many politicians of the Third World continue to try to follow this industrial "dream" to the detriment of future generations.

There must be a redistribution of real income - towards a national, then global equality.

Surely a prerequisite for global harmony must be abandonment of a false standard of living premise in favor of one of 'quality of living'. We must move towards production for real needs, for genuine social and human needs and away from the production for profit, with the subsequent terrible desecration of the natural, rural and built environments, and the accumulation by capitalists (and workers...
apeing capitalists) of consumerist commodities, many of which are completely unnecessary, purchased by people saturated by the incessant brainwashing of the vast, powerful advertising lobby which creates false wants, false values, false ethics, with all their inbuilt obsolescence and ecological destructiveness.

AGAINST “OVER”-INDUSTRIALISATION

The Third World countries should examine the danger signals from the most advanced “western” countries. Dr. Hammond of the US Cancer Society points out -

“Our world is changing rapidly, and the environment in which we live has altered to an extraordinary extent. The air we breathe contains gases and articles that never before entered the human lung. Chemicals in our food, ingest, inhale, absorb an ever increasing number of synthetic materials. Cancers which we are seeing now had their origin 15 to 30 years ago, and cancer agents being introduced into our environment now will not show their effect for another one or two decades .... There has been, and continues to be, no pre-testing materials for cancer or other serious diseases. Examination is for serviceability, sale ability, utility. Whether cancer will result is hardly considered.”

THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF LABOR - DECISIVE

If industrial workers and their organisations can break with economism, and commence to question which commodities, goods and services should be made in the interests of society generally - yes, there is a future - but only if the progressive section of the populations of the advanced industrialised countries, with a socialist thrust, can give assistance to the Third World countries (not to mimic and blindly follow the present advanced industrialised countries) but instead to create a climate in which these countries can be truly independent to develop their economies in the manner in which each country wishes, but noting and avoiding the errors of the advanced industrialised countries and their tragic ecological record.

WORKERS AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

The myth that the workers “have no right in” or “are not interested in” environmental issues is dangerous and wrong. In fact, the working class is the most affected section of the population when the environment is ravaged. Who lives in the most polluted areas of the world’s huge cities? Who bears the heaviest noise levels? Who lives in the least congenial areas, etc.? The less endowed, of course,

Therefore, it is obvious that the workers’ organisations must be concerned with more than the workplace, but must consider and link the transport, the home, the whole network of community and social pressures, all of which impinge on the total environmental life of workers and their families.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT - CONCERNED PEOPLE MUST ACT

If the Third World’s people can learn from the errors of the industrial excesses, of an ecological destruction of the “advanced” countries, if there can be aroused a greater ecological consciousness amongst workers, in particular, and people generally, in the industrialised world, there may be some chance of avoiding the impending catastrophe.

Greed, predatory aggressiveness for personal and corporate profit and the ever-present possibility of nuclear war must be arrested and defeated.

A new ethic, with global concern and consideration for all human beings, other species and the whole environment could mean that humankind’s entry into, and beyond, the 21st century could be assured.

A socialism, with a human, social and ecological heart, as well as a human face, is required. The history of the working people of the world, and of the whole ‘left’ oriented organisations as regards ecology, leaves a lot to be desired.

Possibly the present gravity of the ecological crisis is the reason that workers and their organisations are beginning to move. To the whole left, to socialists, to communists, in fact to all people, the world’s survival is now on the political agenda and will remain there as long as humankind remains on our planet.
Take one film actor already widely known for his roles in various pornographic films. Dress him up in flying gear so that he looks like one of those “kamikaze” pilots who specialised in suicide attacks on United States warships in the latter stages of World War 2. Throw in such traditions as a last-minute radio call of “Long live the Emperor” and then show his plane crashing in flames.

It may sound like a very bad “B” grade movie, but it is just one of the strange, real life events of the Japanese section of the Lockheed scandal.

The basic fact of this scandal is that the Lockheed Corporation has bribed business representatives and politicians in many countries both to ensure orders for aircraft and a favorable political climate. Naturally, the recipients of bribes have been the most conservative forces. The target for the “kamikaze” attack in Japan was the home of a man named Kodama. He was ill in bed when the plane crashed into his house but survived. The incident has been portrayed as a reaction by a young rightist to the “shame” he felt when he learned that such an important conservative leader was implicated in the Lockheed scandal. This “explanation” might have been a convenient way to brush aside the scandal, particularly if the mission had been a success and Kodama liquidated.

New facts coming to light suggest something much more sinister. Kodama built a fortune out of Japan’s military exploitation of China before World War 2 and was jailed as an “A-class war criminal” by the Allied Occupation Forces. After a brief period in prison he was released to work with the General Headquarters of the Occupation Forces. Such changes in fortune were common for both German and Japanese war criminals when the United States determined that the main “enemies” were the Soviet Union and China.

During the Korean War, Kodama, together with other former Japanese army officers cooperated actively in American military operations. He was a supplier to Japanese “military civilians” who were involved in the war and shipped war materials to the US Eighth Army. His fortune increased.

There is some evidence that Kodama was recruited as a CIA agent in Japan and that this connection is the one causing concern now that Japan is to investigate the bribery of Japanese citizens by Lockheed. It is one thing for Kodama to be named a ringleader in the taking and giving of bribes but if the bribes are shown to be connected with intelligence and espionage the repercussions could be enormous, and sufficient reason to plan the liquidation of Kodama so that the investigation can be confined.

In keeping with the scripts of “B” grade movies, it has now been confirmed that the young film actor, Maono, who crashed the plane into Kodama’s house, had studied drama at the University of California between 1967 and 1970. During this time his patron was John Wayne who is as well known for his rightwing political views as he is for riding off into the dusk at the end of his many cowboy movies. Maono also had some relations with the Mafia. He made several trips to the United States after 1970. In 1974 he took up flying and after visiting the United States in December 1974, he undertook some special flight training.

On the night of March 23, police made a house search of Kodama’s home claiming that an assassination threat had been brought to
their attention. The plane incident took place next morning. A close associate of the Maono has said that he was "asked" to kill Kodama on March 2, and one Japanese newspaper, published on the day of the incident, carried an account reporting that "an instruction came from the United States to Japan in early February ordering the assassination of Kodama".

The "kamikaze" attack was made on the day before an agreement was signed to hand over to the Japanese authorities investigating the Lockheed scandal the American materials on the case. In fact, the materials so far handed over do not include the unpublished materials held by the US Senate or other materials held by the US government. Many Japanese political forces believe that a great white-wash is under way. Thirteen national organisations including the Communist, Socialist and Komei parties and the General Council of Trade Unions have joined forces to fight for a full and public inquiry.

Each new disclosure of bribery in various countries confirms the connection between multinational corporations and CIA intervention in internal politics. US imperialism does not confine itself to military operations to ensure that governments will remain compliant or be replaced. The role of the multinational ITT and the CIA in destabilising the Popular Unity Government of Chile is well known. Japan and Italy are the two countries where, to date, the Lockheed scandal has surfaced. In both countries, a strong communist party has developed a strategy of combining militant mass action with a wide unity against the most conservative forces. In Italy, the ruling Christian Democrats stagger from crisis to crisis. In Japan, the ruling Liberal Democrats are divided and disoriented. Both countries are vitally important to United States imperialist strategy. Kissinger has recently announced that the US won't tolerate a communist presence in an Italian government, illustrating once again that the United States continues to suffer from the illusion that it has the right to determine election results or changes in the social system in other countries. Unfortunately, as Chile showed, the United States has considerable power to turn these illusions into ghastly realities.

The case of the suicide pilot, Maono, may seem fantastic, but there is no ground for considering that Japan or Italy or, for that matter, Australia, is an exception when it comes to US intervention and dirty tricks.

- M.R.

Discussion

Pat Vort-Ronald's article on the Italian Communist Party (ALR No. 50) is a very partial view. Her article expresses views which are contradicted in the daily debate and activity of communists and other forces in Italy today.

Space does not allow a full treatment of Vort-Ronald's article but several of her assumptions and conclusions demand comment. Vort-Ronald claims that "the PCI's strategic program abandons socialist revolution as a foreseeable goal" opting instead for a "gradualist parliamentarist road which begins with reforms". I believe this conclusion is drawn from a misreading of PCI documents and actions.

Enrico Berlinguer, General Secretary of the PCI made some relevant observations on the occasion of the 80th birthday of Spanish communist Dolores Ibarruri last December. He said that communists and Marxists must have the audacity and intelligence to liberate themselves from any scholastic application of doctrine, dogma, and orientations which are not adequate to our experience and historical conditions. He argued that communists must advance to socialism along paths which are as yet partly unexplored without allowing ourselves to be paralysed by the risks which are in every new development. These can be overcome, he claimed, when innovative courage is accompanied by steadfastness to great principles and ideals. (1)
As in Australia, there are plenty of small sects in Italy which speak of socialist revolution without putting forward any real view of how to get there. The PCI rather than abandoning the goal of socialism does have a strategic view of how to get there. This view does not divide revolution into two stages but sees it as a continual process and importantly does not seek "short cuts" to gaining power but has a perspective of the relationship between what sort of socialism one hopes to develop and how one tries to create it. The process of revolution, however, will inevitably have many different phases and approaches, including the use of parliaments.

For example, Lenin argues in *Left Wing Communism - An Infantile Disorder* that it is more difficult to start a socialist revolution in Western Europe than it was in Russia. He says: "...to attempt to 'circuitvent' this difficulty by 'skipping' the arduous job of utilising reactionary parliaments for revolutionary purposes is childish. You want to create a new society yet you fear the difficulties involved in forming a good parliamentary group made up of convinced, devoted and heroic communists, in a reactionary parliament! ... It is because, in Western Europe, the backward masses of the workers and - to an even greater degree - of the small peasants are much more imbued with bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudices than they were in Russia; because of that, it is only from within such institutions as bourgeois parliaments that communists can (and must) wage a long and persistent struggle, undaunted by any difficulties, to expose, dispel and overcome these prejudices." (emphasis V.I.L.) (2)

In his writings, Lenin speaks of many alliances and compromises with bourgeois liberalism, Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries, Kautskyites, and others. "At the very moment of the October Revolution, we entered into an informal but very important (and very successful) political bloc with the petty-bourgeois peasantry by adopting the Socialist-Revolutionary agrarian program in its entirety, without a single alteration, i.e. we effected an undeniable compromise in order to prove to the peasants that we wanted, not to 'steamroller' them but to reach agreement with them. At the same time we proposed (and soon after effected) a formal political bloc, including participation in the government, with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries...." (3)

Pat Vort-Ronald reproaches the PCI for asserting that socialism is not on the immediate agenda. Unfortunately, the obvious truth is that it is not.

And where and when was the "analagous situation" for "contemplating seizure of power as Lenin did"? Italy in 1976 is not Russia in 1917 - or at any other time that I know of.

Pat makes much of "the PCI's emphasis on 'democracy' rather than socialism" (my emphasis - P.H.), despite the fact that the socialist goal, its democratic content, and the PCI's strategic program for achieving it, were brought out at the PCI Congress last year and in joint discussions between the French and Italian Communist Parties late last year. The PCI-PCF communiqué issued states: "The Italian and French Communists hold that the march towards socialism and the building of a socialist society, which they propose as the prospect for their countries, must be achieved within the framework of a continuous democratization of economic, social and political life. Socialism will constitute a higher phase of democracy and freedom: democracy realised in the most complete manner."

It continues: "A socialist transformation of society presupposes public control over the principle means of production and exchange, their progressive socialisation and implementation of democratic economic planning at the national level. The sector of small and medium-sized industrial and commercial enterprises can and must fulfil a specific, positive role in the building of socialism.

"This transformation can only be the result of great, powerful struggles and broad mass movements, uniting the majority of the people around the working class. It requires the existence, guarantee and development of democratic institutions fully representative of popular
sovereignty and the free exercise of direct, proportional universal suffrage. It is in this framework that the two parties - which have always and will always respect the verdict of universal suffrage - conceive the rise of the working people to leadership of the State." (4)

In a report to the Central Committee on the record vote won in the 1975 Regional elections, a member of the PCI Executive Committee, Armando Cossutta, said: "We are and we remain above all a great fighting party, capable of translating its elaboration into initiative, movement and action and that intends to obtain these results by constantly promoting and organising the direct, critical, democratic participation of the masses, of the various strata and sectors, in all phases of our activity, from elaboration to implementation: A party that does not wait for elections to develop its function fully, but rather sees elections as a consistent development of a political battle that goes on every day, without interruption, and that draws new vigor and greater efficacy from the outcome of the vote. We are in short, and intend to always be, a serious, responsible, constructive force at the service of the workers and the nation." (5)

The PCI's impact on Italian life is immense. It is the impact not only of a very large party but also of a party committed to change - to the democritisation of life and to the renewal of Italy in a socialist direction. Far from being confined to parliamentarism or government administration of the system, there is a constant and deliberate determination to develop action outside parliament. Parliament and regional governments exist in relationship to action elsewhere, not as the main or only source of initiative.

Fascism continues to be a real presence in Italian political life. There are distinct fascist parties, acts of terrorism, obvious links between important sectors of the ruling class, including the army and police, with fascists. But the PCI's advocacy of unity and defence of democratic rights and forms does not seek merely to maintain bourgeois democracy but to extend and greatly enlarge not only the limits of democracy but its very form itself.

"Defence of the democratic state requires a broader development of democracy. For this reason, we stress that the democratic state can be strong and vital if it rests on the confidence and initiative of the broad masses of citizens and their organisations, if it avails itself of the will to participate that is emerging with increasing vigor in all sectors of society; if it works to strengthen the country's democratic fabric, encouraging both original forms of participation and organisation and an organic relationship between these forms and the representative institutions." (6)

In the schools, the PCI and other forces have achieved important democratic reforms giving parents, teachers and students equal representation on school councils. There is a widespread debate aimed at increasing and improving the participation in these councils, and in new student councils to be established in each school.

Millions of Italian workers do not accept the untramelled 'right' of the employers to invest when and where they please and to produce what they please. There are many examples of work-ins, refusal to accept the sack, and political initiatives beyond the 'normal' concerns of trade unions. This is not, of course, the same thing as socialism. But it cannot be dismissed as a bourgeois democratic approach.

Proposals for the renewal of the productive process are not merely proposals to be implemented at a government level, nor are they merely reforms aimed at pressuring the monopolies while leaving the ideological and structural framework of Italian capitalism untouched. Each struggle of workers does flow over into other sections of society, challenging ideological hegemony.

One example is the struggle at the Innocenti-Leyland factory in Milan last year when it was learnt that British Leyland intended to close their Italian operation. After many months of negotiation and smaller actions the Innocenti workers decided to occupy the factory, preventing the sale or removal of plant, etc. They demanded the reopening of the factory with government and/or private financing to produce vehicles suitable for public rather than private transport. They demanded controls on investment, a clear industrial plan and some controls over managerial decisions.

Having developed unity for these demands among the vehicle workers themselves, support was sought from other areas of the Italian car industry, from other metal workers and from the Milan community. There were strikes in solidarity with the Innocenti workers, including a general stoppage in Milan. Workers and students from all parts of Italy expressed support in different ways.

Vort-Ronald argues that "the PCI faces all the general dangers of co-option faced by any working class party trying to administer the capitalist state, and reform and rationalise capitalist production, especially given that it plans to do this in alliance with non-socialist parties". This observation is obviously true, yet the point surely is now to lessen the dangers and to turn the participation of the PCI in government and administration into a force which can facilitate the development of the mass movement for socialism.

Where the PCI currently participates in administrations, for example in Naples, they directly challenge and demand that the Christian Democrats (DC) participate in formulating plans to deal with the crisis deeply affecting the city and country - a crisis partially created by the DC. The PCI refuses to allow the DC to occupy the safe obstructionist role of opposition.
DISCUSSION

Space is insufficient to deal with the complex arguments relating to the PCI and the "emancipation of women". I agree with some points Pat has made but her presentation of the current debate on abortion omits a great deal. Her statement that the PCI "seems to abdicate from the task of political leadership" on this question and seems "to ignore the vast numbers of women who want to make their own choices about abortion" is quite wrong, I believe. (7)

I do not accept all the positions of the PCI and have criticisms and queries concerning parts of their strategy and program. However, in discussing foreign parties we must avoid distortions and seek to understand why they see things as they do, rather than impose our own concepts onto their reality.

- Phil Herington

Phil Herington visited Italy for four weeks in December last year, during which time he was able to examine the activity and policies of the PCI and attend the 20th Congress of the FGCI (Federation of Italian Young Communists).

FOOTNOTES

1. UNITA, December 13, 1975.
3. Ibid., pp. 556-557.
5. The Italian Communists (Foreign Bulletin of the PCI), No. 4, June-August 1975, p. 33.
6. Political Resolution approved by the 14th Congress of the PCI, in The Italian Communists No. 2-3, 1975, p. 131.
7. Ibid, plus the continual debate in Unita.

The comment by an enigmatic 'Ruaric Dixon' (ALR No. 49, p. 30) evidences much of the muddled thinking that is especially characteristic of bourgeois anthropologists. I am sorry that Dixon did not express other disagreements he had with my original article though I hope they are better established than the one he has chosen to expound.

Perhaps I should begin the details of my reply by restating that my article was written within a marxist framework and proceeded on the basis of the science of historical materialism as I have come to understand it. That Dixon or Levi Strauss do not work within that framework or feel they have "satisfactorily dealt with" key tenets of it is central to the weaknesses in Dixon's comment. Quotes from Marx (or any other theorist) when they are so badly removed from context and misunderstood hardly serve to establish a contrary position. On both questions of the nature of historical development and of the Asiatic mode of production I suggest reading Marx's own views and not Levi Strauss' comments on what Marx should have meant to say.

A major fact of historical materialism is the existence of 'monopoly capitalism' since roughly the turn of this century. In Australia this has been reflected among other things in a scramble for the rich mineral resources of the Northern Territory and the granting of massive pastoral leases in the areas where most of the remnants of traditional Black societies lived. These facts, in addition to the 'reserve army of unskilled labor' role that urban Blacks play are what result in the 'proletarianisation' of Blacks - a fact of modern Australian capitalism.

Questions about what would have been the 'independent' developments in Black Australia if colonialism and monopoly capitalism had not existed are relevant only to academics with nothing better to do. A major social, political or economic force is equally real in terms of its effects whether it derives from within a particular social formation or outside of it. That societies "might endure indefinitely" is speculative nonsense easily refuted by any astute student of history and is fundamentally at variance with the facts of historical materialism.

It is only on the basis of such profound misunderstandings that Dixon could produce the conclusion he does - that a move "back to traditional economy and lifestyles" by Blacks in Arnhem Land could result in the establishment of conditions in which "self-determination would proceed from the economic base". Not only does such a view fail to see the direct and powerful monopoly capital interests involved in this region - interests that will simply not allow such developments to get 'out of hand'; it also just happens to overlook the fact that every aspect of this development is totally dependent on the whim of the capitalist state. If this is 'self-determination' then we have all had it for years and it's pretty useless.

The only future for Blacks and all oppressed sections of society lies in challenging capitalism - in confronting the state with the aim of producing the conditions for a self-managed, socialist society. This requires a linking up with the proletariat - the decisive force in social change - and it is the prime task of any committed militant to assist this process. Major tasks include attacking the racist ideology possessed by most workers and pointing out the groups whose interests such ideology serves (pastoral and sections of manufacturing capital along with multinational mineral concerns) and also pointing out the errors of 'Black separatism' and 'traditionalism' which also tend to exacerbate divisions within the broad working class movement.

- Gary P. Nicholls.
POLITICAL ECONOMY CONFERENCE 1976
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