Organised Crime in N.S.W.
Uranium and Labor
Noel Counihan interview
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Uranium and Labor
The Labor policy on uranium has changed considerably from its original principled stand. Ronald Leeks and Mark Hayes outline and criticise the justifications used for these changes.

Roundtable
Prospects for Socialism
Why is there a crisis in socialism and what are the issues and history behind the crisis? Eric Aarons chaired a roundtable discussion with Linda Carruthers, Phil Hind, Bob Makinson, Joe Palmada and Joyce Stevens to examine the causes.

Economic Notes
Floating the Australian Dollar
What have been the consequences of the floating of the Australian dollar by the Hawke government? Ted Wheelwright explains the issues.

Photoessay
Photo record of International Women's Day 1984 by Peter Murphy, Fiona Moore and Wendy Rew.

Organised Crime
Rightwing Labor and Crime
Organised crime in NSW has links with 'legitimate' capital and the Labor right. Denis Freney outlines the connections.

Australian Left Review 87
Socialist Feminist '84

The recent Socialist Feminist Conference held in Melbourne attracted over 400 participants and has inspired the formation of ongoing groups to tackle issues which were seen as important focuses for action.

One important initiative which emerged at the conference was the initial organisation of group to re-launch the Council of Action for Equal Pay. It was felt that taking up the equal pay fight once again is imperative as, despite equal pay legislation, women continue to receive only 80 percent of the wages of men and this falls to 66 percent when part-time work is taken into account. The Council of Action for Equal Pay was originally formed in 1972 and was active until the early '70s.

Twelve years later, it is clear that the legislation on the books has changed little. A meeting to discuss the possibility of re-launching the Council of Action for Equal Pay will be held on April 14, 1984 at 1 pm, at the Mechanics Institute, Cnr Sydney and Glenlyon Roads, Brunswick. The major focus for action could be around the re-evaluation of the worth of women's work in traditional female jobs which are notoriously low paid. The concept of comparable worth will be used to make clear that traditional female occupations have been undervalued and therefore underpaid and should be adjusted to come into line with men's wages in comparable occupations. This campaign strategy follows from successful cases using these principles in the USA.

Another important focus of debate at the conference was around the idea of forming a women's union which would provide a focus for activity, a source of information and a forum for theoretical debate. One concept involved the establishment of a number of working groups on single issue campaigns as a way of organising activity within the union. This would include issues such as equal pay, taxation reform and child care to name a few. While obviously such a union would not be industrially based, it was felt that organising as a union was important so as to establish identification with both the labour movement and the feminist movement. While no details were finalised and no clear consensus emerged it was obvious that considerable excitement and enthusiasm was generated by the idea. The conference organising collective is to co-ordinate ongoing discussion around this idea.

Socialist Feminist Conference participants.

For more information, the Socialist Feminist Conference organising collective can be contacted C/- 6 Council Street, Clifton Hill 3068.

Linnell Secomb

Medicare Under Siege

Health issues have become a political battlefield over the past decade. One of the major developments in that period has been the changing terrain of that battlefield itself. The health system has more openly become a tool of economic policy, with the provision of services overshadowed by issues of regulation, control of profiteering, and disputes between federal and state governments and the private sector over how to redistribute the burden of paying for services.

The introduction in 1973-75 by Whitlam, Eversharing and Hayden of the new Medicare and Medibank signalled a new emphasis on ease of access and increasing government intervention in health policy. Reactions were swift and polarised. The medical establishment targeted Medibank. The specialists' attack ended the long-standing system of free outpatients clinics in hospitals.

Trade unionists and the rank and file of the ALP expressed strong support for Medibank and community health. These groups led opposition to Fraser's attacks on the reforms, attempting to maintain the social wage in the face of cutbacks, freezes, and a regressive tax system. In addition, the women's lobby of the ALP has consistently supported community health services.

When the Fraser government set about its systematic dismantling of Medibank, the union movement responded with a 24-hour general strike. A dramatic raid on the Sydney stock exchange following the federal budget of 1978 led to this report in the Australian Financial Review the next day:

The trading floor, warned minutes previously, was barricaded but glass doors were kicked in by demonstrators. During the melee a protester armed with spray cans wrote 'Make the rich pay' on lift doors...

Among the leaders of the charge on the stock exchange trading floor were two men carrying a large red banner with the words 'ICI construction workers'. Another banner, which was wrecked, stated 'Another promise broken'.

The basis of the ALP's health policy in the lead-up to the 1983 election had been announced a year or two previously as 'Hayden Health Plan' ('Cheaper for Australia, Cheaper for Australians'). This was the plan which has become known as Medicare.

Medicare is a national health insurance scheme which will cover 85 percent of scheduled medical fees. Medicare also provides an economic basis for expanding community health services through its allocation of $20 million to the states, earmarked specifically for community health. A third feature of Medicare's implementation is the insistence on limiting charges by specialists in public hospitals to the scheduled fee.

It is this third and seemingly minor aspect of Medicare that is the pretext for the present militant outburst by some of the most highly paid specialists in the country, in support of their continuing right to profit from the use of publicly funded hospitals. An alliance of medics, private health funds and private hospitals has, for some months, been running a series of media propaganda campaigns against Medicare in support of private health insurance and medical practice.

Although the public is far more sceptical about the motivation of the medical profession than years ago, the impact of these scare tactics has been noticeable in the numbers of people maintaining private health insurance which they can ill-afford and may not need.

For all this, Medicare is a far from ideal health
program. It is less comprehensive than the original Medibank, and its effect is more regressive at the extremes of the taxable income. It largely bolsters the existing fee-for-service system of health care, and excludes most paramedical (e.g. dental, chiropractic) and preventive services.

"Medicare", according to the Australian Council of Social Service, "sits perched on top of an entrenched structure of private medical fee-for-service payment, run-down community and preventive services, a struggling system of convalescent and community care and the largely ad hoc geographical distribution of health services."

The key to Medicare's promise lies in its potential to further improve access and equity in the health services, and to provide real alternatives to the current system of medical and institutional dominance. The Australian Community Health Association has proposed that community health services, now receiving just $20 million out of the vast Medicare budget, constitute the embryo from which a new order could be developed.

Medicare is a potentially powerful tool for gradually bringing about a redistribution of resources and priorities in the health system. The movement from reimbursement of privately-produced services to the provision of salaried practitioners can be a parallel development to a redistribution from institutional to community-based care. Strengthening the base of community services would also serve to consolidate the gains in public opinion that will be necessary to protect future developments against further rounds of cutbacks and attrition.

There have been important developments in community services in the last decade that now need to be consolidated and built upon.

There is now a consistent and coherent set of policies with broad support among a range of interest and consumer groups, and these policies, as they develop, point beyond hospital dominance. There are proposals for area health board structures to move towards community-controlled and more accessible services. New services would be funded through Medicare 'earmarked' monies. Future federal guidelines for the allocation of this slice of the Medicare pie will need to emphasise accountability to the local community through monitoring at a local level. This is a base on which a national preventive health strategy can be built, and it would be one that won't waver at the first change of political climate.

What is needed is a consciously planned social intervention into the organisational and economic structure of the health care system itself, using the community health program to both strengthen Medicare and reorient the priorities of the health system.

Despite a lot of rhetorical support for community health services, they are currently at a historically low ebb. Each state has adapted in its own way to the rigors of the Fraser federalism strategy, and now the imagination that is required for service development has been stunted by years of ad hoc changes and 'attrition' policies that have left the community health program in the bottom drawer, as far as priorities go.

In most states the community services are under increasing pressure to provide medically oriented curative services and to integrate with hospitals. Victoria's community-controlled health centres maintain their pre-eminence in community involvement. In New South Wales, virtually all money being allocated for community health, whether through reallocation or from Medicare, is being given to hospitals to spend on community outreach programs. Women's health services are receiving no additional support, despite ALP promises, and together with the original community health centres they are feeling increasingly besieged.

The federal ALP and Health Minister Neal Blewett are aware of the need to take some action on community health. The Labor Party was to develop its community health policy in 1983, but was overtaken by the election and the immediate need to get Medicare running, as well as make some broad and functional changes and 'attrition' stunted by years of ad hoc distribution.

The Caucus sub-committee has reported its findings to the Health Minister who now has to argue for the development of the program in the future. The political commitment required for building on Medicare will be generated, in part, by the outcome of the battle against the medical specialists and private health funds. Although it is only a minor skirmish in itself, a victory for entrenched interests and privilege at this early stage of Medicare would dampen enthusiasm for more imaginative and far-reaching reforms.

So far, Neal Blewett has stood his ground and is successfully implementing one of the few reforms of the Hawke government. The unions and the left have been surprisingly quiet on the subject. While Medicare appears to be a genuinely popular scheme, it may be that widespread perceptions of its limitations have dampened public enthusiasm.

As ACOS has said, Medicare can be the start of something better. We should not allow the loud protests of the privileged to distract from its wider potential for promoting equity, access, and accountability in the health system. A clear victory for Medicare and a strong follow-through from progressive consumer groups and unions could have some chance of redirecting the health system. 1984 will be a crucial year for such a program.
Arthur Rudkin comments on Bernie Taft's article "After the Excitement: Eurocommunism at the Crossroads" which was published in ALR 86.

BEYOND SIMPLE ONE-TO-ONE ALTERNATIVES

What peaceful, care-free lives we could all lead if every political problem could be solved by such simple, one-to-one alternatives as Bernie Taft presents in his article on Eurocommunism (ALR No. 86)! And what an incredible load of ineffectual nuts the pre-Eurocommunists must have been if they really chose the alternatives Comrade Taft seems to attribute to them!

In fact, of course, despite the dismal record of the Comintern after Stalin was persuaded to annex it to the USSR as part of his personal estate, none of the four Internationals was set up with the object of imposing "any outside influence or pressure" on their national affiliates, but for purposes of consultation, co-operation and mutual aid. Why, indeed, must an international organisation curtail the "inalienable rights" of its affiliates, any more than a national organisation the "inalienable rights" of its local branches?

Does Eurocommunist rejection of internationalism mean that every small nation trying to build socialism must be prepared, if necessary, to face the combined military and economic might of the capitalist world unaided, lest international solidarity be interpreted as an attempt at "direction of the party by an outside body"?

Rather ironically, the Eurocommunists must thank Stalin for their "complete autonomy". Dissolution of the Third International was his personal decision, announced at a press conference in Moscow, without consulting anyone. The first we knew of our "democratic" decision to be no longer part of an international movement was when we read about it in the capitalist press next morning.

Very probably, the general acquiescence in Stalin's ukase, and attempts to justify it on "historical materialist" grounds, were due less to genuine conviction than to reluctance to start a public brawl with Stalin and the CPSU. The parties of the Comintern tried, whenever possible, to reach unanimous consensus, and avoid public debate — perhaps unwisely, as it tended to create the impression that divergent views were never given a fair hearing within the parties, either.

Despite distortions of democratic centralism by some parties, it was not invented to create "unlimited power for the leadership of the party", but to ensure that democratic decisions, once arrived at, were put into effect, not everlasting recommitted for further consideration, or stymied by obstinate opposition from disaffected minorities. Have the Eurocommunists really developed an equally effective but more democratic means of ensuring that they will not degenerate into mere loose confederations of debating societies, devoted to neither interpreting nor changing the world, but only talking about it?

Comrade Taft has surely been a leading member of the CPA long enough to remember that neither the CPA nor any other professsed marxist party, except a few tiny terrorist splinter groups, ever advocated "insurrection and minority rule" as an intrinsically better way of achieving socialism than "winning majority support". The point is, as Marx predicted long ago, that socialists have no need to initiate violence, even if they want it: the bourgeoisie can always be relied upon to fire the first shot. This has been confirmed historically time and time again, from the Paris Commune to the present day, as in, for instance, pre-war Italy, Germany, Austria and Spain, in Indonesia, Ghana, Korea, Viet Nam, Chile, Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Grenada, to mention only a few of the best known examples, and saying nothing of the many countries where there are no elections, or where socialist and other progressive parties are not allowed to contest them, like...
the Philippines, East Timor and West Irian in our own region, or South Africa, where the last free elections gave communists an overwhelming majority of the popular vote, but only one seat in parliament, thanks to complexion-based suffrage.

What is the use of majority support for a broad alliance of "parties, movements and organisations" in countries like the USA and the UK, where the electoral system virtually bans effective representation for more than two parties, and the very existence of more than one progressive party splits the vote and renders continued minority reactionary rule almost inevitable.

No doubt the Eurocommunists are sincere in their determination not to try to establish Stalin-style dictatorships, but can they predict with equal confidence that their policies will not lead to more Pinocchet-style dictatorships? Do they really believe the bourgeoisie will agree never to use violence against them, if they undertake never to use violence to defend themselves?

The failure of the Eurocommunist parties to answer these and similar questions may account for their decline in popularity after promising beginnings, and for the failure of some communist parties with similar policies, such as those of Australia, the UK and Japan, to gain even temporary new support by their vigorously publicised renunciation of Stalinism.

Perhaps some older comrades forget that Stalin died before most people now living were even born. For many of the younger generation, Stalinism and anti-Stalinism must seem more like historical relics than sound main planks in the platforms of popular political parties. The novelty has worn off the spectacle of communists fiercely denouncing nearly everything that once distinguished them from the reformist Labour and Social Democratic parties. By now, nearly everybody knows what the Eurocommunists and their allies are against, but many are not so clear about what they are for, and how they hope to achieve it.

In pre-Eurocommunist days, we could point to the amazing economic, industrial, social, cultural, scientific, medical and military successes of the Soviet Union as brilliant examples of what socialism can achieve, while stressing that adoption of a socialist economic system did not necessarily entail accepting the Soviet political system, and that its political shortcomings were due partly to its rather recent emergence from absolute monarchy and a predominantly peasant economy, partly to the need for strict internal discipline while surrounded by hostile powers poised to seize upon and exploit internal dissent for their own ends, as they did in Hungary, and tried to do in Czechoslovakia and Poland. Some people might even have considered some restriction of personal liberty a small price to pay for abolition of poverty, unemployment, homelessness, economic insecurity, and racism, the world's first and only completely free and universal health service, steadily rising living standards, and a genuine struggle for world peace, or even that the Soviet attitude to some dissident minorities would not be a bad swap for the "free world" practice of granting unrestricted freedom of speech — well, not terribly restricted — to dissident majorities, with absolute freedom of the politicians not to take a blind bit of notice, as with the installation of Cruise and Pershing missiles in western Europe, uranium exports from Australia, and the annual baby seal massacre in Canada.

There may be flaws in this argument, but for 40 years it did inspire millions of people, not only to vote for communist candidates, but to put in enormous amounts of hard work and personal sacrifice to advance the communist cause.

Nowadays, in some countries, communist party members hardly dare hint that socialism ever had any positive achievements at all to its credit, lest they be suspected of whatever is the current jargon for Left Sectarian deviation from the Party Line. The cornerstone of communist propaganda in those countries thus tends to become breast-beating confessions that communist rule has always been an unmitigated disaster in the past, and fervent promises to do better in future. Though conceivably more logical than the old gospel, and undoubtedly less offensive to the bourgeoisie Establishment, this seems somehow strangely less inspiring; and, of course, it suffers the embarrassing defect, that the safest way to make sure the Eurocommunists keep their promise not to repeat the blunders of the Russian, Chinese and Polish communists, might seem to be not to vote for them, or support them, in any way.

Few people would argue that communists should return to their old quasi-religion, with Karl Marx in the role of Jesus Christ, and the General Secretary of the CPSU as the infallible Pope, but they do need a more convincing and inspiring alternative than they have yet put forward. I have hinted broadly enough what I think the alternative should be. I leave it to younger and more active comrades to work out the details.

Arthur Rudkin is an actor and was editor of the WA Workers' Star during the 1930s and early 1940s.
An exhibition of Noel Counihan's work was held in the National Gallery in Melbourne from 4 October to 5 December, 1983 in connection with the artist's seventieth birthday. A long-standing member of the Communist Party of Australia, Counihan's art has always responded to the great social and human issues of the times. But in October 1981 he suffered a heart attack and stroke and it was feared that his artistic life may have ended. But he has resumed work.

In this edited interview, conducted by Dave Davies at Noel Counihan's Melbourne suburban home in October 1983, he looks back on many decades of activity and tells of the influence of his confrontation with death on his life and work.

Many years ago I recall your saying that you had “an ambition to disturb”. Is that still true?

Yes, that has been pretty constant. But not in simple black-and-white terms. A statement like that could be interpreted in a very simplistic way, like the old “shock the bourgeois” idea which has played a part in modern artistic history. It was the bohemian revolt against bourgeois convention, the stance of shocking the respectable and the established. I mean something more subtle than that.

I have tried, particularly in more recent years, to find images which would disturb people because they would be on some common level. I have tried — to use an old expression of Bukharin — to socialise feelings. Bukharin, being a Russian, used a term that probably had its origins in Tolstoyism, although Tolstoy wouldn't have used it. Tolstoy's view was that art was essentially bound up with communication on the level of the feelings and the emotions.

Now, there is something in that. Artists don't necessarily just give expression to their own feelings — they give expression to widely-felt emotions. Somehow through their imagery they correlate their experiences with other people's. They tap other people's experiences by probing into their own.

Can you give an example of this from one of your own works?

I had one striking experience in the studio within the last 10 years. I had painted a picture which is very much an image arising out of my childhood, which I retain vividly. It was not a happy one and the atmosphere of domestic discord, violence and unhappiness played a very big part in my life. Through my work you can find evidence of it. You find images which are really childhood memories, many of which go back to my mother.

In the late 1950s I painted a picture which Ailsa O'Connor described in an article in our press as a pioneer feminist painting. It's called "The Wife" and it is a statement of sympathy for and solidarity with the position of women. It's a painting of a domestic scene, simply a man and a woman at the dining table, obviously a painting of intense discord. There is nothing between these two people to bring them together, there is only the distance between them.

In the early 1970s I painted an extension of that which was much more violent. I called it "The Parents" and it is a picture of a struggling pair. It's quite horrible because it's a horrible situation.

A youngish couple, looking for a work of mine, came to the studio and I showed them this picture that I was just finishing. I turned to see the young...
woman with tears streaming down her face. That picture had rocked her because it was a picture of her family background.

You have spoken of probing your own experiences. Obviously the Depression was one of them. What were some of the others?

The Depression was of profound importance. I grew up and my education commenced then. It's hard to pinpoint anything quite as definite as that period when I was being strongly conditioned and moulded by my environment.

But the Viet Nam war — in which, of course, I didn't take part — included a period of about ten years during which I painted and drew nothing which didn't give expression to some aspect of that war hanging over us like a big black shadow.

You didn't paint demonstrations or anything like that?

No, and I didn't try to paint war scenes. But I tried to say something about our civilian life here in the shadow of the war in Viet Nam. The "Good Life" series and the "Laughing Christ" series each included a number of images which were statements about the war, the hypocrisy and cant of our position here, the despoliation and corruption of masculine virility in the sense that we sent very young men to Vietnam, and the psychological and physical destruction of them. What I had set out to do.

Perhaps my greatest admirer was the village baker. I spent some time studying him at work at 6.30 in the morning. The village bakery is disappearing with bread coming from the big cities, but the one in Opoul has been maintained.

When you were in Paris over a decade ago you spent some time depicting the derelicts — the clochards — and you have said that the insulted and humiliated, the outcasts of the world, are subjects for you.

Yes, I still respond to that theme. I haven't been working on it in the same way in the immediate past, but I did find earlier this year that I was bugged by the constant repetition on TV news of scenes in Beirut of shattered streets and heaps of tattered clothing and one knew that in those little heaps were bodies.

It was the same with the news pictures from El Salvador. I found myself identifying with those heaps of clothes. Trying to do something about it, that is, to make an artistic image based on it, brought me back into painting after a period in which I had been unable to paint or draw because of my illness.

For the greater part of 1981 I could neither paint nor draw at all. The doctor had said that I would never paint again because of the combined effect of the heart attack and the stroke. This time last year I thought he could be right. I was told I had lost half my range of vision, but that was not right. But it is what goes on behind the eyes — you don't paint with your eyes. But every effort I made to paint or draw was a total failure, in some cases because of physical pain.

I had a brief return to Opoul last year. I didn't do any work but I regained a lot of my health. In my own mind I was pessimistic about painting because I felt empty. But then in Paris I felt the need to get home because I felt the need to do some work. The images that got me going were the ones of human wreckage in the streets that we got.
every night on TV. I did some drawings and two paintings which pleasantly surprised me and I felt that I hadn’t lost it all.

Then, with some confidence from that, I went back to something I had tried 12 months before with total failure. I tried to paint some of the experience in the hospital, not as a hospital scene so much as what happened to me following the heart attack. I tried to get an image out that would have some relevance to a sudden and unexpected confrontation with death.

That’s a very personal and intimate experience, but is shared by many other people, in one way or another. The Beirut and El Salvador images helped me to paint that. As a result, I made a painting which I regard as one of the most important that I have done. In some ways it is the most original. It disturbs people who look at it. Sometimes it horrifies people because it contains a death image, but not the conventional one. That brought me back into painting.

Some things work on you like acid. Images, things in the news, burn their way into you and that was an example. It shows how complex the image-making processes really are. They take on more flesh and blood the more deeply they are felt within your psyche. There is a big difference between the artistic image and the illustration, the anecdote, no matter how skilful.

You have said in the past that you are never satisfied with repetition, and that is perhaps where you find yourself at odds with those who expect you to repeat your Depression pictures such as “At the Start of the March”. In what way are you not repeating yourself today? Are the Beirut and El Salvador images a repetition?

They can have a lot in common without being repetitious. They are seen in new ways, in new terms. One must consider the artistic, the aesthetic evolution. I think they are more complex, more subtle statements than those I have done before.

This is what I am on about — that if in your late sixties you are only doing what you did 30 years earlier then there is something fundamentally wrong. It is stagnation. It means, to use Picasso’s term, you are your own mutual admiration society, you think what you have done is pretty good and you keep on doing it. No progress comes out of that.

Why do you say that subtlety and complexity are virtues? Does this not lose some of the impact?

I don’t really think so because I think
anything that can be assimilated in a brief look is hollow, superficial. The enduring things in art are very complex and profound. It is amazing that images created three thousand years ago are still found to be moving today. Sculptures and paintings created thousands of years ago can stir the imaginations of people today because there's something that's eternally human in them.

That's what I love about great art. I am impatient with all theories that reduce art to the level of the consumer society. I don't believe in a throw-away art. I believe in permanence and at a time when it is unfashionable to do so, I am a defender of what the impatient young sometimes call high art, which they dismiss as the art of the Establishment, the bourgeoisie. I think that one must learn from works of art which reach over the centuries to touch and move people.

That's like the consolidation of human experience. The artist has found some permanent form for human experience. Aboriginal art, which is thousands of years old, stands up like that and lots of supposedly sophisticated art today won't stand up the same way.

So I have been trying for the latter part of my life to create more complex images, but I try to give them the simplest form. I believe in both simplicity and complexity and think there is a dialectical connection between the two. I am not a lover of obscurity. It pleases me that people can walk in off the street to my exhibition in the National Gallery and feel themselves in touch with a lot of human experience spread out on the walls and have no great difficulty in coming to terms with it. The general experience is that the message comes across very clearly.

But that doesn't deny what I have just said. It simply means that I have been able to find the means of saying rather directly some complex things.

You have said that your last ten years have been your best. In what way?

It flows on from what we have just been talking about. I think my work in artistic terms is on a much higher level. It has taken me decades to work out the ways of saying what I want to say and as I get older I am more and more concerned with the aesthetic problems of my work. Problems of organising colour harmonies, richer harmonies, the problems of colour, problems of the internal energy of the image — all of these things are what it is about.

We have a statement to make about life and it's how to do it in terms of your medium. I'm sure that poets and composers have the same sort of struggle with the problems within the medium and I find myself more and more concerned with such problems. But I don't believe that this is at the expense of the significance of the image. I think it intensifies the image. The more one can enrich one's art the more the image is likely to communicate and to work on the levels of the imagination. This does not happen in a simple way, but you are more likely to say something that will penetrate people, disturb them and move them.

Over the past few years a number of publications have come out on Australian art. For instance, there was Humphrey McQueen's *The Black Swan of Trespass*, Richard Haase's book *Rebels and Precursors* and the Catalogue Raisonne of your own work by Robert Smith. Do you have any thoughts about these books and the controversies they may have generated?

I think they are an expression of a period of aroused interest in the history of Australian art. A new generation is looking at the past in new terms. Many of the most exciting and lively things have happened in my lifetime, since the days of the early Heidelberg and Box Hill schools and I just happened to be around when all sorts of things were fermenting and I took part in them. So that now I have been decked out a bit in terms of history — an historical curio.

It's strange reading the works of a new generation of historians who are writing from an academic point of view about the situations in which we took part and which had such flesh and blood significance for us. We were so deeply involved and now we hear a cool appraisal from a remote point of view. I find myself irritated by some of it and sometimes I think the historians are very good.

But it's amazing how an apparently objective writer can still get things cock-eyed. They are not as objective as they think they are. Pure objectivity is unattainable and one gives expression to a conditioned viewpoint.

Your position has often been presented as a kind of war between yourself and the rest of the artistic world. My understanding, however, is that you have a unique position, having had a retrospective exhibition in your own lifetime in 1973 and now, on the occasion of your 70th birthday, another major exhibition in the National Gallery. How do you see this yourself?

The first one was a fairly limited retrospective, not a complete one, but it was important for me at that stage of life and development. It took place in the face of some considerable opposition from the artistic Establishment, from within the Trustees of the National Gallery for instance. A number of them were opposed to it. But the then director felt it was high time I was paid some recognition.

What plans have you for your work?

I haven't got any big series planned. I am still convalescent and working my way back into painting. I've resisted propositions for exhibitions in the near future because I don't feel up to filling galleries with new work. I'm going about things in a slow sort of way.

Some things are constant in my art. I watched an ABC Spectrum show recently which was devoted to the English sculptor Henry Moore. He came from a mining background and never lost touch with certain aspects of everyday reality. Time and time again he came back to the question that all his imagery was based on the human figure, in particular the female figure. He regarded these as the most important forms in life and everything he did, no matter how abstract it looked, had its roots in the human form.

I find a strong bond of solidarity with him there, because that is exactly how I approach my work. Everything is based on the human face and figure and on relationships between human figures. So that I will go on painting and drawing the human figure, particularly the female figure, until I drop.

Some of the new things I've made this year since resuming painting are based on the female nude, sometimes in relation to a male figure, sometimes just in its own right, and I think they are the best things of their kind that I have done. I couldn't have done them before I was ill — not on this level anyhow.

The illness has left a strange stamp on my work which is hard to pinpoint, but other painters coming here sense it. I show what I have been doing and they say it's different. Now, the subject matter isn't particularly different — the difference is in the work, in the colour harmonies, in the orchestration of the colour, a new richness.

I think it's a fact of life that a profound experience leaves its mark on your psyche and that is what art is about.

Dave Davies is a journalist, humorist and linguist.
The recent attempt on Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams' life highlights the importance and effectiveness of Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland. Apart from successes in Belfast and Derry, Sinn Fein has polled well in local elections in 26 counties. Here, ALR publishes extracts from Gerry Adams' address to the Sinn Fein Annual Conference.

It would be fitting and appropriate for me to take this opportunity to make a few personal observations regarding my election as president of Sinn Fein.

When I heard of Ruairí O’Bradaigh’s reluctance to stand for re-election, and when my associates commenced lobbying me to stand for the leadership position, it will come as no surprise to many of you to learn that I was extremely reluctant to let my name go forward. My reluctance does not stem from any false sense of modesty, but from what I believe are practical problems coupled with some personal observations. I already have a heavy workload and feel that the leader of this party, at its present stage of development, needs to be able to give the many tasks facing us, his or her undivided attention. The emphasis needs to be upon the 26 counties and thus I would have a preference for a leader who was based in this area.

My election as president has, as is to be expected, led to media speculation of a 'Northern takeover' or domination of Sinn Fein, and to quiet little rumours that I am about to lead you into Leinster House. My election means neither of these things. There is, of course, as is natural given the nature of our struggle until now, a predominance of Sinn Fein people from the six counties in the public eye, but we are not a Northern nor a Southern party. We are an Irish republican party organised throughout Ireland, and we are the only party with a membership in all thirty-two counties.

We have broadened our struggle, and we must continue to broaden it so that our party can become the focal point for all those who suffer under British rule. That suffering is not restricted to the victims of direct British military involvement. Linked with the victims of plastic bullet murders, or show trial and hired perjurer strategies, or the victims of shoot-to-kill policies, are the victims of a decadent social and economic system which is geared not in Irish interests but in the interests of foreign and native capitalists or in the military and strategic interests of a British government and its super-power allies.

I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to those Protestant people in the six counties who have justifiable, if misguided, fears about their future in an independent Ireland.

I know the leaders of loyalism will dismiss my appeal, as will even the leaders of the SDLP, but nonetheless I direct a sincere appeal to working-class Protestant people who have been badly served and misled by these same leaders over the years.

We seek the unity of all our people in an independent Irish democracy shaped by all its citizens to fulfill their needs. We, as republicans, have a decided preference that this society should be a democratic socialist republic, but we accept that, in a post-British withdrawal situation with Irish democracy restored, we will be bound by the democratic wishes of the Irish people.

Political Protestantism is based partly on the fear that Irish 'Home Rule is Rome Rule'. Protestants need to be reminded that the Catholic Hierarchy has seen fit to attack Sinn Fein more often this past year than it has ever attacked rabid anti-Catholic demagogues such as Ian Paisley.

Republicans do not seek a sectarian state. On the contrary, we seek a secular, or at least a pluralist, society. We in Sinn Fein remember with pride that our republicanism grew from the separatist roots of the mainly Presbyterian United Irishmen. They are as much your heritage as ours, and much more our common legacy than...
the Siege of Derry, or the Battle of the Boyne. We have, despite the imposed divisions, tragedy and suffering of the last 60 years, more to unite us than to divide us.

The twenty-six county state, partitioned to suit British interests, for all its constitutional declarations, failed to establish an ability to act independently in the interests of its people.

The centrality of partition to the maintenance of that evil social and economic system is not alone highlighted by constant republican rhetoric. Figures recently released by the Dublin Forum estimate the cost to the Free State of maintaining partition over the last 14 years to be £2,300 million. How much in the same period was spent in attempting to end partition?

In the economic area the Free State also lacks the will to pursue an independent course. Having thrown itself open to the multinationals with the most abject pleas and attractions of fiscal allurements, the Free State entered the EEC on the coat-tails of Britain. The people of the Free State are now reaping the whirlwind. The multinationals have followed a predictable pattern, using up their benefits, pillaging natural resources, and then pulling out for pastures new, leaving jobless and demoralised communities behind them.

Agriculture, which was to be the golden miracle of EEC entry, has foundered. Money may have gone in large quantities into the pockets of the few hundred big ranchers, but the twenty-six counties is not allowed the independence to process its own food in a so-called agricultural state. It has so little control over its own economic destiny that its farming sector is in such chaos that it not only cannot feed itself but has potatoes as one of the largest Irish food imports.

How far have we come in this so-called independent state? Not even a potato republic!

The social system which exists amidst all of this is one which has as its values the alien values of capitalism. So the 196,309 official jobless, up again this month by 3,070, are not allowed to get to work building homes or hospitals or providing education or supplying health services but must stand idle in the dole queues whilst one third of the population lives below the poverty level in need of all these basic social rights and plagued by such symptoms of that poverty as drug abuse and vandalism.

Also in the social context, useless Victorian notions imported and accepted a century ago as economic and social controls of the subject nation remain enshrined in conservative confessional brainwashing which inhibits the natural spirit of the Irish people.

The disenfranchisement of women, the right to family planning and contraception, the question of divorce and marital breakdown, the invidious social distinctions which surround the question of illegitimacy, one-parent families and so on, are questions which we should be mature enough as a people to decide and settle for ourselves, without fear of croziers waving in the background and without pretending that such problems cannot exist in Ireland.

Life in Northern Ireland is a constant state of war.

What hope then have the people of the twenty-six counties who are faced with Tweedle-dum and Tweedledee parties as alternative governments?

Even as unemployment continues to creep up, and even as public spending is throttled to the tune of 500 million pounds, the political preachers of financial belt-tightening and monetarist rectitude cynically awarded themselves salary increases of 19 percent to cushion their already-cushioned and luxuriously pampered lives.

At the same time, workers at Clondalkin Paper Mills are thrown out of jobs, cheated by false promises and forced to take the terrible and ultimate form of protest — the hunger strike. Workers such as those at Ranks doggedly attempt to stem the tide of redundancy, and vital centres of work around the twenty-six counties, like Dunlop's in Cork or the Snia factory in Sligo, close with immeasurable damage to local communities, but with hardly a shrug from those responsible.

Furthermore, I believe we should also be mindful of Connolly's clear understanding of the need for republicans, socialists and progressive nationalists to find unity on democratic republican demands. We must be mindful of the dangers of ultra-leftism and remember at all times that while our struggle has a major social and economic content, the securing of Irish independence is a prerequisite for the advance to a socialist republic society.

Gerry Adams is president of Sinn Fein.
On 7 November 1983, the Hawke Labor government, at an ALP caucus meeting, voted to allow the development of the Roxby Downs uranium mine in South Australia and to permit the continuation of the Ranger uranium mine in the Northern Territory. This decision represented a significant departure by the ALP government from what many people thought was the stated ALP uranium platform, phasing out existing mines and not allowing any new mines to proceed. In this article, Ronald Leeks and Mark Hayes argue that, despite government rationalisations to the contrary, Australian uranium exports will contribute to nuclear proliferation and render support for the status quo of the nuclear arms race.

These papers were:
1. "Background Paper on Australia and International Nuclear Issues", prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Resources and Energy, and Trade, and sometimes referred to as the Hayden Paper.
2. "Review of the Australian Uranium Industry — Caucus Discussion Paper No. 1" — apparently prepared by the Prime Minister's office. This paper will hereafter be referred to as the Hawke caucus paper.
4. A fourth paper circulated in October 1983 and prepared by the Australian Democrats, "Why We Must Keep It In The Ground: A Case Against Uranium Mining and the Nuclear Industry and the Alternatives for Australia and the World", is also worth noting in this context.

A close reading of these papers reveals much about the government's decision.
The Hawke caucus paper clearly indicates that the Prime Minister wants to connect his position on uranium mining and export with growing public concern over the threat of global nuclear war:

The objectives which should be common, in order of priority, are to concentrate our efforts on reducing the possibility of nuclear war: of bringing about nuclear disarmament; of turning around the expansion of vertical and horizontal proliferation; of tackling the problem associated with the peaceful use of nuclear power including the associated waste problem.

Given the fragility of world peace and the potential for nuclear warfare our view is that our priorities should be focused on the use to which uranium is put rather than eliminating our supplies from the world cycle.

The main thrust of the government position, as approved at the 7 November 1983 caucus meeting, is that a withdrawal by Australia as a uranium supplier would adversely affect the international non-proliferation regime.

**THE NON-PROLIFERATION REGIME AND SAFEGUARDS**

The nature of the non-proliferation regime has been outlined by Warren H. Donnelly:

Today the world depends upon a loose structure of treaty commitments verified by international inspection, not to acquire nuclear weapons: informal and voluntary understandings of nuclear supplier states to limit certain nuclear exports, to require safeguards for others, and to limit their nuclear co-operation to the least dangerous nuclear technologies; bilateral agreements between some nuclear supplier states and their clients; and a general predisposition against nuclear weapons.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), based in Vienna, is the major operating arm of the non-proliferation regime. Its primary mandate, however, is to promote nuclear power worldwide. The terms of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty assign to the IAEA the responsibility over safeguards of fissionable material used in civil nuclear power programs. The IAEA also co-operates with certain regional groupings and individual nations in providing safeguards.

A major argument presented in the Hawke caucus paper for continued Australian uranium supply is the leverage Australia could apply in promoting safeguards without.

Withdrawal will bring no benefit to the broader questions of non-proliferation and the future direction of the industry and the arms race.

Currently, whatever the limitations are in terms of controls and safeguards they are much the better for the involvement of Australia, who has supplied and will continue to supply, even more stringent safeguards.

The limitations of those safeguards have been documented elsewhere and were sufficient for the Ranger Report in 1976 to give its well known assessment:
The Commission recognises that these defects, taken together, are so serious that existing safeguards may provide only an illusion of protection.

The essential point with regard to safeguards under the IAEA is stated by Donnelly:

Its safeguards cannot control the future policies of states, but only verify present activities. The Agency cannot physically protect anything but only report diversions.

Although there are many scenarios proposed for diversion of small and large amounts of nuclear material into a weapons program this represents only a part of the potential problem. A major issue turns around the implications for our civilisation of large amounts of separated or separable plutonium accumulating as the nuclear industry expands. As Donnelly points out:

To give some idea of the quantities of plutonium that could be involved it was estimated in 1980 that as much as 50 tonnes of separated plutonium could be on hand by the year 2000. At 10 kg per explosive, this amount could produce 5,000 warheads.

It must be acknowledged that Australia's support of safeguards is essential for as long as the industry exists. The real question, then, is this: Is the increased measure of influence (if any) over safeguards and controls obtained on the basis of our export of uranium sufficient to justify the support Australia thus renders to an industry with all its accompanying problems?

Not the least of these problems turns around the nature of our civilisation in the future as the global inventory plutonium escalates. Already, clear glimpses of that future can be seen. Australia's blanket reprocessing approval also ensures that a fair proportion of that global inventory of plutonium will come from Australian uranium.

Whereas the longer-term consequences of the plutonium economy could be catastrophic, the immediate benefits of Australia's alleged increased influence by maintaining uranium supply appear minimal and elusive.

The onus of proof therefore rests with the government. This paper contends that it has not proven its case.

An additional and key issue turns around whether or not the non-proliferation regime can endure the changing pressures being brought to bear against it. At the end of a detailed examination of this issue, Donnelly concludes thus:

To evaluate the changing pressures upon the non-proliferation regime is a subject matter. It appears to the author that the balance of forces opposing the regime is rather greater than the balance sustaining it.

Not least among the pressures opposing the regime is the total lack of serious and meaningful disarmament initiatives by the nuclear weapon states. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) commits these states to effect measures to end the nuclear arms race. Unless significant serious disarmament initiatives occur, the NPT itself is under threat of not being renegotiated when its term runs out. Thus, the global arms race directly threatens the likelihood of success of the aims and institutions of the non-proliferation regime.

Thus it can be argued that the impact of the arms race itself undermines the non-proliferation regime to such a degree that withdrawal of Australia's uranium from the global nuclear fuel cycle is a necessity. This would be a clear signal to the world that Australia is serious in its statements to the effect that the global nuclear arms race and the escalating threat of nuclear war represents an intolerable situation.

Recent studies released in the United States, which have indicated that even a so-called 'limited nuclear war' could do irreversible catastrophic damage to the planetary environment, place the nuclear debate into a new level. It is now humanity versus the global nuclear system. As Jonathan Schell put it in The Fate of the Earth: "Extinction is not something to contemplate, it is something to rebel against."

The rhetorical connection of the Hawke uranium policy with nuclear disarmament joins with the earlier propaganda and sophistry of 'Atoms for Peace' which, according to J. Robert Oppenheimer, have only an
"allusive and sentimental" rather than a "substantive and functional" link to which proponents of nuclear power make ritual obeisance.  

THE NUCLEAR INDUSTRY AND PROLIFERATION

The Hawke caucus paper reflects a deterministic resignation to nuclear power as a fact of life:

The position we adopt is not really affected by the arguments of the degree of expansion that may take place over the next 20 years. Whether there is one new station or a thousand is not relevant to grappling with the central issue of the existence of the industry and its most certain continuation, in some form, at some level, for a considerable period of time.

Yet, witnesses the approval given to the Roxby Downs mine and the concomitant approval given to Ranger to continue mining and export, the government is actively supporting the nuclear industry. Ranger has some 80,000 tonnes of uranium to sell. The Roxby Consortium anticipates selling 1.2 million tonnes of uranium. The Hawke caucus paper essentially reiterates earlier arguments in favour of mining made during the 1970s:

In not proceeding with Roxby Downs we would be denying the potential of an enormous economic and employment benefit to South Australia and the country in general.

... It must therefore be an implicit part of the Hawke policy to employ whatever means are available to actively stimulate the global nuclear industry to gain as large a share as possible of the resulting demand for uranium from Roxby Downs and Ranger.

This position must be contrasted with that suggested in the principal findings and recommendations of the Fox Report.

7. Policy respecting Australian uranium exports, for the time being at least, should be based on a full recognition of the hazards, dangers and problems of and associated with the production of nuclear energy, and should therefore seek to limit or restrict expansion of that production.

Similarly, Donnelly cites as major factors which he assesses as supporting the non-proliferation regime:

A slow-down in nuclear power .... Weaknesses in world nuclear industries .... Nuclear difficulties of threshold states [and] Diminished use of highly enriched uranium.

Likewise, Holdren examines barriers to proliferation and suggests that:

The rate of increase in the number of nuclear armed nations depends on the strength of the motivations for nuclear weapons acquisitions which are mainly political relative to the height of the barriers which are political, economic and technical.

In short, to prevent or minimise the risk of proliferation, measures which limit or even reverse development of the global nuclear industry are desirable. The strengthening of the non-proliferation regime is essential and can be most effectively accomplished in a contracting rather than expanding international nuclear industry context. The Hawke policy, by granting permission to Roxby Downs, thus totally contradicts its stated desire to strengthen the non-proliferation regime.

In essence, the Hawke policy argues that uranium exports enhance our position in non-proliferation forums. This is the same logic used by nuclear weapon nations to justify their escalating arsenals to enhance their position — negotiating from strength — at arms control talks.

DETAILS OF THE HAWKE URANIUM POLICY

The formation of the Hawke policy on the mining and export of Australian uranium rests on a number of major and minor hypotheses:
Continued export of uranium strengthens Australia's position in the forums of the non-proliferation regime. Withdrawal of supply would weaken the government's voice in those forums and hence the working of the regime.

Withdrawal is technically irrelevant to the world supply of uranium and the ability of governments to make nuclear weapons. Withdrawal would only offer uranium trade with lessersafeguards.

Withdrawal obviates the possible use of a threat of non-supply in international negotiations in 'related' areas such as French nuclear testing and waste dumping.

The first point has already been discussed in this paper. The second and third will now be discussed.

In arguing the second point, the Hawke caucus paper observes that:

The potential for weakening controls and lessening influence on safeguards is starkly illustrated by the attitude of the Niger Government which states that it would supply uranium to the devil.

Similarly one would not expect high standards for supplies from South Africa or Namibia.

This is not a simple argument of saying if we do not supply it someone else will, but rather we are saying it will be supplied with lessened controls and that will be our responsibility.

This cannot, however, be sustained when the facts are examines. Already, South Africa, Namibia and Niger supply more countries than Australia, including those regarded as having a high proliferation risk, such as Iraq, Libya, Pakistan and Taiwan. (See Table.) It is illogical to believe that a country which requires uranium and has a desire to acquire nuclear weapons would choose Australia as a supplier over a less strict supplier nation.

Also, the important observation must be made that competition with Australia may in fact force other suppliers to seek and maintain contracts with proliferation risk nations. This would more likely result if they were squeezed out of whatever market were available from major uranium users which are of a lower short term proliferation risk. The uranium supply industry is not unknown to operate in cartels.

The third substantive point in the Hawke uranium policy is the so-called 'leverage' position, the deficiencies of which have already been examined elsewhere. The Hawke Caucus paper argues that:

We would effectively be forced out of the international debate if we withdrew from supply. We would not be in a position to use the threat of selective non-supply as a weapon against nation's intentions such as dumping waste in the pacific or continuing with nuclear tests.

The history of such activities — selective withholding of supply, trade boycotts in specific commodities and similar activities — is a sorry one. From time to time. Third World producer nations seeking better prices for commodities have banded together to form commodity cartels and seek higher prices. Invariably, even where a number of nations pledge strong solidarity to each other, such solidarity is short-lived or is eroded by stockpiling or the seeking of alternative sources of supply from former clients.
The most telling case against the leverage argument, however, comes from "Background Paper on Australian and International Nuclear Issues". The high interconnection of the international uranium supply routes and the very nature of bilateral and multilateral safeguards agreements impede the unilateral leverage actions implied in the leverage argument:

As a major supplier of nuclear services to all end-users of Australian uranium, France has a pivotal role in the existing safeguards network under which Australian uranium is exported. France's continuing co-operation is essential to the uninterrupted flow of AONM (Australian Origin Nuclear Material) through that network. Withdrawal of uranium supply to France for end-use in France in response to French nuclear testing in the South Pacific would be on grounds unrelated to observance by France of the conditions in the Australia/France and Australia/Euratom agreements. It would involve disrupting the Australia/France, Australia/Euratom and Australia/UK agreements.

This argument has been established elsewhere. However, it raises a fundamental question with respect to the Commonwealth's capacity to act as an independent and sovereign entity among the world community of nations, not to mention debate on how far a government will go to accede to industry pressure. In 1976, the Ranger Report made the issue very clear indeed in its recommendations: A decision to mine and sell uranium should not be made unless the Commonwealth Government ensures that the Commonwealth can at any time, on the basis of consideration of the nature discussed in this report, terminate these activities permanently, indefinitely or for a specified period.

Economic factors also play an important part in the pressure to continue supply. Indeed, every time this issue is raised, the uranium mining industry responds by claiming that ceasing uranium supply would adversely affect our good international standing as a trading partner. Similarly, the Hawke caucus paper develops the same theme.

At the [ALP] National Conference of 1982, during what was a very traumatic debate, concerns were adequately expressed about the effect our withdrawal of supply could have in terms of our economic relations. Views were expressed that if we were perceived as unreliable suppliers because of decisions simply not understood by other countries, then our reliability as a trading partner would be undermined.

Aside from the implied lack of faith in Australia's diplomatic representatives to adequately explain Australia's position overseas, the inadequacy of this argument has been established elsewhere.

The "Background Paper" also observes that 2,600 tonnes of yellowcake ordered from Australia could easily be obtained by France from other sources and represents only about 2 percent of its civilian requirements.

It thus appears that Australia's participation in the nuclear fuel cycle puts substantial pressure on Australia to continue supply and often relatively little pressure on other countries from withdrawing that supply.

Indeed, even the threat to withdraw supply can bring as much or even more pressure to bear upon Australia, as the "Background Paper" points out:

Total opposition by Australia to the sea dumping of radioactive waste could possibly lead to pressure for Australia to accept waste for disposal.

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Total opposition by Australia to the sea dumping of radioactive waste could possibly lead to pressure for Australia to accept waste for disposal.
There are five measures which can be simultaneously undertaken by Australia which form the basis of a viable policy to reduce the risk of nuclear disaster. These are:

1. A moratorium on any new uranium mining developments and the export of uranium. This can be justified to the international community on the basis of all the problems associated with the nuclear industry, and in particular the adverse impact of the arms race on measures to limit nuclear proliferation and the catastrophic consequences which would result from global nuclear war.

2. A reaffirmation and extension of measures to effect recommendations 13, 14 and 15 of the Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry:

13. Steps should be taken immediately to institute full and energetic programmes of research and development into (a) liquid fuels to replace petroleum, and (b) energy sources other than fossil fuels and nuclear fission.

14. A programme of energy conservation should be instituted nationally.

15. The policy of the Government should take into account the importance to Australia, and the countries of the world, of the position of developing countries concerning energy needs and resources.

3. The establishment of an Environmental Inquiry on Roxy Downs in accordance with the Environmental Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act of 1974, to be conducted under terms of reference at least as broad as those of the Ranger Inquiry. Particular reference should be made to the impact of the escalating arms race and related issues subsequent to the Ranger Inquiry, and the viability of Roxy Downs without uranium processing.

4. The affirmation of a continued emphasis of Australian research into radioactive waste disposal, in particular the safe and secure disposal of high level unprocessed waste.

5. The Australian Government can and should continue support for the non-proliferation regime. This is possible for any nation with or without nuclear developments. As it stands, Australia will have a vested interest in the non-proliferation regime because Australian uranium is already in the global nuclear fuel cycle, and also because of continued research into radioactive waste disposal and the long-term maintenance of uranium mine tailings.

Withdrawing Australian uranium from the global fuel cycle will not end the arms race or end the risk of nuclear proliferation. However, such a withdrawal would be part of a process already under way to reduce national reliance on planned nuclear power, not least for environmental and economic grounds. It would provide inspiration and suggestions for action to people throughout the world involved in non-governmental activities which have caused them to dedicate their lives and energies to the cause of peace.

It would also be a source of inspiration and the cause of reflection by critical thinkers, scholars and writers throughout the world, as well as the Australian community as a whole, on the vitally important issues of looming nuclear war today.

THE HAWKE POLICY AND THE AUSTRALIAN PEACE MOVEMENT

This paper has argued strongly that the Hawke policy contributes to nuclear proliferation and fails to institute measures which could have an influence on the cause of world peace and disarmament. The Hawke policy must therefore be opposed by the sections of the peace movement which agree with this argument. However, the terms in which the policy is formed by the Prime Minister offers an additional threat to the peace movement in Australia.

The rhetorical connecting of his policy with moves to bring about non-proliferation and a reversal of the arms race, may find some root in a largely supportive and uncritical public. If the public believe, or are led to believe,
that the government is doing all it can in the cause of peace — although it actually supports the status quo — they will remain inactive regardless of any personal fear or concern they may feel.

The Hawke uranium policy effectively clouds and confuses the issues, making the public debate both much more difficult and retarded in the development of its focus. Many people will suffer an almost schizophrenic debilitation as they try to reconcile what common sense demands with contrary government actions defended by loquacious government spokespersons. The political effect on the peace movement of a victory within the ALP at its forthcoming National Conference in July 1984 by the Hawke policy and its supporters is beyond the scope of this paper.

It is clear, however, that the peace movement will suffer a significant loss of support within the community if the Hawke uranium policy wins the day.

We believe the peace movement must face this challenge urgently.

This article has been published in the CANP Newsletter, PO Box 238, North Quay 4000 and Chain Reaction, Room 16, Floor 4, 37 Swanston Street, Melbourne 3000.

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FOOTNOTES
2. ibid., p. 15.
4. ibid., p. 73.
8. Hawke Caucus paper, p. 11.
10. ibid., p. 73.
17. ibid., p. 23.
22. This point is expanded in the paper, 'The Case for Honouring Labor's Platform', p. 29 ff.
24. The Case for Honouring Labor's Platform ..., p. 27; Fox Report, Chapter 13; Australian Democrat paper, pp. 26 ff.
27. Background Paper, p. 35.
28. ibid., p. 36.
29. ibid., p. 39.
30. ibid., p. 39.
31. Nuclear industry literature provides many examples of this, e.g. ERA Prospectus, or many statements by uranium mining companies in Australia as reprinted in the national press.
33. The Case for Honouring Labor's Platform ..., p. 27.
34. Fox Report, p. 185.
39. See, above, note 30.
40. Background Paper, p. 22.
42. Fox Report, p. 186.
43. Despite the rhetoric of the nuclear industry, the industry is in deep trouble economically and environmentally; See, for example, Brooks, G., 'Investors Force Nuclear Shut-Down where the Demonstrators Failed', The National Times, January 6-12, (No. 675) 1984, p. 14.
Amie: you do that without money? 
Neil: You work part-time jobs until you've got the money. Dedication, ferocious dedication, that's what it requires.

Amie: We had all that. We had an album in the can, we had arranged some guy from the university to finance us to the tune of $10,000. We had a film clip that Donny Sutherland played two or three times, we dropped the single out, all fine and great. And what happened? We end up back at the steelworks at six. How can you long can you live in absolute poverty? You need more than the songs and the drive, you need someone who can push, and it's money that pushes songs.

Now, here's a good example of albums and successful people — so called. I was hanging around with The Masters' Apprentices, rehearsing in London. So we're sitting around, we'd rehearse for a while, have a cup of tea or something, go downstairs to the kitchen and ponder the day, and think, "Well, what are we going to do?" , and somebody would say, "Well, let's check out the Melody Maker again, there might be some options in there, so we all go through the classifieds. Everyone's sitting there with no money to spend, all pretty down and out — in the days when tight jeans were in fashion they were still wearing flares. Here they are, sitting there, a successful band, they recorded an album at Abbey Road, they had three or four number one singles in Australia, and two or three albums out, and they're still on the compilation albums that come out here every six months. So here we are going through the ads, and suddenly here's an ad which says Masters' Apprentices album due to be re-released. So someone says, "Shit, better phone the record company up, we might get some royalties out of this". So we did, and got two and six, or something. I mean, there's a band that got somewhere, with no work, no money, nothing. A month ago, the two of them that were left played Shellharbour pub. The point is, they're just hanging in; guys who have had top records.

Mike: Getting back to the tools of the trade, tell me, Amie, what's the difference in the hard gear that you have to play successful rock and roll today, compared with what you had when you set up your first one?

Amie: The essential equipment is a decent p.a. system that is capable of mixing the whole band, music and vocals. You need about a dozen mikes just on the drums. To buy a system like the one we can only hire, would cost $30,000 — that's the mikes, the p.a., the desk. That still leaves you to find the lights and the truck.

Neil: The current style is such that keyboards and synthesisers are really big. Australian Crawl went back into the studio and remixed their album. On stage, they use four guitars, and the lead singer would pick one up and kick in, too. So what do they do? They go back into the studio and pull down the guitars so that you can hardly hear them at all; learned how to play or program keyboards and mixed that sound in. Now, what's that mean to a pub musician? You pay $800-$1,000 for a guitar, but a synthesiser costs $5,000. You need, at a minimum, an electric grand and a synth. At all up, $10-$12,000 and that's the basics. Now a Fairlight CMI which is what you would like to have if you could, runs out at $30,000. Whatever instrument you can care to name can come out of that machine. It's not only instruments, but you can create animal sounds in it by programming it and playing the keys.

Stevie Winwood's last three albums were all done by him on one of these things, almost.

Amie: Yeah, but the Stones still use two guitars and a set of drums, and Jagger. A machine doesn't sweat. That's what people want to see. Another thing, you ever seen someone try to sing to these programmed machines? I tell you, if they make one mistake, miss a beat, the machine rolls on, no mercy. So you've got two vocalists and a pack of machines taking the place of five or six musos, but they are so strung out trying to keep up with the machines, that they look like robots themselves.
ALR recently organised a round-table discussion on the problems facing socialism today. It was not expected that conclusions would be arrived at, nor were they. The purpose, rather, was to have a relatively informal exchange of views to stimulate the thinking of the participants and, we hope, of our readers, as well as providing some background to the many discussions on the future of socialism now taking place.

If you think such exchanges are helpful, please let us know, and perhaps suggest topics for future round-tables.

Those taking part were Eric Aarons, Linda Carruthers, Phil Hind, Bob Makinson, Joe Palmada and Joyce Stevens.

Roundtable chaired by Eric Aarons

Eric: To kick the thing off — major manifestations of the crisis which I believe exists in socialism today in Australia and other countries include:

Firstly, the lack of moral ascendancy of socialism over capitalism and of an overall offensive spirit such as existed in previous times. This is given added point by the fact that we’ve had ten years of capitalist depression along with mounting problems in other aspects of social life.

Secondly, the lack of a uniting vision or understanding among socialists. There is a parallel, though not identical division among the many people who are engaged in fine struggles, but mostly have no vision of transforming society as a whole, being mainly concerned with their particular issues.

Among reasons for this situation is inadequate understanding and presentation of the socialist vision. Especially, the impression is conveyed that socialism is purely an economic system and that economic conditions are causal of everything else. This does not adequately relate to the many ways people reject and struggle against what is happening to them at present.

Part of this is the longstanding problem of how to transcend economism or narrow trade union politics within the labour movement.

And even the economic side of socialism is often misunderstood) see my review of The Economics of Feasible Socialism in this issue).

Then there is the political and economic practice of the countries where capitalism has been overthrown, which does not now inspire great confidence or enthusiasm.

Further, marxism has been subjected to an increasing number of different interpretations, so that there are now few generally accepted reference points which might facilitate the settlement of differences. And I do not believe that anyone in the foreseeable future is going to come up with a version which will serve in that way.

Lastly, related to views of how society changes and of the economic as the basic cause, there is the lack of development by socialists of the moral-ethical or social philosophy side of their vision which I believe to be in a sense the most fundamental, and which contains the possibility of overcoming both the lack of moral ascendancy by socialists and their lack of unity.

Joe: I think those questions provide a background to the things we need to discuss, and probably there are others. For a long period there has been a crisis in marxism, with problems
arising in socialist practice, not only in the countries where social ownership was established, but also as a result of the distortions of dogmatic marxism which has displayed an inability to solve problems in the more complex social conditions of today.

The other side of the coin, of course, is the fact that the continuing crisis of capitalism has also seen a resurgence of interest in marxism by progressive forces trying to come to grips with the problems.

Marxism is more a methodology of examination and interpretation of events for the purpose of effectively intervening to bring about change. It doesn’t seem to me to be more than that. I agree with Eric that there is not going to be a single interpretation.

In saying that we need a philosophy or ideology that is going to motivate people we have to inculcate this idea of marxism as a method.

The forces which react against the worst excesses of capitalism are much wider than the forces which exist in socialist political formations. What is lacking in the organisations that arise in such struggles is the capacity to link their particular struggle with the broader issues of altering the system of production and social relations, and to help them do that we must redefine the objective, which cannot be done by a particular individual or political party.

Joyce: I’d like to take up the point about marxism as a methodology. I think one of the problems is in trying to see what it is that marxism contributes to revolutionary practice. I, too, have believed that you can discard all sorts of things from marxism, but then it comes down to the core of method, and that if you can only penetrate that, it gives to you all sorts of clues to political practice. But I don’t really know what that means any more. If it means that you are a materialist and proceed from a whole set of objective circumstances to try to analyse something, you don’t have to be a marxist to be a materialist.

By marxism as a methodology, I always understood that you could predict how society could be changed and what forces should make those changes. But marxism has not been able to do that. One of the most difficult things to come to grips with is that the predictions marxism made about class struggle and the working class being the motive force for social change have not come about.

I believe this is crucial. In technologically developed countries where the working class is the overwhelming majority of the population, there seems to be less possibility of revolutionary change than in other countries. If the methodology of marxism were correct, then there would not be the sort of crisis in socialism that we have, which is not to say that there is nothing in class analysis or class conflict.

Joe: Given that the working class day is largely integrated, and class lines obscured, isn’t it a question of a transfer of power.

Joyce: We are trying to bring about a revolutionary transformation in the economy, in the state as a focus of capitalist power, in social relations and in personal life.

The issue is not so much what needs to take place but, rather, what is the motivation, the motive force of social change, and is it class struggle which arises at the point of production, or is it a range of other things.

Even to secure the potential that is in class struggle, marxism has to change the prioritised position it gives to class struggle, to see the other fundamental conflicts that exist, and to find the connections between them. While people will acknowledge some problems in marxism, it is very difficult to get over such concepts, held in holiness.

Linda: I’m concerned at the idea that class struggle is seen as just concerned with the point of production. I’ve always understood it as all the contradictions that capitalism throws up. For example, those which put tremendous strains on families. The post-war period which drew practically every woman, at some point of her life, into production put huge strains on ideological notions of what was proper for women, for children, for men. This was more revolutionary than anything else I can think of immediately.

My understanding of class struggle would encompass the events and processes which drew women into production and drew forth the contradiction between the traditional ideology about femininity and motherhood and got millions of women worldwide struggling around definitions of motherhood, definitions of what is proper in being a woman, control over their fertility, arrangement of working time and questions about the arrangement of tasks in the household, etc. And far from that being a social struggle, and what happens at the workplace being an economic struggle, most social and economic and class struggles are struggles which come out of acute contradictions which capitalism throws up at a particular time.

I think of the struggle for peace in a
similar way, bringing into debate, for example, questions around resources.

**Eric:** But why do you call it all class struggle? If it embraces everything.... I agree with what you say, but don’t see why you call it class struggle. What is the definition, then, of class ... if it embraces everything?

**Linda:** Unless you have some analysis of this social formation which allows you to see how it produces and is reproduced, then you have no explanation at all of why anything happens except when ideas spring up in people’s heads. Very simplified, my understanding is that you have a very small group of people who own the means by which all of this is reproduced. They make decisions about what is going to happen, and others won’t, irrespective of the needs of people who produce and who lack power not only to participate in decisions, but even to define their own needs. This produces struggles in various ways, and one of the things about these struggles, as Eric mentioned, is the problem we have of making the connections. Not everybody feels the same connections at the same time.

**Bob:** To backtrack a bit, I think we have to use the notion of crisis with some caution. One of the criticisms of socialists is that they’re always blethering about the crisis of this, that or the other issue.

But for socialists in advanced countries there undoubtedly is a crisis of both theory and practice, in the intersection they have with the mass politics of their countries. It’s a crisis in our case because we’re oppositional and have that much less room to manoeuvre. But there is no less an impasse, not necessarily a crisis, of capitalist democracy as well. Particularly in the last 20 years, its moral ascendancy has been eroded, its claims to be a responsive, progressive system which is capable of increasing both spiritual and material progress have come in for increasing disbelief.

But, of course, in countries like ours, that system has state power, it has ideologica hegemony and that counts for an awful lot. And its impasse in respect to the values of freedom and progress is not necessarily reflected in the instability of its hold upon society. But it is nevertheless there, and there is widespread cynicism and distrust about its direction.

The question is, of course, whether people see an alternative to that.

In a similar sense, when talking about the socialist or socialist-based countries, one needs to recognise that in the Soviet Union, for example, there isn’t an imminent crisis. A social system has evolved which has basic differences with the historically held values of marxisin about individual and collective freedom and the ability to progress on material and cultural levels. But it is showing no immediate signs of fundamental fracture, and we have to come to terms with that fact. This is not true, of course, of the satellite countries.

I think, in their situation, and ours, it comes back to ideology. Someone said marxisits have got it the wrong way round. It’s not economics that determines in the last instance, it’s economics that determines in the first instance and is then overlaid, modified and occasionally reversed by ideological considerations.

We have in Australia at the present moment not simply a crisis and shakeup of the socialist forces, but also a shakeup right across the political spectrum from far right to far left, including the much more stable centre - the ALP and the conservative coalition.

We are seeing the beginnings of the breaking of the mould that has been in place for 30-40 years since the war, and what socialists do now is going to set the options which are available for socialists in the coming generation. To engage that problem we need a broader view than that there is a crisis of socialism and what are our ways out. There is a fundamental realignment of social values and beliefs beginning to happen in society and we have to look for the footholds in diverse areas of social life which provide jumping off points for the future.

**Phil:** I agree that there is a crisis which extends far beyond that of socialism — there is, in fact, a general crisis of politics and ideology in advanced capitalist countries which can be seen in the level of non-participation, and the elementary level of what popular participation does take place...

Phil Hind is a disarmament activist who has worked in a full-time capacity for the peace movement.
But more importantly, I think the Soviet union, along with all the other existing socialist countries faces a crisis which is partly of its own making, but largely something which confronts it externally — the cold war and the threat of nuclear war.

And the sorts of fissures and cracks which have built up in some socialist countries — Poland being the biggest example — with a heavy-handed repression of solidarity, all have an impact on how people see socialism.

Concerning the basic understanding of what marxism is. I agree with Joe re marxism as a method, as the kernel of what it means to be committed to marxism. But I have some problems in that, if that is our understanding, then it is somewhat limiting - a method only at the analytical level, where it informs our intellectual work, how society fits together, etc. I don't think that tells us how to go about changing society. Marxism represents something more than a method. It is a theory of social change or, as Gramsci described it, a philosophy of praxis. It's as much about how one works politically as it is about understanding component parts of society, what it is that motivates people, makes them think, that engages them in struggle, and from that and from our own practice, we can learn something about the possibilities of social change.

Eric: I agree, of course, that capitalism faces a crisis, and certainly don't want to downplay that. But it seems to me that, capitalism being in that position point up even more the problems of socialism. Capitalism is in this multi-dimensional crisis, but socialists are not well armed to take it on.

I agree with Bob to a certain extent about the Soviet Union, though I don't know exactly what he means by a basic crisis. But there is a crisis of, shall we say, belief or vision, and that applies also in China and other countries. In a way, they also need to redefine socialism. They are not providing, as they did once, a vision that gave great inspiration to socialists elsewhere. They can't even do it for their own people.

Power, as Joe raised, has a dimension we, in the past, underestimated, but have developed recently in that we see struggles as not just about ownership, but also about power, about control.

But there is another aspect here related to what Linda was saying. It's also a question of power for what. It is true workers lack power to decide whether they will do this, that or the other. But, in some cases, they have asserted power for very good purposes, while in others they have asserted some degree of power for quite bad purposes. For example, on some environmental questions.

Linda: I think this is a really important question. Power is not a thing but is a relationship. I would pose the action of workers regarding the environment in a different way from you. At a particular time, workers had a particular ability to do something about the environment because of complex relationships. Just as examples, there was heightened public awareness, a strong labour market, there was a particular leadership, and the experience of previous struggles, etc. Those, and other relationships, enabled things to happen.

An opposite example is logging on the North Coast, at a time of a bad labour market, the leaders of the union, whatever their own perspective, could not control the situation. If jobs were lost they could offer nothing in return. There was no way out of that impasse. This is a case of the class's powerlessness. I suppose I take a rather determinist attitude in that what you can do in any situation by good work, or having the right ideas, is, in many ways, very limited. It's a matter of understanding all the relationships and seeing how you can intervene at a particular moment. You can say, even if something reactionary happens in the working class movement, part of that is the powerlessness of people in particular situations to break through that contradiction.

Eric: I agree with that. But if you take it to mean that if only they had the power they would use it for the good purpose, I must say I don't find that very convincing.

Linda: I don't think that follows from what I said.

Eric: It seems to me that it does; or if it doesn't that it is still important to make the point. Part of the struggle of socialists is around a body of ideas that has a future, in that it deals with the things that need to be done, have to be done if the problems that face humanity are to be overcome and disasters which loom over us are to be avoided.

And this struggle goes on also within the working class, by any definition.

Linda: It seems to me that what you're saying is that when a bad decision is made that's the result of the bad ideas they have about it. What I'm saying is that they may have many ideas about it, but in the end what they actually do
about it is a result of what's available for them to do, given that they need jobs, for example. What you're saying is that the ideas come first and that's what you struggle around, whereas I say you struggle around what's available to you and that the ideas came out of the struggle itself.

Eric: This is an important point. I don't say that the ideas come first in the general abstract sense. People are not born with them. They imbibe them out of what exists around them. But once an ideology or a particular view has come into existence, it can have a very long life, beyond the conditions under which it was born. For example, the attitude of men to women. And this will exist even after all sorts of power relationships have been changed. And the women's movement is right in fighting on this issue and in not believing the proposition that it will be resolved just because some other things are resolved.

Linda: But if you're going to have some historical explanation for the struggle of women, rather than the germ theory of ideas, you have to have an explanation for why, at some particular moments, that struggle erupts, an analysis of the forms that it takes, and an analysis of why it sometimes dies down. The difference between feminism and moralism on the woman question is that you analyse the relationships between men and women in the ways that show there are real, material privileges and benefits that derive from masculinity and real oppressions that result from femininity. The relationships are grounded in real things and not just in the ideas, but in specific practices.

Bob: Is it not the case that those practices are often matters of custom which are themselves material and incredibly strong because of the identity which people draw from them, and that a threat to those customs is a threat to the identity those people have? That is an ideological factor, but I would suggest it is as strong as any material factor or relationship.

Linda: Oh, indeed, and I think that the contradictions posed between the ideology of the way women were taught to see themselves and the reality of their actual existence in the past thirty years has had a tremendous effect in helping smash through a lot of that ideology. You can have some ideas in your head but I don't know how long you can afford to keep them in your head if, in practice, you're having to do something else. A man can hang on to the idea that it's a woman's place to look after him. But, in the end, what he's actually doing when she's out at work too and has the ability to change power relationships in the family, is he going to do some of the domestic chores. I wonder what real force his ideas about his relationships with his wife actually have in that changed relationship between them. And even if he is stuck with ideas about the relationships and that's a powerful force, I'm not sure how you'd decide how powerful that force is without looking at the reality of the relationship, the power between them.

Joyce: Pretty powerful, by all of the indications of what happened in the Soviet Union. Despite 67 years of there being not only a social acceptance of the fact that women are equal and it being written into the constitution and women being massively engaged in the workforce, women there still do as much of the housework as women in the United States, or Australia, where there's a larger percentage of women still engaged in fulltime domestic labour. I think there are unresolved issues about the relationship of ideology and material practices, both in materialism and feminism, and most social theories, but it's difficult to contest that they both have powerful roles to play.

I can see the point you're making, Linda, about workers in a particular situation and a woman in relationship to a man. Issues are not just resolved by what is in the woman's head, but also by what power relationships exist in a whole range of material things, into which I would put ideology.

But it also seems to me that in the potential for resolving the struggle an important element is what workers have in their heads. In that sense I agree with Eric that you can't say that if workers had more power and circumstances were more favourable, they would necessarily resolve a struggle in a particular way.

If you look at some of the relationships in the union movement at the time of the first Green Bans, it was because of reformist, economist and non-socialist ideology in the union movement that the builders labourers were left isolated in many instances, which is not to suggest that no mistakes were made.

But what motivates workers, or anybody, when they go into struggle is part of the material nature of that struggle.

As for economic in the last or the first instance, and whether the contradictions which arise from the ownership or non-ownership of the means of production are the crucial or overriding factors in relationship to socialist theory and practice, it is
extremely difficult to explain racism or sexism on the basis of either a first or last instance theory, or that the relations of ownership are the crucial thing. They are all, of course, crucially interconnected.

It is clear that the origins of women's oppression predate both capitalist and class society.

I am not arguing that there are no material factors in the oppression of women by men, but they are as much related to the esteem afforded to the reproduction of the species as to the economic divisions between women and men.

There is no point in analysing women's oppression outside the social relations and economic formation existing at the particular time. But it is a struggle in its own right, with its own area of concern, just as it is in the case of the struggle around wages.

To conflating all these and other forms of struggle into some notion of class doesn't increase our ability to understand why these struggles exist, what are their motive forces, how they are connected with, or sometimes in conflict with each other.

It is more important to understand those connections and contradictions than to shove them all into some total category for the sake of being able to hang onto something in socialist theory which doesn't help you.

Eric: I don't know precisely what people mean by the "marxist method". I don't know if there is a specific marxist method beyond passion in the cause and a scientific attitude.

That is not to downgrade Marx. There is still more mental nourishment about human society in what Marx wrote than in the works of any other single person. I call myself a marxist because of that, and because Marx, along with Engels, was the founder of the modern socialist movement.

I recently read a bad book (Wesson's Why Marxism?) which, after claiming that marxism was a failed theory, seeks to explain why it continues to be so successful. And I agree with his conclusion, though not his point of view. That conclusion is that marxism is so successful because it embodies what people who are oppressed and exploited look to, though not necessarily — not mainly — from a theoretical point of view. They struggle because they think what is happening to them is bloody wrong and they are not going to put up with it any more.

The standpoint, the social philosophy Marx was putting forward was against exploitation, against all forms of oppression, against the concentration of ownership and control and for the maximum development of human potentiality, and so on.

Linda: What, then, is the difference between marxism and christianity? Christianity is also against exploitation, and talks about pity for the oppressed and so on. Isn't the difference that marxism is grounded in that philosophy which grew out of the 18th century which said that there are only human events and that human events are potentially able to be controlled by humans and that things don't happen by magic, but because people make decisions and act on them and can make different decisions? But the conditions have arrived within capitalism for that to be done on a world historical scale under the full consciousness of human understanding, without illusions.

Eric: Agreed. I think you've put it well. You speak of human responsibility and choice, but that is a moral question. If there is no choice then there is no question of morality. But when there are choices — do this or do that, permit this or permit that, intervene or not. that is a moral issue.

Certainly, the great feature of marxism is that it is materialist. But materialism, as Engels said, also needs to change with each new discovery. Yet the materialism that many marxists have in their heads remains the materialism of the 18th century, which is way out of date.

Linda: I agree.

Bob: The substance of Eric's point as I get it is that marxism's strength is in the combination of social justice and ethics and the historical side of the analysis. It's the link between the two which has been considerably eroded.

Joe: I substantially agree with that. But what we're talking about is what is it that has the capacity to motivate people today. In many third world countries, struggling for independence and against tremendous exploitation, and one takes up arms to change it. But, for us, the position is much more complex. You've got a sophisticated society where exploitation exists but is disguised.

"... what we're talking about is what is it that has the capacity to motivate people today. In many third world countries, struggling for independence and against tremendous exploitation, and one takes up arms to change it. But, for us, the position is much more complex. You've got a sophisticated society where exploitation exists but is disguised." 

Joe Palmada is a job activist with experience in union leadership and is a member of the CPA National Committee.
"The big acknowledged difference between what the marxist left is prepared to do now and what it was prepared to do before, is to regard the state apparatus as an area of struggle. To see it as an arena for struggle, for gains which can be held."

Bob Makinson is a biologist who has, till recently, been an activist in the Young Communist Movement.

The struggle, for gains which can be held. To see between what the marxist left is prepared to do now and what it was prepared to do before, is to regard the state apparatus as an area of struggle. To see it as an arena for struggle, for gains which can be held.

Eric: Earlier, when socialists talked about power, they meant specifically state political power. There were struggles around all sorts of things, but not about power. Through the struggles, people might learn their own strength and so on, but nothing else would change. In that sense it was purely an ideological outcome.

Perhaps from necessity, we now see it differently. Accepting the fact that the revolution is not just around the corner, as we used to think, we are faced with a long-term struggle.

This, in itself, poses a problem as to how socialists can, in this long-term struggle, sustain themselves, maintain their morale, etc. You can, if you think that the revolution is around the corner, even if the corner is distant, but more difficult if you do not — and I think few think that way now.

Our interventionist strategy comes to grips with that, in that we engage in struggles with a view not only to changing what is in people's heads, but also changing to one degree or another, the actual power relations within society.

It is not that one preaches that people ought to think in a certain way, though one may do that, but that the issues people face are tackled from a socialist ideological point of view and with a view to changing the actual power relations which exist within society.

Some may see this as a new form of gradualism, and maybe it is. But the point is that you don't put every change in power relations off until that day when state power is seized. You wage the battle within society now, thus preparing both the ideological and material or relational conditions. In that sense, one is creating a bit of the new society within the shell of the old, which we always used to reject as impossible.

Linda: Could you liken that to giving up the warfare of mass formations in favour of guerrilla warfare?

Eric: I suppose you could.

Bob: You can take that a bit further. The power that one wields is determined both by the forces you dispose of and the terrain you are able to control, or at least contest.

The big acknowledged difference between what the marxist left is prepared to do now and what it was prepared to do before, is to regard the state apparatus as an area of struggle. To see it as an arena for struggle, for gains which can be held. To participate in certain elements of the state apparatus in a contestatory way, in a way that fights the existing mode of state domination.

The other element to be looked at is how to assemble the kind of power base needed to do that, what are the elements of the coalition to do that. Not simply a political coalition but an ideological coalition within the society which will make it possible to challenge elements of the state power and private power within industry as well.

The big acknowledged difference between what the marxist left is prepared to do now and what it was prepared to do before, is to regard the state apparatus as an area of struggle.
The left has found that it’s not just the industrial working class that is needed for that. There have been long-standing debates about the necessity of intellectuals and on what terms there can be an alliance between intellectuals and workers. There’s been equally long-standing, though less explicit, debates about the role of small business, small farmers, and others, about what sort of coalition can be put together in society which enables you to challenge that sort of power.

It’s not just a matter of saying what sort of political forces are available to form a coalition of the left, because that’s governed by those who define themselves as left. What we’re talking about is a more long-term strategy of trying to penetrate all such areas of society with both ideas and organisation in order to try to assemble the elements of the new society and to demonstrate to people that there is a coherence about socialism, that it can provide not simply as good, but a better way of living and a more human society.

**Eric:** The elements are already there, in the struggles taking place.

**Joyce:** In a way, it’s the striving to find the interconnections between struggles that politicises the various movements, that takes them beyond the particular struggle itself.

Even though I don’t see working class struggles at the point of production as the motive force for social change as Marx saw it to be, I still think it’s a crucial form of struggle, just as a whole range of other forms of struggle are.

**Eric:** I don’t think Marx ever said that change in society would come about by the struggle of people at the point of production. On the contrary, he said that those struggles were skirmishes, were defensive struggles and that the working class had to assert itself on a wider stage. Lenin put it even more strongly, saying that the struggle between workers and capitalists was too narrow to engender socialist consciousness, at most giving rise to trade union consciousness.

This is important because a lot of misconceptions about what class struggle even is, are based on that erroneous view.

**Linda:** We seem to be having difficulty in coming to grips with what is the whole relationship between the way societies reproduce themselves, the ideas people have, and the possibilities of opposition to that.

**Phil:** I have a problem with the way you put that question. You seem to say that capitalist society just reproduces itself, full stop. But I think it’s clear that capitalist society both reproduces itself and doesn’t reproduce itself. It doesn’t reproduce itself perfectly. In fact, it’s largely because of the contradictions within capitalist society that it’s incapable of reproducing itself perfectly.

Thus, there has to be a political struggle conducted by ruling classes and their intellectual forces to try to cement the bits together and reproduce it at a higher level.

The inverse of that is that there are a whole lot of elements of capitalist society which are reproducing different things, which are not just simply capitalist relations, but different ideas, different forces. It is these that are the basis on which we have to work.

This is a great problem which structuralist theory and Marxism got itself into, and the idea has become quite prevalent that capitalist society reproduces itself absolutely. Therefore, the notion of struggle or where struggle comes from can become nothing other than determinist.

**Linda:** Yes, but I thought that I said the struggles we see all round us arose precisely out of the contradictions that capitalism throws up. For example, contradictions arise out of the fact that you have an ideology about femininity at a particular time when capitalism is drawing masses of women into the workforce and doing more to smash the family, as somebody said, than a whole bevy of feminists.

It’s precisely those contradictions and the struggles that they engender that are the points of intervention, of guerrilla warfare.

But what I was getting at was that people are talking about ideas — what ideas can we get to motivate people. Well, what ideas did people have when they were thrown into struggle around the women’s movement? I don’t know what ideas were in people’s heads. Perhaps they weren’t so different on the Monday from what they were on the Friday, but there came a particular time when they had to do something.

We talk about ideas motivating people, about how we get people going, but it seems to me it is not a question of how we get people going, but how we intervene in the ways...
The floating of the Australian dollar by the Labor government in December 1983 was totally out of keeping with Labor ideology of attempting to control the economy in the interests of Australian workers. In this article, which has been widely distributed among unionists, Ted Wheelwright explains the consequences of this action.

It is not overstating the daring nature of the decision to say that Keating has placed his political future in the hands of the intermediaries and the traders who operate in the cut-throat world of the international financial markets.

It was an action which was completely at odds with Labor's platform commitment to government control of the economy, and Labor's long and deeply held suspicions of the market place and its belief that market forces do not share resources equitably. Geoff Kitney, National Times, 16.12.83.

The floating of the Australian dollar is probably the most fundamental single change in the management of the Australian economy in peace time by any federal government, certainly since the Great Depression of the 1930s. It is totally out of keeping with Labor ideology of attempting to control the economy in the interests of the working people of Australia, and makes the Australian government even more of a hostage to international finance capital than it was before, as the above quotations indicate.

It makes nonsense of industry policy and attempts to increase exports — what happens in these areas will be more by accident than design. It makes a mockery of EPAC, whose advice can be negated overnight by the gyrations of the exchange rate, and it threatens the accord, as pressure will mount to remove full wage indexation so that real wages will fall if devaluation causes higher import costs. These points are expanded in subsequent paragraphs.

The gravest danger comes from the increasing volatility in the value of the Australian dollar which is bound to result, unless the Reserve Bank uses its powers of intervention by buying or selling Australian currency in the foreign exchange market much more often, and to a greater extent than the present arrangements envisage. This is what is called a 'dirty float', in contrast to a 'clean float' — which means no government intervention. Very few countries have 'clean floats'. This point will be taken up in a later paragraph.

There is something to be said for allowing market forces, suitably modified, to affect the exchange rate significantly as a result of flows of money resulting from exports, imports and genuine investment, during times of political and economic stability, depending on the ability of the Australian economy to respond to price changes of imports and exports, and how the world economy responds. But we do not live at such a time; the world economy is unstable, the recovery is fragile and very patchy, the world political situation is more serious than it has been for decades, tension is high, and the danger of war considerable.

In such a situation, international capital flows are extremely volatile and subject to political events, in the world at large, and in our region. Recent years have seen substantial flows into our money and securities markets by Japanese institutions, and into our stock exchanges by American and British investors. They have also seen large sums flowing in from Hong Kong, and from Chinese minorities in Malaysia and Papua New Guinea. In addition, there have been massive outflows during the Whitlam government, and just before the election of the Hawke government, which had to be reversed after its election by a substantial devaluation. On top of this there has been large-scale speculation for non-political reasons, and movements across the
exchanges for reasons of company borrowing to pay taxes, and to take advantage of interest rate differentials, e.g., cheaper to borrow abroad than here, etc. Floating the exchange rate reduces only the speculative element of all these flows, as it means that those who bear the cost are other speculators and currency holders, not the Reserve Bank.

Consequently, as speculative forces and operations have increased dramatically over the last decade or so, a significant degree of speculation will continue, and in the present world context of 'alarums and excursions' will act as a destabilising influence. As Keynes remarked:

Speculators may do no harm as bubbles on a steady stream of enterprise. But the position is serious when enterprise becomes the bubble on a whirlpool of speculation. When the capital development of a country becomes a by-product of the activities of a casino, the job is likely to be ill-done. (J.M. Keynes, The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money (Macmillan, London, 1936), p. 158)

This means that capital flows which have little to do with real economic forces such as exports, imports, and actual investment, and which occur through a variety of motives, often to do with the situation in other countries, will cause instability in the foreign exchange value of our dollar, which is inimical to both our export industries (except those where contracts are in other currencies such as the American dollar, as is often the case in minerals) and our manufacturing industry. Such industries, in these circumstances, can only plan ahead by using forward exchanges, which means, in effect, that they need to insure themselves against unfavourable changes in the value of our dollar, at considerable cost, which is used to employ even more financial parasites than exist in our already overblown finance sector.

Not only that, but large, wild swings in the foreign exchange value of the Australian dollar, sustained for a longish period of time, may destroy entire industries. For example, if there was a stampede of capital from Hong Kong in the next few years — which is not unlikely — much of it would come to Australia, and would force up the value of our dollar on the free market for some considerable time. The effect would be to reduce the income of many exporters, in our money, and encourage a flood of cheap imports which would compete away much of what is left of our manufacturing industry. If sustained, such price changes could irrevocably destroy some industries in both the export sector, and the import competing sector. An upward revaluation of the currency is equivalent to a tax on exports and a subsidy on imports.

Conversely, a substantial and sustained outflow of money from Australia would cause a devaluation of our dollar. This is more likely in the longer run as the economic forces operating on Australia are such as to increase our indebtedness, reduce our export income in relation to import costs, increase our payments for shipping insurance and debt servicing, causing us to approximate to a Third World country in these respects. (See Australia: A Client State by Greg Crough and Ted Wheelwright, Penguin, Melbourne, 1982, Chapter 8, "Out of Control — Trade, Payments and Debts"). Such a continuing depreciation of our dollar, if sustained, would benefit export industries and import competing industries in the short run, as it is tantamount to a subsidy on exports and a tax on imports. Its effects would depend on whether, as a result, exports were increased, and imports reduced; but as many imports are essential it would send up the costs of all industries dependent on imports, and this would work its way through to the export industries. The consumer price index would be affected, the cost of living of working people would be increased, and if the accord were implemented, there would be full indexation. However, there would be tremendous pressure — which is beginning to develop now — to break this link protecting the workers' standard of living, and abolish indexation as incompatible with market forces.

The above illustrates the importance of the exchange rate as a tool of economic policy; given Labor's philosophy it should be set at a level which maximises full employment in export and import competing industries, minimises inflation, and prevents too much of an increase in foreign indebtedness, and hence reduction in independence. This is difficult enough to achieve even with competently enforced exchange controls (as distinct from incredibly lax ones of recent years, for which either the Reserve Bank or its political masters, or both, must be held responsible), but it is impossible with a "clean float". The exchange rate is then set at a level which maximises the interests of international capital, in its various forms and conditions, around the world — if these coincide with the interests of the working people of Australia, this is by accident and not by design.
The political component of all this is very important, as spelled out in the opening quotations referring to the political future of Keating (and by implication of the Labor Party) being placed “in the hands of the intermediaries and the traders who operate in the cut-throat world of the international financial markets”. It means that the Hawke government must do nothing politically to upset the high priests of international finance lest they take their money out of the country; this has a bearing on such matters as admitting foreign banks, foreign investment policy, giving unions a greater say in economic policy formulation, consumer and environmental protection — virtually anything which could reduce the profitability of capital and reduce its managerial prerogatives and privileges.

It also means that the ability of the Hawke government to reduce interest rates will be circumscribed, as not only does finance capital profit from higher real interest rates and therefore have predilection for them, but also it will be necessary to keep ours higher than elsewhere to attract foreign money and prevent it leaving. Even with the recently laxly enforced exchange controls, it was difficult, for this reason, to achieve lower real rates of interest. Now it may well be impossible, we could be locked into a high real interest rate syndrome. This is particularly likely, given the very small nature of our economy, trade and money flows in relation to those of the ‘big league’, in world economic affairs — the Americans, Japanese and Europeans. We are attempting to play first grade league football with the size, resources, and expertise of the third division.

Talk of Sydney or Melbourne becoming a financial centre of

Paul Keating, and the Labor government, in the hands of intermediaries and traders who operate in the cut-throat world of international financial markets.
S.E. Asia and the Pacific, perhaps replacing Hong Kong, is fanciful, to put it mildly. In the first place, to compete with them, Australia would need to adopt their economic and social conditions, which involve much lower taxes on corporate profits, no particular taxes on the finance industry, no unemployment pay and no wage indexation, with trade unions which are creatures of the state. In the second place, they are both small 'enclave' economies which have been used to generations of free trade, and on which financial activities have a minimal repercussion. In the third place, they are hardly democratic models of polities which most Australians would wish to follow in pursuit of economic gain.

While there would be some gain in employment because of the expansion of the finance sector, these would be minimal, due to the very capital intensive technology used in this type of 'wholesale banking'. There would not be much extra employment for the traditional bank-clerk type of activity; most of it would be taken up by the high powered money changers who would inhabit a few more Temples of Mammon which would spring up in the city centres of Sydney and Melbourne. However, even if there were a net gain in employment there, it would be more than offset by the unemployment caused elsewhere in the economy by the requirements of the financial sector.

One example of this is Britain, where London is still reputed to be the financial centre of the world, although this is open to dispute, particularly by the Americans. London and the 'home counties' are relatively prosperous, and the middle classes are concentrated there, but much of the industrial heart of the country in the midlands and the north, is dying on the vine, with very high levels of unemployment. One major reason for this is the high value of the pound sterling, which hampers manufactured exports and increases manufactured imports, thus emasculating the industry. Another reason is that the abolition of exchange controls facilitates the export of capital which should have been used to re-equip decaying manufacturing industry to help make it more competitive. Since the removal of exchange controls in 1979, it is estimated that about £30 billion have left the UK.

Another example is the USA, where the development of New York as an international financial centre rivaling London may have created some employment and other benefits there, but these have obviously been offset by other activities of the expanded financial community, such as the export of capital from industrial areas, and high interest rates which attract large inflows of capital from abroad, thus keeping the US dollar at a high value, which inhibits exports and encourages imports, helping to cause an enormous trade deficit. In both cases, the UK and the USA, the issue is much more complicated than space allows, but the essential point is that neither of them provides evidence that freer foreign exchanges and entry of foreign banks contribute to higher overall employment and a higher standard of living for working people.

Even in Switzerland, which is probably the best example of a successful financial centre, because its history and geographical location, money had to be prevented from flowing into the country some years ago, because it was forcing up the Swiss franc to levels so high that they were inhibiting the export of Swiss manufactured goods. Consequently, a negative rate of interest was imposed on such tuens, i.e. foreigners had to pay to have their funds located in Switzerland.

Floating the dollar and abolishing exchange control also makes it more difficult to detect offshore tax avoidance schemes, according to the director of taxation services with PriceWaterhouse. The exchange control regulations often provided a paper trail that assisted the Taxation Commissioner in tracing taxable income. In his last published report, Frank Costigan recommended the tightening up of exchange control regulations, and suggested that Singapore should be added to the list of recognised tax havens. Obviously this will not happen now, so that to the billions of tax dollars lost to the Treasury in 'bottom-of-the-harbour schemes', we must now add untold billions to be lost in 'bottom-of-the-Pacific schemes', with the result that working people of Australia will have to pay even more tax, while the rich financiers go scot free. Is this Labor party policy? (Marian Wilkinson, National Times, 16.12.83.)

The next step is obviously to license more traders in foreign exchange and admit foreign banks. The argument for is that the existing market of a few Australian banks is too narrow for it to operate properly, and hence it must be widened; also the new system will give these banks a semi-monopolistic advantage because they are so few. (The Campbell Report showed that the four largest banks and the four largest insurance companies accounted for about 60 percent of financial assets in Australia.) But once the market is so widened there is no guarantee that it will stay so, the whole history of the merger movement stands mute witness to the contrary, and the evidence in the USA shows that even there foreign banks have been more aggressive, have taken business away from local banks, and also taken them over. (See Robert B. Cohn, The Impact of Foreign Direct Investment on US Cities and Regions, The Analytic Sciences Corporation, Virginia, 1979.)

This should not be allowed to happen here. No more licences to trade in foreign currency should be issued; if new foreign banks are now allowed in, these licences would be snapped up by existing merchant banks, which appear to be the main source of currency speculation. Trading in foreign currency should remain the preserve of existing banks, should be strictly supervised by the Reserve Bank, and excess profits from this activity should be subject to tax. There is no presumption that more banks mean cheaper money, more access to it by those who need it, or more stability, certainly not in the long run. The evidence seems to suggest that more and bigger banks mean more debt, more instability and higher real interest rates. More control of financial institutions is required, not less. This is the lesson of the history of their evolution ever since the South Sea Bubble (which is upon us again, in a different form).

Finally, a word on 'dirty floats'. This used to be called government 'intervention', or government 'counter-speculation'. This last usage was coined when governments were much stronger vis-a-vis large corporations than they are today. Now they cannot match the resources available to the giant global corporations, especially the transnational banks. Any notion that governments can operate successfully in the market place against them is a delusion. What governments can and must do is to control access to the market place by licensing and policing the operators. Even that is not easy, but unless the Labor government attempts to control the activities of international finance capital in Australia, they will inevitably be controlled by it. They might not mind this, but the people they purport to represent will suffer.

Ted Wheelwright has been teaching Political Economy for 30 years in a hostile environment at Sydney University.
International women’s Day is celebrated around the world on 8 March. In Australia this year, thousands of women took part in festivities including cabarets, concerts, dances, art exhibitions, photo histories, festivals, marches and rallies.

The photos above show women at the IWD march in Sydney which was attended by several thousand women. (Photos by Fiona Moore.) Opposite page, top: Betty Olle (right) from the Union of Australian Women interviewed by the media after giving the opening address at the Melbourne IWD rally. (Photo by Wendy Rew.) Opposite, middle: Women at the Melbourne IWD march which was attended by well over 1,000 women. (Photo by Wendy Rew.) Opposite, bottom: 2,000 people marched at Adelaide’s IWD rally. (Photo by Peter Murphy.)
Organised crime is an integral part of present capitalist society. In this paper, which was given at the 1984 Marxist Summer School, Denis Freney explains how predominant organised crime is in Australian politics and why you should be concerned.

Denis Freney

I would like to begin looking at this wide-ranging subject with a very appropriate quote: "The primary goals of organised crime ... are the maximisation of profit. In order to achieve the greatest possible return, organised crime has found it expedient to invest some of its capital in the government."

This statement comes not from a marxist, but from a recent US federal task force on organised crime and it is quoted in an article The Mob in Philadelphia by Murray Waas in the first issue of the new US magazine The Rebel. Waas’ article was a case study of organised crime in one US city, comparable in size to Sydney or Melbourne. Elsewhere, Waas commented: "Like the rest of big business in America, the mafia has realised that it has to engage in good public relations to be accepted in their communities, to expand and grow ... The only difference is that it is not routine policy for oil companies and other corporations to routinely kill people as a normal course of everyday business." (Well, not in the US of A, at
WHAT IS ORGANISED CRIME?

Defining organised crime has almost become an academic industry. The fact is that it is a very imprecise term: when two people get together to 'organise' a bank robbery, is that organised crime? By some definitions it is, as it is 'organised'. But it reduces the definition down to an almost meaningless level. The only valuable way to examine the question is to draw the parallel between crime and 'legitimate' capitalism. Comparing the two-person robbery of a bank with the operations of the Nugan Hand 'bank' or the alleged Abe Saffron empire is like comparing a family corner store with BHP.

When we — and others such as Costigan and his counsel, Douglas Meagher — speak of 'organised crime' we are talking of the top end of the business, of the BHPs of crime, not the corner stores.

Second, let's accept a practical definition of 'crime' as all that breaks the laws of the Commonwealth, States and Territories of Australia. That's not to say we need endorse all those laws, for, as we know, many of them are unjust, able to be applied and directed against the poor, the sick and the minorities, such as Aborigines. But some laws would exist in any society of scarcity, while others have been won by working people, forced on capitalism to regulate big business' rampage of the workforce, the environment, and to finance social welfare. Capitalism has also adopted laws and regulations for its own good health, particularly since the Great Depression, as a matter for its own survival.

Third, we should realise that organised crime in Australia, particularly since World War II, and especially since the early 'seventies, has been increasingly monopolised into relatively few hands, and taken on all the structures of a big corporation. And just as the directors of BHP do not dirty their hands at the blast furnace, so the top levels of organised crime do not dirty their hands with robbery, drug trafficking or fraud. Rather, the top directors of these corporations are the investors, the organisers of the actual crimes.

Fourth, Australian organised crime has become multinational, spreading its empire particularly to the Philippines, Thailand and, to a lesser extent, other countries in the region. In the vice districts of Manila, according to latest reports, Australian organised crime is now even better entrenched than the US mafia. As Douglas Meagher has said, 'close relations' have been found to exist between some Australian criminals and ruling circles in the Philippines — up to and including the Marcos family.

Fifth, as part of the last, Australian organised crime figures have forged the closest possible links with the big US crime families and, beyond that, with the Sicilian mafia, the Naples Commora and the Calabrian Honored Society. Australian organised crime has time-honoured links with its British counterparts and, in more recent decades, has forged links with French, Corsican, Chinese, and other 'mafia' syndicates. It is also in constant business with the Lebanese Phalangists who combine fascist terror with high-level drug trafficking and other crimes.

WHAT FIELDS DOES ORGANISED CRIME COVER?

Douglas Meagher, the senior counsel assisting the Costigan Royal Commission, has listed the main fields of organised crime. I will repeat them with only a few passing comments:

- systematic robbery
- organised shoplifting (including major items such as fridges, TV sets, etc.)
- theft from wharves (not just piffering, but of whole containers)
- motor car theft (not for joyriding, but systematic sale as spare parts interstate, and even in the USA)
- credit card theft (often an overseas operation, with the cards stolen here, then used in South East Asia)
- SP bookmaking
- illegal casinos and gambling
- prostitution
- pornography
- drug trafficking
- loan sharking (Frank Hardy's latest book deals with one aspect of this)
- protection rackets
- arson
- bankruptcy fraud (Bernie Houghton of Nugan Hand fame was an expert on this)
- union racketeering (small-scale here, but likely to spread. We'll deal with this in more detail later.)
- taxation fraud
- computer fraud
- and so on, in many varied forms and combinations.

Some of these are 'traditional' crime areas while others are new. All are highly profitable. In each area, we have a mirror copy of the functioning of 'legitimate' capitalism. We have the big business 'organised crime' executives; the medium-size 'entrepreneurs' and the small-time operators — the last are the ones usually caught. The 'big business' operators do not do the dirty work, they have their 'workers' or hire out independent 'contractors'. They also act as financiers for smaller or medium-size operators outside their own organisation. A reasonably-sized drug importation could cost a million dollars to mount. While one financier may be willing to finance such a deal, it is more likely a number will combine, both to spread any possible loss, and to share the profits, which are enormous.

ORGANISED CRIME AND 'LEGITIMATE BUSINESS'

Capitalism, in its early beginnings, and each budding capitalist today, must go through a process of primitive accumulation of capital. As often as not, such primitive accumulation has occurred historically through criminal activities. As author Richard Hall said at the National Crimes Commission Conference last July: "I suppose the first organised criminals were the officers of the Rum Corps. Perhaps Governor Bligh needed a Crimes Commission to solve the problem." The descendants of these first Australian organised crime figures are today the doyens of high society.

Douglas Meagher, in his recent ANZAAS paper, lists the criminal activities of Morgan and Vanderbilt, who had amassed enormous wealth by profiteering from the American Civil War. We could add the names of other infamous 'robber barons' from Rockefeller on.

Today the multinationals break laws around the world. Just as Morgan in 1856 staged his own revolution in Nicaragua to get control of Vanderbilt's holdings there, and Vanderbilt got the then President to send in US troops to defeat Morgan's 'revolutionaries' and regain his holdings, so, today, multinationals have little respect for laws and legally established governments.

Meagher also notes:

One of the earliest American fortunes was amassed by John Jacob Astor. His money was originally gained through lawlessness and violence committed by his agents against Indians in the western fur trade. At the time he lived in New York as a respectable businessman. The money was used for real estate speculation in New York
where easily corrupted officials helped him become the richest person in America. He crowned his successful business by becoming one of America's greatest slum landlords, extracting money from the poor for the privilege of living in the vilest of tenement housing.

In Australia, it can be argued that the conscious actions of BHP, James Hardie and Asbestos, the uranium miners and so on in breaking health and safety laws and environmental controls is more serious in its social impact than the depredations of 'organised crime'. That may well be so, but nevertheless it should not be used as an excuse to ignore the very real problem posed by organised crime.

But we don't have to go back to the last century to see how criminal activity gave budding capitalists the means to become respectable businessmen, knights of the realm and household names for their philanthropy.

I will mention only a couple of examples. The first example is one of the 'Hungarian mafia' who arrived in Australia in the 'fifties along with such people as Alexander Barton, Bela Csida and Peter Abeles. This person made his millions in real estate speculation and property development. He could never have done so without the aid of his corrupt friend, NSW Premier Sir Robert Askin, who used funds held by state government instrumentalities to help him on his way. This person also used the abilities of Bernie Houghton, of Nagan Hand and CIA fame, to carry out several profitable arson and bankruptcy frauds which are ably described (without naming names) in Meagher's paper to the ANZAAS conference. This individual developed close links with alleged organised crime figure Abe Saffron and the Kings Cross scene. He also forged a close relationship with the Griffith marijuana empire and its principal, Robert Trimboli, particularly when the drug boom collapsed and this person's financial empire in property development collapsed.

In Western Australia, millionaires were born from fraudulent exploitation of the mining boom. One of them worked in close liaison with Saffron and the US mafia. Frank Nagan made his first million with a very doubtful con trick in a WA mining company. He beat up the share values with talk of a multi-million dollar Japanese mining contract, which was never on, then cashed in his shares at a huge profit. Nagan went on to use this million to launch his huge fraud. In the case of Nagan, we see the very obvious connection between legitimate business and organised crime.

In the same respect, I'm sure you are all waiting with bated breath for Kerry Packer to explain himself before the Costigan Royal Commission. Costigan has been investigating two Westpac branches in Brisbane which had been used to launder millions of drug and other illegal money. While investigating, Costigan found that Queensland property developer Brian Ray, a good friend of Joh Bjelke-Petersen, had withdrawn $225,000 from one of the banks for Kerry Packer. Ray said it was an interest-free loan, although Ray was in a scheme with creditors under which he was paying them one cent in the dollar. Ray's associate, Ian Beames, however, told Costigan he personally took $100,000 in cash to Sydney airport and handed it over to Packer's chauffeur. It was part of a tax minimisation scheme, Beames said, for which Packer had received $293,425.

Packer at first agreed to give evidence on this affair, but then took Costigan to the federal court to stop him investigating. The federal judge ruled against Packer. The judge said Costigan was trying to find out whether the $225,000 paid by Ray to Packer was "anything to do with the distribution of drugs in Queensland".

Now, Packer may be entirely innocent. He may have only been involved in a tax avoidance scheme. He admits to having been a 'client' of the tax scheme, and claimed the tax commissioner got $600,000 out of it from him.

I want now to return to the quote from the US federal task force on organised crime with which I began. "Maximisation of profit" is the primary goal of organised crime, as it is for any capitalist enterprise. But, like any capitalist, the wise top criminal aims to maximise profits over a period of time, not necessarily going for maximum profits over one year or so. 'Legitimate' big business 'invests' substantial sums in political parties and the government and bureaucratic apparatus. They pay large sums to major political parties, hire expensive lobbyists, influence the media, and will pay high 'expenses' for a parliamentarian to speak at a convention or whatever. Big business will think carefully about an outright bribe because of the danger of discovery, although such scruples certainly do not apply when doing business in Asia or elsewhere.

As the US federal task force on organised crime said: "organised crime has found it expedient to invest some of its capital in the government". This is not something new since, for as long as crime has existed, corruption has existed. It might be slipping a copper a few quid to turn the other eye. I think the excellent ABC TV series Scales of Justice said it all by tracing the evolution of corruption from the small-scale to the top-level. I think that very few people today would believe corruption does not exist within parties and governments around the country, and not just in police forces.

Some may think the last episode of Scales of Justice in which the young Attorney-General was subtly blackmailed was exaggerated. It is therefore worth quoting Douglas Meagher in his ANZAAS paper on this question.

Corruption may be achieved in several ways. The most obvious and frequent way is by simply paying money. This may be by a payment to hidden bank accounts; but other means are available. A house may be made available at a particularly cheap price; overseas travel may be made at no cost. Sometimes .... the corruption is achieved through a weakness in the character of the victim, which is viciously exploited. The film of deviant sexual practices; the loan to meet the gambling habit.

Meagher ther, refers to the Nugan attempt to frame Frank Walker by setting up a secret Swiss bank account for him in an attempt to then threaten him with exposure.

'INVESTMENT IN THE STATE'

It is only natural that organised crime should 'invest' in both the parties able to form governments. Therefore, it is naturally interested in the ALP with which it has had long historic connections. It should be recalled that Albie Sloss, the Labor member for the Kings Cross area for years, was present at the 'Double Bay Summit' attended by all alleged major organised crime figures (except Abe Saffron) in 1972. That 'Summit' marked a qualitative leap for Sydney organised crime, after some gangland killing in the late 'sixties. And there was Albie Sloss sitting in on the carve-up of organised crime between the criminal oligarchy of NSW. And Labor, it should be recalled, was in opposition at the time!

The Askin years were the heyday of organised crime, when it really developed very rapidly from the corner-shop style of operation to that of big business. Every police commissioner under Askin was, allegedly, corrupt to an extreme and, with the corrupt Askin himself, kept NSW safe for organised crime. Things
have been so bad in NSW that we've had a system operating of mutual blackmail. The Libs and Labor both have so many skeletons in their closets that each could blackmail the other. Of course, in recent years, the Libs have been so wiped out electorally, and have faced so many resignations, that most of those left are probably too new to have too many skeletons around to worry about.

Under Wran we've had the resignation of Police Commissioner Merv Wood and the Bill Allen scandal. We've also seen former Chief Stipendiary Magistrate Farquhar before a court. Now we've got the Rex Jackson affair which has much wider implications than are generally realised. I don't want to take time dealing with these scandals which have already come to light. It is beyond doubt that organised crime has 'invested' in NSW politics at all levels.

But what of federal politics? Until recently, federal politicians had little to do with organised crime because the laws affecting the operation of organised crime were state laws and the police forces concerned were state ones. But, in recent years, we've seen a quiet revolution in this regard. Federal police are now playing a major role in investigating organised crime. The tax laws are now a major threat to organised crime whose principals remember that Al Capone and other mafia figures never went to jail for murder, but for tax evasion. And another royal commission like the Costigan one would be distinctly unpleasant, to say the least, for organised crime. And it now emerges that the federal government can play a role in deciding whether there is going to be a casino in Canberra. That proposal has been killed for the moment by the defection of two ALP members in the ACT House of Assembly who voted against the casino bill despite Hawke's championing of it.

One can expect organised crime to play a much more active role in federal politics in the near future.

It is, therefore, disconcerting that our Prime Minister, a few years ago when he landed in California, phoned one Rudy Tham, a top mafia hood who also doubled as a union official with the Teamsters (or Transport Workers) Union. Tham told Hawke to go to a sleazy bar in San Francisco which was a mafia hangout, and whose owner had shortly before squirred ex-NSW policeman Murray Riley (now in Long Bay for drug offences) around town.

Now, we can accept that Hawke did not know who Tham was, or who the bar owner, Sal Almarino, was. But the person who gave him the introduction to Tham certainly knew.

I haven't got space here to detail all the other signs of penetration by organised crime already visible at the level of federal politics. Suffice it to say that it is a matter of very real concern, not only for the corruption it represents, but the long-term and even short-term effect it can have on the whole labor movement.

WHY WORRY?

The 'Ned Kelly' complex remains strong in Australia, and no more so than on the left. Historically, it may go back to our convict ancestors, or what we may consider our convict ancestors, but the parallel, and the myth, is false. I hark back to what Richard Hall said at the National Crime Commission Conference: our first organised crime figures were the officers of the Rum Corps — the jailers and the tormentors of the convicts.

Today, when we talk about organised crime, we're not talking about Ned Kyls or Robin Hoods. We're talking about our present-day Rum Corps — the BHPs of crime. But even those who have no time for the big men of organised crime sometimes argue: organised crime doesn't affect me. And this may be so directly, but organised crime does affect the labor movement and will do so increasingly. Even if you consider the billions in tax lost through organised crime, you'll maybe understand why your tax burden is so heavy. And if you find that rightwing candidates in your next union election are awash with money, you might wonder whether some of it came from a slush fund to which organised crime has contributed not a little. And if your union sets up a pension fund shortly because of the changes in superannuation laws, you should not be surprised if organised crime begins to pay very particular attention to your union, tempted by those millions sitting in the pension fund, able to be loaned at very low interest rates for some organised crime project ...

But the issue goes deeper than that: in Italy, the Communists party and the Left in certain areas dominated by the mafia. Communists and Honourd Society are literally in a life-and-death struggle with organised crime. Because, in these parts of Italy, organised crime is the Establishment; it is the government. And increasingly, it has penetrated through all Italian society, including into the Vatican, as witnessed by the Pell-Sindoni-Calvi affairs. Similarly, left parts of the USA and under Nixon, even in the White House, the powerful tentacles of organised crime reach to the top, although there are strong countervailing forces.

Organised crime has often provided the shock troops for reaction and, in South America, and in countries like the Philippines, it is difficult to separate fascist military dictatorships from organised crime. They have become almost identical. The CIA and other intelligence services have had long and continuing working relations with organised crime.

Organised crime operates outside, or on the fringes of the Establishment and, by its nature, it has scant regard for democratic rules. The same can be said, of course, for the multinational and big business as a whole. But it would be completely wrong to equate the two — organised crime is qualitatively different in the way it operates politically.

The Left and, indeed, those genuinely dedicated to bourgeois democracy must understand the full political and social implications of unchallenged organised crime.

Another argument advanced is that because organised crime is now so sophisticated any real challenge to it in the framework of this society will mean, of necessity, the abrogation of civil liberties traditionally respected under law. Now this is undoubtedly correct. Any National Crimes Commission could, as Justice Kirby told the National Crimes Commission Conference, end up being another ASIO. (No one at the conference, by the way, thought that having another ASIO was a good idea)

But if there is a problem of possible limitations on civil liberties for those who are investigated, that is no excuse for the Left or civil libertarians to ignore, or wish away, the fundamental problems arising from the growth and sophistication of organised crime.

Before concluding, I want to stress another reason why socialists should take up the issue of organised crime. Most workers have an implicit faith in the capitalist system, even if it is mixed with a great deal of cynicism. They also have an underlying fundamental faith in capitalism's institutions, no matter how cynically they may express themselves about them.

Fully exposing organised crime's nature and its links with political, police and top business circles can help break the illusions. The 'rotten apple' theory is generally accepted by most working people when it comes to corruption in high places. Sure, in NSW, I think workers now think there are a lot of 'rotten apples' in the police force, and politics generally. But they continued on page 59
ART AND POLITICS

Twenty years of rock and roll in Wollongong

The heart of the rock and roll industry is the thousands of men and women who rock it out night after night in the pubs and clubs across Australia. NEIL PORTER and ARNIE OLBRICH live and play in Wollongong, a bastion of heavy metal. Here they speak to MIKE DONALDSON about the current state of the rock industry, and reflect on the 22 years their careers span.

Interview by Mike Donaldson
Neil: I first seriously picked up a guitar in 1961. I learned to play E, A, B7 which is about par for most guitar players and joined my first band in 1962. I performed pretty continuously until 1980 when I gave it away. I played with a famous Wollongong mid-sixties band, The Marksman, until 1968. We then had a name change, became Imagination and went on to Sydney for two years playing full-time and living hand-to-mouth, stealing food where we could get it. We played every major venue in Sydney and a few other states and put out two singles. The first single got to number 80 nationally, scoring a 13 on a country station in Queensland, and 25 on another Queensland station. That caved in due to starvation and other financial problems. I decided that it was better to be a big frog in a small pond, than nothing in Sydney, so I moved back to Wollongong and played out the rest of my career here in Music Co.

Arnie: I’ve been playing 20 years. I began with The Coffin Cheaters with whom I toured Leeton and Griffith (laughs). It’s hard to believe but in one night we made a hundred bucks, each. That was unbelievable for those days, and is bloody good money today. After that, I spent a short time with The Solomon Right Crusade, another Wollongong band. I had a break in ‘68, coming back in ‘72 with a band called Gas stove, the remnants of which became the three-piece that Neil worked with in his closing seven-year stretch. Then came Tree with whom I played Checkers and all the major Sydney venues.

AC/DC were playing at Checkers at that time too and we used to do half hour about. When the special guest band came on, we’d sit down together and I’d say to Angus (Young), “What’re you guys going to do next set?” He’d say, “Aw, shit ... Jumping Jack Flash. Wishing Well, All Right Now ...” I’d say, “Christ, you can’t do them, that’s what we were going to do ...” “Ahn ... OK, we’ll play the first set again.” We did that for about four years. And then that band merged with Freshwater which was already an established band with a top ten national hit single, directed by Peter Sheen.

I left them to it and started a band called Fools Theatre, which didn’t last long. Then came Cloud. Then I went to the UK and played around a bit, doing some time with the guys from the Masters’ Apprentices, Nashville Teens. When I came back I started Hard Grind, put out a single, and I’m now in the process of kicking off The Works.

Mike: Neil, why’s Arnie going around again?

Neil: Nobody from Wollongong in the hard rock scene has ever “made it”. We don’t even know of an individual person, let alone a band, that has made it out of steel city. But it’s just not true that all the best musicians are in Sydney, Melbourne and the capital cities, so why hasn’t Wollongong produced any significant music? The bands in Wollongong that have made their own singles, Reverend Black and the Rocking Vicos in 1967, my band, Imagination in 1969, a great huge gap until Tarquin/Gangsters in about 1978, and Arnie’s old band Hard Grind in 1982. Four bands in 20 years. What happened? Why didn’t they get famous? We call it the Wollongong syndrome, but we don’t know what it is. It’s discouragement, despair and slackness all mixed in together, which stops Wollongong musicians from ever really making it.

Arnie: It’s not lack of talent. If you take the working class suburb of Berkeley, one small area of Wollongong, it had a greater concentration of musos than anywhere, and that’s no shit. Heaps and heaps of players and bands, all from Berkeley.

Mike: Maybe the problem is that it’s also got the highest concentration of communists?

Arnie: Yeah, it’s probably all your fault. But maybe it’s that we prefer to be big fish in a small pond than a sardine in the ocean.

Neil: The five top Wollongong bands that had a single and toured have all had one individual who has been manically single-minded, and has driven the rest of the band. I drove my band, made them practice seven days a week. They jackied up, hated me, said that what I was expecting of them was humanly impossible. Arnie drove his band, but not hard enough in my opinion. Billy Mawer of Tarquin used to drive his band hard and sometimes seemed cold-blooded in the way that he would sack someone. I used to say to him, “Sack ‘em now, mate, don’t wait for five years regretting that you hadn’t.” So he turned into a bloodthirsty slave driver.

Arnie: Yeah, I’ve been catching so much shit lately, too. Like at rehearsals, I say “Pretzel, what the fucking hell are you doing?” Last time you sang in that song, you’re not singing, what are you doing?” He gets all petulant and drops his bottom lip. “You know, well it just didn’t sound right!” I’d say, “Look, man, we got two rehearsals to go. Are you going to sing, or are you not going to sing? I don’t like surprises on the first gig.” “Look, Arnie,” he’d say, “I’m just trying it out.”

Neil: Sack him, I’m serious, sack him.

Look, who’s the leader in that band? You’ve got to have someone to hold the thing together.

Arnie: I tell you what. I’d hate to work for a rock and roll musician. They treat you like shit, and I’d be working for monkey’s shit. I wouldn’t be getting any overtime or any of the other benefits. Look, the overwhelming majority of rock musos have got absolutely no commitment to anything except the individual road to money or fame, and that’s it. They have no time for trade unions, and no sense of class solidarity at all.

Mike: What were the tools of the trade like that you started off with?

Neil: I bought myself a twin 12-inch speaker amp and started playing bass through it — bass didn’t go very well through those sort of speakers — so we gradually tried to build up our gear, but you tend not to, thinking that you’ll only be playing rock and roll for a couple of years, while you’re an “immature teenager”, and then you’ll grow up and do something else. So it goes on for a few more years, and you suddenly think, “Gee, I’ve played for five years on this rotten duct gear”.

We saw The Executives playing out at Wollongong Showgrounds, and they had these beautiful amplifiers called Leonard amplifiers, so we found out where to buy then, went up to Sydney and spent a thousand bucks each on these new amps and went full-time. It did look impressive, with big walls of amps stacked up behind you. A write up in Go-Set, Australia’s only rock magazine at the time, said that we were so loud that you had to go four blocks away for the sound to come in focus — we were ahead of our time with regard to booming volume. So the point about equipment back then was that, through the ’sixties it got bigger, and more and more expensive.

But the equipment was for instrumental music. What was a microphone? You never made any announcements, you just got up there and played.

Of course The Beatles came in and kicked the bottom out of the bucket. Overnight, we had to learn how to sing. Six guys singing through a six-inch speaker. The feedback! Then it just grew like crazy, the amps got bigger and bigger. Now, of course, they have a one-foot square amp, like the one I started with, but with unbelievable quality. The quality these days is incredible. You can hear every instrument. And mixing became crucial. Before, if you had a solo, you turned yourself up and set new settings on your guitar and then, after the solo, you readjusted. I reckon we worked.
IMAGINATION

1969: (From left) Lyle McLalne, Nell Porter, Max Stefanovic, and Geoff Foster in Imagination.

'IMAGINATION' MANAGED BOOKED ABSOLUTE SOUNDS 29-3351

hard for our money.

Arnle: I don't know. I think you work a lot harder now. If you're in a band that's on a shoestring budget like most of us still are, you've got to hump gear. You can't afford roadies, so you've got to hump half a ton, or a ton of gear to the gig.

You've got to get there about four o'clock, set up your gear, have a quick sound check. Then you work while you're still sweating, knackered, absolutely tired out. At the end of the night, after you've finished your gig, instead of sitting down and having a nice beer and driving home, you've got to have a real quick beer and then hump your gear out to the truck again and then drive home. It's no fun.

Roadies are a luxury, without them we're on overheads of $350 a night. In a pub you only earn $250 a night — you're paying to play.

Nell: To play a four-hour gig takes you from 2.30 in the afternoon to 2.30 at night — and you might come home with $15 or $20 a piece, if you're lucky. In the 'sixties, a four-hour gig would only take you six hours maximum, and the money was more or less the same, maybe a bit less.

Mike: Well, why aren't you making more money?

Arnle: I just, think it's a matter that you've got to have the technology. Your overheads have gone up, but the wages that you get from the pub haven't gone up at all. Ten years ago, you were making $150 a night in a pub, without overheads. Nowadays you've got heaps more overheads, but you're still earning basically the same wages. If you want to get better, you've got to get better gear. Your overheads are trebling and quadrupling, but you're still making the same money in the pubs, in the hope of maybe getting there one day.

Another really big change in music that we haven't spoken about yet concerns original music. With The Beatles we had to start thinking about writing music too Australia didn't really come into its own with local songs until 1970/71, but now original stuff just can't be played in clubs.

Nell: Wollongong bands get disheartened because they get all fired up, buy their gear, practise for six months without a gig, get their first gig, wait six months for another one, find that no one will hire them because they play their own music. So they start playing 30 percent of their own songs, so someone books them and says, "Look, you need 50 percent covers", so they learn 50 percent of other people's songs, and so they're up to 80 percent.

By then they're five years older, got a wife and kids, and think, "Gee, it's easier to learn other people's songs than to write your own", and so the originals disappear, and they become a bland, boring, tame club band.

Arnle: But I suppose that there is some room for optimism in all this. There is simply such a vast diversity of music around today — you've got your jazz freaks, old time rock and rollers, heavy metal, the so-called punks, the new wavers, and popular music. It's so diversified I think that you could find a niche for yourself and almost survive.

A lot of years ago everyone sounded like The Shadows, then it was The Stones, and The Beatles, but the range of choice around now is so much greater today.

Mike: Isn't that the same as saying that you have to become more specialised? If you put all your eggs in one basket and become a highly proficient specialised musician, and put all your talent and money into one style, what happens if you've chosen wrong?

Nell: You cry a lot and get old quick.

Mike: How do you get your little niche to become the Hordern Pavilion?

Nell: Radio Birdman, when they first came out, sounded absolutely abominable to the average ear which had been trained on Abba at that time, and the Ramones, they were playing punk in the sixties, and just kept on playing it, until someone picked up on...
enough to be popular, and what? Who knows, they got cult some kids saw in that style of music a

rt Like

Original stuff was pretty unheard of in Shadows, weren't good enough to copy instrumentals, for the truth was that we Marksmen

around and seem just as popular now seventies, but live bands are still
covers. The guitar player In bad band by listening to how they play that.

ana I don't know anyone who can say album, they did hundreds ot originals, or when we were young. Even The Beatles didn't produce an LP of all their own stuff until Revolver. The only Australian band to produce all their own stuff was The Easybeats. Right from their first album, they did hundreds of originals, and I don't know anyone who can say that.

Mike: Disco was a major technological innovation that was said to be bad for rock and roll. I guess it hit in the mid-seventies, but live bands are still around and seem just as popular now as when we were young.

Neil: By 1979, bands were back in disco, and the band got paid its full price, and the disco got paid its full price, but they both only worked half a night each, so really the musicians got it better. 1976/77 when disco peaked, were worrying years, when disco appeared to be taking over, but it was just a fashion. But you see, the bands weren't playing good music to dance to, whereas disco music between 1975 and 1978 was just great to dance to. So, of course, the bands started playing funkier music, and they got their jobs back.

Arnie: It's really hard to criticise a disco, know what I mean? A record, you hear it, you like it, you don't. What is there to talk about? People were getting sick of disco — they liked human musicians, up on stage with their own personalities and idiosyncrasies.

Mike: After the disco flare-up in the mid-seventies, bands adapted their music to get back to dance music, but at the same time the speed of technological change in the industry seemed to be accelerating — with quite marked effects on social relations inside the band — increasing use of keyboard, lead guitarists starting to move away from centre stage, wind instruments starting to come back. There's been massive changes in technology on stage — foot pedals, equalisers and offstage — mixing, phrasing. Did you have to re-learn, re-educate yourselves?

Neil: Yeah, I've undergone a fair bit of retraining. Take a graphic equaliser. Bass guitarists like me might once have said what on earth's a graphic equaliser? And yet most stereos and even car stereos contain these things now. What it does is to adjust the range of that instrument, and colour the tone of the instrument in a beautiful way, so that with a couple of switches your guitar can sound like a heavy metal instrument, next song, jazz. Before, you had to work a lot harder to get those sounds, and couldn't just flip a switch. Speaking for myself, I'm greatly in favour of the current technology. It is absolutely magnificent, and I can't over-praise it.

Arnie: Yeah, but it's not just foot pedals, you know? The whole thing has become so professionalised now that it's not funny. In order to step out on stage now, it seems that you've got to have a choreographer trained in the USA to tell you where to stand and how to move.

Neil: Ah ... come on. Sure, there is professional choreography, but look, you take someone like Ross Wilson from Mondo Rock. You can't tell me anyone is pulling his strings. From the first moment he walks on stage he is brilliant. He is just there.

Arnie: You're putting the chicken in front of the egg now. He's already famous; he's already made it. If he got out there with a bunch of guys that weren't famous and tried to do his stuff, everybody would scream out “Bullshit, bullshit; fuck off. We want Mondo Rock”.

Neil: No, a brand new band can walk on stage and if the players have got real presence and charisma, and precision timing to back it up, they'll get their following.

Arnie: But what are the kids going to think? They can go up to the Entertainment Centre, or Horderns in Sydney, and see this super tech-ed up band, and then they come back home and go down to the Headies (Hotel) and check out the local band, what are they going to think?

Neil: OK, so how do you cross that gap? How do you go from a local band to the Sydney Entertainment Centre? There's only one way to get famous, have an album and a film clip.

Above: Tree. Right: 1981: (From left) Bert Matteschek, Brett Cooper, Peter Ryan and Arnie Olbrich in Hard Grind. continued on page 19

AUSTRALIAN LEFT REVIEW 87 41
George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four was written during a period of anti-communist hysteria and is a highly sophisticated attempt to influence the political attitudes of its readers. In this article, Raymond Southall examines the devices which Orwell used to achieve his political purpose through the fictional literary form.

Die Demokratie muß gelegentlich in Blut gebadet werden.

Junta Chef Pinochet im Auftrag von ITT, CIA, Kennecott Copper Corp u.a.

THE POLITICS OF DESPAIR

George Orwell had already established himself as an anti-Soviet writer when Nineteen Eighty-Four appeared in 1949. His beast fable, Animal Farm, which was published four years earlier, has been described by Penguin Books as a "satire upon dictatorship, the history of a revolution that went wrong — and of the excellent excuses that were forthcoming at every step for each perversion of the original doctrine." The success of Animal Farm is largely due to the manner in which George Orwell translates a trotskyite critique of the Soviet Union's attempt to build socialism in one country into the kind of cant which leads the bourgeois to agree with socialism in theory but not in practice and to maintain that although socialism is a beautiful idea it cannot be realised because human nature is too beastly. This, incidentally, is the bourgeois attitude towards Christianity and towards any other doctrine which assumes that humans are something more than vicious, self-centred animals. It is an attitude which was being supported by 1945 by references to what had happened in Germany under fascism. "There you are," it was being said. "You see what people are like. They may appear decent enough on the surface, but underneath the thin veneer of civilisation human nature is still as Hobbes described it, red in tooth and claw." This is a view which presents a pretty picture of bourgeois humanism in the twentieth century!
In Nineteen Eighty-Four Orwell jettisons the beast fable and elaborates the ‘message’ of Animal Farm into an horrific vision of the future. Following a period of atomic war and revolution the world in 1984 has divided into three power-blocs — Eastasia, Eurasia and Oceania. The international political scene is composed of the shifting alliances and the mutual betrayals of these three blocs as they wage constant war for control of the underdeveloped territories which provide them with a source of slave labour. Perpetual warfare has become the foundation of economic life in each of the blocs and in each of them provides the necessary psychological condition for the dictatorship of the Party. In England, a part of Oceania known as Air-strip One, the form of the Party is Ingsoc and society is divided into three groups: the affluent, policymaking Inner Party; the bureaucrats who comprise the Outer Party; and the Proles, the work force. The children of Party members, dressed in “blue shorts, grey shirt, and red neckerchiefs,” are organised into the Spies, so-called because their role is to spy upon their relatives and friends for the Thought Police. Women Party members also have their own organisation, the Anti-Sex League, the role of which is also explicit in its title.

Party members, dressed in black uniforms, are all employed in one or other of the four ministries. The Ministry of Peace directs the war, the Ministry of Love controls internal security through the Thought Police, the Ministry of Plenty is dedicated to reducing home-consumption and boosting war production. Finally, there is the Ministry of Truth, which is responsible for mass-producing culture, developing Newspeak (the official language which aims at eliminating the English vocabulary so as to make thought impossible) and rewriting history every time there is a change in Party policy.

Members of the Inner Party live in luxurious flats, have servants, drink real coffee and real wine, eat real butter, smoke real cigarettes. Outer Party members occupy broken-down tenements, drink synthetic coffee and synthetic gin, eat synthetic butter and smoke synthetic cigarettes. All Party members live under the constant and omnipresent eye of the telescreen from whose ever-watchful glare only the proles are free. Almost as numerous as the telescreens are the gigantic posters depicting Big Brother, leader of the Party and the People, an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-seeing father figure, whose existence is an article of Party faith since no-one ever appears to see him. Apart from the “black-haired, black-moustachio’d” face of Big Brother, the bill-boards are plastered with the three Party slogans — “War is Peace”, “Freedom is Slavery”, “Ignorance is Strength”, which epitomise Doublethink, the intellectual methodology of the Party. Except for the billboards, which bear such slogans and ever-new pictures of Big Brother, and the smart modernity of the telescreens, the urban scenery is grey, shabby, diapitated.

The full horror of life in 1984 is revealed to us through the consciousness of Orwell’s central character, Winston Smith. A member of the Outer Party, he works in the Ministry of Truth, where his job is continuously to rewrite history, fitting the records of the past to the latest turn of Party policy by destroying every record which disagrees with it and substituting forgeries. He himself, like everyone else in 1984, has lost all sense of the past, although he is visited occasionally by elusive memories of childhood. Through this consciousness we view the daily ritual of the two-minute hate and the frenetic preparations for Hate Week, the annual festival of Air-strip One. It is a consciousness which is slowly drifting into sheeresy against the Party and Ingsoc. The deviation begins with the keeping of a diary, develops into a rather sordid love-affair with another Outer Party member and prompts Smith to seek contact with The Brotherhood, a resistance organisation which is probably a pure invention of the Party. Finally, it leads him to O’Brien, a member of The Brotherhood who, it turns out, is a leading member of the Thought Police. Winston Smith and his girl friend are duly arrested, taken to the cellars of the Ministry of Love, subjected to horrible tortures and finally denounced each other. Then they proceed to confess to crimes they have never committed and are brought to a condition in which they actually love Big Brother for having saved them from further crimes. Full of genuine gratitude and love towards Big Brother and the Party for having taught them the error of their ways, they are released to await assassination.

In a period of growing anti-communist hysteria Nineteen Eighty-Four was naturally taken up and popularised by the media: it was condensed in Reader’s Digest, selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club, had eight pages devoted to it in Life magazine and was turned into a film.

“In a period of growing anti-communist hysteria Nineteen Eighty-Four was naturally taken up and popularised by the media: it was condensed in Readers Digest, selected by the Book-of-the-Month Club, had eighty pages devoted to it in Life magazine and was turned into a film.”

of the past, although he is visited occasionally by elusive memories of childhood. Through this consciousness we view the daily ritual of the two-minute hate and the frenetic preparations for Hate Week, the annual festival of Air-strip One. It is a consciousness which is slowly drifting into heresy against the Party and Ingsoc. The deviation begins with the keeping of a diary, develops into a rather sordid love-affair with another Outer Party member and prompts Smith to seek contact with The Brotherhood, a resistance organisation which is probably a pure invention of the Party. Finally, it leads him to O’Brien, a member of The Brotherhood who, it turns out, is a leading member of the Thought Police. Winston Smith and his girl friend are duly arrested, taken to the cellars of the Ministry of Love, subjected to horrible tortures and finally denounced each other. Then they proceed to confess to crimes they have never committed and are brought to a condition in which they actually love Big Brother for having saved them from further crimes. Full of genuine gratitude and love towards Big Brother and the Party for having taught them the error of their truly reactionary writer does nothing of the sort. In an essay entitled “Why I write”, which appeared in 1947 and in which he refers to his next book, Nineteen Eighty-Four — “I do know with some clarity what kind of book I want to write” — Orwell explicitly mentions political purpose as one of his motives in writing. He defines ‘political purpose’ as a “Desire to push the world in a certain direction, to alter other people’s ideas of the kind of society that they should strive after”.

He then goes on to say that “no book is genuinely free from political bias. The opinion that art should have nothing to do with politics is itself a political attitude”. That is a statement with which every marxist would agree; it is plainly not that of a writer who, in Fast’s words, “plumbs for the separation of ‘art’ from politics”. Orwell is one of those artists who, as Christopher Caudwell remarked, “cannot be content with the beautiful art work, but seem to desert the practice of art for social theory and become novelists of ideas, literary prophets and propaganda novelists”.

Nineteen Eighty-Four is a novel with a definite and fully realised political purpose. Its overt effect is that of “a
25 Jahre
Menschenrechte
25 Jahre Folter

25 years of Human Rights. 25 Years of Torture '1984. This poster was published 25 years after the writing of 1984.

piercing shriek announcing the advent of a black millennium", as Deutscher claimed. This effect, however, is very carefully created; it is not the shrill utterance of a madman, obsessed by a terrifying nightmare. On the contrary, Orwell's novel is a highly sophisticated attempt to influence the political attitudes of his readers. This he attempts in the novel by calling upon the entrenched fears, frustrations and confusions which are recorded and strengthened in the literature of modernism and by a cleverly selected, edited and condensed appeal to actual historical experience. For instance, the historical setting of the novel is in many respects that of war-time London. There is the same general air of dilapidation about the city; the rocket bombs falling upon it from time to time; the rows of houses with their windows broken and boarded up; the marked public interest in the progress of the war; the war effort in the factories; the synthetic foodstuffs; rationing; the occasional and inexplicable shortages of razor blades, darning wool, shoe-laces, buttons, all of which are on offer on the black market. The suggestion that a socialist revolution would simply perpetuate such conditions, transforming temporary austenities into the normal pattern of life, was a nicely judged piece of political persuasion at a time when people in England were still fretting under many wartime restrictions.

The second device used in the novel to discredit socialism is much subtler. It is the implication that socialism in Britain would be the imposition of a foreign, i.e. Russian, system. This implication is contained most powerfully, of course, in the image of Big Brother. Big Brother is quite plainly not a latter-day Harry Pollitt but a latter-day Stalin; not only is he the object of a fervent personality cult, but he has the unmistakable black mustache. Perhaps for a German reader I would not need to argue the fuller implication of this image of Big Brother; in Australia the implication operates but operates unnoticed. It is that the description of the venerable, black-haired, black-moustachio'd leader could equally well apply to Hitler. Australian people are inclined to consider this far-fetched until one explains in more detail the subtlety with which Orwell creates an image of socialism which is a monstrous hybrid of socialism and 'national socialism'. Members of the Party, for instance, are dressed in black uniforms; the program of the Party is war; the purpose of conquest is to obtain slave labour for the munitions factories; the arch-villain Goldstein has the face and doctrines of Trotsky, but he is also Jewish, and the mass hysteria of the daily two-minute hate is intended not only to suggest Soviet attacks upon Trotsky but also Nazi anti-semitism.

This deliberate confusion of socialism and fascism directed the deep and fresh horror of fascism, which springs directly from a failure to revelations of Nazi brutality, against the possibility and desirability of a socialist future. It is a confusion which proved very serviceable to those responsible for spreading anti-communist Cold War hysteria and one which springs directly from a failure to make sense of the modern world. For the bourgeois nowadays socialism and fascism are conveniently lumped together under the general title of totalitarianism and Orwell's intention and performance in Nineteen Eighty-Four needs to be viewed in the light of this confusion, for as he himself confessed in 1947, "Every line of serious work that I have written since 1936 has been written, directly or indirectly, against totalitarianism and for democratic socialism".

"Democratic socialism" is a fine phrase and it suggests, insofar as it suggests anything at all, the kind of belief which Orwell's hero, Winston Smith, expresses when he writes in his diary, "If there is hope ... it lies in the proles". But Orwell's attitude to the working class is implicit in the very word used to describe them — 'proles'. This middle-class contraction of proletarians is a term of ridicule or
contempt. It sums up very nicely the image of the working class with which we are presented in Nineteen Eighty-Four: Working class people are invariably represented as chauvinistic, bovine, pleasure-seeking, vice-ridden oafs:

Heavy physical work, the care of home and children, petty quarrels with neighbours, films, football, beer, and, above all, gambling, filled up the horizon of their minds. To keep them in control was not difficult. The attempt was made to indoctrinate them with the ideology of the Party. It was not desirable that the proles should have strong political feelings. All that was required of them was a primitive patriotism which could be appealed to whenever it was necessary to make them accept longer working-hours or shorter rations. And even when they became discontented, as they sometimes did, their discontent led nowhere, because being without general ideas, they could only focus it on petty specific grievances. The larger evils invariably escaped their notice...

How is it possible for a man to believe himself to be a democratic socialist and yet to look upon working-class people in this way? For although Orwell is here describing what the working class would become, obviously he must believe that potentially this is what it is. Such contempt for the mass of the people — and the proles, we are told, comprise 85 percent of Oceania's population — is characteristic of bourgeois egoism. By 'democratic socialism', therefore, Orwell is referring apparently to the rule of those who believe, like Flaubert, 'that the mob, the herd, will always be hateful' and that 'What counts is only the small group of kindred spirits, ever the same, who hand on the torch from one to another.' "And his attitude to the working class arises from the same source as Flaubert's; as Raymond Williams has pointed out, Orwell's 'way of seeing working people is not from fact and observation, but from the pressures of feeling exiled' which leads the middle-class writer to see other people as "an undifferentiated mass"."

The same contempt for people is evident in the handling of Winston Smith's love affair with Julia. What his initial feelings for her were he declares to her when they are alone together for the first time:

"I hated the sight of you," he said. "I wanted to rape you and then murder you afterwards. Two weeks ago I thought seriously of smashing your head in with a cobblestone." 

The physical brutality of this is typical of the emotional tone of Nineteen Eighty-Four. As Smith prepares to make love to Julia on this occasion he learns that she has made love with Party members scores of times. This news delights him because it suggests corruption in the Party and the thought that crosses his mind is that "If he could have infected the whole lot of them with leprous or syphilitic, how gladly he would have done so". He then turns to Julia with the declaration, "I hate purity, I hate goodness! I don't want any virtue to exist anywhere. I want everyone to be corrupt to the bones". To which Julia replies, "Well then, Iought to suit you, dear. I'm corrupt to the bones!" The Lawrentian notion of living through the senses in a world of corruption seems to be what we actually encounter in Nineteen Eighty-Four and not only in the sordid love affair. But in Nineteen Eighty-Four we can plainly inspect the consequences of such a notion. Here sensuality is itself, of necessity, also corrupt and finds its natural expression in sadism — in the spontaneous desire to rape, murder and smash. In a particularly horrific passage, for instance, O'Brien asks Winston Smith what acts he and Julia are prepared to undertake against the Party:

"You are prepared to cheat, to forge, to blackmail, to corrupt the minds of children, to distribute habit-forming drugs, to encourage prostitution, to disseminate venereal diseases — to do anything which is likely to cause demoralisation and weaken the power of the Party?"

"Yes."

"If, for example, it would somehow serve our interests to throw sulphuric acid in a child's face — are you prepared to do that?"

The same vicious obsession with physical brutality is elaborated in the lengthy scenes of torture which follow Winston Smith's arrest, scenes which culminate in the final horror of Smith clamped down, unable to move, while starving rats are released to feed on his face and eyes. He is saved from the rats by betraying Julia, by screaming out,

"Do it to Julia! Do it to Julia! Not me! Julia! I don't care what you do to her — tear her face off, strip her to the bones. Not me! Julia! Not me!"

The same obsession is expressed in O'Brien's vision of the future. "If you want a picture of the future," he tells Winston Smith, "imagine a boot stamping on a human face — for ever." 

I remarked earlier that Nineteen Eighty-Four is not the shrill utterance of a madman. No doubt that judgment becomes increasingly suspect as one responds to the horrifying nastiness of the book. Nevertheless, it is, I believe, still the correct judgment. Orwell was not insane: isolated, vicious, sadistic, but with a disposition that was emotionally in tune with the anti-communist hysteria of the Cold War period. The undermining of sanity which takes place in Nineteen Eighty-Four is primarily a social event and not an individual misfortune. It is the kind of insanity which led Dulles' predecessor to commit suicide by jumping out of a window screaming that the Reds were after him ...."

Reviewed by Steve Catt

A CAREFUL ANALYSIS

David Combe's fate at the hands of the Hawke Labor government is an issue which has touched deeply people's sense of injustice: there is substantial suspicion that he has been "dumped" with no justification.

But at the popular level it is only suspicion. Among other considerations, disbelief that a Labor government would destroy its ex-secretary causes doubt about the conclusions and the secrecy surrounding the evidence before the Hope Royal Commission makes it difficult to patch together a convincing commonsense explanation of extraordinary events.

But still the suspicion exists. The Stumblebum Syndrome takes us beyond suspicion into careful analysis of the evidence that is available.

Although the bulk of the book is about the Combe-Ivanov Affair, the central theme is ASIO: under the guise of "national security".

The ASIO outlook, moulded from its origins, its history and its tasks assigned by anti-Labor governments, remains deeply suspicious of trade unions, the Labor Party and Democratic Socialism, however moderate and reformist this may be. When it comes to Labor's left .... the Security mind sees little or no difference between them and communists. And as the case of David Combe shows, ASIO can find dangers even in people from the ALP's centre ground.

ASIO's doubts about Combe have a number of strands.

ASIO'S CASE AGAINST COMBE

The first doubt about Combe is money: he planned to make a lot. ASIO saw him as being greedy and thus vulnerable to KGB funds. Unfortunately for ASIO, Combe "expected to make a fortune quickly from big and 'respectable' corporations, he was not in any financial difficulty and was inundated with clients". Mr. Justice Hope saw no problem in this.

Secondly, Combe was supposedly "bitterly anti-American" (and thus prone to subversion of Australia?). Again, ASIO had it wrong; they based their judgment on Combe's criticisms of the CIA's role in the destabilisation of the Whitlam government and the Kerr coup. Combe is not alone in this, but "in ASIO's eyes, this is sufficient to prove 'bitter anti-Americanism' and even significant evidence of being a potential traitor".

Combe, of course, rejected the assertion in detail in his evidence: there is some small distinction between the CIA and the USA. Hope concluded that ASIO was wrong.

The third strand in ASIO's case is Combe's "apparent enthusiasm for things Soviet", amounting to an ideological commitment.

Combe claims that he was only concerned with developing closer relations, mutual understanding, the development of trade and, above all, peaceful relations between East and West.

He was, in fact, "highly critical of the Soviet System". Character witnesses from the ALP supported him on this. ASIO embellished its case with embarrassingly mistaken accusations of free trips on a luxury liner and to the Soviet Union. Again, Hope was not impressed by ASIO's case.

INTELLIGENCE LOGIC

The crucial issues in the case lie beyond these absurdities. However, it is important to see in these and later arguments more than that they are just wrong. The crucial point consistently brought out by
Aarons in the treatment of all ASIO’s allegations is that

Everything is circumstantial, everything depended on accepting their premises and following the Intelligence logic, wildly different from ordinary logic and certainly unsuitable to prove a case in any court.

The evidence is tailored to support a position that is predetermined on the basis of institutionally deep-seated prejudices. It is difficult to grasp the extraordinary reality of these practices without seeing how it is consistently presented in the detailed dissection of the ASIO case. This brief summary can state it, but cannot drive the point home.

THE REAL ISSUES

ASIO’s case really stands or falls on whether or not:

- Ivanov was a KGB operative
- Whether Combe knew he was
- Whether, knowing this, Combe was prepared to sell himself to Ivanov
- That Ivanov suggested and Combe accepted that their relationship should become clandestine.

Most of the evidence on Ivanov as a KGB agent is censored. Without access to it, we cannot decide whether he was or not. On the evidence available, some doubts are suggested; cross-examination by Combe’s counsel of the ASIO operatives produces some interesting holes in the view that Ivanov was a professional, dedicated KGB agent. From this evidence, Aarons concludes:

Ivanov may be a KGB man, of course, but if so he was not very capable, effective or careful.

Frankly, the more crucial question is whether Combe knew. ASIO’s evidence is indirect ("his alleged attempt to make their relationship ‘clandestine’... his acceptance of the possibility that any Soviet diplomat may be... a KGB member") and from two witnesses.

The clandestinity suggestion arose from Ivanov telling Combe on April 3 that he (Ivanov) could be expelled, that Combe’s phone was tapped and that he could be implicated. Ivanov suggested that any further contacts should be made by one contacting the other at home. "ASIO claims that this meant Ivanov was proposing a ‘clandestine’ relationship which Combe accepted." Nothing had happened: ASIO feared it might. On what basis? Under cross-examination, virtually none.

Of the two witnesses relied on by ASIO, one is entirely unreliable. The other, Matheson, has a lengthy chapter devoted to him. He has a strange background: ex-naval intelligence, incredibly rich after trade deals with the Soviet Union, etc. He is the only one to claim that Combe knew that Ivanov was KGB.

On March 7th 1983... he alleges Combe told him ‘Ivanov is more than he appears to be’. Matheson says he did not ask what Combe meant by this because he considered that it meant ‘Combe believed Ivanov was a KGB man’.

Hope rejected Matheson’s interpretation of Combe’s remark but then concluded that Combe believed that Ivanov probably was a KGB officer. Aarons suggests

“not from evidence but from his own prejudice and already-formed opinions about Combe and his attitude to Ivanov.... Hope appears to be saying that Combe ought to have known Ivanov was a KGB officer, therefore he did know.

Matheson apparently is also the source of the clandestinity proposal and appears to be ASIO’s chief informer in the Affair. There is even a suggestion that he acted as an agent provocateur. The extensive treatment of the extraordinary figure of Matheson is fascinating.

Combe’s great attribute was his access to Labor ministers. Would be betray them and would they let him? Security hopefully makes such matters difficult. Where is the evidence that it was on the cards... or even a possibility? It obviously doesn’t exist because, as the ASIO head says:

fortunately it never happened due to Ivanov’s expulsion but we were scared it would happen.

The chapters on Combe and Matheson constitute the bulk of The Stumblebum Syndrome.

Some of the other chapters proceed to address broader questions related to the cloak of security. Mr. Justice Hope comes under fire in Chapter 4 as an apologist for the security mentality. In Chapter 5, the cult of security —

continued on page 51

AND

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL BIPARTISAN COMMISSION ON CENTRAL AMERICA

Peter Ross

NORTH-SOUTH, EAST-WEST

It's a common observation that tourists can learn as much in their first day in a strange country as can be learnt in a week or a month. The quality of their perception has more to do with the quality of the ideological baggage they carry about with them, than with the actual assault on the senses afforded by the foreign environment in which they land themselves.

Central America has become a new mecca for the tourist of the genus 'politico'. Two accounts by such tourists have recently been published. The first, entitled Report of the National Bi-partisan Commission on Central America (more popularly known as the 'Kissinger Report') was released in January 1984. It gained wide publicity in the Western media, not only in magazines such as Time and Newsweek, but also in most serious daily newspapers.

The second report, Kissinger's Kingdom? A Counter-report on Central America by Stuart Holland and Donald Anderson, two English members of parliament, was also released in early 1984. As its subtitle indicates, it is an answer to the Kissinger Report although its authors note that this was not the original intention. Rather, they had been commissioned by Neil Kinnock, leader of the British Labour Party, to undertake a fact finding mission on Central America. However, since their findings were so radically different from those of Washington's Bipartisan Commission, they could not help but write what was, in effect, a counter-report.

While the two groups were concerned with the same area of investigation and spent roughly the same time in the region (about six days), differences in rationale and organisation must be taken into account.

The Kissinger Commission was established in July 1983 as a bipartisan body to study the Central American crisis and produce a report that would gain wide support from Republicans and Democrats. The commission was composed of 12 men, ranging from university presidents and professors, through politicians and businessmen to one sole representative of labour, AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland. The commission, quite clearly a representation of the governing class in the United States, interviewed former US presidents, secretaries of state, and other 'experts' before winging its way through Central America and producing its report in a flurry of dissension, arm-twisting and confusion.

Kissinger's Kingdom?, on the other hand, is the work of two Labour Party men, one of whom (Holland) is the shadow minister for Overseas Development and Co-operation, while the other (Anderson) is the shadow minister for Foreign Affairs. British Labour Party policy is already progressive in regard to the struggles of the people in the region since it pledges support "for all those radical and democratic forces currently striving to bring dictatorship and foreign domination to an end in Central America". Obviously, Holland and Anderson approached their task with a vastly different perspective from that of the Kissinger group.

How then do the two shape up? The Kissinger Report is characterised by:

1) An abysmal level of analysis which, at times, would not be acceptable from a first year university student, e.g. "Perhaps the United States should have paid some attention to Central America sooner. Perhaps, over the
years, we should have intervened less, or intervened more, or intervened differently.”

2) A predilection to blame the Soviet Union and Cuba for fomenting dissent and revolution in the region without offering any proof to substantiate this claim.

3) A blurring of the truth that borders straight out lying as, for example, ignoring the fact that the ‘reform’ government brought in by the 1979 coup in El Salvador had disintegrated by January 1980. Or claiming that the ‘young officers’ who overthrew General Lucas in Guatemala in 1982 were reformists, when all the evidence indicates that repression has increased from that date. Or stating that Nicaragua is characterised by poor economic performance when, in fact, its economy has been performing better than any other in the region despite the efforts of the US to destabilise it militarily and economically. Etc, etc.

4) An underlying assumption that the US should pursue a military course to resolve the crisis.

5) A poorly thought out resurrection of past US policies: notably the recommendation that a Central American Development Organisation (CADO) be established along the lines of John F. Kennedy’s dismal failure, the Alliance for Progress.

6) An unquestioning belief that Central America is a US sphere of influence in which the White House has the right to decide who will, and who will not, govern.

Kissinger’s Kingdom?, on the other hand, is not encumbered by the imperialist assumptions and aspirations that underpin the US project. In its overview of the Central American crisis, the historic role of the US is analysed clearly and precisely.

Individual chapters of Kissinger’s Kingdom? are devoted to El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua. Of these, those dealing with El Salvador and Nicaragua are excellent introductions for those who know little of the area or for those who wish to bring themselves up to date. The Nicaraguan chapter in particular is quite full, covering such subjects as democracy, elections, pluralism, trade unions, censorship, minorities, social welfare, the economy, peace negotiations, and destabilisation. The problems and policies of the Sandinista government are discussed in a commonsense fashion that relies substructurally on the authors’ commitment to social democracy and pluralism. While these types of argument might not please every marxist, they are certainly an effective response to the crude dualism (right versus wrong, freedom versus communism) which pervades the Kissinger report and White House foreign policy statements.

But it is the chapter on Honduras which is most valuable in terms of giving information. In part, this is due to the paucity of news on this country which has only recently been catapulted into the world’s press by the US policy of transforming it into a military base and, in part, to the authors’ ability to concentrate on the key issues.

The hypocrisy of the US government in advocating land reform in El Salvador now that the FMLN threatens to overthrow the capitalist structure itself, but not land reform for Honduras where ownership is possibly even more concentrated, is underlined. So, too, is the appalling condition of the people. Honduras is not only one of the poorest countries in Central America; it is one of the poorest in the world.

Holland and Anderson give a thumbnail sketch of the economic

Sandinista in a home in Esteli, Nicaragua, before the liberation in July 1979. The Nicaragua economy is doing better than any other in the region despite the efforts of the US to destabilise it militarily and economically.

Some of the phrases which have been used, by left and right, at best as a kind of shorthand, at worst as self evident truths, are examined closely. The concepts of ‘backyard’ and ‘frontyard’, ‘another Vietnam’, ‘the Balkanisation of Central America’, and ‘satellite country’ are placed under the microscope to test their validity. It is refreshing to find the Vietnam analogy taken beyond the realm of a slogan so that the similarities and differences between the conflicts in Vietnam and El Salvador are laid bare.

Particularly telling, coming as it does from a European perspective, is the authors’ portrayal of the regional conflict as being more akin to the pre-World War I crisis in the Balkans than to US involvement in Vietnam: “If anything, (the US) record in the region has been less principled, more self-interested and more repressive than that of the Austro-Hungarian regime in the Balkan countries. We are surprised that this obvious analogy escaped Henry Kissinger, granted the influence of Metternich and the Austro-Hungarian Empire on his own version of ‘Realpolitik’. One would like to add the caveat that the USA in 1984 remains a powerful force and is not analogous in that sense to the failing Austro-Hungarian Empire of 1914.
dependence of Honduras on the world market, and of its failure to develop a viable national manufacturing sector. The inability to direct national and international capital into the manufacturing sector, and the problems related to graft and corruption are also sketched in. The current economic crisis (a foreign debt of US$1.65 billion, a recurring balance of payments deficit and growing fiscal deficit) are traced back to the structural and political deficiencies that have, for so long characterised Honduras and also to the present world depression which has seen the prices of primary exports plummet on the world market.

The authors outline the nature of the present government which, on the US analysis, is a democracy but which is more accurately described as a civilian-military cabal in which the military have the upper hand. The evidence for the growing power of the military over the government and the judiciary is presented, as also is the government's increasingly repressive response to the social unrest generated by the inequalities of the system, the economic crisis and the growing militarisation. Simply having to play host to over 5,000 US marines engaged in apparently endless war games has destabilised the economy further by creating artificial shortages, driving up prices and augmenting uneven regional development.

The executive power, which follows the dictates of the army which follows the orders of Washington, has, by its Emergency Economic Law, assumed complete control of the economy so that economic legislation is no longer presented to Congress. Public spending, particularly on health and welfare, has been slashed, overseas investment encouraged and wages frozen. Holland and Anderson point out that such measures, even assuming that the US comes good with its promises of massive aid, will not solve the structural problems of the economy. Moreover, foreign investors are wary of putting money into such a volatile region.

The two British members of parliament see the inequalities and structural deformations in the region as emanating from the dominance the developed world has over the third world, a view quite at variance with that of the Kissinger Report which expressly paints the crisis as one more example of East-West conflict in which the Soviet Union is seeking to establish a strategic and military base in the back yard of the United States. Whether Kissinger and his fellow commissioners seriously believe that this is so is open to doubt since the evidence they muster is pathetically weak.

Be that as it may, the two reports use their respective interpretations as the rationale for the strategies they advance to solve the problems. The Kissinger report opts for huge dollops of aid (US$8 billion over five years), much of it military to defeat the communist threat. The British report is extremely critical of their approach, arguing that it will neither be successful in stopping the bloodshed, nor useful in reorienting the economies. Rather, they base their economic and political strategy on the recommendations advanced by the conference of North Americans, Central Americans and Europeans held at the Hague in June 1983.

Unfortunately, Kissinger's Kingdom? does not elaborate sufficiently on the proposed "new model of development" which includes a strengthened public sector, redistribution of wealth and income, improved welfare services including housing, the encouragement of cooperative activity and the diversification of exports. It sounds, in fact, very much like the new Nicaragua.

Nor does the British report really get its teeth into the proposed economic model of the Kissinger Report which bases itself on the encouragement of local businessmen. Holland and Anderson do, however, attack the concept of 'conditionality' which the US attaches to its aid, i.e. that recipient countries must ally themselves with the interests of the United States — surely a new form of national suicide.

At this time, too, the recommendations of Holland and Anderson have no chance of being accepted. Even in government, the British Labour Party could only pressure, and not direct, the US to change its ways in Central America. Moreover, to redress the imbalance of power between North and South, more is needed than pious words from the North. Ultimately, only the power of the people in the underdeveloped nations will overcome the inequalities within their societies and between themselves and the developed countries. Still, the proposals advanced by the British shadow ministers are certainly worthwhile as a basis on which to develop strategy.

Kissinger's Kingdom? packs a lot of information and analysis into its 73 pages. It's recommended reading for the newcomer to the Central American crisis and, indeed, anyone interested in the developing debate around the global inequalities and structural deformations generated by the growth of capitalism. The book will shortly be available from the AMFSU, 136 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills 2010, and from PND, PO Box A243, Sydney South 2000.

Apparently, the US State Department is none too proud of the Kissinger Commission's Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America. It's not for sale in Australia. You can read it, however, at the reference library at the US Consulate in Sydney.

Peter Ross is a student of Latin American affairs and an activist in Latin American solidarity groups.
A CAREFUL ANALYSIS
from page 47

Part of the new ASIO Act of 1979 is examined in Chapter 6. Steve Rix is an Australian government employee who was given an adverse security report in relation to his employment on the basis of his membership of the Communist Party. He appealed successfully. Through the examination of this case and the way ASIO defines its powers - often in contravention of the Act which is the theoretical source of its legal powers — Aarons reveals the very serious extension of ASIO’s powers and the surreptitious erosion of civil liberties which occurred when the Act was passed. The Act means that all people employed directly or indirectly by the Federal Government are now the subject of ASIO assessments. All these people are now placed at risk in relation to their democratic right to freely associate in lawful social and political activity.

All under the pretext of “national security”.

Finally, the argument is drawn together in the seventh chapter on the security services and the labor movement. The Combe-Ivanov Affair is not an isolated crucifixion of one person. The orientation of the security services is established.

A plausible scenario? The details are interesting: read them.

FOOTNOTES

1. George Orwell, Animal Farm (Penguin


4. ibid.


6. op.cit., p. 184.


12. Gustave Flaubert, See 4. 35n


15. ed.cit., p. 140.

16. ed.cit., p. 230


ARMS RACE GREATEST DANGER

The economic, social and political crisis that has engulfed the world has its sharpest and most dangerous expression in the Cold War, the arms race, and the system of military-political blocs. These phenomena are qualitatively different from other aspects of the crisis; they occur not from failures of the productive-distributive system but from conscious political decisions taken by governments.

Given the political will, they can be checked and reversed in the same way. But with the USA and the USSR inextricably involved in the arms race and the bloc system on spurious grounds of "defence", the political will can be created only through the pressure of a popular disarmament movement of unprecedented dimensions.

In the next two decades, with the expansion of the nuclear economy and its link with nuclear weaponry, the best informed forecast is that the nuclear weapons "club" will have increased from five to eighteen, including such trigger-happy governments as those of Israel and South Africa, which may already have nuclear weapons, Iraq, Pakistan, Libya, etc.

As the bloc system assumes a global pattern, no nation anywhere is immune from the danger of nuclear attack. Australia has placed itself in the front line of danger by its bi-partisan alignment with US global policy.

It is facing and analysing this situation that Jim Falk’s book is of particular value. As a theoretical physicist, historian and peace activist he is exceptionally qualified for the task.

Punctiliously researched and thoroughly documented, this book is written in a direct and lively style, the scientific explanations being readily comprehensible to the lay person.

In his analysis of the background to preparations for nuclear war, Jim Falk traces the development in nuclear-weapon strategies from Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) and the balance of terror, to the new level of danger involved in the more accurate missiles and the doctrines of "first strike", "theatre war" and "winnable" nuclear war.

The militarisation of the world involved in the expansion of nuclear arms on the ground, in the air and under the sea is intensified by the export of armaments by the major powers to the smaller developed nations and the third world, rapidly converting the earth and space into an arsenal.

Simultaneously, attempts at control of armaments by the major powers have failed as each power projects plans to meet its own "security" needs, and expands its military and political control over regions considered vital to its interests.

The author makes the point that it is of no importance to engage in a debate on the degree of responsibility to be attached to one or other of the major powers for the crisis. It is part of history that the USA initiated the arms race by using its exclusive possession of the atom bomb as a political weapon and quite openly developed the hydrogen bomb for the same purpose.

What is critical now is that, while each concedes that nuclear weapons provide no defence because of the retaliatory power of the other, both continue to develop and expand nuclear arms capacity at ever-increasing velocity.

In Jim Falk’s words:

Together the weapons and strategies are moving in a direction in which their role in deterring war is being...
outstripped by a new capability and a new form of planning. Increasingly the new nuclear arsenals are being oriented not to deterring nuclear wars but to fighting them.

Over half the book is concerned with Australia's place in the global network, the suicidal policy it is following as a satellite of the USA, and proposals for policy changes which could have a positive effect on world politics and enhance Australia's security.

In this respect Jim Falk asserts:

There is one central theme that runs through this book. It is that in this rapidly changing world old assumptions, old policies and old reactions, even if they were effective in the past, no longer add to Australia's security.

Based on this concept, a penetrating analysis is made of Australian foreign and defence policies. The bi-partisan dependence on "great and powerful friends", totally irrelevant even lethally dangerous when it becomes a partisan involvement in US global policy, is subjected to devastating criticism.

In particular, the writer disposes of the myth that Australia can depend on the US for assistance in time of need or that such assistance is guaranteed by the ANZUS pact. In the era of nuclear weapons, every nation in the event of nuclear war would be in a desperate position and its only concern would be to ensure its own survival.

On the issue of defence of the Australian homeland, given that the US alliance is irrelevant, Jim Falk makes some interesting comparisons with small European countries such as Sweden, Austria and Switzerland, with emphasis on civil defence and mobilisation of the whole community in time of need.

Zones of destruction from a 1 megatonne bomb. Within the inner 5 km circle there would be total devastation; 8 km circle: high devastation, severe burns to all exposed, high winds and fire; 20 km circle: light to high damage, significant blast, flash burn and fire.

He then turns to the nature of the popular global disarmament movement, its difficulties and its potential, including a description of the beginnings of a non-governmental popular movement in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

The book ends with an examination of the critical nature of the uranium debate in Australian politics and the possibility of the withdrawal of Australia from the "nuclear connection", so providing a "third voice".

"Third voices", unhampered by alignment (to either of the superpowers) have the potential to put pressure on them and adjust the political constraints within which they manoeuvre. Together with other non-aligned nations, through support offered to or withdrawn from either superpower as necessary, we can assist in providing the counterweight that will draw them away from the next stage of the nuclear arms spiral.

On the wider question of changing the direction of world politics away from preparations for nuclear war, the author points to the need for broadening the decision-making process and for decentralisation of political power and control.

Says Jim Falk:

By encouraging an obsessive fear of the other bloc, by pointing to the global reach of the other's influence each superpower is able to bend its allies to its policies, and justify to its own population intervention in the affairs of any country. It is only by refusing to accept the present division of the world between blocs or between peoples that we can mould a secure future.

"Taking Australia off the Map" contains extensive illustrations, diagrams, statistics, factual appendices and a list of national and state peace and disarmament organisations and nuclear energy and anti-uranium-mining groups, with addresses and telephone numbers.

Jim Falk has written a book of immense value to the peace and disarmament movement, both nationally and internationally.

Bill Gollan is a former headmaster and long time peace activist.
LOOKING AGAIN AT MARKETS

At present socialists in all countries face many perplexities. The concentrated expression of these is that, at a time when capitalism is experiencing crisis and humanity faces unparalleled menaces, socialism has not been able to establish its moral ascendancy or develop a general political-ideological offensive.

Alec Nove throws light on this in that his book deals with defects endemic in most socialist economies. And since this is the area in which socialists have traditionally claimed particular superiority, Nove's criticisms, if sound, are especially wounding.

His central conclusion is that a feasible socialist economy needs a market. By "feasible" he means one we can reasonably envisage as possible in the foreseeable future, not one based on unreal expectations of material, political or psychological conditions.

This conclusion does not come primarily from theoretical considerations, but from close examination of the experiences of socialist economies.
over many years, and extensive study of data and conditions "on the spot". Indeed, on general theoretical grounds Nove's conclusions may seem strange because socialism and market have long been seen as mutually exclusive opposites. Defining the movement to which he and Karl Marx contributed so much, Frederick Engels opens his book Anti-Dühring with the following sentence:

Modern socialism is, in its essence, the direct product of the recognition, on the one hand, of the class antagonisms existing in the society of today between proprietors and non-proprietors, between capitalists and wage-workers; on the other hand of the anarchy existing in production.

This anarchy, reflected in ups and downs in the market, and especially in the periodic world economic crises from 1825 to the present day, was to be overcome by supplanting the market with planning, possible once private ownership of the means of production was abolished.

This would likewise end classes, exploitation and class antagonisms since control of the production process and of the surplus generated in it would now lie with the producers themselves or with a government which was truly "theirs". Other oppressions, such as national oppression and the subordinate position of women would consequently and subsequently vanish.

The socialist case against the capitalist market is a telling one, no less today than previously. The basic capitalist assumption (assertion) is that by following private interests the social interest will be served through the 'invisible hand' of the free market mechanism.

Apart from the fact that in Adam Smith's classic definition, the market is not "free" when monopolies and multinational corporations (which have themselves arisen from the free play of market forces within capitalism) dominate, the last decade of capitalist crisis provides clear evidence that market mechanisms do not ensure that social interests are served.

The anarchy of production remains, with occurrence of both over- and under-production of needed goods, and periodically, more general crises in which "lack of demand" on the one hand, and mass unemployment and deprivation on the other are central features.

Nor are social interests such as protection of the environment and a use of resources which takes into account the interests of future generations being served. The mining companies' central complaint, for example, is that while the market says "rip out this (mineral or whatever) here, now", environmentalists and Aborigines say otherwise and organise to that effect.

The market determines what will be produced by recognising the primacy of money ("effective demand"). Capitalist ideologists claim that this is democratic, because the "vote" of your dollar is worth as much as the vote of the dollar of the millionaire.

But how does this square with the principle of equal rights for persons, or in general allow human beings to be put first? And how can other desirable social considerations not backed by money be put into effect — for example the different priorities advocated by the women's movement.

The ideology appropriate to and fostered by unfeathered pursuit of private interests can and does develop into such repellent forms as contempt for others (bugger you, Jack or Jill ...), disdain, exploitation or hatred of other peoples, arms production for profit and, ultimately, even wars.

Part of the ideology of worshipping money and the "invisible (non-human) hand" is to bow to the supposedly 'natural', 'objective', or 'inevitable', thus rejecting the moral dimension — rejecting human responsibility for things that are happening or the need for action to change them (for example, "technological" unemployment).

Or, since the moral dimension can't be done away with so easily as far as the majority of people are concerned, we have such moral deformations by the free-marketeers as the following:

"His central conclusion is that a feasible socialist economy needs a market. By 'feasible' he means one we can reasonably envisage as possible in the foreseeable future, not one based on unreal expectations of material, political or psychological conditions."

The reader may care to apply such monstrous "principles" to the field of nuclear weapons and industry, for example.

There is also the fact that the world market is now dominated by corporations so large that even whole nations find it increasingly difficult to assert their independence.

All this — and more could be said — is indictment enough of the market to make socialists' rejection of it understandable in the present as well as the past.

How then, can Nove and others draw, as their main conclusion from the experience of Soviet-type economies, the need for a market? The main reasons he gives are:

* It is impossible to effectively plan centrally the twelve million different products and components made in the Soviet Union, even with bigger and more efficient bureaucracy than the present one.

* The general, or social interest is not so transparent, even when private ownership and profit seeking is abolished, because of the complexities of a modern economy, because people have different situations, perceptions and desires, and because of the inevitable separation of decision-making units. Add self-interest, particularly the self-interest of the very large bureaucracy and there remains, in Nove's view, a role for the kind of impersonal economic influence provided by a market.

* There is abundant evidence of pollution of air and rivers, and local soviets have at least as much difficulty in enforcing zoning and other town planning regulations as the authorities of Western comurbation.

"One reads almost daily of some ministry or department neglecting the interests of some related or complementary activity, because it is beyond its 'departmental barrier'. There is a strong tendency to self-supply (through) fear of not receiving needed supplies of so-called deficit products .... and it is shortage which
makes it all too easy for the producers to neglect the requirements of the users." (Shortage, says Nove, is the form taken in the Soviet Union by the forces which appear as inflation in the capitalist world.)

"Indeed, the numerous lacunae, inconsistencies and uncertainties in the plan, especially the unreliability of material supplies, lead not only to 'self-supply' (i.e. wasteful duplication) but also to unofficial links between enterprises, a network of personal relationships, supply agents known as tolkachi ('pushers' or 'expediters') and also corrupt practices."

* Departmentalism and localism are constantly criticised, but as constantly survive in the Soviet Union.

* Due to lack of "feedback" to producers from those who use their products, the producers, even with the best of intentions, cannot tell direcly whether the quantity — and especially quality — of their production is really what is wanted. And if they don't care, as is often the case because they are not really involved, the result is even worse. Complaints about the quality of goods, and services, are endemic.

Says Nove: "One can issue an order — produce 200,000 pairs of shoes and this is indentifiable and enforceable. To say 'produce good shoes' .... is a much vaguer, non-enforceable order."

* The efficient use of capital goods is a major problem when these are supplied free by the state and without some form of market feedback to the enterprises producing them (this applies even more to properly estimating the costs of alternative uses of given resources).

* Another feature of the market is stimulation of technological development because of the extra profit to be made by those who first introduce it. Marx repeatedly 'celebrates' the capacity of capitalism to develop the material forces of production. But without a market (including relations with the international market) there is no direct economic stimulus for this. Consequently, socialism actually lags behind in many fields, with damage to its image, especially since its ultimate theoretical justification was supposed to be that it would accelerate progress by removing capitalist fetters to the development of the productive forces.

As Nove points out, new technological developments have to be consciously introduced — and often are not. (There is a potential plus for socialism here in that human beings should treat technology and its use with discrimination, not as 'inevitable' whatever its nature or social consequences, but this is not the reason for the present lag in Soviet technology.

* Agriculture is a subject in itself Nove recognises the progress made, but points to the aggravated problems of central planning in this area and the diseconomies of scale it is liable to display:

"In the last two decades there has been a very substantial increase in agricultural procurement prices and in peasant incomes. Over half of all arable land is now cultivated by state farms, and the collective now pay a guaranteed minimum 'wage' to their members. Yet the practice continues of imposing compulsory delivery quotas and issuing operational orders to the farms. State farm management was and is appointed from above, and collective farm management (the chairman and the committee) are still 'elected' on the nomination of the party authorities. Indeed, the tendency is to try to incorporate agriculture more closely into the centralised planning system, with much talk of 'agro-industrial complexes'.

Given the nature of agricultural work, there is a major difficulty in ensuring supervision. It is unnecessary to follow a peasant proprietor or working farmer around to ensure that he does his job properly, as he is directly interested in its outcome. But the many and varied tasks on a mixed farm can be done well or badly, and this may remain unnoticed, the consequences unforeseen. The large size of the farms, and the sad history of the treatment of the peasantry by the Soviet authorities, contribute to a strong sense of alienation, of lack of commitment .... Incentives exist, of course, but repeatedly produce perverse results." (shallow ploughing, for example).

T he problems discussed in this book are of long standing and not unrecognised by various leaders. I can vouch for this from personal experience. Along with Pete Thomas I visited the Soviet Union nearly twenty years ago (1965) when economic reforms associated particularly with the name of E.G. Liberman (Professor of Economics at Kharkov University) were being discussed.

We had the opportunity of interviewing a number of high economic officials, factory managers and Professor Liberman himself. Typical comments were:

- artificially set prices which did not accord with actual expenditures;
- enterprises consequently concentrating on profitable items and underproducing others;
- lack of involvement and interest by workers in the activities of the enterprise; slackness in the early part of the month and a rush at the end to meet the quota; inefficient use of fixed assets; old machinery used because it was more profitable than to get new (when quotas and some state charges could go up).

Professor Liberman's comments were particularly revealing for the present discussion:

There has been underestimation of economic education by the Ministry of Higher Education. In our University, the Economics faculty was liquidated seven years ago. It will now be restored. Speeches of various Party leaders have spoken of the importance of economists but in practice this was neglected. If
you use administrative methods instead of economic stimuli, then you need economists only to count, not to invent .... There are good economists but if you have no field in which to operate then you can't do good economic work. Many also prefer to keep to the easier, safer job of (for example) interpreting Das Kapital, rather than the more difficult job of tackling the existing problems of socialist society.

These reforms of 1964-5 were in fact basically aborted, in my opinion because the decentralisation of power required (even if only to managers of economic units and not the workers therein) involved political consequences unacceptable to the bureaucracy.

In April last year, it is reliably reported, a confidential study on the Soviet economy was presented to a special seminar organised by the Academy of Sciences, sections of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union with economic responsibilities and the State Planning Commission.

Trenchant criticism of the economic system as a whole were made:

The current system was a social system in which the people were consistently regarded as 'screws' in the economic mechanism and they behaved almost as obediently (and passively) as machines and resources.

This system was corrected, renewed and improved but it was not once subjected to a qualitative restructuring ... (it is unable) to ensure a full and sufficiently effective use of society's intellectual and labor resources ... (The Soviet economy) has long passed the point where it is possible to regulate it effectively from a single centre.

The study challenged a number of ideological dogmas, including the view that, under socialism, change can be effected "without social conflicts":

A fundamental restructuring of the system of economic management touches significantly on the interests of many social groups, some of which see in it hopes for an improvement of their positions while others see a worsening.

And the main opponent of such reform? The state bureaucracy itself: (They) say that the changes envisaged would "weaken the centralised principle and the real importance of the plan". This is the "good" reason, says the study, but the real reason is that they are afraid of losing their power and positions.

**Former Soviet leader, Yuri Andropov, indicated his support for change in a number of speeches, including one in June 1983 in which he said that changes in the economy were "inevitable" and that the economy was managed on an "irrational trial-and-error" basis.

But the resolution of social conflicts, particularly where a large stratum of people has a vested interest in maintaining the status quo cannot occur without political mobilisation of the mass of people and the right to publicly advocate alternatives. These democratic requirements have not existed, with only a brief and partial thaw in Khrushchev's time, so one cannot at present be sanguine about the outcome. And, while one should not have a closed mind, most informed opinion considers that the new leader, Chernenko, is much less likely to challenge the bureaucracy than his predecessor — indeed, is seen by many as representing it.

Of course, consequences flow from having a market and from institutionalising self-managing rights, and not all of these may be congenial to socialist expectations or desires. Nove does not shirk these problems:

Competition among suppliers of goods and services is required to ensure meaningful choice by purchasers and necessary to achieve economic feedback. But this means that some enterprises will do less well than others, or even fail altogether. And the workers involved in these less successful enterprises will therefore suffer reduction in incomes, and there will be inequality with other workers.

Similar considerations apply to the risk involved in introducing favored new technology — some rewards for success, some penalties for failure.

Nove also points out that there would need to be some degree of income differentials for different kinds of labor — the existence of "(a species of labor market as) the only known alternative to the direction of labor".

There would also often be a degree of under-capacity use of capital resources, or overproduction and a possibility that investment cycles would develop to a certain extent. There would be a continuing role for small businesses as well as cooperatives.

Nove stresses not only that administrative means are inadequate, but also that democratic political means such as voting cannot substitute for the economic means involved in the use of a market.

To influence the pattern of production by their behaviour as buyers is surely the most genuinely democratic way to give power to consumers. There is no direct 'political' alternative. There being hundreds of thousands of different kinds of goods and services in infinite permutations and combinations, a political voting process is impracticable, a ballot paper incorporating microeconomic consumer choice unthinkable. Majority votes are in any case undesirable as well as unsuitable. What of minority rights in matters of consumption?

There are, of course, opponents of a socialist market other than self-interested bureaucrats, both on the kinds of general grounds stated at the beginning of this article, and on particular aspects such as the generation of inequalities.

And put in a general form — market or no market — the problem seems insoluble. But if approached more concretely, the paradox looks less formidable. (Boris Frankel in an otherwise valuable book Beyond the State, for example, seems to forget his own strictures on over-generalised and ahistorical approaches when it comes to the market. I hope to review his book in a later issue.)

"THE MARKET" is not an unchangeable absolute, irrespective of its scope and of surrounding social conditions. It makes a great difference whether private ownership and the private profit motive dominate, or social ownership and recognition of the primacy of social need is the major element.
Taking all the above and more into account, I do not think it possible to state in advance the scope of the market which should exist under socialism at a particular time in a particular country. It will depend on the international and national conditions prevailing including, crucially, the degree of development of a new socialist morality and set of values.

And if there are more difficulties than so far perceived in using a market under socialism within certain limits, I am convinced that there are far more in allowing concentration of economic power centrally. For such concentration, on top of the political and ideological power available at the centre, is too dangerous to permit, even if there are genuine electoral and other democratic constraints. An economic counter-weight in the shape of some form of self-management rights in enterprises and institutions is essential.

Nove has performed a valuable service for socialists by exposing the unreality of much of their thinking and predictions about the economy. This is so whether or not one accepts all of his points or his definition of "feasible socialism".

But his overall framework shares other unrealities in the thinking of many socialists today in that he virtually restricts the definition and discussion of socialism to that of an economic system.

Besides the failures in expectations and practical shortcomings in socialist economic performance, socialism’s failure to gain the moral ascendancy at this stage of capitalist crisis and multiplying menace, is no less affected by its downplaying (in theory at least) of other dimensions of human life, often with the underlying assumption that they will in any case follow from the economic project.

Socialism, in fact, needs to redefine itself all along the line in accordance with experience and the present situation if it is to grasp the initiative and regain the momentum it had in previous periods. This is necessary not from the narrow point of view of socialists’ own success, but as an expression of their dedication to human well-being and progress, which otherwise faces in coming decades greater dangers and difficulties than ever before.

Eric Aarrons was formerly joint National Secretary of the Communist Party of Australia.

ALR Autumn 1984
POSITION VACANT
Australian Left Review is looking for a full-time worker (or equivalent) to co-ordinate production, promotion and content of the magazine together with an editorial collective. The work would include co-ordinating and liaising with the collective and convening meetings, liaising with voluntary production workers and with printers, etc., seeking contributions, seeking advertising, and implementing a promotional campaign to increase sales.

Administrative skills essential, layout and design skills and previous experience on publications an advantage. Previous experience with political groups or the labour movement essential.

Written applications should be sent to the Selection Committee, ALR, Box A247, Sydney South PO, Sydney 2000, by 5 pm on Tuesday 1.5.84.

For more information, ring Brian on (02) 264.2161. Women are particularly encouraged to apply. Job share applications also welcome.

RIGHTWING LABOR AND CRIME
from page 37
are still seen as individual phenomena, isolated from one another. It remains an illusion.

I do not have the opportunity here to discuss ways and means of combating organised crime, or how worthwhile a National Crimes Commission would be, or what measures can be demanded.

I believe very strongly that, at this point, the major thing the Left can do is to raise workers' consciousness about organised crime and its connections with the labour movement, government and society as a whole. To do that effectively, we need to know much more and getting that knowledge depends on investigative journalists being encouraged and supported by the Left in the labour movement. There are enough honest cops around to feed the necessary information through leaks, etc.

The Left must see the challenge posed by organised crime as one prong of the attack by capital and reaction on the labour movement. In addition to the ideological attack through the media, there is the organised attack through the rightwing of the labour movement. That organised attack has its financial support from big business, from overseas sources such as the CIA and other such sources. But it also gets its money from organised crime.

On that level alone, the left needs to come out fighting on the issue of organised crime.

Of course, under socialism, or in any post-capitalist society, crime will not disappear and, because there are societies of scarcity, crime, and even organised crime, will be continuing problems. Some of the same problems will arise, for example, on the issues of civil liberties. I think the Left (and the capitalist press, for that matter) have been deafeningly silent about the mass execution of criminals, or alleged criminals, in China in recent months. I think the Chinese actions are as despicable as the death squads operating in Indonesia today against alleged criminals (at the bottom level of course. Suharto is still untouched).

A post-capitalist society, let alone one worthy of the name of socialism, has to find better ways than exist in capitalist democracies to tackle the problem. Reverting to the mediaeval ways of Imperial China, Tsarist Russia, or of Koranic Islam, is the opposite to what socialist should do. But how a socialist society should and could combat this ongoing problem is, again, another topic.

Denis Freney is a journalist, author and sleuth.
REBELS AND RADICALS

Reviewed by
Drew Cottle

MASSSES ARE THE MAKERS OF HISTORY

Students, teachers, researchers and writers of Australian labour history owe a great debt to the work of Eric Fry. A foundation member of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Eric Fry has spent a lifetime selflessly devoted to the promotion of Australian working class history, in all of its many aspects. But, more importantly, Eric Fry, like the late Alan Marshall, identifies most strongly with the driven, the battlers of Australian history.

In Rebels and Radicals, Fry has been given the opportunity to assemble the writings of like-minded souls to produce a highly readable document in Australian popular history, of which there are far too few in these dolorous days of corporate consensus.

All the essays contributed to Rebels and Radicals take up the political position of the oppressed and the exploited, whether they be Black Australian guerrilla leaders like Musquito, or 'Rebel' Major, convict poets, damned democrats, Eureka rebels, radical women or I.W.W. members who refused to cower to state repression. Fry and his fellow contributors have made a valiant attempt to tap that rich vein of radical opposition to colonialism, capitalism and imperialism which often doesn't even make the footnotes in most conventional narratives of Australian history. This alone is a great service to radical Australian historiography.

The chapters of Rebels and Radicals which investigate the episodes of the Black Australian resistance to the heinous brutalities of British colonialism make powerful reading. Christine Wise and Bruce Shaw provide, in their separate essays on Musquito and Major, moving testimonies to the struggles of these black heroes. In fact, the boldness of Musquito, Major and countless other Black Australian warriors not only ensured that colonialism was never totally victorious, but also engendered and inspired a long tradition of Aboriginal resistance to capitalist oppression and exploitation.

Biographies of those who rebelled against the blood-soaked tyranny of British penal servitude are compassionately recounted by Gordon Nail Stewart, John Meredith and Rex Whalan. Like Bruce Shaw in his depiction of 'Rebel' Major, Stewart adopts a Hobsbawmian approach to the 'primitive rebellion' of the Bathurst Ribbonmen and their troupe, Ralph Entwistle. A strong sense of time and place is evoked in Stewart's account of the Bathurst convict uprising. We are shown the calculating ferocity of the colonial floggers and their red-coated minions; the continuous brutality of the convict masters which detonated the convict outbreak; the pluck and ingenuity of the 'impossible revolution' of Entwistle's rebel band. One can only hope in this time of approaching ruling class bicentennial forgetfulness that Entwistle and his insurgents are not expeditiously passed over by those who are genealogically fixated with the fashionable possibility that they may have a convict ancestor as long as he or she is of the calibre of a Francis Greenway. A vain hope.

The heirs of the master class can have their Simon Lords and Francis Greenways; the Australian working people have the convict poet who would not be silenced, Francis MacNamara. Floggings, the treadmill, the killing labour of the colonial quarries never broke the defiant tongue of Frank the Poet. John Meredith and Rex Whalan trace out the life of this convict rhymer who was transported to British Australia for the capital crime of plaid-
stealing. MacNamara's sharp, satirical voice and unrepentant behaviour saw him sent many times to the triangles to suffer the whippings of Lord Lash. But his mocking verses against the hated colonial oppressors and their penal system were known word-perfect by every human being who was forced to endure the brutalities and indignities of British convictism. The enchained 'articulate' were given the tongue of an antipodean Shelley. MacNamara's brand of committed poetry would gain a ready audience in the factories, the mines, the building sites and the dole queues of the present wage-slave system. And, no doubt, at any workers' smoko the spirit of Frank McNamara will be present. Those generations of working people who built but never owned Australia find comfort and inspiration in MacNamara's epitaph:

"... Sworn to be a tyrant's foe
And while I've life I'll crow ...
"

The tragic Dan Deniehy is Gerald Waish's biographical subject. Deniehy railed against 'the Botany Bay aristocrats' and their high-handed efforts to stifle an emergent Australian democracy. He would have no truck with the Geebungs' visions of paternal despotism. At street meetings, on the parliamentary floor and through the pages of the Southern Cross, he campaigned against the infamies of the squatters and their English overlords.

The land-owning class moves swiftly against this eloquent preacher of 'mob rule'. By the end of his life, the radical democrat was delivering rambling, racist speeches against the Chinese and giving up his body and soul to the lost world of grog. Although Deniehy died destitute and broken, many of the labouring classes and not a few of the more independent-minded members of the urban bourgeoisie took up

The 80-year-old Catherine Helen Spence distilled her many activities into a single assertion: 'I am a new woman, and I know it'.

Deniehy's fight against W.C. Wentworth's caste of 'bunyip aristocrats' for greater Australian democracy, whatever its bourgeois limitations.

That unlikely Australian republican, the Scottish Presbyterian minister, John Dunmore Lang, is examined by D.W.A. Baker. Like Deniehy, J.D. Lang was a brilliant publicist. Lang's political views underwent a sea change when he toured the Australian countryside. He moved from being a pristine example of reticent Scottish aristocrats to become a fervent Australian republican. His conversion was slow but irrevocable. His visits to the corruption and repression of Old England and the assumed freedoms of the emergent bourgeois republic of the United States of America convinced Lang that his newly adopted home of Australia should be free of British capitalism's ills and pursue an independent path similar to that of the American bourgeoisie. Frequent tours of the Australian countryside confirmed Lang's republican convictions. Lang took up Dan Deniehy's cudgels with a vengeance.

His former eminent Tory friends saw him as a mob orator who chanted the seditious message of universal manhood suffrage (Lang opposed votes for women on the basis of the quaint notion that it was never advocated in the Bible), land for the people (this demand earned Lang the lasting enmity of the squatters) and a

fully independent Australian republic. Though some purists, cocooned in their own historical present-mindedness, may scoff at the suggestion that J.D. Lang was in any way a radical, D.W.A. Baker, by investigating this wayward Scottish Presbyterian in his own historical context, presents us with the political transformation of an unquestioning conservative into a republican thunderer.
Above: Musquito: From March 1820, dozens of huts and houses were attacked, stripped and fired, and the occupants speared and clubbed.

Below: The Rubei Major: Aboriginal captives in chains during the taking of the East Kimberleys.

his beliefs like his fellow diggers and not the comic opera sentimentalist full of excessive hyperbole as depicted by more conventional historians. For this alone, all Australian republicans should be thankful to Jennifer Lorch.

Corns on male chauvinist feet are rudely stepped upon by Susan Magarey, Farley Kelly and, to a lesser extent, by Brian Matthews in their essays on Catherine Spence, Brettena Smyth and Louisa Lawson. Each of these radical women challenged, and sometimes triumphantly overturned, the patriarchal conventions of late nineteenth century Australian capitalism. Catherine Spence suffered the abuse, scorn and apathy of much of Australian manhood as she and a valiant band of women attempted to win the vote for women of whatever class.

As a first-wave feminist, Spence defiantly carved out a radical life devoted to electoral and social reform, critical journalism and the demand that women take an active part in public life. Although never a class traitor in the same way as Rosa Luxemburg, Alexandra Kollontai and Constance de Markievicz were, Catherine Spence did attempt to give substance to the bourgeois homilies on democracy and individual liberty. Susan Magarey has rescued Catherine Spence from the patriarchal silence and condescension of bourgeois historiography and placed her rightfully at the crest of Australian first wave feminism.

Farley Kelly has set herself the more difficult task in her study of that largely unknown feminist radical, Brettena Smyth. Unlike the Magarey and Matthews contributions on Catherine Spence and Louisa Lawson, Kelly has had to painstakingly drag the strands of Brettena Smyth's biography together. She presents the reader with a fine example of committed history. Smyth emerges as a remarkable 'forgotten' radical, one whose entire life was committed to progressive social change. Widowed during the white plague of tuberculosis in 1873, this North Melbourne woman was left to her own scant resources to bring up her family of six. In her greengrocery-cum-confectionery-cum drapery shop, Smyth eked out a living for her young family. Bearing all of the 'male's' responsibilities, but being denied the right to vote or transmit property, Smyth began to critically question capitalist social relations. She broke with the Pauline rigidities of Catholicism, mingled with the Victorian Women's Suffrage Society, joined the Australasian Secular Association and developed into a formidable polemict firing salvoes against religious bigotry and 'male bias', social and political inequality between the sexes and the need for democratic marriages.

She became a strident temperance campaigner, seeing the destruction excess alcohol wreaks on working people's material existence and believing, wrongly, that a 'dry' Melbourne would somehow escape the class ills of capitalism. A social 'wowser', Brettena Smyth, however, was not. She alienated much of respectable Melbourne by her championing of the sexual and social rights of the poor. Baby farms, infanticide, rape, prostitution and the chronic ill-health of the working class could, the radical Smyth argued, be overcome by steady work, better housing, the condom and the wide dissemination of practical sex manuals. Although idealist solutions to the harsh realities of capitalism's free enterprise, Smyth's radical demands threw down an ideological challenge to the safe lives of 'Marvellous Melbourne's' high bourgeoisie.

If Brettena Smyth is a little known nineteenth century radical fighter, Louisa Lawson's name (but perhaps not her life) is remembered by most students of Australian labour history often only as the mother of a famous radical writer, or an in-law of a demagogic Labor premier hailed as 'greater than Lenin'. The
uncompromising radical, Louisa Lawson has been made 'the madonna of the sink', to employ a Stuart Hall phrase, by most orthodox labour historians; the 'little woman' behind the great labour men. Matthews' examination of Louisa Lawson's 'Dawn Crusade' is mercifully free of the great male syndrome's principal errors.

Through Matthews' pen, Lawson emerges as a woman constantly at war with the suffocating patriarchy of late nineteenth century capitalism. Her creative potential seemed thwarted at every turn. Her unhappy marriage to Peter Larsen was but the beginning of her problems; the first of many social constrictions. She craved to be in intellectual company; to exercise her prodigious intellect on all manner of controversial subjects, particularly those which directly concerned women. Her 'neurosis' led her to address all of those problems of capital — domestic violence, sexual exploitation, the tyrannies of a propertyless, male-dominated marriage, women's physical and mental health problems which some sections of the contemporary Left grandly designate as secondary contradictions and consign to the 'after the revolution' category. Louisa Lawson and her co-feminists would remain unimpressed.

The Dawn crusade petered out in the first few years of the twentieth century. Matthews provides few reasons for the paper's closure, apart from Louisa Lawson's running cattle with the petty caesars of the Post and Telegraph Department. We learn nothing of the Dawn's circulation figures, the character of its popular audience, its relationship to the fledgling labour movement or its effect on the social life of its rebel editor. Presumably, Matthews will investigate these questions in his awaited biography of Louisa Lawson. Hopefully, such a study will reveal far more about this 'forgotten' radical declared by the state to be 'insane' and, at life's end, laid away in a pauper's grave.

The final chapters of Rebels and Radicals are thumbnail sketches of two battle-hardened, unrepentant rebels, W.R. Winspear and Monty Miller. For the authors of these two brief rebel portraits, Verity Burgmann and Eric Fry, their work was a labour of love. Winspear, as Burgmann demonstrates, formulated his own variant of 'socialism' from the hard school of class struggle. Denied contact with European marxism, Winspear and many other colonial radicals were set the task of building their own socialist doctrines. Utopianism, fabianism, anarchism and, later, syndicalism, were the theories which informed not only the debates about, but also the practice of, an emergent Australian socialism.

In such a situation, Winspear and a host of worker-intellectuals became self-taught socialists. The pamphlet, the broadsheet, stump oratory, satirical songs and cartoons were their means by which to broadcast the message of socialism to a mass audience still largely denied even the rudiments of an elementary education. Winspear devoted his mighty pen to this daunting task.

"The Dawn addressed all of those problems constantly reproduced in the social relations of capital — domestic violence, sexual exploitation, which some sections of the contemporary Left grandly designate as secondary contradictions and consign to the 'after the revolution' category. Louisa Lawson and her co-feminists would remain unimpressed."

Burgmann follows Winspear on his evangelising peregrinations through his disputes with compromisers, opportunists and vacillating utopians and his evolution into an uncompromising member of the Australian Socialist Party. By adopting this biographical tack, Burgmann also provides his reader with many fine examples of Winspear's pamphlet-eering skills; a proletarian literary form which, in Winspear's hands, bursts with mocking contempt for the boss class, their Tartuffes, their social system and the bloody monster, imperialism. Two examples of Winspear's irreverence will suffice. Fragments from Winspear's Ten Commandments of Capitalism:

1. I, the Capitalist, am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Honor thy father and mother, and thou shalt not stealth them from me, that thy days be long in my land, and the Lord thy God render thee in return for rent, interest, profit, etc.
3. Thou shalt not steal — from me: but thou shalt not complain when I steal from thee, nor when I command thee to go forth and despise mine enemies — on my behalf.

And two stanzas of an unnamed poem, his last published work, written in the depths of the 1930s Depression:

Sing a song of sixpence, And sound financial rules, Drawn up by the bankers, To govern all the Fools.

The banker's in his counting house, Making heaps of money, while people starve who cannot buy Their milk and bread and honey.

This last published poem illustrates that Winspear even in his mid-70s had lost none of the proletarian clarity in exposing the political power of the rich and their fraudulent schemes for 'recovery'.

In the last decade of a radical life, Winspear could look back on the great class battles in which he vigorously participated. Perhaps none was more momentous than the anti-conscription campaigns of World War I. His white-hot pen denounced the imperialist war and the Australian
Whatever the reason, Verity Burgmann's instructive summary of W.R. Winspear is in the best traditions of history-from-the-bottom-up. If Francis MacNamara was the voice of the oppressed, W.R. Winspear was their hand; both were blessed with Blakean 'eyes of fire'. And so, too, was Monty Miller, a worker who never gave up the struggle against the class robbery and oppression of the rich, as Eric Fry's final chapter makes abundantly clear. Miller, the 'life-long radical', travelled the length and breadth of Australia campaigning for the rights of Australian workers. His lengthy term of active service in the class spanning the Eureka Stockade and the state terror against the I.W.W. (of which Miller was a member) during the First World War.

Typically, Miller, when before the beak in the state's show trial against the I.W.W., used the court as a platform to denounce the bourgeoisie and their grubby wartime conspiracies against those who refused to obey their class laws.

Miller, eighty-four, a hero of Eureka, was first sentenced to jail for two years, but the sentence was waived because of his age and frail health. Miller, forever the fighter, did not want the judge's mercy, but social justice. It was an evergreen characteristic of Monty Miller, a trait first formed during those climactic months on the Ballarat goldfields in 1854.

As Eric Fry carefully explains, although Monty Miller could look back on a long career devoted to the people's cause, he was not a rebel given to nostalgia for a golden victorious past. Rather, Miller's cool head ruled his passionate heart. He made incisive assessments of past struggles; the victories, the unpalatable compromises, the bitter defeats.

He was a significant working class intellectual. Everything of importance to the Australian working class was assiduously studied — English chartism, American democracy, European socialism, British imperialism, the Westminster parliamentary system, atheism, anarchism, syndicalism. Miller's desire for theories and practical information pertinent to a revolutionist was inexhaustible. He harboured no illusions about the nascent Labor Party but, instead, worked persistently in Victoria and New South Wales during the 1890s to give it a mass base among the working class. He helped organise unions among 'the less skilled' of the labouring classes. He lectured on secularism in prim Melbourne and campaigned for the Sunday opening of public libraries and art galleries so that the masses, too, could consider the books and paintings of colonial bourgeois culture. He threw his considerable energies behind the movement demanding women's rights. With the formation of the I.W.W. in the U.S.A., Monty Miller drew deeply on their theoretical arguments and practical politics. Miller was in the van, forming I.W.W. clubs and propagating syndicalist solutions to end the rule of capital.

With the advent of the first imperialist war and the Labor Prime Minister Fisher pledging Australia's 'last man and last shilling' to British imperialism, it was only a matter of time before Monty Miller and other 'wobblies' with their determined anti-imperialist war position would be in the bosses' courts or His Majesty's jails. Fry's account of the rebel, Monty Miller, is as lucid as it is inspiring.

Rebels and Radicals deserves a wide popular audience. It is the stuff radical Australian history is made of. It should be the impetus needed for a vast dictionary of forgotten labour radicals and rebels along the lines of the British Labour Dictionary to be started. This is not because the white Bicentennial ominously approaches. Instead, it is an appeal, a Mayday, to preserve the memories of all those rebels and radicals who stood up for their rights against the tyranny of capital.

Finally, a minor complaint, a quibble. Rebels and Radicals requires a better cover. The reproduction of Grace Cossington Smith's Strike will never do. Cossington Smith as Humphrey McQueen informs us in The Black Swan of Trespass (p.66) feared and was fascinated by the political power of a combative working class. Petit bourgeois voyeurism need not grace the covers of books devoted to social rebels. Surely an appropriate 'Wobbly' cartoon from Direct Action could replace the painterly efforts of Ms Cossington Smith if Rebels and Radicals runs into a second edition?

Rebels and Radicals amplifies that marxist aphorism, that the masses are the makers of history, even if not of their own choosing. Fry and his co-authors have provided a lasting text in Australian popular history.
Ronnie wasn’t interested in subscribing to ALR — but you should be.

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