ON THE “NEW LOOK” CPA

THE STUDY OF POLITICS involves the study of any institution in which power relationships exist. The prevailing attitude of the political scientist is that he is concerned with who gets what, when and where. Significantly, he does not consider it his business to ask why. Yet without asking why power struggles go on, his study is meaningless. What makes contemporary “objective” political science so meaningless is its refusal to discuss anything which cannot be quantified—hence the question why is out.

The latest of the Current Affairs Bulletins, which deals with the new national communist look of the CPA, suffers mainly from the defect inherent in neglecting to ask why? It describes a CPA anxious for power. This is true. All parties are anxious for power. Then, when it shifts to the study of disputes within the party it describes factions of ambitious men vying for control of the party. This too is true. Men do seek power. But because the author does not ask why the CPA seeks power or why Aarons seeks power or why the CPA changes its policies the description of the CPA becomes a description of internal struggles in which A replaces B and then tries to hang onto his power forever and in which the CPA’s essential quality does not change. The description of the dispute with Hill becomes, not a matter of principle but a matter of ambitious rivalry for power. Aarons’ object becomes to increase the power of the “Royal Family of Communism” by placing more members of his family in key positions. So the tale runs.

However, men seek power for a purpose and without discussing that purpose their actions are meaningless. We understand their actions in the inadequate way of a deaf man who does not understand French watching a French film. He sees the actors move around, posture, fight—some triumph—some are defeated—he understands something but without the language and the explanations he understands too little.

This is not to say that the CAB is not worth reading. As far as it goes it is competent. Considering the animosity in contemporary scholarship towards men who attempt to ask the eternal non-quantifiable question “Why” we can almost sympathise with the author. People do not ask why any more. Furthermore, it is always salutary to read the reports of a “devil’s advocate”. He will say as much that is true about you as your own best friend. Everything written about the CPA should be read by the left. Until the left recognises, as the Italian communists have, that the Koestlers of this world have something to say about communism it will never achieve self-knowledge.

ALASTAIR DAVIDSON

ACTU AND WHITE COLLAR WORKERS

BERNIE TAFT (ALR No. 5, 1967) adequately covers the essential reasons for the change of direction at the last Congress of the Australian Council of Trade Unions. However, the method of conducting Congresses, marked by tight Executive control and adherence to traditional conservative Labor Party and trade union attitudes and procedures, is likely to repel many white collar workers.
At Congress, not only is democracy not practised sufficiently but the leaders make little attempt at even an appearance of democracy. An air of tired, worldly cynicism issues from the top table.

Take the matter of an increase in affiliation fees. Under the 1965 Congress decision, the Executive was to submit proposals for any increase to affiliates, for discussion before the 1967 Congress. Instead the proposition of an increase was distributed as an Executive recommendation about ten minutes before debate on it began, in the midst of another debate and the unions had not been consulted between Congresses. Laurie Short spoke against the recommendation (though he voted for it!) as a "protest against the way this Congress is being run." The motion was passed by use of the machine.

Some increase is no doubt justified and would have been approved by most unions but the point is, they were not consulted. Small wonder that Vice-President Evans' criticism (when he explained his refusal to stand again) received an attentive hearing.

By such contemptuous treatment of the unions the ACTU leadership will defeat its own purpose—to draw the white collar unions increasingly into a "safe", right-wing dominated ACTU, away from centres like the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations, of "doubtful" origin and too independent to be readily controlled.

The trade unions should be extending democracy not strangling it.

While ever the Labor Party right-wing maintains its traditional tight control over delegates Congress may continue to be run in this way, unaware of the big changes taking place in the workforce.

In many of the white collar unions, for whom recent Congresses have been their first experiences of the "Parliament of the Trade Unions", Labor Party policies and attitudes do not prevail.

Frequently they are accustomed to a degree of expression and democracy much greater than that in evidence at Congress. They commonly have allegiance to the Labor Party and will not accept the kind of "rough justice" handed out at Congress.

More importantly the white collar unions have their own share of right-wingers, often Liberal Party people or Democratic Labor Party members, who are only too willing to drag their unions from the ACTU or ACSPA. The ACTU leadership supplies them with ammunition!

In this way division can be fostered between blue and white collar unions.

Congress could be much improved by:

1 Distribution to delegates at least one week before Congress of the Agenda paper (this year two hundred and eighty-six items), the Executive report and Executive recommendations on the various topics.

2 Revitalising the industry groups so that they function as originally intended.

C. A. HAWKINS

WOMEN AND EQUALITY

ALTHOUGH in Australia today women constitute one third of the workforce, and half of these are married, very little has been heard of them, apart from an annual equal pay function. However, in one week recently in Victoria, two events occurred; first on
September 30 the Professional Women's Committee of the Australian Labor Party held a seminar on working mothers and their problems; then on October 6 the Technical Teachers' Association held an evening "Talk Out" on equality for women.

The ALP Seminar was organised in three sections, dealing with the economic, psychological, and social implications, and 600 women and a handful of men attended one or all of the sessions. The majority were professional women, who in the main already get equal pay, with the notable exception of teachers, but certainly not equal opportunities.

The average working class mother has to do a weekend shift in the home on Saturday—she cannot afford professional cleaners, or laundry charges on the "mini-rate" paid in factories to women workers. She would have difficulty even raising the $2 entrance fee for the seminar. It is important that some type of activity suitable for lower paid workers be devised to carry the campaign for equality still further.

Many women at the Seminar represented unions and Labor Party branches who were quite willing to pay for a delegate to attend, but did not consider the Seminar of sufficient importance to warrant a male union official giving up a Saturday—they looked around for an office worker, or even in one case, a mother-in-law to represent them! The lack of real understanding of the need for equal pay for equal work in both men and women is one reason why the campaign has dragged on for so many years.

Two aspects of the question were brought out very forcibly by speakers—firstly the difficulties facing women who must work to support a family: the lack of sufficient creches and reliable child minding centres, the absence of facilities for after-school and holiday care, and where any facilities are available, the large slice they take out of a wage already reduced by 25% because they happen to be women.

Secondly, a very strong case was put, particularly by younger women, for the right of women to continue in a job they enjoy rather than being tied to caring for a house and children. Many said they resented not having an income of their own. They cannot use the government creches since these are really only available to mothers supporting a family—some are catered for by the University Family Club creche, but this, apart from being expensive, can only take limited numbers. They too want adequate child care facilities where they can leave their children with a clear conscience.

It was rather fortunate that Prof. Lebedev, a visiting gynaecologist from Siberia, who made a special trip down from Sydney for the Conference, could not understand English very well. She would have found it very hard to understand why a country that is advanced in technical matters just does not recognise that women are people too, and makes so little provision for them to reach their full potentiality.

Prof. Lebedev outlined the facilities increasingly available in the Soviet Union to pregnant women and young mothers, and also the child care facilities available. She willingly answered questions on how she coped with working full time and caring for her daughter. The problems facing working women seem to be similar, but there they are not so complicated by economic worries or by problems of inadequate child care centres.

From the psychological angle, Prof. Elwyn Morey, of Monash University, was inclined to the view that while
young children are usually better being cared for by their mother, the main consideration is that they be cared for by a happy person. If the mother is frustrated and unhappy, then the child is better with someone who enjoys caring for him.

A case for mothers not working was put by a pediatrician mother of nine, but as hers was a long course of study, it is obvious that she had exceptionally favorable facilities for child care at home while she completed her training.

A strong case for the need for complete equality for women from the trade union point of view, was put by Mr. J. J. Brown, of the Australian Railways Union. Miss Molly Bayne put forward a good case too and pointed out that it was vital to build up a political demand for what is needed to enable women to take their true place in society, whether it be more creches and kindergartens, effective after-school care centres, or adequate family allowances for widows or deserted wives with children.

M.B.O.

MORE ON WOMEN

1967 HAS FOCUSED a lot of attention on the question of working women and attention is starting to be drawn to the special problems of the displaced women intellectuals who are urgently needed in our society with its present shortage of teachers, research workers and other skilled people.

Women constitute one third of the work force in Australia today, a large number of whom are married women. In Sydney 24% of homes have a second wage packet supplied by the wife and a good percentage of these would be unskilled workers such as shop assistants.

Whilst equal pay is the starting point other needs are vital such as pre-school centres, after school and holiday facilities to relieve the mother of constant emotional strain and worry; compassionate leave to care for sick children; and working hours which provide shopping time for the housewife. (In the case of shop assistants, shopping for the home is a mad panic.)

Thousands of women with a tertiary education who have worked before having a family, find that they have been educated in a different way from today's generation and are not readily employable, as Governor-General Lord Casey would have us believe. The September 1967 issue of the Bulletin in an article entitled What Shall We Do With the Educated Woman? comments that Lord Casey forgets that women were educated to be pleasant companions and not specifically for any real occupation other than teaching. A study of this question discussed by Madge Dawson in her book Graduate and Married reveals that all women questioned knew they needed additional training before they could return to active participation in their sphere of work.

The Communist Party Program on the needs and rights of women entitled Wanted a New Style of Living for Modern Women seems to cover most of the points required if women are to take their rightful place as equals in the Australian work force and in society. One thing that perhaps could be given a little more consideration as the campaign for fulfilment of the program gets under way is the three months paid maternity leave listed under the heading "Special Leave". Why start from the minimum? Overseas experience has shown that longer periods are necessary. In France some
sections of women workers have won paid maternity leave of fourteen weeks, and in Czechoslovakia it has been raised to five and half months, the longest in the world, six months in the case of single girls, and in Hungary to five months, where it is thought that a shorter period contributed to the low birth rate. In the U.S.S.R. when I was there a lot of discussion was taking place about increasing the paid maternity leave time.

The Bulletin comments on pregnancy being a barrier "it would appear that the employer must be prepared to take a risk on both sexes. If statistics were worked out, probably as many mature men succumb to stomach ulcers and heart attacks as women do to pregnancy."

Would something like the Macquarie University idea of organising pre-school centres and after school minding facilities be more appealing to women than being organised to press governments and councils to start these projects? How can such pressure be strengthened and how long do working mothers and children have to wait for these things? In the average locality are women drawn more readily and more enthusiastically to assist with something real that they can help establish themselves?

Would Governments and Councils be persuaded more easily to contribute and assist when the project is already under way?

Perhaps a special day for Mothers would draw more attention to the very much neglected problems of the working mother.

If "Mothers Day" was held on a working day how many employers would give their working mothers a day off?

MIGRANTS AND THE WORK FORCE

IN the limited space available I can only afford some general observations on what I, too, consider a neglected field. And I hope also that much more will be said on this subject on which a discussion was initiated by George Zangalis in ALR October-November 1967.

The literature on Australian immigration is of course enormous and it is growing almost daily. It is a pity that the Australian left isn't making more use of this literature whether compiled by government agencies or by specialists working on particular fields of immigration and Australia's immigrant body. This material could be of considerable value to the labor movement struggling as it is with the imposing problems that resulted from the entry of two million or so migrants in the last 20 years.

Of the many things that can be said about Australian immigration one thing is fundamental and that is that immigration has resulted from the demand for labor by Australian expanding capitalism. This in turn has determined largely the quantity and quality of immigrants. The demand for labor as a factor was so powerful in the postwar period that it has completely negated the pre-war discriminatory policy against Southern European immigrants on the grounds that these were not capable of becoming assimilated. The demand for labor, moreover, was high enough for the Australian Government to waive past practice and give considerable assistance to certain classes of immigrants. Apart from Britishers, Displaced Persons and North and Western Europeans, Commonwealth assistance was given to Southern Europeans, but mainly to certain age-groups considered necessary to industry. Between
1953-60 for example, of the Greeks coming out on assisted passages 43.3 per cent fell in the 20-24 age group and 53.8 per cent in 25-29 age group.

Any analysis of Australia's postwar immigration policies and practices confirms the view that Australia needed labor and this because of her growing industries. The political and humanitarian side of Australian immigration has been a decidedly secondary consideration if not purely coincidental.

Consequently most postwar immigrants (certainly most of those in the labor force) started as employees. It is also significant to note that the further south one's place of origin in Europe the lower he found himself in the occupational ladder in Australia. This, of course, poses some very special problems. For many Italians, Greeks and East Europeans their first entry into a factory was in Australia and the associated problems of such a radical change in their mode of living call for some careful and sympathetic treatment. Little can be achieved by the trade unions by insisting that Southern Europeans join them on the former's terms, which requires knowledge of English, of trade union practices, regulations, history and politics. Still less when a migrant worker pays his union fees to a union representative who also happens to be his foreman or the "grey coat" in the workshop. And it is necessary also, as Mr Zangalis and others have pointed out often enough, to utilise the bi-lingual and poly-lingual migrant workers in trade union organisation if the gap between native and foreign-born worker is to be bridged at all.

For the labor movement outside the factory, the formation of ethnic communities is yet another field that poses special problems. I am not sure whether one can talk of ethnic communities or national minorities in the traditional sense, but among some migrants, notably Greeks, Yugoslavs and Ukrainians, there is the tendency of ethnic community formation which means the formation of typical national institutions such as newspapers, churches, schools and fraternities and in the case of the Greeks also the ubiquitous coffee house. This also means that ethnic communities tend to confine their politics to themselves and, therefore avoid participation in the wider Australian political process. But the fact that this state of affairs exists surely warrants analysis. Admittedly wide cultural differences between Australians and immigrants precipitate ethnic communities, but I am not sure that ethnic communities are not also strengthened by traditional hostility to them from Australians and Australian authorities. Discrimination and intimidation, e.g. the denial of citizenship rights to radical, leftist and communist immigrants, discourage open political activities by prospective immigrant leaders of the labor movement. On the other hand immigrants engaged in rightwing and anti-communist activities such as the Ustashi are condoned and even encouraged by Australian authorities.

All of these as stated before pose some special problems for the labor movement. What we are witnessing here are numerous peculiar factors which in their sum total work and have worked towards weakening somewhat the strength of the labor movement. To state them and perhaps reiterate: large numbers of immigrant workers, particularly non-Britishers, have entered Australia but have not been successfully assimilated by the Australian labor movement; many immigrant workers have found themselves in the bottom rung of the occupational ladder; these workers are in a pretty servile position with little
knowledge of existing conditions and for at least five years without political rights; fear and intimidation against immigrant labor movement leaders has discouraged immigrant workers from fully participating in the trade unions and Australian political life. These factors in turn, among others, have facilitated the employer class parties, the Liberal and Country Parties, prolonging their stay in power.

It now remains for the labor movement to consider the special problems of immigrants, and their ethnic communities, where they exist, and find the way to assimilate them in its ranks. One signpost of thought should guide the labor movement—that there is a migrants' point of view.

M. Tsounis

MIGRANTS AND UNIONS

In the splendid article by George Zangalis in the October-November issue of *ALR* there are some interesting facts and some rather provocative conclusions.

I welcome both because in my opinion very few people in the Australian labor movement are at all aware of the importance of the immigration problem. If they are they usually "sweep it under the carpet" because they don't see the answers to it.

In the recent pre-Congress discussion of the Communist Party of Australia some of the contributions to the discussion dismissed the industrial working class as unimportant and dying out, whereas in fact it is growing rapidly.

Probably this is because many of the writers do not see industrial workers in their everyday experience.

Forty or 50 years ago almost all children from working class families had only primary school education, and started work at 13 or 14.

Later more such children went further, but then only to technical school in order to qualify for apprenticeships.

Now it is most common for the children of working class parents to attend universities and teachers' colleges in preparation for professional careers. So it is easy for people affected by such changes to feel that the industrial workers are disappearing.

They exist however, but instead of the unskilled workers being drawn from native born Australians, they are more and more being drawn from the ranks of the migrants and in many factories, building and construction jobs the majority of the unskilled and semi-skilled are foreign born.

Also there are growing numbers of foreign migrants among the tradesmen. Many Dutch and German migrants come here as tradesmen, and the Australian born sons of Southern Europeans are entering the tradesmen's ranks in increasing numbers.

Many Australians like to pride themselves on the racial tolerance that exists here as compared with the situation in the United States for example, but reality is not quite so rosy.

It is most common even among militant workers to hear expressions such as "Dago", or "Wog", to experience Australians shouting to make themselves understood to those whose knowledge of English is limited, as if it was deafness which was the obstacle to free communication, or adopting an attitude of benevolent paternalism as though dealing with children.
George Zangalis is correct when he says that the labor movement should combat the concept that migrants have an obligation to Australia. They get the dirtiest, hardest, poorest paid jobs, they are under-privileged in many other ways, so what do they owe to Australia?

Thinking Australians have the duty to combat prejudices in every way, be it overt or covert but I think Zangalis puts his finger on the main point, that is that the labor movement has no real policy on immigration, at best it has a non-immigration policy, at its worst an anti-immigration one.

The time is long overdue to develop a positive policy which faces reality, and which is designed to bring into activity the large number of migrants, who are now passive through no fault of their own.

As well as the development of a positive policy immediate steps of an organisational nature are needed.

The number of non-British migrants who hold leading positions in the political parties and trade unions is depressingly few. The undoubted talent that exists should be looked for, encouraged, and given help with the English language which will enable migrants to play an all-round role of leadership.

For Australians to learn other languages is useful but the best demonstration to migrants that the labor movement is their movement is to see and hear their own people in the leadership.

Southern Europeans find it very difficult to understand the Australian labor movement. Take for example the Italians. Many of them came from peasant villages and had no industrial or trade union experience before migrating. Even those with industrial experience coming from industrial cities such as Milan or Turin are used to a completely different political set up to ours.

The Communist Party of Italy is the biggest party of the working class and plays a prominent and public part in Italian life. There is no deep-rooted tradition of support for any other party such as exists here in the traditional loyalty to the Labor Party.

The unions are industrial unions, without craft divisions.

There are divisions but on political and religious grounds.

Few Australians understand these differences but Italians do and can explain them to their countrymen and help them to overcome their puzzlement.

Finally, steps to bring migrants into more prominence in the leadership of the labor movement must not be considered as a concession as foreign born workers, given the opportunity, will make a tremendous contribution to Australian workers' organisations, helping them to become more attuned to the needs of present-day Australia.

Ernie Thornton

"WORK VALUE" CASE

THE FEDERAL Metal Trades Margins case, commenced in November 1966, is being watched with great interest by all sections of the community. The final decision will have a very definite effect on other awards whether this decision is made to flow to other awards or not and could establish new marginal relativities which would have repercussions throughout all sections of the wage and salary earners.
The proceedings have already been strewn with the wreckage of old ideas of obtaining decisions based on skilful advocacy, the reliance on arbitration methods and the permanency of its standards.

"Work value" investigations are not a new type of procedure, awards are constantly being work valued. That is, the value of the skill, responsibility or nature of the work is being estimated or re-examined for the purpose of deciding margin payments or in the case of total wages, to decide the adjustment to the total wage, as is now the case in the Metal Trades Award.

Since the workshop inspections have been completed witnesses have been heard by the Commission. Union submissions will commence from the week commencing November 6, in Sydney.

The Commonwealth Government has created a precedent by participating almost as if it were a party to the award by making far reaching proposals basically reducing wage levels by recommending the creation of first and second class tradesmen, with a small minority being treated as special class tradesmen.

The same technique is already known by its use in the 1957 Metal Trades Award which resulted in the creation of a "Special Class Welder" working on a specified wide range of metals, thus excluding the vast majority of welders from receiving the extra rate and blanking off a general upward trend in margins.

The Commonwealth Government advocated the use of a "job evaluation" scheme, which allocates points for numerous factors, such as education, skill, adaptability and experience, compiled in the form of a sum total upon which the individual making the assessment bases wage valuation. The main weakness in this scheme is that the evaluation depends entirely on the personal estimates of the individual and once fixed, acts as a barrier to future wage claims for increases based on "work value," increasing the difficulty created by the "total wage" straight-jacket of annual reviews limited to argument on economic grounds.

Other proposals of the Commonwealth Government included alterations and exclusions of existing classifications and that when the Metal Trades decision is made it should not flow to other awards and each award should undergo the same work value "job evaluation" procedure.

The advocate for the Commonwealth made the following main points in his submissions:

1. The Job Check Sheet system used by the Commonwealth in this case should be adopted as the method of handling all work value cases.

2. Work value cases must be conducted on an award by award basis, so there could be no test case basis where what was done in one award flowed to others.

3. Any review of an award or classification should be solely on a comparison with the last review carried out.

Technological change does not necessarily mean that wage rates call for a regular upward review, and in these days of technological change there is every reason for the assumption that relativities between classifications will change.

4. Work value is not to be assessed on the basis of changes in purchasing power, nor should the productivity of a particular industry be taken into account.

5. There is no room for argument on the grounds of the under-valuation of
skill, the scarcity of skills, comparative wage justice, and the existence of over award payments.

The most difficult fact for unions to accept is that despite the Commonwealth Government not having one employee under the Metal Trades Award they are making proposals which profoundly alter the award in a manner which helps the employers. It propagates the idea that lower wages apply as a result of technological change. This is ominous in view of the multitude of awards which will be directly affected by principles established in this case and rapid technological developments.

The private employers have based themselves entirely on that same principle, exposing their real aims in any new technical changes. Every argument possible has been made to support the claim that wherever work may be lightened or made easier as a result of new techniques a reduced wage standard should apply. So much for co-operation and collaboration in the establishing of new wage standards in an era of automation and technological change.

This highlights the inherent weakness in much of the propaganda aimed at proving the historic differences between employer and employee have been resolved; when it comes to wages and employment the conflict is as strong as ever and with the introduction of new technological developments the differences will become greater.

The Metal Trades Wage Case appears to be a long way from completion and the statement of the Full Bench that rates for 26 classifications plus a few others could be given first and envisaging a number of changes in the structure of the Metal Trades Award, almost surely means no decision before February 1968.

Jim Baird

THE OUTLOOK of dialectical materialism is powerful not mainly because it “has come to be adopted as the official world-view of the Soviet State, and indeed of the world communist movement as a whole. This fact is certainly important, but it by no means exhausts the problem. For there is every reason to think that the outlook of which this system is the most thoroughgoing expression is not merely representative of the world-view of the various communist parties, but also reflects the often unconscious or unspoken attitude of the average citizen of today, so far as he is not positively religious and Christian in his beliefs; and does so regardless of his political affiliations and social status which may often be such as to make this same average citizen an embittered opponent of communism.

The doctrines underlying the whole system of dialectical materialism that nothing exists apart from matter and that the whole world as at present constituted has somehow come about of its own accord, are in accordance with the views held by what is doubtless the great majority of people nowadays, and not merely of those who are numbered in the ranks of the communist party. The penetrative power of the communist ideology at the present time may well be largely due to this fact.”

G. Wetter, Dialectical Materialism, pp. 548-9