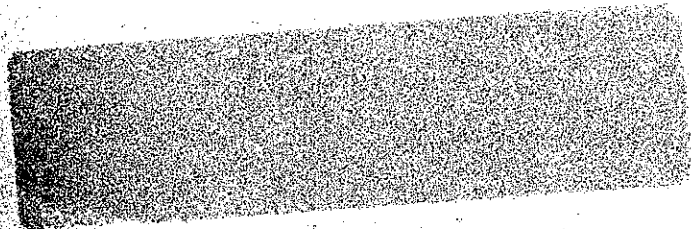


**U.S.G.**

**NEWSLETTER**



**Union of Socialist Geographers**

VOL. 4 NO. 4

### THE SYDNEY LOCAL

USG Australia comprises a Sydney local of ten members and five other people scattered through New South Wales. The Sydney local formed in 1978 after meeting in a Marx reading group for some 18 months. The material explored during the thirty months that the reading group has now met includes a selection of the classics (writings of the early Marx, the Grundrisse and Capital) and a variety of current material on urbanization, housing and the state. We are currently finishing James Becker's Marxian Political Economy.

Many of the members of USG are also in the Sydney Geographical Expedition (see the article within). The expedition has been running a full-time community information centre for 17 months.

Most of the members of USG have recently begun what promise to be long-term, in-depth studies predominantly of the Australian social formation. We would welcome communication from other people with similar interests and include the following list of members and their research/praxis to that end.

- \*Steve Baxter
  1. Rural poverty
  2. Urban expeditions
- \*Katherine Gibson
 

Uneven Development and the Labour Process in Australia.
- \*Ron Horvath
 

Marxism and geography
- Richie Howitt
 

The impact of transnational capital on the political economy of Northern Australia
- Vivienne Milligan
 

A Political Economy of private multi unit housing development in Sydney
- \*Debbie Mitchell
 

State provision of housing in New South Wales
- \*Dave Owen
  1. A Local Theory of the State
  2. Urban expeditions
- \*Peter Rogers
 

Housing and the State
- Frank Williamson
  1. Capital and Rural Australia
  2. Hegemony and the homeless
  3. Philosophical links between phenomenology and Marxism.

Colleen Shipman Librarianship  
 The members whose names are asterisked can be contacted through:

Union of Socialist Geographers, Department of Geography,  
 University of Sydney, Sydney, N.S.W., 2006, Australia.

The address for the other members is:  
 School of Geography, University of New South Wales,  
 P.O. Box 1, Kensington, N.S.W. 2033, Australia.

## GEOGRAPHERS AND PRAXIS

### The Sydney Geographical Expedition

Dave Owen and Steve Baxter.

Past newsletters would indicate a preoccupation on the part of members of the Union of Socialist Geographers with theoretical issues. This has certainly been true of the Sydney local. The Sydney Geographical Expedition (SGE) has, by contrast, attempted to achieve a unity of theory and practice. Although members of the SGE have been engaged in a range of activities in inner-city Sydney during the last three years, it has only been in the last eighteen months that any attempt has been made to link Marxist theory with Expeditionary practice. This has led to a basic level of confidence that a modified form of Expedition can play an important role in a transitional process to socialism. It is contended that if geographers are to be anything more than spectators in a socialist transformation they must recognise the opportunities presented by Expeditionary praxis and endeavour to expand that praxis.

The philosophy of praxis that guides the SGE is best characterised as:

"... consciousness full of contradictions, in which the philosopher himself, understood both individually and as an entire social group, not merely grasps the contradictions, but posits himself as an element of the contradiction and elevates this element to a principle of knowledge and therefore of action."<sup>1</sup>

Geographers must recognize three component concepts within this classic Gramscian notion of praxis:

1. an ongoing search for contexts in which theory and action can unite to bring about,

2. a directed, partisan change - the political emancipation of the working classes, via
3. an acknowledgement of the fundamental importance of the individual as an agent of change within class struggle.

Rarely have geographers been able to identify such contexts, and consequently geographers have rarely asserted any individual integrity as change agents. The SGE is one such context.

A brief indication of the activities of the SGE during these past three years might be useful at this point (a fuller statement on these activities will be the focus of a proposed Antipode article). The development of the SGE falls into three distinct phases. The first phase, beginning in early 1976, was inspired by Bunge's writings on the Detroit Expedition. Activities at this time centred around Sydney's derelict homeless population and a series of projects related to low-income housing. By the middle of 1977 a second phase had begun. This involved the realisation that good intentions combined with existent geographical theory and methodology were an insufficient basis for the geographer as change agent. The requirement at this stage was for more adequate theory and a context where SGE members could involve themselves with the day-to-day experiences of inner-city residents. A Marxist reading group provided the vehicle for the theoretical search, whilst the establishment of a "Community Information Centre", controlled and manned by the Expedition, supplied the necessary learning environment.

The present phase can be characterised as the beginnings of a genuine unity of the theoretical and practical developments of earlier phases. The consolidation of the SGE's role as a

resource group in the inner-city has been accompanied by a fuller understanding of the role of the Expedition within class struggle. Theories of the State, of class, and of ideology have been incorporated into the planning of Expeditionary activities. These activities include the linking of inner-city "community" groups around common issues such as housing, health services and the provision of information. They involve geographers playing a catalysing or organising role utilising experiences gleaned from working at the "community" level. Responsibility for the Information Centre has legitimated the Expedition with local residents and organisations within the inner Sydney region. This has allowed the establishment of SGE members in key positions within such organisations. An ongoing influence with respect to decisions made by these bodies is thus ensured and a range of further opportunities for the geographer's praxis is facilitated.

Four lessons have emerged from the Sydney experience as crucial components in the identification of these opportunities:

1. Geographers have for too long assumed that their contribution to a given change movement is delimited by the skills they possess as geographers. It is contended that a more appropriate model is Gramsci's "organic intellectual" - one who is "leading" and "representative" in the crucial respect of being part of the daily existence of the working classes. To be effective, the intellectual must become an organic part of the working class so as to be able to articulate new values, new explanations within the shared language and symbols of the larger culture. These explanations must not be limited to the insights of the geographer. It is perhaps worth noting that the second stated aim of the U.S.G. itself is "developing

geographic theory to contribute to revolutionary struggle". The first struggle must still be against disciplinary fetters.

2. Despite geographers' attempts to bring about change by working within government instrumentalities and planning bodies, there has been comparatively little recognition of the State as a basic category in any analysis of such change, and few attempts to understand the role of the State within a given social formation. Arguably, the Detroit Expedition suffered from an inadequate conception of the repressive potential of State apparatuses. Sydney has learned from the North American experiences in this regard and has devoted much of its time to the establishment of a legitimating base for its operations.

3. Too often when geographers have attempted to bring about change they have done so within a structure of "community action". The role of the term "community" within the operations of the State in advanced capitalism must be critically evaluated. It is suggested that the North American Expeditions did not examine the dangers and expectations that accompany "community". The SGE attempts to use the concept rather than be dominated by it.

4. Geographers who have turned to Marx in their search for an understanding of praxis opportunities have typically neglected the action component of their praxis. This appears to stem from the mistaken belief that change within capitalism can only flow from action at the point of production, the factory floor, where the primary contradiction between capital and wage labour is located. The SGE sees this as overly extreme and contends that there exists considerable potential for revolutionary struggle within the sphere of reproduction. The geographer will find no

shortage of opportunities for praxis on this "new terrain of class struggle".

Space does not permit the further explication of these four points. It is perhaps worth noting, though, a trend emerging within the U.S.G. Newsletter and Antipode: not only is there an imbalance towards theory at the expense of the description and justification of practice; the theory emerging is inadequate as a basis for the development of strategies for class struggle. The first stated aim of the U.S.G. is "organising and working for radical change in our communities". If, as is likely, U.S.G. members are operationalising this objective, where are the write-ups?

USG members interested in further information on the SGE are invited to write to the following people. We would greatly appreciate hearing from geographers involved in similar struggles.  
DAVE OWEN or STEVE BAXTER  
C/- CHIPPENDALE COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE  
64 PINE ST., CHIPPENDALE, N.S.W. 2008  
AUSTRALIA.

**Notes:**

1. Gramsci, A., quoted in Boggs, C. "Gramsci's Marxism" Pluto Press, London, 1976, p. 30.
2. The title of Chpt.6 of Cynthia Cockburn's "The Local State: Management of Cities and People", Pluto Press, London, 1978.

### EASTOWN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

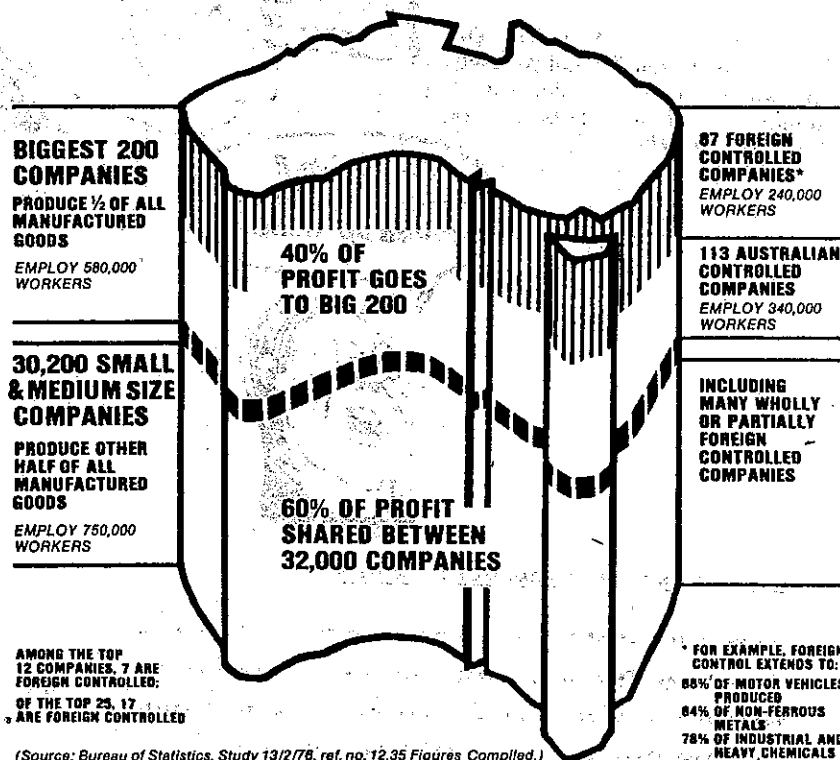
One of the little publicized, though immensely successful community development programs in the tradition of geographical expeditions is going on in Eastown, a suburb of Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A. Started by Thomas W. Edison of the Department of Geography of Aquinas College in 1972 using methods developed by Bunge, Alinsky, and Kotler, Eastown went through a remarkable transformation owing to the institution building that transpired during the next seven years. The history of the project and the methods used are reported in: Easley, L.A. and Edison, T.W., Eastown, Battle Creek, Michigan, U.S.A.: Kellogg Foundation, 85 pages. You may obtain a FREE copy by writing to: The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 400 North Ave., Battle Creek, Michigan 49016, U.S.A.

### SOME FACTS ON THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL FORMATION

#### Some facts about these Multinational or Transnational Corporations

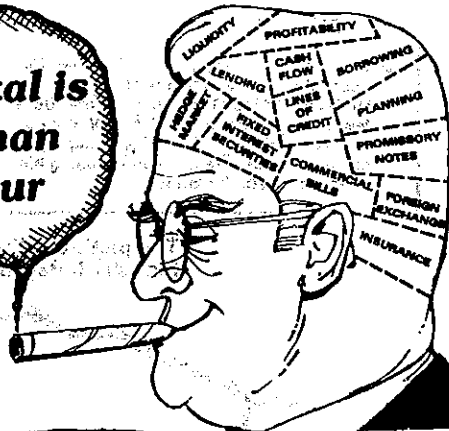
- Who are they? They are household words. Esso, Shell, General Motors, Ford, Unilever, Philips, Goodyear, to name just a few. If you use a radio, watch a TV, drive a car, use washing powder, dial a telephone, etc. the chances are that you are using the products of a multinational.
- By the year 2000 some 300 firms will control three quarters of the assets of the non-communist world. (Source: N McGuiness (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris))
- Many multinational companies handle more goods and services than the entire economies of many countries. (Source: Fortune Magazine.)
- Most multinational companies are growing at a faster rate than any national economy. (Source: Fortune Magazine.)

The picture in the manufacturing industry today looks like this:



"I think it is about time we all came to understand that if each of us is paid according to his or her worth we will very soon bankrupt this country" - Mr. Fraser, Prime Minister of Australia.

**Remember, capital is nothing more than stored-up labour**



(Statement by J. H. Grief, Vice President of Exxon, Esso of Australia, the world's most profitable corporation.) (Source: Nucleonics Week, December 19th, 1976).

**Good 'grief!' A touching piece of 'stored up' honesty**



SOME FACTS ON THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL FORMATION

- The wealthiest 1% of the population owns 22% of the total wealth.
- The wealthiest 5% of the population owns 46% of the total wealth.
- The wealthiest 10% of the population owns 60% of the total wealth.
- 50% of Australians own less than 8% of the total wealth.
- The richest 2,000 people in Australia own as much as the poorest 2 1/2 million Australians.

(Source: P. Raskall Journal of Aust. Pol. Econ. No. 2 1978).

52% of the value of Australian real estate is owned by 10% of Australians.

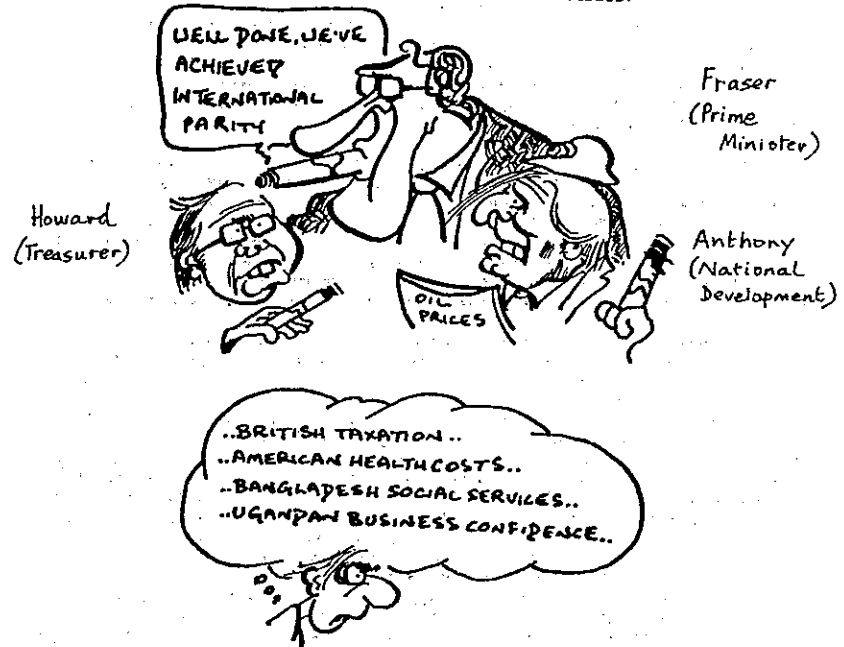
Ten years ago 9 in every 10 people could afford to pay off a house. Now only 2 out of 10 can do it.

10% of adult Australians receive 92% of all the income received from interest, rent and dividends paid on shares.

56.4% of workers earn less than the average weekly earnings of \$180.00 (Aug. 1978 figures).

While men in Australia have average weekly earnings of \$203 per week the average for working women is \$136 per week.

64% of all Australians are employed in service industries.



The number of unemployed in Australia has steadily climbed from 91,600 in May 1973 to about 451,000 in January, 1979. (These are the official A.B.S. figures).

In May 1977 the A.B.S. found that there were 411,900 workers who were not regarded by the Bureau as being the workforce but who still wanted a job.

This means that at least 862,900 Australians cannot find a job - about 13% of the labour force is unemployed. (Source: "Australia Ripped-off" A.M.S.U., 1979.)

## THE AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY MOVEMENT

Katherine Gibson.

Until 1976 Australia's relatively active labor movement and worker-based political groups on the left had not been offset by any similar organizations within the academy. The intellectual leadership of left groups came from the rank and file members perhaps aided by isolated contributions from individual academics sympathetic to the cause. Leftists in the ideological bastions of Australia (the universities, colleges of advanced education and technical colleges) had not 'surfaced' in any organized form and their voices were represented or mis-represented only by specific individuals. The First Australian Political Economy Conference was held in Sydney in June 1976 and the organizers were overwhelmed by the response. Fifteen hundred people attended to hear papers given by Australian political economists and the four international guests - Sam Bowles, Herb Gintis, Ian Gough and Ed Nell. The outcome of the conference was the formation of the Australian Political Economy Movement an organized and formal voice for radical academics, teachers and students interested in understanding Australian capitalism.

Since that tumultuous beginning the APEM has sponsored annual conferences, published a *Journal of Political Economy* and its members have directed their efforts to the institution of more radical undergraduate courses within the establishments of higher education. The majority of members come out of the disciplines of Economics, Political Science and increasingly Sociology and whilst the movement is largely based in the educational institutions, trade union and labor movement support has always been present. How did the movement begin and what exactly is its practice?

Ironically, the beginnings of APEM could well be attributed to the concerted efforts of some of the most reactionary and right wing academics in the Australian universities. Let me elaborate. The first Australian Political Economy conference was the culmination of six years of struggle within the Department of Economics at the oldest and perhaps most establishment of the Australian universities, the University of Sydney. In 1970 the Department was joined by two economists strongly schooled in the quantitative applications of neo-classical and Keynesian economics. Entering a department which had been moulded along British lines to teach a relatively descriptive, institutionalist form of economics that focused on the Australian economy, the new brooms were eager to sweep the place clean. Proposals were made to introduce a totally new course structure centred on micro and macro-economic theory heavily oriented towards quantitative techniques and applications. American Friedmanism was to replace British institutionalism. Finally at the ideological level a parallel was developing to that process which had already been successful within the Australian economy, namely the replacement of British imperialist interests by those of America.

This proposed sellout was not acceptable to some of the more radical students and faculty who were anxious that the Department maintain some of the alternative courses in order to supplement the highly abstract theory with considerations of the real world economy. Their initial demand was merely for some alternative courses. However as the conservatives within the Department strengthened their determination to resist any opposition to their new courses, so the student movement became progressively more radical and determined in their demands to see Political Economy courses taught along side the orthodox micro-, macro-theory and international Trade courses. A bitter struggle ensued punctuated by student strikes and

junior faculty sackings, and culminating in an Economics Faculty enquiry and a University administration enquiry. The outcome was the incorporation of a Political Economy stream within the Department of Economics through which students are allowed to study alternatives to mainstream economics including Institutional and Marxian approaches. The victory was a qualified one. Had the Department been split as was proposed by the Economics Faculty but vetoed by the Administration, the political economists would have had the autonomy to introduce new courses without a fight, to appoint radical teachers and to supervise students at the Honours and post-graduate levels. As it stands these rights are denied the Political Economists at Sydney.

The struggle did, however, have a widespread effect on the consciousness of students and faculty and provided the genesis for the broader based Australian Political Economy Movement whose members are not limited to Sydney or to Economics. APEM has no particular political line other than its members are all leftists. The types of papers presented at its conferences reflect the eclectic nature of its members' interests. For example:

The Political Economy of Australian Capitalism  
 Australian Neo-colonialism in Indonesia  
 Racism and Sexism in Australia  
 Industrial Rationalization and the Trade Unions in Australia  
 Energy and Resources in Australia

The major practice, apart from organizational, of the movement is directed at the teaching of political economy. Sydney University, for example, has 500-600 students in PE each year and the courses continue to be taught under the pressure of a still largely unsympathetic Department and Administration.

So far there has been no significant move towards APEM by radical geographers in Australia. One would hope that this will change in the future as radical geographers begin to transcend the fetters of their disciplinary boundaries. The existence of a forum for cross-disciplinary debates amongst radicals is important not only for the flow of information and support that it facilitates but also because of the potential base it provides for more concerted organization by academics and students in the political sphere. In this period of economic crisis in Australia the vulnerability of the material basis for radical theoretical work is evident as junior faculty are denied any job security and post-graduate research is barely funded. As the future for radical research within the academy grows progressively dimmer owing to the contraction of tertiary educational establishments, one could hope that such an organization like APEM will grow to become a focus for more than theoretical action and resistance.

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My thanks are due to Greg Crough and Frank Stilwell of the Department of Economics, Sydney University for their help and information regarding APEM and the political economy struggle. I am, however, totally responsible for the final content of the article.

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## URBANIZATION IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Katherine Gibson and Vivienne Milligan.

A discussion centred around *Cities Unlimited* by L. Kilmartin and D.C. Thorns, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1978, 195 pages, pa, \$A6.95.

Australia and New Zealand are urbanized nations. A high proportion of their populations live in urban areas which are dominantly large, primate seaboard cities (Figures 1 & 2).

Figure 1: Urban Population Growth of Australia and New Zealand in the Post-Second World War Period. Source: Kilmartin & Thorns, *op cit*, p46.

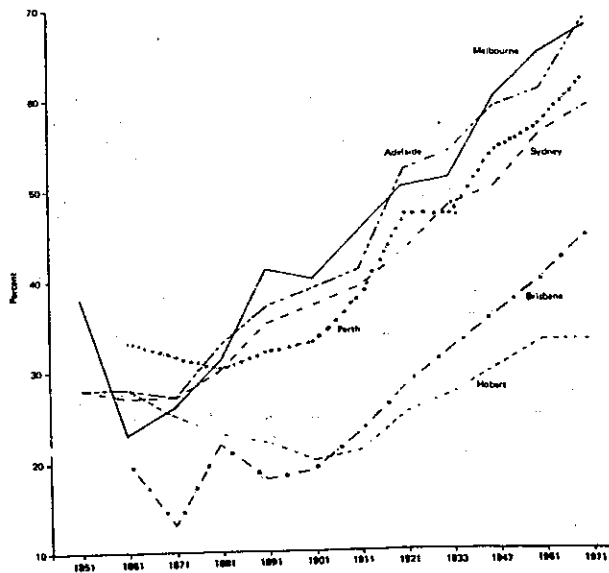
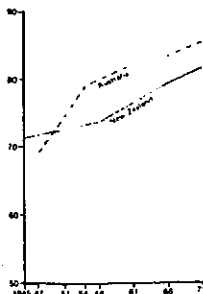


Figure 2: Capital City Population as a percentage of Colonial/State Population: 1851-1971. Source: Neutze, 1977, p 9

Both countries display some of the world's highest rates of home ownership (Figure 3) but, whilst the average<sup>1</sup> family 'owns' (or is tied to a lifetime of paying off) its home, the stark residential differentiation and segregation of our urban areas highlight the inequalities of resource distribution existing in our seemingly affluent society.

Figure 3: Home ownership rate and rank order of per capita gross national income of selected industrial societies, 1971. Source: Kilmartin & Thorns, *op cit*, p22.

Country	Percentage of owner-occupied dwellings	Rank order of GNI per capita
Iceland	70.8	12
Australia	68.7	8
New Zealand	68.1	14
United States	62.9	1
Canada	55.9	3
Belgium	55.9	11
Britain	50.1	16
France	43.3	10
Sweden	35.5	2
West Germany	34.3	5
Switzerland	27.9	4

Indeed the current urban crisis in Australia<sup>2</sup>, notably manifest in chronic unemployment, especially of youth, in the outer western suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne, rapidly escalating housing prices and a severe shortage of rental accommodation<sup>3</sup>, has served to remind us that the urban poor and disadvantaged are a significant and growing population.

Kilmartin and Thorns in attempting to begin a debate on the nature of urbanism in Australia and New Zealand from the perspective of the 'new urban sociology' fail to adequately come to grips with the intriguing and contradictory phenomena that characterise the uniquely urban nature of these social formations. Despite their failure it is not the purpose of this discussion to concentrate narrowly upon the inadequacies of this recent contribution to the growing number of attempted alternative or radical approaches to social science research in Australasia. Instead we wish to use this discussion as a vehicle for informing an international audience about some of the specificities of capitalism 'down-under' and the sorts of questions that need to be posed and analyzed in order to understand them. In addition, the brief review and critique of *Cities Unlimited* that follows next is intended to provide our readers with some sense of the 'state of the art' of radical work, in this instance in sociology, in our part of the world.

*Cities Unlimited* is written as a comparative study of the urban structure of Australia and New Zealand with the intention of providing "illustration and development of the theoretical insights of the new urban sociology rather than simply a description of urbanization in the two countries"<sup>4</sup>. This emphasis has determined the selection of issues and the structure of the book so that it proceeds from theoretical and historical beginnings (Chapters 1, 2 and 3) to four chapters on the "macro structure" of the cities where the ownership and control of the central business district, the suburban land development process, urban planning and urban housing systems are the focus. In the final chapters the city is viewed from the "perspective of the consumer"; first as a set of social relationships and second as the focus of social action. We have many criticisms to make of the way in which Kilmartin and Thorns have dealt with their stated topic. However, the three we have selected to discuss are those which may be applied to much of the new and so-called 'alternative' approaches to social science research being published recently.



**First:** perhaps the most crippling of the limitations of Kilmartin's and Thorns' beginning debate is given away by the book's subtitle "The Sociology of Urban Development in Australia and New Zealand." The work exemplifies new urban sociology with quotations from the writings of Castells, Harvey and Mingione. These theorists operate within a holistic framework which identifies the dominant structural economic relations of capitalism that underlie and interact with political and ideological levels. The implication of their work is that any disciplinary confinement of analysis and exposition to only one of these levels would automatically render the work partial and misleading. Yet Kilmartin and Thorns are stubbornly 'sociological' in their approach to urbanization in Australasia. Their analysis is dominantly at the ideological level. The spirit rather than the structure of capitalism is elevated to central importance. While there is recognition of the relation of our society's dominant values to its capitalist structure, the latter is never analyzed in terms of economic and political relations.

**Second:** the brevity and consequent superficiality of *Cities Unlimited* is at variance with the breadth of the authors' initial aim. As an example, consider their treatment of the role of the state in urban development. This acknowledged complex and important question is raised under the heading "urban planning". The one page theoretical discussion culminates in this position: "there is widespread agreement from all points of view that the state operates to co-ordinate and 'keep the system running'". Thus on to description of types of government intervention in planning, provision of state housing and urban service provision in Australia and New Zealand!

**Third:** constrained by the space and disciplinary boundaries of their own making Kilmartin and Thorns can never reconcile the disparate views that their 'new' theoretical sources display (Marx versus Weber, for instance), let alone integrate these back into orthodox sociological thought (the publishers vain claim!). They give the reader a confusing pot pourri of concepts and ultimately lapse back into traditional theory giving emphasis to notions like the "revealed preferences" of urbanites. As an example of this betrayal of their purpose consider a paragraph (taken from the concluding chapter of the book) which purports to explain the dominance of the motor car in our urban societies.

"A dominant role was played in the growth of cities in Australia and New Zealand by the motor car. The car reflects the basic contradictions between communalism and privacy. Many of the choices that Australians and New Zealanders make are for greater privacy, more individualism and more separateness, rather than for more communalism. This is demonstrated both by their housing aspiration - for the single-family, owner occupied home on its own block of land, and by the central place given to the private car. The car is in many ways the most compelling symbol of contemporary urban life, it releases individuals from dependency on others for mobility and allows them to establish their own unique set of pathways through the city. It also produces a reaction from the city, which must cater for the needs of the carborne individuals who no longer live within a specific locality but see the total urban place as within easy reach. The high rate of car possession results in strong demands being placed upon the urban system for accessibility by car and for improved transport circulation, which means wide roads and freeways despite their social and economic costs".

Such 'theoretical insights' are indistinguishable from those offered by the mainstream sociology that Kilmartin and Thorns wish to separate themselves from. Paradoxically their book contains a good, comprehensive bibliography on urban theory and urbanization in Australia and New Zealand including much of the newer more radical theoretical and empirical work. Yet the influence of the authors' claimed reference group, the more radical new urban sociologists, seems in the last analysis to be barely noticeable in the content and conclusions of *Cities Unlimited*. The book suffers from the lack of a coherent theoretical framework that generates directed questions and focuses the discussion both theoretically and empirically. Having noted this lack we would like to proceed with a discussion which we feel may get closer to the essences of urbanism in this part of the world and begin to provide such an organizing framework

What are the questions about the Australasian form of urbanization under capitalism that need to be addressed by radical researchers be they new urban sociologists, radical geographers or political economists?

It would seem that to fully understand the present nature of urbanism we must look to the historical roots of the phenomenon and ask what role did urban development play in the establishment and growth of a capitalist mode of production in these countries? The population of Australia, since its colonial beginnings, has been dominantly urban despite relatively late development of traditionally capitalist production. Consider this contradiction: in 1891, when only 16% of the workforce was employed in manufacturing and manufacturing goods contributed only 10% of the nation's total output, 66% of the population lived in cities. Colonization had brought the immediate integration of our countries into the world capitalist economy. Primary produce was supplied by Australia and New Zealand to the United Kingdom and in exchange finance capital was invested by the 'centre' in the 'periphery'. Much of this investment was channelled into Australia's urban development. Our original question can thus be extended: considering the integration of the Australasian economies into the global economy, how can the built environment in these countries be seen as an artifact of the global capitalist system and its investment patterns rather than of dominantly local activity?

As well as these broad historical questions which prepare the way for a full and balanced analysis of the complexity of urbanization, more specific questions should be asked. These must relate to the particular features of urban development such as the oppressively dominant single family owner-occupied suburban bungalow on its quarter-acre block. What are the political economic bases for the homogeneity of this housing form? This question opens up a Pandora's box of detailed considerations at the economic, political and ideological levels. Only a limited number of these are recognised by Kilmartin and Thorns.

Suburban development and associated speculation are extremely sensitive components of the Australian economy having a history of booms and slumps closely related to the wider economic conditions of production and investment at the national and international levels. (Figure 4).

It would seem that at the economic level careful analysis of the central role of the construction industry and related activities like land development will contribute to an understanding of the reasons for the dominance of our land and resource hungry form of residential development. Also at the economic level, the increasingly important role of finance capital in supporting the high ownership rate and the high speculative turnover of dwellings must be carefully considered.

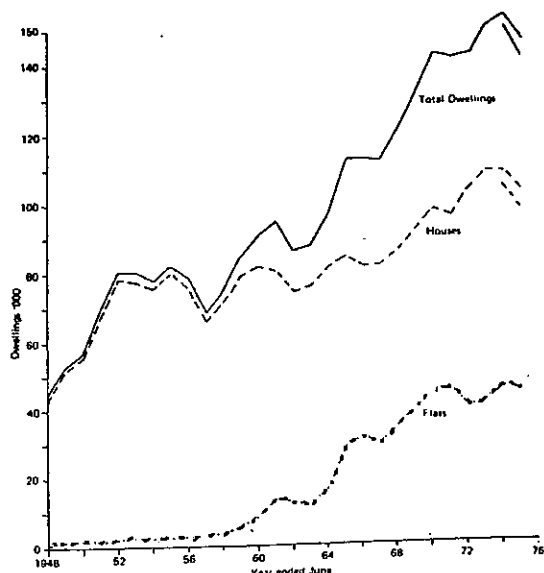


Figure 4: Completions of Dwellings: 1947-1975. N.B. Lower lines for 1974-5 exclude alterations and additions. Source: Neutze, 1977 *op cit*, p145.

At the political level the contradictory activities of the state in relation to urban development include, on the one hand active support through favourable planning, fiscal and monetary policies while on the other, a long history of government promotion of policies of decentralization of industrial and residential development. It may be that the different and sometimes conflicting state functions of accumulation and legitimation can be demonstrated very effectively through an analysis of the history of state involvement in Australia and New Zealand.

Finally, at the ideological level, the dominance of the aspiration for private ownership of property in the form of a home, upon which Kilmartin and Thorns place so much emphasis is truly an interesting and real manifestation of the social relations of capitalism in these countries. On the surface the material wealth of the Australian working class appears substantial - they have successfully gained the right to a small slice of the economic pie. One important ideological question that must be asked of this is to what extent home ownership and mortgage repayments act as a de-radicalizing influence on the working class? Also it must be recognized that the obvious dominance of the aspiration for and belief in home ownership masks the realities of the real distribution of resources in these countries. Despite the high percentage of home ownership in major cities social differentiation is manifest in marked residential segregation in terms of accessibility, environmental amenity, disposable income and level of service provision. And what of the non-home-owners, whom Kilmartin and Thorns completely ignore? Tenants, inadequately housed, are concentrated in clearly differentiated groups - the aged, aborigines, single-parent families, migrants and low-income earners - the 'undeserving poor'.

An adequate understanding of the urban question in Australia and New Zealand can only come from a truly historical materialist perspective which, whilst recognizing the importance of ideology (values and aspirations in sociological jargon) probes beneath these to their historical and economically based roots. Kilmartin and Thorns have begun their break away from mainstream sociology but as yet their analysis of why our cities certainly appear to be unlimited remains constrained by the shackles of their parent discipline. Furthermore, no worse an empirical account of Antipodean urbanism can be gleaned from a number of earlier publications most of which were not self-consciously radical.<sup>10</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. Some 80% of high income earners and 55% of lowest income earners are homeowners - quoted in Kemeny, J. "A Political Sociology of Home Ownership in Australia". *ANZJS*, 13, p56.
2. By virtue of our limited experience and knowledge of New Zealand much of the following discussion and, in particular, the examples used focus on Australia.
3. Regular newspaper reports over the last 18 months have contained accounts of striking annual increases in house prices - for instance, 25% in some areas of Sydney in 12 months. See, for example, Haselhurst, D. "At last - A Recovery in House Prices", *The Bulletin*, April 3rd, 1979, pp88-89. The Real Estate Institute of N.S.W. reports current vacancy levels for rented property at record low levels around 1.8% in Sydney, 1979.
4. Kilmartin and Thorns, *op cit*, p19.
5. *ibid*, p88.
6. *ibid*, p164-165.
7. *ibid*, p39.
8. David Clark postulates 'unequal exchange' in his paper "Unequal Exchange and Australian Economic Development: an Exploratory Investigation" in Wheelwright, E.L. & Buckley, K. *Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism*, V3, 1978, Australia and New Zealand Book Company, Sydney.
9. See Jones, M.A. *Housing and Poverty in Australia*, 1972, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.
10. See, Burnley, J.H. (ed) *Urbanization in Australia*, 1974, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.  
Neutze, M. *Urban Development in Australia*, 1977, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney.  
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## THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DOMESTIC LABOUR DEBATE

Colm Regan and Hilda McGrath, recent visitors from Ireland, upon seeing the Horvath's (second-hand) dishwasher made some disparaging remarks about the foolishness of such items. Colm may even have muttered about the unrevolutionary nature of such appliances, but observers are uncertain on this point. "But it saves time," a wounded Horvath replied "It does not," was the response from the Irish.

Very quickly the debate moved to a theoretical level: does raising the technical composition of the domestic labour process provide the basis for liberation from domestic drudgery? Do dishwashers increase social alienation? Vigorous debate ensued. With no resolution emerging, it was decided that the matter would be settled empirically. (Scratch a Marxist geographer, find a positivist?) Enthusiasm for data collection lasted four days with the following results obtained

Low Technical Composition of the Labour Process		High Technical Composition of the Labour Process	
Day 1	100 CPM*	Day 3	40 CPM
Day 2	52 CPM	Day 4	41 CPM
Average	76 CPM		75.5 CPM
ANNUAL SAVINGS:		14,782 minutes**	
		246 hours	
		10 days	

Debate then ensued on the validity of the experimental conditions, the size of the sample, the quality of the work\*\*\*, etc. Theoretical debate resumed.

Ronald J. Horvath

\*Congealed People Minutes

\*\*All data have been checked on an IBM 3060 to within .00% megatrons and no errors remain

\*\*\*Soapsuds were frequently found as a by-product of the labour process involving low technical composition.

"While the working class has... of late, assiduously avoided Marx, Marxism has become the opiate of the intellectuals" (a well known Marxist geographer).

Has Marxism become the opiate of the intellectuals?

## REVIEW : MARXIAN THEORIES OF THE STATE

A Critique of Orthodoxy - Boris Frankel  
(Arena Monograph No. 3, Arena Publications, Melbourne, 1978)

In the past decade the problem of the State in capitalist society has become one of increasing interest to Marxists in all countries. This has been largely in response to the increasing penetration of all spheres of society and the economy by government agencies and programs. Also the rapid growth of the public sector bureaucracies relative to the size of the productive sectors of the economy has further highlighted the importance of the State in contemporary capitalism. The myths of traditional bourgeois social and political science concerning the State have tended to predominate until the recent upsurge in Marxist analyses. More and more Marxists are coming to see the State as crucial in any attempt to understand the capitalist mode of production and its attendant social relations. Unfortunately, much of the recent work has tended to rely on outdated concepts and analyses of distinct social formations.

This short monograph by Boris Frankel has bravely attempted to identify the salient errors and inadequacies of Marxian theories of the State, and to offer guidelines and concrete suggestions as to the way to proceed in the future. It is an excellent critique, although some of his solutions are not fleshed out and some of the argument is vague and disjointed at times. Most of the more telling criticisms remain to be answered in the future analyses of the State by Marxists.

In his introduction Frankel poses several crucial questions which form the basis of his critique. What is the nature of the capitalist State? Is the distinction between the State and civil society still valid and useful? What determines the size, mode of production and the logic of reproduction of the State? Does the State merely maintain the capitalist mode of production or does it exacerbate its contradictions? Also the notion of the historical specificity of the capitalist state to a particular social formation is noted but not explored in any depth.

This historical specificity mitigates against the possibility of a theory of the capitalist 'state-in-general'. Of course, some of the roles and structures of capital are common to many capitalist societies throughout the world. But, the individuality of specific social formations must be recognized and analysed if meaningful and effective action is to result. The understanding of capitalism as a global phenomenon should not obscure the uneven development of capitalist social relations (especially at the political level) as has been the case in the past.

There is a critical need to analyse correctly the nature of the state apparatuses. Such a task cannot be left to mere restatements of the classical positions of Lenin and Gramsci, for example. The notion of the State as a solely repressive apparatus may be true in a period of acute crisis, but how does it apply in periods of state (and capitalist) expansion? The concept of the State as a disseminator of bourgeois cultural hegemony demands an analysis of the content and impact of the dominant ideology and of possible counter-hegemonic strategies.

Frankel attributes much of the incompleteness of State analyses to the failure to examine the internal structure of the State and the relations between State and capital. He criticizes the Frankfurt School for concentrating almost solely on cultural matters and ignoring the political economy of the State. At the opposite extreme, the political economists like Baran

and Sweezy, Dobb, Mandel, and Braverman fail to see the State as anything more than a subservient appendage to the capitalist class and the productive sector in general. Both schools of thought relegate the state to the position of a monolithic superstructure which either assumes total power in the end stages of the capitalist era, or intervenes on behalf of the bourgeois at times of crisis.

The base/superstructure dichotomy has tended to pervade most Marxian theories of the State. It "has only clouded up attempts to resolve the relationship between state and civil society and class power and state power" (Frankel, p.19). The famous Miliband/Poulantzas debate, although clearing the air on many issues, failed to resolve these problems. Equally the Althusserian notion of the economic sphere being determinant 'in the last instance' relegates all non-economic institutions to the relatively powerless superstructure without providing any indication of the manner in which it relates to the base.

A partial solution, as Frankel sees it, to these problems lies in the work of the so-called State Sector theorists, like O'Connor, Habermas and Claus Offe. They directly analyse the political economy and hegemony of the state apparatuses and their role in the capitalist mode of production. Unfortunately, much of the discussion of these theorists is overly brief, but a good reference list is provided in the footnotes. Several important issues are raised. These include.

- the specificity of the historical context of the State
- the re-politicization of the mode of production because of the weakening of exchange relations by state initiatives
- a delimitation of competitive, monopoly, state, and residual labour power sectors in advanced capitalist societies
- the interrelationships between these sectors
- the manner in which state apparatuses exacerbate the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production.

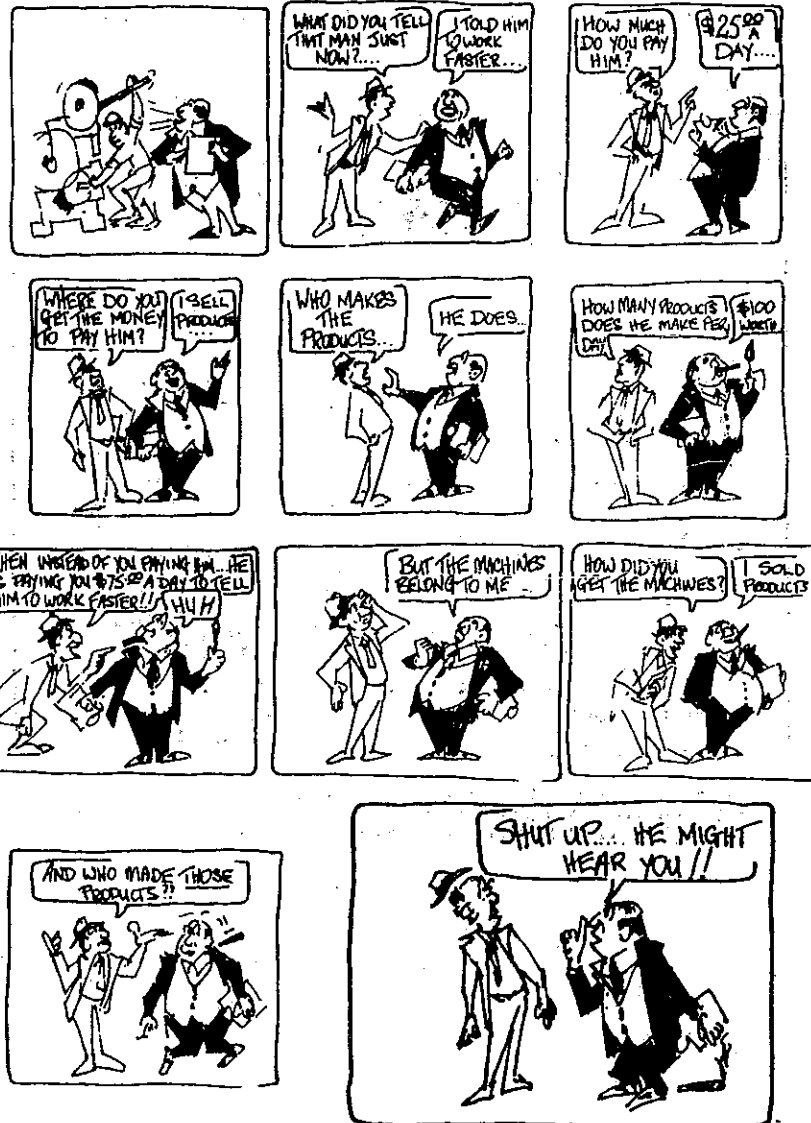
Most important, perhaps, is the idea that the capitalist state "is not unambiguously reproducing capitalist social relations" (Frankel, p.50). The expanding production and distribution of social use-values by the State is largely contrary to the interests of productive capital, which is founded upon exchange relations. Despite the undoubted benefits that the capitalist class derives from the State, its position may still be threatened by both the internal contradictions of capitalist production (as documented by Marx) and the contradictions that are generated by the state apparatus.

Even at the level of the dissemination of bourgeois ideology by the State, contradictions may arise. Gramsci when he developed the notion of cultural hegemony failed to clarify what it actually represented. Frankel argues the 'pure' bourgeois ideology is not the dominant ideology in capitalist society. Rather the dominant ideology is "a 'hybrid' bourgeois hegemony living parasitically off the remnants of pre-bourgeois social relations (i.e. sexism, racism, religion, myth)". Capitalist states in disseminating bourgeois ideals of liberty and equality (irrespective of the actual conditions that exist) conflict with the residual pre-capitalist forms which are basic to capitalist exploitation. This it is important to grasp the exact nature of the dominant ideology in each social formation and confront it with a counter-hegemonic ideology. "If socialists do not make explicit broad universalistic socialist principles then there is no way of evaluating how political action is either overthrowing repressive, unjust social practices, or reproducing these pre-capitalist and bourgeois relations...." (Frankel, p.55).

The criticisms of orthodox Marxian theories of the State made by Frankel in his brief monograph may appear self-evident to some. However, they need to be acted upon in the future to develop a coherent theory of State formations and the strategy by which both they and capitalist social relations may be transcended. Frankel's critique is a thought-provoking essay on an issue of extreme importance to Marxist theoreticians and activists. The monograph is available from:

Arena Publications,  
P.O. Box 36,  
Greensborough, 3088,  
Victoria, Australia.  
(Aust. \$1.50, incl postage)

Peter Rogers.



## URANIUM MINING IN AUSTRALIA

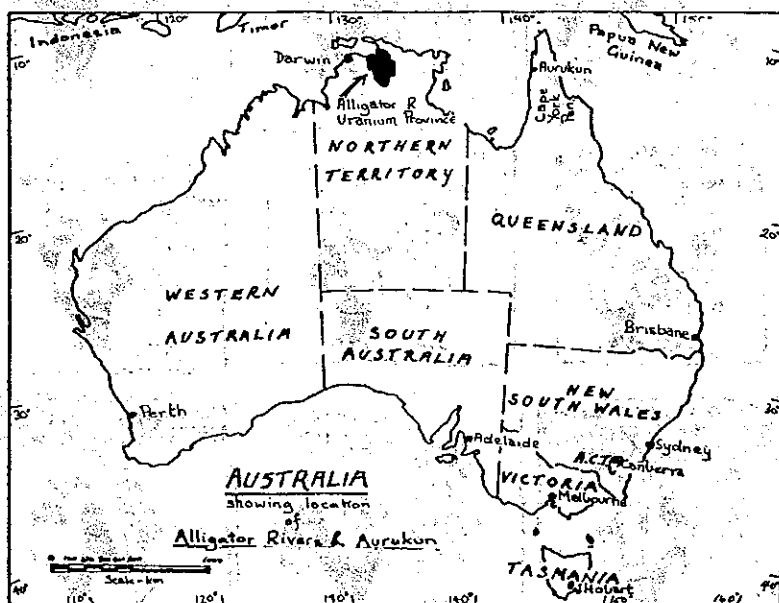
Richie Howitt & Peter Phibbs

The controversy over uranium mining has developed into one of the most contentious issues in Australia at the moment.

In contrast to most other industrialised nations, where anti-nuclear movements have focused on nuclear reactors and armaments, the movement in Australia has put its energies principally into preventing Australian uranium entering the international nuclear fuel cycle.

This issue is a complex one, and it is not possible to provide a comprehensive account in this limited space. Therefore, the present article presents an historical overview of the uranium controversy in Australia.

Discovery of the vast uranium resources of the Alligator Rivers region of the Northern Territory is relatively recent (See Map). In fact it was only in June 1970 that there was any real indication that the deposits existed.



When the Australian Labor Party (ALP) was elected in the 1972 Federal elections it had a pro-uranium stance, but was also committed to recognising Aboriginal land rights in the Northern Territory.<sup>1</sup>

An inquiry to determine how Aboriginal land rights should be recognised recommended that enabling legislation should allow Aborigines to veto mining proposals on their land unless the Federal Government felt it was in the 'national interest' to overrule Aboriginal opposition to a particular project. (Woodward, 1974, pp. 108, 110.)

ALP legislation put before the Parliament in November 1975 accepted this recommendation. However, a memorandum of understanding between the Federal ALP Government and the Ranger companies in October 1975 suggested that the ALP would overrule Aboriginal opposition to the uranium mines in the 'national interest'. In this memo the ALP committed the Australian Atomic Energy Commission to providing 72½% of capital required for the Ranger Project.

Earlier, in July 1975, the ALP commissioned a judicial inquiry into the Ranger Project and its environmental impact because of increasing public opposition to uranium mining. The inquiry's terms of reference were very broad. (Fox, Kelleher & Kerr, 1976, p.1).

However, the Labor Government was dismissed from power on November 11, 1975 by a controversial decision of the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, and a 'caretaker' Government of conservative right-wingers sworn in until elections could be held. The ALP was defeated at the following election and the Liberal National Country Party Coalition formed a Government, headed by grazier Malcolm Fraser. This series of events, commonly known as the 'Kerr coup', rocked the Australian Left and remains an obsession with many.

A year before the coup, Liberal Party director, Tony Eggleton predicted, to U.S. uranium executives, the blocking of the Federal Government's Supply Bill, which was the strategy which ultimately led to the coup. Further, five days before the coup a lawyer for the Westinghouse Company, which did not have enough uranium to fulfil its contracts, was reported as saying that "the shortage (of uranium supplies) is near term... Maybe if the Labor Party is thrown out in Australia in five weeks or so, we can get uranium we thought we had." (Nucleonics Week, Nov. 6, 1975). Anyone for conspiracy theories?

Therefore, neither the Aboriginal land rights legislation nor the Ranger Environmental Inquiry's Reports were presented to a Labor Government. The Land Rights legislation eventually introduced by the Liberal-NCP Government in June 1976 specifically excluded the Ranger Project Area from certain provisions of the Act and required the Ranger Inquiry to assess the land claims of Aborigines in the area. Rather than delay their report any longer as a result of this extra burden, the Ranger Commissioners decided to submit two reports.

Their first report, published in October 1976, dealt with the general arguments for and against uranium mining. At best it was ambiguous, and recommended that no decision be taken on the future of uranium mining until their second report was published. However, despite this warning, the press treated the first report as the green light for uranium and the stock exchange went wild.

About the same time the Uranium Producers' Forum, a loose coalition of potential uranium producers in Australia, mounted a \$1 million-plus advertising campaign in support of uranium mining. Much of the advertising was withdrawn after the anti-uranium movement challenged its accuracy in court.

Throughout the development of the issue, beginning in 1972 with the Land Rights Inquiry, the Australian Mining Industry Council (AMIC) has been an outspoken opponent of Aboriginal land rights and proponent of the uranium industry.<sup>2</sup> Many of its suggestions were incorporated into the Land Rights Act by the Liberal-NCP Government.

The Second Report of the Ranger Inquiry, published in May 1977, dealt with local environmental aspects of uranium mining in the Alligator Rivers area, including the impact on Aborigines. It also assessed the Aborigines' land claims and recommended the conditions on which mining should occur, if the Government decided to proceed with it.

The Inquiry approved virtually all the land claims of the Aborigines. They also found that "the traditional owners of the Ranger site and the Northern Land Council<sup>3</sup> are opposed to the mining of uranium on that site" (2nd Report, p.9). Further, they acknowledged that local Aborigines had been poorly informed and had perceived that any opposition to mining by them was futile. Despite this, the Inquiry concluded that "(the Aborigines') opposition should not be allowed to prevail" (ibid. p.9).

The Inquiry recommended that no decision to proceed with mining be taken until there had been wide-ranging public discussion and deliberation. The Liberal-National Country Party made a farce of this process, announcing a go-ahead for uranium mining in August, only four months after the final Ranger Report. During the 'deliberations' one Federal Cabinet Minister was freely offering advice to his constituents to buy uranium shares as soon as possible! When it was announced, the press heralded the go-ahead as an economic bonanza to rocket Australia out of the recession.

Morale in the movement was low, but the determination to oppose the multi-national carve-up strengthened. After a long battle within the Labor Party the movement was rewarded when, in late 1977, the ALP National Conference adopted a policy which opposed uranium mining under present standards of waste disposal, reactor safety and nuclear arms proliferation. The policy had real teeth because the ALP announced that they would not fulfil export contracts negotiated by non-Labor Governments.

Trade Union support has been crucial throughout the struggle against uranium mining. In September 1975, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) black-banned work on uranium mines pending the outcome of the Ranger Inquiry. Since then the labour movement has been split into pro- and anti-uranium factions, but there is still wide support, particularly among rank-and-file workers, for anti-uranium policy in the ACTU.

However, during 1978 the Liberal-NCP continued with pro-uranium decisions. Many of the conditions the Ranger Inquiry recommended which should apply to the mine were ignored. More diabolically, the Atomic Energy Act (1953) was expanded to protect commercial uranium projects and, in concert with accompanying legislation the companies and the Government now have power to:

- (a) deny information on public health hazards to uranium workers and the public (Environment Protection (Nuclear Codes) Act, S.13);
- (b) prohibit free speech and demonstration of opposition to uranium mining and export (Atomic Energy Act, S.60);

- (c) give police the right to search and arrest people without a warrant and to convict people without proving an offence has been committed (Atomic Energy Act, S.47);
- (d) ban people, including health inspectors or union organisers from uranium mine sites (Atomic Energy Act, S.60); and
- (e) allow the army to be brought in to ensure nothing stops the flow of uranium (Environment Protection (Nuclear Codes) Act, S.13).

In short, the legislation turned Australia into a potential Police-State.

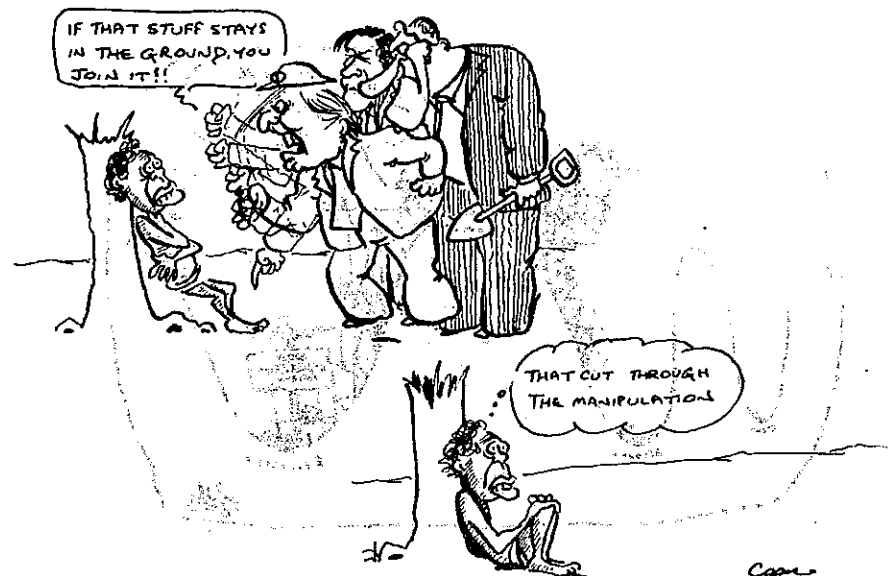
Events of late 1978 when Aborigines faced enormous Federal Government and corporate pressure to accept a hastily prepared and quite inadequate royalty agreement from the Ranger company encouraged more people to join the movement. The sham, trickery and unnecessary haste surrounding the final conclusion of the Ranger Agreement, which was signed by only four of the forty traditional owners of the Ranger site, resulted in increased concern over the uranium issue as well as the Aboriginal land rights issue.

As preparations for a mass-mobilization by the movement were being finalised in early-April 1979, however, the shattering news that the nuclear reactor at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania was in a crisis situation shook many Australians out of their complacency and tens of thousands of people marched against uranium mining in cities throughout Australia in the biggest demonstrations since the end of the Vietnam War.

The polarization of Australia on the twin issues of Aboriginal land rights and uranium mining seems likely to continue. The struggle will proceed on all political, economic and ideological fronts. Uncertainty in the future of the nuclear industry generally has not impinged upon the consciousness of Australia's pro-uranium lobby which continues to scramble to get uranium out of the ground at any cost and to overpower the Aborigines, and others, who stand in their way (see cartoon).

The need for the movement in Australia to continue to oppose, delay and increase uncertainty about Australia's ability to supply uranium to world markets is clearly crucial both in local and international terms -

NUCLEAR FUTURES - NO THANKS ... KEEP URANIUM IN THE GROUND.

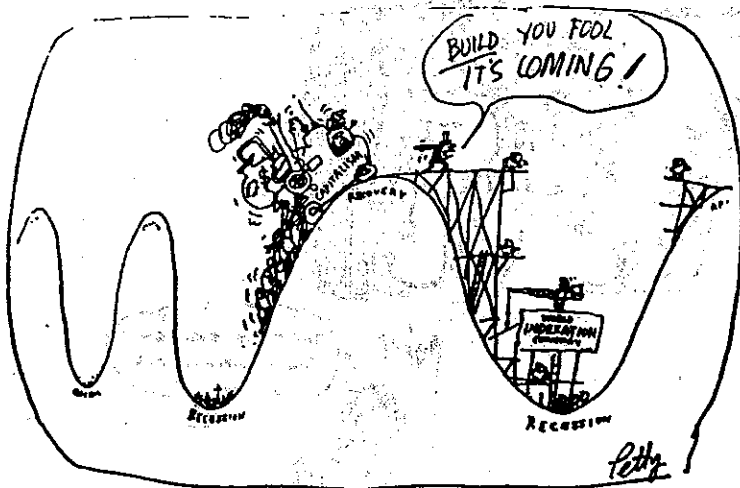


## Notes

1. Under Australian Federalism, the State governments maintain responsibility for a number of areas, including Aboriginal Affairs. The Federal Government was responsible for Aborigines only in the Northern Territory.
2. A.M.I.C. produces a free newsletter called Mining News; it also sponsors "handbooks" for geography (and other) teachers in schools (1) - e.g. Mining in Australia, 1976, 1979, Nuclear Electricity, 1978: available from P.O. Box 363, Dickson, A.C.T., 2602, AUSTRALIA.
3. The Northern Land Council is a decision-making body set up by the Land Rights Act. It consists of Aboriginal delegates from each community represented by the Council, but has been plagued by conservative White 'experts' as advisers in a number of fields.
4. The company was required to negotiate this agreement with the traditional owners, and also had to consult with other Aborigines living in nearby areas, through the NLC. Members of the NLC executive were placed under great pressure by white advisers to accept an agreement between August and November. While negotiations were required by legislation, the Act also contained the threat of an arbitrator if the Aborigines refused to accept any deals. (see Felix 1978).

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## MERCHANT CAPITAL AND UNDER DEVELOPMENT: A REVIEW

Ronald J. Horvath.

While it has been recognized for a number of years that dependency theory, after providing an excellent basis for ideological critique, has failed to provide an adequate theory of the underdevelopment of peripheral capitalist societies, some hopeful signs are beginning to appear that this gap is in the process of being filled and Geoffrey Kay's Development and Underdevelopment: A Marxist Analysis (Macmillan, 1975) is one such sign. Kay characterizes the legacy of dependency theory as follows: inasmuch as dependency theory

"does not recognize the law of value... (it) is an eclectic combination of orthodox economic theory and revolutionary phraseology, seasoned with supposedly self-explanatory facts, such as data concerning the pattern of trade and capital movements, and spiced with cynical quotations by Western politicians and businessmen on their aims and methods adopted to achieve them. The conclusions reached are not wrong insofar as they go, only they cannot get beyond the level of general ideological critique. Turning their backs on the law of value the best they could achieve was a historical account of the process of underdevelopment elaborated through empirical categories such as dependence, metropole, and satellite, which collapse into hopeless contradiction in the face of close investigation". (103-04).

And when Kay's critique is added to the equally formidable one provided by Robert Brenner ("The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism" New Left Review, 104, July-Aug. 1977, 25-92), it appears that the resolution of the theoretical confusion produced by the failure of dependency theory is beginning to emerge.

In a mere 187 pages Kay attempts to provide an introduction to a large part of Marxian economics "with the intention that it should be understandable to readers with no previous knowledge of Marxism or economics" (x). How courageous! The first four chapters are devoted to explaining many of the basic concepts of Marxian economics such as production, circulation, surplus, reproduction, social relations of production, surplus value, profit, wages, accumulation, unequal exchange, etc. He employs, with particular effectiveness, the circuits of capital, which Marx developed in Volume II of Capital, to define many of these concepts. These chapters serve as background to chapters 5 and 6, "Merchant capital and underdevelopment" and "Industrial capital and underdevelopment", which contain the core of his argument. And while one could criticize and quibble with the early chapters ad infinitum for his method of developing concepts and their uneven treatment, it is not an incompetent review of Marxian economics especially given his purpose.

In chapter 5 Kay discusses the role of merchant capital in the process of underdevelopment including the transformation of merchant capital associated with the rise of industrial capital. I will return to this discussion toward the end of this review. In this context, his review, a critique of A. Emmanuel's Unequal Exchange is especially useful. His discussion of "Industrial capital and underdevelopment" in chapter 6 is based on Marx's concepts of fixed and circulating capital, the effect of turnover on the rate of profit, the effect of turnover on accumulation and employment, and all of the factors in the foundation of the proletariat.

It is in the most theoretically formidable chapter, along with the section on the intensification of labour in chapter 7, that he provides the basis for a proposition put earlier in the book: "Capitalism has created underdevelopment not simply because it has exploited the underdeveloped countries but because it has not exploited them enough" (55). While one can hardly imagine that Kay will have the last word on the subject, what I find useful is the degree to which he brings Marxian economics and the law of value to bear upon the underdevelopment of the Third World given some of the laws of action of capital the situation industrial capital found in the Third World.

The final chapters represent a slim addendum on selected changes in industrial capital in the 20th century, e.g., Fordism, Keynesianism. Given the more comprehensive treatment of these and other subjects available elsewhere, e.g. E. Mandel's *Late Capitalism*, the last two chapters are sketchy and incomplete. And if one were to judge the book on the basis of the works cited, the book could be dismissed altogether. How can one write a book like this and fail to mention the work on imperialism within the Marxist tradition? At this point, I would prefer to highlight what appears to be one of the real contributions of this book, namely, his discussion of the role of merchant capital in the underdevelopment process.

Kay draws together Marx's discussion of merchant capital which is scattered throughout *Capital* but is found in a relatively compact form in chapter 22, "Historical facts about merchant capital" of Volume III. In that chapter Marx unambiguously distinguishes between merchant and industrial capital, a distinction Ricardo and Smith failed to make with the consequence that they failed to understand its role in the production of value, profit, etc. Although merchant capital is confined to the act of circulation, and produces no value, Marx distinguishes between merchant capital as an adjunct to industrial capital and merchant capital that existed prior to industrial capital. Indeed, during the period of manufacture, the relationship between the nascent industrial capital and merchant capital were the reverse of the period of industry. "Today, industrial supremacy brings with it commercial supremacy. In the period of manufacture it was the reverse: commercial supremacy produced industrial predominance" (I, p.918).

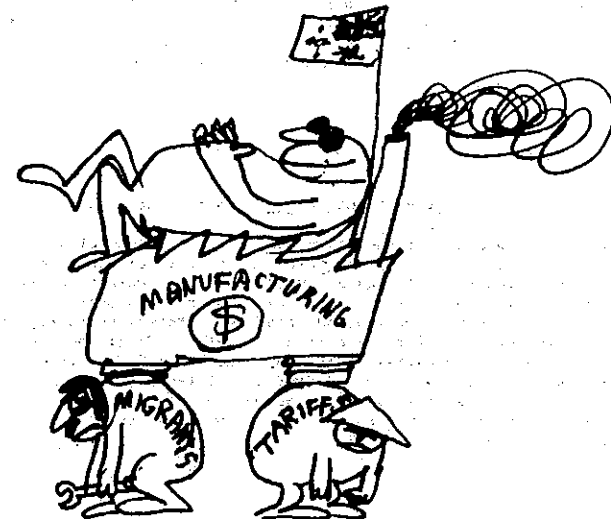
Marx argued: "Wherever merchant capital still predominates we find backward conditions" (III, p.327). In fact, he formulated a "law" regarding merchant capital: "The independent development of merchant capital, stands in inverse proportion to the general economic development of society" (III, p.328). Marx was, of course, referring to merchant capital still dominating certain towns in England as well as other parts of Europe, but Kay has taken this thesis and used it to explain the initial development of underdevelopment. Thus it is not that capitalism has dominated Latin America since the 16th century, as some dependency theorists have claimed, but that Latin America was underdeveloped initially by merchant capital. The "system of robbery, plunder, piracy, colonial conquest" were all associated with merchant capital according to Marx. Merchant capital had "a more or less dissolving influence everywhere ... to what extent it brings about a dissolution of the old mode of production depends on its solidarity and internal structure" (III, p.331-2). And it is the particular relationship between merchant capital and England (and subsequently other developed countries) as opposed to its relation to what became the underdeveloped world that explains what dependency theory, in failing to adequately distinguish between merchant and industrial capital, obscured.

Kay's thesis may be summarized as follows: Merchant capital has existed under three 'circumstances' in the underdeveloped world. Initially (ca. 1500-1850) merchant capital functioned as free capital and promoted

exchange between a variety of pre-capitalist modes of production. The preceding comments by Marx pertain especially to these circumstances. Second, between ca 1850 and 1930 merchant capital mediated between the capitalist mode of production (industrial capital) and a variety of pre-capitalist modes of production on the periphery of capitalism. It is during this phase that the development of underdevelopment occurred. The underdeveloped world remained the "final preserve of merchant capital... but it was forced to become the agent of industrial capital" (100). Since 1930 and more clearly after World War II, industrial capital, and therefore the capitalist mode of production, began to move into the underdeveloped world. Merchant capital's independence is further diminished as industrialization proceeds.

While I find merit in Kay's formulation, it suffers from what Ernest Mandel has described in relation to other attempts to link Marxist theory to history as a 'monocausal explanation' of development (*Late Capitalism*, chapter 1). If we are to view merchant capital as being confined to the sphere of circulation, then to argue for merchant capital as the specific differentia of underdevelopment is to dismiss the role of the mode of production in the underdevelopment process, that is both forces and relations of production. In addition, the relationship between the above and various Third World superstructural elements, including the colonial and neocolonial state, ideological agents (missionaries, etc) must be clarified. An adequately constituted theory of underdevelopment will have to take into account the complex interaction of 1) the capitalist mode of production (including its periodization), 2) the force compelling the C.M.P. to include pre-C.M.P. in its expanded reproduction (theories of imperialism), 3) the internal structure of the pre-C.M.P. (including its periodization especially in relation to changes brought about by capitalism) and 4) the forms of economic, political, and ideological mediation which connect the capitalist and underdeveloped worlds. Kay's contribution is his attempt to clarify the role merchant capital has played in economic mediation (the economic aspect of point 4). Points 2 and 3 are hardly treated at all and Kay's discussion of point 1 varies from being sophisticated (the discussion of fixed and circulating capital) to simplistic.

Kay has identified the role of merchant capital in the process of underdevelopment. Dependency theory lead us up a blind alley; Kay's work along with that of Amin, Rey, Brenner and others points to a way out.





## BOOKNOTE

Peter Rogers.

PAPER TIGERS: An Introduction to the Critique of Social Theory -  
Rod O'Donnell, Peter Stevens & Ian Lennie (eds.)

This collection of papers from the General Philosophy Department at Sydney University is an attempt to deliver a philosophical critique of orthodox social theory. Apart from the exclusion of several important social sciences, this critique succeeds admirably in its task. The only major problem with the book is in the denseness, and at times obscurity of the epistemological argument.

Beginning from the notion that orthodox theories in a wide range of disciplines are generated by a common set of principles, Paper Tigers examines this orthodox problematic as an instance of a dominant theoretical ideology. The problematic "is a theoretical framework used for the production of knowledge". i.e. it is the means of theoretical production. Within this framework the various elements are articulated with each other and the structure in definite ways. Consequently, there are certain properties of orthodoxy which may be uncovered and described. This task is the one which Paper Tigers attempts to begin.

One of the major properties of orthodoxy is its closed nature, i.e. only a "limited domain of social reality" is investigated. Thus, the production of knowledge of society is confined within a narrowly prescribed field. This serves to preserve and perpetuate existing social relations by mystifying and obscuring our comprehension of the society which is being investigated. An epistemological examination of social science enables one to critique the foundations and hidden assumptions of orthodoxy. To this end Paper Tigers pursues four interrelated themes: empiricism, theoretical individualism, idealism and values.

The book is divided into two sections. The first describes and examines the orthodox problematic and its political/social consequences. Secondly the disciplines of social work, psychology, history, economics, politics, law, medicine, english, visual arts, and philosophy are analysed both as manifestations of the orthodox problematic and as sources of its sustenance and extension. Anthropology, education, sociology and science are listed as forthcoming chapters in what is hoped will be an ongoing critique of orthodox social theory.

## BOOKNOTE

THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM Marta Harnecker.

This book is a basic introductory text in the science of historical materialism. As such it is largely based on the work of French philosopher, Louis Althusser, and is useful as a compendium of his work to be kept close at hand when reading the more difficult passages of Althusser, Poulantzas, Balibar, and even Manuel Castells, on occasions. More importantly it may be useful as an educative device for both university students and the people, in general. The book is mostly clear and concise, with definitions of important terms emphasized and discussion questions at the end of each chapter. Some of the more subtle of Althusser's arguments are glossed over but this does not weaken the impact of the book as an introductory text. It is soon to be published by Harvester Press.

## ON PREMATURE CLOSURE AND OPEN MINDS :

Some 'heretical' thoughts on phenomenological marxism .

Frank Williamson<sup>1</sup>

" The role of philosophical thought is to eliminate premature explanations, those limitive positions which would prevent us from penetrating and possessing the formidable content of our being."

(Lefebvre, 1969, 115)<sup>2</sup>Preamble

I would like to continue and thus add to a mood established by a contribution to each of the last two U.S.G. newsletters. These were: (i) Sayer's discussion of Philosophy of Social Science, Marxism and Geography, itself generated by Gregory's book,<sup>3</sup> and (ii) Peet's response to his critics and his plea for comradely criticism. The mood is one of critical and reflective tolerance and struggle, as I read it, and to this I would add my plea for acceptance of diverse paths towards common goals.

More specifically, I wish to begin a discourse among socialists, (who happen to be geographers, for the most part), on the virtues, perhaps even the necessity, of a reinvigorated philosophical basis of our marxism. I believe there is a need for a vitality and power, a momentum of insight which Marx himself possessed but which has been progressively lost in the century and more since his death. The seductive 'success' which Marxism enjoys as it penetrates more fragments of knowledge (i.e. disciplines like geography) should not mask an unpalatable fact. Marxism still does not have the key to the transformation of capitalism. I think that the vitality and momentum which is required is most likely to come from a basis of phenomenology or a closely related source.

Purpose

This paper was intended as an annotated bibliography of attempts to merge, or to synthesise phenomenology and marxism, but has been waylaid by the enormity and complexity of such a task. It now offers a partial, skeletal guide to this literature and a more personal statement of commitment and justification for the unfinished task. My purpose in seeking to initiate a discourse on this theme is to question what I fear is a rigidity in stances taken by geographers who are marxists. I sense that there are premature explanations and rejections of compatible ideas and arenas for struggle which should be part of the marxian effort. Especially, I would take issue with the dismissal of phenomenology because it is 'idealist'. The over-rigid faith in the idealist/materialist antinomy is a denial (or at least a dilution) of the relatedness of ideas and material life; such relatedness is at the very core of the revolutionary potential of marxism. I agree with Sayer's criticism of humanist geographers for their focus on subjectivity rather than intersubjectivity<sup>4</sup> and feel that the move 'beyond the individual' which a focus on the latter provides is a further aspect of phenomenology prejudged by some of its critics.

### A Middle Way or a Cul-de-Sac ?

We embark then on a project which several of the leading critical thinkers of this century have begun. It is salutary to note that some of these have retraced their steps and repudiated their journey's worth and it is perhaps frightening that none have claimed any hint of completion or even fulfillment. To sustain us, however, the last decade has witnessed a vigorous revival of interest, especially as the prospect of a share of power (?) dangles before Eurocommunism. Within this setting, Paul Piccone is one of the more active writers in the literature in English,<sup>7</sup> and under his editorship, *Telos* has become a major outlet for republishing early work as well as more recent attempts at a phenomenological marxism. The major work by Enzo Paci, first published in Italian in 1963 and translated in 1972 provides another focus and stimulus for 'unorthodox' marxists from a range of disciplines.<sup>8</sup>

The following is a preliminary typology of some of the relevant literature in this field and an indication of the principal thrusts within recent controversies. Many of the writers were or are philosophers, a designation with some overtones of almost an a-worldly position. The nuances of debate between philosophers are shrouded, for most of us I'm sure, in deep mists of introspection and rhetoric, but these are insufficient reasons to leave unexplored and unexamined the bases and presumptions of our own thoughts and actions, or to accept a marxism which has no scope for incorporation of experience and creativity.

#### Early attempts - and repudiations

Most writers on the theme of phenomenological marxism accord Lukács a central position for his set of essays first published in 1923.<sup>9</sup> Although not acknowledging any debt to Husserlian phenomenology, the very vitality of Lukács marxism, according to Goldmann, consists in "The decisive progress that the work entails by substituting the phenomenological idea of atemporal meaningful structure ... with the marxist and dialectical concept of meaningful structure which is both dynamic and temporal, based on the idea of the Totality."<sup>10</sup> Dallmayr highlights a further major contribution which Lukács made as being his "incipient critical posture, ... (his) repeated emphasis that Marxism should be viewed as method and key to further inquiry rather than as compendium of fixed propositions."<sup>11</sup> For reasons still not fully clarified, Lukács repudiated his early views in later work although some of his followers have not done so, as noted below.

The earliest documented effort at a synthesis between Marxism and phenomenology is attributed to Herbert Marcuse in 1928,<sup>12</sup> before his affiliation with what is now known as the Frankfurt School.<sup>13</sup> Marcuse saw several Marxist notions (revolutionary praxis, class antagonism as the driving historical force, inter alia), as receiving a solid theoretical grounding in phenomenology, especially in Heidegger's existential categories. This foundation, though, as Dallmayr notes, remains "abstract and elusive, refusing to proceed from general categories to the examination of concrete historical experience. In order to achieve a comprehensive perspective and to join general insight with concreteness, therefore, phenomenology had to be merged with dialectical materialism."<sup>14</sup> Marcuse later moved to other formulations, although Dallmayr claims some residue of his early project remained in his Frankfurt writings<sup>14</sup> a similar "subterranean linkage with the intentions of both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty" is detected for Habermas, and, in fuller vein, Dallmayr uses Adorno as a crucial link between phenomenology and critical theory, seeing him journeying from idealism in the direction of a non-orthodox (and anti-positivist) dialectical materialism.<sup>15</sup>

A final example of a Marxist who sought to incorporate a phenomenological focus into his thinking and later rejected such a position was the Vietnamese philosopher, Tran Duc Thao, operating within the same cultural milieu as Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. Thao's "flirtation" with Husserl was especially an attempt to reformulate "the Marxist nexus of infrastructure and superstructure in terms of the opposition between a basic layer of experience and awareness - revealed through bracketing - and the realm of opinions and institutional objectifications."<sup>16</sup> His rejection of such views five years later in 1951 is regarded by Piccone as unconvincing.

The very nature of the volte face by both Lukács and Tran Duc Thao, and the intensely 'political' nature of reactions to their work and to that of the French existential Marxists (Sartre and Merleau-Ponty) attests to the centrality of such issues for a vibrant Marxism.

#### Persistent Searchers

Both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty have been seen, correctly, in recent years as important sources for philosophical and sociological reformulations of Marxism.<sup>18</sup> Even the enormously-strong vogue of Gramsci-ology was almost predated by Piccone's and Dallmayr's claims that the Italian master was situated in this same 'critical Marxist' tradition albeit with only a tenuous direct affiliation with phenomenology.<sup>19</sup> Gramsci figures prominently as part of the heritage of Paci's recently translated major effort of merging phenomenology and Marxism.<sup>20</sup> Paci views Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, as being as important to contemporary Marxists as Hegel was to Marx, hence the necessity of addressing Husserl's writings as a resource for retrieving the "critical Marx" from positivist orthodox Marxism,<sup>21</sup> a stance rather reminiscent of the early Lukács. Some of the latter's Hungarian colleagues have been contributors to *Telos* and other avenues<sup>22</sup> for the exploration of the critical roots to an understanding of the crises of science, society and marxism, the arena for the richly relational thinking of such 'persistent searchers.'

Several of the more recent writers also doggedly pursuing the 'illusory' synthesis have been cited already - Piccone, (probably the most strident and convincing), Dallmayr as a political scientist, O'Neill as a sociologist - while a great many other flit meteor-like across the sky of critical social literature,<sup>23</sup> apparently fading into obscurity, or could it be to invigorated social practice ?

#### Closer to Home - Sociology and Geography

The awakening of interest in critical and radical activity has swept through the social sciences with ever increasing pace in the past decade. A striking parallel can be seen between sociology and geography in this regard. (a) An initial flowering of hope for a phenomenologically-based encounter with 'the real world' has been followed by (b) a cynical reaction and an often severe dismissal, (without trial ?). A concurrent emergence of a marxist sociology/geography has very recently allowed (c) an attempted fusion of the two critical and radical positions, or at least an exploration of the relations between them (following Gregory's terminology).<sup>24</sup>

Conclusion ... and now to begin ...

This short paper has traversed an enormous territory of theory and practice, and has done little justice to the richness of much of the ground. Hopefully, it will stimulate debate and struggle in the sense in which Foucault has recently cast the political function of the intellectual - namely "of knowing that it is possible to constitute a new politics of truth."<sup>23</sup>

I believe that a merger of phenomenological intent and purpose with marxian focus and urgency is an appropriate way to create not only the basis of a post-revolutionary, classless society but of emancipatory, revolutionary activity now.

Notes

1. School of Geography, University of N.S.W., P.O. Box 1, Kensington, N.S.W., 2033. Despite their preliminary nature these thoughts have already accumulated heavy debts. For their continuing support and encouragement I would like to thank Richie Howitt, Louise Johnson, Kathy Mackie and Vivienne Milligan. Louise and I hope to elaborate and substantiate some of the ideas in the present paper and would be delighted to receive reactions, comments and suggestions.
2. Quotation brought to my attention by Suzanne McKenzie in an unpublished paper: Man and Nature in Phenomenology and Marxism, Toronto, April 1977.
3. A. Sayer, Philosophy of Social Science, Marxism and Geography, U.S.G. Newsletter, 4 (2), 1978, 34-40; the book is D. Gregory, Ideology, Science and Human Geography, Hutchinson, London, 1978.
4. R. Peet, On Comradely Criticism and Marxist Geography, U.S.G. Newsletter, 4 (3) 1979, 20-26.
5. By closely-related source I mean existentialist. The crudeness of my grouping such bases as the many varieties of phenomenology and existentialism is possibly justified for my present polemical purpose but would be disabling of a more careful project. For the remainder of this paper I will use phenomenology as 'umbrella' term for this large area of philosophy.
6. Sayer, op.cit, p.38.
7. As well as the references cited below see Piccone, Reading the Grundrisse: Beyond 'orthodox' marxism, Theory and Society 2, 1975, 235-55, and ibid, Gramsci's Marxism, Theory and Society 3, 1976, 485-512.
8. E. Paci, The Function of the Sciences and the Meaning of Man, translated with introduction by J.E. Hansen and Piccone, Northwestern University Press, 1972.

9. G. Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, translated by Livingstone, Merlin Press, 1971.
10. As cited on p.136 of Piccone, Phenomenological Marxism, pp. 133-158 of Towards a New Marxism, edited by Grahl and Piccone, Telos Press, 1973.
11. F. R. Dallmayr, on p. 310 of Phenomenology and Marxism, pp. 305-356 in Phenomenological Sociology, edited by G. Psathas, Wiley, 1973.
12. H. Marcuse, Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Materialism, Telos, No. 4, Fall 1969, 3-34, (originally published in German in 1928).
13. Dallmayr, Phenomenology and Marxism, p. 317.
14. ibid.
15. F.R. Dallmayr, Phenomenology and Critical Theory: Adorno, Cultural Hermeneutics, 3, (1976) 367-405, esp. 378-80. (Note - journal now known as Philosophy and Social Criticism).
16. Dallmayr, Phenomenology and Marxism, p. 313.
17. Piccone, Phenomenological Marxism, p. 142.
18. See for example, I. Craib, Existentialism and Sociology, Cambridge U.P., 1976, and ibid, in Radical Philosophy, 17, 1977, esp. pp. 36-7 (Towards a Marxist Phenomenology of Concept Formation); S. Kruks, The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, Radical Philosophy, 11, 1975, and J. O'Neill, Sociology as a Skin Trade, Heinemann, 1972.
19. Piccone, in Phenomenological Marxism, footnotes 20, 41, 44, 49, and in Gramsci's Marxism, esp. 505-7, and Dallmayr, Phenomenology and Marxism, 312-13.
20. Paci, The Function of the Sciences and the Meaning of Man. See Dallmayr, Phenomenology and Marxism, for a summary, pp. 318-30; also ibid, Marxism and Truth, Telos, 29, 1976, for a situation of Paci vis a vis Merleau-Ponty and Kolakowski especially.
21. B. Smart, review of Paci, op cit, in Theory and Society, 2, 1975, 418-21. For a brief introduction to Husserl see R. Waterhouse, Husserl and Phenomenology, Radical Philosophy, 16, Spring 1977, 27-39.
22. For example, see Vajda, Marxism, Existentialism, Phenomenology: A Dialogue, Telos, 7, Spring 1971, 3-29, and the following in a symposium on 'Fifty Years of Sociology of Knowledge', in Cultural Hermeneutics 3, 1975: A. Heller, Towards a Sociology of Knowledge of Everyday Life, 7-18; Markus, The Marxian Concept of Consciousness, 19-28; and Vajda, Truth or Truths ?, 29-39.
23. Among a 'cast of thousands' the following may be of interest: D. Howard, Existentialism and Marxism, 101-31 in Grahl and Piccone, Towards a New Marxism, note 10, plus the other essays in the same book; E. Shmueli, Can Phenomenology Accommodate Marxism ?, Telos, 17, 1973, 169-80; J. Schmidt, Adventures of the Dialectic, Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 5, 1975, 463-78; P. Freund and M. Abrams, Ethnomethodology and Marxism: Their use for critical theorizing, Theory and Society,

3, 1976, 377-93, H. Press, The Existential Basis of Marxism, Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, 37, 1976-7, 331-44; W. Archibald, Using Marx's Theory of Alienation Empirically, Theory and Society, 6, 1978, 119-32; and S. Weber, Existentialism versus Marxism: A Kazantzakian Synthesis, Journal of Social Philosophy, 9 (3), Sept. 1978, 1-8.

24. For sociology:

- (a) includes P. Berger and T. Luckman, The Social Construction of Reality, Penguin, 1966; J. Douglas (ed) Understanding Everyday Life, RKP, 1971; and G. Psathas (ed) Phenomenological Sociology, Wiley, 1973.
- (b) includes Z. Bauman, Towards a Critical Sociology, RKP, 1976; A. Giddens, New Rules of Sociological Method, Hutchinson, 1976; J.J. Valone, A Critical Theory of Knowledge and the Phenomenology of Alfred Schutz, Cultural Hermeneutics, 3, 1976, 199-215; and most damningly, B. Hindess, Philosophy and Methodology in the Social Sciences, Harvester Press, 1977, esp. chs. 2 and 3.
- (c) includes I. Craib, Existentialism and Sociology, Cambridge U.P., 1976, and ibid, Lukács and the Marxist Criticism of Sociology, Radical Philosophy, 17, 1977, 26-37, B. Smart, Sociology, Phenomenology and Marxian Analysis, RKP, 1976, esp. chs. 4 and 5; and R.A. Gorman, The Dual Vision, RKP 1977, esp. ch. 5.

For geography:

- (a) includes E. Relph, An inquiry into the relations between phenomenology and geography, Canadian Geographer, 14, 1970, 193-201 and ibid, Place and Placelessness, Pion, 1976; Yi-Fu Tuan, Geography, Phenomenology and Human Nature, Canadian Geographer, 15, 1971, 181-92 and ibid, Space and Place: Experiential Perspectives, Arnold, 1978; A. Buttner, Values in Geography, 1974, AAG Resource Paper 24, and ibid, Grasping the Dynamism of Lifeworld, Annals, AAG, 66, 1976, 277-92; and D. Mercer and J. Powell, Phenomenology and related non-positivistic approaches in the social sciences, Monash publications in geography, 1, 1972.
- (b) includes J. Walmsley, Positivism and Phenomenology in Geography, Canadian Geographer, 18, 1974, J.N. Entrikin, Contemporary Humanism in Geography, Annals, AAG, 66, 1976, 615-32; and M. Billinge, In search of negativism: phenomenology and historical geography, Journal of Historical Geography, 3, 1977, 55-67.
- (c) includes, at least partially in its attempted conflation, Gregory, Ideology, Science and Human Geography, and at least three essays (Chapters 2, 3 and 17) in D. Ley and M. Samuels (eds) Humanistic Geography, Maaroufa Press, 1978.

25. M. Foucault, The political function of the intellectual, Radical Philosophy, 17, 1977, 12-14.

## REVIEW . MARXIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

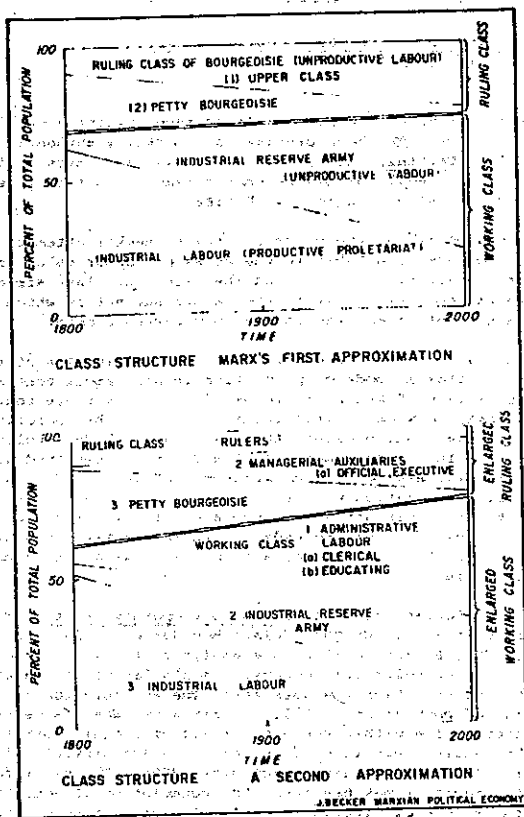
James F. Becker, Marxian Political Economy: An Outline, Cambridge U.P., 1977, £11.00.

James Becker has produced a clearly written reconstruction of classical Marxian political economy. The book provides a remarkably authentic exegesis of most of Volume I of Capital, part III of Volume II, and parts I, II, and III of Volume III. I would highly recommend reading this book as a companion to reading the above sections of Capital.

In addition to summarizing the classical texts, Becker attempts to update Marx in several areas, notably in the areas of labour value accounting, the causes of contemporary stagflation, and the nature of class structure in advanced capitalist countries. It is the latter subject in which Becker goes into the greatest detail and the one which deserves comment.

Becker argues that Marx provided only a first approximation of the class composition of the capitalist mode of production in his famous general law of capitalist accumulation (Chapter 25, Volume I). It was there that Marx showed the relationship between capital accumulation and the composition of population. As accumulation proceeded, there was on one side a ruling class and on the other a working class comprised of a shrinking employed workforce and an increasing reserve army of the unemployed (Fig.1A). And then Marx qualified his law of accumulation with the comment: "Like all other laws, it is modified by the many circumstances, the analysis of which does not concern us here" (p.798). Becker proceeds for three chapters in analysing these circumstances and thereby provides a second approximation to Marx's first approximation (Fig.1B).

More firmly than Poulantzas (Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, NLR, 1975) and in sharp contrast to Wright ("Class Boundaries in Advanced Capitalist Societies" N.L.R., 98), Becker develops his analysis of class on the basis of the principles of Marxian political economy. Marx's law of accumulation is his starting point and thus Becker argues that "The accumulation of capital is the accumulation of population". (201). Becker asks "What is materially and technically distinctive within the whole field of social capital today?". His answer is 'the leading technique of our era' 'is administrative' and 'is primarily suitable for coordination activity' (229). The major form of accumulation within recent times has been the accumulation of administrative capitals within the sphere of circulation. And labour performed within the sphere of circulation is, according to Marx, unproductive. Becker provides a convincing discussion of unproductive accumulation in Chapter 3, and discusses the economic consequences of unproductive consumption in advanced capitalist countries in Chapter 8. But in his analysis of class, Becker focuses upon the impact of the accumulation of administrative - circulatory capitals in the composition of population, i.e., the expansion of administrative labour and the managers. The consequence of the form that contemporary accumulation takes is that 'there is a tendency for the value composition of social capital to rise'. This rise in the value composition, in turn, helps to temporarily solve aspects of the realization problem by 1. stimulating aggregate demand and 2. reducing real growth. And since circulatory capitals function like constant capital, those firms with circulatory capitals above the social average enjoy favourable terms of exchange within the entire social economy. In brief, these are some of the arguments Becker offers to explain the changing nature of accumulation in advanced capitalist countries which have produced the new divisions of labor represented by administrative labor and managers.



Becker does not systematically incorporate political and ideological elements into his discussion of class; in this respect, Poulantzas is better consulted. However, as Wright notes: "We need... a criterion for the use of political and ideological relations which itself is determined by economic relations" (39-40). Becker offers such a principle: "the closer a given branch to the processes of economic reproduction... the more certainly does the labour power fall into the productive category and the more certainly will it reflect the frustrations arising out of an order that militates against the fulfillment of the reproductive function. On the contrary, the further removed from economic reproduction the branch or division of social labor, the more surely will that labor reflect the reproductive needs of capital alone, the structure of values that governs the mode of production rather than reproduction itself" (257).

Ronald J. Horvath.

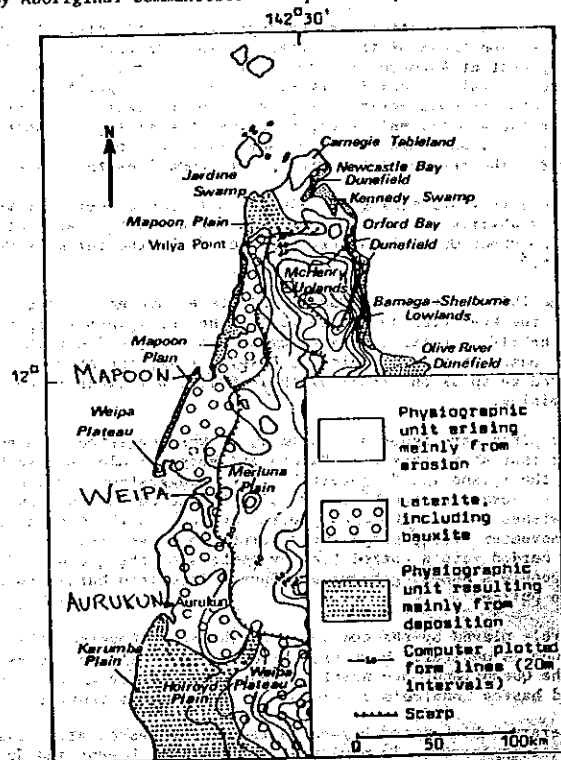
# AURUKUN

## THE ABORIGINAL LAND RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Richie Howitt

Aurukun is an isolated Aboriginal community on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, North Queensland, about 1600 Km. north of Brisbane and 1100 Km. east of Darwin. Originally controlled by the United Church (formerly Presbyterian), the Aurukun community was taken over by the conservative and notoriously racist Queensland State Government, led by Premier Bjelke-Petersen, in March 1978.

As the map below suggests, the western side of Cape York Peninsula contains vast deposits of bauxite, the principal ore of aluminium. These deposits are estimated to contain about 35% of the 'free world's' known bauxite reserves. Since its "discovery" in 1955, Cape York bauxite has changed both the political economy of the 'free world' aluminium industry and the daily lives of the Aboriginal people at Aurukun and the other nearby Aboriginal communities Weipa and Mapoon.



Map: Cape York Peninsula - Geology showing location of bauxite material

Three companies currently hold bauxite mining leases over areas of Cape York. They are: Comalco Ltd. (comprised of Kaiser Aluminium, USA - 45%; Rio Tinto Zinc, UK, through its subsidiary Conzinc Riotinto of Australia - 45%; and "public" shareholders - 10%); Alcan Aluminium Ltd., Canada and USA; and the Aurukun Associates consortium (comprised of Shell Oil, Holland and UK, through its subsidiary Billiton - 40%; Tipperary Corporation, USA - 40%; and Pechiney, France - 20%). At present only Comalco is actually mining bauxite on Cape York.

These companies' mining leases cover more than 50,000 ha. of land which traditionally belongs to Aboriginal people from Mapoon, Weipa and Aurukun. Many of these people continue, despite suffering 100 years of frontier brutality and missionary zeal, to rely on their land for their daily needs and to perform religious ceremonies and other duties required by the timeless laws handed down to them from the first people, more than 30,000 years ago.

Given the contradiction between aspirations and interests of the mining companies and those of the Aborigines, the struggle for land rights and self-management at Aurukun provides an instructive example of several aspects of the Australian social formation. Although a great deal of work remains to be done in documenting the penetration of capitalism into Cape York, of which the Aborigines' struggle against the mining companies is the most recent stage, I was able to gather some material for a fourth year thesis in 1978. The rest of this brief paper summarises this material.<sup>2</sup>

In the late 1950s mining and aluminium companies were actively assessing the viability of the Cape York bauxite deposits. At that time Aborigines throughout Queensland were "protected" by the infamous Queensland Aborigines Act.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1950s neither the Queensland State Government, the aluminium companies nor the Presbyterian Church wanted the Aborigines to speak out on their own behalf. Instead, they assumed that they, and not the Aborigines, knew what was best for the Aborigines. Despite this, the Aborigines continually demanded to speak on behalf of their tribal homelands in negotiations about mining.

Their pleas were ignored. In fact, it was suggested on a number of occasions that Aborigines from Mapoon and Weipa should be forcibly removed from their land and "relocated". These suggestions culminated in the violent closure of the Mapoon Mission by the Queensland Government, against the wishes of both the Presbyterian Church and the Mapoon people. Early on 16 November, 1963, people were forced to leave their beds at gunpoint and herded into a patrol boat by members of the Queensland Police Force. The people's homes, gardens and Church were then burned to the ground by the police.

The role played by the companies in the State Government's decision to close Mapoon is unclear. However, the evidence available suggests that members of the Queensland Government thought that closure of the Mapoon Mission would hasten Comalco's development of the area's bauxite resources.

Tipperary, which later organised the Aurukun Associates consortium, started bauxite exploration in mid-1968. In 1968 the Queensland Government

continued to oppose Aborigines' right to own and control their traditional land or even speak for themselves. However, the Presbyterian Church had, by this time, become more aware of its responsibilities in relation to the dispossession and oppression of the Aurukun Aborigines. Thus the Church supported the Aborigines when they asked to negotiate directly with Tipperary officials to determine the condition on which the company could prospect on the Aurukun Aboriginal Reserve.

An Agreement between the community and the company was reached at a meeting organised by the Church. The most important condition required Tipperary to negotiate a new Agreement with the community if and when they decided to apply to the Queensland Government for a mining lease over the Reserve. However, this term was quickly made obsolete by the permanent head of the Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Islander Advancement who added a further clause suggesting that further negotiations would be unnecessary.

In 1975, Aurukun Associates secretly applied for and were given a mining lease over 11,600 ha. of Cape York Peninsula from the Queensland Government. Traditional owners of the land were not consulted, or even informed at any stage of these negotiations. The first notice they received was a front-page report in a three-day old newspaper when it reached Aurukun.

The Aurukun Aborigines challenged the legislation granting the lease in the Queensland Supreme Court, but lost an appeal to the Privy Council in England initiated by the Queensland Government. The Privy Council decision, handed down in 1978, encouraged the Queensland Government to step in and take over Aurukun and nearby Mornington Island.

This action precipitated a long, complex struggle between the Queensland Government and the Federal Government, led by arch-conservative Malcolm Fraser, over who should control the land - and the bauxite in it (see cartoon).



"We'll soon know who it belongs to — Bjelke-Petersen or Fraser."

As soon as the Queensland Government threatened to take control of the community, the Aurukun Aborigines asked the conservative Federal Liberal-National Country Party coalition Government to acquire their Reserve land and hand it back to its traditional owners. Despite numerous Federal Government promises that this would happen, the Federal Government eventually accepted a Queensland compromise resulting in the Aurukun Reserve being administered by the Queensland Department of Local Government.

The compromise was opposed by the Aborigines, although they tried to work within the new legislation once it had been forced upon them. However, the Aboriginal Council was eventually sacked by the Queensland Local Government Minister because it had failed to "co-operate" with him.

Throughout this dispute, Aurukun Associates avoided making its position public. However, it is clear that the consortium was satisfied to let the Queensland Government do the "dirty work" of undermining community solidarity and cohesion at Aurukun. This would, if it happens, leave the way open for the consortium to start mining whenever economic conditions make mining at Aurukun a profitable proposition, without any coherent opposition from the Aborigines.

This situation, where the 'state' intervenes in disputes on behalf of transnational corporations would be familiar to observers of many aspects of the Australian social formation. Throughout Australia, State and Federal Governments have trampled on Aboriginal rights to facilitate pastoral or mining development by the corporations (e.g. see article on uranium mining in this Newsletter). In other areas conservative governments have intervened in industrial disputes to protect scabs and bosses. They have introduced economic policies resulting in high unemployment (50%+ among Aborigines) to placate the corporations.

Of course, these policies have not gone unopposed. For example, the Aurukun dispute has been crucial in raising consciousness about state intervention in both Aboriginal and Anglo Australia.

Across North Australia a cultural revival movement has gained strength in the last two or three years. Large cultural gatherings have contributed not only to development of a self-conscious Aboriginal identity, but have also provided forums for Aborigines from different places to sit down together to discuss the economic and political problems each isolated community has, until recently, been forced to face alone. This has encouraged increasing political consciousness and action among many Aborigines.<sup>5</sup>

Among white Australians, long famous for their racism and parochialism, the land rights movement has forced at least some sections of Australian society, e.g. sections of student and labour movements, left political parties, including the major opposition party, the Australian Labor Party, and some of the major churches, to become more aware of the political and economic reasons for increasing underdevelopment in the country so often referred to as "the lucky country".

#### Footnotes:

1. J. Smart, 1977, 1:250 000 Geological Series, explanatory notes, Aurukun, Qld. (sheet SD 54-7), Aust Govt. Publ. Service, Canberra, page 5.
2. This material is dealt with at greater length in Howitt, 1978, The Management strategies of aluminium companies with interests on Cape York Peninsula, 1955-1978, unpub BA(Hons) thesis, Dept. of Geography, Newcastle University, NSW; and in a paper called Beyond the Geological Imperative to be published shortly by the Dept. of Geography, Newcastle University, Shortland, 2308, NSW, Australia.
3. Although they have been amended several times since 1955, the Queensland Acts, as they are commonly known throughout Black Australia, still exist and continue to oppress Queensland Aborigines. see Black Resource Centre Collective, 1976, The Queensland Aborigines Act and Regulations 1971 - so that anyone can read them, Black Resource Centre, P.O. Box 345, Brisbane, 4000, Qld. The Act and Regulations were amended earlier this year.

4. This disgraceful incident is discussed in The Mapoon Books, a three-volume study of the invasion of Cape York by the mining companies. (Available for \$45.00 from the publishers, International Development Action, 73 Little George St., Fitzroy, 3065, Victoria, Aust.) See also, J. Roberts, 1979, From Massacres to Mining: the colonization of Aboriginal Australia, available from CIMRA, 5 Caledonian Rd., London, NI, England for \$1.99.
5. See e.g., F. Engel, 1978, The position of the Australian Aborigines, Australian Council of Churches, Box C199, Clarence St. P.O., Sydney, 2000, NSW, Aust.



Antinomy Department

The Kautskyan road to socialism - parliamentary, democratic and peaceful - has led to defeats and catastrophe for the workers' movement, disarming it against fascism and war. While this road, adopted by the Communist Parties after the Second World War, has not led to socialism anywhere, the regime which Lenin defended against Kautsky's attacks as the first historical incarnation of the dictatorship of the proletariat has evolved in the direction of a new class society. It seems, then, that history is playing one of its tricks. It justifies Lenin against Kautsky and Kautsky against Lenin. But behind this paradox there lies a profound truth, a lesson which all revolutions - and periods between revolutions - teach the proletariat. One will not win with democracy alone, one will not become the dominant class and advance towards the classless society. But without democracy, one will lose even when one thinks one is winning; for from one's own ranks a new ruling and exploiting class will tend to emerge.

(F. Claudin, "Democracy and Dictatorship in Lenin and Kautsky" New Left Review 106, 1977, p.75).

## RULING ECONOMY, RULING CLASS

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University of Adelaide.

In terms of foreign ownership of the economy, Australia can be accurately described as the Canada of the southern hemisphere. Australia has the dubious distinction of belonging to a small group of countries which, while highly urbanized and industrialized, are incapable of finding the capital resources to maintain the necessary rate of investment needed to ensure the stability of the economy. The high degree of penetration of the Australian economy by foreign capital is now well documented.<sup>1</sup> Yet to date there has been almost no recognition of the significance of this fact for the class structure of Australian capitalism. Most important, studies of the class structure are predicated on the assumption that the Australian ruling class is comparable to those of industrial societies where there is a relatively high degree of indigenous ownership of the means of production. Models of the ruling class tend to be drawn from the experience of Britain and the U.S.A.<sup>2</sup> on the assumption that although the economies of these countries differ fundamentally from that of Australia their class structures are basically similar.

This assumption must now be challenged. If the basic Marxist principle that the nature of the economy determines or heavily influences the class structure, and if we can point to major structural differences in the ownership of economies of different countries it follows that major structural differences in class relationships are almost certain to exist. The wealth of data and analysis on foreign control of certain economies which has recently emerged out of the work of political economists must be taken up in studies of class structures. The aim in this paper is to sketch out in a preliminary manner some of the wider implications and ramifications for the structure of the Australian ruling class of an economy heavily penetrated by foreign capital. Such a task must be seen as one element in a reappraisal of the class structure which must be extended to the working class and eventually to the more detailed studies of fractions of capital and labor.

Estimates of the degree of foreign ownership of the Australian corporate economy range between one third and two fifths: comparable to that of Canada and in stark contrast to highly 'autonomous' capitalist societies such as Japan and Sweden where foreign ownership is negligible: less than five percent.<sup>3</sup> The most important sources of overseas investment are, as one might expect, Britain and the U.S.A. which together accounted for some 70 percent of all foreign investment in 1971.<sup>4</sup> Like Canada, Australia possesses no indigenous multinational corporations whose brands are household names around the world. With almost twice the population of Sweden, Australia has no equivalent of Volvo, Electrolux, or SKF. Australian cars are manufactured by Chrysler, General Motors and Ford; its electrical goods by Westinghouse, General Electric and Hoover, and its chemical products by ICI and Dow. In some sectors of the economy, notably motor manufacturing, foreign control is almost complete. Nor is the relative absence of Australian capital in the economy the result of heavy investment of Australian capital overseas. Although Australian capital is exported to Britain in considerable amounts, the only economies substantially penetrated by Australian capital are those of New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.<sup>5</sup>

The weakness of Australian capital and its heavy dependence upon foreign supplementation on a massive scale is particularly noticeable in mining and other primary extraction industries.<sup>6</sup> The recently planned 'North West Shelf' development off the north-west coast of Western Australia based on oil and gas resources and estimated to cost several billion dollars to develop, is heavily dependent upon foreign capital. Indigenous capital is quite unable to raise the necessary funds to finance the development of the most profitable and expanding sectors of the economy to the end of the century.

The implications of the weakness of indigenous capital for the structure and cohesion of the Australian ruling class are far-reaching. It is axiomatic that the power of any ruling class derives directly from the extent of its control over capital and through this of the entire corporate economy. A ruling class which does not possess sufficient capital resources to develop the economy and whose economy is heavily penetrated by foreign capital is necessarily in a much weaker position to control and exploit the economy than a ruling class which is not so heavily dependent on foreign capital.

Unfortunately, 'degree of control over the economy' is difficult to quantify. One simple index might be the way in which the web of interlocking directorates is likely to be influenced by foreign penetration of an economy. The concept of interlocking directorates and its importance in understanding the nature of the ruling class has been extensively studied, and it is clear that multiple directorships, and less obviously, the holding of executive positions in political, administrative, educational, religious and other institutions by the directors of major companies is an important aspect of the integration and control of capitalist society by members of the ruling class.<sup>7</sup>

Foreign ownership is likely to differ from indigenous ownership in that interlocks will be less extensive. That is, a foreign-owned subsidiary will generally have as its directors the appointed executives of the parent company who are little interested in the local political scene and who function as (often temporary) posted administrators, answerable to the parent company and who may be members of its board.

What data are available on Australian registered foreign-owned subsidiaries suggests that this is largely the case. A comparison of the interlocks of a number of large foreign-owned companies with Australian-owned companies shows that each director of an Australian company held on average four other directorships as against the directors of foreign subsidiaries who held on average only one other directorship.<sup>8</sup> In so far as interlocks are important for the cohesion and integration of capitalist economies therefore, Australia's deeply penetrated economy weakens control at the strategic level through the maintenance of a dense and comprehensive network of interlocks.

The implications of this are worth pursuing in a little more detail. Australia's economy is not uniformly penetrated by foreign capital. Some sectors of the economy, such as automobile manufacturing, mining, electric durables etc. are heavily dominated and in some cases monopolised by foreign companies. Others, such as retail stores, the media, banking and finance are still largely owned by Australian companies. This means that some sectors of the economy will be characterised by dense interlocks, while others will be poorly represented, and still others will be almost devoid of interlocks. Sectors of the economy virtually monopolised by foreign companies, such as motor manufacturing, will be all but excluded from the network of interlocks which the indigenous ruling class can sustain.



The patchy and incomplete nature of indigenous control over the Australian economy must necessarily have profound implications for the structure of the ruling class. One major implication concerns the national integration of the economy. The fact that between a third and a half of the economy is foreign-owned understates the importance of foreign ownership in one sense. This is that foreign ownership is heavily concentrated in large companies operating at the national level. Since much foreign ownership is in the form of the subsidiaries of multinational corporations, this necessarily means that Australian-owned major companies are more under-represented than is the case with smaller companies, even though there may be a considerable 'undergrowth' of local companies. The motor manufacturing industry is a case in point. The domination of the manufacturing industry on a national scale by Ford, Chrysler and General Motors co-exists side by side with a considerable proliferation of small, often Australian-owned, state-based companies and workshops which provide the multinationals with components, servicing, facilities, etc.

The implication of this is that the national integration of the economy in the network of interlocks will be particularly weak. This is likely to be at least one factor in the oft-noted state-based nature of Australian ruling class interests, particularly in the industrial states - New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.<sup>9</sup> Concomitantly, the displacement of national Australia-wide indigenously-owned companies by foreign-owned multinationals must be an inhibiting factor in the growth of a national consciousness within the ruling class.

Yet another implication is the extraordinary importance of rural vested interests in the Australian ruling class. The National Country Party which traditionally represents pastoral interests plays a major role in both Federal and State politics holding office in coalition with the major conservative party (the Liberals) as the dominant party (as in Queensland) or the secondary party (federally).<sup>10</sup> At least one reason for this may be the peculiar structure of the Australian ruling class, under-represented by industrial capital, so much of which is foreign-owned, which makes traditional rural interests a relatively more important fraction of capital. In most industrialised capitalist societies rural interests have become rapidly eclipsed by the growing importance of industrial interests. To the extent that this has not happened in Australia, or has happened to a much lesser extent, rural interests are likely to play a more important role than might be suggested by the level of industrialisation of the national economy.


Finally, we might point to the intensely conservative nature of the Australian ruling class as partly the result of its truncated structure. Australian capital necessarily is both dependent upon and in competition with foreign capital. The stresses and strains in this relationship have been indicated elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> From the point of view of the threat posed by the social democratic policies of the Australian Labor Party, such a defensive and decimated ruling class is likely to be much more sensitive to fabian policies of 'creeping socialism' such as the Labor Party often propose in its occasional nationalisation drives. The tremendous struggle to avert the nationalisation of the banks in the 1940's<sup>12</sup> and the reaction against Federal and South Australian Labor Governments moves to develop public insurance sectors in competition with private interests must be seen in this context. Thus, in so far as finance represents both a crucial sector of the economy and one of the strongholds of Australian capital which has as yet been relatively little penetrated by foreign interests, separate opposition to nationalisation must be understood in part at least as a reaction to a major threat to the structure and even viability of the ruling class.

These necessarily exploratory comments on the relationship between ruling class structure and the nature of the economy point to the need to carry out more work which does not simply restate general principles governing the nature of ruling classes in capitalist societies but which begin to systematically explore specific historical conditions in which ruling classes develop in particular countries. Australia's ruling class is of potential interest because of the high degree of foreign penetration of the economy. Because of this, comparisons with the structure of the Canadian ruling class would be especially useful to bring out similarities and differences. Much the same goes for the structure of the working class. Hopefully, this sort of starting point can shed more light on the detailed working of the class structure of capitalist societies.

#### Notes

1. E. L. Wheelwright Radical Political Economy: collected essays Australian and New Zealand Book Co. Sydney 1974, E. L. Wheelwright and Ken Buckley (eds) Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism (Vols. 1 & 2) Australia and New Zealand Book Co., Sydney.
2. See, for example, John Playford Neo-Capitalism in Australia Arena Publications Monograph No. 1, Melbourne 1969, John Playford 'Who Rules Australia?' in John Playford and Douglas Kirsner (eds.) Australian Capitalism: towards a socialist critique Penguin, London 1972 pp.108-155, and R.W. Connell Ruling Class, Ruling Culture: studies of conflict, power and hegemony in Australian life Cambridge University Press, London 1977.
3. Commonwealth Treasury Overseas Investment in Australia Treasury Economic Paper No.1 (May) Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1972 pp.71-74.
4. Calculated from ibid. p.17
5. ibid. p.149
6. Australia Up-Rooted A.M.W.S.U., Sydney (circa 1977) p.8, estimates foreign ownership of mining at 65 percent.
7. See, for example, Thomas R. Dye Who's Running America? institutional leadership in the United States Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs 1976; Peter J. Freitag 'The Cabinet and Big Business: a study of interlocks' Social Problems December 1975 Vol. 23 No. 2 pp.137-152; Michael Hughes, John Scott, and John Mackenzie 'Trends in Interlocking Directorships: an international comparison' Acta Sociologica 1977 Vol. 20 No. 3 pp. 287-292; Tom Lupton and C. Shirley Wilson 'The Social Background and Connections of "Top Decision Makers"' in John Urry and John Wakeford (eds) Power in Britain: sociological readings Heinemann, London 1973 pp.185-204; John Scott and Michael Hughes 'The Scottish Ruling Class: problems of analysis and data' in A. Allan MacLaren (ed.) Social Class in Scotland: past and present John Donald, Edinburgh n.d. pp.166-188; John Scott and Michael Hughes 'Ownership and Control in a satellite economy: a discussion from Scottish data' Sociology January 1976 Vol. 10 No. 1 pp. 21-41; Philip Stanworth and Anthony Giddens 'The Modern Corporate Economy: interlocking directorships in Britain, 1906-1970' The Sociological Review February 1975 Vol. 23 No. 1 pp. 5-28.
8. For data and further discussion see my 'Capitalism: the Australian way' (editors' title) Arena (Melbourne) No. 51, 1978 pp.94-104.

9. E.W. Campbell The 60 Rich Families who Own Australia Current Books, Sydney 1963; J. Hoas Monopoly Owns South Australia the author, Adelaide 1961.
10. For a discussion of the Country Party see Jack Barbalet: 'Tripartism in Australia: the role of the Australian Country Party' Politics 1975 No.10 pp. 1-14.
11. See R.W. Connell 'Conflict in the Australian Ruling Class 1970-72' in M. Richards and R.A. Witton (eds.) The American Connection Macmillan, Melbourne, 1975; O'Shaughnessy, Terry 'Conflicts in the Ruling Class' Intervention August 1978 No.10/11 pp.40-57; John Playford 'Who Rules Australia?' op.cit. p.113. For a view of an ex-Governor of South Australia on the negative influence of foreign companies see Sir Mark Oliphant 'Eliminate Foreign Companies' The Advertiser (Adelaide) Tuesday August 22 1978 Vol.121 No.37 374 p.1.
12. For a discussion of this see R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving 'Yes, Virginia, there is a Ruling Class' in Henry Mayer and Helen Nelson (eds.) Australian Politics: a fourth reader Cheshire, Melbourne, 1976 pp.81-92.



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HYPER-ELECTRONICS

## AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY

### Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism

edited by E.L. Wheelwright and Ken Buckley, 3 Volumes  
Australia and New Zealand Book Company, Sydney  
Volume 1, 1975; Volume 2, 1978; Volume 3, 1978

This collection of twenty six essays, three introductions and 685 pages originates in "the belief that a 'History of the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism from the Earliest Times to the Present Day' should be written; that this would be best attempted from a basic Marxist standpoint; and that before it could even be started, it would be necessary to provide both bricks and straw" (Volume 1, p. 1). All but three of the 26 contributors and editors are academics, and those three 'outsiders' have close links with academia. However, the academics, all ranks are represented including a graduate student and two undergraduates, and several disciplines - one third from sociology, followed by history, and lone contributors from areas like law or communications studies. More than half, however, are based at academic institutions in the greater Sydney area (including a North Shore C.A.E.) with a smattering from the universities of Monash, Adelaide and Flinders. Does this mean that the bricks and straw of Marxism are not represented at Wollongong, Western Australia, James Cook or New England? Though that might be too sweeping since not all the contributors are Marxists anyway, as in the editors words, "the main criterion for inclusion was that an essay was considered to be putting forward a tenable point of view on a significant issue ..." (Volume 1, p. 9). That is an argumentative point given the goal eschewed only eight pages earlier. It is questionable that some important areas of concern are represented for example by John Connell, whose better known publication Ruling Class, Ruling Culture<sup>a</sup> uses a very questionable definition of "class", or Jill Roe, whose Social Policy in Australia, 1901-1975<sup>\*\*</sup> treats poverty from a reformist standpoint at best. I mention their major publications rather than their specific chapters least one tries to excuse them for lack of space to thoroughly develop their arguments! Of the total, seven articles concern either the long range evaluation of the Australian social formation or historical moments in its development; six deal with general areas of the

\* Subtitled, "studies of conflict, power and hegemony in Australian life", and published 1977 by Cambridge University Press.

\*\* A collection of essays edited by her and published 1976 by Carsell Australia Ltd.

present conjuncture, and a further six tackle specific topics of current concern (housing, racism, poverty, education, the environment, and Australia's neocolonial role in Papua New Guinea); four deal with class relations; and there are two concerned with culture (mediation and representation).

My familiarity with these books came as I was parachuted into teach someone else's course on "Social Issues" and sought them as an antidote to what Samir Amin called Australia's "world of absolute silence" in a review of socialist writing.\* He also went on to note perceptively "... how is it possible to be an Australian? Yes, it is possible, there are Australians; one can even be comfortable, it seems, being an Australian, even have a slightly better chance (statistically) of being a tennis champion. One can even become an Australian: functionalism is a thing you can get hooked on. So let all the technocrats in the world be automatically sent to Australia, they will like it there ... because they will systematically build 1984" (pp. 14-15). Is this then Wheelwright and Buckley's answer to the functionalism that is so much the motor of Australian social science? Despite my reservations about the non-Marxist contributions, the difficulties that some of my Australian students had in using these Volumes, and the uneven coverage of Australian political economy in these first three volumes, my response is "let's have more", though better organised, thematic, and Marxist. Further I would encourage Marxists in Canada (and elsewhere) to use these Volumes as an object lesson in what can be done - we have no equivalent set of essays, only a few isolated tomes - let us build upon this Australian experience so that we can "... gladden the heart of any Marxist" (Volume 1, p. 1).

Ted Wheelwright, the senior editor, is probably the most familiar contributor to us outside Australia, particularly for his book with Bruce McFarlane (also a contributor to this series), the Chinese Road to Socialism\*\* , which (despite the "great leap backwards") is still one of the best contributions to an understanding in the English language to the pre-cultural revolution Chinese economy. His contribution, and that of others, must be measured against the struggle in a very conservative milieu earlier this decade to found departments of Political Economy and General Philosophy dedicated to radical analyses of social science. His description of what Australian Marxist historiography could be all about is worth quoting at length:

\* "In praise of socialism", Monthly Review, Vol. 26, No. 4 (1974) pp. 1-16.

\*\* Monthly Review Press, 1970.

"Such a history might show the following: how capital came to Australia dripping with blood and dirt, in the form of, first, the expropriation of the original owners of the land, and their virtual extermination; and second, the Australian version of slavery, known as the convict system. How the national bourgeoisie came into existence, how Australian nationalism developed and how much this depended on the Australian working class. How this nationalism never broke with British imperialism, but became side tracked into militaristic jargon in support of it. How much of Australian economic development was due to two world wars, when the imperialistic links were weakened, and why there was an opposite effect in the Great Depression. And how, after World War II, Australian capitalism slipped out of the orbit of British Imperialism into the American variety. And finally to what extent the Australian bourgeoisie has become ... a junior partner of world imperialism, having foreclosed any possibility of a self sustaining Australian capitalism, and are only now becoming aware of this when it is too late."\*

These tasks are spelt out more fully in pp. 6-9 of the first introduction, written in the "turbulent" Whitlam years, but not revised in Volumes 2 and 3, under the Fraser regime, so presumably still extant: "the leit-motiv is that although capitalism may be regarded as a socio-economic system which involves certain fundamentals which revolve around the central relationship of capital to wage labour, nevertheless the system takes on different forms in different physical and cultural environments, and in different historical periods." In elementary form the particular topics are, the role of the state; immigration; the penetration of capital from many sources rather than few sources like Canada; periodization; the rise of nationalism; the impact of imperialism; and to use Geoffrey Blainey's phrase, "the tyranny of distance". With more volumes promised, many of these individual topics and the leit-motiv are covered in the present 26 essays - in Volume 1 largely dwelling on the evolution of the Australian social formation in the long term, Volume 2 centres around an analysis of contradictions within the ruling and "middle" classes, and Volume 3 looks at working class Australia - though that is a post facto observation of the organisation, not one imposed by the editors.

Within this collection, uneven though it may be, there are

\* E. Wheelwright, "Underdevelopment or revolution? The Bara Frank thesis", p. 257 in his collected essays Radical Political Economy, Sydney: ANZ Book Col., 1974.

some excellent contributions; given the total number of essays, I will mention only a few - in Volume three both John Collins' "Fragmentation of the working class" and Mervyn Hartwig's "Capitalism and Aborigines: the theory of internal colonialism and its rivals" are worth comment. Collins' contribution is well set out and methodologically easily applied to other social formations. Taking the orthodox economists' "dual labour theory" refined in the U. States in the 1960's he transforms it by, I'm tempted to write, standing it on its head! He relates "class", the concept of the "industrial reserve army", and the specificities of the conjuncture, to groupings which have appeared in the Australia working class in terms of internal differences within labour movements, ideology, and politics; groupings like immigrant women and Aborigines repeatedly appear in such an analysis. Hartwig takes the most oppressed of these groupings, Aborigines, and tries first to assess attempts to differentiate racial exploitation from class exploitation, which obviously he finds totally inadequate as explanations of the relationship of classes within racial or ethnic groups to the class structure of the society as a whole. In its place he examines the inexorable way in which the capitalist mode of production has penetrated, destroyed, and then transformed a non-capitalist mode, in this case that of the Aborigines, into a way of life alien to their wants and needs. His examination of the subtle, and not so subtle, changes in the associated ideology and state policies made fascinating reading for a non-Australian, and made the movie Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith which I saw about this same time, much more meaningful. Less satisfactory is the first half of his article in which the "internal colonialism" model is given yet another airing!

As a Canadian, Glen Lewis' essay "Queensland nationalism and Australian capitalism" has a special fascination. Unlikely as it may seem superficially, there are strong similarities in certain basic undercurrents in Quebec and Queensland. Lewis analyses nationalism in Queensland as a reflection of the political economy of that state and the uneven development between regions, sectors, and nations; in this context he uses the concept of regionalism and the specific historical evolution of this state in relation to Australia as a whole in terms of geography, defence policies, immigration, racism, and economic dependence. Ideologically, corporatism, agrarianism, dependent investment, and collective consumptionism have seen the rise of a new petty bourgeois class, led here by Bjelke-Petersen; although the latter represents a neo-capitalist fraction of this new class, it is another fraction of the same class, the technocratic group, that Levesque represents via his Parti Quebecois in that Canadian province. State paternalism, collective competition, and a northern version of the mateship ideology stand out clearly in Queensland.

But most notably "comprador capitalism" in which the local bourgeoisie and new petty bourgeoisie are agents of international capitalism mark strong parallels with Quebec too. There are other essays which I found of considerable interest as well - Bob Catley's assessment of the impact of the end of the "Age of Growth" on Whitlam's social democratic government and its inevitable replacement by Fraser's coalition of the right, Sol Encel's review of the particular features of capitalism in Australia in the late 1970's and its reflection in the nature of the labour market and surficial class and subclass structures, Ian Turner's provocative essay, "he bastards from the bush" which contrasts media-manipulated Ockerism, popular culture, and the elitist bourgeois high arts in Australia, and Michael Dunn's explication of the convict labour system were all notable.

There is no doubt that these three volumes, including their faults, do represent a very healthy filling of that Australian silence. The parallels with struggles elsewhere are obvious: they tackle issues we have all been pondering: political economy in general, and its Marxist basis; more to the point, the nature of the state comes to the fore as does class and class consciousness. That not all the essays succeed is simply part of the learning process that helps identify an Australian contribution to the literature on the left. As I left Australia, Kibble Books launched a new series "theses on the left", of which the first by Tim Rowse is a contribution as worthy of note as the start, reviewed here, under Wheelwright and Buckley's supervision.\* Rowse takes a theme mentioned or alluded to throughout these three volumes - that of the practice of ideological struggle and its relation to class and the hegemony of a particular group in Australia. Not only is it an excellent and critical introduction to "liberal democracy", but it is a working example of the practice of Marxism in the social science. I am convinced that the ANZ trilogy helped paved the way for more Marxist scholarship of this type.

To end I need only quote the editors' final plea from Volume three: "(we) now look forward to preparing Volume Four in the series. Contributions of essays are invited and maybe sent to either editor. The essential elements are that the essays be related to Australia, and the approach of the authors should be leftwing, preferably Marxist - using that term in its widest sense." (Volume 3, p. 10.)

Michael E. Eliot Hurst  
Simon Fraser University  
April 1979

\* Australian Liberalism and National Character, Box 210, Malmesbury, Victoria, 1978.

"Is socialism ... the highest form of capitalism?"

(Geoffrey Kay, Development and Underdevelopment. A Marxist Analysis, MacMillan Press, 1975, p.85).

## RECENT LEFT AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

### BIBLIOGRAPHY OF RADICAL JOURNALS IN AUSTRALIA

#### ARENA

A Melbourne-based left/radical journal concentrating mainly on analysis of the Australian social formation, with some commentary on international events.

#### No. 49 (1977)

'Genetic Risk: The Nuclear Wastes' - Alan Roberts

A discussion of the nuclear waste disposal problem, focussing on the social responsibilities of scientists and technocrats.

'The Political Economy of Housing' - Jim Kemeny

Superficial comparison of the profitability and social costs of home ownership, private rental, and public housing. Also considers movements of capital investment between housing and other sectors of the economy.

'U.S. Colonialism in Micronesia' - Anthony Ashbolt

U.S. militarist imperialism in the South Pacific. Good historical and political analysis, with some consideration of the economic impacts.

'The Economic Cycle in Post-War Australia' - Charles Silver

Marxist discussion of the current crises in Australian capitalism and the end of the so-called 'long boom'.

#### No. 50 (1978)

'Minerals and Multinationals' - Bob Catley and Bruce McFarlane

A useful description of the reaction of mining capital to a crisis in capitalism.

'Cultural Independence'

Eight short articles on underdeveloped areas within and near Australia, especially their penetration by foreign capital and culture.

- 'The Bonds of Charity: The Aid Debate' - Nonie Sharp
- 'Culture of the Torres Strait People' - Hironobu Kitaoji
- 'Papua New Guinea' - MegascHEME for the Purari R. - Peter Kavo
- 'East Timor: The People and the Struggle' - Arnold Zable
- 'Land Rights for Tasmania's Aborigines' - Michael Mansell
- 'The Aurukun Story' - Lyndon Shea
- 'Living Black' - Sandra Neilley
- 'New context for the West Irian Struggle' - Nonie Sharp

'Subtle Anatomy of Capitalism' - Melanie Beresford

Excellent review of Jesse Schwartz's book of the same name. Includes comment on Sraffa and his interpreters (Roncaglia, Robinson, Steedman); criticism of the labour theory of value and the theory of crisis.

#### No. 51 (1978)

'The Social Character of Time' - David Biggins

Disappointing examination of time as a social concept and the means by which it affects the development of society.

'Social Work: The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing' - PatSkenridge & Ian Lennie  
Althusserian critique of the ideology of social work and the role it plays in the maintenance of capitalist social relations.

'Capitalism: The Australian Way' - Jim Kemeny

Foreign capital in Australia and its effect on the indigenous class structure. Mainly descriptive.

'Raymond Williams: The Critic and Society' - Peter Williams

Very fine review of Williams' book 'Marxism and Literature', which examines the debate between the Romantic Humanists and those influenced by Althusser and Collerti.

#### AUSTRALIAN LEFT REVIEW

Union-oriented magazine which focuses on national issues of interest to the union movement, as well as including reprints of theoretical articles and news of international socialist and workers movements.

#### No. 63 (Mar 1978)

'Contemporary Feminism and Socialist Movements' - Barbara Ehrenreich

Emphasis on the women's movement within the broader socialist context. Includes an interesting section on the political economy of the family under capitalism.

#### No. 64 (May 1978)

'History of the Land Rights Struggle in Queensland' - Daisy Marchisotti

Brief history of the Queensland Aborigines and their struggles against Federal and State Governments and mining interests.

'Economic Notes' - irregular column

Interesting attempt to explain the arguments of 'Capital' in seven pages of diagrams and explanation.

#### No. 65 (Aug 1978)

'TV without Tears' - Daniel Ben-Horin

Analysis of television as a mass artform. Critiques manipulation theory, content analysis and positive formal analysis. Offers a strategy for socialist TV.

#### No. 68 (Apr 1979)

'Socialist Feminist Theory: An Appraisal' - Ruth Connell

A potpourri of feminist theories since Engels. Some important points raised but not explored in any detail.

'Recent Theories of the Capitalist State' - Bob Jessop

Perceptive overview of the contributions of Marx, Lenin, Gramsci, Miliband, Poulantzas, the Neo-Ricardians, the Capital Logic school (Altwater, Muller & Neussuess and Rosdolsky) and Claus Offe to an understanding of the contemporary State.

INTERVENTION

An academic Marxist journal containing analysis of the Australian social formation and theoretical articles.

No. 9 (Oct 1977)

- 'Nuclear Madness' - Kelvin Rowley  
'Fraser, Carter and the Uranium Market' - Hugh Saddler  
Rowley outlines the technical problems of the nuclear power industry and its place in the structure of capitalism. Saddler attacks the government claims of the future economic benefits of mining and selling uranium.
- 'Timpanaro's Limbo' - Paul Foss and Liz Gross  
Critique of Timpanaro's 'The Freudian Slip' and a defence of the concept of the unconscious. Challenging, but at times obscure, mixture of the ideas of Althusser and Lacan.

No. 10/11 (Aug 1978)

- 'The Making of the Australian Industrial Bourgeoisie 1930 - 1975' - Bob Connell and Terry Irving  
Excellent history of the class changes that followed in the wake of the First World War and the Depression.
- 'Some Recent Conflicts in the Ruling Class' - Terry O'Shaughnessy  
Examines some clashes between fractions of the bourgeoisie. Suggests a socialist response to these conflicts.
- 'Melbourne Housing Prices' - Anthony Ward.  
Interesting attempt to integrate exchange value and use value of houses in explaining ground rent.

JOURNAL OF AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL ECONOMYNo. 1 (Oct 1977)

- 'The Australian Crisis from Boom to Bust' - Michael Breznjak and John Collins  
Brief examination of the historical roots and internal dimensions of the current crisis, including the response of the State.
- 'Women and Work' Theresa Brennan  
A political economy of women which discusses the exploitation of migrant women; the productivity of domestic labour; women as a reserve army. the position of women in trade unions.
- 'The End of the Age of Growth' - Ted Wheelwright  
Examines the effects of the internationalization of capital on the Australian economy.
- 'Inflation, Money, Gold and Marx' - Bruce McFarlane  
Critique of monetarist economic theory and the neglect of inflation as a subject for analysis by Marxists.

No. 2 (June 1978)

- 'Trade Unions, Myth and Reality' - Edward Davis  
Investigates the media image and the reality of the organized working class movement.
- Peter Rogers

ON CRITICISM, COUNTER CRITICISM, AND COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE CRITICISM

Michael E. Elliot Hurst

Laying aside the personal sensitivities, for which so many of us are renowned, and unfortunately crippled to some extent by 'constructive criticism' of a personal or collective nature is vital to the continuing development of Marxism. We should feel free to offer criticism as best we can, guarding against subjectivism, arbitrariness and vulgarization; statements should be based on facts, and criticism should centre on politics. In addition, to paraphrase Marx, we must involve ourselves in an uncompromising critical evaluation, a critical dialogue, which fears neither its own results nor conflicts with others (including the establishment, as such).

ON SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

First, however, let us get rid of the trivia and set the record straight.

- (a) I am somewhat surprised that the alleged "inaccuracy" was taken up by Dick Peet, since I had explained both in person and in writing that we were dealing with a typing/proofreading error, in which the phrase "and spatial relations" was omitted. In fact, given the context of my argument, it weakened my line of reasoning not Dick's. To take it up and repeat it several times is scurrilous.
- (b) The context in which the error occurred was a typescript of a presentation I made at the IAG meetings, Townsville, August 1978. The typescript contained the note:-

"This paper was originally conceived with another title 'The lacunas, lapses, and silences of Geography: towards a de-definition'. Subsequent thought has shifted the emphasis from simply carrying out an 'archaeological' type research into Geography as one fetishized domain, to that of arguing the position of abandoning that domain altogether for a different organisation of 'epistemological space'. This change in emphasis has delayed completion of the full paper, and what is presented here is only a summary paper with a partial bibliography".

This summary was also circulated by me to twenty individuals in North America, Britain, and Australia, asking specifically for critical feedback before it was revised and possibly published (in Dick's use of 'external' domain?). At the IAG meetings the oral version was prefaced in terms of a "possible or potential paper". Rather than being a "paper" in the normal sense we have a series of notes, comments, thoughts, "in search of a paper", and needing critical dialogue. The whole point of its limited circulation was to receive critical feedback before committing it to the publication circuit. I still have copies of this version, which are available for critical review, if you want to write to me at Simon Fraser University.

- (c) It is ironic that in accusing me of selective quotation from his work, Dick then does the same to mine. Very importantly given

'Mao Tse Tung "On correcting mistaken ideas in the party", Collected Works, Vol.1, 1967, p.112.

Dick's plea for a "Marxist Geography" and my argument against such a stand, he omits the critical sentence (italicized in the following). To set the record straight here is the contextual paragraph:

"Radical interventionism, increasingly fashionable over the last decade this current has attracted many leftward drifting liberals. There has been a concern to expose and denounce the ideological distortions of both mainstream geography and its variants listed above ["outraged humanism" and "benevolent positivism"]. In particular the works of Marx and his 20th century interpreters has been utilized in this critique. For some it is a genuine intellectual transition, but for others who learn only a few catch-words and phrases it is no more than an academic bandwagon. Unfortunately for both groups, because they were not able to see Geography as a problematic, as a product like the other 'social sciences' of a particular economic, political and ideological conjuncture (Capitalism) the moves by Peet, Santos, Buch-Hanson and Neilson, Sôja, and others to create a convergence of Geography with a 'radical' approach is doomed to failure. Their interventions are futile and unscientific, even though Harvey had warned them early on, that the cooptation of Marxist language 'without conveying the essence of Marxist thinking' has effectively prevented the true flowering of Marxist thought' [Peet quotes] ... This new straight jacket for Marxist enquiry is then by some added legerdemain reconstituted as a fusion of a bourgeois discourse, geography, and some aspects of a critical science, Marxism, 'Marxist Geography', to produce a wholly contradictory discourse that would because Marx to turn in his grave! It is not far from that confusion to define, as Peet does ... [Peet quotes]".

- (d) Against mine and Leach's comments (which have not reached Australia at the time of writing) Dick sets the exemplar of Buch-Hanson and Neilson's criticisms of his earlier poverty article in the AAG Annals. That particular criticism occupies only 264 lines in a lengthy article (where ironically the two authors repeat very similar mistakes). Dick himself has reprinted his poverty article without comment or updating in his more recent "Radical Geography" collection. This particular article has been analyzed in more depth, constructively criticized, and built upon by myself in a manuscript on poverty to be published in 1979 by Oxford University Press. The point being to learn from our earlier attempts and Marxist analysis and to improve upon it. In Dick's exemplar this is not carried out.

#### ON IMPORTANT MATTERS:

There are, as Dick points out, some fundamental issues at stake, the practice of those of us who are now either Marxists, or at least like myself still on the threshold of Marxism, within the discourse, geography, from which we received our training, current employment, etc; the origins and continuance of a particular and historically specific division of "epistemological space", geography, the role of "space" per se, which cannot be dismissed just as a fetishism, anymore than criticisms of spatial fetishism can be counter-criticized by being termed fetishistic too! These crucial issues are in fact the concern of my "de-definition" paper as well, but in order to clarify the situation it is important to define some of the concepts and terms being used.

Marxism is both a science and a guide to socialist action. A union of historical materialist theory and a revolutionary movement. The one cannot be separated from the other without the risk of producing either ivory-tower radicalism on the one hand or futile cooptive political action on the other.

In its claims to be scientific, Marxism uses a particular mode of analysis and explanation (historical materialism), and a philosophy (dialectical materialism). Althusser refers to the "necessity ... for a theory which defines itself dialectically, not merely as a science of history but also and simultaneously as a philosophy that is capable ... of accounting for itself" by taking itself and its scientificity as an object (1969, p. 10). We can regard historical materialism as the Marxist science of social formations and their history, and dialectical materialism as the theory of the production of knowledge, the theory of science, the theory of the history of science, and the theory of theoretical practice. Therborn summarises the conception of science used here in this way:

- (1) There exists an external world independent of men's conceptions of it, of which science tries to gain knowledge, and which provides science with its real object (Materialist postulate).
- (2) What science studies is not external reality as it appears to everyday sense perceptions, but a theoretically defined object, by means of which it strives to grasp the real world (Anti-empiricist thesis). These conceptual objects are incessantly worked upon and transformed in the scientific production of knowledge.
- (3) The rise of a new science ... means above all the discovery production of a new system of concepts defining an object of systematic investigation. This entails a break with previous conceptualizations (Discontinuist thesis of the history of science) ...
- (4) A basic difference between science and ideology is that the former is an open system of questions asked of its object, the answers to which are not prejudged. Ideology, on the other hand, is characterized by posing problems whose solutions are pre-ordained, produced outside the cognitive process. Ideological questions constitute a mirror in which the ideological subject can recognize its own ideological solutions ...
- (5) No external proof of the truth of a science can be given. The verification of scientific propositions is itself part of scientific practice (Anti-pragmatic thesis)" (1976, p. 60).

In short Althusser listed the three elements of science as, "a materially existing object, a theory, and a method". Note that in contradiction to science, there is ideology. Ideology is a general concept which involves both material practices and the ideas intertwined with them, it is a system of "representation of the world" but one which does not refer to the world as an object external to that system. It is a lived relationship with the world in terms of practical and institutional ideologies and more or less systematic frameworks and theories about the natural and social world in the form of theoretical ideologies. Although these ideologies are often defined as "the imaginary ways in which people experience the real world", it is much more complex than ... that. Ideology is not merely false consciousness, error or illusion; it is authentic, but closed, that is it only investigates and relates to a certain limited part of social reality and cannot produce

knowledge of anything outside it. The limitations are not innocent, of course, but function to support and reproduce that limited reality.\*

From science and ideology we can move onto the notion of problematic which we have both invoked from time to time. A problematic is a specific unity of a theoretical complex, whether scientific or ideological, which serves to conceptualize and delimit such a complex. This complex governs not merely the solutions that it is capable of providing, but the problems/questions it can pose, the form in which they are posed, and determines what is excluded (hence my earlier reference to "lacunae, lapses, and silences").

There are perhaps four further terms used by Dick which we should be clear about too: "radical", which can be quickly disposed of in its literal meaning of "root, root cause, or fundamental principle"; "fetishism" is embraced in the Althusserian notion of structural causality (the affectivity of a structure on its elements) and is linked to ideology. In these terms a fetish is an objective structure of the social formation which is imposed on most people by a mechanism they do not understand, a mechanism which determines that structure as the objective mode of appearance of reality; "relative autonomy" is very much a concept in vogue at the moment. Drawing from Engel's letters\*\* in which he emphasizes the non-reducibility of legal and political forms to economic phenomena, Althusser has argued that the legal/political and ideological levels of society are characterized by a "relative autonomy" from the economic base. These levels or structures take concrete form in material apparatuses (such as those of the state, courts, etc.) which have their own specific unity and coherence, their relative autonomy. Each plays a part in determining social events, although the economic structure remains "determinant in the last instance". This conception makes scientific sense in the way Althusser, Poulantzas and others have used it, but it is not a concept that can be applied necessarily to other concepts, domains, etc.\*\*\*

Lastly we can mention dialectics as such. The dialectic is the "study of contradiction the very essence of objects" or "the doctrine of the unity of opposites". But very importantly we should stress that we are dealing with Marxist, not Hegelian dialectics. Hegelian dialectics presuppose "a simple original unity which develops within itself by virtue of its negativity, and throughout its development only ever restores the original simplicity and unity in an ever more 'concrete' totality"

\* See O'Donnell, Stevens and Lennie (1978). I have had reason to pursue notions of "ideology" and "culture" further in two recent papers (1978a, 1978b).

\*\* for example to Bloch (9/1890), Schmidt (10/1890), Mehring (7/1893) and Starckenburg (1/1894), in Selected Correspondence.

\*\*\* I think the concept of society that we can build from this does make scientific sense: a dialectical structure of distinct but related structures/levels existing in relative autonomy from the mode of production and thus developing at different tempos (the law of uneven development). However, it is also very easy to use this concept of "relative autonomy" as an escape from economic determinism, an escape which is always, inexplicably foiled in the "last instance", and as Althusser rather cryptically warns us "from the first moment to the last, the lonely hour of the 'last instance' never comes" (1969, p.113). "Relative autonomy" and "last instance" as well as autonomy and determination which are conditions for us understanding the first two, need much more refinement.

(Althusser, 1969, p.197). Dialectics in a Marxist usage are never univocal, nor for that matter equivocal. The contradictions reflect in their very nature a relationship to the unevenness of a complex whole, determined by the structured complexity that assigns them to their roles, or to use Althusser's term, are overdetermined (complexly-structurally-unevenly-determined). That is, dialectical processes are complex processes in a structured social whole, and so called "simplicity" or the "simple category" is merely the product of complexity. This conception makes Marxist dialectics a scientific rather than an ideological notion, and one to be used with care and not converted into a series of adjectival dialectics with no meaning.

#### Where do ideas come from?

Ideas, knowledge, and "divisions of knowledge" are something that are produced. They are not innate and they do not fall from the sky, and as Mao continued, "ideas come from social practice and from it alone ... it is man's social being that determines his thinking ...". In other words ideas are shaped by our material lives, social practice, by activity in the struggle for production, in class struggle, and in scientific and artistic pursuits.

Ideas that are produced however need to be produced by a certain means, the production of a problematic. As a structure or framework, a problematic consists of certain specific elements such as theories and concepts which are joined in definite ways. One of the most important properties of the problematic used to produce orthodox geography is that it is "closed", that is that it can only investigate a certain limited domain of social reality and is unable to produce knowledge of anything outside this domain. Thus geographers can produce knowledge which is descriptive of spatial patterns, but they cannot give us knowledge of how these patterns are generated. So long as social scientists continue to use this problematic (bourgeois geography) they are constrained in advancing our knowledge of social formations. Not that such practice is innocent! As Brian Hudson has commented, geography in the nineteenth century "was vigorously promoted ... largely, if not mainly, to serve the interests of imperialism in its various aspects including territorial acquisition, economic exploitation, militarism, and the practice of class and race domination". That is, this particular problematic is a theoretical ideology; it mystifies our understanding of the world (as for example when it takes "space" as prior to society) and it does that to reproduce the existing social structure. That leads us to pose the particular question:

#### Where does geography come from?

Economics as a discourse emerged as a concomitant of the rise of what this discourse was about, a new type of economy, capitalism. That is, as a problematic it was the product of particular social formations in a particular historical period (conjuncture). Sociology was a term coined by Comte in 1838, after the bourgeois revolutions were largely over, and in the period when a counter-revolutionary conservatism had set in. Foucault (1973) has argued that these nineteenth century discourses represent "monuments" to past divisions of epistemological space; and in his case it has led him to "abandon the great divisions that are now familiar to us all ... the space of knowledge was then arranged in a totally different way". In the quote above Hudson sees geography's origins in similar terms. Geography as a discourse was a particular practical, theoretical and institutional ideology erected in response to a particular set of demands brought about by the social relationships determined at a particular conjuncture -- gazetteer

\* See chapters 2 and 3 of Thorburn (1976)



for the ruling class, explorer for the Royal Geographical Societies, apologist for the inhumanities of industrial revolution, colonialism, and imperialism. It is an interesting exercise to glance back at the handbooks, the Commercial Geographies of the period. The basic constraints of that problematic have not simply evaporated with the passage of years, though having weathered the stagnation of a post-colonial, post-exploration period, its determining rationale now lies in terms of defence of the impervium against contraction, rationalisation of new networks of flows and commands, and the effective location of the component parts of a new global economy. The tools and crafts may now carry the veneer and sophistication of a "technocratic" ideology but the basic elements of the nineteenth century discourse and its theoretical ideology remain.

#### Geography in the 1970s

Geography exists to this day as a problematic within the ideological level of capitalist dominated social formations. No matter how many "definition" papers I write I cannot wish that structure and apparatus away -- it has "texts", "teachers", "departments" and so on, ensuring its reproduction. However lacking a theoretical base that relates it to a real object of its own, geography is not a real science, but rather a by-product of "various technical-administrative techniques, ideological techniques of social adaptation and readaptation". In short, a theoretical ideology. Such a discourse may of course claim for itself a "scientific" status, since it uses methods which are commonly called "scientific" (though defined independently of the specificity of their presumed objects). Althusser notes that a discourse, like geography, may think "like every true science, that they have an object", in our case "space", when they are merely dealing with a certain given reality that is anyway disputed and torn between several competing 'sciences', a certain domain of phenomena not yet constituted into scientific facts and therefore not unified; disciplines which in their present form cannot constitute true theoretical practices because most often they only have the unity of a technical practice" (1969, p.171).

#### Marxism and Geography

Given all the preceding comments let us take the argument one stage further, and look at a particular problem tackled by some Marxists currently "working" (though obviously in a contradictory sense) within this bourgeois domain, geography. We can look at the attempts at reasoning used in moving from "space" through "laws of uneven development" to "spatial patterns", "forms" or "processes". We can compare this to the dialectical process that Althusser denotes by the terms Generality I, II and III. Generality I is the concept, the abstraction which constitutes the raw material of theoretical practice, and as such it is not a "given", but an already worked-up material from previous practice that can be part scientific, part ideological (i.e. can be part abstraction, idea, intuition). Space per se presupposes the existence of the structured whole of society, a historically specific society. The categories in use are not Hegelian, but categories of the Marxist dialectic (the only two dialectical methods we can recognise). In other words "space" cannot be considered in isolation. As Roger Lee has noted, "geographical patterns are not autonomous; they are very much those of class and structure ... power centralizing institutions such as private ownership, an increasing concentrated structure of capital, and state planning in the face of the dynamics of inter-metropolitan competition are the crucial forces, and in this context 'space' is both inert and insignificant ... regional patterns then are the spatial expression of the dominant mode of production. To understand them its necessary to understand that mode" (1976). In other words space does not have an ontological autonomy, it only exists in Dick's terms within the theoretical ideological framework specific to a particular problematic. The ideological framework here is bourgeois geography, a particular conjunctural response where the practice-

social predominates over scientific knowledge. To tackle "space", as Dick does, within a particular bourgeois discourse, geography, and then claim a Marxist interpretation is idealist; and it is Hegelian too in that it conceives the real space per se, as the "result of a self-synthesizing, self-deepening and self moving thought" (Althusser 1969, p.188).

In other words we have here a confusion between the labour of production of scientific knowledge and "the genetic process of the concrete itself" on the one hand, and on the other hand "universal concepts" that figure at the beginning of the process of knowledge are taken to be the essence and motor of the process! In Althusserian terms you take "Generality I, which theoretical practice is to transform into knowledge (Generality III), for the essence and motor of the transformation process itself". In terms of an analogy, one might

"just as well claim that it is the fuel that by its dialectical autodevelopment produces the steam engine, the factories, and all the extraordinary technical, mechanical, physical, chemical, and electrical apparatus which makes its extraction and its innumerable transformations possible today!" (Ibid).

So Dick falls victim, along with most other "geographers", to an illusion, because like Hegel they impose on the reality of theoretical practice an ideological conception "space", along with its function and meaning.

"But in the dialectic of practice, the abstract generality at the beginning (Generality I) [space], that is the generality worked on, is not the same as the generality that does the work (Generality II) [tempus of uneven development] and even less is it the specific generality (Generality III) produced by this labour: a knowledge [the concrete theoretical] [unevenly developed regional/global patterns]. Generality II (which works) is not at all the simple development of Generality I, it's passage (however complex) from the in-itself to the for-itself; for Generality II is the 'theory' of the science under consideration [Marxist] and as such it is the result of a whole process ... of real transformations in the strongest sense of the word ... that induce real qualitative discontinuities. So when Generality II [uneven development] works on Generality I [space, per se] it is never working on itself ... That is why Generality I always emerges from this labour really transformed. It may retain the general 'form' of generality, but this form tells us nothing about it, for it has become a different generality -- it is no longer an ideological generality, nor one belonging to an earlier phase of the science, but in every sense a qualitatively new specified scientific generality" (Ibid, pp.188-89, square-bracketed interpolations added).

"Space", an abstraction, it is argued produces spatial patterns by its own movement of auto-determinant auto-genesis (uneven development). Such Hegelian logic is unscientific. It is not the general concept of "space" which produces concrete patterns by autodevelopment but on the contrary it is the unevenly developed concrete patterns which lead us to the abstract conception, "space". However, that simple inversion of ideology, does not alone, Althusser argues, produce a science.

"A science is obtained on the condition that the domain in which the ideology believes that it is dealing with the real is abandoned, that is, by abandoning its ideological problematic ... and going on to establish the activity of the new theory 'in another element', in the field of a new scientific problematic" (Ibid, pp.192-3).

Now I have compressed a very complex process of Althusserian argumentation here, but I think it clearly illustrates the problems of those taking a concept, "space", defined by a particular problematic, geography, attempting still to work within the latter, yet at the same time trying to ask radical questions by invoking "Marxist" concepts. Obviously that demands an unperformable intellectual somersault/high dive/pirouette all rolled into one! Its contradictory, scientifically meaningless ideological, and above all, non-Marxist. In Mao's words again, "empty, dry, dogmatic formulas do indeed destroy the creative mood; not only that, they first destroy Marxism. Dogmatic 'Marxism' is not Marxism, it is anti-Marxism".

Hence my plea for "de-definition" and the abandonment of a scientifically untenable position "Marxist hyphen Geography". Historical/dialectical materialism is essential for what would be a transcendence of geography, much in the way Marx transcended classical economics, and the development of the science of society. Marxist theoretical practice has not yet produced a science of "uneven development/environment" as a regional study of social formations.

"The Marxist theoretical practice of epistemology of the history of science, of the history of ideology, of the history of philosophy, of the history of art, has yet in large part to be constituted. Not that there are not Marxists who in working in these domains have acquired much real experience there, but they do not have behind them the equivalent of Capital or of the revolutionary practice of a century of Marxists. Their practice is largely in front of them, it has still to be developed, or even founded, that is, it has to be set on correct theoretical bases so that it corresponds to a real object, not to a presumed or ideal object, so that it is a truly theoretical practice, not a technical practice. It is for this purpose they need ... the materialist dialectic, as the sole method that can anticipate their theoretical practice by drawing up its formal conditions. In this case, the utilization of [dialectical materialism] is not a matter of applying its formulas (the formulas of the dialectic, of materialism) to a pre-existing content ... the external application of a concept is never equivalent to a theoretical practice. The application changes nothing in the externally derived truth but its name, a rebaptism incapable of producing any real transformation of the truths that receive it ..." (Ibid, pp.169-70).

Here in a nub is the contradiction in which self-proclaimed "Marxist-Geographers" are caught; the attempt to apply external concepts (dialectics) to a theoretical ideology (geography) produces nothing but a new and meaningless name, that of Marxist Geography. "The application of the 'laws' of the dialectic to such and such a result ...", spatial patterns let us say, "makes not one iota of difference to the structure of the theoretical practice ... worse it may turn into an ideological fetter". It is in this sense that I was using "fetishism", to denote that in fact we should engage "in a continuous struggle against ideology itself, that is against idealism, a struggle whose reasons and aims can be clarified by ... dialectical materialism and guided by it as by no other in the world" (Ibid, pp.170-171). Similarly then we cannot recast Neil Smith's phrases as Dick does, without falling into a contradiction: we must transcend these monuments to nineteenth/ twentieth century practice in capitalist dominated social formations, and work for their overthrow. To remain within them, except in the most pragmatic sense, is to be confined by them and to practice non-Marxism.

#### ON PRAGMATISM

Geography has, to a degree, a pragmatic utility at the present time, "Talks at the Yemas Forum on Literature and Art" Selected Works, Vol.3, p.94

as does the bourgeois university. Marxists working within geography as an apparatus or using uneven development as their point of departure\*, are as Dick rightly points out, paid by the institution, help reproduce the institution and its component parts. But we should not allow such pragmatism to seduce us into believing that geography and the bourgeois university are other than what they are: practices to serve the interests of capital. Fortunately such practices are not without contradictions and it is these we should exploit without deviating one moment from our commitment to Marxism. Paper Tigers (pp.24-26) spells out some of these contradictions; in producing reasoning skills and critical abilities in order to ready students for the production system, skills to develop a critical analysis of capitalism itself are unleashed; the theoretical ideology of the university inhibits radical developments by its insistence on detachment and neutrality, whilst at the same time holding to a liberal notion of academic freedom, which prevents radicals being too easily removed. However these contradictions, and others, in a university are not merely presented to one to be exploited, they must be struggled for. We must battle over departmental and university administrative affairs, over the nature of the curriculum, course content, hiring, tenure, departmental democracy, etc. We must help Marxists within geography to get jobs. At the same time this pragmatic approach must not become our only interest, it must not sap our strength away from work in Marxist theory and practice (which I know to my personal cost can so easily happen), we must not overestimate its importance nor must we neglect our scientific practice.

"It is a struggle that needs to go further, to link up with workers' struggles against capital, and to break down the existing centralisation of knowledge which separates workers from, on the one hand, the knowledge necessary to take over production processes themselves, and on the other, the understanding of capitalism which reveals the necessity for this. This struggle is a struggle to end that same special position of the university that currently makes it a privileged vantage point" (Paper Tigers, pp.25-6).

As a branch of the tree of political power, as an extension of sovereignty by other means, the university has survived many a boxer-from-without and a carver-of-initials in the bark. But to liberate the branch means not to sit comfortably in our seminar/coffee rooms ensconced on the safe geographical branch, nor to sit on it and whistle the "Marseillaise" or the "Internationale", rather it means to saw it off. In the last analysis the only means to liberate ourselves from the Geography we have come to know are those moves which contribute to the process of liberation from fetishized geographical practice and the university ideology of which it is a part. Our pragmatic use of "geography" or "university" must never let us lose sight of that.

#### CONCLUSION

Marxism is a theory/science of the specific levels of human practice (economic practice, political practice, ideological practice, scientific practice) in social formations, each of these levels is relatively autonomous, each presents us with differing types of initial object or raw materials, which are transformed into different types of products; to the degree that

\*I am grateful to Tom Walker for suggesting that alternative

there are regional studies of those levels and practice, we can say those regions of Marxism are relatively autonomous. Outside of Marxism as the science of society are only the mathematical and physical sciences. Neither the convergence nor synthesis of theoretical ideologies like sociology, economics, anthropology or geography can achieve such a coherent attempt to study the totality of social existence, whether they become adjectival "Marxist" disciplines or not, since they are scientifically incapable of sharing the openness of Marxism. However, to indicate that the transcendence of those domains or discourses to Marxism is needed, is not to achieve it. Goran Therborn's closing words of Science, class and society, "the extent to which ... [this] ... prove(s) capable of realization will not depend on intra-scientific events alone. The rise and formation of the social sciences were determined by the class struggles of particular historical societies, and so, no doubt, will be their further development or wrested development. Thus the question of a future development of social sciences in the direction of historical materialism remains open -- above all to those of us who are committed to working for it" (p.429).

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I personally think it is an enormous, and extraordinarily healthy step forwards that we can publicly review our work without fear. In attempting to reply to Dick's concern about my possible misrepresentation of his work and his need "to answer comments like yours in the last USG Newsletter, 'Marxist-hyphen-Geography'" [from a personal communication] I hope that we have begun a fruitful interchange in which many may join. In my attempt to demystify "space" and see it as an ideological concept within or without a "Marxist Geography" I may have misunderstood or mangled Althusser, and have ended up mystifying myself. The importance being that I have attempted a critical dialogue. I deliberately chose an Althusserian exposition because I know from conversations with Dick, that like myself, he is very sympathetic to that particular scientific account.

However, I must continually remind myself both in terms of personal critiques (including auto-critiques of one's own practice, like my "Human/Inhuman Geography") and in critiques of the ideological and scientific practice of others that we should always bear in mind Lissitsky's warning that in personal development, "each form is the frozen temporary image of a process. Thus any work merely represents a staging point in the process, becoming, not a fixed goal".

Armidale, Australia, November 1978

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#### CHANGES IN NEWSLETTER EDITING, PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION

Owing to the decline in numbers of active USG members in Vancouver, the AGM of the USG, which was held in Vancouver in May, decided to appoint Eric Sheppard as Newsletter co-ordinator, and to shift the final editing and production functions of the Newsletter to Minneapolis.

The address for the Newsletter co-ordinator is

Eric Sheppard  
Department of Geography  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
USA

The schedule for editing and publication of the newsletter in 1979 and 1980 (Volume 5) is given overleaf. Please send contributions to the appropriate addresses.

Details of the AGM and its decisions relating to other matters will appear in the next issue of the Newsletter.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT: USG (BRITISH ISLES) ANNUAL MEETINGS

The USG (British Isles section) will be organising sessions at the Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference at Lancaster University, January 2 to 5, 1980. We expect to hold one 'official' session within the IBC programme. In addition, we hope to have evening USG workshop sessions (and the USG (BI) AGM).

If you would like to organise a workshop, give a presentation, or have suggestions for the meeting, please contact

Jo Poord or Malcolm Forbes  
26 Teesdale Road  
Leytonstone  
LONDON E11 1NQ (please use postcode to ensure delivery)  
England

NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION SCHEDULE  
VOLUME 5  
1979-1980

ISSUE	DEADLINE	EDITORS	PUBLICATION DATE
1	Aug 15 '79	Mark Garner Department of Geography University of Wisconsin Madison WI 53706 USA	Sept 15 '79
2	Sept 1 '79	Jo Poord 26 Teesdale Road Leytonstone LONDON E11 1NQ England (use postcod: to ensure delivery)	Oct 15 '79
3	Dec 15 '79	John Holmes Department of Geography Queens University Kingston Ont. Canada	Jan 15 '80
4	Mar 1 '80	? Not yet arranged - volunteers, please contact Eric Sheppard, Newsletter co-ordinator	April 1 '80

USG TEXTBOOK PROJECT

Last autumn, contributions were solicited for a proposed textbook that could be used to present a socialist alternative to mainstream geography. It was felt that this would be a politically important venture and one which could perhaps be carried out under the auspices of the USG. The eventual deadline for manuscripts was March 31, 1979. Unfortunately, sufficient contributions were not forthcoming and this meant that the project would either have to be shelved or that the coordinators would be required to write most of the first draft. Eventually, it was decided that the former was the only reasonable course. The textbook project has been shelved indefinitely due to a lack of response by potential contributors.

We still remain committed to such a project in principle. It is politically vital that the growing number of socialist and other sympathetic teachers have an introductory text for use in the classroom. Therefore, we would ask that the USG reaffirm its commitment to this project, again in principle, in the hope of succeeding at some later date.

Neil Smith  
Phil O'Keefe

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