Racism

The Accord and Women

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Renegotiating ANZUS

The New Zealand Labour government's stance against visiting nuclear armed or powered warships has received much publicity here in recent weeks. Understandably, it is something new to hear of a Labour government, and prime minister, that is prepared to stand by party policy and implement it word for word, instead of merely interpreting its "spirit".

Speaking in Sydney last month, at the invitation of People for Nuclear Disarmament, was Helen Clark, chairperson of both the New Zealand Parliamentary Select Committees on Foreign Affairs and on Disarmament and Arms Control. Ms Clark pointed out that her government's action was a "valid and indigenous" response to the very grave threat of nuclear war. In Australia, and especially in the United States, she said, the New Zealand government had been misrepresented. The Wall Street Journal had referred to "the Greek disease" and The Washington Post to "Hollanditis" claiming that New Zealand, like these countries, had isolated itself from the realities of the rest of the world.

Far from being a new or rash step, the development of New Zealand's anti-nuclear position dates from as far back as 1966, when the French first began testing in Polynesia. Having gone on to win their case against French atmospheric testing, in the International Court in La Hague, the New Zealand Labour Party proceeded to develop a consistent anti-nuclear platform.

When Robert Muldoon's National Party government took office in 1976, both it and Malcolm Fraser's government here in Australia took steps, through ANZUS, to positively encourage a stronger US military presence in the region. The New Zealand Labour Party was put under enormous pressure to change its policy of no nuclear ships, and a steady stream of US official visitors from Strategic Command in Hawaii, the Pentagon, and the State Department came out casting dire warnings that the policy could only end in the collapse of the whole ANZUS Alliance.

Helen Clark made it very clear that the present New Zealand Labour government does not, and never will, accept this position. Muldoon called the election in July this year precisely on this issue of national security and ANZUS. In fact, says Clark, it was largely fought on the economy and other domestic issues though both Muldoon and, strangely enough, the US Ambassador, tried to turn the focus back on ANZUS. Helen Clark was shocked that a US Ambassador could issue statements in the run-up to an election, deprecating the opposition's policies, which is just what the US Ambassador did in New Zealand. Those familiar with the role of Marshall Green, US Ambassador to Australia under Whitlam, may not be surprised.

But public opinion in New Zealand on the nuclear issue is very strong and many of the tactics of the right and the US were less than productive. During Hiroshima Week last year, the US sent one of its largest nuclear-powered warships into Auckland Harbour. This provoked an extremely negative reaction from the New Zealand people. Over 50,000 came out into the streets to demonstrate - one in 15 of Auckland's population.

The New Zealand Labour Party (NZLP), in standing by its anti-nuclear policy, has gained support from the New Zealand people rather than lost it. In a national poll taken just after the general election in July, 76 percent approved of the NZLP policy of "no nuclear-armed ships". Perhaps even more surprisingly, 60 percent approved of the policy calling for the renegotiation of the ANZUS Alliance itself. The NZ government's policy is clear and uncompromising.

1) Legislation for a nuclear-free NZ, specifically no land-based nuclear weapons, no nuclear armed or powered ships, no nuclear power generation and no nuclear processing or waste (except for bona fide medical or scientific research).

2) A pledge to renegotiate ANZUS along the following lines: NZ participation only on the basis of its non-negotiable non-nuclear stance; moves for a nuclear free Pacific; partnership where all signatories are on equal terms and make unanimous decisions; the absolute guarantee of NZ security.

Finally, Helen Clark was adamant that it was possible for a small country to refuse to accept a super power's veto over its own sovereign affairs. In Greece it has been done, in Romania it has been done, the latter never having accepted nuclear weapons on its soil though it has always remained a member of the Warsaw Pact. Similarly, both Denmark and Norway will only remain in NATO while no nuclear weapons are on their soil in a time of peace.

The obvious question remaining is what we can now expect from the present Australian Labor government. If the NZLP can successfully renegotiate ANZUS, then even following Bob Hawke's and Bill Hayden's own reasoning, it must be possible for Australia to do the same.

Daryl Dellora

Cockburn Sound Protest

Women's anti-nuclear groups around Australia are organising a two-week protest against US bases in Australia at the Cockburn Sound US military base in Western Australia. The demonstration is planned for December this year and over 1,400 women are expected to take part.

Simultaneously, a travelling women's peace camp will travel throughout the Sydney suburbs from November to 2 December so that women unable to go to Cockburn Sound can participate. This NSW protest will be one of many actions held around Australia to demonstrate concern about the pres-
The left's sixty percent to forty percent victory was so decisive that it has forced the Reform Group out of the next ballot for national positions to be held in December. The leftwing team of Dick Scott (president), Greg Harrison (leftwing nominee to replace Laurie Carmichael as joint assistant secretary) and Bill Martin (national organiser) has been returned unopposed and the rightwing push led by Rod Kelly has come to a halt, at least for the time being.

At the time of writing, the Kelly group had lodged an objection with the Industrial Registrar about the nomination procedure for this next ballot but it is highly unlikely that this manoeuvre is anything more than a disruption tactic. It would have been easy for the right to nominate by the deadline even while lodging an objection, yet they did not.

The left vote in the September election, held at about the same level as the vote for defeated left candidate Bob Adamson in the previous ballot last January for one national organiser. Adamson lost the ballot by just 2,000 votes in a total vote of 45,000 after a particularly vicious anti-communist campaign was waged against him, and the rightwing candidate's leaflet contained a picture of himself (Charlie Bali) and Bob Hawke, implying Hawke's support.

However, the Reform Group's vote this time plummeted by about 10,000 (from about 23,500 in the January ballot to about 13,500), raising some interesting questions about the sudden desertion of "votes in the bag" for a group which claims the support of the majority of members. Among possible explanations is that earlier supporters drawn in by the Hawke photo subsequently realised they'd been conned and refused to vote this time.

Whatever the reasons, the rightwing in the labour movement has dealt a severe blow in its continuing attempts to take this and other key unions away from the left. The aim is not just to shift the policies of individual unions but to change the nature of the wider labour movement, including by taking away a significant bloc of left votes at both ACTU Congresses and state ALP conferences.

There is no doubt that the NCC is in this campaign up to its neck. We have that on no less an authority than B.A. Santamaria who, in a speech in Brisbane last year, which got an unauthorised public leaking, targeted the Teachers Federation and the AMFSU as the main left "citadels" to be captured.

However, the NCC is not the only force involved in this work and may well not even be the main one. The extreme rightwing ALP machine would also dearly love to wrest unions like the AMFSU from the left, if only to alter the balance of forces within the ALP itself. And the huge injection of funds for the Kelly group (probably nearing one million dollars over the last four years) can only have come from very wealthy backers indeed, unlikely to invest such funds solely with the NCC.

It remains to be seen whether such hard-headed investors will continue to invest in expensive ventures which, so far, have provided little return.

Brian Aarons

Oakes said the information had been leaked to him as a result of a power struggle in ASIO between old experienced spies and younger ones promoted because of their academic qualifications. The older spies apparently believe the lack of experience of the new ones taking over the organisation would lessen the chance of uncovering such alleged assassination plots.

Once again, the leaked allegations have come at a time when there is a lot of pressure to have ASIO abolished or at least reformed substantially. In a bid to alter its media image of being a gaggle of stumbling blocks and cold warriors, ASIO also wants its functions to include public relations. The latest ASIO claim has the usual disinformation odour surrounding it, as the Palestinians have once again been defamed as the result of problems in the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation.

Ironically, the renewed attack by a government agency on the Palestinian community comes at a time when the Hawke government professes abhorrence of racist slurs on the migrant community. ASIO's unsubstantiated allegation was revealed by journalist Laurie Oakes on Channel Ten on 16 July. Oakes said sources associated with ASIO had claimed an assassination plot by an unnamed Palestinian organisation against prominent Australian Zionists had been foiled by ASIO in the mid 1970s. The alleged targets were to have been Bob Hawke, Isi Leibler and Sam Lipski.

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The unemployed and other social welfare dependents have a right to both job creating economic policies and social welfare reform. In analysing the 1984 Budget, Peter Davidson argues that on both fronts they have been disappointed.

This year's budget is a big disappointment for pensioners and the unemployed. Even before it was brought down, Hawke assured the Australian Finance Conference that "in this (budget) process the interests of particular sections of the community have to be weighed against the overall interest of the nation".

He went on to reassure the assembled custodians of "the overall interest" that he'd got his priorities in the right order: "I can tell you now that the simultaneous achievement of a lower budget deficit and the provision of a meaningful personal income tax cut, while providing adequately for social welfare services for the genuinely needy, is enormously difficult." (AFR, 26 July, 1984.)

The mass of the "genuinely needy" have been waiting since the election for the government to meet its social security obligations. The ALP committed itself to:

- raise pensions to 25 percent of average earnings (i.e. $102 per week next year) within three years
- raise unemployment benefits to the same level as pensions.

These policies are also an important plank in the Accord. Eighteen months later, there has been no real increase in pensions (now about $92 per week for a single person) and unemployment benefits are still $10 per week less than the pension ($82 per week). The under 18 years rate of benefit is $45 per week, less than half the pension rate (see Table 1).

The first step in any credible program of welfare reform is the raising of unemployment benefits to the pension level. In 1975, all of these rates were the same. This discrimination against the unemployed is a vestige of the Fraser government. They also miss out on the $15 per week rent allowance paid to pensioners.

Not that the proposed pension reforms will see them in the lap of luxury. Pensioner organisations and the ACTU both endorse a policy of raising pensions to 30 percent of average earnings. A pension and benefit rate of $102 per week is a mild reform indeed.

The budget increase is instead of the increase pensioners would have automatically got in November if not for the "medicare effect" on the CPI. This means that, since the Hawke government came to power, there has been no significant, real increase in pensions.

Welfare spending is caught in a vice. On the one hand, the government insisted on keeping the deficit below $7,000 million to please big business and finance interests. This figure is quite arbitrary, and is based on the assumption that this year's deficit should be lower than last. On the other hand, the ACTU sought tax cuts of around $8 per week, at a cost of $1,300 million. The government failed to restructure the tax system to generate more revenue from the wealthy.

Welfare was not the only area of social expenditure to suffer. Cuts of over $1,000 million dollars were made in proposed increases in housing, education, cultural programs and capital works.

By the end of 1985, if the government meets its commitment of a pension/benefit rate of 25 percent of average earnings, the rate should be around $102 per week for a single person. It would cost approximately $1,300 million extra in the 1985/86 budget to raise payments in real terms.
to that level, and to pay rent allowance to the unemployed. This is three times the total (non-indexation) budget increase in social security payments for 1984/85 (Table 1).

Welfare spending is linked very closely to the government's strategies for taxation and economic growth. Both must be challenged in order to get a fair deal for pensioners, the unemployed and social welfare services.

**Tax Reform**

In May, ACOSS and the ACTU argued publicly over tax cuts and welfare increases. ACOSS insisted that only those on around average income or less should receive a tax cut, and that the savings should be used for social security increases. The ACTU called for both significant tax cuts and welfare increases, but failed to put a figure on the latter. Both organisations missed an important opportunity to combine to hammer the government on its budget deficit target, and push for real tax reform after the election.

The political trade-off between tax and welfare is not new — it is the foundation stone of the Australian welfare state. The problem is that social welfare is paid for by ordinary workers, not the wealthy. It only redistributes wealth within the working class.

During World War II, the Curtin Labor government funded the new system of unemployment and sickness benefits and widows' pensions with a tax slug on low and middle income earners. In fact, it was the first time low income earners had been taxed. (See Table 2.) Curtin got away with it by setting up a "national welfare fund", to guarantee that the extra taxes would go to welfare payments and nothing else. Menzies then abolished the fund but retained the higher taxes.

Since then, the tax slug on low and middle income earners has worsened. From 1962 to 1984, pay-as-you-earn taxation revenue grew from 32 percent to 52 percent of the total tax "take". Indirect tax remained steady at around 30 percent, while corporate taxes dropped. There are no effective taxes on capital gains or wealth in Australia (as in most capitalist economies). This has encouraged tax evasion by the wealthy (by disguising income), which was estimated by the Taxpayers Association to cost around $1,000 million dollars in lost revenue in 1978. The wealthiest 10 percent of Australians get over 90 percent of Australia's income from dividends, interest, and rent. Yet many of them, and many large corporations, pay no tax at all.

Social welfare spending has trebled since Fraser came to power because of mass unemployment rather than that government's generosity. It now represents 30 percent of total Commonwealth outlays, more than the health and education budgets combined. (See Table 3.) This may look good on paper, but for each unemployed person, all it means is a hand-to-mouth existence.

Social welfare is not only about pensions and benefits. Welfare services like public housing and child care also have a big impact on working class lifestyles. A central plank in the Whitlam government welfare program was a big expansion of funding to community organisations to improve welfare services for the aged, for women, for blacks and for local communities starved of resources.

Before the 1970s, the welfare scene was dominated by government bureaucracy and conservative charities. These organisations gave social welfare a bad name, a stigma. They invented the patronising notions of "genuine need" and "deserving poor". Labor challenged this orthodoxy of "charity" with a drive for community participation and control of government funded services. Social welfare was regarded as a right for all, not a handout to the poor.

But there was a catch. These new community-based services were never adequately funded and were used by governments to buy their way (at a cut price) out of their own social welfare commitments. Community development became "community responsibility". Community based care often boiled down to an old-fashioned reliance on women as unpaid carers. And Fraser (now Hawke) brought the old concepts of "genuine need" back to life.

The problem with welfare spending is not confined to its adequacy. The last decade's increases in welfare spending have been paid for out of the workers' wages. The stage was set for the all too familiar game of divide and rule.

It is about time the rules of the game were changed, with genuine taxation reform and redistribution.

Those who attack welfare spending usually neglect the thorny issue of community organisations to improve welfare services for the aged, for women, for blacks and for local communities starved of resources.

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**TABLE 1: SOCIAL SECURITY BUDGET: THE INCREASE MUST TREBLE IN NEXT BUDGET!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pensions (single rate)</th>
<th>Prebudget rate (pw)</th>
<th>Increase (98 budget)</th>
<th>New rate (pw)</th>
<th>Policy target (55)</th>
<th>Increase needed (tot)</th>
<th>Increase needed (85 budget)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$90</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>$92</td>
<td>$102</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$14</td>
<td>$5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits (single adult rate)</th>
<th>$80</th>
<th>$2.50</th>
<th>$82</th>
<th>$102</th>
<th>$20</th>
<th>$14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits (single 1/18 yrs rate)</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>$102</td>
<td>$57</td>
<td>$57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Rent allowance (pensioners only) | $10 | $5 | $15 |
| Rent allowance (to unemployment beneficiaries) | $15 |

**Rent allowance**

- Pensioners only: $15
- To unemployment beneficiaries: $15

Total cost: $430m.

Rates rounded off to nearest dollar. 'Married rate' increases also accounted for in estimate of total budget increases. A 5% annual increase in both CPI and average earnings is assumed.

*This excludes the 6 monthly indexation rates which should occur in May and November 1985. It refers to real increases only.
"taxation expenditures", those rebates and tax credits which are, in fact, a form of welfare benefit (including executive lurks and perks estimated to cost $7,000 million in 1981 - University of NSW Social Welfare Research Centre). One of the largest is the spouse rebate which costs around $750 million each year. This rebate goes to single income families and thus discriminates against married women who work. Only one third of its recipients are low income earners. Single parents and welfare dependents don't benefit at all.

**The Deficit and Economic Growth**

Why is the government so concerned to reduce next year's deficit? *The Financial Review* gives us the answer. This year's deficit must be seen to be lower than last year's because it is "psychologically important to business". (*AFR*, 20 July, 1984.)

The key to the Hawke Keating economic strategy is to encourage new business investment in Australian industry, to restructure it and make it more "efficient" in world terms. Hawke has been heard to complain that, despite burgeoning company profits, capital has been inconsiderate enough to desist from investment. Big business insists that the "climate must be right", which usually means more belt tightening to reduce real wages for productivity as well as "service" industries. This was, after all, the way the capitalist world hauled itself out of the last great depression. Already, it is the public sector which is contributing the most towards economic and employment growth. Business still resists to reinvest in Australia's industrial base, except to reduce employment by "rationalisation".

**The Labour Movement's Role**

The ALP-ACTU Accord will come under close scrutiny after next year's budget, and the Accord and the ACTU tax cut campaign will be blamed for the lack of adequate "social wage" improvements. The problem is not the content of the Accord itself, but the narrow form it has recently taken - a trade-off of wage restraint for tax cuts. The Accord also provides for social welfare, health, and education spending, but apart from Medicare, these reforms haven't seen the light of day.

Unions are faced with the immediate problem of the impact of the "Medicare effect" on the CPI and hence on wage increases. Union members won't tolerate this without a trade-off and a simple tax cut was the easiest solution. Unions are used to bargaining over wages and conditions, they aren't geared up to campaign over social expenditure. Even the term "social wage" equates social welfare with wage bargaining.

The separation between work and home, between workplace politics and "community" struggles over social services, is enshrined in the trade union movement. This is slowly changing, especially with the growing influence of women unionists (whose interests usually span workplace and domestic politics) and of public sector unions. The AMFSU "social wage" campaign has played a major role.

However, divisions between employed and unemployed workers, between men and women, and struggles between workers as taxpayers and workers as welfare dependents, continue to block progress, and the immediate priorities of the union movement and the Accord remain far too narrow. From the standpoint of economic justice, the Accord will be judged in the following terms:

- The reconstruction of Australia's industrial base, to generate employment and social wealth. The interventionist policies of the Accord

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**TABLE 2.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The 1983/84 Australian Social Welfare Budget (1,000s of millions)</th>
<th>$161.168</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>$51.686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age pensions</td>
<td>$3.482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment benefits</td>
<td>$1.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions for supporting parents and widows</td>
<td>$1.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid pensions</td>
<td>$1.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family allowances</td>
<td>$1.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>$1.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>$41.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care services</td>
<td>$0.982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aged pensions accommodation</td>
<td>$0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled pensions services</td>
<td>$0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Housing (to states)</td>
<td>$0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Islanders Services</td>
<td>$0.104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| TABLE 3. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National welfare fund contributions - 1944</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£21.5 million from low income earners (under £400 pa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£13 million from middle income earners (£400 - £1,000 pa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5 million from upper income earners (over £1,000 pa)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*Source: A. A. W. E. (Australian Women's Economic Review).*

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Despite massive economic growth of around 10 percent this year and nearly 225,000 new jobs, unemployment has been reduced by only 1.5 percent (10.4% to 8.9%), and the government has accepted that mass unemployment will be with us for many years.

Long-term unemployment will be an intractable problem, even with strong employment growth. The average duration of unemployment is now 40 weeks, not counting the "hidden" unemployed. The problem is especially severe for older workers, many of them retrenched in the recession of 1982. The average spell on unemployment benefits for people aged 35 to 54 years is now 60 weeks. It is much worse for those over 55 who don’t stand a chance without specialised skills. Neither do those young people who have never had a permanent job.

Policies aimed at the "reconstruction" of Australian industry will need to be combined with short-term job creation and retraining schemes, and new approaches to retirement, part-time work, and education, if long-term unemployment is to be beaten. It is unrealistic to expect economic growth alone to "mop it up". The view that economic growth is by itself an alternative to welfare programs, is an illusion within the union movement which is hard to shake. It springs from the old "residual" approach to social welfare, as a "safety net" for the disadvantaged which can be pulled back on board once full employment returns.

On the other hand, the ALP's abandonment of a policy of full employment is of great concern. The recent ALP Conference removed reference in the platform to "the right of all to employment" and replaced it with a reference to the "difficulties" of a return to full employment.

The unemployed and other social welfare dependents have a right to demand both job creating economic policies and social welfare reform (reconstruction and redistribution). They are not mutually exclusive. On both fronts, they have been disappointed. Can the left take up the challenge?

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In this issue of ALR we continue our series on the ACTU/ALP Accord. We will be publishing further articles in future editions. In this article, Herb Thompson refutes a number of arguments commonly put forward to justify the Accord; he argues that the objectives of democratic socialism have been rejected in favour of capitalist economic management.

In 1975, Mr. Clyde Cameron, on behalf of the Labor Party, was able to announce that he had "... presided over the most massive redistribution of income in favour of Labour that Australia has ever seen in one year". To the year ended September 1974, the share of non-farm gross domestic product going to the labour force increased by 6.1 percent. This increase, of course, became part of what was later to be called a "wages explosion" and/or "real-wage overhang" (implying that wages were increasing at a pace more rapid than productivity) and was directly correlated with the recession and high rates of unemployment. Various arguments were then forthcoming to show that young people, old people, women, tradespeople and public servants were paid too much relative to their productivity, the resultant implications being that real wage reduction would offset an inflationary spiral, promote profitable production and reduce unemployment. The policies of the Fraser government from 1975 to 1982 were based on the premise that the real wage share of gross domestic product had to be reduced to pre-1972 levels if recovery was to take place; this culminated in the wage freeze instituted in December 1982.

A number of related and important questions were never to receive the same attention, during the Fraser years, as did the so-called "real-wage overhang". These questions would include: What is the relationship between unemployment and labour-replacing technological change? Given reductions in the real wage with increases in production, whence comes effective demand? How can profitability be maintained if effective demand is decreasing and prices are not rising? Assuming profit rates and the profit share are increased, how do we know those profits will be invested productively and not sent offshore or used for speculative gain?

During the crisis of recession throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, the wage earner was to be burdened with the guilt of having created yet another capitalist crisis. In that Alice-in-Wonderland atmosphere of capitalist enterprise, where investment must continually increase so the economy can stand still, workers who demand a greater share of the cake when the economy is growing and healthy are accused of causing inflation; and in the bad times of recession, workers who fight to maintain their standards of living are accused of causing unemployment. High interest rates, labour-replacing technology, poor capacity utilisation of productive enterprises, declining effective demand for goods and services, unequal distribution of wealth, "bottom of the harbour" tax...
dodges, the loss of investment capital overseas through repatriation of profits, transfer pricing and speculation, all of which play a part in the flushing-out mechanism of capitalist recession, disappear into the shadows when the spotlight is turned on the workers who dare to ask for an increased share of what they have produced.

This is the context in which the Wages Accord was born. The Accord was not just an election strategy. It was also an attempt to prove (in conjunction with the National Economic Summit) that the Labor Party, in a very pragmatic way, was more capable than the Liberal-Country Party coalition of serving the interests of capital. The Accord played a double role in the ascendancy of the Hawke government: first, in the use made in its negotiation as a means to assassinate politically Hawke’s predecessor as leader of the party, Bill Hayden; and second, as a foundation to discipline the trade union movement.

The Wages Accord

After only three months under a wage freeze initiated by the Fraser government, working people of Australia elected a Labor government to power. Immediately following the election, the rank and file and many of their representatives were confronted with a document entitled the “Prices and Incomes Accord”. Very few people had been involved in drafting the document and very little attention was given to mass worker participation in its structure and implementation. In fact, endorsement of the Accord was requested of Trades and Labor Councils across Australia by the ACTU before delegates had even had a chance to read it. (In Western Australia, for example, a member of the state executive of the Trades and Labor Council objected to endorsement of the Accord the night it was presented on the grounds that even he had not yet been given a final copy to read beforehand.) In this context, the argument that “99 percent of unions support the Accord” is laughable, to say the least.

Consequently, after six additional months of a wage freeze under the Hawke government, and the endorsement of the Accord, the Arbitration Commission brought down a decision on 23 September, 1983 to award a fully indexed payment of 4.3 percent from 6 October, and six-monthly indexation until October 1985, locking the union movement into centralised wage fixation for two years. In line with the decision, the commission placed unprecedented restrictions on wages, hours and conditions claims outside indexation. These included: virtual abandonment of the 9.1 percent wage catch-up during the period of the freeze; no further reduction of working hours below 38 hours per week for any reason whatsoever, and no productivity wage hearings before 1985. This decision officially satisfied the marriage between the ALP and ACTU in economic policy.

It is important to examine a few of the reasons given to justify the Accord, other than those mentioned above, by those who, among Labor, labour and capital see it as an historic document. Four main reasons are given to justify the Accord’s existence, some of which directly contradict others, which should not surprise us at this stage of our trek through Wonderland with Alice, Bill and Bob.
Argument 1

The Accord makes it possible for all workers to enjoy a higher and more equitable real wage than would have existed without it. The process identified as full indexation appears to imply that real wages are maintained through centralised wage fixing. This appearance is, in fact, not true based on indexation hearings being held every six months. If one assumes that inflation occurs evenly over each six month period and that workers could get a one percent return on money spent on price increases during that time, then workers are actually receiving approximately 97 percent of total compensation due for inflation. Since cigarettes, tobacco, alcohol and petrol are indexed at the same time as wages, workers are never compensated for price increases for these products. Therefore, real wages are falling each six months since full indexation is really partial indexation.

Indexation, as it exists, without plateaus, provides for higher absolute monetary gains for high income workers as compared to low income workers. Assuming a “fully indexed” wage structure over time, by the time a worker earning $10,000 per year reaches $20,000, a higher paid worker at $20,000 will be earning $40,000. Relativities are maintained with no attempt whatsoever to provide for a more equitable wage structure over the life of centralised wage fixation.

Therefore, the argument that the Accord makes it possible for the existence of higher and more equitable wages than without the Accord, is pure speculation based on self-serving political rhetoric and flies in the face of a number of important facts: (1) The last major increase of workers’ wages came as a result of the $39 Metal Trades Industry Award which was set as a community standard in July 1982 and which flowed on to all workers except a few caught by the wages freeze in December 1982 or those workers in industries such as the pastoral industry, affected by economic decline and drought. (2) Every major potential gain made by workers in industries with the capacity to pay has been opposed, condemned, or prevented by the Arbitration Commission and government on the basis that the increases would lead to severe flow-ons and were in violation of the Accord. Examples include the oil industry pay agreement, chemical processing industry agreement, Food Preservers Union, Federation Confectioners Association, Builders Labourers Federation, Electrical Trades Union of W.A, dispute with contractors in Western Australia; and recently, the Federated Furnishing Trades Association and aluminium window fabricating industry. These examples show that gains were possible among unions which were small, large, relatively strong and relatively weak. This shows that while ALP-ACTU policy is prevailing, it is not necessarily in the interests of all workers.

One of the most pathetic examples of the Accord at work occurred during a tense debate at the ACTU Congress in 1983 when Bill Kelty and Laurie Carmichael teamed up to strongly criticise the Food Preservers Union for gaining $16 per week for its members from two major eastern companies. Carmichael gave delegates a strident warning about attempts to establish a second tier of wage-fixing: “Those who think the road to socialism is made of individual wages struggles in half a dozen factories . . . . have no bloody idea whatever”. The irony is that neither Carmichael nor any other representative of the AMFSU complained when AMFSU members in the food industry accepted the flow-ons resulting from the struggle by the Food Preservers Union. Kelty argued that “the FPU could not have it both ways. The FPU is pushing a principle that would seriously undermine a centralised wage-fixing system. The FPU is introducing to the minds of workers an excuse for wage increases that is totally incompatible with the interests of all the workforce. Decisions had to be made according to the national capacity to pay”. What Kelty left unsaid is that three months earlier, in June 1983, the full bench of the Arbitration Commission deferred a claim by the AWU for flow-ons of the Metal Trades Award to the pastoral industry, on the basis of an incapacity to pay; and then refused on 28 June, 1983 to endorse the flow-ons resulting from the struggle by the Food Preservers Union. Kelty argued that the FPU could not have it both ways even though Kelty argued that unions could not.

The continuing idiosyncrasies of the Accord were portrayed vividly in September 1983, at the same time that Kelty and Carmichael were chastising the FPU at the ACTU Congress. With a $15-$17 wage increase spreading through the Victorian chemical industry, an arbitration commissioner questioned rank-and-file allegiance to the Accord. Confronted with 60 striking chemical workers seeking a wage claim, Commissioner Graham Walker questioned whether union leaders were “correctly representing the views of workers”. A money round began with Altona workers at the Union Carbide petrochemical complex receiving a wage increase before the wage freeze. Comparative wage justice ensured that it flowed next door to Hoechst workers who won $15 on 30 May, 1983, after a four-and-a-half week strike despite the wage freeze. Similar amounts were won by workers at four other Altona complex companies and Australian Carbon Black, Footscray Chemicals and Monsanto. Albright and Wilson workers on strike and before the commission kept referring to the $16 won by the FPU from H.J. Heinz Company in Melbourne. Commissioner Walker waved a copy of The Age newspaper in the courtroom, which reported calls by the Prime Minister for unions to stick to their wage restraint side of the Accord. Walker suggested that the workers should “walk half a mile to the ACTU Congress and see for themselves whether in fact the ACTU representatives are representing the rank and file . . . . My hands are tied because of the actions of people representing the working people of this country. If they are not representing them correctly, I cannot do anything about it”.

In late October 1983, 2,500 electricians in Western Australia walked off the job on construction sites where they were employed by contractors. The state Labor government indicated that the dispute was the most serious in Western Australia that year and posed a serious threat to the Accord. The strike was the result of a deferred wage agreement made in February 1982 with the Electrical Contractors
Association (ECA). A newsletter published in late 1981 by the ECA pleaded with ETU members to accept a $38 deal: "If you consider this package a fair deal you should vote to accept its complete introduction". The ETU members voted to accept the wage package which allowed for a series of wage increases — three six-monthly increments of $17, $18 and $20. This was the first time electrical workers had led the way in a wage agreement as they usually took flow-ons from metal trades agreements. The agreement was ratified in total by the commission.

Seventeen dollars was received on 1 July, 1982 and then Fraser's wage freeze made the next two increases illegal. An increase of $18 on 1 January, 1983 and $20 on 1 July, 1983 were both deferred by the commission on application of contractors. The ECA spokesman, Mr. Gus Ferguson, argued that the employers were not backing out of the agreement and that the workers would get the money in six months. Given this decision, the ETU went on strike on 12 October, 1983. Then on 20 October, 1983, Chief Industrial Commissioner Kelly made it clear in a state wage hearing that the ETU must abide by the new centralised wage system: "Any reinstatement of the $38 is likely to lead to similar demands for a flow-on from contracted metal workers."

On 4 November, 1984, the commission withheld the national 4.3 percent wage rise from the ETU which would have amounted to $13.50 had they returned to work. This only accomplished the hardening of their resolve. The employers then made an application to the Industrial Commission to cancel the award which would have cost workers redundancies and severance payments, site allowances and other specially negotiated awards.

On 11 November, 1984, the ETU argued before a full bench of the State Industrial Commission that wage guidelines should not apply retrospectively. Commissioner Bruce Collier responded: "... the continuation of the stoppage seems to me to be the most fruitless exercise I could ever imagine", and informed the union that they had to answer a summons as to why the union should not be deregistered in a hearing to be held on 24 November.

New technologies: the microchip and the computer.
The following week the WA state government went on the attack warning the striking electricians that they could be blamed for demolishing wage indexation and the Accord if they did not return to work. State Minister for Industrial Relations, Des Dans, said: "no matter how valid the ETU's objectives looked, they should not be allowed to jeopardise the longer-term future of all other Australians". The state government condemnation of the ETU was welcomed by employers. Employers indicated they were looking at the possibility of mounting cases under the secondary boycott provisions of the Trade Practices Act and other avenues of civil action. ETU secretary, Mick Beatty, responded to the criticism most succinctly by stating: "The WA government has already breached the Accord by increasing state taxes and charges to a record level and abandoning any serious attempts at price control. Perhaps Des Dans should look in the mirror".

Proceedings for deregistration began on 24 November with employers predicting that small electrical contractors would not survive the strike. On 29 November, the ETU was suspended by the commission and given eight days to return to work before deregistration of the entire union in Western Australia. The following day, Minister for Industry and Commerce, Senator Button, described the strike as selfish and told the Senate he would talk to the federal Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations to see what action the Commonwealth could take in the matter.

Further discussions took place before the commission and a new agreement was reached. The Industrial Commission agreed to omit the $18 payment and award the $20 payment in lieu of the 4.3 percent national decision. This amounted to about $7 more than the 4.3 percent would have provided. The ETU, under severe pressure, agreed to return to work on 12 December, 1983. The entire dispute provides a most poignant example of the Accord at work. No matter how just the claim, workers must sacrifice their livelihood for the benefit of national consensus. The ETU organiser, Mr Wally Palmer, said, "We were starved back to work." Based on the principles of the Accord, it took the ECA, the State Industrial Commission, the state Labor government and the federal Labor government to do it.

In February, 1984, the Builders Laborers Federation decided to fight for a $9 increase rather than wait for agreements by building employers over a new superannuation package. This decision was a result of the Full Bench of the Arbitration Commission rejecting a negotiated national building award agreement. Once again, unions and employers had reached an agreement to increase allowances under the anomalies and inequities provisions of the Accord guidelines, only to see it rejected by the commission. Pat Clancy, secretary of the Building Workers Industrial Union, described the decision as a recipe for industrial anarchy but the commission was primarily worried about the potential for flow-ons.

However, when the BLF campaign got under way to get money "up front" rather than through a half-baked superannuation scheme, agents of the government came into action. Bill Kelty of the ACTU said, "The union movement could not allow the central wage-fixing system to be threatened by the BLF campaign". The federal government was said to be considering moves to have the BLF excluded from all national wage increases and also threatened to initiate deregistration proceedings. Prime Minister Hawke said that the BLF was out of step with the ACTU, the rest of the union movement and the government. "We as a Government will not tolerate a position where that union repudiates the ACTU." On 28 February, 1984, the BLF lifted bans on 100 building sites around Australia and declared that its $9 campaign was over. They agreed to get behind a revived superannuation campaign. Mr. Polites argued for the Confederation of Australian Industry that "there was no doubt that the $9, if won, would flow to other tradesmen's unions and from there into the supply areas of the building industry".

In April 1984, the Federated Furnishing Trades Society won a claim in the aluminium window fabricating industry for site allowances of $11.90 per week, $6 to be paid from April and $5.90 to come later in the year. On 28 May, the federal cabinet endorsed a submission by Employment and Industrial Relations Minister, Mr. Willis, for tough action against the union's pay claim outside the Accord. The submission was understood to include punitive action against the 8,500 member union so as to prevent flow-ons to other unions such as the Federated Ironworkers Union. The National Director of the Metal Trades Industry Association, Mr. Bert Evans, said: "We are delighted to see that the Government is thinking about taking the union on." The ACTU then met with union officials to get them to withdraw the claim. On 31 May, 1984 the FTS abandoned the claim to head off government action against the union.

The above examples are only a few to show that the Wages Accord is indeed working to prevent wages from being higher and more equitable than they would have been if the Accord had not been in place.

Argument 2

The Accord prevents money wages and real wages from increasing too rapidly so that employment can be increased.

The above argument contradicts Argument 1, but was implicit in the ACTU submission to the Arbitration Commission in June 1983 when Jan Marsh argued that, if full indexation was not forthcoming, industrial disputes would increase, wage struggles would heighten and the economy would suffer with increased non-deployment of resources. The argument is based on the premise that wage increases are directly correlated with unemployment. While trade unionists recognise that wage costs may contribute to unemployment, it must also be the case that international trade, high interest rates, declining demand for goods and services, technology, and even increased productivity also create unemployment. Keeping these other factors in mind, one must remember that, since the wage freeze and Accord were put into effect, unemployment in Australia has increased 66 percent. Unemployment is a more complex phenomenon than the simple-minded correlation artists would have us believe. Wage increases do not cause unemployment, although wage increases in conjunction with other factors may reduce employment.
The contradiction is that if real wages decline and the profit share increases, there is nothing to prevent those profits from being invested overseas, in labour-replacing technology, "rationalisation" processes or in speculative gain portfolios, which would also lead to an increase in the unemployment rate.

Gail Cotton, organiser for the Food Preserver's Union, put the case well, so she is quoted at length:

"There are real changes occurring in this industry at the present time in terms of productivity connected with technological change, profitability and rationalisation that would allow this union to narrow the gap between haves and have nots. This union does not accept the principle of one person's wage increase is another person's job. Nor does it believe that by keeping workers in the food preserver's industry low paid and powerless we are really doing the unemployed a favour.

It is not a matter of not caring about the unemployed, nor failure to understand the Accord, or trying to bring down the system. It is a matter of improving the living standards of the working poor and allowing them to benefit, where circumstances permit, from changes in a particular industry and to benefit from the profit they work so hard to create with their sweat and often with their blood, for their employers. Abrogating our responsibility would have been to tell the workers, as the Heinz Company, the Arbitration Commission, and the capitalist press did, that as a union we would not support them because of the Accord. In the age of consensus, this position is called 'leadership'. I call it 'sell out'. Supporters of the Accord who attack this union would do well to be mindful of the difference."

It is useful to remember, as the so-called "natural" rate of unemployment continues to rise, what one senior Arbitration Commission judge has said: "If a little union like the food preservers can break the Accord so easily, what effect do you think that is going to have on the so-called more militant unions"? So far, it remains to be seen.
Argument 3

The Accord permits a stable profit recovery in the present and will prevent a wage explosion when the gross domestic product begins to increase and profitability is secure.

This argument comes much closer to the truth than either of the two previous arguments. The goal of both the Fraser and Hawke governments has been and is to push back the wage share of gross domestic product to pre-1973 levels. The increased wage share and reduced profit share which was generated by the Whitlam government in the early 1970s is now seen as a destabilising force for capitalist economic activity. It is also clear that there are those in the ACTU hierarchy who also share this philosophy. For instance, Bill Kelty used a forum organised by the Victorian Employers Federation in Melbourne to put his pro-growth, pro-profits position. He has been stumping the country recently with the message that unions should be seen as economic rationalists aligning their position with the political and economic position of the Prime Minister and Treasurer Keating. "Trade unions don't shy away from the question of profit," he said. "The trade union movement, not like some economic ideologues, accepts the world as we see it. This country needs productive capacity"

Fundamental to Kelty's position on profits is that, according to those criteria, the Accord is working quite well. The profit share of gross domestic product has risen from an historic low of 11.4 percent in the September quarter 1982 to 16.2 percent as of the March quarter 1984, the highest it has been since the end of 1973. Correspondingly, during the same period, the wage share has fallen from 67.8 percent to 61 percent, the lowest it has been since 1971.

Calendar year 1983 showed a growth rate of 6.1 percent in gross domestic product with company profits increasing sharply by 39 percent. Over the same time period, award rates of adult wage and salary earners increased 4.7 percent. While real wages stagnate, a major recovery in profitability is under way. In a study by J.B. Were and Son, it was shown that, in the second half of 1983, listed industrial companies were performing strongly. Combined pre-tax earnings of 187 sampled firms were up 35.3 percent for the half-year to 31 December, 1983. Industry breakdowns show records being set in a number of sectors as the following summary indicates:

- Beer and wine (CUB, Castlemaine, Mildara and Seppelt) show pre-tax profit up 13.2 percent to a record $117 million.*
- Tobacco (Amatil, Rothmans, Philip Morris) increased 25 percent to $103.2 million.*
- Automotive (dominated by Repco) increased 62 percent to $58.6 million.
- Retail (Coles, Woolworths, David Jones, Myers) increased 52.2 percent to $817.5 million.*
- Developers (Lend Lease, Hooker, Leighton) increased 43.6 percent to $88.4 million.*
- Building materials (24 companies) increased 22.5 percent to $280.4 million.*
- Engineering (24 companies including ANI, NCL and Johns Perry) increased 40.5 percent to $133.6 million.
- Media (16 companies including Bell Group and Fairfax) increased 58 percent to $169 million.*
- Paper and Packaging (5 companies including APM) steady at $64 million.
Food and Household goods increased 20.7 percent to $111 million. 
Sundry (28 companies including Dunlop) increased 35.6 percent to $182.6 million.*

*Refers to a record performance in profitability for a six-months period.

Additional selected examples which show the broad base of the profit recovery include: Western Mining Corporation recording a massive profit increase of 1,360 percent with earnings of $18.09 million for the period July to December 1983; Australia's largest financier, Australian Guarantee Corporation reported a 20.3 percent increase in net profits to $50.5 million for half-year to March, 1984; Westpac reported a 42 percent increase of $143.5 million for half-year to 31 March, 1984; for the December half of 1983, EWI (seat belt webbing) increased 35.8 percent to $110,000. Nally Ltd. (plastics) recorded a 31.8 percent rise to $460,000. Softwood Holdings (timber) increased 132 percent to $6.8 million and Hartagen Energy posted a 62.1 percent increase to $10.1 million.

Along with the profit recovery has occurred a subsequent increase in dividend payments which have also outstripped wage growth. From January to June, 1983, dividends increased 13.7 percent (compared to the previous corresponding half) and they increased a further 19.6 percent in the December half of 1983.10

Not surprisingly, there has also occurred a flurry of salary increases for senior managers in the first three months of 1984. According to the Price Waterhouse Association, survey data covering companies with a turnover between $5 million and $500 million, showed annual base salaries for chief executives on $60,000 per year increasing 12 percent in the first three months of 1984. In 1983 they received increases of between eight and 10 percent. Finance executives earning $40,000 got increases of 13.4 percent; and senior production executives received eight percent, both in the first three months of 1984.11

The above figures should be noted in the context of Clause 28 of the national economic summit which encouraged "non-wage income" groups to have their fees set by the Arbitration Commission; and the words of Mr. Willis, federal Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations who has said that "control over non-wage income is a major quid pro quo for union wage restraint outlined in the Prices-Incomes Accord".

Speaking of prices and incomes, the federal government, in December 1983, introduced prices surveillance legislation into parliament, warning business to fight trade union sectional wage claims. Treasurer Keating said that the new Prices Surveillance Authority (PSA) would not hinder profit recovery and would examine price movements by only a limited number of powerful corporations and Commonwealth authorities. The bill contained no penalties against firms which snub PSA findings. The legislation was seen as establishing a "toothless tiger" by Cliff Dolan, president of the ACTU, shortly before it was proclaimed. In March 1984, Mr. Bill Kelty acknowledged to a group of leftwing union officials that the ACTU had not been able to reach agreement with the government on all aspects of the PSA. He said, "delays in setting up the authority which was a key part of the Accord have not been helpful in effecting the Accord"12.

The PSA began formal operations on 19 March with its scope limited primarily to petroleum products, Telecom and Australia Post. It does have less teeth than its predecessor, the Prices Justification Tribunal, established by the Whitlam government. The great majority of Australian businesses will not be affected at all by its existence, irrespective of the delay in setting it up.

In the meantime, most state governments, particularly Labor governments, have failed to honour election promises of taxation restraint, and have since 1981-82 been increasing taxes and charges at a faster rate than inflation. Victoria and Western Australia have the poorest records. From 1981-82 to 1983-84, Victorian state taxes increased 40.2 percent; Western Australia — 33.1 percent; NSW — 29.5 percent; South Australia — 26.7 percent; Queensland — 15.7 percent; and Tasmania — 10.3 percent. These increases included duties on payroll, stamp, land, lottery, business franchises, statutory corporation payments and motoring charges.13 Indirect taxes imposed on cigarettes, tobacco, alcoholic beverages and petrol, all of which hit those least able to pay were increased in the August 1983 budget and will be indexed to the consumer price index every six months. In Clause 25 of the national economic summit communique, it is stated: "In like fashion, governments agree to exercise, as far as possible, restraints in their charges".

A Perth study has shown that the cost of feeding a family on a low budget rose 20 percent in 1982-83. The state Minister for Consumer Affairs, Mr. Tonkin, admitted that there was nothing the state government could do to contain prices. The Consumer Affairs Bureau's price-monitoring unit is proving to be purely cosmetic in responding to complaints.14

Finally, it is important to note that in the August 1983 federal budget, the company tax contribution to total revenues fell from 17 percent in 1982 to 14 percent while PAYE taxes increased from 81.8 percent in 1982 to 83.7 percent of total tax receipts.

Argument 4

The Accord is part of an interventionist strategy of the trade union movement through which money gains are traded off so as to gain an intervening position in government policy. Specific areas of concern include economic planning, technology, occupational health and safety and industry policy, particularly in the metal trades and manufacturing sectors.

This argument is used by those sincere trade unionists who, correctly, have identified the role and power of the state in the present economic crisis. What those who argue this position fail to fully comprehend is that it is the responsibility of the state to reproduce the social relations of capitalism. If this can be achieved through co-opting the most militant trade unionists into exercises of "consensus planning", then that course of action will be pursued. Throughout the world, income accords have exhibited important common elements. On the part of labour they represent acceptance of the logic of profitability as the guiding principle of resource allocation, international exchange, technological change and product development. In return, labour is assured of a minimal living standard and an attempt to control...
unemployment by the state. Capital is offered a secure and stable investment climate in return for support of limited expenditure on social welfare by the state. According to Colin Crouch, this interrelationship is defined as "corporatism", in which there exists a hierarchical, non-conflictual integration of the state and organised groups representative of capital and labour.15

The corporatist state is best understood as a network of bargaining, consultation and compromise aiming to promote consensus between "partners within a capitalist framework". Social conflict and antagonism is translated by the state into a policy of distribution which preserves the existing structure of power and control. Consultations simulate a public debate between classes and other organised interests, and participants see the absence of confrontation as a measure of efficiency and effectiveness. However, the most decisive aspects of the debate are hidden from public view. A distance is thereby created between those representing the interests of trade unions and trade unionists themselves. True representation with active participation is jarringly at odds with the pragmatics of simulated debate and consensus politics. "Simulated debate is, by definition, and exclusive affair; attendance is by invitation only."16

Co-operation becomes a duty enforceable by the state, if necessary. Sectional interests must be subordinated to the "general will", as defined by agents of the state. Corporatism is hierarchical in principle. The state administers by using flexible "enabling act" models whereby aims are so abstract as to be uncontroversial with content and specific powers to be filled in later. Agreements are then worked out in private negotiations between key individuals in government, business and union sectors. The Accord is the centre of the regulation process over trade unions. Once "voluntary agreements" have been reached it becomes the responsibility of trade union leaders to enforce the agreements and control the rank and file. Self-enforcement is part of the responsibility, and participation in the Accord provides for legitimation for co-opting potential dissidents into the committees of decision-making, defusing opposition, and turning the militants into agents of enforcement.17

Argument number four is most indicative of a dialogue of the deal taking place between those sincere trade unionists who wish to transform capitalism and those who in the interest of profit, economic rationality and capital, wish to preserve the status quo. Argument number three is a clear indication that the function of the Accord is to raise the profit share at the expense of workers. Argument number two presumes that employment is only a function of lower real wages. This flies in the face of the clear indication that new investment in manufacturing will be labour-replacing investment on plant and machinery. And, finally, argument number one is speculation and obfuscation meant to con rank-and-file trade unionists. As one writer has concluded:

Bringing unions into an agreement on incomes is the most important and effective way of tying them into a corporatist political structure. That is, an incomes agreement brings unions, employers and the state together to develop and administer a wage policy in which the union's principal task is to ensure rank and file acceptance.18

The objectives of democratic socialism have been clearly and totally rejected in favour of tripartite capitalist economic management and rationality. The sad fact is that the question was never put to the rank and file, much less debated.

References
11. As reported in Australian Financial Review, 14 March, 1984, p. 27.

Herb Thompson is a senior lecturer in political economy at Murdoch University.
Women and the Accord

Danny Blackman

Why are women virtually excluded from the Accord?

Danny Blackman examines this problem in her investigation of the relationship between the Accord and the position of women in the paid workforce.

The Prices and Incomes Accord between the ALP and the ACTU formed a significant plank in the ALP election campaign in March 1983, offering a compact between labour and the state which sought to guarantee the containment of wage demands, and industrial peace, thus enabling a social democratic government with a high popular profile and a commitment to consensus, to manage the economy out of the current depression.

Implicit in the concept of the Accord from the beginning was an understanding of incomes policy as fundamental to the ability of a Labor government to achieve a return to anything approaching full employment — and thus, from the outset, acceptance of the idea that wages were responsible for the depression.

The agreement, when concluded, prioritised simultaneous reduction of unemployment and inflation. In agreeing to wage restraint, the unions were assured of corresponding restraint on prices and non-wage incomes, some measure of redistribution through reforms to the taxation system, and a gradual increase in the social wage. Sectional claims by stronger sections of the labour movement were exchanged for guaranteed Consumer Price Index (CPI) based rises in a centralised wage fixing system, with a goal of maintenance of real wages and of living standards. In the economic climate of the time, this offered a guarantee of wage rises which might not otherwise be achieved by some sections of the labour movement and, in addition, promised trade union involvement in economic planning by way of the tripartite Economic Policy Advisory Committee (EPAC).

I would argue both that the processes by which this compact between labour and the government was reached, and the policies contained in it effectively exclude women from participation, and therefore that an agreement made on behalf of labour which does not deal with the interests of 37 percent of the existing workforce can hardly be an adequate representation of the interests of that workforce as a whole, or of the Australian working class.

The Nature of the Accord

Firstly, it is important to recognise that the Accord is both an economic and a political document. Its economic intent is obvious in the need for the incoming ALP government to offer a strategy consistent with the social goals to manage the Australian economy out of the worst depression since the thirties; in so doing, it implicitly attempts to manage the crisis within a capitalist framework. Its political intent arises from the conviction born of the experiences of the Whitlam years that, in order to govern successfully, it is necessary for an ALP government to have the confidence of business. The Accord, as a compact between state, labour and capital, is essentially a document aimed at business, at gaining the confidence of the private sector in Australia. This analysis is, I think, substantiated in the spectacle of the Hawke Summit, a sort of media hype to a Tripartite gathering.

It can also be argued that the Accord is, par excellence, a compact with the patriarchy; the working class with which it is concerned is represented as predominantly male. The emphasis which is placed on recovery in the manufacturing industries at the expense of social wage and public sector growth, the low priority placed on redistribution by means of effective price control and reform of the taxation system, together with a commitment to real wage maintenance which fails to address the question of relativities all effectively exclude and disadvantage women.

The Accord's commitment to regaining full employment is based upon a conception of the proper unemployed as blue-collar male (the narrowest possible traditional definition of the working class). Women are very firmly located out of the class for whom this document is drafted, and located back in the home, the family and the "community". The only specific mention of women in the Accord, for the record, occurs in the section relating to education where, in the context of Equal Opportunity in all areas of education and training, there is an expressed commitment to seeking recommendations from TAFE (Technical and Further Education) on its Equal Employment Opportunity policy and implementation regarding women, rural people and Aborigines.

This active collaboration along patriarchal lines is supported by the growth of a New Right ideology which gives the family a high profile. Threatened by gains made by women in the 1970s, and the effect of these on the nuclear family, the proponents of this ideology seek to emphasise women's role in the family as primary, and as well as taking up the old argument about married women taking men's jobs, blame the so-called "crisis in the family" on women's growing access to paid employment, growing access to divorce, and the general loosening of sexual morality which has occurred in Australia over the last two decades.
The Accord emphasises recovery in the predominantly male employing manufacturing industries at the expense of social wage and public sector growth.

The impact of this ideology on the trade union movement, in political terms, can be explored through an analysis of the location of women in the paid workforce — the largest concentration occurring in the clerical area (32.4 percent of employed women in 1980), in the retail industry (18 percent in May 1983), and in the professional/technical area (over 18 percent in 1980). While in the professional/technical area representation of women's industrial interests to the ACTU is often progressive e.g. by such unions as the Australian Teachers Federation, women in the clerical and retail areas are represented by two of the largest and most rightwing unions in Australia — the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees, and the Federated Clerks Union. The political consequences for women of the large representation of these two unions at ACTU level (and even on the ACTU executive) is indicated by the insistence, in FCU policy, on the need for maintenance of the family unit because:

The existence of the family structure provides economic, political, social and psychological advantages for democracy that cannot be adequately fulfilled by any other body ... it is imperative ... that the family unit be a top priority for the government in the areas of taxation schedules and family allowances, and for the union movement and the Arbitration Commission to establish a Needs Minimum Wage sufficient to keep a husband and wife and children in decent circumstances.

Such views are familiar: they represent the thinking behind the 1907 Harvester Decision which, in implementing the concept of the family wage, enshrined in Australian industrial practice the ideology of women's dependency on men and the prior right of males to paid employment.

Given such ACTU representation of the interests of the largest section of women in the Australian workforce, it is not surprising that the ACTU, having endorsed in the Working Women's Charter in 1977, a checklist of basic demands which put the trade union movement on notice that women were able to formulate their own industrial demands, moved, for instance, at the 1983 Congress, towards a position on the provision of child care with regard to the "needs of families to maintain the opportunity for raising children which is independent of institutional care for their children" — a view which, in the event, incorporates the understanding that "child care is primarily a parental issue, not an industrial issue. Whenever possible a child should be cared for by its family." Such a position of necessity concentrates responsibility for child care upon the unpaid labour of women since, because of the gender
Policies favourable to the interests of women in the paid workforce were acceptable to sections of the trade union movement and the ALP in a period of economic growth and labour market expansion. In a tightening labour market, the trade union movement seeks to defend existing conditions for an internal market; lasting hegemony of the family wage concept reinforces the definition of this market as traditionally male. Women, in turn, are located as a reserve army whose prime commitment is consistently represented as in the home or "community"; whose role is increasingly to perform, unpaid, socially necessary work abandoned with the contraction of the public sector. This process is ensured by the low priority given in the Accord increases in the social wage (beyond the introduction of Medicare) which: will depend considerably on the government's success in achieving a non-inflationary expansion of the economy, which in turn will be substantially influenced by the extent to which this prices and incomes policy is successfully implemented.

The Position of Women in the Australian Labour Force

Women's position in the paid labour force is substantially defined by the sexual division of labour, in that responsibility for family, children and home creates the material conditions under which women sell their labour, and also because gender is fundamental to the way in which work is organised. Thus, work largely performed by women shows characteristics traditionally associated with "women's work":

often derivative of housework ... associated with food, clothing and cleaning, and ... caring for the young and the sick.

Gains made by the women's movement in the 1970s created some climate of acceptance for women's participation in the paid workforce in non-traditional areas as well as traditional. However, the onset of the economic crisis in the later '70s served to halt this process in terms of any real gains.

Thus, while overall women's movement struggles for women's control over their own bodies and the process of reproduction facilitated women's participation in the paid labour force (from 39.6 percent in 1970 to 45.1 percent in 1980), introduction of maternity leave provisions ensured their right to retain a place in the labour force, inadequate provision of child care ensured, in the absence of any serious challenge to the existing sexual division of labour, that responsibility for child care still rested on women. Even the Whitlam government's initiative in the direction of maternity leave — a minimal step in involving males in some responsibility for parenting — was abolished by the Fraser government in 1977.

While more women entered the workforce, much of this increase was in the area of part-time work (36.2 percent of all employed women in February 1983) and casual or temporary work because of women's (unpaid) responsibility for child care, housework, etc. Over the last decade, capital's restructuring of workforce and work processes around the introduction of new technology has produced a massive increase in part-time work: between 1970 and 1981 the total workforce grew by 19 percent; within this, full-time work increased by only 11 percent, while part-time work exploded with a growth rate of 85 percent. In August 1983, 845,900 women worked part-time, compared with 240,500 men. Hall makes the point that part-time work disguises the extent of unemployment and underemployment, and this is clearly reflected in the gender wage differential in Australian society.

Despite legislation for Equal Pay (1969, 1972), in 1981 average weekly earnings for all female employees (part-time and full-time) were 67.6 percent of that of all male employees. This percentage for total female workforce is obviously lowered by the numbers of women working — and earning — part-time, but average weekly earnings of female full-time employees are still only 80.1 percent of those of the corresponding sector of the male workforce, or 89.4 percent if award rates only are compared. As women work significantly less overtime than men (2.3 percent of wage as compared with men's 7.8 percent) and receive less in over-award payments (2.4 percent compared with 4.6 percent), they are further disadvantaged.

Moreover, because of the extreme gender-based segregation of the Australian workforce, women are concentrated in particular sectors. In May 1983, 81 percent of women were clustered in four major occupational categories. This type of segregation has ensured that, given the narrow interpretation applied to Equal Pay as work of equal value, and the inability to make comparisons of value across traditional lines of job demarcation, Equal Pay legislation has affected comparatively few women workers. Further, women are also concentrated in the lower scales of many awards; in the Metal Industry Award, for example, most women are at process worker level. This has obvious effects on women's wages. Some particular industries which employ mostly women, such as the Clothing and Textile industries, have the worst working conditions and lowest wages overall; in the clothing industry, in addition, there are thousands of outworkers who are even more exploited than those who work under factory conditions.

While anti-discrimination legislation makes it possible to effect some changes in the overall conditions and wages of working women, in that it ensures the principle of Equal Employment Opportunity in employment and promotion and, in some cases, affirmative action, this is under political attack from conservatives in the trade union movement and is also impacted by developing New Right ideology regarding women's role in the family. Moreover, it does not address basic...
questions of the value of work traditionally performed by women, such as typing or cleaning. This particular type of legislation for change without material support can too easily be seen, and used, as management strategies for organising women workers in competition with trade unionism. For women to effectively address their industrial issues they will need to pursue them collectively in the industrial arena and until the full Equal Pay struggle is won in this arena, there will be no material changes in the economic conditions of the majority of women workers.

An Accord in the Interests of Women?

Given their position in the workforce as outlined above, it is reasonable to suppose that women, had they been asked, would have argued for commitments in the Accord for equal pay for work of comparable value, provision of adequate child care, and a high priority for increases in the social wage. These increases should be facilitated by strategies for redistribution of wealth by thoroughgoing taxation reform and effective price control, rather than depending on the ability of capital in the manufacturing sector to produce a significant upturn in the economy. Strategies for public sector development around the social wage would create a practical challenge to the existing sexual division of labour in turning areas of women’s unpaid work into paid work, and in addition allow growth in a sector which employs large numbers of women.

The interests of women were ignored in the Accord because of a combination of circumstances arising from the economic crisis including:

- unemployment,
- the collapse of small business in the manufacturing sector due to restructuring of capital,
- the ALP government’s need to bind labour into wages restraint (without incurring the rancour that was aroused by the Fraser-imposed Wage Freeze) in order to secure business confidence, and
- the appeal to the trade union movement of guaranteed CPI based increases in a period where rank and file militancy in pursuit of wage claims could not be guaranteed.

Both the tendency of the stronger unions to see expansion of the much depressed manufacturing industry — a substantially male industry — as primary, and a view of women’s role in the workforce as a “reserve army” whose proper place was in the home, helped to ensure this.

In accepting, on behalf of the working class, such a compact between labour, capital and the state, the trade union movement has also accepted implicitly the notion of rapid wage rises as the cause of the depression. Its lack of insistence on
strong redistribution strategies results in further segmentation of the class.

The Contents of the Accord

Firstly, it should be noted that one of the basic premises of the Accord is consultation with the labour movement — the tripartite structures of consultation surrounding the Accord have tended to ensure that, for the labour movement as a whole, this has not occurred.

The fundamental features of the Accord are as follows:

- to ensure that living standards of wage and salary earners and non-income earning sections of the population requiring protection are maintained and through time increased with movements in national productivity.
- and to apply government policy to prices and all income groups, rather than, as has often been the case, to wages alone.21

These features are in the context of "continuous consultation and cooperation between the parties involved" and with an assurance of "Accommodating and supportive government policy".

The commitment in the "Wages and Working Conditions" section to maintenance of real wages as a key objective will, without any examination of relativities, merely confirm and widen with each successive percentage wage increase the existing gender wage differential. One might well ask "Whose real wages?", for this particular section of the Accord, and the resulting National Wage guidelines can be seen as excluding the issue of equal pay from the agenda altogether. In agreeing to centralised wage fixing with guaranteed CPI based increases, the union movement also accepted the situation of "no extra claims except where special and extraordinary circumstances exist. The no extra claims provision shall apply to both award and overaward payments".22

In the National Wage Case hearings in 1983, three women's organisations, The National Council of Women, Women's Electoral Lobby and the Union of Australian Women, made submissions asking for re-evaluation of women's work on the grounds that the equal pay decision had not achieved the desired results. Such a re-evaluation was ruled to be outside the guidelines; women's wages apparently being neither special nor extraordinary enough, and consideration of the applications was refused.

While a more sympathetic interpretation of the Accord's commitment to improving the living standards of all Australians"23 and to "equitable distribution of real disposable income"24 would allow consideration of the equal pay question, it would seem that the most likely strategy to get the question back on the agenda would be to seek to amend the National Wage Guidelines in 1985. It is perhaps reassuring to note the mention of the equal pay question in the Draft Document emanating from the ACTU executive's March meeting25 which offers specific programs around the equal pay issue as indicated by the responses to the Working Women's Centre Draft Manual on the Subject. As the Draft Manual raises the issue of comparable value cases, based on non-sexist definitions of value, and also attacks the system of over-award payments which operate to women's disadvantage, this will involve major campaigns in order to place these areas within the political and economic agenda of the Accord.

While centralised wage fixing guarantees to all women in the workforce, even those in areas with least industrial strength, regular if small increases, the "no extra claims guideline" locks them into this process alone. The system of percentage increases operates to maintain the differential; for most women in the workforce, as for all lower paid groups, a flat rate increase based on the CPI as applied to, say, average male weekly earnings, would be a progressive step, but since the principle of relativities is one of the backbones of the overall wage-fixing system, this would constitute a major battle. Women's wages could be increased to parity with "real wages" by, for instance, a series of lump sum adjustments applied in addition to CPI based increases, whether percentage or flat rate. However, as Justice Staples pointed out in relation to the clothing industry, where the wages of women workers under factory conditions are only 81 percent of average female earnings, a sectional claim to raise these workers even to the same wage level as other women workers (on average 67.5 percent of the male average) is outside the guidelines agreed upon in the Accord.26

The ACTU executive draft document gives some attention to the issue of child care which was not addressed in the Accord itself. At June 1980, 284,000 children not yet in school (approximately a quarter of this age group) had their responsible parent in the workforce.27 Because the main thrust of children's services policy since 1975 has been in the area of pre-schools rather than full child care, there simply is not adequate child care for working parents. In 1980, only 25 percent of children with the responsible parent in the workforce had access to child care centres, or even to family day care; 22 percent were cared for by non-supervised child minders, 58 percent by relatives — or spouse.28 The number of women thus attempting to combine child care and responsibility with much needed part-time work further fuels the growth of the part-time sector, decreasing the likelihood of overall hours reductions with no loss of pay.

Complete reform of the taxation system is required, involving both effective capital gains and wealth taxes for redistributive purposes, and restructuring of the tax scale to shift the tax burden to the higher scales. Women would benefit from such a restructuring since they largely fall into income brackets at present disproportionately burdened. They would, of course, also benefit from any extension of social wage made possible through increases in tax for higher level incomes. However, most importantly, the transition from a rebate system of assistance to families to a direct transfer allowance would be of real benefit to the majority of women.

The 1984 budget attempts to give the illusion that women have been included — belatedly — into this consensus, with a special "Women's Budget Program". In reality, the budget will reinforce women's disadvantage, economic dependence and poverty. While temporary tax relief is available to employed women, this should be compared with tax incentives available to big business,
The Accord is a compact with the patriarchy which ignores women in the workforce and locates them back in the home.

and increases in indirect taxation. Industry policies which rely on private sector investment promise little in the way of employment opportunities for women, and there is little growth in training opportunities. Inadequate welfare increases mean that women, the majority of welfare beneficiaries, continue to bear the brunt of the Hawke government’s economic policies, while the parlous state of existing child care facilities makes the 30 percent real increase in Children’s Services funding a minor gain.

There has been no increase in family allowances — rather, the dependent spouse rebate has been extended to de facto couples, thus extending the (male) subsidy for marriage, and increasing women’s economic dependence.

For women, once again, the budget has been a con, with money allocated for research but not for solid policy initiatives, and stress by the government on policies like the Affirmative Action Pilot Program which will benefit only a handful of women, while real issues like labour market inequality between men and women are ignored.

Perhaps the most important question in the Accord for women is that of the promised increases in the social wage and the question of redistribution. The most bitter disappointment must surely be the low priority set upon social wage increases. For women, the issue of the social wage is vital and inseparable from the question of their workforce participation. The redefinition of areas of work, performed unpaid by women according to the existing sexual division of labour, as paid work included in the social wage, will both free women from part of their burden of unpaid work, and simultaneously create jobs in a sector that is a substantial employer of women. The provision of adequate services for children and the aged would be key areas for such a redefinition.

Women form the largest single body of welfare consumers — in June 1982 they comprised 61.2 percent of welfare recipients (67.3 percent if unemployment beneficiaries are excluded), and constitute a staggering 95 percent of single parent beneficiaries. As clients of the state, any increase in social wage is to their advantage. As principal users of medical care, they are a major beneficiary of Medicare; as supporting parents who face the greatest problems in gaining housing on the private rental market, and have the least chance of being able to buy their own home, women would benefit greatly from an increase in public housing.

A serious commitment to a social wage strategy involving evaluation of socially necessary work could provide areas of permanent work, many of them deriving from the area of “community work” at present funded either on a short term submission basis through the Department of Youth and Community Services or as job creation schemes through the Community Employment Program. This area is largely run by women, most of its clients are women; it is highly volunteerised, largely non-unionised, and massively overburdened, as are the formal state welfare agencies in dealing with the effects of economic crisis on large sectors of the Australian working class.

The Accord’s commitment to tying social wage increases to national economic recovery based on the manufacturing sector performance involves the government in continued concessions to capital (as evidenced in this year’s budget, regarded by businessmen as having “only pluses for industry and few minuses” and as establishing “a favourable environment for private capital investment”). This precludes any serious attention to the question of redistribution.

The Accord’s commitment to a national superannuation scheme (in line with both ALP and
ACTU policy would, if acted upon, be very advantageous to women, since only a relatively small proportion of women already benefit from occupational superannuation schemes; many women work in areas where such schemes are not available, or they are ineligible because of the part-time, casual or temporary nature of their work. Where women are eligible, broken service resulting from family and child care commitments often excludes them from full benefits. However, the several-tiered system proposed, involving a universal 25 percent average weekly earnings benefit, plus existing occupational superannuation benefit and, if necessary, a "top-up" supplement, will, because of women's relatively low access to occupational superannuation, still tend to leave them justifying their need for supplementary money. Any system which seeks to build onto the existing schemes in this way will leave unchaged the inequalities in the existing system, and will not address existing problems in management of superannuation funds. It seems likely, at this juncture, that any such scheme will be the brainchild of the insurance industry; how much input any other area will be seen as the interests of the male working class, "family breadwinners" who also constitute the "proper unemployed", for whom job creation should take place on a more long-term basis than under the Community Employment Scheme. By failing to prioritise extension of the social wage, the Accord effectively seeks to locate women in the "community", in the family, and in doing so is influenced by both the long-time hegemony of the family wage concept and the impact of New Right ideology in the 1980s.

Nonetheless, the Accord defines the terrain of economic and industrial relations in Australia in the mid-1980s, and as such many women have to struggle collectively to extend its framework to encompass specific goals such as equal pay for work of comparable value, provision of adequate childcare, social wage increases and a long-term campaign for shorter hours with the eventual effect of cutting down the part-time market, while maintaining wages. Women will have to struggle in any renegotiation of the Accord for inclusion of goals such as these, which are of real importance to the position of women in the workforce, and in doing so, will have to attempt to write themselves out of the home and the "community" and back into the Australian working class.

Conclusions

Despite the relatively progressive nature of existing ALP and ACTU policy on women, both bodies, faced with the certainty of the election of a Labor government and its need to manage the economy out of a depression, rapidly put aside any commitment to women.

While one recognises the constraints under which the Accord was formulated, the resulting document, which purports to be a compact between the working class, state and capital, is inadequate because it is premised on a very narrow definition of the class. In effect, it is a document of collaboration on a patriarchal basis, by which, for maintenance of the status quo and participation in national economic planning, the trade union movement has assented to a further fragmentation of the Australian working class.

While there is nothing inherently wrong with the notion of a compact between labour and capital in order to deal with economic crisis, such a compact, based on the status quo, can only serve to further exacerbate the differentials between men and women within the class.

Because the Accord is a defensive document based on preservation of the status quo, it represents the interests of the traditional male blue collar working class. The absence of women from the Accord is no accident, but a real exclusion, in that the interests of the working class in such an agreement are seen as the interests of the male working class, "family breadwinners" who also constitute the "proper unemployed", for whom job creation should take place on a more long-term basis than under the Community Employment Scheme. By failing to prioritise extension of the social wage, the Accord effectively seeks to locate women in the "community", in the family, and in doing so is influenced by both the long-time hegemony of the family wage concept and the impact of New Right ideology in the 1980s.

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Sociological

Strictly speaking, these are not sociological theories, since they explicitly avoid sociological explanation, i.e. the explanation of difference in terms of social and historical circumstances. However, theories like these have proved very attractive to some social scientists, who have helped to disseminate them beyond academic circles. Those who sympathised with the Nazis’policies in Germany are obvious examples, but scientific racism has been revived more recently. The work of the psychologist Jensen in the US purported to show that black children had lower I.Q.s than white children and that these differences were genetic in origin. His work was picked up and popularised in Britain by the well known H.J. Eysenck (1971).

Another variant of biological determinism has come from the ethologists and the sociobiologists. The former have included popular writers such as Robert Ardrey, Konrad Lorenz and Desmond Morris. These writers claim that human aggression is innate, based on territoriality and a corresponding hostility to those who are different and/or members of an outgroup (cf. Ardrey, 1967, 1970; Lorenz, 1967; Morris, 1968, 1971a and b).

Their arguments have been elaborated by Pierre van den Berghe, a once liberal sociologist who has been an influential writer on race relations. van den Berghe has recently argued that racism also has a genetic basis. To quote:

As hominids became increasingly formidable competitors and predators to their own and closely related species, there was a strong pressure for the formation of larger and more powerful groups. (This) necessarily meant organising against other competing groups, and therefore maintaining ethnic boundaries. (1978, p. 105).

In another influential formulation, that of E.O. Wilson of Harvard, nationalism and racism are portrayed as the culturally nurtured outgrowths of simple tribalism, i.e. the genetic need to look after one’s own (Wilson, 1976).

There are, of course, major flaws in this mode of analysis. One is that there are no discrete biological groups that can be designated as races. In the case of the US, for example, the mix of blacks and whites makes theories of biological determinism highly dubious to say the least. Criteria for difference are equally dubious. And a mountain of evidence indicates that the tests used by people like Jensen are of questionable validity (Richardson and Spears, 1973). In the case of the sociobiologists, one can criticise the selectivity of evidence, the interpretation derived from the available evidence and its extrapolation to human behaviour.

Given the obvious deficiencies of such theories, how can we explain their widespread acceptance? Clearly, they fulfil some social and political purposes, and it is these purposes that we need to explore further.

In this article I will try to show why we must develop a critical understanding of this society and some of the ideas and theories that guide it if we are to confront racism. In doing this, I am concerned to locate theories socially and historically. Theories are not immanent truths plucked from the air, but are constructed by relatively powerful people with particular predispositions and interests. They form part of the structure of political formations, and the dominance of certain theories and certain philosophical orientations requires political explanation.

I will, therefore, begin by summarising some of the ways in which sociologists have theorised racism so as to clarify the more specific discussion that follows.

The first of these theories I have labelled biological determinism. This one is very common, reappearing in various guises, as we shall see later. Biological determinists argue that there are discrete races, clearly distinguished from each other by physical characteristics. These inherent characteristics determine temperament, intelligence and aptitudes, in some genetically transmitted way which then limits or advantages certain groups vis-a-vis other groups with a different genetic inheritance. Hence, relations of domination and subordination have been attributed to natural inequalities — supposedly inferior intelligence, endemic laziness, a natural incapacity to cope with abstract thought, etc.
The second mode of explanation of racism is closely related to the first. I have labelled this prejudice and human nature. In general terms, this approach sees all people as antagonistic towards those who are different from themselves. It is, therefore, "natural" to prefer one's own people, and prejudice maintains the cosiness of the in-group (the idea that We are superior to Them). Anthropologists will attest to the fact that such sentiments are widespread, that people distinguish themselves positively and their neighbours negatively in the same breath. Max Weber spoke of "ethnic honour", "the conviction of the excellence of one's own customs". If one's own ethos is superior, all others are, by definition, inferior. This kind of ethnocentrism is the other side of prejudice, as anyone who has observed the buildup of nationalism anywhere will verify. The line between ethnic honour and intolerance is a very fine line indeed. I want to return to this point later, as well. For the time being, we can see that prejudice by itself is an insufficient explanation. It tends to focus on individual interaction and fails to explain why prejudice occurs unevenly. To do that, we need a historically specific analysis. There is little evidence that prejudice causes conflict; it is more likely to be the outcome of conflict.

Nevertheless, attitudes and ideology are important determinants of group interaction. They cannot be dismissed as superstructures that simply reflect material realities. This has been the tendency in some theories which I shall label economistic for purposes of discussion. Economistic approaches are brilliantly discussed in a paper by Stuart Hall, who draws out the strands of argument presented by writers with quite different political orientations, e.g. development theorists such as Rostow, and Marxists such as Gunder Frank. In a summary statement, Hall says:

Here one is then obliged to agree that race relations are directly linked with economic processes: historically, with the epochs of conquest, colonisation and mercantilist domination, and, currently, with the "unequal exchanges" which characterise the economic relations between developed metropolitical and "underdeveloped" satellite economic regions of the world economy. The problem here is not whether economic structures are relevant to racial divisions but how the two are theoretically connected. (1980, p. 308)

This brings us to another kind of approach, one that often includes criticism of the "economic reductionism" of the previous tendency. This approach could be more accurately described as sociological, though there is also a wide range within such a category. For example, John Rex has developed an extremely complex analysis of the concrete economic and historical conditions under which racism developed in South Africa. These conditions included distinctions at the level of culture and values, which generated conflict between groups that was distinct from control of the means of production (see Rex, 1970). Rex's work is an impressive example of such analysis, and demonstrates the
Enoch Powell’s intervention in Britain in 1968 gave a great boost to the racists. Powell adopted a role not unlike that of Professor Blainey in Australia today.

inadequacies of economism. But an approach that resists or ignores economic explanations can become simply descriptive or even an apology for the status quo. The South African government, for example, never mentions the colour-coded control of economic resources whenever they offer cultural explanations for their vicious political system.

A sociological model that has obvious relevance to Australia is the assimilation model. Developed in the US, like so many of our adopted ideas, this model included a "race relations cycle" that moved from competition, to conflict, to accommodation and, finally, assimilation. Robert Park and the sociologists from the University of Chicago elaborated this view of immigrants and, to a lesser extent, of blacks in the US. It fits well with the broader philosophy of mobility according to individual effort within a classless society of self-made men. Accordingly, it has also been influential in Australia, another nation of immigrants. It was, however, irrevocably shaken by the Black Power movement and militant black activity. More recent critiques have also demonstrated that some immigrant groups have been more equal than others, even in the long term (Karabel, 1979; Kolko, 1976; Steinberg, 1981). The perpetuation and regeneration of racism are not explicable within this framework.

Another large body of material has focused on colonialism and the development of racist theories to

justify the pillage, rape, murder and desecration that accompanied the colonial enterprise and the establishment of a world economy based on colonial and post colonial exploitation. Marie de Lepervanche has detailed these justifications, in the Australian case, for the disinheritance and genocide of Aborigines, the blackbirding of Pacific Islanders, the hostility to Asians (de Lepervanche, 1980). From the Bible to biology, reasons can be found for the superiority of the so-called "white" races and the natural inequality of the others.

John Rex argues that the colonial heritage is still important in Britain today, where most of the immigrants come from countries that used to be colonies. Their relations with the British are, to some extent, pre-formed (and deformed) by the experience of colonialism. Their presence in Britain testifies to the decline of Empire (Rex, 1970). This historical residue is picked up with some force in the title and contents of a recent study of racism in Britain, The Empire Strikes Back (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1983).

The analysis of colonialism has been extended by some writers to a notion of "internal colonialism", to explain continuing racial exploitation in, for example, South Africa (see Wolfe, 1975) and Australia (see Hartwig, 1978).

Certainly, the heritage of colonialism is central to an understanding of racism, as we will see when we discuss the British situation. But colonialism is also systematically neglected in colonising countries and in those ex-colonies, like Australia, where the colonial ideology goes largely unquestioned.

I will return to this question, but I’d like to indicate what I mean by a personal account, which I’m sure you’ll find familiar. My daughter, attending a relatively progressive state primary school in a middle class area of Sydney, was assigned, in 1979, a large history project called "Man Discovers the New World". This Man, of course, was Magellan, Cortes, Columbus, Marco Polo and the pre-colonial boys from Europe. When I suggested (a) that this New World was pretty old and had already been discovered, (b) that the civilising intent attributed to these adventurers was dubious and (c) that those women and men who probably did discover these lands were not only brutally treated by the Europeans, but oppressed by their successors, my daughter burst into tears, her teacher became very hostile, and the headmaster gave me the "demented mother" treatment. Twenty years of anthropological training could make no scratch on the patina of 400 years of European domination.

I believe this is a very important element in the continued existence of racism. It means that our very basic social understandings, our ideas of ourselves in the world, are founded on racism. Martin Barker and others talk about the “new racism”, but we should not over-emphasise the novelty of the ideas and actions they describe.
Stuart Hall (Inset) applied the economic theories of Marx and others to the question of racial division, concluding that "the problem is not whether economic structures are relevant but how the two are theoretically linked".

This too-brief summary of some approaches to racism may have shown up the inadequacy of most explanations. But some explanations have tremendous power. Stuart Hall, Professor of Sociology at the Open University in Britain, continues to produce brilliant analyses of racism providing models which can be used to structure sociological views of racism in certain ways. Hall emphasises that racism cannot be explained in abstraction from the other social relations. It is not a universal. Different racisms must be understood in the context of specific historical, economic and political conditions, existing class relations and ideological practices. I cannot pretend to tackle such a mammoth task here, but I will attempt to point out some of these elements in a consideration of contemporary racisms.

The "New Racism" in the 1980s

John Rex detected a resurgent racism in Britain towards the end of the 1950s when, as he put it, "racist jokes began to be heard in working men's clubs" (1973, p. 176).

In 1958, there were violent clashes between black and white residents of Nottingham and Notting Hill. The "hooligans" held to be responsible were punished, but the activities in the Notting Hill area of such well-known racists as Sir Oswald Mosley were not widely publicised, let alone restrained.

By the mid 1960s, Conservative and Labour had agreed on the control of black immigration, thus giving support to the anti-immigrant and anti-black sentiment in the country. In 1968, the famous intervention of Enoch Powell gave a great boost to the racists. Drawing on his colonial experience as a Professor of Classics, Powell described himself as feeling like the Roman who saw visions of the River Tiber "foaming with much blood". This apocalyptic vision would be realised in Britain unless black immigration was drastically reduced. Powell made three public speeches in 1968 which reiterated the same themes — that ordinary (white) English people were being overwhelmed, intimidated and dispossessed by the deluge of (black) immigrants. At the same time, Powell has refused to be described as racist. According to him, he is not arguing that blacks are inferior, just that they are different and that this difference would cause fear and reaction among the white population (see Barker, 1983, p. 40).

In these speeches, Powell raised several themes which have been extremely important and which have relevance to us here in Australia. One of these themes is "the genuine fear of ordinary people". Barker describes it as "a central weapon in the Tory armoury" (p. 15). Margaret Thatcher herself used it in a major speech in January, 1978, which suggested that the "British character", which "has done so much for democracy and law throughout the world" would react to the fear of being swamped (ibid.).

Such fear, therefore, is a fear of loss of a way of life, of a valued and valuable culture.

Subsequent Tory statements demonstrate that this British way of life is seen as essentially homogeneous, cementing the unity of the nation. A challenge to that unity is therefore a threat. To quote Enoch Powell:

The disruption of the homogeneous we, which forms the essential basis of our parliamentary democracy and, therefore, of our liberties, is now approaching the point at which the political mechanisms of a "divided community" take charge and begin to operate autonomously (from Barker, 1983, p. 21).

Furthermore, the feeling of community is portrayed as human nature, that same human nature which rejects alien-ness. Powell again:

An instinct to preserve an identity and defend a territory is one of the deepest and strongest implanted in mankind. I happen to believe that the instinct is good, and that its beneficial effects are not exhausted. (BBC I, 9 June, 1969, quoted in Barker, 1983, p. 22).

Marlin Barker analyses the development of this new Tory theory which links race with nation and which is legitimised by reference to human nature and common sense. Closely linked to the increasing jingoism of the Thatcher government, this new racism has been alarmingly successful.

At this point, we can see several elements of the theories/ideologies I summarised earlier. First, the appeal to human nature as an explanation of the naturalness of racism. Second, the
more sophisticated sociobiological arguments about instincts, crowding and tribalism. The popularity of Eysenck’s work also justified the suggestions of those who talked about the supposed dilution of the British “race” with inferior stock (a process described by the National Front as “mongrelisation”).

The relatively strong anti-Nazi feeling in Britain has, for some time, prevented the relics of Nazism from parading too openly. The largest organised far right party, the National Front, claims no affinity with the Nazis or the fascists. By contrast, the NF makes statements about the importance of parliamentary democracy (at the same time as they use street violence and other authoritarian strategies). Much of their election campaigning, however, emphasises nationalism, law and order, and anti-Communism. Within this framework, they have opposed coloured immigration and argued that the “ultimate progress of mankind depends upon the White nations” (Taylor, 1979, p. 127). Taylor believes that the increasing support for the NF over the 1970s encouraged major party elites to include these issues in their own platforms. The Conservatives have had close relations with the NF, sometimes including dual membership (Barker, 1983, p. 26).

Enoch Powell was not given immediate support by his party colleagues after his 1968 speeches, but the support has been growing until, as I pointed out earlier, the themes which he had broached emerged, though in milder form, in a major speech by Margaret Thatcher 10 years later.

Mrs. Thatcher has brought several other themes to something of a crescendo, with the jingoism of the Falklands War and her continuing emphasis on law and order, as she transforms Britain into a police state. Accompanying these measures has been the attack on the welfare state and reprivatising of welfare. The family, for example, should assume responsibility for child care, and for care of the ill and the aged. Hence we have an enormous emphasis on the virtues of family life (that is, “good” families, responsible, hardworking and patriarchal — not the kind of family life the Afro-Caribbeans have been portrayed as having). Andrew Jakubowicz has argued that many Asian immigrants in Britain have co-operated with Thatcher’s strategies. The values and ideals of these Asian bureaucrats and businessmen correspond closely to the Conservative ideals. Thus, the rights of workers to reasonable conditions are subsumed under “family responsibilities” or “a cultural predilection for hard work”. The rights of women are subsumed under “the culturally appropriate role of a subservient wife and mother” (Jakubowicz, 1984). Accordingly, the Thatcherites can be seen to have support from the immigrant population by this strategy of “selective ethnic revitalisation” (ibid.).

There are several strands emerging from this discussion which I would like to weave into our consideration of the revival of racism in Australia. These are by no means separate strands, but they do require special attention. One of these has to do with the historical, political and economic context of the new racism. It is part of an ideological package developed by the Right in opposition to what they generally describe as “socialism”. (For example, Mr. Hodgman always refers to the current Australian government as “the Hawke socialist government”. It always makes me think that there must be another government I don’t know about, but the adjective is important, even if inaccurate.) In fact, the aims of socialism have been largely abandoned by social democratic parties concerned with the “benevolent management of capitalism” (Poole, 1983, p. 105). The post-war consensus between capital, the state and organised labour ensured that the latter gave up “more radical aims of socialisation and redistribution in return for a share in longer term capitalist growth” (ibid.). In most advanced capitalist countries, this consensus included increased state intervention in welfare, economic guidance and some measures of redistribution. These policies were given theoretical support by major political parties and were accompanied by relative prosperity and considerable political stability. There were critics such as Ayn Rand and F.A. Hayek who warned about “creeping socialism”, but McCarthyism and the cold war tended to absorb much of the anti-socialist rhetoric.

With increasing economic crisis, however, — unemployment, inflation and the end of the postwar boom — the fragility of the accord became apparent. Keynesian policies were based on continued growth, and the new economic problems were intransigent. It was at this point that the critiques of Milton Friedman began to attract attention, partly because they resonated with echoes of basic liberal thought. Friedman argued, among other things, that there must be a reduction in government expenditure and that governments must concentrate on controlling the money supply. These controls on government expenditure naturally attacked the position of workers, especially those at the bottom of the heap.

Ross Poole offers an excellent analysis of these developments in a paper called “Markets and Motherhood” (1983, pp. 103-120). He points out that the breakdown of the tripartite accord has sharpened class conflict. But:

monetarist policies have been presented within a political discourse of much broader appeal, in which the notion of class conflict is subsumed under a more traditional liberal rhetoric. It is through this supplementation that monetarism has been translated into the remarkably effective political instrument of the past ten years” (1983, p. 108).

The main elements of this rhetoric are:
(a) individual freedom, including an emphasis on free enterprise and private property;
(b) the free market and the equilibrium model of market forces;
(c) that state, necessary to protect property, control money supply and maintain order;
(d) socialism, the contrast to these three elements and “the acme of oppression and inefficiency”.

To quote Poole again:
The force of this rhetoric does not reside in its empirical and theoretical adequacy but in the extent to which it corresponds to much that is contained by way of aspiration, resentment and “common sense” in everyday experience. It is important to recognise the nature and source of its appeal — even to those against whom it is ultimately directed. (1983, p. 109).

These principles have combined with a rhetoric which Poole describes as “moral conservatism”, including the reassertion of traditional sex roles and of patriarchal authority within the family, an accompanying critique of
Racism on two fronts:

In its more blatant form in the Northern Territory and on campus, where it is directed against Asian students.

sexual permissiveness, abortion, homosexuality and pornography. Other elements have been patriotism and a return to religion, usually of a fundamentalist kind. In Britain, as we have just seen, and in the US and Europe, racism is another element in this set of ideological practices.

The Australian Context

Some of these elements of struggle are already familiar to Australians, e.g. the work of the Razor Gang in cutting back state services and the rise of nationalism (perhaps at its most absurd when represented as the feverish support of the activities of millionaire yachtspeople). We have also seen right-wing opposition to anti-discrimination legislation — an opposition supported by the wealthy and powerful wives of wealthy and powerful men in the name of the "majority of women whose voices cannot be heard". Monetarism has also been with us for some time, as have the theories of Ayn Rand and Hayek, both favourites of Malcolm Fraser.

Racism, however, has only recently resurfaced in Australia at a semi-official level. Marie de Lepervanche (1980; 1984) and others (Curthoys and Markus, 1978; Lippmann, 1973; McQueen, 1970) have demonstrated the official uses to which racism has been put since the Europeans invaded this country, but it had receded considerably from public statements and ideology.

Nevertheless, racism has never been honestly confronted in Australia at an official level in the way in which sexism, for example, is beginning to be confronted. This is a country whose very foundations are racist, but where racism and the heritage of colonialism are curiously unexamined. The "anti-dago" riots in Kalgoorlie in the early '30s are not well known, nor is the "blackbirding" of Pacific Islanders to Queensland in the 19th Century. Colonialism and post-colonialism are extremely important and poorly understood in Australia, despite the continued existence of colonial attitudes and institutions.

Several consequences follow from this condition of selective amnesia. One is an identification with the colonisers, including, for example, an assumption of "natural"
superiority to Australian blacks and to other non-whites. The civilising effect of European settlement also goes largely unquestioned. Related to this is a collective paranoia that allows bogeys such as the Red Hordes and the Yellow Peril to be used, with effect, for purposes of political mobilisation. All of these elements have been well utilised by racist groups and others who would reject any association with such groups. For example, the Immigration Control Association letterboxed Sydney householders in the 1970s with pamphlets depicting red and yellow arrows rushing downwards from Asia to Australia. More recently, National Action seems to have taken the lead with spraypainting graffiti about the “Asian invasion”. The egregious Professor Blainey has also touched on several of these themes, talking about a “new Asian Australia policy” (The Age, 20 March, 1984) and warning that Asians will be the “inevitable possessors of this land” (The Australian, 4 March, 1984). We have moved, he claims, “from White Australia to Surrender Australia” (The Age, 3 April, 1984).

Professor Blainey has moved the debate off the lavatory walls (where it perhaps belongs) and onto the front pages of the newspapers. He has been congratulated by some for his “well reasoned contribution to an important debate” (The Australian editorial, 21 March 1984). Other have compared him with Enoch Powell, who also gave a high level legitimation to racist claims. Certainly, the Victorian president of the RSL, the Big Brother Movement, and the otherwise marginalised racist associations have been grateful for the media coverage and for the influential support from an unexpected quarter. Blainey has articulated, at great length, the themes of nationalism, invasion and Britishness, explaining his intervention in terms of concern for the poor and the unemployed, who are, he presumes, suffering because of the government’s purportedly pro-Asian and anti-British immigration policy. Like Margot Anthony and Flo Bjelke-Petersen, he speaks as a privileged person representing the downtrodden masses. In that respect, his technique is certainly reminiscent of Enoch Powell who always brought into his speeches the ordinary Englishman and little old ladies with genuine fears of the blacks (Barker, 1983, pp. 37-42).

Although claiming that he “might have thought twice” about making his original comments if he had known what the reaction would be (The Age, 20 March 1984), Blainey has continued to stir this rather noisome mess of potage, seemingly intent on creating a self-fulfilling prophecy. At the same time, the Liberal Party, who initially criticised his comments (The Age, 3 April 1984), have subsequently embraced them with a kind of fervour, placing themselves in the rather contorted position of criticising a policy they instituted while in government, but presumably expecting to gain support by kicking a can which resonated so well for Blainey.

Obviously, some valid comparisons can be made between the Australian and the British situation I described earlier, especially if the conservative parties here pick up on the Blainey initiatives and, in effect, align themselves with the far right. The other programs for moral conservatism are well advanced, especially in Queensland where science teachers are now required to teach creationism. Mr. Fraser, presumably with the support of other conservatives, has been reportedly assembling his own think-tank (Sydney Morning Herald, 9 June 1984) to include such well known freedom fighters as Professor Leonie Kramer (an outspoken critic of Equal Employment Opportunity) and Hugh Morgan of Western Mining who has argued a kind of Christian mission for mining and associated the land rights movement with backwardness and cannibalism. Fraser himself has just re-emerged from the heartland of the new right, the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy in Washington.

The ideological package of the new right is not without its inconsistencies, and the interconnections between the practices I have been describing are extremely complex. It is, however, important to demonstrate that there are interconnections, that the resurgence of moral conservatism, nationalism and of racism is no mere historical accident. Obviously, there is considerable support for these strategies, but we should also bear in mind their likely outcomes and those people at whom they are directed. They have persuasive power partly because of their appeals to “common sense”, to the “genuine fears of ordinary people” and to long-established folk ideologies generated by the kind of selective amnesia I mentioned earlier. But they are also persuasive because they are rooted in existing practices and relations.

To explain a little further — “common sense”, for example, is what people regard as natural. Some people call it “horse sense”. But most of our sense is, in fact, learned, and learned within a particular context that is, as I have shown, historically formed. Appeals to common sense are usually appeals to the status quo, and this often means appeals to prejudice. Common sense must be treated with acute scepticism.

Similarly, studies of nationalisms have revealed their status as “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1983). If we had a better historical sense, we would be better equipped to ask “whose
nationalisms are these, and how have they been constructed? What does it mean to me, for example, to identify with some overweight footballer who probably beats his wife? The various Australian nationalisms that have been constructed have been overwhelmingly male, Anglo, white and possessed mainly of physical attributes. Why have the rest of us been left out?

It is not hard to see that certain modes of domination are reproduced in these representations. These modes appear as the natural order of things, but they are, in fact, quite arbitrary. Yet they are extremely powerful, mobilising people to hostility against "aliens", and sustaining divisions between people who actually share common interests. Furthermore, the "naturalness" of these modes of domination goes unquestioned partly because they are embedded in the state and in existing institutions.

On the immigration front, the official interpretation of multiculturalism has, it seems, deliberately avoided any analysis of class and power relations, of past, present or potential conflict or of the fundamental tensions between capital, labour and the state. In analyses that ignored economic issues, "inequality itself has been reinterpreted as the cultural monopolisation of social resources" (Martin, 1983, p. 147). As Andrew Jakubowicz points out, Fraser's multicultural think-tank even imported Michael Novak, a legitimator from the American enterprise institute, to reaffirm the importance of ethnicity to free market economies (Jakubowicz, 1984).

The current government, therefore, is faced with an immense task if, in Jakubowicz's words, they wish:

to wrest back the space swamped by conservative rhetoric and political domination and re-establish free and open debate within which redistribution goals concerned with social justice become legitimate once more.

Geoffrey Blainey's intervention has made this task even more difficult by suggesting that problems of the distribution of resources can be linked to a government bias towards Asian immigrants. The old tactic of scapegoating takes us further than ever from the central issues.

Certainly, the Minister for Immigration, the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the Prime Minister have recently spoken out against racism. But the assault on racism, as on sexism and other ideologies that legitimate domination, will require a coherent and sustained analysis and a genuine desire for change. Such an assault would have to confront the entrenched structures and ideas I have been discussing — that is, not just making people more tolerant, but redistributing resources and power.

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Gill Bottomley is a senior lecturer in comparative sociology at Macquarie University. She has done extensive research, writing and teaching in the sociology of migration over the last fifteen years.
Over 700 people have travelled to Roxby Downs this year to protest at the proposed development of what has the potential to be the largest uranium mine in the world. They came from diverse political movements and for many different reasons. Particularly strong were the groups of women who camped in the separate women’s space. Here they met to plan women’s actions, some of the most
creative and constructive of the protest, including graffiti on the administration block of Roxby Downs management and symbolic plugging of the shaft.

Women's space also provided support for women faced with police harassment, and the strain of living under constant surveillance.
Women’s Work — Undervalued, Underpaid

It's nearly ten years since the phasing in of equal pay was completed but the gap between male and female average earnings is still large and has hardly altered since 1976. There are no occupations in Australia, even female-dominated ones, where women earn, on the average, more than men.

Up until 1969 the Australian wage fixing tribunals operated on the belief that women should receive lower wages than men. The "Harvester judgment" of 1907, for the first time, guaranteed male workers a minimum wage but, in assuming that the "average employee" was male, married and with three children, it reinforced the sex segregation of the Australian workforce and guaranteed that women workers were grossly underpaid. Even at the time of this judgment, 45 percent of the male workforce were single, and 20 percent of the total workforce were women.

Although in 1912 the Arbitration Court acknowledged the need for women who were performing similar work to men and might, therefore, be in competition with them for jobs, to be paid equal rates, this did not happen. But the court's attitude did have the effect of further consolidating the notion of separate rates for women irrespective of productivity or need, and women’s rates remained at around 54 percent of the male rate until their labour was needed for the war effort during the Second World War.

A concerted campaign by women in unions and sections of the women’s movement, which commenced with the setting up of the Council of Action for Equal Pay by Muriel Heagney in 1937, finally bore fruit in 1972 when "equal pay" was phased in over a period of three years. But while, in theory, women have had equal pay since 1975, by the September 1982 quarter, women’s total average earnings were only 66.4 percent of men’s, with women receiving $221.80 per week and men receiving $333.70.

Using theoretical tools provided by the feminist movement, two recent studies have revealed many of the factors which contribute to these ongoing pay discrepancies. The first was published in August 1983 by the Women’s Bureau of the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations on Gender Wage Differentials in Australia, and the second, a draft manual on equal pay by the Working Women’s Centre of the ACTU, was published in February 1984. The manual both analyses the issues and develops, for union consideration, a number of possible strategies for attacking unequal pay.

Both studies point to the inter-relationship between a range of complex social and economic factors which rest on a sexual division of labour in public and private life. Today, Australia can boast the most sex segregated workforce of the developed OECD countries.

Sex Segregated Workforce

The most difficult problem to eliminate is the sex segregated nature of the workforce for it is chained, as it were, to other equally entrenched ideas and practices related to women’s reproductive role and unpaid labour, notions of femininity...
and masculinity and the privatisation of the family and personal life under capitalism.

The sex segregated, or dual, labour force is reproduced both horizontally and vertically. That is, there are pay inequalities between traditional female and male occupations and within occupations where women and men are both employed. The appearance of women in a non-traditional occupation appears to be enough to downgrade its value or to at least create a new division of labour within it, with women clustered at the bottom of the ladder.

Technology can both deskill and hold or push women into depressed wage areas. This process and the close affinity between sex oppression and the formation of class in modern capitalism has been illustrated in *Gender at Work* by Game and Pringle. It is not possible to fully understand this without considering the relationships that prevail when women perform their unpaid labour in the family. For many women, their status in paid work is a mirror image of what happens at home.

In those occupations where women and men both work, pay differentials are one measure of the sex segregation of work classifications. In the non-managerial sector, women’s earnings range from 78.2 percent to 94.5 percent of men’s, and in the managerial sector they are 73 percent. Though these are areas where women have most benefited from equal pay legislation because there has been a male rate to take as the norm, far greater promotional opportunities for men and reclassification of work processes keep a wage gap operating.

Often, the greater promotional opportunities for men are connected with relationships away from work. For example, women teachers in New South Wales have been disadvantaged in promotion because of the requirement for country service, and married women are readier to follow a husband into the country than vice versa.

Education and training also play a part, with many more women being unskilled or having followed tertiary education courses that are not technically oriented. Thus, in industries such as Esso-BHP where an affirmative action program has been in operation for some years, those small advances which have been made are primarily in the managerial sector. They have left untouched the vast majority of workers, both women and men, who come up against the impenetrable barrier of no tertiary education. Similar problems exist in the public service where the least skilled and most exploited women workers cluster in one or two divisions.

This gives rise to the following pay gaps: In May 1979, average weekly earnings for women in clerical work was $185.50 when it was $231.70 for men; in professional/technical $237.70 (women) and $275.10 (men); and manufacturing $160.70 (women) and $228.50 (men).

The largest pay differentials, however, arise from the traditional horizontal sex segregation of the workforce with 91 percent of employed women, by 1980, still working in only five occupational groupings. Often this problem is posed as one of changing women’s own attitudes when women can’t be found to respond to some sudden “enlightened” policy on the part of a corporation.

Certainly, many women have been conditioned to see themselves as nurses, secretaries and the like. However, the resistance that has existed for scores of years on the part of corporations as well as many unions and male workers has helped to form and sustain these attitudes.

Women entering male dominated areas have often had to stand alone against a sea of hostility and sexual harassment. In some places, such as the South Coast of NSW and Newcastle, where the closure of manufacturing industries led to successful campaigns to get women into the steelworks, these women have faced massive sackings. These experiences are not designed to give women any sense of security or belonging in new-found areas of work and, today, the problem is how to break down divisions in a shrinking labour market.

No single policy can be suggested. Women need encouragement from the earliest days of schooling, quotas into jobs that don’t isolate individual women, campaigns against sexual harassment, changes to work structures and conditions which take account of child bearing and parental
Comparable Worth

A major breakthrough in the area of pay was made towards the end of last year in the United States when the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees won a claim for comparable worth in the Washington District Court. Proceeding from the view that women's traditional work areas had been undervalued and that this contravened women's equal rights, the union compared secretaries' work with that of truck drivers.

The judge found that the state of Washington had been guilty of "direct, overt and institutional discrimination" against nearly 15,000 employees, most of them women. He awarded them increases of 31 percent in their pay rates — around $500 per month. Although there is now a legal challenge to this decision, the case has set an important precedent and has already led to a number of instances where unions have been able to renegotiate wage rates for women workers. The detailed processes in the US case have no significance for us because of different laws and their system of collective bargaining.

Various systems also exist for establishing comparable worth but they are generally based on a comparison of skills, effort, responsibility and working conditions. The actual preparation of such a case, however, is lengthy and requires considerable research and study. The US case took over nine years to prepare and argue and was eventually taken to court. It is also important to note that rarely are such breakthroughs made because the claim is just. They also require considerable organisation, and industrial and political strength.

It is not difficult to see, even at first glance, the justice of the notion of comparable worth if applied to a number of sex segregated work areas in Australia. For example, a nurse with a high level of responsibility, often heavy and onerous duties, after three years of general nursing training earns $304.80 and, after five years $351.20. On the other hand, a four-year trained carpenter earns $369.98 (nearly $30 of which is tax free) and may, on a construction site, get a site allowance as well. Perhaps it would be even fairer to compare nurses with some other sections of the medical profession itself, particularly as it is shortly to become a tertiary trained occupation, or, say, with males in the professional/technical group where the median wage in August 1981 was $506.50.

The only attempt so far to secure a re-evaluation of women's traditional work in Australia didn't get far. Taken up during the 1983 National Wage Case by the National Council of Women, Women's Electoral Lobby and the Union of Australian Women, the court ruled that such a request did not conform to the current principles of centralised wage fixing.

There are some moves through the ACTU to expand the wage fixing guidelines when they are renegotiated next year. However, given the difficulties involved in this, other possibilities need to be considered. Opinions vary as to whether the federal Anti-Discrimination Act could aid an attempt to establish comparable worth, though it might be used where inequities exist in loadings or overtime. In a recent Tribune interview (22 August, 1984), Lecturer in Law, Margaret Thornton, who has specialised in anti-discrimination possibilities for pursuing comparable worth claims.

The issue here, of course, is whether unions and their peak councils will be prepared to upset traditional wage differentials and whether male conservatism and often hostility to the interests of women workers will stand in the way of any attempts to bring about change. The ACTU Working
Women's Centre Manual on Equal Pay, at present circulating among unions for their opinion, is an important initiative in the right direction. It could help to spearhead a new stage in the attack on women's unequal pay rates if it has sufficient active backing from women and progressive unions.

The way in which comparable worth claims are developed is also important. Many women workers have little industrial strength and most are poorly represented in union forums. Many of these are at the bottom of even female pay structures and could be easily overlooked. A claim arising from the equal pay for equal work decision, if it can be developed into a class action on behalf of all women workers, would seem to be beneficial but, even so, would probably need to start with a given area of work and proceed from there as a test case.

Part-time Work

Another major factor in the lower wages received by women is the amount of part-time and casual work that they perform. Between 1972 and 1979, three out of every five new jobs created were part-time. Full-time work fell by 41,000 jobs while part-time increased by over 176,000 (1970-1977). Two and a half out every three part-time jobs were filled by women and 40 percent of all women in the workforce were part-time workers, and this trend continues. (Discussion paper for ALP Conference, June 1980.)

The three main reasons why women do part-time work is lack of diverse forms of child care; the unavailability of full-time work (though many prefer part-time); and the fact that many women believe that they should shoulder the main responsibility for housework and child rearing, or they are unable to change this situation.

Of course, part-time work carries with it part-time pay which increases the social wage and taxation. While suggestions have been made to increase the tax advantages of children and part-time work, this is not even accepted as a principle by some governments and Labor governments see not only penalty rates as an issue for trade-offs, but some regard work-based child care in a similar light.

The equal pay movement itself, from its earliest days, recognised the importance of simultaneously campaigning for child endowment as some form of social responsibility for children. Today, family allowances are little more than a token payment and, in response to cries of alarm that doubling and indexing them would cost millions of dollars, it is only reasonable to expect corporations and employers who have benefited from women's super exploitation over the years to foot the bill. (Some other capitalist countries do have wealth taxes.)

Parental leave and paid maternity leave could also help to loosen the sexual division of labour. In Sweden, a parental insurance scheme exists which enables either parent to take leave during the first 12 months after a child's birth, at 90 percent of one's income for first six months, and at a fixed rate for the remaining three months. Up to six months can be saved up and used at any time until the child is eight. There is an additional 60 days paid parental leave each year when children are sick. This scheme has the advantage of being tied to income thus providing some incentive to the parent on a higher income (mostly the male) to be involved in parenting.

At present, the interruptions to work that maternity involves considerably reduce promotional and job opportunities for women. The alternative of competing in a workforce which is organised as though all workers are men with no responsibilities for children or nururing is hardly an enticing proposition. Though we may not be able to advance on all these fronts at the same time, we'll have to keep working away at all of them if we don't want old inequalities to reappear in a different form. In the long term, it might even take a revolution to sort it out.

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Subversion dissent: Where ASIO draws the line

Jenny Hocking

The Tribune of 22 June, 1983 reported the findings earlier that month of the Security Appeals Tribunal, concerning the appeal made by Stephen Rix against an adverse security assessment given by ASIO (the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation) during Rix’s employment with the Department of Trade and Resources. Rix had been a member of the Communist Party of Australia since 1980, and it was on that ground alone that ASIO had denied him a positive security assessment — ASIO declared the CPA a subversive organisation and Rix, as a member, was considered a security risk.

The Security Appeals Tribunal reached a landmark decision in its findings that the CPA is not a subversive organisation within the meaning of the 1979 ASIO Act, and from this, that membership of the CPA cannot in itself be accepted as the basis for a negative security assessment. As the Tribune pointed out, these findings "should go a long way to removing unwarranted impediments to the careers of people given adverse security assessments by ASIO". However, the Security Appeals Tribunal placed an important rider on its decision: "that our findings do not, and indeed could not, in any way affect the exercise of the functions of (ASIO) under section 17 of the Act to obtain, correlate and evaluate intelligence relevant to security ...".

Section 17 of the ASIO Act relates to ASIO’s maintenance of security files, from which, in turn, its security assessments derive. Clearly then, the Security Appeals Tribunal was quite explicit in its view that, despite the Tribunal’s perception of the CPA as a non-subversive organisation, ASIO may nevertheless continue to consider the CPA as “relevant to security” in terms of its security records.

What follows is a clarification of the areas of political activity seen by ASIO as “relevant to security” for the purposes of its security files, and an assessment of the criteria on which these files are maintained.

On 22 June, 1974, the weekly magazine The Bulletin printed an article titled “Cairns: ASIO’s startling dossier”, which contained extracts from an assessment by ASIO of the then deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Jim Cairns. This report, which had “fallen into the hands” of The Bulletin’s Canberra correspondent, had been written in 1971 at the height of the anti-Viet Nam war demonstrations, and provided an invaluable insight into ASIO’s attitude towards this type of popular dissent, its perception of the nature of liberal-democracy and its corresponding conception of activities and ideologies which presented a threat to the viability of a democracy. The dossier’s assessment of Dr. Cairns was based largely on his writings and public statements. It claimed that Cairns held a “populist-type theory” which advocated generating extra-parliamentary opposition to the parliamentary system itself through the development of protest and dissent movements. Several references were made in the assessment to perceived similarities between Cairns’ beliefs and those of the Communist Party of Australia: “the kind of socialism envisaged by Dr. Cairns bears a striking resemblance to that promoted by the Communist Party of Australia”, his views “echo the current view of the Communist Party of Australia”, ASIO’s analysis of Cairns’ participation in protest movements concluded that this sort of activity could lead "to the growth of elitism in every sphere, to the manipulation of people by demagogues, to the fascist cult of the personality, to the worship of force, and to the destruction of the democratic system of government and its replacement by a form of collectivism .... That way lies Anarchy and in due course left-wing fascism."

The publication of this article raised two important questions: what criteria was ASIO using as the basis for its maintenance of security files on individuals or groups; and how adequate was the degree of ministerial control of ASIO if ASIO was in a position selectively to disclose intelligence information it had collected on members of a political party. However, the poor standard of the dossier’s political analysis (referred to by The Age as "speculative, exaggerated and paranoid") caused widespread condemnation of ASIO’s “political illiteracy” rather than of its maintenance of the file itself. The public concern expressed over the nature of the document and the political use to which it had been put, provided the federal Labor government with a politically opportune moment at which to institute a judicial inquiry into the activities of Australia’s security organisations. The editorial referred to above argued...
and political

**ASIO's wings clipped**

by a special correspondent

- The Communist Party of Australia is not a subversive organisation.
- People cannot be denied "security clearances" because of their membership of the CPA.
- ASIO and its Director-General are bound by the terms of the ASIO Act, 1979, and cannot use their own security matters.

Findings made on June 1 by the Security Committee for democratic rights and freedoms, were not simply the result of widespread demands by the Labor Party for an inquiry into the activities.

"Dr. Cairns and the Communist Party of Australia (are leading) to the worship of force, and to the destruction of the democratic system...."

**Expectations of the Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security**

The Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security was established at a time of some turbulence in government and security relations, following not only the immediate matter of ASIO's security file on the Deputy Prime Minister, but also the much earlier "raid" of ASIO's Melbourne headquarters by the federal Labor Attorney-General, Senator Lionel Murphy, in 1973. This turbulence underscored the expectation that the Royal Commission would suggest radical changes in the operations and accountability of Australia's security services, and possibly even the abolition of some of these operations. Speculation that the Royal Commission would result in at least a major administrative reorganisation of security organisations was strengthened by the announcement that Mr. Justice Hope, a New South Wales Supreme Court judge, would be heading the Royal Commission. Hope was considered "an acknowledged small-l liberal", "a champion of civil liberties"^4, and had been very active in civil liberties issues before going to the bench. This "libertarian" profile has since been irrevocably damaged.

Strongly for this inquiry, and concluded that "the affair underlines the need for a thorough inquiry into activities and operations of ASIO, a clearer definition of its proper role, and the establishment of effective safeguards against the abuse of its powers". The subsequent establishment, in August 1974, of the Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security was therefore not unexpected. The then Prime Minister, Mr. Whitlam, had included the establishment of such an inquiry in his 1974 pre-election policy speech, and it had been rumoured intermittently that an inquiry was imminent ever since the Labor government first assumed office in 1972.
The prospect of the inquiry being highly critical of the security services was further bolstered by continuing revelations of the widespread abuses by security services overseas of their power to undertake operations according to their own determinations of "national security". The lesson of the earlier Murphy "raid" of ASIO highlighted the problems associated with a lack of accountability in these crucial security determinations.

The expected, interrelated recommendations of the Hope report regarding the resolution of these security issues were that —

- ASIO would be made more accountable to the minister in charge of it, there would be an increase in policy guidance from the government to ASIO and the setting of strict priorities in its operations.
- ASIO's role and functions would be more clearly defined to avoid any extension of its activities into areas not relevant to national security.

On these matters, in particular, Hope's recommendations were entirely unexpected.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security

The long-awaited inquiry into Australia's security services was finally established in August 1974, with very broad terms of reference which demanded an examination of the operations, structure and co-ordination of Australia's intelligence organisations, of which the major ones considered were the Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO), the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS), and ASIO. The commission's fourth report dealt specifically with ASIO and provided an overall review of its operations. It is this fourth report which will be principally discussed here and referred to simply as the "Hope report". The essential part of Hope's terms of reference for this report were: "in the light of past experience, and having regard to the security of Australia as a nation, the rights and responsibilities of individual persons, and future as well as present needs, to make recommendations on the intelligence and security services which the nation should have available to it and on the way in which the relevant organisations can most efficiently and effectively serve the interests of the Australian people and Government...."

Hope's Criticisms of ASIO

Hope found that "neither the quality nor reliability" of submissions and information supplied to him by ASIO was as "one might have wished". The Royal Commissioner and his staff personally examined hundreds of ASIO files partly because ASIO's own evident could not be relied upon. Of these files, Hope commented that the extent of their disorder was such that "I have been quite unable to establish the truth or otherwise of many of the particular matters alleged in evidence, or raised by ASIO as the result of other inquiries". Hope also found that ASIO had in the past departed from...
"principles of propriety, including legality, to which ASIO should have regard in fulfilling its functions". In some areas, he continued, "its operations were or may have been in breach of the law". Further criticism was levelled against ASIO for leaking its own intelligence information to sections of the media: "ASIO has in the past provided selected people with security intelligence material for publication". However, the report's most strident criticism was reserved for the operations of ASIO's Special Projects Section which had been disbanded prior to the writing of Hope's report. The functions of this section included taking action "to build and maintain liaison with selected contacts in a variety of fields, including the media". Hope referred to these functions as "improper in the extreme". Raising another issue, he noted that this impropriety was exacerbated by ASIO's "tendency to think of anyone they chose to call 'left wing' as subversive".

Clearly the maintenance by ASIO of files on the basis of people being "left wing" rather than genuinely subversive, introduces the possibility that ASIO could maintain files on a purely political basis which could then be leaked to selected contacts in an effort to discredit either a particular political party or pressure group. The document on Dr. Cairns compiled by ASIO and leaked to The Bulletin can be interpreted in this way, and Hope does not dispute that ASIO has misused its powers in such a manner in the past. Hope's comments on ASIO's past abuses set the tone and perspective of his report. "I have taken the view ... that my task is to make recommendations for the future rather than to seek to track down the truth or otherwise of past errors ...". "I do not propose to deal with ASIO's transgressions in detail. This report is concerned with the future rather than the past and to point to what should happen in the future." Justice Hope apparently felt that evidence of ASIO's past misdeeds had little bearing on the realism or practicality of his recommendations, and his comments contrast starkly with his terms of reference which specified that his recommendations were to be made "in the light of past experience".

The main area of the Hope report's discussions and recommendations to be examined in detail here concerns ASIO's criteria for the maintenance of security records, and in particular its understanding of "subversion".

Subversion: Hope's View

ASIO's principal function, Justice Hope considered, should be the protection of Australia against four types of activities: espionage; "active measures" (the use of "agents of influence", the dissemination of "disinformation", and "other forms of clandestine or deceptive action"); sabotage and subversion.

Subversion is the most controversial of the four principal activities listed above, since the domestic variety (Hope recognises two classes of subversion, those involving "foreign activities" and those involving "domestic activities") impinges so closely on the legitimate activity of political dissent. Unlike the other three areas, which all involve the interaction (in varying degrees) between individuals and foreign governments or foreign security organisations, domestic subversion relates solely to the political activities and philosophies of individuals "not directed by, subsidised by or otherwise undertaken in active collaboration with a foreign power or a foreign political organisation". Hope rightly points out that at the "outer limit" of subversion — which "extends to the mounting of armed revolution" — identifying subversive activities presents few problems. The "inner limit" is the area in which dissent and subversion merge and which therefore makes defining subversion not only extremely difficult but also extremely important.

The 1954 ASIO Act gave no definition of subversion, and although this neatly avoided the problem of-legislatively distinguishing between subversion and political dissent, could enable ASIO to impinge on legitimate political behaviour and the expression of political rights generally considered essential to democratic practice. It was the potential danger to democracy which Justice Hope cited in his recommendation for the inclusion of legislative guidelines concerning subversion in the ASIO Act.

There is an inherent potential danger of intrusion into proper political activity and the resultant infringement of basic democratic and legal rights. Democracy thrives on non-violent differences of opinion and attitudes and ASIO must be careful to avoid mistaking mere dissent or non-conformity for subversion.

Hope suggested that the proposed definition of subversion should include:

those activities which involve, or will involve, or are intended ultimately to involve, the use of force or violence or other unlawful acts (whether by themselves or others) for the purposes of:

(i) overthrowing the constitutional government of the Commonwealth of Australia or of a State or Territory; or

(ii) Obstructing, hindering or interfering with the taking of measures by the Commonwealth Government in the interests of the security of Australia.
(Hope notes that "security" here is used in its common and wider meaning of "safety" and not in its statutory sense as set out in the ASIO Act.) This suggested definition has been criticised largely on the grounds that it is too broad, and certainly the second purpose presents a vague area within which ASIO's discretion will continue to operate. However, Hope's description of subversion confines subversion to criminal offences committed or intended ultimately to be committed (and as Hope points out, this intention also constitutes a criminal offence) with either of the above two purposes. This element of criminality does place a restriction on the types of activities which ASIO may legitimately consider subversive.

In theory, this aspect of Hope's definition removes the basis for previous criticisms that ASIO's use of the concept of subversion had extended to cover activities which were lawful, non-violent and which were seen as subversive solely by virtue of their political content. Unfortunately, this definition does not remove the possibility that in practice ASIO may yet continue to consider subversive anyone it perceives as left wing, as Hope noted had been its tendency in the past. For although Hope makes quite specific the narrow, legal sense in which subversive is to be understood, ASIO's primary use of the term does not require a precise legal opinion as to whether or not someone is actually a subversive. It requires only the identification of "known", "suspected" or "potential" subversives. Of these groups Hope writes: "the Government should expect that ASIO should look at them and that some watch should be kept upon their activities". "Potential subversives" in particular presents the possibility of future conflict between security concerns and political liberties, for Hope's description of this term marks a transition from the assessment of actual or intended criminal action, to an interpretation of the likelihood of this action from a given ideology. "Potentially subversive" describes "those persons or organisations who have merely a "contemplation" in respect of these actions ... mere contemplation exists when persons have a purpose or espouse an ideology in which the possibility of the use of acts within the stated classes is foreseen or the nature of the purpose or the ideology involves that possibility, but not only the time for their use but their use at all, even though necessary to achieve that purpose, has been left for future decision". (my emphasis)

"Potential subversives' in particular presents the possibility of future conflict between security and political liberties."

The ambit of this concept clearly encompasses those groups or individuals with no history of violence or criminality, and who may in fact explicitly denounce such actions, yet who (on the basis only of their ideas rather than their actions) may be nonetheless considered "potentially subversive" according to ASIO's own political analysis, an analysis which has already proved to be disarmingly superficial. The surveillance of, and maintenance of files on, alleged "potential subversives" in themselves constitute an affront to the political and personal privacy of those involved. But the impact of this vigilance is far more serious since these files form an essential component of ASIO's "vetting" of applicants for public service and defence force positions. ASIO's vetting system has, since the early 1950s, included all applicants for clerical and professional positions in the third division of the public service, regardless of whether or not they would actually have access to classified information in those positions. Hope does not specify the role of state police special branches in this vetting system, nor the maintenance by them of extensive security records which are used in providing security checks for ASIO. The relationship between ASIO and special branches, the nature of special branch security records, are all revelations of the White report to be discussed below. One of Hope's few comments explicitly linking ASIO and special branch activities, is that "the material before me about police special branches does not establish that either the nation or its citizens' liberties would be better provided for if ASIO were not concerned with subversion". This assertion is strongly disputed by the findings and recommendations of the White report.

The Inquiry by Acting Justice White into the Security Records of the SA Special Branch

The security role of the special branches of state police forces has, until recently, been extremely covert. The former South Australian Premier, Don Dunstan, has stated that he was unaware of the existence of that state's special branch until 1970, although he had been state Attorney-General between 1965 and 1968. It was not until 1975 that Dunstan was informed of the nature of special branch's activities, and specifically of the co-operation between ASIO and special branch in the maintenance of files on potential or actual security risks. That so much is now known of special branch operations is due to the revelations of the White report, established in South Australia in November 1977.

The conflict in South Australia over its special branch was precipitated by an article in The Australian on 3 September 1977, headed "Exposed ... the Secret Police Dossiers on Demonstrators". This article, co-written by the Premier's former executive assistant Peter Ward, claimed that:

State special branches ostensibly collect data to prevent "subversion". But those on file include many eminent lawyers, judges, politicians, academics, journalists, and top public servants ... Within each state they act as a "mini-ASIO", and the way they operate and collect data is entirely interchangeable with ASIO.

Following the repeated claims in that paper that special branch maintained "political files", and continued questioning of the government on the issue in parliament, the Cabinet on 7 November 1977 approved the appointment of Mr Acting Justice White to conduct an inquiry into the nature and extent of the records maintained by the state's special branch. The terms of reference given to White specified the criteria...
which the government considered to be the proper basis for the maintenance of security files, and White was asked to determine the extent to which special branch files complied with these criteria, and to report on what other criteria were used to determine the recording of information by special branch.

Although these terms of reference were quite explicit, White interpreted them broadly, and in that interpretation lies the importance of assessing his report in relation to the Hope report. The mutual bearing of these reports on each other can be seen from White’s description of the scope of his findings:

my report explores two subjects which at first sight might not appear to be directly relevant to the terms of reference — first, the concept of domestic subversion and the application of that concept to particular cases; and, second, the relationships between the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation and Special Branches of State Police Forces, and between the Executive and the Commissioner. Special Branch records can only be understood within the wider framework of ASIO policy and records and the history of liaison between Special Branch and ASIO. In turn, ASIO’s policy and records are influenced by those of other friendly powers. My principal concern about Special Branch records was the width of its interpretation of “domestic subversion”, an interpretation obviously influenced by ASIO and by the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States.

Dunstan received White’s report at the end of 1977. As he was about to leave South Australia for a short holiday, he “looked at it briefly, realised that it was pretty hair-raising, and locked it away until I returned to the office in the New Year”. Even the introduction to the report was “hair-raising”. In it White summarised his major findings:

I found there a hard core of genuine security intelligence material, substantially conforming with the criteria, relating to extremist left-wing and right-wing organisations and persons reasonably suspected of being potential security risks in the security areas of espionage, terrorism, sabotage and subversion. However, I also found there a mass of records (indeed, the greater part of Special Branch records) relating to matters, organisations and persons having no connection whatsoever with genuine security risks. A significant proportion of the files relates to political, trade union and other sensitive matters. Grave difficulties have been encountered in past attempts to define domestic subversion and grave mistakes have been made by Special Branch in attempting to apply vague and erroneous concepts to particular organisations, persons and activities.

The report accepted Hope’s view that communists are to be seen as security risks “on the grounds of reasonable suspicion of the likelihood that they might ultimately commit acts of espionage and subversion when in a position to do so”. The various communist parties therefore made up the largest areas of legitimate concern for special branch records. Of the remaining categories, for which the holding of information was not justified, White noted that files were maintained on: “All ALP candidates and elected members ... There are no corresponding files about Liberal Party or Country Party personalities”; on unions: “There is an armful of files about the ACTU”; on demonstrators: “Most of this information seems irrelevant to security purposes”;

peace movements: “Most, if not all, of the activity (on file) was peaceful and non-subversive. Even prayer meetings for peace were watched and recorded.” on the Council for Civil Liberties: “All of the members ... are on file. Long before the Council was formed, the public utterances of many prominent persons who advocated any form of civil rights or liberties were indexed.”

“Most, if not all, of the activity (on file) was peaceful and non-subversive. Even prayer meetings for peace were watched and recorded.”

In all, there were about 40,000 index cards (opened on anyone who “came under notice”), and about 28,500 of these referred to individuals. White describes this process of “coming under notice”: “Such persons were selected because the organisation or situation, in which they were when they came under notice, was considered by Special Branch to be potentially subversive per se, a judgment made on unsound criteria, which were laid down long ago, and continued uncritically, without review by higher ranking officers sensitive to policy matters”.

Of special branch’s general consideration of “subversive” (which will be discussed fully below) White noted that organisations and persons were conceived to be “left wing”, and suspected by Special Branch of holding or supporting “subversive” views by reason only of the fact that such organisations or persons adopted policies or opinions which were “radical” or “to the left” of an arbitrary centre point fixed by someone in Special Branch. I have no doubt that the arbitrary centre point was established by Special Branch with the assistance of ASIO.

It was because of this link between ASIO and special branch that the nature of the latter’s files is so significant, for the information contained in these files provided the basis for ASIO’s vetting system and flowed beyond this to the security services with which ASIO conducts information exchange. Although much of the material White uncovered may appear in itself innocuous, it does not remain so when considered in conjunction with ASIO’s records and the use to which they are put. The corollary of this is that ASIO’s records can likewise not be assessed in isolation from the nature of the special branch records which provide them with subsidiary information.

Subversion: White’s View

One of the major areas of divergence between the White and Hope reports concerns the interpretations of “subversion”, and the extent to which this term provides a legitimate basis for surveillance. White expresses “some reservations” about Hope’s suggested definition of subversion. Although he accepts Hope’s emphasis on the potential or actual use of force or violence as the standard against which an assessment of any actions as subversive should be predicated, White mirrored several criticisms already mentioned in his
view that Hope's failure to specify any
criteria for determining "the interests
of the security of Australia" was quite
inappropriate. White's own view is, in
line with that implied by his terms of
reference, "that the threat of
immediate or ultimate force or
violence must be the touchstone which
distinguishes legitimate from
illegitimate political activity". 29 This
tenet is consistently used throughout
his report as the criterion on which
White assesses special branch's
determination of groups or individuals
as security risks, and was also the
criterion referred to by the Security
Appeals Tribunal in their findings
concerning Stephen Rix's appeal.

Although there is substantial
similarity in the approaches to
subversion presented in these two
reports, through their mutual
concentration on the "threat of
immediate or ultimate force or
violence", Hope's categories of
legitimate subject matter for security
records are significantly more
expansive than White's. This is so
because Hope's view of subversive
actions as those which may ultimately
involve the use of force or violence, is
repeatedly qualified by White who
introduces an additional criterion of
"reasonable suspicion" that force or
violence may ultimately be involved.
Hope's description of legitimate areas
for security records is further
expanded by his inclusion of the
category of "potential subversion"
which perceives incipient violence
according to ASIO's analysis of the
likelihood of violence from a group's
or an individual's ideology.

Although White does not refer
specifically to Hope's description of
"potential subversion", he does note
that "peripheral security risks"
constitute "too subtle an exercise for
any Special Branch of a State Police
Force to undertake".30 The
implication throughout the White
report is that any action which is not
expressly violent or which does not
give rise to a reasonable suspicion of
future violence, is not an area for
special branch security records
concern.

The dangers implicit in the "subtle
exercise" of identifying legitimate
areas of security surveillance from
Hope's "inner limit" of subversion are
clearly documented by White's
findings. The question remains
whether these dangers (to personal
privacy, to political expression, to the
practical workings of democratic
principles) are justifiably risked by the
security benefits which flow from the
collection of information on groups
and individuals not yet reasonably
suspected of incipient violence or
subversion. These threats are posed
not only because of the maintenance of
files on the basis of an obsolete notion
of "subversion", but also because of
the dissemination of information the
collected being determined by ASIO
without any ministerial oversight. One
of the areas which Hope
recommended should be relieved of
ministerial control and which was later
enacted in the 1979 ASIO Act was
"Whether, to whom, and in what
manner any intelligence held by ASIO

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should be communique".31 It is this provision for ASIO’s operative independence which actually translates the maintenance of files on “peripheral security risks” into a potential area of political misuse of security information. In his speech to the House of Assembly on 7 February, 1978 on the White report, Dunstan referred to an incident which provides evidence of the existence of precisely this type of political manipulation.

"The Analysis"

At the hearings of the Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security in July 1975, a Sydney journalist, Robert Mayne, gave evidence that ASIO files on five “left wingers” had been made available to him five years earlier by the leader of the NSW Liberal opposition, Peter Coleman. These files were to be used as the basis for articles in a new magazine aimed specifically at discrediting radical individuals (including members of the ALP) and political organisations (including the Vietnam Moratorium Campaign).32 This evidence was not new; it had first been raised in March 1973 by the National Times which disclosed that in September 1971, Mayne, Coleman, an ASIO officer Ernest Redford, and a Sydney businessman Peter Warren, met to discuss the proposed magazine called The Analysis, for which Mayne was offered $1,000 a year to prepare material on the basis of information supplied to him by ASIO.33 Coleman persistently denied having ever seen any personal ASIO files, although he admitted that he had registered the name The Analysis at that time, and that he had been shown some ASIO material.34 Dunstan raised this matter in parliament soon after the release of the White report because one of those five files handed to Mayne had been that of a prominent South Australian. Dunstan claimed that this file was one of the South Australian special branch files maintained for purely political reasons, and that this incident indicated the chain of information exchange between special branch and ASIO. The importance of recounting this episode is that it presents an empirical foundation to the concern expressed throughout the White report, that the maintenance of security files on a basis other than actual, or a reasonable suspicion of, potential violence, could (particularly where there exists an ineffectual ministerial control of the security organisation) give rise to such specific political use of at least the organisation’s information, if not of the organisation itself. The broader a perception of subversion is, the more speculative must be the determination of specific instances of subversion, and the more imprecise is the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate political activity.

In the instance described above, the speculative net has been cast so widely that it encompassed not only extra-parliamentary dissent movements, but also those parties or individuals who circulated ideas within the parliamentary sphere, which were to the left of ASIO’s “centre point”.

The Implications for Political Liberties

The events which have been described above, together highlight the potential abuse of political rights presented by the use of a broad and ill-defined notion of subversion as one of the criteria on which security files are maintained. ASIO’s determination of “non-subversive” political behaviour has been shown as not only based in its own entrenched bias, but also compounded by the secrecy which surrounds its activities and which, particularly since the enactment of the 1979 ASIO Act, provides for inadequate supervision of its operations.

The clear misconception of our security services as to the nature of democracy and the integral role of public dissent and agitation within it, is cause for substantial concern. It is particularly revealing that the bulk of the security records which White considered were “not legitimately” the subject matter of special branch files, comprised the activities of people and organisations concerned with political and social issues at a largely extra-parliamentary level. At a time of growing political “consensus”, with its corollary of the increasing marginalisation of political activity outside that consensus, the left should not become complacent about the everyday workings of Australia’s domestic security services.

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The technological maelstrom is dramatically affecting even the most intimate aspects of our lives. Reproductive technologies are forcing changes in the nature of human sexuality, in the way that women view their own bodies, in the difference between women and men. Here Rebecca Albury and Anne Traynor discuss these processes with Mike Donaldson, and assess their strategic implications for the women’s movement. In a future issue Rebecca and Anne plan to continue and expand on this initial discussion.

Mike: When I first read Shulamith Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex* more than 10 years ago, I thought the discussion of reproductive technology was science fiction. Firestone discussed artificial insemination, artificial inovulation, choice of sex of the foetus, test-tube fertilisation, the development of artificial placenta and the artificial womb. Clearly, what she predicted has happened and is happening.

On rereading, I found Firestone’s political position on these issues quite unlike what I am hearing currently. She said, for example,

> In the case of feminism the problem is a moral one: the biological family unit has always oppressed women and children, but now, for the first time in history, technology has created real preconditions for overthrowing these oppressive “natural” conditions, along with their cultural reinforcements. In the case of the new ecology, we find that independent of any moral stance, for pragmatic — survival — reasons alone, it has become necessary to free humanity from the tyranny of its biology.

Has this view any currency at all within a women’s movement of the nineteen-eighties?

Rebecca: The thing that struck me when I first read the book was Firestone’s absolute terror at the functioning of a woman’s body. Her description of what pregnancy and childbirth is like is the description of someone who had had an absolutely horrendous experience brought about through a loss of confidence in and power over the woman’s own reproductive function. I was much more suspicious of technology than she was; technology is not the answer to fear and loathing of our bodies.

Reproductive technology so far has not been used in the ways that she foresaw, that is, to change relations between men and women, adults and children. Firestone saw technology as a way of breaking a very strong ideological justification for the oppression of women in family units: they produce the kids, so they should do all the child-rearing and caring.

I don’t think that reproductive technology will do that unless it is accompanied by a cultural revolution of such magnitude that, beside it, the Chinese cultural revolution would resemble a party barbecue.

Anne: I think that Firestone’s conception of childbirth was static and ahistorical. To say, as she does, that “pregnancy is barbaric” and that it is “temporary deformation of the individual for the sake of the species”, is to confuse biology and culture. Any biological function gains its meaning from the cultural practices surrounding it and inscribed in it.

Rebecca: Yes, Firestone blurs culture and biology and also doesn’t pose sharply enough the question of who controls the technology, which is precisely the question that we should be raising. The people who control reproductive technology currently, the doctors, lawyers, parliamentarians, medical scientists and some philosophers, are not talking about it in a way that raises the possibility of cutting the nexus between ownership of the child and biological parenting. Instead, they see it as a way of ensuring that every woman can play the role of mother.

In the discussion about these technologies so far, it has simply been assumed that they should be reserved for married women or for women in long-term de facto heterosexual relationships. Uncoupled women and women in lesbian relationships are excluded, by and large, on the grounds that they won’t make “good mothers”. The whole thrust of the discussion of reproductive technology has been toward the “preservation of the family” and thus the restrictive roles of women within it, quite the opposite of what Firestone was on about.

Mike: I wonder if this is quite so true? The “super sperm” bank set up in California houses the semen of Nobel Prize winners, and has inquiries from 20 women a week, on average. One of the successful users of the sperm bank commented, “It’s wonderful that a woman can be independent and choose her own family. I don’t have any wish for marriage. I love my privacy and my independence.” Isn’t this what Firestone was talking about?
children, but the expectation that this child is somehow which currently exist, turn the child into a commodity. The central question must and sexuality, which feminists have recognised as a major dimensional. The potential is there for the development of " better", I don't know what effect that would have on the children, but the expectation that this child is somehow particularly special, and the expectation that the mother must behave in special ways to realise the "potential" of the sperm would lead to immense pressure for them both, from the mother's friends and associates, and perhaps to considerable pressure by the mother on the child. The tensions and ambivalences are great enough with an ordinary child, what would it be like with a "genius"?

Anne: Yes, but the process is not unilinear or one-dimensional. The potential is there for the development of less repressive sexual relationships and the dissolution of the nuclear family. The problem is, the liberatory aspects of the technology will be short circuited and manipulated to serve the current needs of the present social system. On the one hand, it weakens the nexus between reproduction and sexuality, which feminists have recognised as a major source of women's oppression. The central question must remain, is self-determination coming with these new technologies?

Mike: Well, if the new reproductive technology means that women can have children without men, doesn't that mean that women are more self-determining? If the problem is, as Rebecca has already suggested, that men control the technologies, isn't it possible to set up centres of reproduction for women similar to, and perhaps in conjunction with, feminist abortion clinics and women's health centres?

Rebecca: Sure you could, but the question then becomes, what is the rest of the situation? What is it like for a woman who has a child on her own? As long as women earn 60 percent of what men earn, as long as the labour market is thoroughly sex segmented, then one of the few conditions under which women can have children and enjoy them, is to be with a man who earns money. It may not be wonderful, but women raising kids need to be in multiple income units. Unless we on the left really work to alter the way people live and experience the need for emotional commitment and caring, then the technology will rush ahead and force women into things that they don't want to be forced into.

Mike: But why are you assuming that "multiple income units" as you call them, need to include men?

Rebecca: There are plenty of women on their own now with kids, kids which they obtained in the usual fashion through sexual intercourse; they thought they were in marriages or de facto relationships which were going to last, and so they had children within those relationships, the relationships broke down, now they're on their own with kids, and they can't make enough money to keep them and feel good about the way they're keeping them. Also, of course, most women want to live with a male partner/lover.

In a sense, access to reproductive technology is available only to single women in professions, which make up the women that use the "super sperm" bank that you mentioned, Mike. So, the unmarried users of this technology are either professionals, or they are women who have already invented suitable forms of group living, or friendship networks, or whatever. Women who live alone and raise children still feel marginalised, and they are.

It is a shame that relationships are not being discussed along with the new technology.

Anne: I agree with many of the points that you are making, Rebecca, although I am not sure that the situation is quite as over-determined as you suggest. Certainly, access to this technology will be limited to those women who have gained some measure of economic security, and sure, the idea of the family as the ideal support system is still strong. But it is not invincible, and has been eroded by the ever-increasing number of women forced to rear their children independent of men. One of the positive aspects of this has been that women are building up alternative emotional support networks which are extensive and which reduce their reliance on men. The problem as you imply, is one of financial independence and inequality in the workforce. But doesn't the development of reproductive technology undermine the very ideology which has worked to exclude women from the public area? Isn't the system setting up technological preconditions which might help women in their struggle for political and economic equality?

Rebecca: But one of the problems still remains that the technologies are under the control of the medical profession, and the level of political struggle against that profession needs to be greatly intensified. Presently, there seems to be even a backing away from making the sorts of challenges that are required. I don't see how you can say that reproductive technologies are even potentially liberating until there is a powerful and ongoing struggle to break the grip of the medical profession.
Mike: Is the medical profession so impregnable as you make out? I got myself into quite some hot water recently for arguing that very case when a doctor informed me that half the doctors in her hospital were women and that I should take more care to base my opinions on evidence.

Rebecca: Male domination doesn't necessarily require a majority of men. Some women have been socialised by the profession. "Male control" doesn't essentially mean control by individual men, it means control which benefits men more than women most of the time. Far from each man exercising personal authority, things are much more complex. We live in a network of power relations that both defines "masculinity" and ensures the success of individuals and activities that reinforce that definition.

Mike: What sorts of political problems will this new technology pose for radical feminism? Doesn't it open up the possibility for the erosion of difference between men and women, since difference is frequently considered by radical feminists to be based essentially on the biological aspects of what is female? How does difference survive in the face of the artificial womb and placenta?

Rebecca: I don't think we can say what the politics of the women's movement will be like by the time artificial wombs arrive. The general politics of the situation will be quite different by then. We can't talk about current politics in terms of some hypothetical future.

Anne: But can't we talk about directions?

Rebecca: I don't think we can say what the politics of the women's movement will be like by the time artificial wombs arrive. The general politics of the situation will be quite different by then. We can't talk about current politics in terms of some hypothetical future.

Anne: I believe that reproductive technology, as it is presently being developed, will lead to the illusion of androgyny and the elision of difference, without actually altering the position of women at all. The political strategy for the women's movement at the moment must rest on difference.

Rebecca: Wait a minute. How would androgyny lead to the subordination of women?

Anne: I said the "illusion" of androgyny. Because I think that the ideology of women as "different", and the negative aspects attached to it, are no longer as necessary to the maintenance of a system moving toward totalisation. Capitalist patriarchy could well accommodate, and benefit from, a concept of androgyny which implies homogeneity. We can draw parallels between reproductive technology and productive technology. Technological changes at the point of production have rendered difference an irrelevance at work. With technology you don't have to be muscular and 6'2" to do "manual" work. New technology promises to take care of biological differences. We are all the same, we are all equal, no more need to struggle to overcome the disadvantages of difference. In short, as the contradictions in this society set up the conditions for liberation, so will capitalist-patriarchy use "androgyny" to render these conditions inoperative at the ideological level.

Rebecca: But how does that continue the subordination of women?

Anne: Because there would be no real change.

Rebecca: I think that, with artificial reproduction, androgyny is going to mean that we would all become like men. And that, therefore, any kind of difference of female functioning from male bodily functioning, would be chemically treated. Because the difference in biology is no longer necessary for reproduction, we can do away with menstrual cycles and a whole range of things. What would happen is not a move to a genuine androgyny, but a move toward the neutering of women and the masculinising of society as a whole. Right now, women have become
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The Editors, Social Alternatives,
Department of External Studies,
University of Queensland, 4067. AUSTRALIA.
On 9 November 1983, as the uranium debate within the ALP gained tempo, the Prime Minister Mr. Hawke requested a government advisory body, the Australian Science and Technology Council (ASTEC), to conduct an inquiry into some of the political and technical aspects of uranium mining. The subsequent report, titled *Australia's Role in the Nuclear Fuel Cycle* is sometimes referred to as the Slatyer Report after its chairman, Professor Ralph Slatyer of the Australian National University.

Immediately it was announced, the Slatyer inquiry was criticised on the basis of its terms of reference, the make-up of the ASTEC committee itself, the amount of time to be allowed for submissions and the overtly political timetabling of the whole inquiry.

The terms of reference given to ASTEC concerned waste disposal options, how to improve Australia’s nuclear safeguards and how involvement in the nuclear fuel cycle could “further advance the cause of non-proliferation”. The biased slant of these terms of reference was further accentuated in the national advertisements for submissions, by the comment “ASTEC will not be reviewing decisions already made and announced by the Government on the mining and export of uranium”.

The 18 members of ASTEC, mostly Fraser government appointees, are primarily recruited from the heads of big business and senior university faculties. As such they form an elite whose conclusions, while purporting to be scientifically objective, are in fact laden with a highly selective world view and value base.

Submissions, solicited by ASTEC during the later part of November, allowed only 4-5 weeks’ preparation by interested community groups, an almost impossible task in the pre-Christmas period. The report was released on 18 May 1984, conveniently six weeks before the ALP National Conference.

The response of the anti-nuclear movement to the inquiry was swift and effective. Many groups voiced their concern at these issues and declared they would boycott the inquiry. A very significant
The most damaging case against the Slatyer Inquiry, however, is derived from the content of the report itself. The ASTEC report has come under strong criticism especially from within the scientific community in Australia.

Suspicion about the Inquiry was such that the report was mentioned only once during the ALP national conference debate on uranium. However, the framing of the conference resolutions on uranium was already a foregone conclusion.

The ALP's uranium policy, which allows the export of uranium from Nabarlek, Ranger and Roxby Downs, subject to "stringent safeguards", can best be understood by reference to the attitudes detailed in the ASTEC report.

The recently released ASTEC Report titled *Australia's Role in the Nuclear Fuel Cycle* provides a key to understanding the polarisation of arguments found in the current nuclear debate. That key is found by examining how it is possible for the recommendations of ASTEC to be in essential opposition to the conclusions of the Ranger Uranium Inquiry released in 1976.

ASTEC recommended "That exports of Australian uranium should not be limited as a matter of principle but should be permitted subject to stringent conditions of supply designed to strengthen the non-proliferation regime".

The Ranger Inquiry recommended "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".

The ASTEC recommendation is obtained from a rather unconvincing discussion on energy issues which concluded that the controlled supply of Australian uranium would "contribute significantly to international energy security".

Part of the explanation for the inadequate discussion in the ASTEC Report can be attributed to its term of reference. The Ranger Inquiry had very much broader terms of reference and examined all the issues concerning the nuclear industry.

**Vertical Proliferation**

An essential reason for the differing conclusions rests on the perspective taken on nuclear proliferation and the effectiveness of the non-proliferation regime by ASTEC.

The non-proliferation treaty (NPT) which forms the centrepiece of the Non-Proliferation Regime (NPR) incorporates into its articles opposition to both the acquisition of nuclear weapons by non-weapons states (horizontal proliferation) and to the extension of the weapons capability of nuclear weapon states (vertical proliferation) insofar as it demands of them effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament.

Although acknowledging that nuclear proliferation has two dimensions, the ASTEC Report follows the emphasis of the NPR by concentrating on the impact of uranium exports on issues related to horizontal proliferation. What effect the supply of uranium for civilian use has, directly or indirectly, on the military programs of nuclear weapons states receives hardly a mention in the ASTEC Report.

While the question of whether or not the nuclear arms race receives indirect support from the supply of Australian uranium remains open, there is evidence that Australian uranium developments profit from the arms race. The United States is the only country to which ASTEC points as being a likely and significant new client for Australian uranium in the period 1984-1996, assuming export contracts are allowed. The economic viability of the proposed Roxby Downs mine will be dependent on sales of uranium to American utilities.

Although the USA has ample uranium of its own, ASTEC says "The United States and the Soviet Union have very much larger weapons programs, which may consume amounts of uranium comparable to those used in their civil nuclear programs".

If the arms race were to cease and a schedule of nuclear warhead dismantlement introduced, this statement of ASTEC indicates there could be a doubling of domestic uranium available in the USA for civilian use. The market for Australian uranium in the USA would collapse and with it the calculated viability of the Roxby Downs mine. For so long as the arms race continues there will be increased demand for Australian uranium.

**Horizontal Proliferation and Latent Proliferation**

The ASTEC conclusion that uranium exports should not be limited as a matter of principle is predicated on the Report's analysis of the Non-Proliferation Regime (NPR) from which it concludes that uranium exports would not contribute to the spread of nuclear weapons. The Ranger Inquiry's extensive examination of the NPR led it to quite the opposite conclusion and, while...
arguing Australia must institute appropriate measures to support the regime, it recommended a very cautious approach to any uranium development.

The definition of horizontal nuclear proliferation adopted by ASTEC tells much about the philosophy the Report adopts to the functions of the NPR. ASTEC says "... an increase in the number of countries with such weapons or which have exploded nuclear devices (is) referred to as horizontal proliferation". In recent years, however, there has been a redefinition of proliferation in terms of the degree to which nuclear technological developments and access to fissile materials would enable a country to develop a nuclear explosive device on relatively short notice. This is referred to as latent proliferation. The definition used strongly influences judgments of the approach and effectiveness of measures adopted to stop proliferation.

Pressures Opposing the Regime

The NPR is a series of agreements and mechanisms established to influence the political motivations of countries who are signatories to the regime, and to manage the spread of sensitive nuclear technologies which could lead a country to nuclear weapons development. The primary arguments in the ASTEC Report for deeper involvement by Australia in the regime arise not from encouragement at its success in preventing proliferation, but rather because of the considerably added pressures bearing against the NPR since the Ranger Inquiry eight years ago. ASTEC's support for the further involvement of Australia in the nuclear fuel cycle is a logical consequence of a management philosophy rather than a judgment on the viability of the NPR obtained from weighing the pressures which support or oppose the regime. The logic of the management approach dictates that the more pressure brought against the NPR the more support it would require in terms of Australia's nuclear developments. Thus, ASTEC says "Australian participation in stages of the nuclear fuel cycle in addition to uranium mining and milling should be permitted where such participation promotes and strengthens the non-proliferation regime."

The following points summarise the pressures opposing the NPR referred to in the ASTEC Report:

- Increasing international tensions. ASTEC says "while a lack of security remains in the world, a universal political commitment to non-proliferation is difficult and perhaps impossible to achieve".
- Countries holding out from non-proliferation agreements. ASTEC says "there is a small group of so-called "threshold countries" which have the technological capacity to develop a weapons program and which have not made a political commitment to do so" (Examples are Argentina, Brazil, India, Israel, Pakistan and South Africa.)
- The further spread of sensitive nuclear technologies.
- Difficulties in verifying no nuclear weapons pledges in some NPT states.
- The existence of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities.
- Politicisation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the threatened withdrawal of the USA.
- Stalemates in discussions on proposals to develop an international plutonium storage agreement.

The above is not an exhaustive list of what are essentially the secondary pressures against the NPR. The primary threat, however, even to the non-proliferation treaty itself continues to be the total lack of progress in nuclear disarmament. ASTEC says "This failure to implement the treaty provisions is a weakness in the Non-Proliferation Regime and has provided some countries outside the treaty with grounds for refusing to join. It has also provided ample opportunity for criticism of the treaty by some countries which are already members of the NPT, but which find its conditions onerous".

The diplomatic and other initiatives Australia can take to respond to these problems are independent of the direct supply of Australian uranium. The ASTEC Report simply reiterates the arguments of the Prime Minister, Mr Hawke that the supply of uranium gains and enhances credibility for Australian participation in the Non-Proliferation Regime. Yet even without further uranium exports,
A cylinder of uranium hexafluoride fuel — it was this, in gaseous form which recently escaped from the reactor at Lucas Heights in Sydney.

Australia will continue to have vested interests in the NPR because of the existence of Australian origin nuclear material in the world's nuclear fuel cycle and by our continued interest in the technology of disposal which was discussed in the ASTEC Report and is generally supported.

Pressures Supporting Non-Proliferation

By placing predominant emphasis on the political motivations and management barriers to proliferation, the ASTEC Report's recommendations for more Australian involvement in the nuclear fuel cycle downplay the economic and technical impetus this would give to latent proliferation.

In line with its restricted definition of horizontal proliferation, ASTEC supports its conclusions by citing the success of the NPR within the context of the expansion of the nuclear industry over the past three decades. Yet ASTEC makes little assessment of the contribution to non-proliferation by the general downturn in nuclear power, setbacks to anticipated development of breeder reactors using plutonium and the weakness of nuclear industries, particularly in the third world, which restricts the financing of fuel cycle developments. Economic and technical difficulties in so-called threshold states have also slowed the development of weapons potential.

The threats to the medium or long term viability of the Non-Proliferation Regime are so severe that, while requiring the continuing support of Australia, we cannot afford to trade off the caution detailed in the Ranger Inquiry by any expansion of the uranium mining industry. As well there are many other issues external to the analysis undertaken by ASTEC which argue for a very restrictive approach to uranium supply.

Pressures to Supply Uranium

An important conclusion of the Ranger Inquiry concerned the ability of the Commonwealth to "immediately terminate these (nuclear) activities, permanently, indefinitely, or for a specific period". Under its terms of reference, ASTEC failed to examine the domestic and international pressures which trap Australia into a forced supply situation. Each supply of uranium in turn induces pressure on Australia to continue supply, regardless of changes which occur within the general context of nuclear proliferation or the overall world situation. In particular, supply, once contracted for from any particular country, becomes virtually unstoppable except for reasons detailed in bilateral and non-proliferation agreements, regardless of other international considerations. Such difficulties in the current dispute with France over nuclear testing in the Pacific have put to rest the once popular "leverage" arguments of the Hawke government.

Conclusion

While the ASTEC Report does an excellent job of detailing the school of thought on the NPR advocated by the international nuclear fraternity, it fails to displace the pre-eminence of the findings of the Ranger Uranium Inquiry. Consensus demands that an Environmental Inquiry be undertaken on the Roxby Downs proposal, thus allowing investigation of the full range of nuclear issues which have arisen in the eight years since the Ranger Inquiry, with time allowed for the participation of the whole Australian community. This author believes the balance of argument comes down firmly on the side of the position which concludes "leave uranium in the ground".

Ron Leeks, B.Sc., M.Sc., Dip.Ed., has worked as an organiser for the Campaign Against Nuclear Power (Qld) and maintains an active interest in the global nuclear system and the anti-nuclear and peace movements.
repositories for certain gentle virtues, because that is how
our culture has divided up psychological attributes. But if,in
moving toward androgyny, you simply have men, and
not-men who are not-women too, then you drop off a
section of human values that are currently seen as positive,
and necessary, though less regarded, and female.

Mike: But doesn't the use of difference as a political
strategy at this time involve a revalorisation of femininity,
maternity and, by extension, the family? Isn't this what
Women Who Want To Be Women and the Right to Life
are pursuing?

Anne: First, I must emphasise that to advocate difference
as a political strategy at this point in time, is not to say that
difference is an irreducible biological given. These
differences are socially and historically constructed and
are therefore open to change. Second, the strategy of
difference can be used to achieve different goals. Women
on the right use difference in order to make a nostalgic
return to a time in the past when "femininity, maternity
and the family" seemed to give them some measure of
security. In so doing, they accept the negative side of the
bargain which the system deals out. Those feminists who
advocate difference also revalorise the feminine and the
maternal, but their aims are entirely progressive. Taking
the positive values of difference — sharing, caring, etc. —
they apply them in a practical effort to transform the
dominant value system.

The power that women have in the socialising and
domestic realms is a power which, to date, women have
been unable to realise, or recognise, since they have been
taught that their work is valueless compared to that of
men. From the point of view of difference, women can
begin to realise this power. It begins with the rejection of
those negative aspects which have been attached to our
work, and a reassessment of our worth to the social system.
Of course, to arrest the process here simply results in a
reinforcement of our present status. But this needn't be the
case if the personal power realised at one level is carried
over and asserted at other levels. Albeit constructed, our
"difference" has inscribed us as having particular needs and
particular values; turning our "difference" to a positive
advantage we can place these needs and values at the centre
of a political program which radically confronts the
system. Ultimately, the assertion of difference is a demand
for self-determination in all areas.

Rebecca: I think difference is important for it reminds
women not to embrace masculinism in the name of
androgyny, but going too far with "difference" is danger­
ous because, in this political conjuncture, it does move into
sentimentalism — as in, "it's the only power we have, so we
should keep men away"; this makes no change to what men
do, or to the social value placed on domestic work and
child care. If we focus too heavily on difference, then we
will find ourselves in that trap. The control of the
refrigerator is not the control of our lives. It is true that
presently women are responsible for most of the emotional
and personal life maintenance of the human race. But we
have to look at this carefully and see that the whole
structure is not what gives us pleasure, only some parts of it
do. So let's even out some of the stuff which is oppressive.

Mike: You seem to be suggesting that men should re-enter
the areas of fertility and heterosexual gender relations.
How do you suggest that we should go about doing this?

Rebecca: Men should bring their not inconsiderable skills
in company research to the corporate financing of medical
research and share those with the women who are
concerned; they should raise questions about reinforcing
models of the nuclear family; question the view that every
woman should be attached to one and only one male;
experiment in new forms of emotional support networks;
they should take responsibility for their own self­
maintenance and the life support work that needs to be
done for kids; they should raise the questions of child care
among groups of men.

Anne: Decisions on women's issues must be the
prerogative of women, and men must take a back seat. This
means men must constantly monitor their personal politics
as they relate to women and resist the temptation to
exercise the power which they enjoy by dint of their sex.

Rebecca Albury is a long time activist in women's
reproductive health politics. Mike Donaldson is District
president of the Communist Party of Australia on the
South Coast of NSW. Anne Traynor is secretary of the
Wollongong Women's Centre. All three teach sociology
at the University of Wollongong.
Affirming the centrality of class


Reviewed by Kath Olive

Affirming the centrality of class


Reviewed by Kath Olive

Affirming the centrality of class

Audrey seems to have anticipated that there would be some surprise at the title she has chosen — A Proletarian Life. This is not an autobiography. We are shown those events in Audrey’s infancy, childhood and youth which she perceives as having the main significance in shaping her adult development. We see something of her life in the youth movement and the Communist Party, and some major events in which she was a leading participant. And we do little more than glimpse personal relationships. Thus, it is not so much the account of a life as of the shaping of a person, a picture of an era as it affected the author and was affected by her.

But why “Proletarian”? Audrey asks, “since it is not the most popular of terms these days”. She answers in part:

I chose it because I wanted to turn away from the fashionable Left thesis of the death of ‘class’ as a concept for today. I wanted to affirm the centrality of class, to counter the decline of the Left amongst the workforce, to challenge anti-socialist marxism and an anti-Soviet socialism, and to confront a politics without a subject, the goal of which is no longer the socialist transformation of society, but merely a renovation of liberal capitalism.

And further,

The young unemployed today prefigure, so we are told, a massive permanent army of workers with no work to do. And so I chose ‘Proletarian’, raising the flag, so to speak. Equally, the word speaks of the ideas of internationalism, solidarity, peace and socialism.

I have quoted this at some length because it is the cornerstone of the book. In much of the discussion around the future of the Communist Party and the “relevance” of socialism in today’s Australia, one often feels that socialism itself is being jettisoned along with what are perceived as its mistakes. Whether one agrees with Audrey’s approach to the present and future development of socialist theory and practice, one must surely welcome her re-exploration of fundamental marxist analysis, and her unequivocal declaration for the socialist future.

In the 1970s, there was a strong idea among the younger comrades that everything that went on before 1968 was irrelevant, stalinist and counter-revolutionary. Those who had struggled in a previous era were of no importance. The feeling of rejection to us was very strong, and Audrey’s book is excellent in this regard. It doesn’t only, or even mainly, enumerate struggles and events. It deals with ideological evolution, and brings to life, in the context of Australian conditions, the correctness of Marx’s contention that the present and future rest on the experiences of the past — a lesson that still needs to be learnt by many of the young people who are attracted to the left.

In the ‘40s and ’50s, it was common to ascribe political proficiency in women to the influence of the men with whom they were associated. Thus, Audrey was held by many to be a “gramophone”, a mouthpiece for Jack Blake, a purveyor of his ideas. (This attitude merged with the more generalised view that, in Queensland and in Victoria, all the leading comrades were reflections of the two charismatic leaders, Jack Henry and Jack Blake. This was equally a travesty of the truth.)
A demonstration against war and fascism (Melbourne, circa 1939).

The calumny of this view of Audrey is shown clearly in A Proletarian Life. She is revealed as an independent and creative socialist thinker and theoretician, one of the few women on the left in Australia to engage consistently in serious contribution to socialist theory. To me, this book is significant for this fact as much as for the not inconsiderable input into socialist theory it actually achieves.

The Audrey that those of us who worked with her knew, a confident and very competent organiser and activist, is not so evident here, but comes through in her account of the Youth Festival for Peace and Friendship, of which she was the originator, architect and executor. It was one of the most important, most intense and most successful battles of the Australian labour movement.

The strong tendency in the Communist Party and on the left to rubbish the past and those who built it received a welcome check at the Sixtieth Anniversary CPA History Conference in Melbourne in 1980. From this, Audrey reprints one of her contributions, in which, as throughout the book, the application of the marxist dialectical method of analysis is evident. The emphasis is not simply on "learning lessons" from the past, but on interpreting past struggles, past methods, past relationships and past theories in terms of their influence and contribution to present and future socialist theory and practice.

For women of our generation and political history of activity in the youth movement in the 1930s and 1940s, Audrey's attitude to the modern women's movement is one with which we can identify. In those two decades especially, as she points out, young women in the youth movement enjoyed great scope and opportunity to become leaders at state and national level, both in the youth organisations and, by virtue of their prominence there, in the Communist Party. That this was not the general situation for women in the party became apparent only when we moved away from youth activity.

During the period of World War II, when so many of the male party leaders went into the armed forces, women of necessity moved into many of the party's leading positions, to the sotto voice, and often not so muted, mutterings about "petticoat rule". The benign experience of our early youthful years was a valuable source of able women activists as well as an important demonstration that a leadership composed mainly of women was at least as effective as that dominated by men.

I found this book rich in material to provoke thought — on the need for a youth movement of the left in today's conditions; on the influence of Jewish comrades and culture in shaping Audrey's development, and on similar influences in North Queensland from the Southern European migrants; and on Audrey's first-hand experiences of the Stalin terror and the conditioning which made her, and us, repudiate what later became obvious conclusions.

For me, one thing missing from the book was the fun and enjoyment we had from the movement then, but the optimism certainly comes through. We had a tremendous sense of purpose and fulfilment in those days. It is easy to scoff at these things, and to point out with truth that the purpose and fulfilment were due to the stalinist conviction that we were absolutely right. To regain the sense of commitment and purpose without dogma is, to my mind, one of the problems of attracting young people to socialism today.

Finishing the book, one sees that Audrey's was indeed "a proletarian life", and Audrey emerges not only as proletarian in background and experience, but as that much rarer thing, a proletarian scholar and intellectual.

I hope her book is widely read, particularly by younger people on and approaching the left. It should stimulate interest in the forthcoming film "Red Matildas", of whom she is one.

Give the book to someone for Christmas, or even sooner.

Kath Olive worked with Audrey Blake in the youth movement in the 1930s and '40s and has remained an active communist.
Honesty, passion, understanding

The autobiography is a genre in literature which too often begs for a biographer to tell the real story of a life. It is difficult for anyone to tell the whole truth about him or herself, or even to know that truth.

It is even more difficult to faithfully report the events that have structured their lives, and to paint friends, lovers and enemies honestly.

Roger Milliss has done so with enormous self-critical honesty, with passion and with great depth of understanding.

Certainly, it is the best piece of writing to come from the pen of a committed Australian socialist that I have read. Only Frank Hardy’s *The Dead Are Many* comes within cooee of Roger’s book.

It is a long, dense book of over 480 pages, written in a spirited monologue, without paragraphs which, to the casual browser will give the appearance of something unreadable. But, on the contrary, it is a most readable book, one that it is almost impossible to put down once begun.

Roger Millis weaves together a series of themes which were indivisibly linked in his life: the lives of his parents and particularly his father, Bruce Milliss; the fortunes of the Communist Party and radical politics in Australia and around the world; his obsessive loves; the changing fabric of Australian society in the past decades.

It has all the elements of a tragedy, almost a Russian sombreness in its passion, lit from time to time by some ironic humour and particularly by quite brilliant pen portraits of those from the editorial offices in Moscow to Sydney University in his student days.

The title, *Serpent’s Tooth*, comes from King Lear: *How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is! To have a thankless child!* Roger’s guilt over his lack of gratitude to his parents is the dominant theme, but one which may strike some as self-indulgent, a maudlin and “Freudian” obsession. Perhaps it is, but Roger is not alone in his obsessions.

With a beguiling simplicity, Roger’s regret is that he did not follow the advice of Goneril, Lear’s daughter and “serpent’s tooth”: *Never afflict yourself to know the cause; But let his disposition have that scope That his dotage gives it.*

But nothing is so simple.

Bruce Milliss became a communist during the Depression, while a prominent, if small, businessman in Katoomba in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. There he remained until 1951, the local town Red, while precariously keeping his businesses afloat.

But the Cold War finally forced him to retreat, to suburban Ashfield and to an import business, most of whose profits went to Party funds. Bruce Milliss pioneered trade with China, in days when it was the great ogre of conservative Australia, the red/yellow peril in one.

Bruce Milliss also pioneered import of Soviet films into Australia. But his greatest success, it seems, was Mao’s *Little Red Book* after the Sino-Soviet split when Bruce Millis turned to the Peking “Vatican”.

While Bruce Milliss remained an unreconstructed lover of Stalin until he died, Roger went the opposite way. From 1956 he denounced Uncle Joe and went to work in Moscow in 1961.
in the days of Khrushchev, when the hope of a real flowering of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union remained high, despite Khrushchev's erratic turning on and off of "destalinisation".

It was Stalin's shadow that led to constant and screaming rows between Roger and Bruce, from Moscow to Ashfield. After each, the exhausted protagonists would have their reconciliation and Roger would resolve not to discuss the question again with his father. But politics was in the blood of both. "What else is there to talk about?" his father replied after one argument.

Bruce Milliss, the country town small businessman and devout Catholic, converted by what he saw in the Depression to a new Vatican in Moscow, then in his old age, turning to Peking when Stalin was removed from his pedestal, is a symbol of the tragedy of a whole generation.

Many who devoted their lives to socialism were misled and finally disillusioned, yet unable to face the reality: Bruce Milliss was not alone.

There were, of course, those who saw that either Moscow or Peking was not the same thing as socialism and who survived the shock to fight on.

R oger straddled the two generations: young enough to be a dedicated stalinist in his student days, yet also young enough to survive the crisis. Yet, for Roger, like, I suppose, the vast majority, the loss of a simple faith, the lack of quick and easy solutions, leaves a hole: "I want some star to steer by!" is the final line in the book.

There is not, and never has been, any such a star and those hucksters who offer one make it themselves from the dullest and cheapest tinsel.

Yet Roger's guilt as the "thankless child" is much more than just a product of political divisions. (Its complexities will no doubt satisfy undergraduates as a suitable field of essay-writing in the future.) His guilt is also not separated from his other great obsession with Suse, the pursued one; won, then lost.

It is an obsession that Roger knows is destructive, that in the name of love destroys love. It is Love with a capital "L" in all its Russianness, that cries for more than it says.

It is The Family reincarnating itself as it has always done, but here the process is set down in all its truth, outside the romanticised vision. It is not a new theme and will remain one of the great themes of literature until The Family finally, if ever, dies.

R oger's book is not informed by a feminist critique, nor for that matter a reading of David Cooper and his anti-psychiatry. Yet Roger Milliss, because of his utter honesty, lays it out like a textbook written with passion: the desire for immolation of the Self in the Other, yet the simultaneous resistance to self-death and denial.

The endless reincarnation of The Family explains much but not everything. For Roger, his "tragedy" is that he cannot reincarnate it in the image in which he perceives it, not even in the unhappy suburban security of his parents.

For those who find the personal tragedies too intense, the book offers much more. It presents a kaleidoscope of the history of the Communist Party, its struggles and defeats; of the changing mores of Australia over decades, and some magnificent insights into the Soviet Union.

Less satisfactory are its portraits of post-independence Kenya and Black Africa. These lack the depth and grasp of reality of Roger's years in the Soviet Union.

It is impossible here to convey the depth and breadth of this book. Sufficient to say it is compulsory reading for those concerned about the human condition and a socialist future.
End of an era

The period 1929 to the early '40s, the subject of this book, was in many ways the end of an era and the beginning of a new one.

The USA had become the dominant force in the capitalist world; the Russian Revolution had established a new social and political order that challenged the hegemony of capitalism; and the conflicting values of the two societies came into sharp focus with the capitalist economic crisis of the 1930s, "The Great Depression".

The system of economic imperialism by which a few European countries controlled colonies and dependencies in the "undeveloped" or "developing" world was under challenge through liberation movements in India, China and elsewhere in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

With the economic crisis, the contradictions in capitalism were sharply revealed, and a new phenomenon appeared, fascism, which condemned liberalism, socialism and independent trade unionism, established regimes of authoritarian rule, extolled militarism and began preparing for a new war to redive the world.

With the rise of fascism, democracy as a political and social system came under challenge. Traditional values and loyalties changed. The more reactionary elements in society, especially in the ruling classes, saw in fascism a means of controlling or even destroying democratic institutions, such as trade unions, which appeared to threaten their monopoly of power.

On the other hand, socialists claimed that a genuinely socialist society would expand democracy by placing control of the means of production in the hands of the actual producers, not of an exploitative or leisure class.

As Ralph Gibson's book effectively demonstrates, loyalty to fascism as a system, or sympathy with its aims, led to the undermining of democracy and even the betrayal of one's country by following policies that led to its conquest by foreign powers. France is an obvious example, and England narrowly escaped the same fate when a division in the ruling classes brought Churchill to power in place of Chamberlain. That Chamberlain's view remained unchanged is demonstrated by his proposal to cabinet after Dunkirk that Britain should capitulate to Hitler with Mussolini as mediator (p.374).

This book is a blockbuster. In 389 pages of concise print, it deals with all the main issues of the period. It is a scholarly work, thoroughly documented by a man who, in his twenties, turned his back on a promising academic career to spend the next fifty years as a Communist Party activist, organiser, writer and political leader.

The book has three central themes: the effect of the economic crisis of the 1930s on world politics and on the lives of the people of the world; the role of the Soviet Union and of the communists in the capitalist countries in building popular fronts in opposition to fascism and war; and a historical analysis of the Communist...
The start of the 1933 May Day march, and Tom Wright, one of the most powerful communist orators.

Party of Australia, the communist movement generally, and the working class movement for a better life.

The writer’s integrity and respect for historical accuracy in no way detracts from the passion and conviction with which he analyses events. The book is not merely an academic exercise but also an important political analysis of the period.

His comments on Stalin and on errors made by the Comintern and the communist parties are cases in point. On the one hand, he shows the dynamism and the positive features of Stalin’s record in the early period of the Soviet state; on the other, the criticism of Stalin in “Lenin’s Will”, and his proposal that Stalin should be removed because of his negative qualities from the position of general secretary of the party.

Later, as he shows, with the gradual accumulation of absolute power, Stalin exhibited, on a massive scale, the negative characteristics that Lenin had observed.

Having formerly tolerated opposition, he changed to a ruthless dictator suppressing all opposed views and distorting socialist concepts in the establishment of Soviet society. The loss of personal freedom, the brutality and injustice that led to the exile of millions to the prison camps described by Solzhenitsyn, are, perhaps, not adequately presented. Nor, perhaps, is sufficient attention given to the impact of Stalinism on the world communist movement: the concept that the Russian form of communism was a model for other parties and countries.

However, by implication, this comes through in Gibson’s treatment of the relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia and China. In discussing Stalin’s role, the writer also deals with the dialogue and conflict with Trotsky, and its impact on events such as the bitter divisions on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War.

Dealing with the role of the Comintern, he contrasts Lenin’s concept of an organisation in which conflicting views and factions should have full freedom of expression with its development under Stalin as a monolith, highly organised, almost on military lines, when dissent from the “official” view became dangerous and could even lead to lethal consequences.

It became the instrument of Stalin’s rule over the international communist movement.

Gibson comments on both positive aspects and on some of the serious political errors of the Comintern, such as its view that the Labour Social Democratic parties were the principal deceivers of the working class and that they were the means by which fascism would come to power. Hence, the practice of describing Social Democratic leaders as “social fascists” and “left social fascists”. This practice intensified the conflict between the Social Democrats and the communists in Germany, assisting Hitler in his rise to power. When the Comintern realised its error and, through Dimitrov, projected a policy of a United Front against fascism, the damage had been done.

Gibson gives considerable attention to “left sectarianism” in the communist movement and in the Communist Party of Australia, including left sectarian errors in which he himself participated.

His analysis of such errors contains the comment that “a vanguard can only win when masses of people rally behind it, and when it is, all the time, looking for new allies” (p.50). He has an interesting comment on this question in a view expressed by Tito who was, at that time, working as a member of the Comintern. The time was 1940, and the USSR, having been effectively rebuffed by the Western powers, had signed a pact with Hitler which included the partition of Poland.

The USSR itself defended its action and, in some of its public statements, appeared to be friendly to the Nazi regime. Tito, concerned with probable Nazi aggression against Yugoslavia, “expressed the view that working class struggle could not be directed from outside the country”.

In other words, the perceived diplomatic policies expressed by the USSR did not automatically require acceptance by national parties.

Tito’s independent position on this issue was to lead to a direct and violent clash with Stalin in the post-war period and to the exclusion of Yugoslavia from the Comity of Socialist Nations in the Comintern.
O one of the central issues in which Ralph Gibson has been directly engaged for almost the whole of his political life is the struggle against war which, in the 1930s, also directly involved the anti-fascist movement. Attendance at the Brussels conference brought him into direct participation in the ideological struggles among diverse ideological and political trends.

The views presented at the conference, the "leftism" of some delegates, the concern of the pacifists with the injustices of the Versailles Treaty that, to a degree, prevented them from seeing the threat of fascism, and the conflicting views on communism and the role of the USSR all presented problems.

The communist movement was already calling for the United Front of the working class and a Popular Front of wider and more diverse elements of society.

The Spanish Civil War was being fought and the issues of unity against fascism and the corruption of large sections of the ruling class by fascist ideologies were already being debated.

On his return to Australia after the conference, Gibson was involved again in building the anti-war and anti-fascist movement.

His detailed account of the Movement Against War and Fascism, the visit of Egon Kisch and Gerald Griffin to Australia, and the struggle against the appeasement and pro-Nazi views and policies of Menzies are an important component of the book.

On the outbreak of war, the Communist Party at first took up an anti-Nazi position, but confusion arose quickly when it appeared that the pact signed by Molotov and Ribbenbrop had changed the nature of the war. Was it still an imperialist war, or had the Soviet-Nazi pact made it something different?

Ralph makes a searching analysis of the debate, of the policy of the Australian party discussing the confused position for a period, the attack by the reactionary Menzies government and the period of illegality.

He reaches the conclusion, "We underestimated the changes that were occurring and, to some extent, lost touch with the potential life of the time ... I believe now that we were on the right track in the early days of the war when we declared our support for the war, and demanded that it be waged on an anti-fascist basis".

To do justice to this book, a reviewer would need to make an historical summary and analysis of the whole period, and to refer to the intense political debate of the time. It covers the years when the Communist Party of Australia had about 2,000 members, over fifty percent of them unemployed, to its increase to about 5,000 at the end of the decade, and the beginning of the rapid expansion of the war years that took it to its peak of over 20,000 by 1945.

Consequently, it deals with struggles of the unemployed workers, the Chinese Peace activists, etc. (p.29). He pays tribute to often unskilled workers who developed a knowledge of theory and organisational skills that helped to build the party.

On the international issues, Gibson has chapters on the Spanish Civil War, the Chinese Revolution, the Indian struggle for independence, and a brief survey of the early years of the war. In all cases, the dialectical relationship of theory and practice is developed.

As a kind of postscript, Gibson adds a chapter on the arts and the social struggle, again dealing with theoretical and practical questions such as socialist realism, the relationship of the artist and society and other matters which may appear arcane to some, but are part of the warp and woof of civilised society.

This is a book of modesty, pride and integrity: modesty as to Ralph Gibson’s own part, pride in the party and its achievements, and the integrity of the scholar who tackles the hard questions as well as the easy ones.

Bill Gollan is a former school principal and long time peace activist.
Reviews

Not only a servant

Reviewed by Paula Hamilton

This book has attracted much wider interest than a focus on South Australia would suggest. Its main strength is a concern with a section of the unorganised working class previously denied a voice in our history—female state wards. It gives the reader insight into their daily lives of work as domestic servants, their relationships, experiences and feelings. This is unusual. Most of the existing histories of women and work tend to concentrate on the labour market since it is notoriously difficult to uncover the nature of social relations in the home. As far as possible, Margaret Barbalet allows the women to speak for themselves so that the text is interwoven with extensive quotes from her main source, the South Australian State Children’s Department correspondence. This was the letters written to the department by women boarded out or fostered to “respectable” middle or working class homes. Barbalet has covered the period from 1887, when the State Children’s Council was set up to supervise the operation, to 1940 when there were extensive changes made to the system. Throughout this time there were several hundred girls from the age 13 or 14 who were apprenticed out as servants every year. These letters provide a window into lives usually unavailable for scrutiny, lives filled with drudgery and often with violence or loneliness. This was particularly so in the country where it was sometimes a fine line between the work of a servant or a farm hand.

Over the fifty year period of the study, Barbalet emphasises continuities in experiences; departmental policy and attitudes to the state wards. Even in the 1930s the majority became domestic servants, although the women themselves were increasingly resentful of this occupation. By then working class women generally were able to work in a narrow range of jobs which at least gave them more independence. Another aspect of their experience which altered little, according to Barbalet, was the stigma of “being not only a servant but also a ward of the state”. She rightly points out the dual nature of this social prejudice. Certainly, Barbalet reveals the life of a state ward to be more restricted, since the women were unable to change their situation without application to the department. This was an important infringement on their independence, and one which of course attracted applicants for their employment. However, other restrictions described, such as the lack of personal privacy, the control by mistresses over dress, clothes, choice of male suitor, etc., were also features of the general domestic servant’s life.

The department believed that to apprentice women as domestic servants in the home was a “safe” occupation, preventing them from exposure to the “evil influences” accompanying factory work or other independent city employment. The chapter on “Sex and Marriage” is therefore valuable in revealing the sham of this assumption. In practice, there were many instances of sexual abuse, with less recourse to police help. Many cases of rape and assault by men of the household or co-workers indicate how little control these women were able to exert over their own lives. It could be an equally destructive experience inside the family as out of it. Another section on violence is also included in the chapter “Country Life and Other Trials”. This section deals mainly with mistreatment by mistresses — women against other women — and the book might have gained more force by discussion and comparison of these together.

Barbalet’s women do not emerge simply as “victims”, but one might wish that she had explored more fully the concept of their resistance to such extensive state control of their lives and the oppressive social and economic situation in which they were placed. The instances of insolence, refusal to do certain tasks (such as feeding horses, pigs, chopping firewood and cleaning shoes), refusal to get up in the morning, theft or absconding, all indicate something of the spirit of resentment and rebellion which runs as a thread in their correspondence to the department. Many of the letters expressed grievances or complaints, since this was largely their purpose, but they also should be seen as attempts to change or control their own circumstances.

This book makes fascinating reading about a little known world, but it is also a study of increasing state intervention over working class family life, with the dual aim of ridding the world of poverty and doing it cheaply. As Barbalet says, to the late nineteenth century reformer boarding out seemed the ideal solution. The evidence from her study of these women’s lives would seem to indicate otherwise.

Paula Hamilton is writing a book about domestic service in Australia and teaches at the University of Wollongong.
TWO TACTICS FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN NEW ZEALAND

Reviewed by Mike Donaldson

This book concerns the questions of nationalism and Maori sovereignty in New Zealand, and provides an excellent summary of the current positions on these issues adopted by left parties and progressives in New Zealand.

The debate was triggered by a number of articles by Donna Awatere, prominent Maori activist and feminist, in the NZ feminist journal Broadsheet in 1982 and 1983. In these, Awatere argued that Aotearoa belonged to the Maori and launched a vitriolic attack on the "spiritual impoverishment" of white New Zealand culture, which can offer only the technological fix and which "as a social corpus is sick and destructive".

It is not surprising, then, that Awatere's critique should be sympathetically heard by some sections of the women's movement, although Awatere herself explicitly attacks whites who claim a solidarity of oppression with the Maori, be they trade unionists, the left or feminists.

Quayle summarises comments by Bruce Jesson and Peter Lee which appeared in The Republican, a quite long-standing and reasonably widely read journal on the NZ left. Jesson and Lee attack Awatere and argue for a synthetic nationalism, a unique national character resulting from a Polynesian and white anti-British fusion. This is followed in Two Tactics by a succinct account of the positions of the Communist Party of New Zealand, the Socialist Unity Party, Workers' Communist League and the Socialist Action League. These all, Quayle points out, with a quiet chuckle, owe more to Luxemburg than Lenin, except for the trotskyist SAI, which owes little to either.

In outlining Awatere's position and in discussing the responses to it, Quayle neatly and accurately summarises the positions of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the national question, provides an insight into the historical and changing nature of Maori nationalism itself and touches on the question of political union with Australia. All this, plus his own recommendations, based on a careful reading of Lenin and refreshingly down to earth, in less than sixty pages. This book deserves far more attention than it will receive, and could usefully be read by all with an interest in New Zealand, and or in questions of black nationalism, sovereignty and self-determination. Why is the book called Two Tactics for Social Democracy? Because Quayle has a delightful sense of humour.

THE LOBBYISTS: USING THEM IN CANBERRA by Peter Sekuless. Published by George Allen and Unwin, 1984, $14.95, paperback, 145 pages.

Reviewed by Mike Donaldson

Peter Sekuless, former public relations director of the Whitlam government's Department of Urban and Regional Development, and Jonathan Gaul, press secretary to Billys McMahon and Snedden, make up Canberra Liaison Ltd., once described by the National Times as a "small and idiosyncratic" lobbying firm.

In his book, Sekuless argues that lobbyists are useful people who help the democratic process. The effective lobbyist puts "people in touch with people"; resolves problems at the departmental level thus improving government efficiency by minimising unnecessary demands on ministers; saves companies megabucks (it would cost $100,000 per annum minimum to keep a suitable executive stationed in Canberra); and fills the gap created by a huge and complex bureaucracy which cannot communicate effectively.

Most of the 200 professional lobbyists in Canberra spend most of their time monitoring government, advising clients on strategy, preparing presentations and arranging contacts. They can do this because they know, or know how to find out, how and when and by whom decisions are made. They sell this information to a client, and they "would mould information supplied by the client, into an acceptable form and recommend to whom and when it should be disseminated to achieve optimum results".

As well as insights into the political process itself, Sekuless provides a useful intro to the "tools of the trade" — Commonwealth Government Directory, Ministerial Staff Directory and the Parliamentary Handbook; a guide to the Cabinet Committee Structure; the procedures followed for the consideration of cabinet submissions; rules for lobbying ministers; an introduction to the structure of the public service; and a breakdown of federal departments and their areas of concern. It would be rather useful if these things could find their way into a smaller, cheaper activists' handbook. Until then, if your community organisation, social movement, union, or party branch is interested in pursuing modest reforms through the parliamentary process, then the 17 pages in the book devoted to those things just mentioned are well worth a read.
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