
EVEN A QUICK dipping of the big toe into the icy turbulence of professional political science literature these days would be sufficient to make the faint-hearted shiver and lose breath. The older marxian-type jargonist would be somewhat humiliated by the queer sort of language which is now commonplace in the academic writings on society and democratic theory in the United States of America (and Australia). Such words, repeated ad nauseum, as dichotomy, charismatic, dysfunctional, behavioralism, equiliberal, eschew, pluralistic, infrastructuralism, are perhaps not bad attempts at creating a mumbo-jumbo superior to anything we may have had in the past and having the effect of repelling all but the most stouthearted layman from becoming initiated into the mysteries of what it is "all about."

However the Australian John Playford and the American Charles McCoy have performed a considerable service in presenting the collection of readings in Apolitical Politics. The volume constitutes a powerful broadside into the bows of the elite-pluralist political science school which has held sway for many years in American and Australian university teachings.

These theories advocated by such titans in the world of bourgeois political science as Dahl, Parsons, Lipsett and Bell, based upon the earlier writings of Mosca and Pareto and others, and upon empirical studies of social and political behaviour in US society, idealise the status quo and argue that the ultimate in democracy has been reached. Mass movements are anathema, holding the possibility of upsetting the equilibrium or stability of present monopoly-capitalist society. Too much political action outside of voting or lobbying is dangerous in the extreme. The theories are also vitally concerned to perpetuate the kind of elite leadership which will maintain the system.

The introduction to Apolitical Politics states "The articles collected together in this volume all share a unifying focus, from which three main points emerge: these authors find the professional writings of the behavioralists characterized by conservatism, a fear of popular democracy, and an avoidance of vital political issues."

McCoy and Playford further indicate that as the title of the book implies "it is the failure of the behavioralists to address themselves to genuinely significant political matters that concerns us most. By establishing methodology as the most relevant criterion for research they turn the students of politics into political eunuchs. Yet important political questions will continue to be discussed by the poet, the Bohemian fringe, the propagandist and the opportunist. In fact one is struck by the renewed interest in politics of students and the public at large: the only place where a discussion of politics is not likely to take place is in the political science journals and in the political science classrooms."

The volume contains a dozen contributions written mainly by professors of political science at US and Canadian Universities. One Australian, Graeme Duncan, senior lecturer in politics at Monash University, pairs with Steven Lukes in a hardhitting critique of the "new democracy" of the elite-pluralist school. (Duncan, incidentally, is the
author of a forthcoming book on Marx
and Mill to be published by Cambridge
University Press).

The most penetrating material is
written by Christian Bay (Politics and
Pseudopolitics: A Critical Evaluation
of some Behavioral Literature); James
Petras (Ideology and United States Poli-
tical Scientists); Jack L. Walker (A Cri-
tique of the Elitist Theory of Demo-
cracy); Maure L. Goldschmidt (Demo-
ocratic Theory and Contemporary Poli-
tical Science) and Todd Gitlin (Local
Pluralism as Theory and Ideology).
Gitlin, by the way, was the 1963-64
president of Students for a Democra-
tic Society (SDS), an organisation much in
the limelight today.

The editors point out that their read-
er "may be properly described as a
'liberal' critique" and this is so. The
contributors are worthy representatives
of that growing body of political sci-
centists and students who are critical of
the elitist and pluralist theories of
democracy and therefore play an im-
portant part in the ideological struggle
against modern capitalism. Mostly they
express support for the classical bour-
geois democratic theorists (such as John
Stuart Mill) and for a participatory
democracy that does not rule out the
need for social change. However while
criticising modern industrial capitalist
society and posing the need for a com-
munity of participating members they
present few views of how such is to be
achieved. The weakness of most of
these progressive theorists seems to be
their inability to think outside the
'system' or outside the theories of
classical bourgeois democracy even
though they are trenchantly critical of
its modern operations. Maure L. Gold-
schmidt however does indicate "the
need for the revival of a dynamic demo-
cratic theory which will point the way
for the next generation . . .".

The goal of a community of fully
participating citizens is a most worthy
one, but it will be hard for society
to realise. To lay the basis for such a
society it is necessary, in this review-
er's opinion, to end the capitalist sys-
tem of exploitation, profiteering and
rotteness. In capitalist society the
struggle for democracy is necessarily
tending to merge more and more with
the movement for socialism. The move-
ment for democracy is becoming revolu-
tionary because the way to greater
democratic freedoms and 'participa-
tion' lies through the revolutionary
restructuring of society.

Apolitical Politics, I believe, plays a
part in this battle. Perhaps it could be
followed by another volume devoted
more to the subject of how to achieve
democracy. If you want to improve
your knowledge about pluralism and
current intellectual political attitudes
then turn to this volume.

JOHN SENDY

CONTEMPORARY SOVIET
GOVERNMENT.
By L. G. Churchward.
Routledge and Kegan Paul,
365 pp, $7.00.

THESE DAYS, when so many people
have visited the Soviet Union, one has
either to have a particularly loud
voice or really know something about
the country to get a hearing on the
subject. Lloyd Churchward is in the
second category.

Although intended as a textbook for
university studies, his Contemporary
Soviet Government is a most valuable
and interesting book for the general
reader — the standpoint of this re-
viewer.

Naturally there are explanations of
the functions and role of the various
organs of government such as the
Supreme Soviet, the Council of Min-
isters, and the local Soviets. But if it
were a mere expanded version of the
Soviet Constitution, as many such books
produced in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics tend to be, it would be a pretty dull affair.

The real interest is in Churchward’s discussion of the underlying theories of government currently held in the USSR, and the degree to which the practice of Soviet government corresponds with the Constitution and the theories. A sample of his approach is to be found in his opening paragraph of the chapter on the Supreme Soviet. More than one icon is cracked by the statement:

“The Supreme Soviet of the USSR is often referred to, even in the Soviet Union itself, as the Soviet Parliament. This is inaccurate except in a purely formal sense. The Supreme Soviet is not and never has been the main legislative body in the Soviet Union. On the other hand it is not merely a kind of collective ‘rubber stamp’ for the automatic registration of decisions arrived at elsewhere.”

Worshippers of the Soviet Constitution will wince, as will those who write off Soviet legislative processes as a facade for a dictatorship, but serious readers all will read on to find out what is the main legislative body, what say the ordinary people have, and what the Supreme Soviet does anyway. And they will not be disappointed.

The author is a reader in political science in the University of Melbourne. He has made a close study of Soviet government over a long period, including an extended stay in the USSR in 1965. Churchward states in the preface one of his aims as being an analysis “essentially in the Western tradition, but the main line of explanation is marxist.”

Churchward lists early in his book a number of distinctive features of the Soviet political system. The first listed, and probably the most important is its socialist basis. But it is the second feature, ‘the political monopoly of the Communist Party’ which intrudes itself most forcibly into the treatment of the various aspects of Soviet government. Although the one-party system is backed by a large volume of theory in the Soviet Union, there seems to have been no theoretical justification of such a position prior to its ‘happening’. In addition, there are a diminishing number of Communist Parties in western countries at least, which regard the one-party system or even the domination of one party among others as an inevitable feature of socialism.

But the fact is that this was one of the most important features of Soviet Russia when it emerged from Tsarism, torn by years of world war, revolution and civil war. It is a feature which, whatever might have been the case in other circumstances, and for better or worse, seems likely to remain a feature of the USSR for a long time.

One does not need to be anti-communist, or even opposed to the main lines of the policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to be concerned with this question. For example, Churchward demonstrates that the electoral system, while producing Soviets with appreciable numbers of non-party people (from 25 per cent in the Supreme Soviet up to about half in local Soviets) gives the Communist Party the main say in who shall or shall not be candidates and hence deputies.

Churchward rejects the conclusion that the existence of only one party makes the USSR a ‘totalitarian’ state, and clearly does not regard the Party’s monopoly of political power as an unmitigated evil. For example, in his chapter on local government he points to stimulating and encouraging aspects of the work of the party in involving millions of people in the work of local government as well as to the stultifying
effects, where citizens tend to wait on Party policy before coming out with proposals for the tackling of specific problems.

In contrast with most Western writers, Churchward gives serious examination to the 'considerable success' of the Soviet system in fostering mass participation in a long list of activities. Apart from elections, these are categorised as public debate of policy and legislative proposals; popular involvement in administration; participation in trade unions, co-operatives and collective farms, comradely courts, volunteer militia and fire brigades, street and house committees, parents' councils, pensioners' councils etc; and through socialist competitions.

Discussion of Soviet democracy is a highlight of the book, and some readers will not be able to resist the temptation to read first the second last chapter on this topic, although it is in a sense a culmination of the previous sections.

In the style of the book as a whole, the author examines the concept of democracy which is held in the USSR, relating it to views commonly held in the West. He then compares the theory with the reality of contemporary Soviet politics.

One of Churchward's important conclusions is that Soviet democracy "depends neither on the rights guaranteed in the Constitution nor on the activity of citizens through the Soviets, but on the degree of inner-Party democracy and on the willingness of the Party leadership to exercise a voluntary self-restraint. This is an incomplete and an inadequate basis for democracy."

The author does not set himself the task of providing a history of Soviet government, or of treating exhaustively the internal and external environment in which the institutions, practices and policies of the Soviet government developed. But his brief material on these points is nevertheless useful and at times dramatic. For example, in dealing with what is often described as forced industrialisation, Churchward quotes a Stalin speech of 1931: "We are fifty to a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it or we shall go under."

Churchward follows with: "It was in fact ten years and a hundred and thirty seven days from the day of that speech that the Germans launched their attack on the Soviet Union. That the Soviet Union did not go under was largely due to the forced industrialisation of the previous decade."

Contemporary Soviet Government has an excellent bibliography, an adequate index, and a valuable list of appendices of important Soviet documents and extracts.

While not being an encyclopedia on the Soviet Union, Churchward's book covers much ground which is either ignored or glossed over in other works, and as such deserves to be read by all who venture to argue the toss about Soviet government.

D. Davies


"THE SYDNEY HARBORSIDE suburb of Mosman", said its Mayor, Alderman V. H. Parkinson, recently, "is one of the finest living areas in the world", and he spoke of "the pleasure I have of waking each morning and looking across the blue waters of Middle Harbor".

As a longtime resident of the suburb, I can, with the Mayor, attest to
its physical beauties, with its many gracious old homes, its pleasant bays and inlets and its wide vistas over the central and middle harbors. (There are other, less wholesome, facts about Mosman which are dealt with in a footnote below.)

Two years ago two affairs brought Mosman prominently into the news, for reasons other than its historic charm. The first was the attempted assassination of the Leader of the Federal Opposition, Mr. A. A. Calwell, after an anti-Vietnam meeting in Mosman Town Hall on June 21, 1966. It was Australia’s first attempted political assassination.

The political affiliations, if any, of the young man who fired the shot at Mr. Calwell, Peter Raymond Kocan, were never brought out, because he pleaded guilty at his trial. But there were reports current at the time that, minutes before the shooting, Kocan had been seen in conversation with a well-known extremist rightist in the foyer of the Town Hall. This anti-Vietnam rally, incidentally, followed one two months earlier at the same town hall, which representatives of extreme right groups had tried to break up.

But the real intrusion of the extreme right in this area, which came with the Federal elections later in 1966, forms the subject of The Politics of the Extreme Right: Warringah 1966, by R. W. Connell, a research student, and Florence Gould, tutor in the Department of Government and Public Administration, both of the University of Sydney.

It is a well-documented and fairly exhaustive analysis of the groups and people that make up the extreme right in Australia, their influence and size, but not, unfortunately the people who are behind them financially.

Mosman is the heartland of the federal electorate of Warringah which stretches from Cremorne, on the south side of Middle Harbor to affluent and fashionable Palm Beach to the north. Because of its social composition, predominantly middle and upper middle class (here analysed in detail), Warringah has always been a blue ribbon conservative seat. Only once has anyone (P. G. Spender, later Sir Percy, in 1937) ever successfully bucked the United Australia Party or later Liberal Party machine.

In August, 1966, the Warringah seat became vacant with the death of the sitting Liberal member, J. S. Cockle. In September, after an exhaustive examination of 19 nominees, the Liberal Party’s Selection Committee for the electorate chose as the party’s candidate Edward H. St. John, Q.C., 51, former Acting Judge of the Supreme Court, President since 1961 of the Australian Section of the International Commission of Jurists and Australian President of the South African Defence and Aid Fund, a body devoted to financing legal aid for political prisoners in South Africa.

It was this latter position which drew the fire of the extreme right. To the racists anyone who took part in any action which seemed to oppose South Africa’s policy of apartheid was a communist or at least a pinkie. The South African Government had, in fact, declared unlawful Defence and Aid Committees in the terms of the Suppression of Communism Act.

The extreme right immediately launched a “Stop St. John” movement and, after shopping around, a candidate was chosen to stand as an Independent Liberal against the selected candidate. He was Keith Bernard Chambers, 49, a Mosman real estate man and former Mayor of the suburb, and a member of the Liberal Party.

The rightists swung into a vigorous
campaign against St. John and in support of Chambers.

Mr. Connell and Florence Gould list as individuals or groups who at some time became associated with the anti-St. John campaign:

- Local Liberal Party members dissatisfied with the workings of the party machine.
- Henry Fischer, chief of the rightist journal Australian International News Review (which was used extensively in the campaign), Sir Raphael Cilento.
- Individuals associated with the Basic Industries Group (later attacked by Minister for Trade and Country Party leader McEwen).
- The “Fifty Club”, an extreme right group operating at Kings Cross, which had been refused permission to form their own Liberal Party branch.
- The League of Rights, a racist organisation (Eric Butler).
- The Friends of Freedom, whose national president is the well-known rightist, Owen Warrington.
- Various individuals sympathetic to various rightist causes—anti-fluoridation, support of South Africa and Rhodesia, etc.
- Chambers’ own friends and relations.

The campaign was waged fiercely, with huge amounts being spent on newspaper publicity on both sides. The fight even attracted the attention of the national press. At one stage St. John issued a $100,000 libel writ against the proprietors of a local throwaway paper, The Mosman Daily, after he had learned that it intended to publish a rightist-backed supplement attacking him. In the end, not unexpectedly, the Liberal Party machine proved too strong and, although the Party vote was cut by 12 per cent, St. John had a clear 20,000 majority over Chambers.

In effect, the extreme right was left in tatters, and as the authors point out: “The extreme right vote, stripped of its accidental and personal components, was not large and did not have the distinctive social character which seems to be a necessary prerequisite for mass social support in Australian politics.

“If this is even roughly true of an electorate as conservative as Warringah, the results of the election clearly hold out little hope to the present extreme right for political action outside the Liberal Party”.

That, of course, is the crux of the matter. There is ample scope for extreme right thought and action inside the Liberal Party, as the statements, actions and associations of many of its leading members, including Cabinet ministers, have shown. The faint suggestion by the authors that the NSW Liberal Party machine fought the extreme right, as such, in Warringah, is rather naive. The machine supported St. John against the right because it was bound to back the man it had chosen, and not because of the political beliefs of his opponents.

Other facts about Mosman: Among Sydney’s northside suburbs, it has the highest incidence of mental illness, with one in every 430 residents receiving hospital treatment, apart from uncounted numbers receiving private treatment.

A NSW Health Department survey found that most of the psychiatric disorders in the area occurred among people living apart from their families in flats, flatettes, or home units.
Recent years have seen a great proliferation of home units in Mosman, known locally (after the Mayor) as “Parkinson’s Disease” and these are mostly occupied by elderly, retired people.

Despite its outward air of affluence, Mosman is reported to have wide areas of poverty, mostly among retired people on fixed incomes, still living in big homes, and going short of food to pay their high rates.

Its relatively small population of 28,000 supports two flourishing pet food shops, both of which carry big notices emphasising that the kangaroo and horse meat they sell is not for human consumption, and there aren’t all that many dogs and cats in Mosman.

T. Moody

THE UNLUCKY AUSTRALIANS.
By Frank Hardy.
Nelson, Melbourne, 257 pp, $4.95.

THIS BOOK is unusually successful in coming to grips with one of the nation’s deepest social problems and is a landmark in its author’s commitment to the rights of man, while also having the capacity to irritate, among others, some of the real characters that come vigorously to life in its pages.

It is the best book yet written about the rising struggle of Australian Aborigines as proletarians.

The subject is the Aboriginal Gurindji stockmen who in 1966 went on strike at Vestey’s Wave Hill cattle station in the Northern Territory—beginning on the issue of wage equality with whites but developing around issues with much deeper social and historical roots.

Despite the boldly improvised form of the book — an amalgam of narrative, interview, introspection and rhetoric — the book achieves an uninterrupted pressure on the sympathy and conscience of the reader that should go far towards achieving the author’s aim, the shattering of the complacency of White Australia.

Hardy sets out the dimensions of anti-Aborigine discrimination by using at length the tape-recorded words of the stockmen themselves. The imposed degradation of admirable men and women (the latter do not come to life in the book) is forced into the consciousness of the reader again and again as, one after another and often overlapping, they tell of their long, unpaid hours of work which white men do less skilfully, the intolerably crude conditions of living and eating, the arrogant white abuse of the womenfolk, the totality of 10th class citizenship.

Intermingled are the accounts given by the small number of white territorians who, in various ways, assist the Aborigines in the historic defiance of white bossdom and white land monopoly.

Binding all together is the cement of Hardy himself, self-doubting yet gripped passionately by the monstrous inhumanity resulting from extermination, displacement, exploitation and indifference towards a whole race of people which continues today in our land.

Hardy allows himself to be scathing towards his fellow-whites, verges at times on condescension even towards some who played no small part in assisting the struggle and will not escape the charge of immodesty. But one is left with the clear conviction that, in substance, this is very much how it happened and that it could not have happened quite in this way or at this tempo without the rare compassion, commitment and drive of the author himself.
Since the book’s publication, the Gorton Federal Government, armed by referendum with new powers, has nevertheless shamefully failed the Aborigines and, indeed, all Australians by bowing to the white land monopolists’ sacred insistence on continued privilege. Part of the smokescreen for this was an official claim that Frank Hardy had talked the Gurindji into making the troublesome demand for return of a piece of their tribal land from the Vestey clutch.

It is precisely this claim which is exploded by one of the most absorbing themes in the book — the emergence, in the shy, careful talk of the Gurindji ‘themselves, of their long-held aspirations to dignity and independence on their own land, to self-determination, the power and the abilities to build a decent life, pasturing their own cattle, maintaining their own vehicles, raising educated children. And all this on the land of their tribal Dreaming.

It began to emerge so subtly that Hardy recognised it only in retrospect. Vincent Lingiari, tribal leader of the Gurindji, tells him one night by the campfire “I bin thinkin’ this bin Gurindji country. We bin here longa time before them Bestey mob.”

It came out obliquely in another way from the respected Lingiari, explaining why, as strikers, they had not taken steps to cut off Wave Hill’s pump water supply:

“We not bin let them cattle die of thirst. Them big Bestey bosses not hear them cattle die but I bin hear them cattle die.”

And “Pincher” Manguari: “We want them Bestey mob all go ‘way from here . . . Wave Hill bin our country.”

And confirmed by the experienced, rebel Welfare officer, the bearded giant Bill Jeffrey: “Ever since we’ve been here, the main idea they’ve put up is the moral idea: treated like dogs, abused, and their land taken away.”

And Hardy, after cautiously digesting these statements: “I’m convinced that tribal identity and land are the real issues for them in this strike.”

And it was this, and only this, recognition that impelled three white people — Bill and Anne Jeffrey and Frank Hardy — to witness and transcribe the ideas of the four Gurindji tribal leaders in a letter to Gordon Bryant, MHR — their first formal request in claim of Wave Hill tribal lands “of which we were forcibly dispossessed in time past”, not for a “reserve”, but for use as a cooperatively run cattle station.

And while, down south, the movement of support and financial aid for the strikers gathered pace, particularly among trade unions and Aboriginal advancement organisations, prodded by the restless Hardy, the Gurindji occupied and built on their land and waited patiently for the Government approval that, to this day, has been denied.

Long before the recent rejection of their entire concept by the Gorton Government, Vincent Lingiari had said: “Don’t matter ’bout that Canberra mob. Wattie Creek bin Gurindji country. We go there.”

And Pincher Manguari had said: “That letter you wrote last year bin ASK ’em that Canberra mob, this letter bin TELL ’em we take ’em back Gurindji country.”

And there was the hard-earned conclusion last year by the outstanding Aboriginal organiser Dexter Daniels: “We have to act, fight all the time, to show them what we want.”

The Government and the cattle bosses could have fended off a lot of trouble in the future if they had understood the real significance of such words.

A. R.
THE VERY TITLE of this book Work was enough to cause humorous comments by friends who saw me reading it. That reaction, probably more than anything else, was endorsement of the sentiments expressed in the collection of essays on work in the book.

The twenty short essays are about the experiences of a cross section of professionals and wage earners in carrying out their daily work and are selected from a series published in the British New Left Review. Together with the Introduction by Ronald Fraser and the final chapter 'The Meaning of Work' by Raymond Williams, it is an effort to examine people's experiences of and attitude to work and the broader question of the purpose of human endeavour in their daily lives under Britain's capitalist society very similar to our own.

It could be said that the writers of the essays are not typical, they are people with a progressive outlook and a critical mind; most have a reasonably good education and are occupied in some community activity, trade unions, political or peace movement. All of which indicates above average understanding and interest; so then, who else would carry out such an examination of themselves and their environment, but people so endowed?

How typical these experiences are can only be judged by what others say who have an intimate knowledge of the areas of work with which each essay is concerned, in much the same way as salesmen are the only ones who can fully understand the pathos and deeper significance of Death of a Salesman.

Constantly expressed through these stories is the feeling of dissatisfaction with work and its purpose. The lack of constructive objective and its demoralising effect is evident in the stories of the watchman and the croupier and particularly in the degeneration of the unemployed miner in On the Dole whose aim in life is to 'grow fat'.

The method of giving biographical details after each essay was intended to, and does, enable the essays to be read without preconceived ideas arising from knowledge of the writers' background. Like most people I was automatically prejudiced against 'The Copper' but found in the reading of the essay I became more reasonably disposed to his problems. The articles were interesting and in some cases they aroused sympathetic feelings which I had always considered peculiar to myself.

The concluding article by Raymond Williams deals in a much deeper way with the meaning of work, the attitude of British society to work relationships, the purpose of society in light of major changing technological methods. It causes the reader to question long accepted standards and look at work in a more critical way and many readers of this book will be left with the feeling that surely there must be a better meaning to life than the humdrum 'work for money to live to work' sequence, coupled with false and double standards in the lives of great masses of people.

The book is well worth reading and provides an insight into other people's personal feelings about their work and helps reach some understanding of the discontent and reasons for the movements of students, intellectuals and workers against the 'establishment', coupled as they are with the abandonment of fixed acceptance of old social and political standards by large groups of thinking people.

J. Baird