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reluctance to accept women even as potential equals. The positive side is that obstacles have now been identified. One of the company's mainstays in its defence has been section 36 of the Factories, Shops and Industries Act which imposes weight restrictions on males (to age 18 only) and all female workers. But, as John Basten put forward on behalf of the complainants, such restrictions are intended to protect workers' health once they're on the job. It “doesn’t allow a company to refuse employment to women”.

The gross under-representation of female employees at A&S cannot be explained (away) by section 36. To show some figures: between June '77 and April '80, 4,289 ironworkers were employed, of whom a mere 58 (1.35 percent) were female. Between 1 July and 22 August 1980 another 468 workers were hired, of whom 71 were female (15.2 percent). But, on 10 September 1980 there were still 2,000 women listed as applicants, and only 47 men.

Surveys done by Chloe Refshauge on behalf of the complainants show a consistent imbalance in favour of the men throughout the job classifications. The exceptions are in cleaning (even of cranes) and canteening, and (surprise?) in jobs classified as “female sorters”. Women can be “storemen”, but men are never “female sorters”. Apart from section 36, the remarks made by personnel (mainly male) constitute a large part of the argument and make for some gripping reading. Superintendents of departments have volunteered opinions varying from “over my dead body”, “it's too dangerous, actually” and “16 kg is only part of the story”. The 16 kg reference is to the weight restriction for females over 18.

The company's defence is that “attitudes” and “behaviour” are not one and the same, meaning that those opinions have not influenced recruiting patterns.

For feminists and women generally who want a job, the consistency of these remarks and female under(der)employment can only be interpreted as discrimination. Their shock value may differ, depending on individual and collective experience.

A range of material which makes sweeping judgments about the inability and unsuitability of women as workers has been presented. Problems with shift work, overtime and women's reluctance "to work alone in isolated areas" are all posed as innate female inadequacies. In fact, they are based on "family commitments" (which male workers obviously don't have) and fear (unspoken), but have not, until now, been regarded as responsibilities to be shared by men and women, employers and employees.

Many references to work as being "arduous" and weights as "heavy" have only now been "forcibly" substantiated (put to the test by the campaign and anti-discrimination legislation)

As late as December 1984 (I) the employment office had to undertake a massive survey of the steelworks, department by department, to obtain relevant information simply in relation to "point of entry" jobs. For the first time, objects were actually weighed. The company also tries to defend itself by saying that its aim is to produce steel, not paper.

The latter refers to the lack of written policy since the anti-discrimination laws have been passed.

But, as pointed out by Basten, a change in occupational health and safety legislation did prompt management to inform employees. It goes without saying that 10,000 employees can only be managed on the basis of written directives, i.e. firm policy statements. A&S cries poor, too, saying it can't be "required to undertake capital expenditure in order to be able to employ women".

The case of Najdovska v. A&S (which includes categories of complaints/complainants regarding non-employment, re-trenchment, workers' compensation and damages) cannot but contribute to change in management and union practice, as well as a change of mind in all who learnt about it. The case shows a backwardness of attitude in regard to women which can only be compared with that of 19th century industrialists to the labor movement.

"Being a man" is not a genuine qualification where the essential nature of the job calls for physical strength or stamina: and that is only one of the conclusions presented to the tribunal. Now it's public knowledge.

Malke Let.

THE NEW RIGHT MOBILISES

At the time of writing, the immediate outcome of federal government moves to bring the sacked Queensland electricity
workers under a federal award is not known. However, it is clear that these moves will not, of themselves, force the Queensland government to re-employ the workers. The struggle to reinstate them, and to defeat the draconian anti-union laws introduced earlier this year, will have to continue, relying mainly on long-term political and industrial work.

In fact, the labour movement is up against a long-term strategic offensive of rightwing and conservative forces. After the initial honeymoon period of the Hawke government, these conservative forces have remobilised with a vengeance around several key issues, with a clear long-term strategy to destabilise the political situation, undermine and push back progressive reforms, and prepare the way for the return of conservative governments which would make Malcolm Fraser look like a moderate.

The most reactionary of these forces do not aim merely to replace Labor governments with Liberal/National ones. They want conservative governments of the Thatcher and Reagan ilk. They want to destroy or weaken the power and effectiveness of the labor and progressive movements, and they want to "change the political agenda" through an ideological offensive along Thatcher/Reagan lines.

The Queensland government's onslaught on unions is not just designed to whittle away and eliminate traditional rights of workers and unions. It is also the opening shot in a long-term campaign to undermine the very basis of industrial unions by enforcing and encouraging contract labour and non-unionism wherever possible, as has happened for the moment with some workers in the power industry.

The Queensland moves are being closely watched by conservative and reactionary forces around the country, as a test case for possible further wide-ranging attacks against unions and the labor movement nationally.

These forces would like to undermine and weaken the unions along the lines of Reagan and Thatcher. The US "model" is especially attractive, with union numbers there down to 17 percent of the workforce, contract labor rampant in industries such as building, and where the unions couldn't prevent Reagan's destruction to the Air Traffic Controllers union some years ago.

The aim is not just the traditional one of taming unions in times of economic crisis. Conservative forces also want to cut off the possibilities opened up by the Accord, in which the union movement has widened its horizon of interest to a broad range of social and industrial issues beyond the traditional wages and conditions.

Powerful corporate and political forces do not want to see the possibilities for union and workers' involvement in decision-making around these issues realised, especially involvement in economic planning and industry policy, the traditional preserve of capital.

Nor do they want the unions to gain further public stature, preferring to push them back into the union-bashers' mould of disruptors of essential services.

Perhaps the most significant element of the conservative revival, at least in the longer term, is a carefully-planned ideological offensive. This is not being directed by rightwing academics or politicians and their advisers, but by some highly conscious corporate chiefs and their paid ideologists.

Chief among these is Hugh Morgan, Managing Director of Western Mining Corporation. A recent Sydney Morning Herald article described him as "at the centre of a large and growing network of activists who are seeking to reshape the political agenda in this country".

Morgan astutely observes that "you won't get change through politicians". Politicians, he notes, can only accept what is accepted in public opinion polls. "So you have to change public opinion."

Morgan's way is to finance and to be a patron of various conservative "think tanks" such as the Centre for Independent Studies in Sydney, and Melbourne's Institute of Public Affairs.

The Sydney centre has an annual budget of $350,000, mostly supplied by corporations and individuals. Its director, Greg Lindsay, says: "We are seeking to change public opinion by producing well-researched material."

Morgan and his allies have selected four broad targets for their ideological bullets: the education system, the growth of the public sector, the power of trade unions, and the arbitration system.

(Interestingly, he sees the last as Australia's greatest single problem.)

He blames Australia's economic problems on what he claims are the enormous powers of the unions, "not subject to limitation". He cites opinion polls which show a great majority of Australians believe union power is too great.

The connection between the Morgan ideology and current Queensland events is clear from Bjelke-Petersen's remark to Business Review Weekly (March 29): "The balance between employers and unions is now fair for the first time in years and we'll be seeing it stays this way."

These reactionary and conservative forces are at present not fully united and co-ordinated, and are certainly not yet winning the day. However, the possibilities are being created for a concerted destabilisation campaign with similarities to that waged during the second and last term of the Whitlam government.

The labor and progressive movements will have to develop broad and effective responses if they are to avert the 1980s equivalents of November 11, 1975, and Malcolm Fraser's eight-year rule.

Brian Aarons.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

History repeats itself? August 6 will mark the 40th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima by
effective, quick deployment of nuclear disclosures of the USA's effort on civilian populational bombs in favour of propaganda still peddled rationale for the bombings, ruling out of a "no-death" real motives included the forces would have opened total destruction of their Japanese defence forces, including the near allies upon Japanese land defeats inflicted by the impending entry of Soviet naval capacity (and the War saw the bombings as a exposure of American Allied troops in the defeat of Japanese fascist (or Hibakusna, as they are known in Japan), but the realisation that the Second World War was the first nuclear war, and that a second would wipe out humanity as we know it.

In the words of Wilfred Burchett, the first western reporter (and an Australian) to view the destruction, both physical and psychological, that was Hiroshima, "Hiroshima never again". The adage that history repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce is a haunting reminder that only the apostles of Armageddon will win the next nuclear war.

The unity and strength displayed by the peace and disarmament movement around Australia in the March 30 Palm Sunday rally, is the primary objective of the Sydney Hiroshima Day Committee. Planning is well underway, the focus of the commemoration will be a central city march and rally on Saturday, 3 August. The committee is also acting as a co-ordinating body for local and regional groups' activities leading up to (and around) Hiroshima Day.

This is particularly important for local peace groups, church congregations, councils, community and solidarity groups. One such example is the targeting of Sydney's western suburbs for a major action. Support for the Sydney City Council ceremonies and peace group activities such as the People for Nuclear Disarmament Art Exhib-

The Legacy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is not just its victims and the survivors (or Hibakusna, as they are known in Japan), but the realisation that the Second World War was the first nuclear war, and that a second would wipe out humanity as we know it.

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The Opposition will also take every opportunity to exploit the deteriorating economic conditions facing governments in coming years. The Cain government can no longer afford the luxury of continuing the "don't rock the boat" approach of its first term. The electorate will be looking for a more imaginative approach which will involve some hard decision-making, particularly in the area of manufacturing, which may not be to the liking of big business interests.

It may no longer be appropriate to see the Victorian electorate in terms of how one Cain staff member put it: Sure, our approach is moderate, it is conservative. But that won't hurt us in Victoria because this is a conserva-

This is not to say that the Labor government has been idle in the area of reform since first coming to power in 1982. Improvements in public transport, greater opportunities for women through programs such as affirmative action, and a more sympathetic approach to social welfare are achievements to point to. Other important reforms in occupational health and safety and workers' compensation have been delayed through Opposition control of the Upper House in Parliament.

Labor, for the first time, will not only have a second term in government but may have control of both Houses of Parliament. From 14 July, Labor's Upper House majority will be two, but it could lose control if the Supreme Court upholds a Liberal Party appeal against the result of the Nunawading seat which saw Labor awarded the seat through a lottery after a tied vote.
The result of a likely by-election will determine the reforming road will come from the Socialist Left faction which will now has 12 of Labor's 23 Upper House seats and six ministers.

directions available to the Cain government. If Labor retains control of the Upper House, the path to greater reform is open to it. Pressure to take the

Apart from the two industrial reform packages mentioned above, the left will be pushing for implementation of the party's social justice policy which includes setting up a new Human Resources Department. This department would be responsible for reforms in education, health, aged care, housing, law and civil rights, police, community welfare, corrections, consumer rights, youth, women, ethnic groups and the Aboriginal community.

Apart from Opposition attempts to sink the ship of state, the other destabilising factor within the Labor Party will be efforts to change policies by the incoming rightwing delegates from the recently readmitted NCC/IAC influenced unions.

While their readmission will take some time to have effect on policies, Labor Unity and the right could use delaying tactics to prevent radical legislation until those policies are changed.

All these factors point to hectic and rough sailing ahead for the Cain government. Certainly, basic and fundamental changes won't be forthcoming. That's not what Labor governments are about. But a calm sailing approach in rough seas will make the government a sitting shot for the Liberals.

Brian Murphy.

OVERSEAS STUDENTS

It's on again. Tuition fees for tertiary students resurfaced recently in the May mini-budget only to be knocked down after a public hue (read electorate) reminded the government that, once again, its slip was showing.

Yet even Education Minister, Senator Susan Ryan, will publicly admit that there is the ultimate possibility that she will be defeated over the reintroduction of fees for Australian students. Of course, overseas students didn't fare quite so well.

Since 1979, when Fraser introduced the "visa charge" for foreign students, there have been steady fee increases from both Liberal and Labor administrations. These fee hikes have been matched by an equally vigorous publicity campaign by the media, some academics, politicians, government officials and groups like National Action who have variously claimed that overseas students are "displacing" Australian students, costing the taxpayer "too much", causing racism and that educating overseas students is only educating the rich anyway.

Nevertheless, all these claims have been dispelled through two government reports, the Jackson Report and the Goldring Report with the latter stating, "the major factor in reducing the capacity of Australian educational institutions in providing places for all qualified applicants has been the decline, in real terms, of government funding over the past few years".

Under the new government policy, overseas students will be required to pay 30 percent towards the "cost" of their fees, with the introduction, as the Jackson Report favours, of full-cost fees after 1988, as well as facing tough new entry quotas in universities. On top of this, a steering committee will be set up to draw up guidelines which would allow tertiary institutions to offer additional places, at full cost, in courses specifically tailored for overseas students.

When Senator Ryan finally took the razor gang's fee proposal to federal caucus and secured a reaffirmation of ALP policy of "no fees", she helped maintain, in appearance at least, that Labor's commitment to a free and equitable education system, is intact. But is it?

There are now clear signs that not only is Labor developing its education policy via a back-door route, the Overseas Student Program (OSP), but that this flatfooted approach to the delicate foreign policy implications of the OSP will prove disastrous for Australia's relations with Southeast Asia.

Successive governments have commissioned reports into overseas students and foreign aid/trade. Under Fraser, the Jackson Report was set up to consider policy on overseas students in the context of development assistance and trade benefits under the Australian overseas aid program. Under Labor, the Goldring Report, entitled "Mutual Advantage", was formed to review private overseas student policy.

Ironically, Labor has favored the recommendations arising from the Liberals' report, the Jackson Report, proposing full-cost fees, and premised upon education as a marketable export commodity. Goldring states, "if you are going to retain the principle of free education in Australia, there is no way you can have fees for some students and no fees for others ...." According to Steven Gan of the NSW Overseas Students Collective (NSWOSC), a group representing OS from Sydney University, NSW University, Macquarie University, University of New England, Australian National University and NSW Institute of Technology, the government is looking towards an education "package" for overseas students, similar to those in the UK and the USA, being sold to the third world via private universities based here, "It was part of the Jackson Report to say that Australia does have very good educational facilities, and that it could, with some packaging (more development oriented courses, etc.) be sold to the third world," he said. Goldring goes on record as saying, "The consequences of imposing full-cost fees, even if accompanied by a scholarship scheme, would outweigh the goodwill and other benefits flowing to Australia from the program ...."
It’s with political dexterity like this that the government has been able to develop both the administrative bureaucracy and policy capable of levying fees, and viewing education as a commodity, without any real public debate or recognition. “I think Australian students should realise that it is a step towards the privatisation of the education system,” says Steven Gan. And as one overseas student newssheet described it, “The overseas student fee is not a separate issue, overseas students are paying tuition fees”.

Labor needs cuts in items like education in general, and overseas students in particular, to finance its deficit. May’s mini-budget arrived minus any of Finance Minister Walsh’s big item slashes like tertiary fees (estimated to be worth between $180-230 million) or Medicare. The federal caucus has compromised with Senator Ryan on an alternative to fees. Instead, they want a “performance audit” on expenditure priorities within tertiary institutions to combat what is perceived to be “wastage and misuse of taxpayers’ funds”, as one MP put it.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition, John Howard, has described the budget cuts as “illusory”. In some respects he may be right for, as The Financial Review has pointed out, they are generally cuts to the “forward estimates”. In other words, most of the funding will be restored before the next election, but not before Labor has demonstrated to big business that it is serious about reducing the deficit.

There is nothing “illusory”, however, about what the budget tells us about the development of education policy: the government has been moving decisively and quietly in but one direction. At a recent meeting between Senator Ryan and overseas student leaders in Canberra, they were informed that the government’s policy on overseas students was not open to negotiation. Senator Ryan, flanked by five mate advisers in what was described as an extremely “hostile meeting”, responded to the students who raised the issue that OS were still being “victimised” by allegedly replying “That may well be the case”. She offered neither support nor solutions. One student present at the meeting said “She virtually said that if we didn’t like it we should just go home”.

And if present policy continues, overseas students may do just as the minister suggests. Surveys conducted across campuses indicates that as many as 84.5 percent of students will return home without completing their courses because of financial hardship. Late last year when the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mr. Mahathir, visited Australia, he expressed concern at the imposition of fees on Malaysian students who currently constitute 56 percent of the 11,000 or so foreign students studying here. During his visit, masked Malay students demonstrated against his repressive home rule, and particularly the anti-student Universities and University Colleges Act which severely curtails students’ rights to organise themselves.

The Goldring Report has highlighted the delicate foreign policy implications of the OSP. Overseas students spend $105 million annually in Australia, exceeding by $85.4 million the government outlays on overseas student education. Foreign governments have indicated that they do not take kindly to the myths of the

The success or failure of overseas students in resisting these policy developments will depend partially on the responses of the broad student movement. Overseas students have been organising autonomously since the collapse of the Australian Union of Students last year. After the National Overseas Students Conference held in Sydney in mid-May, two groups will be operating separately in the future. “NSWOSC will be concentrating on fees, quotas and racism,” said Steven Gan, and has already placed a list of demands before the government, while a conservative grouping from Victoria will campaign for a freeze in fees. Following the conference, a co-ordinating committee has been set up to look into the formation of a National OS “Network”, the latest catchword of the student movement.

In 1981, students successfully lobbied the Democrats and eventually Labor in the Senate to halt the reintroduction of fees under Fraser. The current situation is obviously a more sophisticated and disguised one; Labor has already imposed tertiary fees on overseas students and, in doing so, has fully accepted the principle of “user pays”. Additionally, structures and policies are either being formulated or implemented to privatise the education sector, and a simple transfer of these principles and policies is all that’s needed so that they apply to all students. With the final demise of AUS last year, and no alternative national structure in the offering, who will save us from the Laborals now?

Wendy Carlisle.
A Riotous Assembly

Bathurst Motor Bike Races: an annual festival of police and biker confrontation. Or is it? Chris Cunneen reviews the police hype, and hardware, behind Bathurst’s grande bouffe.

The Tactical Response Group

Each year, both the media and the police present the “violence” at Bathurst as the “worst ever in the race’s history”. Both groups have transparent reasons for doing so. The commodity value of the media’s “story” is increased in proportion to its sensationalism. Significantly, there is little media interest in the actual motorcycle races. The police use Bathurst to argue for changes in hardware, organisation and legislation to suit their interests. In fact, if there has been an increase in the level of confrontation in the 1980s, this is certainly attributable to the introduction of a repressive “law and order” solution to the Bathurst “problem”. A prime function of the Tactical Response Group (TRG) is to “control” what are collectively titled public order “offenders”. Thus, confrontationist policing methods have become institutionalised. The whole notion of “public order” is itself highly political. The use of the TRG in maintaining “public order” has extended far beyond Bathurst “bikies” to include other leisure activities such as the Tamworth Country Music Festival and cricket matches at the S.C.G., and to include more orthodox political activity such as student demonstrations, BLF pickets and Women Against Rape In War marches.
A Riotuous Assembly

Police Build-up in Bathurst

A brief look at the Bathurst races during the 1970s gives the reader some idea of the continuing level of biker/police conflict. In 1975, 1976 and 1977 there were one hundred and forty, two hundred and seventy-five and one hundred and thirty-eight arrests carried out at each Easter race respectively. Even in the other “quieter” years, eighty to one hundred people were arrested. These figures do not include the number of people “booked” over the weekend—a particular source of harassment for motorcyclists. For instance, over the 1974 Easter weekend no fewer than four hundred people at Bathurst received traffic infringements.

“The police use Bathurst to argue for changes in hardware, organisation and legislation to suit their interests. In fact, if there has been an increase in the level of confrontation in the 1980s this is certainly attributable to the introduction of a repressive ‘law and order’ solution to the Bathurst ‘problem’....”

It is possible to trace a distinctive police build-up in Bathurst in the later part of the 1970s. Traditionally the race policing would involve the local forty or so Bathurst police and approximately forty reinforcements from Sydney. However, by 1978, the Bathurst races were to become, and have remained, one of the major policing operations in NSW. In that year, there were three hundred and fifty police involved in the operation over Easter. This high level has remained fairly constant. These changes in policing coincided with a rising level of confrontation and a localising of the conflict to the camping area on top of Mount Panorama. Previously, police/biker confrontation had occurred in the main streets and parks of Bathurst. This conflict often involved “outlaw” gangs such as the Hell’s Angels, the Finks, etc., who were arrested under the various “street offences” of the Summary Offences Act. Often there were attacks on obviously hated symbols of power. In 1976 a molotov cocktail was thrown into Bathurst Court House.

In the mid-1960s the doors of the Court House were blown off with dynamite. However, as police pressure built up, the outlaw gangs began staying away from Bathurst. Despite media misrepresentation, there have been no gangs at Bathurst since the late 1970s. The “one percenters” hold their own festivals and meetings away from police harassment and without any “trouble”.

Establishment of Police Compound

The confrontation in 1976 on top of Mount Panorama seems to have been a real turning point. The number of people arrested that year is still the largest to date. The 21st Division was involved in some heavy-handed police tactics involving indiscriminate arrests and bashings. Few police wore numbers. Members of the Auto Cycle Union (ACU) who organise the races were arrested when they complained about indiscriminate arrests. The police were reportedly drunk. This pattern of policing was to expand and to continue. Significantly, the confrontation had been moved off the streets of Bathurst to the motorcyclists own camping area—the Mount. The maintenance of “public order” was now seen as necessary even within the cyclists’ own domain. A police “mobile unit” was established in the centre of the camping ground. In 1979 it was replaced by a compound including a brick police station filled with bullet-proof glass, a four-metre cyclone-mesh fence ribbed with barbed wire, and a series of arc lights to illuminate the area. This concentration camp fortress-like structure is only 20 metres from the main toilet block and 10 metres from the public telephones and shops! “Trouble” had certainly been moved off the streets where there was a far greater possibility of extensive property damage. It was placed in the middle of three to five thousand motorcyclists who have no love for cops at the best of times and who hardly appreciate seeing a blue uniform every time they use the toilet. The stage was obviously set for full-scale “riots”.

Thus, by the time the TRG emerged on the scene in full riot gear, a distinctive pattern of confrontation had developed. It is important to note that founding members of the TRG were drawn from the disbanded 21st Division. The “riot” that occurred on the Mount in 1981 was hardly different from previous conflicts except that
the police found they had far greater numbers of bikers to “control” because they had situated themselves right in the centre. The police had provided an extremely visible target. The 1981 “riot” was used to justify and demonstrate the necessity for creating a permanent, fully-equipped riot squad. Typical newspaper headlines at the time read “Riot Squad Planned In The Wake of Bathurst” (Sydney Morning Herald, 21.4.81). The then Police Minister, Mr Crabtree, later stated that the plans for the TRG had been under way “for some months” prior to the “riot”. Bathurst simply provided the convenient law and order “crisis” which allowed a controversial announcement to appear “necessary” and “natural”. In the atmosphere of “crisis” there was no public debate about the wider ramifications involved in the potential use of a permanent riot squad or the equipment to be made available to the squad. It is no wonder, then, that, in the aftermath of both the 1983 and 1985 conflicts, the police have demanded more and better riot gear to maintain “public order”. Water cannon, tear gas and rubber bullets have been on the agenda of Police Association demands for several years. After the 1983 confrontation, Burgess, the NSW Police Association organiser, visited the Tokyo Metropolitan Police and inspected equipment available to their Mobile Units (the TRG equivalent). He was impressed with the “water cannon equipped vehicles and could not help ponder how useful they would have been at the Bathurst riots”. (NSW Police News, Jan. 1984.)

Harassment of Bikers

It would be highly misleading to view the bikers as simply passive victims of police repression. A significant feature of biker subculture is the reality of police harassment. The Easter races provide a rare opportunity for bikers to congregate in enough numbers to take on the police. There is no doubt that the police stationed in the compound provide both an outlet for frustration, anger and aggression, and an opportunity for entertainment. People on the Easter Saturday night automatically began to hang around the outside of the compound to watch, jeer and insult the thirty police behind the wire fence. Common expressions heard this Easter Saturday night before the “riot” were “Let’s see what’s happening in the pig pen”, or “Let’s go visit the zoo”. By 8 o’clock there were well over a thousand people surrounding the compound, all with very similar feelings towards the “cops”. A few cans, bottles and rocks go over the compound fence, a couple of flaming toilet rolls, then molotov cocktails. The police call up reinforcements in the shape of the TRG. The “riot” has started.

“When a bike rider was pulled over, up to five police would surround the rider, with their long batons drawn. Riders were poked with batons and told to remove their leather jackets and luggage.”

The harassment of motorcycle riders at Easter is extreme. This year, Police Public Relations maintained that policing would be “low profile”. Possibly the higher officers in the police force believed that statement to be correct. But three hundred police in a country town are difficult to hide. About half the police numbers were Highway Patrol and Random Breath Testing Units (RBT). Motorcyclists were selectively stopped, checked, searched and booked. Many RBT units did not bother to see whether the riders had been drinking. The unit was simply used as a cover to stop bikes. An observation on Saturday showed that fifty percent of all bikes that passed were stopped, but no cars were halted. The “bag” was put on only one rider. On Easter Sunday the repressive police practices were even more pronounced. When a bike rider was pulled over, up to five police would surround the rider, with their long batons drawn. Riders were poked with batons and told to remove their leather jackets and luggage. Independent observations of RBT and Highway Patrol behaviour during the 1983 and 1984 races indicated similar discrimination. In other years there have been full-scale road blocks and searches. On Easter Saturday 1985 there were six different police stops which a rider would have to negotiate between entering the outskirts of Bathurst and arriving at the camping grounds on top of Mount Panorama. It’s not surprising that bottles are ready to fly by Saturday night.
"Fun on the Mountain"

The biker culture which develops on the "mountain" over Easter is unique, fascinating and inimical to police "control". Hundreds of people form huge "bull rings". In the centre, riders display their skills in spinning bikes in tight circles — "donuts". Or a toilet roll is soaked in petrol, then lit and thrown into the air. The flaming ball is tossed around among the crowd. Some end up in the police compound. Fire breathers, cock fights, "burnouts", drag races, all illuminated by the smoky light of a hundred camp fires, form the reality of a highly original "uncontrolled" and "unorganised" carnival. A medieval-like festival with the roar of motorcycles. Occasionally, a huge ball of flame will shoot into the night sky as a bottle of petrol in a camp fire explodes upwards. In the middle of this stand the agents of the state, behind a barbed wire fence. Their raison d'etre — to impose order. When the TRG emerge with riot shields, long batons and tinted helmets, the crowd goes wild.

"Ninety-five of the people arrested have been charged with 'riotous assembly'. This is a Common Law charge rarely used this century ...."

The fight with the police is engendered by very strong feelings of camaraderie and power among the crowd. For one night of their lives these people take on the "law" and are fairly certain of success and a limited chance of arrest. At 8.00 pm, when the Riot Act was read and the threat to "disperse or be arrested" was announced, the reply from the crowd was a slow chant of "Bullshit, bullshit". For the next five hours the TRG was involved in essentially defensive policing of the compound. Despite indiscriminate beatings and arrests, the police were only just able to hold their bit of space in biker territory. The Channel 7 News car which was fire-bombed was only 30 metres from the police compound. The TRG was unable to protect the car. The battle over whether the crowd would take control of the vehicle was waged for nearly two hours. Eventually, the police were unable to hold a perimeter at that distance from the compound. They were forced to retreat. The target of the media car is noteworthy. There was a roar of approval when the vehicle finally went up in flames. Numerous comments heard at the time criticised the "press" for always lying about bikers and about what happens at Bathurst. The general feeling was that the "press" deserved to have their car burnt out.

In general, the mood of the people during the "riot" was buoyant and happy. There was a very real sense of power over the police. The only time that the mood changed was immediately after baton charges. Whenever anyone went down and was batoned while on the ground, the crowd in the area fought back. The police were forced to retreat to their perimeter line. Chants of Sieg Heil! or "Pigs Suck!" were raised.

In the later part of the night, as the crowd dwindled, the police were able to take their reprisals. From about 1 am to 3 am many arrests were made and a great deal of batoning occurred. The following Sunday and Monday the police moved through the camp ground arresting people supposedly identified as a "rioter" on the Saturday night. There are many allegations of random arrest. Ninety-five of the people arrested have been charged with "riotous assembly". This is a Common Law charge rarely used this century. Riotous assembly is an indictable offence which carries a custodial sentence. The length of imprisonment is dependent on judicial discretion.

Symbol of Law and Order

The importance of regular Bathurst "riots" is determined on several levels. Undoubtedly, if the police were not on the mountain, there would be no trouble. Similarly, a "riot squad" galvanises a crowd into "rioters". A lot of anger and frustration against the police is released at Bathurst. Bikers, like many other sections of the working class, do not like "coppers". Police presence in their own space formulates that "dislike" into action. The "riot" also has some importance for the police. Large-scale changes in the methods of policing (fast response, "fire-brigade" policing), the introduction of new equipment (riot shields, long batons, etc.), and organisational changes (the TRG) have been brought about supposedly because of "Bathurst". These changes in the repressive nature of the state have been quickly applied to a whole range of working class and progressive political activities. The events at Bathurst need to be understood both in terms of the history of the event and motorcycle sub-culture and of the wider changes in the state policing apparatus. For those of us interested in progressive politics, the fate of marginalised groups is particularly important. The treatment of bikers by the state can be easily extrapolated to include all "troublemakers".

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THE ULTIMATE ANSWER TO BATHURST?

The F.A.V. (Fast Attack Vehicle) is being developed by the US Military Police as a highly mobile vehicle capable of covering many different types of terrain. It may have great possibilities for use at future Bathurst racing carnivals. (Photo courtesy of Military Police Journal).

from NSW POLICE NEWS, August, 1983.

A Riotous Assembly
The Dollar is Down, the Debt is Up and the Government is Out to Lunch

Australia's dollar is at an all time low and there is an increasingly serious foreign debt problem. Ted Wheelwright examines how the Government has presided over this financial malaise and discusses its implications for our standard of living.

The first point to be made about the falling Australian dollar is that it is not, of course, the only currency to depreciate in terms of the American dollar. Others have also been affected to varying degrees. Thus, in the first 50 days of this year the Japanese yen depreciated 3.8 percent, the British pound 5.4 percent, the German mark 5.0 percent, and the New Zealand dollar 6.9 percent.

The depreciation of the Australian dollar was much greater than any of these — 16.5 percent, against the American dollar. Consequently, averaged over our major import sources, the USA, Japan, Britain, Germany and New Zealand, the fall was 12.5 percent. (A Koprak, Currency Exchange Movements 1 Jan - 20 Feb, 1985. Parliamentary Library Legislative Research Service.)

So, while we can place the fall in our dollar in the perspective of the strength of the American dollar, what has to be explained is why our depreciation has been three times worse than anyone else's (except New Zealand) this year. I am not sure that this can yet be done, although I will try. But the most important general point to grasp is the rise of the American dollar against all currencies as a result of its expansion, fuelled by enormous rearmament expenditures, and financed by a huge budget deficit. This is a form of military Keynesianism which, using high interest rates and the fear of nuclear war, is sucking very large sums of money into the USA from the rest of the world — with incalculable economic consequences.

".... the volatility of the world foreign exchange market .... can shift not only billions of dollars .... but also information, accurate or false; and rumours ...."

This means, in a world where capital markets and financial markets have been progressively deregulated, that the countries of Western Europe, for example, have to keep their interest rates high to prevent even bigger outflows of capital, and this inhibits investment which might help to reduce the massive unemployment there, of around 16 to 17 million.

It also feeds on speculation, causing the vastly enlarged money markets to speculate on how long American rearmament will continue; how large their budget deficits will be; how long they will continue; how interest rates will behave; how large trade deficits will be, and how long capital will continue to flow into the USA at previous rates.

It is this state of affairs which keeps the US dollar strengthening against other currencies: there are also other factors which are more political than economic. Thus, money flows into the USA because it can obtain a better return there than in more stagnant economies; but also it is considered to be politically safer from threats of war, and governments even marginally hostile to private enterprise.

America: From Creditor to Debtor

Clearly, it is an inherently unstable situation for several reasons. For example, the USA is becoming a debtor country externally, through its massive trade deficits, and its internal debt grows through its large budget deficits. Its trade position does not warrant such a high value for its dollar — on its balance of trade on goods and services. The US dollar is overvalued by at least 30 percent according to several estimates. The high value is caused primarily by the large inflow of capital which swamps trade factors which take some time to change.

But capital flows can be switched on and off like a tap; all it needs is for the top ten world banks to switch their flows, or even reduce them partially, buying significantly less US dollars with other currencies, and its value would collapse overnight.

Also the high dollar causes problems in a number of quarters. For example, it affects American exporters who can compete less easily in foreign markets. This is one reason for the depressed state of much of American agriculture, and the problem of companies which gain most profit from exports. For instance, IBM blames the strong dollar for reduced export income. Kodak put a
figure on it, claiming reduced earnings of $500 million on that account over the last four years. (Australian Business, 6.3.1985).

These are so-called high technology industries, handicapped, they claim, by an over-valued dollar which also affects local traditional industries subject to import competition. Such a dollar makes imports much cheaper, and the so-called “smokestack” industries such as steel and automobiles claim this is a major reason for the substantial inroads into the domestic market by imports, made artificially cheap by a high dollar. These factors set up pressures to reduce the value of the US dollar, causing another reason for instability.

Similarly with European reaction and, to a lesser extent, Japanese. Last year, at one stage, their governments tried to slow the rise of the dollar by getting their central banks to sell US dollars in large amounts; but succeeded in causing only a momentary blip in its trajectory. Last week they tried again, partly as a result of a statement by Paul Volcker, chair of the US Federal Reserve Board who let it be known that a strong dollar could cause problems for the USA, and hinted that previous foreign exchange intervention by central banks had not been forceful enough.

Last week it was estimated that over one billion US dollars were put on the foreign exchange market by European central banks. This halved the rise of the dollar and improved the value of the German mark and the British pound. This sounds a lot, but the daily turnover of the world’s currency markets is estimated at US$300-400 billion, with 85 percent of it being banks buying and selling from each other. (Guardian, London, 3.3.85.) However, no further action was taken and the dollar soon recovered against those currencies (Australian Financial Review, 4.3.85). Was this, then, just another blip, like the one last year, or is it a straw in the wind, suggesting that the US government may, in conjunction with others, take action to reduce the high value of the dollar, which is causing so much trouble?

I am inclined to think it is, but that little will happen until the US economy slows down, as it is expected to do in the second half of this year. But it does not matter whether I am right or wrong. The point to be grasped is the volatility of the world foreign exchange market which is now largely deregulated, and composed of a relatively small number of increasingly large conglomerates, linked by a sophisticated instant communications system which can shift not only billions of dollars across the world (now that they have become digits in a global interlocked computer network); but also information, accurate or false; and rumours. This is the world to which Australia has now become irrevocably linked, thanks to the groundwork laid by the Fraser government, and its consummation by the Hawke government.

**The Changing Face of Financial Institutions**

It is important to note at this stage that not only have world financial and foreign exchange markets been transformed in the last decade, and the number and size of the financial institutions significantly increased, but also that their character is altering. Practically every big corporation today operates as a form of finance capital, and financial conglomerates link the various forms together, a process begin in the USA twenty years ago.

Finance capital today has been defined as:

The increasing interpenetration of industrial, banking and trading capital. In a word, accelerated conglomeration within the setting of oligopolistic capitalism. (It is) not a homogeneous and unified power complex — not even in Japan. (However) corporate management of money, credit and finance is becoming inseparable from the management of industry, services and commodity markets.

(Frederick F. Clarmonte, “The Mechanisms of Finance Capital etc.”, paper delivered to the Seminar on Law, Justice and the Consumer, Consumers Association of Penang, Malaysia, November 1982.)

The most advanced case of financial and non-financial institutions embraced in one organisation is the Japanese Sogo Shoshas, or general trading companies. The Mitsui Group, for example, employs about 260,000 people; has total assets of US$128 billion, and includes companies in banking, insurance, steel, non-ferrous metals, chemicals, foodstuffs and machinery. Hence, with this form, to speak of banks dominating industry and trading companies is meaningless; they are all in bed together. Australia has nothing which even looks like this yet. The closest approximation is Elders IXL, run by John Elliott, whom some describe as the heir apparent to the Liberal Party.

**The Working Class Under Siege: An International Strategy?**

Before we look in more detail at the Australian situation, there is one other aspect of international capitalism which must be recorded, and that is the attack on the working class, which, I am delighted to see, has been discovered by Mr. Bill Kelty, secretary of the ACTU. I quote from his address to the NSW Labor Council on 28 February, as reported in the Sydney Morning Herald (1.3.85):

... he condemned the US Government, the British Government and conservative Governments in Australia, saying they were using the unemployed to try to destroy the union movement.
They had been taught, “there is one way you can control the trade unions, and that is with high levels of unemployment”. Mr. Kelty said the effectiveness of the strategy could be measured by the decline of unionism in the United States, where it was now considered to be finished as an effective vehicle for improving conditions and wages.

The Reagan and Thatcher Governments had shown that the destruction of the union movement was now a practical proposition. It was clear the British miners had lost their battle.

We have to appreciate that while we are not the United States and not the United Kingdom, and while we have a better organised trade union movement, the alternative will nevertheless be tried by conservative Governments in Australia. It is being tried now by the conservative Government in Queensland.

It is important to realise that there are many other manifestations of this attack on the working classes of the world which, of course, has been going on since capitalism began, but which today has reached a degree of sophistication which would have been incomprehensible to the Tolpuddle Martyrs who were sentenced to transportation to Australia 150 years ago last year.

These cannot be pursued here, but they include management consultations in the USA which specialise in strike breaking and union destruction, which also have affiliates in other countries.

They also include the media, which is big business, and orchestrates anti-union ideologies in the press, on TV and radio, especially on “talk back” programs. There is, in fact, a growing industry, sponsored by corporations, which can only be described as an “ideological management” industry, based on, and partly derived from, the USA, which has “anti-union ideology” as a key component.

"... Regulating wages and taxes is now about the only part of the economy the government can hope to affect; it has relinquished any control it had over the exchange rate, capital movements and the money supply; it is pledged not to increase government expenditure .... so .... the only thing left for it is to keep wages in check and tinker with the taxation system .... "

Another manifestation of the attack on the working class in Australia is the orchestrated undermining of the arbitration system by employers’ organisations and the media, which consistently denigrate the system, and especially those parts of it such as indexation, which are designed to protect the real wages of workers. Having deregulated the financial system so that exchange rates are free to move, and interest rates are free to move, the pressure is now on to deregulate wages so that they are free to move: and with current levels of unemployment there is only one way they would go — downwards.

Initially, of course, money wages would stay the same, but would not be adjusted for price increases due to devaluation, or indirect taxation, so that real wages would fall. In due course, there would be no compensation for any price rises; and then there would be pressure to lower money wages, to “give back” other gains which have been struggled for over the years, such as penalty rates, conditions, holidays, hours of work, etc. just as American unions have been forced to accept lower standards of living.

It should also be noticed that all this explains why there is so much attention being focused on the taxation system. Regulating wages and taxes is now about the only part of the economy the government can hope to affect; it has relinquished any control it had over the exchange rate, capital movements and the money supply; it is pledged not to increase government expenditure or expand the public sector or do anything to harm business. So the only thing left for it is to keep wages in check and tinker with the taxation system — which does not look as though it would benefit the working class on current proposals.

**Australian Government Out to Lunch**

All the foregoing items should be borne in mind as we turn our attention to the sharp drop in the dollar two weeks ago. In attempting to explain it, the following facts, drawn from the financial press, should be noted: according to the chief economist of CRA Ltd., speculators and inter-bank dealings dominate the currency markets. For the total value of currency turnover in those markets is roughly ten times the value of trade transactions. This bears out the point made earlier about capital flows swamping trade flows (Australian Business, 6.3.85). He said speculators are testing the nerve of the Reserve Bank to see whether they would let the dollar fall further.

It is known that the market is very “thin” — only seven or so big “players”, but on the day of the big fall, when overseas traders, particularly in New York, were selling Australian dollars, most of these “players” were not offering to buy them, for fear of making losses. They were "not answering their phones", "they were out to lunch": only Westpac and BNP were operating. (Sydney Morning Herald, 4.3.85).

The reasons given by New York traders for selling showed them to be naive and ill-informed. They were saying, for example, that they feared a split in the Labor Party; that Australia would join New Zealanders in banning nuclear ships; that industrial turmoil was seriously affecting the economy. True, there was some bad news, especially about our burgeoning foreign trade deficit but, even so, Australian traders knew that the dollar was falling too fast and too far. They did not know how far it would go; they did not know whether the New York traders were in collusion so as to make a killing — so they withdrew from the market, and let the dollar fall (Sydney Morning Herald, 4.3.85).

The really bad news about the foreign trade deficit was bad enough without the rumours; although the prevalence of these in the current political climate suggests that a free market in a very minor currency such as ours is not likely to

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be very stable for long, and questions the wisdom of allowing it in the first place. Such markets feed on rumour and blow up bad news out of all proportion, ignoring healthy signs in an economy. As the chief economist for Lloyds International said: "The frame of mind of the currency market at the moment is such that everyone is only looking for bad news". (Australian Business, 6.3.85.)

Rising Foreign Debt and a Lower Standard of Living

The foreign trade deficit threatens to blow out to about $11.5 billion, making it the worst ever. (The previous worst was $8.8 billion in 1981-82.) That would be about 6.9% of our Gross National Product (GNP) — over twice the relative size of the US foreign trade deficit. Imports have been exceeding exports significantly, and the so-called "invisible" outflow, such as freight, insurance, interest and dividends, is already a billion dollars higher than at this time last year. Also, now that exchange controls are off, some Australian companies, such as Humes, Monier, Hooker and the AMP Society, have been investing heavily abroad. (Australian Business, 6.3.85.)

The fastest growing of these payments is interest on foreign debt, which has grown nearly fourfold in the last five years. In June 1980 it was $13.6 billion; by June this year it is expected to be $50 billion. Much of this is by companies in Australia borrowing from overseas during the so-called resources boom; they expended the money but the bottom fell out of the market. So export income did not expand to finance the servicing of that debt in foreign currency.

In the last financial year, interest on that debt took 11 percent of our exports, and long term capital repayments another 17 percent. This means that we have already mortgaged our future. We are in the position of so many of our aspiring middle class, we have taken out a large mortgage on a house we can only afford to pay off if both parents work. One of them is now on half pay and we can't afford to keep up the payments. The bailiffs will soon be in, and they will say we have to starve the kids to pay the finance company!

All this comes as no surprise to those like me who have been inveighing against the economic policies of Australian governments over the last 25 years. That policy has been to borrow, borrow, borrow for so-called development — even the Whitlam government wanted to borrow, even though it was to buy out some of the resource transnationals. This disease seems to be endemic in Australia. Fifty-five years ago there appeared a poem in a trade journal on this question. It appeared in the June 1930 issue of The Australian Banker:

Australia has a motto
'Tis known throughout the world:
"Advance Australia money"
On our banner is unfurled.
What is a thousand millions
On which to come and go?
Just put another one in front.
And add another O
And we'll pay you what you lend us
With the money that we owe...
... What Australia needs is money
So we can eat and sleep;
And journey out to Randwick,
Then see the Easter Show.
And buy a Yankee motor car
To Yankee pictures go —
And we'll pay you what you lend us
With the money that we owe.

John Hill, From Subservience to Strike,
(Univ. of Queensland Press, 1982) pp. 60-61.

The gross mismanagement of the economy of this country by successive governments, and the gentlemen of the Treasury, has turned it into an economic satellite and client state of international capital. The acceleration of this process has been most pronounced in the last ten years; it can most easily be shown by expressing the foreign debt as a proportion of our GNP, to avoid any money illusions. In 1975 it was eight percent, today it is approaching 24 percent. Hence, the burden of debt has increased three-fold in a decade.

Fundamentally, the fall of the dollar expresses the Australian economic situation. Our consumption has had to be curtailed; under the present system this will be done cruelly in the unfairest possible way, by allowing the market to raise the prices of imports, and not compensating workers and pensioners for it, thus squeezing real wages and pensions; while the owners of export industries such as mining and agriculture will receive more Australian dollars for their foreign currency.

Capital will flow out of the country, seeking more profitable investment overseas, and private investment will eventually be reduced, causing further unemployment; but the speculators and the financiers will prosper mightily.

None of this is new; it has happened in many Third World countries already; something similar has happened in Poland; it has happened in Britain and in France. The irony in Australia, and the tragedy, is that it is happening, as in France, under a so-called socialist government.

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Not the Pope's Peru

Peru, yet another South American country under the thumb of U.S. corporate and international capital, has recently had an election. The Alianzo Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) candidate, thirty-five year old Alan, has become Peru's latest and youngest ever president. But will he maintain power without forming a coalition with the U.S. backed military? Kerri Carrington was in Peru before the elections and wrote this special report.

A third of Peru is now under martial law. Human rights activists, socialists, students and left leaning church leaders are sought by the military police. Many have been jailed without trial. Still more are missing, suspected buried in one of the mass graves found by a UN human rights group near Ayacucho last year. On 1 December 1984, the military enforced the closure of the state's universities in response to student rioting and demonstrations against the government. The subsequent slaughter of students and academic staff resulted in a reported one hundred deaths and many more casualties. This is the country that Reagan has heralded as a fine example of Latin American democracy.

Since 1960, Peru has witnessed historic social and political changes and conflicts of great significance. It has been a period characterised by petty bourgeois populism and heightened peasant rebellion. APRA (Alianzo Popular Revolucionaria Americana), a populist party with strong grass roots organisation, won the 1962 elections, promising land reform to appeal to the rural Indians and improved working conditions to appeal to the urban masses. The military power, however, declared it fraudulent and called for elections the following year (Lloyd, 1971:185). APRA has since moved further to the right. Its candidate in this year's election, Alan, is a charismatic leader with corporatist
style politics, who owns three newspapers and one television station. Initially a revolutionary party, APRA has contested elections since 1932, with only one brief moment of glory in 1962. The following year Belaunde was elected president with the support of the military and, having promised land reform, with partial support from the peasants. The reforms never materialised. These populist regimes endeavoured to obscure class inequality and hence curtail peasant revolutionary fervour by offering them token benefits and minimal reforms (Huizer, 1973:152).

The frustration caused by false promises and empty deeds resulted in organised peasant rebellion. In Cusco, Pasco and Junin, in the early 1960s, peasant groups occupied the landowners' haciendas, seizing control of local agricultural production (Quijano, 1982:51). It was at this time that Hugo Blanco, a well known revolutionary, developed a reputation as an agitator and organiser of peasant movements in Peru. Blanco saw the need for agrarian reform as part of a revolutionary strategy to win power for peasants and workers, beginning in rural areas (Huizer, 1973:77). The Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path), a guerrilla group most active in the central and southern Andean ranges of Peru, pursue a similar strategy today. But, predictably, in 1964, Belaunde unleashed the troops in an attempt to repress the momentum of an increasingly organised peasant movement, killing scores of its members and arresting its leaders, most notably Blanco, who received a 25-year jail sentence (Huizer, 1973:80).

The repression of peasant organisations and the denial of land reform have significantly protected the interests of a landowning class of agricultural exporters, forty or so families who have dominated political life in Peru for many decades (Lloyd, 1971:183). The Belaunde government's economic policies, particularly the devaluation of the Peruvian sole, further enhanced the position of the agricultural bourgeoisie at the expense of the urban industrial capitalists (Bamat, 1983:130). In a worsening economic climate, with a foreign debt of $200 billion and foreign investment at a standstill, and with the erosion of the profitability of industry coupled with escalating peasant rebellion over land reform, the military assumed government with popular support.

The 1968 populist military coup led by Velasco introduced agrarian reform, some worker participation in industry and tighter state economic controls with the object of modernising industry. The

International Petroleum Company was expropriated and the foreign banks nationalised. Agrarian reform was largely accomplished through drastic changes in landholding. The expropriation of large haciendas gave way to the formation of Cooperativas Agrarias de Producción (Quijano, 1982:52). Velasco claimed dramatically, "the landlord will never again feast on your poverty" (Bollinger, Lund, 1982:18). Land reform liberated Indian peasants from the servile social relations of pre-capitalist forms of domination. The repressive base of the traditional agricultural bourgeoisie was partially eradicated. However, it was essentially a change in the social relations of agricultural production and not a change in the economic base of production. The main reason for this cosmetic change in the relations of production is that the Velasco regime did not have a coherent plan to abandon private enterprise (Bamat, 1983:146). Although Velasco's policies undermined the dominance of the agricultural bourgeoisie, they strengthened the interests of the urban industrial capitalists, leading to historical changes in the balance of power between the factions of capital. The policies of the Velasco period of government did not address class inequality, or challenge the capitalist basis of the means of production. The overall effect, therefore, was the reproduction, expansion and modernisation of industrial capitalism in Peru (Bamat, 1983:134).

By 1974, both the industrialists and the landowning bourgeoisie opposed the military government's reformist policies, pressuring for either a return to bourgeois democracy or a change in military leadership. At the same time, divisions within the top ranks of the military worsened. The 1975 takeover of military government by Morales was welcomed by both international and domestic capital. The conservative officers such as Morales, Montagne and Mercado Jarrín resented the military's attempted incorporation of Indian peasant groups (Phillips, 1980:427). It is telling that these conservative officers were trained at the Centro de Altos Estudios Militares, a largely US financed military training college (Phillips, 1980:427). A fairly common strategy of imperialism is to train military personnel under aid programs so that such personnel emerge reflecting the interests of imperialist powers. It is a strategy tried, tested and systematised in Africa, Asia and South America.

Within two years, the conservative policies of the Morales military government had thoroughly reversed the reforms initiated by the seven years of Velasco's leadership. The agricultural co-operatives were dissolved and foreign banks re-entered while foreign investment and ownership increased, largely unregulated. These reactionary economic measures, arguably pressured by the IMF, have exacted an overwhelming toll in disease, death and hunger from the rural peasants and the urban masses (Bamat, 1983:148).

After five years of rightwing military rule, Morales abdicated authority to civilian government. Belaunde was elected the first civil president since 1968. The return to bourgeois democracy in 1980
therefore succeeded a thoroughly entrenched rightwing military dictatorship reluctant to relinquish power. Given the increasing repressive activity and the unrelenting presence of military personnel on every corner in almost every city or village in Peru, it is highly questionable whether the military has ever relinquished its authoritarian role in the maintenance of capitalism.

The imminent 1985 elections, like the 1980 elections, are little more than an exercise in painting a democratic face onto a US supported neo-fascist regime. The elections are an attempt to legitimate the military’s continued existence, thwarting demands for a return to “democracy” while maintaining a stable economy for predominantly US foreign investment. It may have had the intended effect on the less perceptive of world observers, most notably Reagan, but to the Campesino peasants and urban poor, repression, starvation, sickness and abominable poverty wreck their lives. Hence the continued and heightened peasant resistance to their exploitation through revolutionary organisations such as the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and the Puka Llacta (Red Fatherland).

The Sendero Luminoso are labelled extremist terrorists, skilled and ruthless in the tactics of guerrilla warfare (see, for example, *Time*, 18/2/85:38; 25/2/85:25). It is necessary to distinguish a guerrilla strategy such as sabotage from acts of terrorism which are generally not employed by guerrilla groups because they are ineffective and indiscriminate in their results and thus detrimental to the revolution (Che Guevara, 1961:26). Acts of sabotage are more generally organised, targeted, effective and rarely cause the loss of human life. Examples of the latter can be seen in the Sendero Luminoso’s numerous attempts to blow up communications, power supplies and the American Embassy in Lima. More recently, in February this year, the Sendero Luminoso attempted to foil the Pope’s landing in Lima by blowing up the electricity plants. To make their point even clearer to the Pope, a towering hammer and sickle was set ablaze on a nearby hillside overlooking the blackened city. This particular act of sabotage was a defiant protest in response to the Pope’s caustic condemnation of the revolutionary struggle in Peru led by the Sendero Luminoso, the lighting vanguard of the people. The Pope had severely criticised guerrilla activity in a sermon delivered to 40,000 people in Ayacucho, the heartland of Sendero Luminoso territory and loyalty. His speech made no mention of either military or US financed terrorism in Peru. So, within several hours, the Sendero Luminoso had organised a welcoming party for him on his return to Lima. The harsh and misdirected criticism of the Sendero Luminoso is itself an indication of the threat they pose to the US backed ruling class of Peru.

The Sendero Luminoso have been effective in seizing control over parts of the Andean mountains, particularly in the centre near Ayacucho and in the south past Arequipa, through the closure of roads, occupation of
haciendas and control over local transport and communications. Although the relationship between grass roots peasant organisations and the Sendero Luminoso is unclear, its continued survival would be impossible without the widespread support of the peasants. A base in the masses is an indispensable condition of guerrilla warfare. Without it, capture and extermination is highly likely (Che Guevara, 1961:15).

Peasant loyalty is invaluable, as they provide food and shelter, constitute the communication links between guerrilla bands, transport goods and arms, and act as guides in unfamiliar territory. It is the political and organisational work of the Campesino women on which the guerrillas rely heavily. Their bouncy dresses make the smuggling of arms, explosives and important documents an easier task. Some of these women have been captured and, last year, on 25 July, twelve of them were brutally beaten in Callao prison (Revolutionary Worker, 1984:4).

The geography of the Andean mountains lends itself to guerrilla warfare. The mountains provide hiding places, easy escapes and an impenetrability to the repressive forces of the Peruvian military. The blocking of roads and railroads has therefore been crucial to prevent their easy entry. However, it is difficult to gauge which roads have been blocked by the military to isolate the guerrillas from their “water” and hence flush them out, and which roads are blocked to prevent the entrance of the military. The peasants mostly claim that the Sendero Luminoso have blocked the roads and railroads, while official sources tend to claim it is the doing of the military.

It is not likely that the government will admit a lack of control over guerrilla territory unless it can be used to legitimate repression, as was the case in Ayacucho early last year. Peasant resistance was met with violent repression. The resulting massacre of 4,000 people, mostly Campesino peasants, preceded the imposition of martial law in March 1984 over almost a third of Peru, including Ayacucho. The shooting of twelve journalists at the time was squarely blamed on the Sendero Luminoso in an attempt to discredit its tactics to world observers. The people knew who were responsible. A year later, two Peruvian military police are being tried for the shootings. Torture, massacres, “disappearances” and the use of death squads similar to those terrorising El Salvador have reportedly increased since the imposition of martial law. In August last year, a well known Sendero Luminoso activist, Professor Laura Zambrano Padillo, affectionately known by the people as Meche, was captured, imprisoned and tortured. Meche is not alone. The jails in Peru are filled with political prisoners.

"Riots over industrial issues are almost a daily sporting event in the cities and villages of Peru ...."

The Pope’s visit to Peru in February this year was an overtly political manoeuvre designed to thwart the popularity of liberation theology and its ensuing support for class struggle. It is significant that Peru is the birthplace of liberation theology, articulated in the writings of Father Gustavo Gutiérrez. In the last two decades, liberation theology has spread throughout South America. Hence the repression of Catholicism and the spate of killings of Catholic priests in Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala and pre-liberated Nicaragua. In Guatemala, for example, the Catholic church has been banned and replaced by an evangelical US sect (Maxwell, 1985:19) whose doctrine, preaching submission and acceptance, is far more compatible with the genocide of the indigenous Indian population. The main difference between this and the message of the Pope to the Peruvian people is that he gave recognition to the injustice of racial inequality, claimed that the Campesinos have a right to self-determination, and then told them to surrender their arms and pray, not struggle!

The wearing of ponchos was banned when the Pope visited Ayacucho for fear of concealed weapons (Time, 18/2/85: 38). Ponchos have a symbolic association with peasant struggles in Latin America, as it is mostly poncho-wearing Indians who have fought them. They also mark the severe racial inequality in Peru, indeed the entire continent. Indians are grossly over-represented in the peasant class while the descendants of Spanish colonialists fill the ranks of the bourgeoisie (Bollinger, Lund, 1982). Therefore, the wearing of ponchos, precisely because of the struggle it epitomises, is viewed with suspicion and met with denigration and discrimination. It is perhaps telling that, after the 1973 military coup in Chile, the wearing of ponchos was prohibited, along with the use of traditional musical instruments such as the quena (flute) and the charango (guitar) [Marquez, 1983:81].

Trade union activity has been similarly circumscribed by repression and has recently been the focus of escalating violence. Industrial unrest permeates almost every facet of Peruvian production. Transport is the most notable, being subject to frequent and protracted strikes over the price of fuel and the level of wages. In March this year, striking white collar workers demonstrated in the Plaza de Armas, Lima.
dramatic wage increases to match spiralling inflation upwards of 500 percent per annum. Their protest was met in the usual manner by the presence of military tanks in the Plaza emitting tear gas, rubber bullets and firing water cannons, followed by the unleashing of baton-wielding, military-trained and licensed killers.

"The elections are an attempt to legitimate the military's continued existence thwarting demands for a return to 'democracy' while maintaining a stable economy for predominantly US foreign investment ...."

Riots over industrial issues are almost a daily sporting event in the cities and villages of Peru, except that the rules are unequal, the stakes are human lives and the game is class warfare. Many active trade unionists have either "disappeared", been jailed, or executed for subversion. The average wage for a semi-skilled worker is US$6 per sixty or seventy hour working week. This pitiful wage entitles its recipients to a share in slum living conditions and a life plagued with inadequate food, water, clothing and medical treatment. Protests over the living conditions in the slums are frequent, and are met with harsh and violent repression, resulting in either death or jail for some of its participants.

More than a hint of authoritarian control of the peasants is evident to even the most ignorant of gringo observers. Every Peruvian must carry an identification card to be produced for every bureaucratic procedure, such as the purchasing of goods, the receipt of medical or building supplies and the purchasing of bus or rail tickets. Most peasants and workers are prohibited from travelling outside or between towns without prior permission and stating means and purpose of travel. Trains, trucks and buses are constantly checked for the transportation of guerrillas and/or armaments. For example, the road between Lima and Arequipa, the first major town in the southern Andes, spans only 1,000 km, yet boasts at least a dozen military check points. But the Sendero Luminoso continue to evade their repressors and would-be executors.

The people of Peru are struggling against the oppression of a US supported rightwing military government not dissimilar to the regimes in El Salvador, the Philippines, Guatemala, Honduras and Israel.... The point is, these people are fighting a war against imperialist capitalism maintained by an aggressive domestic military apparatus. Revolution in the Americas has been, and will be, successful. However, any naive optimism is ill-founded, given that the people's will to struggle will be met by the billions of dollars and the paid terrorists of international capital.
Psychiatry: Making Criminals Mad

Psychiatry is increasingly attempting to attribute criminal behaviour to biological rather than social causes. Denise Russell reports on the dubious justification for this move, its implications for "criminals" and the vested interests of drug companies.

In the '80s, psychiatry has attempted to shift itself, take over, if you like, another area of inquiry, that of criminology. At the same time, however, this move has not been accompanied by adequate theoretical justification from the medical profession. A situation, obviously, not without its problems.

One of the signs of psychiatry's attempt to move into criminology is the statement by psychiatrists of their express desire to do so. This sometimes surfaces when psychiatrists comment on court processes. Reviewing the major opinions given by the U.S. Supreme Court on mental health law from 1975 to 1983, the psychiatrist Appelbaum concludes: "The Supreme Court's decisions in both the civil and criminal areas display a profound and initially puzzling ambivalence towards psychiatry and psychiatrists."1

The court is arguing that the actions of psychiatrists are in some sense irrelevant — that larger issues are at stake. Appelbaum comments, "Many psychiatrists have felt that if the profession could only 'reach' the Court, if psychiatrists could persuade the justices of their noble intent, their moral probity, and the scientific and medical bases of psychiatric care, the court would find itself compelled to rule favourably on psychiatric claims."2

The desire by psychiatrists to entrench and expand their involvement in criminal proceedings is reflected in the amount of concern and research that goes into the public's perceived attitude towards this. If anything, these attitudes appear to be increasingly negative. They sank very low after the Hinckly verdict of not guilty of murder by reason of insanity, after he had shot President Reagan. A report on attitudes after the Hinckly verdict shows that older people were much more negative towards psychiatry in the courtroom than younger people were. The authors suggest that this could be explained by familiarity with psychiatry — the younger people being more closely linked to an era when psychiatry had become more accepted.3 It could be argued against this, however, that the older people were more familiar with psychiatry — having had more time to witness its practices.

So, firstly, the desire is there for psychiatry to expand its area of influence within criminology. Perhaps the most significant sign of this expansion is the shift that has taken place in the way certain psychiatric disorders are described by the American Psychiatric Association in a
new system of diagnosis put out in 1980. This system is called the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Third Edition, DSM III, or short. It has been widely adopted around the Western world.

Criminality as a disorder

Through previous diagnostic schemes, psychiatry has revealed a concern with criminal behaviour when it has been associated with other forms of abnormality. What is new about the DSM-III is the inclusion of criminality as the disorder even when it is not associated with any other abnormalities. This can be illustrated by a comparison of three of the diagnoses from the DSM-III with three of the diagnoses from the Second Edition of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-II).

Diagnostic Changes

In the DSM-III, various “conduct disorders” are listed. The disorders fall under the general category of "disorders usually first evident in infancy, childhood or adolescence". They are characterised by a continual pattern of conduct which either violates the rights of others, or runs counter to major social norms or rules that are appropriate for the child's age. It is clear that all types of long-term criminal behaviour may be covered by this description. One might then ask whether criminality is enough to attract this label “conduct disorder”? The interesting point is that in the new scheme it is, whereas in the old scheme it was not. In the DSM-III, there are two types of conduct disorder involving aggression: the undersocialised aggressive disorder and the socialising aggressive disorder. A person displaying the latter may be one who engages in criminal behaviour while showing evidence of social attachment to others. A recent psychiatric text notes that this criminal behaviour may take a mild form, for example lying, petty theft or vandalism; a moderate form, for example physical aggression, reckless driving, serious stealing, breaking and entering, extortion; or a severe form, for example, serious physical aggression against others. The criminal diagnosed as having the socialised aggressive conduct disorder shows affection and empathy to some others, usually not the victims, but more commonly, a peer group. The sole mark of this mental disorder is criminal behaviour.

“unsocialised aggressive reaction” which is similar to the “undersocialised aggressive conduct disorder” of the DSM-III. The descriptions of both of these categories involve more than mere criminal behaviour. But the DSM-III has no diagnostic category corresponding to the “socialised aggressive conduct disorder” of the DSM-III.

A study conducted last year on adolescents admitted to psychiatric hospitals in the U.S. with the diagnoses of “conduct disorder” was compared to adolescents admitted to the same hospitals without this diagnosis. The major factor distinguishing the first group of adolescents from the second was violence. This indicates a willingness, on the part of practising psychiatrists to see violence alone, as a form of mental disorder requiring hospital treatment and further suggests that psychiatric practice is indeed guided by the new diagnostic scheme.

Another marker of the extension of psychiatry into criminology as indicated in shifts in diagnosis concerns the psychopath, otherwise known as the sociopath, or more gently as the “anti-social personality”. Something significant is revealed if we contrast the description given in the DSM-II of an “anti-social personality disorder”. The former description is reserved for individuals who are basically unsocialised and whose behaviour pattern brings them repeatedly into conflict with society. They are incapable of significant loyalty to individuals, groups or social values .... are grossly selfish, callous, irresponsible, impulsive, and unable to feel guilt or to learn from experience and punishment. Frustration tolerance is low. They tend to blame others or offer plausible rationalisations for their behaviour. A mere history of repeated legal or social offences is not sufficient to justify this diagnosis.

"For the last thirty years, the drug industry has been either the first or the second most profitable industry in the world .."

In contrast, the DSM-III description of an “anti-social personality disorder” is as follows: “The essential feature is a Personality Disorder in which there is a history of continuous and chronic anti-social behaviour in which the rights of others are violated, persistence into adult life of a pattern of anti-social behaviour that began before the age of 15, and failure to sustain good job performance over a period of several years.” This description contrasts with the previous one in that it is now the outward behaviour which is offensive to others, which is stressed over an inner state which may or may not be particularly problematic to others. Outward behaviour of a criminal nature would fit well with the description of an “anti-social personality” given in the DSM-III and, in this description, there is no qualification as there is in the DSM-II, that mere criminality is insufficient to warrant the diagnosis. A recent text asserts that the “anti-social personality disorder should not be thought of as synonymous with criminality”. Yet what is the basis of the distinction given the description that I have quoted? The authors’ answer is so weak that one suspects their seriousness: “Anti-social personality disorder can be distinguished from illegal behaviour, because anti-social personality disorder involves more areas of the person’s life”. It comes as no surprise that they claim that, in prison populations, the prevalence of anti-social personality may be as high as 75 percent. If the only distinguishing mark of the other 25 percent is that their criminality doesn’t involve many areas of the person’s life, then the distinction is impossibly vague and arbitrary. At least it involved enough to get them into jail. There is then no clear distinction between the anti-social personality disorder of the DSM-III and criminality.

The third significant change in diagnoses which bears on the expansion of psychiatry into criminology concerns...
the adjustment disorders of the DSM-III in comparison with the adjustment reaction classification of the DSM-II. In both schemes these disorders are described as acute reactions to overwhelming environmental stress, but then a difference emerges. In the older scheme, adjustment reactions were further subdivided according to age — whether the person was an adolescent, adult, etc. In the new scheme, adjustment disorders are grouped according to whether they are associated with particular moods or behaviour and it's the latter which allows in a third avenue for bringing criminality within the domain of psychiatry. One of these new classifications is entitled "Adjustment disorder with disturbance of conduct". This disorder is described as follows: "the predominant manifestation involves conduct in which there is violation of the rights of others or of major age — appropriate societal norms and rules. Examples: truancy, vandalism, reckless driving, fighting, defaulting on legal responsibilities". Again, what we have here is criminal behaviour, without any other abnormality and yet the behaviour counts as a mental disorder.

Psychiatry's move over

How has it come about that psychiatry has been able to take over criminality? There appear to be three conditions which have made this possible: 1) the weakness of alternative theories and practices; 2) the push from the drug companies to move into new markets; and 3) the strength of the medical model in general psychiatry, and the attempt to carry that aura of strength over into medical theories of criminology.

The main rival to psychiatric explanations of criminal behaviour is the belief that criminals are evil and need to be punished. The high rates of recidivism and the increase in the crime rate with systems that embody this belief have led many to question it. Yet there remains a popular desire to see crime as a feature of individual criminals (rather than, for example, a phenomenon of a particular social context — a position which I would favour). Isolation of the criminal and attempts to change him or her are also generally regarded as the best course of action; but how do we back that up if we are not seeing the criminal as an evil person any more? Obviously there is room here for a theory which gives a rationale to these popular desires and attitudes; the criminal is not bad, but he is mad, his madness justifies his isolation and calls out for treatment.*

Drug companies cash in

The second condition making it possible for psychiatry to expand into this area is the background support of the drug companies. For the last thirty years, the drug industry has been either the first or the second most profitable industry in the world. Recorded profits are far in excess of manufacturing industry averages and these profits have attracted new money to the industry at more than three times the average rate.¹⁰ The industry is consequently on the make for new markets. There is a

very nice mark-up on psychiatric drugs in particular. Valium, whose wholesale price is twenty-five times the price of gold, sells at twenty times the total production cost.¹¹ There is, then, a specific desire to expand the consumption of psychiatric drugs. If more behaviour is coming to be seen as a psychiatric problem, then the door is open for drug industries to move in to these new areas, and, indeed, with the recent classification of conduct disorders, personality disorders and adjustment disorders, there are recommendations for drug therapy: phenothiazines - major tranquilisers for conduct disorders, anti-depressants for anti-social personality disorders, and minor tranquilisers for adjustment disorders. Many of the drug advertisements which appear in psychiatric journals in the last year or so, emphasise the effectiveness of certain drugs in taming aggression and hostility suggesting that criminals are among the targeted population group. Also, there is a lot of emphasis in these ads on slow-release injections which maintain control over the patient for some weeks as a method for getting over non-compliance in treatment — a procedure which has obvious relevance to the handling of criminals who do not accept that they are crazy and in need of psychiatric help.

"There is a very nice mark-up on psychiatric drugs in particular. Valium, whose wholesale price is twenty-five times the price of gold, sells at twenty times the total production cost .... "

The dominance of the medical view within psychiatry generally has also played a part in making the psychiatric expansion into criminology possible. In the past, psychiatry has had many competing explanations of madness and although several are still around today, the idea that madness is a medical illness or disorder is slowly squeezing out conflicting ideas. As the editor of the American Journal of Psychiatry said in 1984: "psychiatry has turned back toward the rest of medicine - has finally been equipped to turn back ... So, except in certain enclaves such as analytic practice, the clinician whose touch has the daintiness of a safecracker's fingers is out of date. Sensitivity to proper drug levels — no small act — has pushed aside sensitivity to emotional nuances".¹² A field with many competing explanations is in a much weaker position to take over new areas than a field with an established paradigm. If there is, however, one dominant mode of explanation in a particular field, some rationale for expansion might be given as follows — explanations of a certain sort seem to be working in field x, so why not try them out in the field? This is precisely what we have here with the development of new medical theories of criminology in the last few years.

¹ The male gender is used here because most criminals are male.
biological base, then criminal behaviour has also. Cruel experiments on cats, monkeys and humans have revealed that, if their brain is electrically stimulated in certain places, aggressive attacks will be made. The cats and monkeys made it clear that they intended to do the experimenter harm; one human subject said, “If you’re going to hold me you’d better get five more men”. Whereupon she stood up and started to strike the experimenter” — who then turned the current down.13

The Biological answer?

It is claimed that a creature’s level of aggression is, in part, determined by heredity. Extremely aggressive strains of mice, rabbits and guinea pigs have been bred. Human experiments haven’t been reported in this area but, on the basis of the animal findings, Kenneth Moyer, an American psychology professor, claims that “neurological differences (relating to aggression) must be inherited in the same way that differences in the shape of noses are”.14

Another arm of this proposal that biology affects aggression and hence criminality is the claim that blood chemistry affects the level of aggression, in particular the amount of testosterone, the male hormone. The basis for this claim is that castration seems to have a calming effect. Some authors suggest that it is also of relevance that males are more aggressive than females and, compared with females, males commit more crimes — worldwide, except for sex specific offences such as abortion.15

Certain allergies which affect blood chemistry are also claimed to increase aggression.

After discussing all these theories, Moyer claims “Just as there are wild cats and wild monkeys, there are wild people, individuals who have so much spontaneous activity in the neural systems which underlie aggressive behaviour that they are a constant threat to themselves and to those around them”.16

Ginsburg claims that biology is “presumably involved in aggression” in the ways suggested above. He also clings on to a watered-down version of the old chromosome theory. This is the idea that individuals containing an extra Y-chromosome (the male chromosome) are more aggressive than others. Acknowledging that research has shown that there is no invariable association between the extra Y and aggression, he still claims that we can make the assumption that at least some XYY males have an unusual tendency to aggression.17

A further theory has been put forward recently: that psychopaths have some sort of brain malfunction — a disturbance in the frontal lobe of the brain which is supposed to be linked to certain cognitive functions.

Several points of criticism can be brought to bear on the over-all orientation which attempts to define the criminal as a medical psychiatric problem. Firstly, it is claimed that aggression has a biological base. It is then assumed that there is a link between aggression and criminal behaviour and then it is concluded that criminality has a biological base. This link is highly contentious. Even if one assumes that the criminal population is adequately represented in prisons, not every prisoner is aggressive and what of white collar criminals who don’t end up in jail? The link between aggression and criminality gains its credibility only when we narrow down the relevant crimes to violent ones against people and property. Yet the medical model of criminality purports to cover the whole field.

That aggression can be sparked by electrical stimulation of the brain is not surprising, yet it does not establish that aggression is generally caused by our biology rather than, for example, social conflicts. It’s possible to electrically stimulate the brain to make us have a sensation of an orange, even when there isn’t one there, but we can hardly infer that all perceptions of oranges, or perceptions in general, are simply a matter of biology.

There are gross methodological problems with the research on the inherited nature of aggression. Recent studies have shown that differences between aggressive and peaceful mice, which were thought to be due to genetic differences were, in fact, due to handling differences. The so-called aggressive strains were handled more roughly than the others.18 This has thrown a question mark over the animal research in this area.

The claim that the level of the male hormone, testosterone, is somehow linked to aggression at least can’t be as clear cut as selective appeal to animal studies make it appear: “All normal male animals in the reproductive age group produce much greater quantities of testosterone than females; yet many of these males (are not aggressive e.g. rabbits) .... And there exist primate species where the female is clearly more aggressive .... than the male, e.g. Tamarins”.19 Hence the level of testosterone can’t be a sure indicator of the level of aggression.

The claims about allergies affecting aggression are vague and unsubstantiated. Fatigue, nervousness, irritability, fears, rage and distorted thinking are taken as symptoms of the underlying allergy — a brain allergy — but research into the brain has not revealed its presence. It is mere conjecture.
In 1980, a group of tutors and artists from the Art Workshop (Tin Sheds) at Sydney University expressed a common interest in engaging themselves in an arts project which would involve residents and workers from the inner-city suburbs immediately surrounding Sydney University, i.e. Redfern, Chippendale and Waterloo.

From this was born the Pictures for Cities Project, an ambitious attempt to record a visual history of South Sydney, incorporating both historical documentation and community participation (via a series of workshops).

The project workers set themselves the difficult task of capturing the seemingly disparate range of experiences of both Aboriginal and European Australians in South Sydney.

Funding for the project was received in 1982 from the Crafts Community and Visual Arts Boards of the Australian Council. It was then decided to divide the research and presentation into two strands: Aboriginal History and Industrial History.

Tracey Moffat, an Aboriginal artist, was invited to join the project to research the Aboriginal strand while Geoff Weary, assisted by Leonie Lane and Susan Ostling, undertook the industrial strand.

The finished product, which was first exhibited in a local High School last year (and more recently in Artspace — March 1985), consists of over sixty panels, 23 for the Aboriginal strand and 38 for the industrial strand.

Rita, 17, doesn't mind living in Redfern because 'there's much more going on, than in country towns.'
FOR
PROJECT

The Aboriginal strand relates the tragic demise of the Cadigal people who once inhabited South Sydney region through to the formation of an increasingly strong black community in the area from the 1930s up until the present.

The industrial strand records the establishment of the local working-class communities surrounded by a diversity of places of work and industry. As part of this story, the protracted disputes, poor housing, local entertainments and continuing waves of immigration form an integral part of South Sydney's history.

What is remarkable about this exhibition has been the researchers' ability to utilise an incredible diversity of visual sources to recreate in an imaginative manner the above themes. Such sources include paintings, sketches, cartoons, photographs and stills from films and video. In conjunction with this are brightly coloured photographs of community murals and printing workshops depicting local scenes.

To ensure that the invaluable work done is not wasted, the team has employed Oceania Media Network to handle distribution of the exhibition. Multiple copies of each panel have been made and are available for purchase or short term hire.

Currently, Oceania Media Network is hoping to circulate the exhibition to trade unions, government bodies, city councils, libraries, museums, educational institutes and community groups. (For further information, contact Oceania Media Network on [02] 264.3529.)
The recent taxation debate has brought the direction of Australia's present taxation system into question. Michael Evans surveys the recent history of our taxation system to provide a critical examination of the need for genuine reform, not the perpetuation of present inequalities.

An examination of recent government taxation policies in Australia reveals that there has been a steadily increasing emphasis on personal income tax to provide the main basis of government tax revenue. However, that emphasis has fallen disproportionately on low and middle income earners, and specifically those falling under the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system.

This has happened mainly because the state apparatus, through conservative governments and an even more conservative judiciary, has deliberately allowed a grossly unequal distribution of wealth and income to occur within society. The effects of this have been most notable in the 1970s and '80s, when economic recession, shattering the capitalist dream of Australia being an equitable country for the majority, can be contrasted against massive fortunes gained through tax avoidance and evasion.

- Personal income tax as a percentage of wages, salaries and supplements has increased from 12.7 percent in 1959/60, to 25.3 percent in 1983/84.
- Personal income tax amounted to 35.5 percent of total federal tax revenue in 1959/60, while Budget estimates for 1984/85 indicate that this has now climbed to 53.1 percent.
- The richest five percent of individuals paid 54 percent of personal income tax in 1953/54; now they pay 22 percent.

And yet, in comparison with other O.E.C.D. countries, Australia is not a very highly taxed country. It ranks fifteenth of nineteen O.E.C.D. countries in terms of income tax and social security contributions as a proportion of G.D.P., and eighteenth of twenty-two countries in terms of total tax as a proportion of G.D.P.

Why, then, is there both the perception and the reality that personal income taxes for the majority is too high? Because the taxation system has consistently aided the process of wealth and income becoming concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, while the burden of providing tax revenue has reverted to low and middle income earners.

Neville R. Norman, in The Economics of Personal Tax Escalation in Australia, expounds a theory, from a Friedmanite approach, as to why governments have "of necessity" raised personal income taxes. I do not wish to enter a discussion here concerning the specific method of the economic analysis, but merely to state that I consider the points raised in the analysis to be an accurate historical picture of the approach taken by successive Liberal governments; and, alarmingly, the approach being more and more embraced by the Hawke-Keating forces in the A.L.P.

The theory, in brief, is as follows:

1) The control or reduction of inflation is established as a top priority.
2) Inflation is seen as a problem caused by excessive monetary growth.
3) The government perceives that the only avenue it has to restrict monetary growth is to reduce the domestic deficit.
4) There are mainly political constraints to reducing government expenditures beyond an acceptable "bottom line".
5) This, therefore, necessitates escalation of tax revenues, and those that cause the least political resistance are personal income taxes because they can grow automatically without government action.

The period up to 1970 saw Australia experience sustained economic growth, with low levels of inflation and unemployment. The economic recession and oil price rises of the early 1970s saw successive Australian governments raise personal income taxes. Liberal governments did it to stem inflationary pressures; while the Whitlam government funded increases in mostly socially useful government expenditure. The Mathews Report on the Australian tax system, released in 1975, recommended increasing concessions to business and industry, as well as personal tax indexation. This was subsequently adopted in the 1976 (Liberal) Budget. However, by the 1978 Budget, the Liberal government had increased company tax rates to pay for these concessions, and personal tax indexation was deferred, as well as an income tax surcharge being imposed from 1978 to 1980.

While the Fraser government mouthed expansive rhetoric about fighting inflation and unemployment by aspiring to strict monetarist economic policies, the reality was that total federal tax revenue as a proportion of G.D.P. increased steadily from 1978/79 to 1982/83.
abandonment of full personal tax indexation saw workers take a real wage cut, while personal income tax, and especially PAYE receipts, increased as a percentage of G.D.P. The 1981 Liberal Budget included an attempt to increase indirect taxation by a 2.5 percent general sales tax on a wide range of items including clothing and books, but the Democrats and the ALP defeated it in the Senate. Over the last 20 years there has been a gradually decreasing reliance on indirect taxation as a proportion of total tax revenue, falling from 43 percent at the start of the 1960s to 31 percent in 1983–84.

The ACTU/ALP Accord signed in 1983 just prior to the election of the Labor government gave a commitment to dismantle the tax avoidance and evasion industries, reform corporate taxation, reduce the relative incidence of indirect taxation "because of its regressive and inflationary nature", and annually adjust personal tax rates for inflation. Thus far, the Labor government has given moderate personal income tax cuts, but has not indexed tax rates. It has fundamentally ignored its commitment to the Accord and ALP policy in its approach to economic management and the financial system.

**Tax Avoidance**

The inconsistencies and loopholes in the Income Tax Assessment Act have spawned a massive growth in the tax avoidance industry in the 1970s. Australia has never had an effective capital gains tax, and tax avoidance has boomed largely as a result of the artificial, yet strictly legal, distinctions certain income earners are able to make to intentionally reduce the level of tax paid. This process was actively aided and abetted by a sympathetic High Court under the reign of Sir Garfield Barwick which, in the mid-1970s, effectively destroyed Section 260 of the Act, the "catch-all" section for dealing with avoidance.

".... Garfield Barwick .... effectively destroyed Section 260 of the Act, the 'catch all' section for dealing with avoidance ...."

This signalled the growth of the tax avoidance industry, and large numbers of accountants and lawyers were able to devise highly successful avoidance schemes, thus providing an increasingly profitable service to income earners outside the PAYE system. It was only when the full extent of the sums involved were made public by the Costigan Royal Commission that there was a public outcry to do something about it. Section 260 was replaced by the more effective Part IVA of the Assessment Act in May 1981. However, the Democrats have consistently defeated attempts by both Liberal and Labor governments to introduce retrospective legislation to recoup lost revenue. Former Special Prosecutor Roger Gyles recommended to deaf ears, for a number of years, that an attempt should be made to resurrect Section 260 to combat company stripping. A case was finally put to the High Court and, with the exit of Barwick, received a favourable decision.

But this situation is likely to continue until a) the government has the political courage to implement an effective capital gains tax — one which treats net capital gains as ordinary income and taxes them at normal rates; and b) the government recognises the necessity to increase resources in the Australian Tax Office to enforce effectively compliance with the Act.

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*The recent Auditor-General’s report on tax administration was highly critical of the inefficient use of resources within the Tax office. The report stated that the office was mainly geared to catch the small PAYE taxpayer cheating on deduction claims, while revenue lost from dividend and interest income omitted from returns amounts to $500 million a year. The Taxation Commissioner has recently foreshadowed a change to a "self-assessment" tax system to be introduced from July 1986. Hopefully, this will mean a greater utilisation of resources in order to monitor efficiently compliance with the intention of tax legislation. Other significant changes suggested by ACOA in its Tax Reform submission to EPAC are elimination of "tax perks", the artificial disguising of income as some other benefit which is available to many income earners; also the ridding of the system of all tax expenditures, restoring the Assessment Act to its original purpose of raising revenue rather than providing hidden assistance to certain sections of industry and certain types of taxpayers."

**The Corporate Sector**

The last 20 years have seen an increasing decline in the share of total tax revenue paid by the corporate sector. Company tax has fallen from 18 percent in 1960–61 to ten percent in 1983–84.
Proposals made by the Communist Party of Australia in its submission to EPAC, *A Case for Radical Tax Reform*, include:

- taxing company profits on a progressive scale based on rate of return on paid-up capital
- eliminating tax deductions and allowances now claimed by corporations. Tax expenditure granted to industry in 1983-84 amounted to $670 million, while advertising costs as a deduction exceed $1 billion a year
- stopping methods used to reduce company tax such as transfer pricing, and the latest concession of allowing losses of subsidiaries to be offset against income of others.

The Rightwing Offensive

The former Secretary to the Treasury, John Stone, recently spelled out the blueprint of what international capital's expectations are of the Australian government's approach to economic management. These include:

a) the breakdown of full wage indexation;
b) specific spending cuts in policy areas which appear ideologically "hard" for a Labor government;
c) restoration of clear monetary targets;
d) deregulation of interest rates.

The implementation of some or all of the above points would see the end of the ACTU/ALP Accord, and an inevitable lowering of living standards for the Australian working class. The massive political, economic and ideological offensive being waged by the international ruling class should not be underestimated.

Now that the Australian dollar is even more susceptible to the whim of overseas financial markets, we are seeing the results of threats being made to force the Australian government to "toe the line". The first was the announcement of massive cuts to the forward spending estimates. Is the next step to be the discounting of full CPI increases to wage earners for the "cost" of devaluation?

Aims of Progressive Tax Reform

The present tax reform debate provides an opportunity to combat this offensive by struggling for progressive reform and starting to redress the present inequities.

The two main principles involved in the achievement of progressive tax reform should be:

a) horizontal equity — that those receiving the same amount of income, regardless of its source, pay the same amount of tax;
b) vertical equity that those receiving higher levels of income, that is, having a greater ability to pay, contribute proportionately more.

The tax reform debate, as far as the government is concerned is presently centred around which method is most appropriate for maintaining existing levels of tax revenue, but without serious examination of the question of who pays, and who doesn't. This is precisely what makes the present arguments about broad-based consumption taxes vs. personal income taxes so significant.

While it is valid to say that the rates of personal income tax are at unacceptably high levels for the majority of people, a switch to a broad-based consumption tax will only increase the inequities which have historically occurred in the tax system.

A prescription for progressive tax reform must include the following:

- an increase in total tax revenue to allow for redistribution of income and wealth in Australia, to provide real employment and improve the living standards of low and middle income earners;
- a more equitable sharing of the tax burden according to ability to pay;
- a recognition of the relationship between the taxation and social security systems, and the importance of guaranteeing economic security for all.

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Max Bound

The Technology Test

Economic planning in Australia cannot remain with the captains of industry, or their peers. Max Bound argues that new technologies and new strategies are posing serious questions for the left.

The trans/multinational strategies to move manufacture out of Australia to cheap labour havens is an important aspect of job destruction in Australia. Use of technological change against workers is another.

Metal union led campaigns and actions have had some small effect in slowing down this process, despite governmental inaction.

Limited union success in having input into economic planning and decision making underlines the importance of the struggle for democratisation in industry.

Transnational corporations and governments which accept their demands undermine the national interest in favour of continued and accelerated capital accumulation. This process increases the control of a few giant corporations. These bypass national boundaries but are centred mainly in Japan and the US, and are more concerned with maintaining some sort of economic stability in those countries than in Australia.

Power to decide economic policies is a strongly guarded “right” of capitalists. Development of union and worker input to economic decision making holds the possibility for developing the social, political and national economic forces essential to save Australian industry.

Social conditioning and control of people occupies much of the efforts of a vast army of apologists for capitalism. Sexism, racism, conditioning to accept the status quo in terms of what constitutes “the good life”, consumerism rather than quality of life, bolster the system. Occasional talk of full employment is skilfully combined with efforts to win acceptance that there must be “the unlucky ones”. Other plots include the argument that “the market system is not perfect but it is the best offering”.

The reality, that capitalism has developed to a point where it creates unemployment more than it creates new employment, is covered over. Similarly, whatever the virtues of a “free market system”, no such system exists. Trans- and multinational corporations control most markets.

Most unions are poorly equipped to provide input into economic planning. With some important exceptions, union research departments confine themselves to matters concerned with award hours, wages, job conditions; i.e. with maintenance of the status quo. Several unions have widened their research activities and this process has been extended by the work of semi-voluntary and part-funded research groups in several cities. Much of the work of the latter groups draws heavily on neo-marxist interpretations of modern problems.

A new and different approach to economic planning is essential. The advent of mindless computer modelling based on capitalist theories of economics has become an embarrassment to some more serious upholders of the status quo. Writing in The Financial Review (9.4.84), P.P. McGuinness claims of econometricians that “… theythrow out the equations which tend to invalidate the positions they argue”. McGuinness, a supporter of bourgeois theories in general, says that the techniques of most econometricians are “worthless”.

In some universities, large sums of public monies are used up by economists putting what McGuinness describes as dubious figures through “their professional econometric sausage machine” (ibid).

Intelligent computers

The opinion of US and world leaders in computer technologies is that talk of “intelligent computers” is nonsense (ABC Science Show, March 1985). The increasing use of computers by the more financial unions and union-based research organisations in Australia can help some aspects of analysis. It cannot, of course, do away with the necessity for the sort of analysis only humans can perform.

In 1981 there were 11,126 jobs in forestry and logging, wood, wood products and furniture, paper, paper products, printing and publishing. This was 906 less than in 1966. (ABS figures) The quantity of native grown saw logs used increased fourfold from 1960 to 1981, from 1,083.02 m³ to 4,362.0 m³. Of this huge quantity, less than one quar­ter, or 992.0 m³ were used for saw milling and plywood milling. That is, the amount of resource used per job in the industry grew from 90.1 m³ in 1965-66, to 392.03 m³ in 1980-81. Some employment has been created with road transportation of logs. However, ABS figures reveal that the number of jobs in road transport fell by 361 over the 1966 to 1981 period.

(Tasmania — A Way To Go)

The report also documented a more than 20 percent fall in employment in the forest products corporation, APPM (Australian Pulp and Paper Mills) from 1971 to 1983. Since its Hill Holdings), there has been a further “rationalisation”.

Another example of cuts in employment came from The
Tasmanian Parliamentary Report on Unemployment 1983:

In 1965-66, the Edgell Company's Devonport factory employed approximately 500 persons to process 400,000 kg of peas. In 1982-83, 300 persons are required to process 20 million kg of peas. Thus, during the period in which production increased fiftyfold, employment reduced by 62.5 percent.

A Way to go?

The unions as such, and the research groups they sponsor, have to take into account the broad spectrum of opinion in the unions. However, progressive socialist-oriented ideas can be argued within the union research framework. In Tasmania last year, the Trade Union Community Research Centre Inc. (TUCRC), an independent body with strong trade union and Labor Party connections, released a report on "employment development criteria". This report, Tasmania — A Way to Go, was an attempt to place union-based research in the mainstream of economic planning. The content of the report and the Labor Party connections of the TUCRC were reported on by all main media outlets in Tasmania, in a generally favourable way. Its content and likely influence have also been the subjects of some feature articles. One paper commented, "... conclusions if implemented would mean a total change in direction for the state's economic development." This press review then went on to say, "Unfortunately the report is marred by the old socialist rhetoric of a conspiracy of big business using its powers to exploit workers." (Sunday Examiner, 19.8.84.)

What the report actually did, in this respect, was use statements of local managers of corporations in the context of, and as part of, explaining the political economy of job loss in conditions of capitalist control of production and technology. It also showed how, in forest-based industries, production increases and resource usage had increased substantially, while employment had dropped.

Not rhetoric, simply facts about how capitalism functions.

The report concluded "that democratisation in industry and employment planning is the key element to resolving economic problems". It proposed that "this could only be achieved in the context of working for a positive plan to generate economic and social well being for all".

Three essential target areas were identified. These were:

1. High Capital Industries which provide substantial but falling employment levels. Under the present system, for the most part, profits from these industries leak out of the state to interstate and overseas shareholders (e.g. paper, mining, mineral treatment).

2. Medium Technology Industries which are more labor intensive and are more often locally owned. Expansion of both productive and service industries in this area, using local resources and labour skills could (in the model we propose) be financed with profits from area 1., providing certain mechanisms were put in place.

These included democratisation and mechanisms for increased public equity to help ensure returns to Tasmania.

The report had earlier examined Tasmania's position as a "periphery state of a periphery nation". Manufacture is narrowly specialised around its food, basic metals and timber resources and has declined. Most consumer goods are manufactured interstate or overseas. Further, "interdependent relationships between manufacturing services' works against employment possibilities in Tasmania.

The other main target area was:

3. Redefinition of Work and the promotion of social harmony .... this area involves more than just a guaranteed income — it considers the whole quality of life and the preservation of human dignity....

The report presented a number of goals and outlined methods to achieve these goals. In its later chapters, it examined some specific problems in Tasmania against the background of the overall analysis developed in the first half of the report.

As stated earlier, the report was an attempt to have union-based research move into the mainstream of economic planning in Tasmania. Nationally, the few existing union research departments play a particular role in industry research. There is also need for overview development research by the labour movement. The resources and connections needed to make this research relevant to our economic, political and social future require a broad approach. Within that broad approach, the work of marxists who can project a relevant marxist analysis is necessary.

It is essential to bring together plans for job provision with resource protection, protection of the working and living environment, a democratic society and the democratisation of industry.

For a variety of reasons, social and political retention of the manufacturing industry is critical. At the same time, if all we do is maintain
a manufacturing industry which is competitive in world market terms, then employment will continue to decline as further labour saving technologies are introduced. The mere shortening of hours, while essential, is not a sufficient answer to this problem. It has to be tackled in terms of the whole issue of distribution of wealth and the critical issue of what is production for. For workers, being competitive means competing with labour which is controlled by army and police guns and denied union rights. The nature of production, of transport and of control by trans- and multinational corporations results in this issue becoming increasingly central.

Queensland's ultra-right has launched a frontal attack on unions and democracy of any kind. The danger to even traditional union rights is real.

Consensus capitalists

Australia's "consensus" capitalists want destruction of unions. John Elliot of Elders IXL, in a statement published 21 September, 1984, calls for reduction of union power. He also quotes Sir Roderick Carnegie of CRA to the effect that Australia could become "the white trash of Asia" and sees Australia's living standards as falling below those of Singapore by 1990 (The Mercury). If these people have their way, clearly what they forecast will happen. Both these men were main actors in Hawke's consensus ploy.

Democratic control of industry not only has to be won, it has to be capable of moving away from that highly destructive and corrupt guideline "being more competitive". Measures which protect resources and provide jobs now and in the future are possible, given democratic controls in and of industry. For example, an industry of considerable importance in Tasmania, namely forestry, requires proper forest practices if it is to have a long term future. Proper forest practices would make us, or the corporation NBHH, less competitive, but they would protect the resource and provide more jobs and a better quality of life now and in the future. The problems of industry efficiency should not be ignored, but should be tackled in a way which benefits people, rather than safeguarding short term profits for a tiny few.

Australian marxists have not done enough in working through these questions. The TUCRC research project makes a start. My observation is that all too few of our scarce resources are employed in tackling this aspect of the struggle. In this respect, "the Accord, despite its weaknesses, represented a step of historic importance".

One very simple but far-reaching point that needs to be spelled out is that the real problem is not our capacity to produce; it is that growing numbers are being increasingly denied access to the wealth that is produced. Inequalities are increasing both between and within countries. Competition in the form of the nuclear arms race is the biggest single potential destroyer of people and cities, but it is not the only one. Most aspects of so-called peaceful competitive drives are also, in their final results, wantonly destructive of both people and the resources so necessary to enable people to live at decent standards.

Socialists, with other concerned people, have to develop viable alternatives to that destructive approach. if socialism is to come into its own. The many truly wonderful advances in knowledge and technology can only really serve people in a democratic, non-sexist, non-racist and socialist society. It must also be a society capable of discriminating as to which technologies are to be developed and how those technologies are to be used.

Other societies in other countries also have a right to live decently, and that means replacing capitalist irresponsibility with a responsible attitude to the use of resources.

Real achievements have been recorded, particularly, but not only, by the metal workers' union, in placing union input into economic planning on the political agenda. These achievements pose the tasks and issues discussed above with the urgency of immediate practical questions. Our limited resources could be better directed.

Socialists have a responsibility, not only to their own political interests, but also to the broader labour and progressive movements. Political, economic and social theory has not been a strong point in the history of the labour movement in Australia. Our future depends to an important degree on developing our capacities for analysis and forward thinking in terms of alternative economic and social strategies and policies.

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Winter 1985
Psychiatry from page 23.

It seems ridiculous to keep maintaining even a modified version of the idea that those with an extra Y chromosome are more aggressive than others when research continually refutes that claims. To say, as Ginsburg does, that at least some XYY males have an unusual tendency to aggression, reflects nostalgia for the old theory but little else — as some XYY males aren't aggressive and some males or females without chromosome anomalies are aggressive.

Burning out parts of the brain has proved effective in taming the cat, Lynx rufus rufus, and the wild Norway rat, both of which attack unprovoked, without the operation.23 Surgeons vary in their reports of the success of these operations on humans 41.5 percent to 92 percent,24 but the success in taming aggression has to be weighed against the irreversible side effects of these operations — personality changes, intellectual and physiological impairment and decreases in spontaneity and creativity.25 Certain sorts of electrical brain stimulation have also been used under the medical orientation. An electrode is placed in the brain and connected to a radio which is bolted to the person's head. This radio receiver can be activated by a transmitter some distance away and through the resulting stimulation of the brain, aggressive impulses can be blocked. The problem with this procedure has been that people tend to feel conspicuous with radios on their heads but miniaturisation in electronics has provided a solution. It's possible to build a unit about the size of a ten cent coin which takes the radio, the power to operate it, and a radio transmitter which will send out brainwaves. The problem that this procedure gives some individuals horrendous control over others is not, of course, overcome, and there is also what is known as the "kindling effect", an irreversible change in the brain resulting from the stimulation which means that the person becomes more prone to convulsion.

An analysis done last year of the study that was supposed to reveal that psychopaths have a brain malfunction has uncovered several weaknesses, for example psychopaths certainly didn't do so well as the "control" group on certain cognitive tasks, but the "control" group consisted of university students who differed from the psychopaths in age, education, general ability and drug or alcohol abuse, and any of these factors could have been relevant to the different test scores.29 In fact, in a study controlling for these factors, psychopaths did not come out as particularly weak on cognitive tasks as the author of this study asserts: "it would seem prudent to rule out non-organic explanations of task performance before involving an organic one."22 This comment could be generalised to apply to the whole biological orientation in the field of criminology — rule out the non-organic, non-biological, non-medical explanations of criminology first before moving into the biological domain. Why? The answer lies in an assessment of the consequences of holding different positions. If, for example, you believe, as I do, that criminology is to be understood in terms of social conflict and that no resolution can be found by focusing on the individual criminal, then the focus should be on social change — measures to decrease injustice and inequality. This sort of action stands in sharp contrast to the practices which follow from the medical model of criminology. They involve, as one author puts it, "influencing the internal milieu, by producing changes in the individual's physiology".22 The use of psychiatric drugs in only one such practice, and in the present day, is the most common. All of these drugs have irritating and/or debilitating effects and if they do succeed in controlling aggression, they produce a certain dullness. Some cause irreversible brain damage.

Another procedure to control aggression which emerges from the medical approach is castration. This may achieve the end, but it is irreversible and some well known side-effects. Some medical writers look for what they call "less drastic measures", e.g. taking adolescents who have displayed aggression or who might, because they have the chromosome anomaly, and using behaviour modification techniques or drugs which block the effects of the male hormone. The side-effects of these drugs are not well researched, but there is an overriding problem here — the fact that these adolescents are selected for special treatment would have a stigmatising effect and it could, in fact, increase the hostility which now, at least, has a rational foundation.

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- For A Free West Papua
- Political Economy of Mining
- Computer Culture

Arena is a marxist journal of criticism and discussion, published quarterly.
P. O. Box 18, North Carlton, Victoria, 3054
$4 per copy, $12 subscription for individuals,
$20 for institutions.
A New Era?

Psychiatry visibly enters the criminal domain when psychiatrists assist the courts in determining the individual offender's competency to stand trial or guilt or lack of guilt by reason of insanity. Their role here is not new, but it is expanding. Psychiatry has entered less visibly into developing and passing on theories of criminal behaviour to those concerned with the crime problem, and into the domain of treatment. It's in these last two areas that the medical-biological view is having an impact — an impact which, according to one writer, will change history: "The increase in our knowledge of atomic forces moved us into a new era. The increase in our understanding of the physiology of behaviour will move us into another and the effects will be even more profound", or, as another author put it: much crime and deviant behaviour may actually be caused biochemically ... (and) it may be that as the biochemical causes are found and treated most citizens would see the goals and means and rewards and punishments provided by advanced capitalist societies to be sufficient for them to conform? — a new era maybe, but do you want to go there?

Denise Russell is a lecturer in philosophy at Sydney University and is involved in two groups working for changes in the mental health area.

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Reviews

PERSPECTIVES ON THE MINERS' STRIKE

Reviewed by Chris White


It is difficult to describe the overwhelming impact that the miners' strike has had on British life. British politics will never be the same. Class struggle has been waged and witnessed on a momentous level.

For the Australian reader wishing to investigate issues beyond the images and headlines, these four books, published just before the end of the strike, are an excellent beginning. They provide penetrating descriptions of most aspects of the strike, unravel the key economic and political forces involved in the struggle and provide insights and lessons about the social experiences of the combatants involved.

Although the miners and the labour movement have suffered a considerable setback, it cannot be said that the Thatcher strategy has decisively prevailed. In the years to come, the arguments in these books will help explain why the Tories are in serious trouble.

State Power

The first section of Digging Deeper, The State of Siege and Policing the Miners' Strike show how this dispute, simply in opposition to redundancies, has laid bare for all to see the repressive functioning of the state apparatus against workers and their families.

The first two essays in Digging Deeper, "Decisive Power: The New Tory State Against the Miners" by Huw Beynon and Peter McMylor and "Let Them Eat Coal: The Conservative Party and the Strike" by Bill Schwartz provide an excellent analysis of the Tories' obsession with avenging the political defeat of the Heath government by the miners. They show how carefully prepared were the plans for the exercise of state power and how ruthlessly and at what cost the battle was pursued.

What is significant is that the Tories did not quickly succeed — if at all — and that the resistance lasted for so long.

In the introduction to Policing, "The Law of the Market and the Rule of Law", Bob Fine and Robert Millar link up the repressive activities of the police with the demands of the "law of the market": The dogmatic enforcement of the "right to manage", to close so-called "uneconomic" pits and make thousands of miners redundant, depended on the full power of 8,000 police and the institutions and propaganda of law and order, the flouting of the rule of law and the consequent serious weakening of accepted liberties.

Behind the Tory slogan of the law of the market, we discover a commitment to maximising the rate of profit and minimising the influence of workers and the public on how surplus is produced and distributed; a view encapsulated in the idea of the "right of management to manage". Behind the Tory version of the rule of law, we find an equally anti-democratic commitment to maximising the power of the state at the expense of democratic forms of organisation within and without the state and of the civil liberties of individual citizens.

Given the power of the labour movement and the liberal vestiges which remain within the state machinery and even the Tory party, the government has not been able to carry out this project without challenge. It is by no means inevitable that the drift towards...
It is neither rhetoric nor exaggeration to say that every aspect of the system of law and order was used to defeat the strike.

The Police

The evidence accumulated of mass military-style policing intended not to regulate picketing, nor to guarantee peaceful picketing, but clearly aimed at stopping all picketing is impressive. Sheffield Police Watch enumerated case after case of unprovoked violence by the police in six months of systematic observation. (John McIlroy, "Police and Pickets" in Digging Deeper.)

The State of Siege contains horrifying accounts of police tactics and the miners' responses in the first five months of the strike. It tells of the massive roadblocks stopping, searching and arresting miners, the constant intimidation of mining villages, phone tapping, the sensational events of Orgreave with thousands of police, horses, dogs, and the brutal methods of arrest, of how hundreds of police would escort one scab through picket lines to a mine, the reactions of the miners to this and to the injustices of the magistrates and, above all, how the political and industrial ideas of the miners merely to resist mass sackings and to put forward their policies for expanding the coal industry were ruthlessly opposed. For generations now the image of the "friendly bobby" is gone.

Policing the Miners' Strike, in a more analytical framework, describes the changes which took place in the organisation of the police force. Initially, the police force was organised at a local level but, during the dispute, it became a national force which could despatch thousands of personnel to a particular area and which used riot tactics seen only in fascist states.

The Judiciary

The strike dominated every daily newspaper and every radio and TV broadcast for a year. The gutter press went over the top consistently with personal attacks on the striking miners and on Scargill. A Murdoch rag printed a photo of Scargill waving and alleged this was a fascist salute (here the print workers took industrial action). This constant mass media exposure was critical for the Tory strategy, distorting and highlighting the "violence", reducing the dispute to personalities and creating an environment hostile to the striking miners and favourable to the Coal Board.

The Union Movement

The books do not dodge the hard issues for the union movement. The issue of no national ballot was constantly used by the Tories against the union leadership. Huw Beynon, in the introduction to Digging Deeper, suggests that the decision not to hold a ballot was a tactical mistake. Michael Crick's book on Scargill gives much of the background to this issue. But the arguments by Peter Heathfield, the new dynamic general secretary of the NUM, are put with conviction. It cannot be right for one man to vote another man out of a job; that a ballot on wages is a ballot which everyone enters on an equal basis and everyone is affected by equally; on jobs it is a different matter, especially when the jobs are at risk in some areas and not others. (p. 13)

Two essays in Digging Deeper criticise the failure of most of the unions to deliver by upholding the TUC policy, and the vacillation of the...
Labour Party leadership. In "Trade Unionism in Crisis: The Challenge to Union Democracy" Bob Fryer analyses the weaknesses in union resistance to the savage anti-union laws of the Tories and the ineffectiveness of the TUC in "Where's Ramsay MacKinnock?". David Howell rips into the labour leadership, making uncomfortable parallels with Labour in 1926.

The Women

Towards the end of The State of Siege, and in essays in the other books, the courageous, innovative and energetic miners' wives and the many support groups are given centre stage. Here is the real reason why the strikers struggled and survived for so long. After the strike, I attended an International Women's Day rally held by the Women Against Pit Closures, where 10,000 women defiantly declared that the struggle would continue, and demonstrated that their lives had been radically transformed.

An illustration of this is given in Policing in "Women and the Strike: It's a Whole Way of Life". In the first weeks of the strike, the capitalist press tried to drum up opposition among the wives. The opposite occurred. Thrown together initially to talk about the hardships, the women established soup kitchens, food distribution centres and fund raising activities in each village. But soon they broke out of their traditional roles and demanded to be involved in picketing and speaking. The men in the union said it was too dangerous and their job. But an autonomous women's organisation was formed which organised pickets and mass demonstrations of women; the women developed political skills and the confidence to fly overseas to explain the strike.

The family and social roles of women in the mining communities have been irrevocably altered. A typically male bastion, the NUM was forced not only to acknowledge that the wives were the backbone of the strike, but that they were equal partners in industrial and political organisation. Like the women of Greenham Common, the miners' wives are now carved into history as an international symbol.

Support Networks

In "Beyond the Coalfields: The Work of the Miners' Support Groups", Hilary Wainwright and Doreen Massey describe an aspect of the strike, ignored by the capitalist media, which involved innovative organisational forms of solidarity, the creation of a network of active supporters in every city and town in Britain.

Throughout the strike, benefits raising thousands of pounds were held; food, clothing and necessities were collected, transported and distributed and anti-Thatcher meetings were held connecting the miners' struggle with many others. Long-standing barriers of a formerly male chauvinist tradition were broken down. Miners learned about the oppression of gays as gay support groups gave concrete support. Peace camps, local council services, environmentalists, health workers and teachers were active in collecting money and offering support. The notion of "winning"; whereby southern towns adopted northern coal pits, led to the development of personal contacts and political awareness, as well as the provision of material sustenance.

These experiences had an important bearing on an old divisive argument inside the left about the way forward to socialism, characterised rather crudely as the blue collar class struggle versus the social movements.

But what the miners' strike has shown is that the traditional institutions of labour can be superseded and challenged without abandoning class politics. It has shown that it is not a question of either industrial action or the new social movements, nor is it one of just adding the two together. What is important is a recognition of a mutual dependence and a new openness to influence, of the one upon the other. What this strike has demonstrated is a different direction for class politics. New institutions can be built through which class politics can be seen as more than simply industrial militancy plus parliamentary representation. (p. 168, Wainwright and Massey.)

Control of Energy

What were the underlying reasons for an initial 20,000 miners being thrown onto the unemployment scrapheap and the decimation of the mining communities of Kent, Scotland and Wales? Colin Sweet in Digging Deeper, "Why Coal is Under Attack: Nuclear Powers in the Energy Establishment", provides some of the answers.

For the present government, faced with increasing dependence on coal and a resolute trade union with a militant leadership, breaking the miners has become more than a key issue. It has become an obsession. (p.201). The Energy Establishment and the Tory government are embarking on no less a strategy than dismantling forty years of the nationalised coal and electricity industry. The run down of coal and the build up of nuclear power is central to this exercise. The next stage will be to privatise at least the most profitable parts of both industries (coal and electricity). (p.202)

Mrs Thatcher's powerful backers, the giant transnational corporate oil and energy interests could make millions of pounds and control of the nation's energy be transferred into their private hands.

Thus the private interests of giant corporations mesh with the requirements of the state. These requirements dictate that the state has available: 1. a centrally controlled
Reviews

Scargill

But what of Arthur Scargill? In complete contrast to the other books, Michael Crick, a TV journalist, has focussed on the most dynamic socialist trade union leader seen for many years. Scargill and the Miners is a most readable short history of Scargill's life, his rise to the presidency, some of the inside developments of the NUM from the '50s into the '80s when the left was voted in, and the strike itself.

This is, in true journalistic fashion, a book about the man. As a youth of 15, Scargill "decided that the world was wrong and I wanted to put it right, virtually overnight if possible". It described his first days down the mine, the influence of his communist father, the Young Communist League, his fights for better conditions for the miners and the battles with the rightwing leadership. He was elected as pit delegate, as compensation officer and became prominent at NUM conferences. The famous Saltley Gates incident in Birmingham is described, when thousands of workers went on strike in solidarity with the miners (unlike in 1984) and marched to a mass picket, with Scargill organising, which divided and weakened the then Tory Heath government. The significance of the fight against redundancies is made clear by the fact that Scargill won 78 percent of the vote to become president in 1982 on such a program and the left won control of the executive.

Few political figures in this country arouse such strong feelings as Arthur Scargill. Those who dislike Scargill often positively detest him. And yet, among his own supporters he is almost worshipped. To the young men on the miners' picket lines he is like a pop star. They have trust in him, and a respect for him, that no other British trade union leader or politician in living memory has enjoyed. Rank and file activists in the labour movement snare that adulation.

I attended a number of Scargill rallies and heard 10,000 sing the battle cry "Arthur Scargill, Arthur Scargill, we'll support you evermore".

This level of support continued even after the return to work. Two weeks after the end, Scargill contrasted the 1984 strike with 1926 when the miners went back to work cowed to lower wages and longer hours. In 1985 at the end of the most historic strike seen, Britain's miners marched back to work having seen the 1984 closure program not implemented, five pits still open, a new procedure giving an appeals body on closure intact, and above all this union refusing to acquiesce to the closure of pits on the grounds of so-called economics. That's not defeat, that's victory as far as this union is concerned. (to rousing cheers)

As this review is completed, just before Easter 1985, the miners, despite having suffered a setback, are still a force; the British economy under the Tories is severely strained; opinion polls indicate that Thatcher's position on the strike and her policies are causing divisiveness; and the Labour Party is in front. History may judge the strike as not so much of a defeat for the miners after all.

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Review of Capital Essays from page 40

The pressing need to construct the "The Political Economy of Australian Capitalism" or more precisely to map out the complex pattern of Australian class relations remains. This mapping requires labour and capital history as the necessary condition. An informed socialist politics that engages with the pattern of Australian commodity relations is still in its infancy. One precondition of a potential hegemonic socialist political strategy is a set of appropriate responses to Australian circumstances. Socialist writings of which capital history is an important part is valuable, not because theoretical analysis should determine the course of political struggle. Rather, its importance lies in the effective contribution that socialist scholars can make in clarifying the important strategic issues. To this end, capital history in general, and this volume in particular, may aid the struggle to socialism: under socialism the writing of capital history would be of purely academic interest.

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FROM LABOUR HISTORY TO CAPITAL HISTORY

Reviewed by Andrew Wells

Capital Essays: Selected Papers from the General Studies Conference on Australian Capital History, edited and published by Drew Cottle, C/- General Studies Department, University of New South Wales, Sydney.

Socialist historians in Australia have had an enduring preoccupation with the writing of labour history. Labour history has understandably focussed on the industrial and political struggles, the institutions, experiences, leaders and ideologies that have shaped the working class. Despite the new emphasis given by socialist historians to working class initiative and responsibility in making their own history, the dominating power of the capitalist class could not easily be ignored. Indeed, most labour historians have been, and remain, fully aware that their persistence in recovering and recording working class history arises from a political commitment to a subordinate, exploited class. This emphasis has rarely led to a focus on the formation and consolidation of the dominant capitalist class and their means — economic, political and ideological — of maintaining hegemony over the direct producers. For this reason, one can only agree with Drew Cottle’s and Ken Buckley’s call in this volume for the systematic study of Australia’s dominant economic and political class: to write what they call capital history.

Exactly what writing capital history involves is worth considering. One assumes that capital history is a significant departure from company history. Conventional company history tends to harness the extent (and sanitised) documentary records of a firm, in order to provide a more or less comprehensive description of the firm’s activity. Like other forms of ruling class history, company historians work with the recorded documents of the exploiter and this encourages the historian to sympathise with the entrepreneur. Sometimes this degenerates into an uncritical account of company founders and the director’s business acumen. At best, the company historian may move the focus to the wider field of economic relations into which the firm is inserted. But even the better company historians do not grasp the fact that the capitalist firm is not a historical subject in the sense of creating its own history: even when capitalists make history they do not do it as they please but within determinate relations inherited from the past. The capitalist system is a system because it forges a wide-ranging set of possibilities and constraints which enmesh those who control private property, the means of production and thereby the surplus labour in capitalist society. This system is essentially an ensemble of economic relations but they are produced and reproduced by political or legal forces. Moreover, these economic relations are heavily influenced by the world capitalist system. In short, the shape of economic and political relations fundamentally circumscribes the so-called freedom of private enterprise. These relations, the dominant pattern of class relations, are the premise and the product of capitalist commodity production. It is towards the elucidation of these class relations that capital history should be directed. These relations should be seen as structural — that is, involving basic property distinctions — and dynamic — illustrating the evolutionary trends of a particular capitalism. From this perspective, the concern of capital history is directed towards the same end as labour history; it is the evidence employed, the orientation and the starting point which is somewhat different.

In illuminating the structure and dynamic of an Australian capitalism, capital history might proceed in two separated though related ways. First, an attempt could be made to identify the general pattern of economic (and other) relations in which the general experiences of capitalist firms is explicable. This would involve a consideration of the entire process of the production and the circulation of surplus value. Second, the analysts might concentrate on a particular firm or branch of the capitalist economy thereby grasping the system as it impinges on a part of the totality. Neither approach is useful for socialists unless they are built on theorisation. Theorisation is necessary because there already exists a vast literature, a conceptual vocabulary and research methods capable of simplifying a vast undertaking. Given that the Australian economy has been subjected to powerful international economic forces there are some important characteristics requiring theoretical innovation. Theory is useful in pointing to the relevant questions, relations and issues; not in providing ready-made answers. Ultimately, successful capital history should, as I said earlier, complement labour history. But the writing of class history should not be seen as total history. Rather, it illuminates a central dynamic of capitalism: a dynamic of particular interest to socialist thinkers and activists.
It follows from these comments that capital history as an intellectual project may be assessed in the following way:

- What does it tell us about the process of producing and reproducing surplus value?
- How successfully does it explain specific capitalist economies and branches and firms within that economy?
- What light does it throw on the wider pattern of class relations in their dynamic totality?

With these questions in mind, I shall turn to the contributions in this pioneering Australian work. The collection commences with a short introduction by Drew Cottle explaining the purpose and indicating the content of each essay. A short exposition of the potential of capital history by Ken Buckley follows Cottle's introduction. Buckley illustrates his discussion with reference to his important work on the Burns Philp Company. Despite an assertion that company history should be distinguished from capital history, with the latter embracing a more critical orientation, the purpose of capital history is ill-defined. One turns to the bulk of the remaining essays with the expectation of reading clear examples of the more innovative promise held out by the notion of capital history.

The first substantial essay is John Shield's "Capital, Craft Unions and Metal Trades Apprenticeship in NSW Prior to World War II". As an article, it would not look out of place in Labour History. Its purpose is to investigate the role of apprenticeships in the struggles between metal trades bosses and workers. Shield hoped to throw some light on the (by now vast) literature on deskilling of the labour process and of writings by Australian labour historians on the skilled "Labour Aristocracy". The undermining of craft through job reclassification, the displacement of master craftsmen by boys and the use of piece-rates in the mid-1920s considerably enhanced the powers of employers. The arbitration court conspired to weaken the system on indentures, threatening the privileged labour aristocracy. But, with the shortage of skilled labour experiences during the second war, the skilled unions were able to reassert their earlier controls over skill. We are left wondering about the ambiguous nature of skill for both capitalists and workers and how the vagaries of the capitalist labour market rather than skill per se determines the position of skilled workers. An explanation of the transformation of the labour market, an aspect of a wider pattern of commodity relations indicates the need to venture further into the analysis. The need to move from labour to capital history is demonstrated; the execution not accomplished.

Contrasting with the bulk of the essays, Donaldson et al engage in a regional analysis of contemporary Wollongong, generating in the process an explicit political strategy. The coherence of such an exercise might be questioned at the onset: a regional analysis and strategy must be related to a comprehensive national strategy to have a chance of long-term success. What future exists for socialism in one city? Despite these reservations, at least we are given the outline of how capital history might be attempted and how it directly relates to socialist political practice. At the onset, the dominant economic agents and processes are sketched in. This enables the major trends — monopoly ownership, industrial concentration, plant modernisation, economic integration, workforce rationalisation and declining commodity markets — to be identified. Collectively, they result in regional economic decline and mass unemployment. We are given a sense of the vulnerability of the Wollongong region to national and international market conditions that have shaped the investment, production, management and employment practices of the major economic actors (BHP, CRA, Shell, BP, etc.); a sense pointing to the broad concerns noted above and crucial to capital history.

These developments have generated signs of working class resistance. Marches, meetings, protests and debates within the industrial and political labour movement have occurred. But the optimistic note of the authors seems unwarranted. The encouragement of public and private investment initiatives, the promotion of high technology industries and the formation of local financial co-operatives might be welcomed by those interests (especially small business) fearful of continuing recession. But, in themselves, such initiatives do not mark a break with commodity relations or transform the balance of class forces. Industrial employment could still continue to wither away. Perhaps to invert Gramsci's slogan, optimism of the intellect might result in pessimism of political will.

Chris Cunneen's "Capitalism, the State and Youth" is a most interesting essay but it is not well integrated with the collection's explicit themes. It has much to say about the state's role in contemporary capitalism. He claims that the NSW government is increasingly repressive in its policing against the young unemployed. A strategy of control involving remand centres, community residential care and an anti-terrorist squad point to the dual nature of repression in mobilising high technology and professional counselling. Concurrently, the Child Welfare Act, and a kibbutz solution to unemployment show cynical "concern" by the ruling class with effective social control. One feels Cunneen's well-placed concern and anger at the indifference and response by the employers,
bureaucrats, police and politicians at the wasted lives of the unemployed. Yet, I wonder if the policies and responses of the state are as co-ordinated, coherent and sinister as Cunneen suggests. Does the state have the sort of power and interest in the containment of potential working class rebellion as he maintains? Nevertheless, the essay remains disturbing and powerful. Its real target is the power of the state and its interest in maintaining social order and commodity relations. But the assumption that the state responds to the needs of capital, a valuable hypothesis, is in need of more careful elaboration. The state, like the relations it works to reproduce, is subject to contradictory pressures.

Simms, in an essay on the Liberal Party in Victoria, draws our attention to the characteristic form of "developmental statism" in Australia and its impact on Victorian conservative politics. Simms warns us not to equate post-1945 liberalism with laissez-faire ideology. Victorian liberalism was the political expression of divergent streams of ideas, business interests and branch concerns, not without complex contradiction. Its political success derived from the translation of these divergent class and sectional interests into a politically viable notion of the national interest. To a considerable extent the essay, despite its confused presentation, might be viewed as a variant of Gramscian interpretation of the articulation of the dominant interests of capital, with those of the capitalist class as a whole and with those of the people/nation and their translation into a political program. But Simms' essay leaves unresolved the precise nature of the Liberal Party's relationship to the capitalist economy. It might be said that, until the nature of Australian capitalism is more clearly defined, the question of political power and the role of parties will remain unanswered.

In his "Convicts and Capital — Absences in the Imagery of Early Settlement", Terry Smith demonstrates the pitfalls of non-historical theorising employing an ill-defined conception of early Australian capitalism. Though generating arresting images and provocative assertions, the value of Foucault's influence must be doubted. It is not so much that the characterisation of convictism as punishment, confinement and surveillance is invalid (though John Hirst's Convict Society and its Enemies argues otherwise) but that the direction of these acts of state coercion need delineation. To say, as Smith does, that during the convict period "... the State was interested above all in their (i.e. the convicts) wastage unto death" (p. 74) is to misconstrue the transition towards mercantile capitalism and the various state interventions to produce that result. A preoccupation with power and the multiple sites of domination, the forms of symbolic and pictorial representation and a reliance on Foucault can, when aligned to a political economy of class relations, expand our historical understanding. Freed from historical and class constraints, such an approach creates a bizarre historiography. Unfortunately, Smith does not exploit the approach to greatest advantage.

The concluding essays are concerned with a neglected topic: the nature of rural capitalism in Australia. Geoff Lawrence shows in "The 'Poor Old Farmer' Revisited" why this is central to our perception of class relations as a totality. He attempts to specify the structural conditions which account for the trajectory of recent agricultural developments. The trends he discerns are relevant: the consolidation of rural holdings, increased capital intensity in the production process, an increasingly competitive world market in agricultural commodities and the ascendant position of monopoly capital. The contradictions of rural capitalism result in the emiseration of family farms, the powerful hold of merchants over producers, ecological and environmental damage and growing dependence on the state. State subsidies, taxation, research support and controls over production and marketing have failed to create a co-ordinated approach to rural capitalism. While the purpose of Lawrence's essay is excellent, the structural aspects he considers are not comprehensive. For example, the issues of rent — private and public, differential and absolute — and the provision of rural credit are largely absent. Moreover, the division of labour in rural capitalism, relations of domination in the paid and unpaid labour force and the characteristic form of exploiting women's work are not explored. In short, the analysis is incomplete.

The book concludes with Drew Cottle's "A Compradore Countryside: Rural New South Wales, 1919-1939". It presents an important contrast with the rest of the book by emphasising the powerful links between rural capitalists and British finance capitalists. Cottle argues that the NSW countryside was dominated by a compradore class, acting as "Dependent Allies of Foreign Capital". Cottle argues that this compradore class held control over rural production, exploiting a compliant workforce with assistance from the Australian Workers Union (AWU) and exercising cultural and ideological power. From this powerful economic position sprang an organised politics; parliamentary and otherwise. At the margin of this organised politics arose a rural fascism, a fascism influencing the more respectable face of rural conservatism. Cottle probably overstates the power of reaction and underplays the tensions with class and compradore politics. The value of his approach lies with the emphasis on the political consequences of the high level of Australian economic integration with world capitalism. The success of capital history depends on the investigation of this theme.

As a whole, these essays are worthwhile. They vary considerably in quality and accessibility. To an extent they can be compared favourably with the essays in the Wheelerwright and Buckley volumes. But how well do they succeed as capital history? The answer is just tenuously. In one sense the subject is so broad as to be elusive, even though modest progress towards a clearer definition of capital history emerges in this collection. Lawrence's piece, for example shows the most profitable direction in writing capital history even if the execution is partial. More importantly, the lack of clear conceptualisation, the specification of the subject matter (including the inevitable constraints) and strong collective editorial control are all too evident.
DESIRE AND SEXUALITY

Reviewed by Kim Back and Marilyn McCormack


There's something happening to the debate around sexuality within the Women's Liberation Movement — for a start it's been reopened. Sex is on the agenda again and in a way which breaks the silence (around sexual practice and desire) that has permeated much of the movement in recent years. Desire: The Politics of Sexuality is one of a number of books/articles published recently which address this problem and ask us to re-examine some of the major assumptions which have developed within feminist sexual politics — in this sense it is a very challenging collection of articles.

Desire — in examining the feminist challenge to the oppressive aspects of heterosexuality, marriage, love, romance, role-playing.... shows how some of us have backed ourselves into a corner. The developing implication that we could find our "true" (innate?) women's sexuality by simply (I) liberating ourselves from these oppressive relations produced a stalemate around sexual politics within the movement. A hidden agenda emerged in which the public face of the movement often denounced certain sexual practices as "politically incorrect" while, privately, we struggled to get our often "secret" desire to match our political aspirations.

The original work of the movement to make sex/personal life and a public/political question inspired thousands of women. But this particular aspect of feminist politics became impossible to sustain as valid criticisms of men's power over women (often expressed in sexual relations) developed into fairly rigid moral pronouncements about how women should or should not live their lives. As Rosalind Coward points out in the preface to Desire, what is "at issue here is the question of just how easy (and desirable) it is to proscribe a new form of sexual practice purged of all the patterns of desire characteristic of oppressive heterosexual relations. After all, some women are asking, is sexual desire absolutely the same thing as sexual relations, and if it's not, aren't there ways of changing sexual relations without getting into the quicksand of telling women what they should be feeling?"

It is this dilemma which Desire addresses. The editors and many of their contributors argue for the development of a feminist sexual politics based, not on what desire should be, but rather what it Is — how it is constructed, the power of its construction, if it can be changed, how it can be changed. They argue for a politics which sees these possibilities around desire as historically/culturally and race and class specific. There's a move in the book "towards seeing sexual practices not in isolation but in the context of other social structures. This move is designed to allow us to assess sexual activity, not as being "progressive" or "not progressive" in and of itself, but in relation to other historical forces — the intervention of the state, the power which men have over women, the divisions between races and classes".

The articles in Desire re wideranging and cover such issues as and sexual morality, pornography, fantasy, capitalism and gay identity, the relationship between power and desire and the erotic dimensions of domination/submission. A lot of it is heavy going which doesn't necessarily make it widely accessible, but articles such as "Mass Market Romance: Pornography for Women is Different" by Ann Snitow make for an exciting read as we travel through the "set of relations, feelings and assumptions that do indeed permeate our minds" and account for much of the mass appeal (and big business!) of "Mills and Boon".

The debate with which Desire is concerned has raged over the last few years around such "controversial" issues as sadomasochism, pornography and paedophilia.... but these issues themselves have broader implications for the development of a new sexual politics within the women's liberation movement. We can move beyond the
Impasse of being classified as either "for" or "against" these sexual practices if we are willing to take a much closer look at the complex patterns of power and desire in our sexual relationships.

The section from *Desire* entitled "Domination, Submission and the Unconscious" seeks to explore these complexities in a way which might enable women to recognise/use power and powerlessness for its erotic possibilities — for our own pleasure. In such a schema, heterosexual relations, for example, are not simply power plays by men where women must be condemned for "sleeping with the enemy", but rather can be seen as dynamic relationships which it is possible for women to enter with a relative degree of autonomy, and as strategies around their own personal/sexual pleasure. The article from this section entitled "Master and Slave: The Fantasy of Erotic Domination" by Jessica Benjamin is brilliant and outlines the complex interplay around domination/submission which permeates much of our sexual and personal relationships.

Most importantly — in reading *Desire* you get the feeling of breaking new ground, the argument for a different feminist sexual politics has implications for women's relationship to political change, for differences between women that may be class or race based and for the possibilities of coalition work with other oppressed groups. As Rosalind Coward points out in the preface, "it may seem far fetched to suggest that a discussion of sexual pleasure contains these implications". But the long term effects of such a discussion does open new ground for the women's movement. "It may become possible to talk about feminism once again in terms of attitudes towards friends and work as well as sex, and to be able to evolve politics towards women and the family, and respond to pressing issues such as racism — all issues which have been swamped in the quest for purity of sexual position. It would be pleasingly ironic if, in pursuing an understanding of sex, it should free us from the tyranny of sex."

Kim Back and Marilyn McCormack have been involved politically in health and women's services for a number of years. They have played an active role in union, land rights and anti-racist movements.

**Review of Marvellous Melbourne**

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not want to know their neighbours, and anonymity for them means freedom, not anomie. Others want the isolation provided by an acre block on the edge of the city. Are such preferences beyond the scope of socialism?

How can housing be allocated fairly and efficiently under the shelter title system without the establishment of a large, and possibly authoritarian, bureaucracy? How can supply of housing keep up with demand without the creation of the ugly and depressing mass housing estates which are a feature of existing socialist cities? Any future expansion of the Alternative Melbourne project would have to discuss these issues.

The city is also a political-economic entity, but the collective's discussion of the shape of industry in the future Melbourne is much less adequate than their discussion of the shape of the metropolitan community. They freely admit that their performance in this respect is "disappointing" — something that reflects, not so much their inadequacies as their lack of information, the difficulties involved, and a general failing of the left to come to terms with the problems of industry.

Their general principles of economic organisation are in line with their socialist ideal: A mixed economy, so they argue, will best allow for individual diversity and the general social good. Large industries, especially multinationals, must be brought under the control of the community but, in addition, there will be room for co-operatives and small businesses to respond to the demands of individual consumers. On the other hand, "free market ideology must never be permitted to swamp the conscious promotion of democratically decided values or regulate allocation of resources". How exactly this is to be ensured is left mostly to our imaginations.

The industry section in particular — and to some extent, the whole program — suffers both from being too general and too specific. It is too general in that it never really deals with *Melbourne* — that unique entity with its own history, cultures, landmarks, styles of life. The proposals which are made would apply equally well to virtually any city in the developed world (with the exception of some proposals concerning trams). This generality is, in some respects, an advantage — you don't have to live in Melbourne in order to appreciate and apply the program. But it is also a weakness. Any socialist program which aims to promote both diversity and community should concern itself with the question of how the unique features of a particular city can be preserved and developed. But this is another, much larger, project....

At the same time, the program suffers from its specificity — its attempt to focus on a unit which is merely a dependent part of a much larger whole. Everyone, including the collective, will agree that you can't have socialism in one city. A socialist Melbourne requires, at the very least, a socialist Australia — an economic and political structure which makes possible the kind of developments envisioned for a future Melbourne. Planning a socialist Melbourne depends on planning a socialist Australia.

But that, too, is another project. Formulating a vision of a future socialist society must begin somewhere, and the Socialist Alternative Melbourne Collective have made a credible beginning. In doing so, they have contributed significantly to the achievement of unity among progressive people, which is also the prerequisite of socialism.

Janna Thompson is an academic at Monash University and has a long standing interest in environmental and technological issues.
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MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE

Reviewed by Janna Thompson


In socialist Melbourne, in the year 2000, large industries will no longer be in private hands; their products will be socially useful and environmentally sound. People will live within easy reach of community centres where they will be able to satisfy most of their shopping, eating, social and entertainment needs; there will be little need for private transport. Most people will hold shelter titles to their houses or flats, giving them security of tenure and freedom from interference. Residents will use and collectively manage a large variety of community services and organisations.

These are some of the projections made by the Socialist Alternative Melbourne Collective in their draft document. The ideas are the result of many years of experience as community activists, of discussions with environmentalists, feminists, unionists and many others. The project is based on the assumption that "progressive people from many different areas and backgrounds potentially share common goals and values — a common vision of the future". Make Melbourne Marvelous is an attempt to demonstrate that this assumption is true.

The collective does not claim to be able to take us on an exhaustive tour of socialist Melbourne in the year 2000. Most readers of this booklet will be able to think of ideas that ought to be incorporated, of changes that ought to be made. This process of addition and criticism is what the collective aims to encourage. Socialist Melbourne will not be built — or planned — in a day, or by one collective.

A city is, above all, a community of people, and the collective's vision of the future centres on ideas about how people will live and relate to each other in a socialist city. There are two ideas, in particular, which make the future Melbourne profoundly different from the city as we know it.

• The concept of cluster and connect: housing, local shops, community services and entertainment areas will be clustered around railway stations and/or major tram stops. Every neighbourhood will be connected to the nearest community centre and to the city centre by means of readily available public transport. The self-managed centres provided in each area will not only be able to satisfy most of the health, child care and recreational needs of residents, but they will also bring people together in a collective enterprise — thus overcoming the isolation, self-centredness and "anomie" of present-day city life.

• The concept of shelter titles: houses will no longer be commodities from which profits can be made. Housing will be valued according to its usefulness. Those people who wish to settle down can obtain a shelter title by making payments equivalent to rent until the value of the house is reached. Housing will be varied, catering to different preferences, life styles, stages of life.

Underlying these concepts is the basic premise of the Alternative Melbourne project: that a socialist society should be able to satisfy a plurality of individual needs and preferences — more so than will ever be possible under capitalism — and at the same time promote the development of community ties and environmental awareness. From the point of view of the collective, "From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs" means both the encouragement of community responsibility and an appreciation of individual differences.

Within the framework of this ideal, a number of questions can be raised about the concepts of shelter titles and cluster and connect. Would a city made up of clusters satisfy all individuals? Behind the concept of cluster and connect lies the idea that all of us are villagers in our hearts, and would prefer to establish close relationships with our neighbours if only this were possible. But some people love the cosmopolitan nature of a city; they do...
Reviews

RHETORIC AND REALITY IN KAMPUCHEA

Reviewed by Darryl Bullen


The laziness or incompetence of journalists relying upon "briefings" from the Thai military or "sources" in the US government has resulted in an almost continuous stream of blatantly anti-Vietnamese propaganda in the Western press since 1975. Red Brotherhood at War, by Australian authors Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley, looks instead at the facts behind the continuing conflicts in South East Asia and provides a counter to the unsubstantiated assertions of Vietnamese expansionism and puppet governments in Laos and Kampuchea.

The book, released in early 1985 and launched in Australia by Foreign Minister Bill Hayden, is timely as this year marks the tenth anniversary of the US defeat in Indochina. The victories won in 1975, following years of bitter struggle and ending over a century of foreign domination, sadly turned sour very shortly after the end of the war. The "fraternal people" of the new Democratic Kampuchea (DK), led by the now notorious Pol Pot, began deliberate armed aggression against Viet Nam, culminating in the Vietnamese army entering Kampuchea in December 1978. The relations between Viet Nam and China gradually deteriorated to the point where China invaded Viet Nam from the north without provocation in early 1979 to "teach Viet Nam a lesson", as a result of the Vietnamese action against Pol Pot's government in Kampuchea. Socialist countries in the Asian region, presumably working from a similar ideological framework, were in conflict, leaving the left confused and an opening for the right to exploit.

Evans and Rowley believe that "a major stumbling block to an understanding of events in Indochina is the influence of nationalism". They argue that modern nationalism, a product of colonialist notions being imposed upon traditional societies, is an overriding factor in both communist and non-communist states. They could also argue, but for some reason don't, that Pol Pot's leadership of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) and Democratic Kampuchea seems not to have been inspired by any conventional marxist thought.

Certainly, Pol Pot's deliberate use of anti-Vietnamese racism was in no spirit of socialist international solidarity. (This tactic of inciting racism was also used by Pol Pot's predecessor, the rightwing military dictator Lon Nol.) Evans and Rowley carefully document the events in the Kampuchea-Viet Nam conflict from May 1975 onwards. The brutal attacks on border towns in Viet Nam by DK forces were followed by continued Kampuchean belligerence at the negotiating table.

In 1977-78, DK forces inflicted immense damage in Viet Nam, destroying 25 towns, 96 villages and making over 250,000 people homeless. Then, when dissident Khmers (tens of thousands of Khmers had been executed or died of hunger under the DK regime), along with Vietnamese forces, overthrew the Pol Pot government in January 1979, Pol Pot announced that this justified his propaganda that Viet Nam had always wanted to take over Kampuchea.

This is an argument taken up, not only by Pol Pot and his partners Son Sann and Sihanouk in the so-called coalition government of Democratic Kampuchea, but also by China and a number of governments in the west, notably the USA and the ASEAN countries. Evans and Rowley carefully dissect the myth of post-war Vietnamese expansionism and present valuable evidence of how Viet Nam worked strenuously after 1975 to establish firm economic and political links with the west. Viet Nam was continually rebuffed.

The question of the current level of Vietnamese involvement in the day-to-day affairs of Laos and Kampuchea is an important one. The popular western notion of quisling or puppet governments in Vientiane and Phnom Penh, answerable only to the Hanoi leadership, is not accepted by the authors. They agree that Viet Nam is by far the stronger partner in any
important alliance but it has, on the other hand, generously extended its own limited resources to help Lao and Kampuchean reconstruction. The "Indochina Federation", so often referred to by Pol Pot as evidence of Vietnamese designs for "swallowing up" Laos and Kampuchea, does not exist and has not existed as a viable notion for some thirty years now.

China's role in the Indochina conflict is vitally important, particularly to the future of Kampuchea. China has been arming and funding Pol Pot/DK activities from the Thai border since 1979. Evans and Rowley leave no doubt that China has a lot to answer for in the area of foreign policy. Chinese intransigence has been significant in blocking a peaceful solution to the Kampuchean situation. Since publication of Red Brotherhood, this has amounted, in one instance, to Chinese officials preventing Sihanouk meeting in Paris with a representative of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, the current effective government of Kampuchea. China's premeditated and unprovoked attacks on the north of Viet Nam in 1979 were an unmitigated failure for China, and Evans and Rowley point out that Chinese policy towards Indochina has been counter-productive.

Similarly, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has failed to present a successful policy for peace and stability in the region. Thailand, the ASEAN partner closest geographically to Kampuchea, has, as detailed in the book, been crucial in effecting the policies of China and the USA. It provides the practical means of supplying arms to the Pol Pot/DK group. Having supported the DK in order to force Viet Nam out of Kampuchea, ASEAN was "saddled with the task of sustaining DK as a credible alternative government to the PRK". The authors go on to note that whereas the ASEAN countries, Thailand above all, genuinely wanted to see the Vietnamese withdraw from Kampuchea, the Chinese preferred to see them bogged down in a protracted war (in Kampuchea). As with the chapter on China, the reader is left with the conclusion that ASEAN policy towards Indochina has also been counter-productive, although at least one partner, Indonesia, has been working hard on improving relations with Hanoi.

Finally, conclude Evans and Rowley, the peoples of Viet Nam, Laos and Kampuchea have yet to achieve peace. The authors believe big power politics holds the key to a solution for the problems in the region and optimistically put forward a view that China is unlikely to directly attack Viet Nam while it (China) is seeking to normalise relations with the Soviet Union.

Red Brotherhood at War is an extremely important and well-documented contribution towards understanding the real issues behind the conflict in South East Asia.

The book takes on the perplexing problem of why it is socialist countries have been at war and closely examines some of the mistaken views which have clouded the thinking of the left in this area. The authors seriously challenge whether or not international cooperation between communist governments is even possible, given the overriding influence of nationalism in individual states. In this respect, Red Brotherhood is essential reading, not only for accurate information on the South East Asian conflicts, but also for the continuing debate on East-West and Socialist Community relations.

Evans and Rowley write in a style which is easily readable and their book should be read by all concerned about, or involved in, the future of the peoples of Indochina.

Darryl Bullen currently works for an Australian aid agency. He worked with the Australian Red Cross in the Thai border relief operation in 1979-80 and in April/May 1984 visited Viet Nam and Kampuchea.

Reviewed by Phil Shannon


The colour red of the left was the red of embarrassment as the facts of "Democratic Kampuchea" (DK) under Pol Pot from 1975 to 1979 were revealed with increasing credibility. Michael Vickery's Cambodia 1975-1982 recalls how sceptical western marxists, properly suspicious of the capitalist media, initially dismissed the mass media's portrayal of DK as a "chamber of horrors" as being typical anti-communist words of hate from the mouth of ignorance. Even the more critical marxists tended to rationalise Pol Pot's regime as a "popular, if violent, peasant revolution which was possibly doing the right things in other than the best way" and where large death tolls were probably unavoidable in a country ruined by five years of vicious US war from 1970 to 1975.

When socialist Viet Nam, however, revealed the reality of Pol Pot's terror, a sobered left admitted the worst - that Pol Pot's policies were mostly to blame - and supported the Vietnamese-backed popular uprising against Pol Pot in 1979.

Vickery, an Australian scholar fluent in the Khmer language of Kampuchea, visited that country often from the 'sixties to the 'eighties. His book presents a picture of Kampuchean society built, brick by factual brick, from a vast and varied range of personal interviews conducted by Vickery with refugees and other individuals.
Whereas the “refugee rumour mill” was worked uncritically by western journalists to present a distorted, often false, image of both Pol Pot’s Kampuchea and the current Heng Samrin government, Vickery subjects the refugees’ stories to “close reading”, untangling the propaganda from the factual content.

He rigorously tries to cross-check and verify the refugees’ accounts, rather than simply accept them at face value. A sensitivity to the bias of refugees also demands care in evaluating their claims. Many of the post-‘75 refugees favoured by the mass media are the better-off “who refuse to live with socialism” rather than the poor peasants, of whom there are fewer, and who, after experiencing life in Thailand’s camps under the control of an emboldened US-back Pol Pot, often return to Kampuchea. Also selectively favoured by the capitalist media were those post-‘75 refugees of the urban middle class. Although this class was a special object of attack by Pol Pot, the media fed on the propaganda “news” value of the refugee section of this class, who were “spoiled, pretentious, contentious, status-conscious at worst, or at best simply soft, intriguing, addicted to city comforts and despising peasant life”.

Vickery’s analysis of refugee testimony shows that there was much variation in time, place and extent concerning the deaths, the atrocities, the rigid egalitarianism of communal eating and sleeping, the strict sexual code, the destruction of education, currency, industry, culture and religion, the persecution of doctors and other intellectuals, the forced rural collectivisation, etc. There was a large element of journalistic beat-up for anti-socialist propaganda.

Nevertheless, there were many genuine horror stories; terror and a climate of fear did exist; and, although the death toll (excess, “policy” deaths beyond those that were the “inevitable results” of the US war legacy) of 400,000 was a lot less than the 2-3 million alleged by the anti-Kampuchea propagandists, Vickery rightly stresses that 400,000 murdered people is 400,000 murdered people and this further condemns the Pol Pot regime. The general failure of the DK regime is both evident and huge.

Critical and rigorous analysis — a quality politically incompatible with the plastic superficialities of mainstream journalism and soggy liberal scholarship.

As Vickery’s study of Kampuchea under the current Heng Samrin government shows, a clear and honest view of Kampuchea is more vital than ever because the US now finds Pol Pot good for more anti-communist ends. US policy-makers and their media toadies are waging Pol Pot’s hands clean and rewriting DK’s history with the aim of further blackening and isolating an independent socialist Viet Nam for its “invasion” and “occupation” of Kampuchea. Having only recently identified Pol Pot with Hitler is no obstacle to the US Establishment in revising Pol Pot’s history — having out-Owrelled Orwell’s conceptions of rewriting history (from the days when leading Nazis were sanitised and made acceptable by the US because a reactionary capitalist Germany would prove useful against a European socialism and the USSR), Pol Pot poses no problems. If even Hitler has his uses for the US ...

The US’ transforming of Pol Pot from communist enemy to anti-communist friend demonstrates that capitalism’s love of failed revolutions (Pol Pot’s DK) is outmatched only by its fear of successful revolutions (Viet Nam).

Phil Shannon is a member of the Communist Party of Australia and is currently a public servant in Canberra.
The history of women in music has been the subject of many books. Most concentrate on a few "superstars", usually in only the pop category. Signed, Sealed and Delivered gives a much broader, well researched, feminist view of women in all areas of the music industry from the ‘50s onwards.

Much of the book is based on interviews with women who are musicians, packers, producers and promoters. This approach reflects how differently the industry treats women who are "pre-packaged" stars from those who have approached their work as "real" musicians. The book highlights, however, that it is not only women musicians who have been fighting against this "pre-packaged prejudice".

The authors’ analysis of the political influences in music runs through this book, linking up the sections of the music world (or at least that part of it which comes from the US and UK) with general trends in the western world. This is one of the book’s strongpoints.

The book is also diverse in the range of music styles it explores. Jazz, African, reggae, pop, soul and punk are all reasonably well covered, with pop being the dominant category. The book’s broad coverage of occupations and music styles results in an unfortunate lack of detail and information within some categories — a whole book could be written on each one. The chapter on punk covers a lot of ground in a short space and begins to analyse the nature of the music performed by all-women punk bands during the growth, impact and diffusion of feminism and the ‘70s economic climate. At this time, there was an explosion of women moving into the industry or, rather, creating an industry of their own.

The extent of women’s participation in the industry, both past and present, has brought about a “sense of female” lineage. This book is a good reference to that lineage and gave this budding musician lots of encouragement and insight.

Anne McKillop

Browsing


Contemporary young Sydney writers with their thoughts on the bomb. In an arrangement of poetry, prose and short stories. Their response to the nuclear age makes, at times, fascinating reading. Although it’s not that bleak, is it?


Brings together Aboriginal women’s experiences of a “century of history in fifteen communities scattered from Cape York Peninsula, Arnhem Land and East Kimberley to the Western Desert, The Centre, South Australia, Victoria and NSW.” With an introduction by Judith Wright.


A short, informative and accessible review of the history of IWD in Australia which, incidentally, dates back to 1928. Joyce amassed the text and images while researching other material on women’s history in Australia. She thought it was too good to lie in a filing cabinet — thank goodness she did. A lively tome for your bookshelf.


As a good deal of interesting and exciting research with essays on: Pre-Industrial England (1500-1750), Victorian Spinsters; Dutiful Daughters. Desperate Rebels and the Transition to the New Women; and Brides of Christ and Poor Mortals: Women in Medieval Society, among others. Contains a useful “Suggestions for further reading” index in the back of the book.


If you want to be informed about what’s going on in Central America currently, then this deserves your attention. A group of scholars and activists present such topics as: Towards an Understanding of US policy in Central America, The Soviet Union and Central America, Mexico and the Contadora Plan, Theory and Practice of Revolution: What works in Central America, and Roque Dalton and El Salvador: the intellectual as outlaw.

Available from your usual bookshop or the School of Spanish and Latin American Studies, Universities of NSW, P.O. Box 1, Kensington, NSW 2003.

PATHWAYS TO ACTION: A RESOURCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE. Published by Combined Pensioners Association of NSW with the assistance of the NSW Board of Adult Education. $5.00 for Individuals, $10.00 for Institutions. Six booklets.

In NSW alone, there are just over one million people on pensions and benefits. Compare this with the number of people who are eligible to vote in the state (about 3.4 million) and you have about 33 percent of the voters in NSW on either a pension or a benefit. That’s one hell of a lobby, and the sort of fact that politicians listen to!

Pathways to Action is a publication designed to assist pensioners concerned with the consumer rights to get into community action. The six booklets convey a clear, concise message about how to get organised, keep in touch, find facts, get the message across, and move into action. Available from the Combined Pensioners Association of NSW, Box 14, Trades Hall, Room 27, Goulburn St, Sydney 2000. $5 for individuals, and $10 for institutions.

Wendy Carlisle
IT'S NOT THE RITZ — BUT IT'S HOME: Mt. Druitt Youth Resource Centre. $1.00.

Young people in the Mt. Druitt area recently produced a collection of poetry and prose based on issues around the theme of discrimination; including discrimination against Aborigines, gays and people living in the western suburbs. The book was written entirely by young people as a project of the Mt. Druitt Resource Centre and made possible through a grant and the support of the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Board.

"It's Not the Ritz" is available from the Mt. Druitt Youth Resource Centre. Direct orders or queries to Ali Halil or Steve Warren at the Mt. Druitt Resource Centre, P.O. Box V123, M.t. Druitt Village 2770. Ph: 625.6262.

Tony Westmore


The community of Wollongong has felt the pinch of the current economic recession harder than most. Julianne Schultz tells how the people of Wollongong have had to bear the costs of the restructuring of Australia's manufacturing sector. Designed for corporate benefit, they have left the area in a depressed state with massive unemployment. Local responses to this crisis have had to confront some massive problems, but some bold initiatives have emerged nonetheless.


Trade union banners which once so proudly celebrated working class life have become a much neglected part of our culture. This well-illustrated and researched book attempts to record this rich heritage, from the early Eight Hour Day marches to the present. The powerful use of images to represent working people provides an interesting contrast with recent attempts to revive and reinterpret this tradition.

 Colin Griffith

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