TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION — MORE MYTHS

YOUR ENGINEER contributor, Mr. David Morris, challenges the views of Richta published in the February-March issue of the A.L.R. and poses the question: "Just what is the scientific and technological revolution"?

Without really challenging the basic standpoint of Richta, in his final paragraph he declares:

"In sum, the scientific revolution is certainly not another industrial revolution like that caused by steam and the factory system. Of its many widely different aspects only a few have significant effects on the economy..."

It is not being too derivative or doctrinaire, to look to method in debate. And so, I would point to a current debate between Russian and Chinese writers on the Changing Structure of Capitalism (New Times No. 37, 1967, No. 9 of 1968 and Peking People's Daily, Jan. 3rd, 1968). The Russian writer, S. Dalin made the point (N.T. 9, p. 14):

"Marx in his great work (Capital) gave us a picture not only of the statics of capitalism, but also of its dynamics. He revealed the tendencies of capitalist development, which in his lifetime were still at an embryonic stage. In our time these tendencies have manifested themselves full force, and hence reading Capital today one can only be amazed by Marx's foresight. Proceeding from the trends of capitalist development revealed by Marx, Lenin continued his work and made a profound analysis of the new stage of capitalism. Much has changed in the half century since then, but for all that we still find in Marx and Lenin the answers to the most pressing problems of present day capitalist reality."

The "amazing foresight" pointed to by S. Dalin includes not only the developments in capitalism, but also in the technologies of capitalist and socialist countries too. Seen by another writer in New Times No. 8 of 1968 (V. Shamberg)

"The present technological revolution radically differs from previous industrial revolutions, which hinged on isolated discoveries, such as the steam engine, the weaving loom, and the electric motor. Today it is a matter of an entire avalanche of discoveries, inventions, and modernizations. Ours is the age of the electronic computer, nuclear power, automation, programmed machine tools, supersonic jets, transistor radios, tape recorders, television and synthetic fabrics. The list could be continued ad infinitum and would include not only new products, but also new methods of production and new types of services."

And the same writer points to: "The concentration of enormous capital in the hands of huge corporations... in 1966 the number of corporations with a turnover in excess of $1,000 million was 80 in the U.S.A., 12 in West Germany, 8 in Britain, 4 in Italy, and 3 each in France and Japan". The scientific and technological revolution in capitalism with the further development of monopoly!
Some may over-simplify the process of change and development in accepting the present definition — a scientific and technological revolution. They may have been better served by sticking to the earlier definition — the Second Industrial Revolution. But in our lives, occupied, as they are, largely with many other needs and thoughts, that acceptance may be excusable and not so very important to our consequential social actions, for social action around the problems of the scientific and technological revolution appears to be the matter of increasing importance. In the same issue of New Times (No. 9 of 1968) the report of a joint French-Russian Symposium on “Automation and Man” had this to say on the point:

“The indisputable success of the symposium — and the French press was unanimous on this — must be credited to the... scientific and technical committees of the two societies who avoided treating the problem of automation from a narrow technical angle and gave the symposium a sociological slant. This fully accorded with the interests of the French scientists and technicians whose basic problems of automation are of a sociological nature. It should be said that there is increasing interest in the sociological aspects of automation in the Soviet Union too.”

Dr. V. Pevzner writing in New Times No. 52 for 1967, is not satisfied with the viewpoint of those making up a general consensus some ten years ago that the Second Industrial Revolution opened or began to unfold a few years after the end of World War II, perhaps in 1950. His concept criticised the acceptance of isolated data of the unconnected kind cited by Dave Morris without trying to give it some kind of historical logic:

“. . . the sum total of data relating to the foundations of economic life . . . of the whole world . . . reveals the past half century has witnessed two stages of the scientific and technological revolution. The first up to the second world war, marked the completion of the mechanization of production processes and the conveyor. The second, post-war stage marked the beginning of automation in the full sense of the term, transition not only to automated machines and production lines, but to new production techniques when the worker’s role became more and more that of the designer, builder and supervisor of the machines and less and less that of direct producer.”

His perspectives on twentieth century history are not dissimilar to those advanced by British marxist, Dr. Sam Lilley in the book Men, Machines And History. And what Lilley, Pevzner, Richta and Hermach of Czechoslovakia and many writers like them in the United States and Britain are trying to pose is simply: As well as social revolutions proceeding in four continents there is, also, a general scientific and technological revolution developing in the capitalist, socialist and “third” world systems. These concepts pose problems of understanding as difficult as when Marx pointed to the “abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself” as well as its abolition with the capitalist mode of production itself: a concept over which Russian and Chinese marxists are now in some disagreement. And what is extremely important to our understanding of current realities, however, is that the problems being posed by many writers are those within social frameworks that grow less and less dissimilar. The two stages of Marshall McLuhan and Peter Drucker — typographical man and oral man or Drucker’s capitalist owner and a manager for capitalists — appear to have no basic quarrels with the realities presented by
the Russian and Czech marxists. For were we not, according to Marx and Lenin, to see such things in the transitions to Monopoly Capitalism and State Monopoly Capitalism?

Professor Hermach takes up the challenge of those seeing only trees in today’s forest of change. In a longer theoretical work, not available in Australia, unfortunately, he points to some dangers in such views:

‘The model of communism and the conception of marxism, ignoring the scientific and technological revolution as their essential component and further reducing the revolutionary process to problems of power, changes in proprietary forms and changes in ideology (i.e. considering the sphere of changes in production forces, work, etc., to be only an external condition of revolution) perpetuate, in fact, the social forms taken over from the industrial revolution and class struggles, and are incapable of directing society under new conditions. Everything indicates the fact that the beginnings of the theory of the scientific and technological revolution, along the lines of the 20th Congress, and especially of the Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, represent a most essential creative discovery and a positive development of the Marxist theory since Lenin’s time.’

But even Australians are not un receptive to such concepts, for a lecturer in the University of New England recently quoted a definition of the Industrial Revolution in order to draw comparisons with developments in today’s Second Industrial Revolution. He quoted from an American sociologist:

“The term is generally applied to the changes which occurred in England roughly between the middle of the 18th century and the first 40 years of the 19th century ... characterised by the urbanisation of population, mechanisation of agricultural processes and the development of the factory system ... based on the steam engine and other labor saving machinery.”

In the light of that definition, the lecturer, who clearly saw the use of steam and the development of the factory system as only parts of the First Industrial Revolution, went on to pose what he thought would be the main social features of the Second Industrial Revolution across whose thresholds, he thought, we had now begun to pass in all forms of society. These main social features were:

1 a further extension of urbanisation;
2 an elimination of differences between city and country;
3 oligopolies;
4 a world population explosion;
5 vast displacements of human labor in favor of machines;
6 great changes in the shape of leisure and the working day, working week, working year and working lifetime;
7 wages and salaries giving way to incomes;
8 much greater upward mobility of labor;
9 a vast shift, in countries like the U.S. and Australia, of ownership, control and direction of life from owners and non-owners to managers officials and a bureaucratic power elite much greater than we have seen before; and,
10 three distinct and widely debated sets of social relationships across world society.

As the lecture was about Industrial Conflict and Automation, the lecturer
pointed out that these changes will be the source of deeper industrial conflicts than we have today, but that they will proceed against a background of even deeper conflicts such as those now maturing over:

1. The Negro and Puerto-Rican ghettos in the U.S.
2. Technological unemployment and unemployability for many youth and the "under-educated".
3. Urban poverty, particularly of the aged and invalided, increasing.
4. Resources employed in ventures like the Vietnam War instead of "Great Society" projects.

In trying to reach an understanding of modern social realities room must be found increasingly for the views of the Richtas and Hermachs and more heed needs to be taken of the warning by Dr. Pevzner, previously quoted about the dangers of accepting isolated data in making an appraisal of historical events.

COLANTI

BUILDERS' LABORERS AND MARGINS

THE BUILDERS' LABORERS margin struggle is further evidence of the aim of the employing class, governments and courts to split asunder the unity of skilled and semi-skilled workers in industry.

The general public would possibly believe that the struggle of metal workers early in 1968 was centred mainly around the absorption of hard won over-award payments in well-established work-shops. The publicity of the daily press certainly led readers to believe so.

There is, however, another deep-seated and still unresolved problem confronting metal workers. This is the fact that the overwhelming number of semi-skilled workers received less than $1.00 increase, yet in this section exist some of the most exploited in the whole industry. The increasing skills, responsibilities and profitability to employers of this large number of metal workers are ignored.

With the advent of more rapid technological change, it is clear that the employers are preparing to downgrade workers generally, with the recognition of the smallest possible elite.

Semi-skilled metal-workers dissatisfied with the metal-trades award, are looking for leadership and militant activity. This is not forthcoming, mainly because the leadership of most of the unions covering this category is firmly entrenched in right wing hands. However, of late there appears a growing realisation by sections of these leaderships that there is an urgency to get together with centre and left wing unions, if any real gain is to be hammered out of the employers in this fast-changing Australian industrial climate.

The anger of the metal-workers, shown by the almost spontaneous strike action, surprised the ruling circles and made it more difficult for them to contain the workers, to confine money increases to metal-workers, and compel unions in other industries to carry out protracted "work-value" cases.

Early in February the Building Trades Group of unions in N.S.W. commenced a vigorous campaign to win an interim margins payment of $5.20 for tradesmen with a proportionate amount for Builders' Laborers. Of the twelve unions in the building industry in N.S.W., only the Builders’ Laborers is a non-tradesmen union.

The Master Builders' Association, the biggest employer of building work-
ERS in N.S.W., were divided on whether the $5 should flow to building tradesmen. The conservative element of the M.B.A. favoured a work-value case.

The more liberal element saw the danger of state wide strike action in the building industry and were all for having a negotiation with the Building Workers' Industrial Union, the largest and acknowledged leader of the building unions in N.S.W.

A militant history, sound leadership of the B.W.I.U., unity of building unions in N.S.W. and their preparedness to struggle won the day and finally the B.W.I.U. received an interim margin increase of $5.00 per week. This opened the door for other tradesmen's unions in this state and now all have won at least $5.00 per week, and await developments in August.

Since 1962, when a new standard was set in the Builders' Laborers, with the first real review since the conclusion of World War II, the N.S.W. leadership has fought for a relativity of margins and builders' laborers' margins. Commissioner Webb by the introduction and upgrading of new classifications in the Builders' Laborers award, emphasised the key connection between the carpenter and builders' laborers in modern building technique.

After much industrial activity the general working conditions and rates were brought into uniformity in N.S.W. However, there is an attempt by the employers to move away from treating the Builders' Laborers as an integral part of the building industry with a close relationship with tradesmen in this industry. Instead the employers wish to equate the Builders' Laborers with somewhat similar non-tradesmen in the metal awards.

Though most States of the Builders Laborers' Federation are covered by the Federal Award, there are differing agreements in some States, so it is difficult to campaign in a national way. Therefore Builders' Laborers in N.S.W. have engaged in widespread job activity to maintain the relativity of margins and similar conditions to building tradesmen.

Besides the avoidance of industrial turmoil, one would think it would be preferable for job costing etc. if the employers agreed to see the industry as a whole. Also because the laborers in the building industry are a minority, the cost would not be great. This, however, is not the case and the builders are pushing ahead with schemes to deny builders' laborers their due deserts.

Right throughout Australia and in N.S.W. particularly, feeling is high and more strikes have taken place than for many a year. Conferences with the Master Builders in N.S.W. in late May, and with national employers in Melbourne early June will decide the immediate future, for if they fail, the building industry will be a turbulent one in the months ahead.

J. MUNDEY

NEW GUINEA DEVELOPMENT

IN DEALING with the advancement of New Guinea most writers emphasise the importance of developing her export markets and say little or nothing about the need for balanced development, and industrialisation.

All the nations with high living standards, the wealthy nations, are industrialised and this is an inescapable connection with consumer demand and the industries to satisfy it can only come from people with money in their hands. Essentially this requires a home market, more particularly in the formative stages.
If concentration on exports was the way to riches, India, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America would be the richest nations in the world.

But the richest nations are in Europe, North America and Australasia. They lead the world in living standards and the consequent industrialisation.

New Guinea's concentration on exports arises from her colonial position and her domination by the big Australian planter monopolies, the most important of which are Burns Philp and W. R. Carpenters, although there are others whose rapid expansion could well challenge the positions long held by the older firms.

These people own or control a very large number of plantations and their production dominates New Guinea's exports. Having large shipping interests they are able to exert control over indigenous production which in some fields is quite considerable. They also dominate the import of manufactured goods.

The control exercised by overseas monopolies has meant and continues to mean that the greater part of the wealth produced is channelled out of the country. This leaves the local economy impoverished and little capital finds its way into the hands of the local people. This hampers the promotion of essential industries and limits the market for the goods they would produce. The activities of the Administration, too, seem to inhibit funds accumulating in New Guinean hands.

In forestry and mining the Administration takes action which prevents New Guineans from receiving the value of the assets on their soil. At no time has the Administration endeavoured to foster a large-scale agricultural project by New Guineans whether by co-operative or company development.

The lack of capital can be seen on every side; primitive agriculture, housing, water supply, sanitation and drainage all indicate that little of the tremendous wealth created (G.N.P. $330 millions) remains in the Territory.

The domination by these monopolies means that New Guinea is forced to give up its natural riches at the lowest possible prices, but has to pay correspondingly higher prices for the goods it imports.

This inequality in price relationships between the underdeveloped nations and the imperialist nations, has been the subject of several surveys by the United Nations. A special U.N. study in 1949 showed that between 1897 and 1938 the average prices of primary products fell by approximately a third in relation to those of manufactured goods. A further U.N. study (Economic Problems No. 600, 20.6.59) points out that the increase in prices of industrial goods and the decline in prices of raw materials represented a loss of import capacity for underdeveloped countries of approximately "the equivalent of six years of loans to underdeveloped countries by the World Bank on the basis of 1956-57 prices".

Another U.N. Report in 1961 reveals that between 1953-55 and 1957-59 the loss through the worsening in terms of trade for underdeveloped countries was nearly twice the total amount of public aid funds these countries received.

All this indicates that continued reliance on exports will not and cannot result in a balanced and viable economy in New Guinea. It also indicates the urgent necessity to plan for industrial development, for the production of equipment and materials to make New Guinea independent of imports to the greatest extent possible.

What is meant by industrialisation? The colonialists point to the giant pro-
ject which is being planned by Con- zinc Riotinto in Bougainville to process the copper ore won from its con- cession at Panguna, and to serve which the first railway in the Territory will be built. But this massive complex will only serve the interests of the exploit­ ers and do little to advance the inter­ ests of the people. This is not indus­ trialisation.

What is meant by industrialisation is manufacturing the requirements of the people, from the common shovel to machines to make machines, as well as textiles, foodstuffs and other com­ modities. No nation can consider that its economy is sound if it is not indus­ trialised, and the standards of living can not be safeguarded if the country has to rely on other countries for its manufactured goods.

The government recently elected will exercise a measure of responsibility. It is essential that its activities be directed towards an economy which will be able to stand on its own feet.

It will need to see that capital ex­ penditure in the Territory is directed in a way that will advance the pro­ ductive capacity of the people rather than facilitate the exploitation of New Guinea by overseas interests.

JIM COOPER

STATE AID AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

STATED in its most general form, the demand for state aid to non-state schools is a cry for equality of oppor­ tunity in education, especially for the most under-privileged pupils, those in the Roman Catholic parish schools.

How could such equality be achiev­ ed taking into account the backward position of education in Australia gen­ erally? (4.3 per cent of the Gross National Product spent annually on education compared with 6.4 per cent in the United Kingdom, 6.5 per cent in the United States of America, 7.3 per cent in Sweden and the USSR).

Is it enough merely to state a prin­ cipled objection to the whole policy of state aid? Such a position tends to sharpen sectarian division and conflict amongst individuals and organisations working for educational reform, whilst leaving the problem of inequality un­ touched.

It is felt by some that the dual sys­ tem should be accepted as a fact of life temporarily at least, and its class biased methods of implementation be opposed by insisting that financial grants to non-state schools be confined to those in need, the Roman Catholic parish schools, whilst the schools of privilege and wealth should be ex­ cluded.

Such a policy would undoubtedly bring some relief to the poorer schools, but it would be misleading to suggest that giving special assistance to Roman Catholic schools whilst excluding others in a predominantly non-Catholic com­ munity is politically feasible; or, if it were, that the present level of state-aid would do more than provide a tem­ porary palliative.

Another suggestion that has been made is the provision of an educational endowment for all school children by an expansion of the family endowment. This would have at least the merit of reducing the burden of maintaining children at school in the case of the lower income groups, and would not raise sectarian disunity. It would not, of course, solve the financial problems of the parish schools.

Some Roman Catholics believe that the Church should vacate the field of primary or secondary education alto­ gether. In Scotland, where such a view has prevailed, church and state have
agreed upon the taking over by the state of all Catholic schools, which then became an integral part of the state system, but staffed exclusively by Catholic teachers. In all other respects, staffing, administration, curricula, inspection by departmental officers, no distinction is made between Catholic and non-Catholic schools. Such a compromise solution would undoubtedly meet the wishes of many Catholic teachers and parents, but in view of the rigid attitude of the Australian Catholic hierarchy it seems to have little immediate relevance.

Continued state aid in its present form, whilst providing marginal benefits to some of the poorer schools, is also, in fact, a dishonest manoeuvre to provide handouts to the schools of privilege under the spurious slogan of equality of benefit.

The gross bias shown towards the schools of privilege is expressed in Education, the journal of the NSW Teachers’ Federation, of April 17, in regard to grants for science laboratories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of all pupils in State</th>
<th>% of grant</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Schools</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-State Schools</td>
<td>26</td>
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The grants already made include $70,000 to Newington College and $16,000 to Trinity Grammar School, both well-equipped private schools. The position is even more glaring in Victoria where grants have been made to the already lavishly equipped Geelong Grammar.

State aid in its present form does not substantially ameliorate conditions in the Catholic parish school; the marginal benefits provided leaving their pupils in a state of serious educational inequality, even when compared with the inadequately provided state schools.

At the same time the financial burdens of Catholic parents continue to increase (a rise in school fees this year despite state aid). The strengthening of the non-state sector also strengthens the social and sectarian divisions in the community and generates sectarian bitterness and social disunity.

Meanwhile, conditions in state schools continue to deteriorate; teacher shortages are becoming critical (hundreds accepting overseas positions, untrained teachers being introduced into Queensland schools), classes grow larger, essential equipment is not provided, and overall, even in the state system Australia is falling far behind the requirements of an age of science and technological change.

Clearly whilst inadequate funds are available to meet basic educational requirements division and conflict over the distribution of public finance will continue.

The teachers’ unions and parents’ organisations have enunciated the two basic needs for educational advance in general: a national enquiry into education promoted by the Federal Government; and immediate large-scale grants by the Federal Government to meet the most pressing demands. Any substantial improvement in the conditions of the under-privileged schools will remain a chimera until these conditions are met.

State aid is being used as a red-herring, a diversionary move, to delay meeting them. The important issue must continue to be the broad struggle, with the maximum degree of Catholic participation that can be achieved for an enquiry and massive emergency Federal grants of finance.

Until this fight is won the internecine struggle for the inadequate available funds is certain to become sharper and to be used by reactionary politicians to keep education reformers...
divided. The basic question is to put first things first, not to allow secondary issues such as state aid to divert those working for educational reform from seeking unity in action to defeat the divisive plans of the Government and to secure real educational progress.

W. E. Gollan

DISSENT ON CUBAN WRITING

IN APRIL-MAY ALR, in concluding “Writers in the New Cuba”, J. J. quotes J. M. Cohen as noting a retrograde tendency towards the discouragement of the liberal trend in culture by “the rigid party men” and joins in Mr. Cohen’s hope that “this tendency will soon be reversed”.

Mr. Cohen writes of a positive attitude until 1967 and J. J. writes, presumably, in March 1968.

But does a search of the prolific Cuban articles (easily available in English) by “top” (rigid?) party men support the report of retrogression and the hope of an early reversal, which arises on the assumption that the report is true?

In 1967, for example, President Dorticos made it clear that the party had evolved no set views on art and literature, regarding these questions as being too complex and important to be “dealt with.” Meanwhile, full freedom of expression, including abstract and “unorthodox” schools, continues as, say, in Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia – but not in some other socialist countries.

It appeared that this view was voiced also at the international conference of intellectuals in Havana, in January 1968, and that there was complete agreement on questions of artistic freedom in a spectrum extending from Cuban “party men” to such people as Graham Greene) Bertrand Russell and J. P. Sartre – no friends of party-imposed criteria – also made it clear at the time that this was also their view of the state of freedom in Cuba in 1967, whereas they are still very concerned about the fate of the creative writers etc. in other socialist countries.

Lastly, in 1967, an English translation appeared of “Socialism and Man in Cuba” – a remarkable article dealing almost exclusively with the subtle problem of overcoming alienation and its practical consequences and the demands it makes of a marxist party and socialist society. This article by Che Guevara discusses freedom of expression in literature in the same spirit as Dorticos in the same year.

This may come as a surprise to those who dismiss Guevara and the Cuban leaders as Mao-tinged, as may his suggestion that 20th century “decadent” art is closer to reality than the prettied-up versions of 19th century realism which passed for some time as socialist realism.

S. Cooper

REALIST PROTEST

IN THE ALR No. 2 of 1968, there is an article, “Read any Stories Lately?”, by Leon Cantrell, which refers to “literary quarterlies such as Meanjin, Overland and Southerly”.

I find it extraordinary that the article makes no mention of the Realist, and I can only assume that the author has neither seen nor heard of it. In fact, the omission becomes even more extraordinary when it is realised that the Realist is the only literary magazine of the left in Australia.

The fact is that the Realist consistently publishes more short stories than either Meanjin, Overland or Southerly, or, indeed, than any other literary magazine in the country. The latest issue
of the Realist (No. 28 — Autumn), for instance, contains seven short stories, compared with two each in the latest issues of Meanjin and Southerly and one in Overland.

Perhaps Mr. Cantrell justifies his silence on the subject of the Realist on the ground of quality, insofar as a significant proportion of its stories are not written by established and well-known writers. That he has a leaning towards the established writer is evident from several remarks in his article. In fact he even makes specific and favourable mention of Patrick White, whose short stories most people seem to find unreadable.

While the Realist does publish stories by established writers, including some of those mentioned by Mr. Cantrell, it does not do so exclusively. One of its aims is to assist and encourage promising new writers by publication, and there is little doubt that few, if any publications in Australia do more to help new writers than the Realist.

The Realist has always been ignored by the Literary Establishment, probably because of its partisan support of progressive causes, but it is a sad thing to see a similar conspiracy of silence developing in the left.

I might mention that the three literary quarterlies mentioned above are subsidised, in two cases very substantially, whereas the Realist is entirely dependent on voluntary donations from readers and supporters.

RAY WILLIAMS
Editor, The Realist

MORE ON CIA

AS A FOOTNOTE to my article on "Political Scientists and the CIA" (ALR April-May, 1968), it may interest readers to know that Dr. Max Kampelman, Treasurer of the American Political Science Association and probably Hubert Humphrey’s closest political adviser, has been recently featured in items in both Newsweek (19/2/68) and Time (1/3/68). Representing Napco Industries Inc., he signed a $2,300,000 loan agreement with AID (Agency for International Development) in 1962 to send auto-parts plant equipment to India. Napco failed to deliver and the Justice Department has now filed suit to collect the $2,300,000. Congressman Gross (Iowa) has claimed that AID were eventually “hoodwinked” out of almost $4 million in the deal that “reeks of incompetence, fraud or both.” For once, Humphrey is reported to be maintaining complete silence.

JOHN PLAYFORD