

Australian Left Review

No 74 MAY 1980 \$1



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GAY LIBERATION TODAY

THE NEW MONETARISTS

Australian *No 74* Left Review *May '80*

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Layout: Mick Waters.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: \$6.00 for six issues. Surface or airmail postage to be added to overseas subs.

Students, apprentices, pensioners: \$4.00. Single copies: \$1 each.

Australian Left Review, Box A247,
Sydney South P.O., Sydney, 2000.

Printed and published by Red Pen Publications Pty. Ltd.
4 Dixon St., Sydney, 2000.

QUEENSLAND POLITICS

Murray Broad



The analysis produced by the broad left and the CPA in Queensland presents that state as being in the forefront of a vast, national ruling class offensive. We regard Queensland as a testing ground for anti-democratic assaults to which the rest of the Australian bourgeoisie often looks for guidance.

This view of Queensland as a pacesetter in a national campaign of reaction directly counterposes itself to the old notion that Queensland is a stagnant backwater, dragging its feet behind the rest of Australia. Such a naive assessment was accompanied by the idea that Queenslanders were somehow innately different from other Australians.

However, the old jokes about Queensland have been quickly muted as recent actions by the Court and Fraser governments have strikingly paralleled the established pattern of the Petersen government.

I would contend, therefore, that an understanding of recent developments in Queensland politics is vital to correctly assess the emerging pattern of events across the continent.

Moreover, because of the intense state of struggle in Queensland and because of the

already mentioned implications of that struggle for Australian politics, the Queensland experience can be a useful meter of the effectiveness of left and communist strategies. For example, there have been many important experiences in the establishment of a broad alliance capable of meeting the ruling class offensive, and campaigns such as civil liberties have provided the acid test for working relations of different sections of the left.

This article covers four broad areas:

1. It briefly analyses the forces forging a restructuring of Australian capitalism;
2. It examines the historical development of the Queensland political conjuncture;
3. It examines the way in which these same forces for economic restructuring have inflicted themselves upon that political conjuncture and explains (I hope) why Queensland has become a pacesetter for the reactionary offensive;
4. It looks at the actual state of political struggle over the last two years, particularly with regard to the civil liberties movement, and attempts to spell out the possibilities for struggle in 1980.

**I LOVE A STRIP-MINED COUNTRY
A LAND OF TOURIST RESORTS,
OF POLICE ATTACKING STREET MARCHERS,
OF SWOLLEN JAILS & FLOODED COURTS...**

Now this is a very complex task and necessarily my analysis is far from complete. In fact, the very pace, complexity and depth of struggle of Queensland politics over the last few years has blurred the senses of many who have tried to understand it.

Yet there is a method to the madness of Queensland politics and to uncover it I shall first turn to a description of the basic forces shaping Australian economic and political life. (For many people this section will be "common knowledge" but I think the necessity to site Queensland in the overall context of Australian capitalism is obvious.)

The Australian economy is situated in a well-integrated world market. The form of capital which has come to dominate this world market is crystallised in the multinational corporation.

The Australian economy is heavily influenced by multinational corporations, largely based in America, Britain and Japan. (1) Over 50 per cent of all company profits are payable to foreign shareholders.

But Australia itself reflects a miniature version of the world pattern. Out of 30,000 registered Australian companies, some 200 account for half the total production. Some of the largest maintain a mini-imperialism in the South East Asian area. Most of what's left after 55 per cent of profits goes overseas, goes to the 10 per cent of Australians who own 60 per cent of our wealth and receive 92 per cent of the income from that wealth.

So it is not really the extent of "foreignness" that matters. It is the monopoly position of the largest companies which leads them to behave in an economically common fashion, regardless of their country of origin.



This overall situation is having drastic effects on the Australian economy. The development of a global market, not just in goods produced, but in labor itself, has put Australian workers in an extremely poor bargaining position. Many labor-intensive sectors of Australian industry are being transferred "off-shore" to low-wage countries.

During 1973-74, some 1.4 million people were employed in the Australian manufacturing industry but today, this has dropped to 1.17 million — a decrease of 16.5 per cent in five years. This situation is redressed in only three areas:

1. **Extractive industries.** Multinational corporations have to take minerals

where they are found and consequently Australia is becoming a major world mineral exporter.

2. Some industries such as the building industry are "naturally protected". For example, if a house has to be built for an Australian worker, labor must be employed in Australia to build it. There is also a building boom associated with the construction phase of mining projects.
3. Highly energy-intensive processes are being shifted into Australia because of our abundant cheap energy. For example, a host of aluminium firms are planning, or have already commenced, to build new smelters in Australia.

Apart from these areas, the future of employment in Australian (particularly manufacturing) industry looks exceedingly grim.

A second major feature of today's Australia is the impact of the scientific/technological revolution which is intimately tied up with multinational corporations. In fact, it was the development of modern transport and communications which made it possible for corporations to organise their operations on a transnational scale in the first place. Now these same forces are being turned against Australian workers, resulting in the loss of further jobs and tighter control over those that remain.

The important thing to realise is that the impact of multinational corporations and their associated technology are rapidly developing tendencies which show signs only of becoming stronger. The future we can look forward to, 10 or 20 years hence, is one in which perhaps the majority of present employment has been eliminated.

How do smaller Australian capitalists who do not have the option of moving their operations "off-shore" respond to this state of affairs — those that have traditionally been the backbone of Liberal Party support?

Their only option is to stay put and try to become more competitive internationally by reducing labor costs. That is, by sacking some workers and lowering the wages and conditions of those remaining.

Hence, all major fractions of the ruling class have a common interest in increasing

the rate of exploitation of Australian labor, and for smaller, indigenous capitalists, this is absolutely essential if they are to coexist with their multinational competitors.

So, when Malcolm Fraser says that Australian labor must become more competitive, he is not talking about lowering wages a few per cent. To compete with the workers of the world's most brutal military dictatorships, Australian wages will have to be cut 80-95 per cent.

But, in doing this, the conservative forces necessarily come up against the very extensive and well organised (if somewhat conservative) system of Australian unions. If the Australian economy is to be restructured in line with the needs of international capital, then the whole structure of wages and living conditions which has been won through more than 100 years of struggle, must be broken down.

Hence, for the ruling class, the act of restructuring the Australian economy must take place concurrently with the destruction of the means by which working people can defend themselves. It is at this level that we see the intimate connection between economic and industrial struggles and the struggle for democratic rights. For without the democratic rights to organise in trade unions, to conduct strikes, to picket, rally, march, leaflet, speak at public gatherings, etc., the working class lacks its principal organisational means for fighting back.

It is in this context of the present rapid intensification of the struggle between labor and capital that Queensland must be sited because that struggle has reached its greatest development in Queensland. Queensland has been the pacesetter for attacks on trade unionism and democratic rights.

Before I go on to examine the list of attacks on democratic rights I'd like to look at some basic features of the Queensland political economy which show why these attacks occurred in Queensland first.

Australia has been dominated by industrial capitalism since before the depression, but in Queensland the manufacturing sector was secondary to primary production up until 1966 when the Queensland government proudly proclaimed

that manufacturing production had passed that of the primary sector.

During the 1960s, both the number and size of factories was increasing faster in Queensland relative to the rest of Australia. This manufacturing growth was accompanied by the "minerals boom" of the late 1960s and 1970s. Queensland now is the greatest export earner of all Australian states. In coal alone, \$6,000 million worth was mined between 1956 and 1978. Of this, however, only \$123 million was paid in government royalties — a mere 2.2 per cent of the total value to mining companies.

This period also saw a concentration of rural holdings with smaller land-holders being gobbled up by larger ones, largely due to the pressure of wage rises. This has important social and political consequences.

Self-employed proprietors are threatened by rising labor costs for rural workers and are either forced to work harder themselves or go further into debt, or both. (2) This makes them very anti-labor and embittered by the "easy life" in the cities. It is from here that the National Party gains most of its support.

The striking feature of Queensland is that until recently it lacked a strong industrial sector and its consequent economic backwardness contributed to a long history of bitter class struggle.

The strikes of the 1890s spread to Queensland and saw the successful mobilisation of the ruling classes throughout eastern Australia against the rural workers. This defeat acted as a catalyst for the formation of the Labor Party which held office from 1915-1957 except for the years 1929-32.

The 1912 Brisbane general strike lasted one month and spread to all of Queensland. Peter Murphy says (in his as yet unpublished thesis on Australian coal mining):

It was defeated and so was the politics of militant industrial action. The AWU established its dominance over the Queensland ALP and maintained it ever after. Its dominance has always been challenged by the Trades Hall group of Brisbane craft and trade unions which represented the industrial working class of Queensland; the AWU represented all rural workers in one massive union.

The AWU domination made rural interests the prominent matter of the Labor

government's initiatives. And it also involved these governments in the characteristic contradiction of representing workers and maintaining a backward capitalist economy.

Because of the failure of strong manufacturing development, a strong and united industrial fraction of capital never emerged and a strong industrial working class likewise never gained hegemony over the workers' movement. Within this stagnant economy, many conflicts between unions and governments erupted.

In the 1920s the railway and public service unions had to fight the state Arbitration Court for pay and conditions. In the post-war years, big struggles were undertaken by the ARU to gain simple flow-ons from federal awards.

The 1948 railway strike was a bitter contest between left forces in the ARU and the workshops' unions, and anti-communists in the AWU, Catholic elements in the Queensland government and the ruling classes.

Finally, in 1957 the Gair cabinet was expelled from the Queensland ALP by a coalition of the AWU and the Trades Hall group. The Queensland ALP has never recovered from the split, but it is interesting that Ed Casey who has led the recent swing to the right by the Queensland ALP is moving to reorient the party towards rural elements once again. In this case, Ed Casey and Co. may be seen as a regrouping of the old "Grouper" forces.

The Queensland Country Party was formed in 1915 but because of Labor's agrarian orientation it found difficulty in organising politically. After reorganising in 1944, the Country Party sought ways of joining forces with the emerging Liberal Party. The opportunity arose in 1957 when the Labor split opened the way for a Country/Liberal win. The famous Labor gerrymander in 1949 favored the Country Party and only discriminated against the Liberals. Thus, the Country Party has been able to dominate the Liberals ever since.

To quote Peter Murphy again:

In the 1960s and '70s the objective economic criteria have changed. Now it is the manufacturing sector which dominates the productive forces. This is remarkable when it

is considered that the state has been under Country Party domination during this period, though in coalition with the Liberal Party. The tensions within this coalition have increased as the economy has developed. This has involved the transformation of the Country Party to the National Party, Queensland Branch, and its attempts to seize decisive control of the parliament, and the bureaucracy.

The Country Party has held decisive control through the portfolios of Premier, Mines Minister and Primary Industries Minister. In 1971, the Co-ordinator General of Public Works was reorganised and put into the Premier's Department. The Co-ordinator General became the top public servant and the Premier, through the Co-ordinator General, directly oversees all major projects in the state.

In 1974, the Premier established a Priorities Review Committee in his own department. This allowed the Treasurer of the time, Gordon Chalk, to be overruled and the Treasury was reduced to an accounting body. This led to Chalk's retirement in 1976.

The conclusion to this logic is that the Country Party changed its name to the National Party in 1975 and projected itself as the one conservative party of Queensland, capable of representing both rural and urban interests. It had been riding high in the parliament after its victory in the 1974 election when it captured most of the seats Labor lost, and came close to being able to govern alone.

The Liberal Party has so far been unable to overcome the National Party forces, but the tide may be turning. In attempting to characterise itself as the one and only conservative party to manage a developing Queensland, the Nationals appear a bit too "modern" for their rural power base. Sensing this, the Liberals have decided to conduct three-cornered electoral contests and the struggle seems to be on in earnest.

Unfortunately, the Queensland ALP has not capitalised on the recent expansion of the working class. One important reason for this is the destructive role that strong anti-communist sentiments have historically played in the Queensland labor movement. This anti-communism is epitomised by the strength of extreme rightwing organisations such as the NCC and the League of Rights.

Ideologically, the only real force opposed to this has been the CPA and its strength was drastically depleted during the Cold War.

So far I have dealt with the overall factors forcing a restructuring of Australian capitalism and of the specific historic composition of Queensland's political life upon which these forces have superimposed themselves.

It is this interaction of restructuring forces with the particular fabric of Queensland politics which has allowed the rightwing offensive to take on so quickly here.

We have established that Queensland already had a long history of repressive government, a labor movement which was ideologically conservative and a strong, extreme rightwing element.

The National Party has a long history of political dominance and, while its electoral base is very conservative, the Nationals see themselves in a progressive role, developing the State of Queensland.

Thus, when the first signs of the overall restructuring of the Australian economy hit Queensland in the form of the minerals boom, the National Party grasped the nettle and went all-out to encourage massive corporate investment. As resistance to the effects of this investment grew, the Nationals moved quickly to silence it.

In the face of all the facts, and against great public opposition, the state government allowed the giant CRA to build a powerhouse at Tarong when the contract should have gone to a smaller Australian consortium which wanted to build at Millmerran. (3)

There have been many attacks upon the living conditions of Aboriginal people for the sake of minerals concealed beneath their land. In country areas of Queensland, Blacks are likely to be herded onto reserves and used for cheap labor, while in the cities they are subject to brutal police harassment. This state of affairs is legislatively encouraged through the infamous "Queensland Acts".

Companies like Comalco and Utah have had railways, townships and entire ports built for them (at public expense) by the state government. Comalco's Gladstone alumina refinery purportedly gets some of the world's cheapest electricity (0.5 cents/kh.). I say

purportedly because the exact figure is a state secret.(4)

The sale of a large tract of land on the coast near Yeppoon to the Japanese millionaire/industrialist Iwasaki, attracted mass, public resentment.

In its attack on working class organisation, the Petersen Government has employed many means to divide and suppress working people.

The patriarchal nature of Australian society is reinforced through an education system so conservative that a small, rightwing pressure group headed by Rona Joyner can silence even slightly progressive material like MACOS and SEMP. Twelve per cent of Queenslanders have more than 9 years' schooling, compared with a national average of 18 per cent. Forty-three per cent of 16-year-old Queenslanders are still at school, compared to 57 per cent nationally.

In and out of school, Australia's most repressive abortion and rape laws act to keep many Queensland women politically inactive

Queensland's drug laws are extremely severe, giving police the right to enter and search without a warrant. Many young people live in constant fear and remain politically inactive because of the threat of police action.

Union organisation has come under increasing attack from Petersen who takes every opportunity to use his well-oiled publicity machine to decry the "red Menace". Yet when more subtle forms of coercion have failed, Petersen has never balked at using blatant force.

Queensland has a long history of repressive use of the police and the law. The Mt Isa strike of 1964-65 is a notable example where police were mobilised to back up the State Industrial Commission. The Nicklin government on that occasion had to back down in the face of nationwide protests.

States of emergency were declared over an eight week lockout by MIM in 1961 and again over the Springbok Rugby tour in 1971 when 1,000 police were mobilised.

More recently, police involvement at Cedar Bay, in street marches and in union and anti-uranium pickets have shown that the



government sees a well-controlled working class as a prerequisite to big investment programs.

Hence, in the latter half of 1977, Queensland was seething with discontent. Political sensitivities had been numbed by almost daily outrages. There was no credible parliamentary alternative (and no possible one, given the gerrymander), no legal vent to the frustration and anger that was building up in the population.

Then in September 1977 on the eve of the 5,000-strong Ted Zaphir trade union rally and under conditions of a rapidly growing anti-uranium movement, Petersen banned political street marches.

Almost every country newspaper, no matter how small, is circulated with copies of the Premier's press statements and there is scarcely one country town he does not visit in the Government aircraft.

Although the change to the legal code was slight, it served as a vent for public feeling and the civil liberties movement quickly became an extraparlimentary focus of opposition to the state government.

I'm not going to try to recap on the whole history of the civil liberties campaign. Most importantly, it has served as a pivot of opposition by progressive forces and has taken that opposition into a qualitatively new form by physically confronting the Queensland state and its police force.

It has exposed Petersen's real intentions where they are most blatantly obvious — on the streets.

The movement has scored some observable political victories. Notably, it strained the coalition relationship to the point where 13 Liberals crossed the parliamentary floor over the destruction of a pub called the Belle Vue. The movement helped remove "Right to Work" laws from the political agenda. Since the beginning of the campaign the National Party strategy of moving into metropolitan electorates has been completely defeated through the loss of the seats of Wynnum and Redcliffe. (A 12 per cent swing was recorded against the National Party in Redcliffe.)

Also, it has built a stronger and more active left in Queensland and has helped build an understanding by the left nationally of the nature of the rightwing assault. There have been over 2,000 arrests to date and over \$500,000 in legal costs.

I think, the Australian political experience in recent months has completely borne out the analysis presented so far. Nationally, there has been a rapid escalation of the ruling class offensive.

Recent events in Western Australia (a state economically most similar to Queensland) have been a kind of political *deja vu*.

The arrests of unionists which sparked off a national stoppage were initially portrayed as a foolish blunder by the Court government. In 1977, the move by the Petersen government to ban street marches was seen likewise.

The law which allowed the arrests of Marks and Carmichael was one piece of a host of undemocratic legislation.

The 1974 "Fuel and Energy" Bill gives state-of-emergency powers to the West Australian government to intervene in industrial disputes in these areas. Recent changes to the Police Act make interference with state government property an offence punishable by six months' jail or \$1,500 fine. This manoeuvre directly resulted from protests against a new alumina refinery. The Education Department has been given powers similar to those of the Morals Committee for assessing graduating Queensland teachers.

Other big sticks in Court's legislative arsenal include the Flour Act (1977), the Essentials Foodstuffs and Essential Commodities Act (1979) and the industrial Arbitration Act Amendments Bill (1979).

Clearly, the Court government is conducting a multi-faceted anti-democratic assault similar to that seen in Queensland over the last two years.

The Fraser government has extended its nation-wide front of union bashing laws with the Commonwealth Employees Employment Provisions Act (CEEP), the Commonwealth Employees Redeployment and Retirement Bill (CERR), Industrial Relations Bureau legislation, new ASIO Acts and the latest amendments to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act which brought protests from Deputy President Staples and all 25 commissioners.

These measures have accompanied economic policies which have already significantly reduced the living standards of Australian workers.

Since 1975 the real value of wages has decreased by more than \$25 per week. Partial indexation has pushed down the wages share of the national income by at least four per cent. Social welfare programs have been drastically cut. At last year's Premiers' Conference, the states received, in real terms, 38 per cent less for welfare housing and 20 per cent less for works programs.

Figures for the NSW economy suggest that this state will be \$900 million down in revenue, forcing it to borrow heavily on the overseas (multi-national dominated) money market.

Meanwhile, tax concessions to the biggest corporations rose from \$280 million in 1974 to over \$900 million in 1978.

Even at official government level, the realisation that unemployment is growing in direct proportion to the destruction of jobs in manufacturing industries receives *de facto* recognition.

Nationally, the working class response to these economic and anti-democratic assaults has reached levels unprecedented for many years. We have seen national stopwork action over the West Australian arrests. Telecom workers have taken national action

and Commonwealth government employees have been involved in national disputes around the CERR and CEEP Bills. Indeed, the militant stand taken by so-called "white collar" workers is one of the most heartening aspects of the present industrial scene.

Serious splits have appeared in the ranks of the coalition parties at the federal level and in most state branches. One of the most interesting features of the present crisis is that all major political parties are experiencing severe internal tensions. Divisions among the conservative forces can be exploited by the left but only if the left itself has a proper understanding of the nature of those divisions.

Not to be outdone by the actions of the Fraser and Court governments, Bjelke-Petersen's National Party has unleashed a new wave of undemocratic legislation in recent months.

After months of threats by Bjelke-Petersen against power workers campaigning for a 35-hour week, the Essential Services Act finally became law in October 1979. It is not possible here to give a detailed account of the circumstances of its introduction.

Ostensibly it bans strikes in essential industries which are defined as — transport; fire brigades; hospitals and ambulances; electricity and water; garbage, sanitary, cleaning or sewerage services.

But cabinet can declare any industry to be an essential service.

Once any union rejects an Arbitration Court decision and continues industrial action, a Period of Emergency can be declared in that industry.

- * During the Period of Emergency:
 - * the union or unions involved can be deregistered or fined \$10,000 and union officials can be sacked;
 - * individual unionists can be fined \$1,000 but will be sacked automatically if they strike for more than 24 hours;
 - * individuals and unions refusing to pay fines can have their property confiscated;
 - * special agreements between unions and employers are prohibited with a maximum penalty of \$100,000;



- * strike funds are banned;
- * anyone who suffers damage or loss through "unlawful" strikes may sue the union(s) involved;
- * scab labor is protected and employers are required to keep records of those who scab so that strikers can be blacklisted;
- * state government employees can be directed to act as strike breakers;
- * the Minister appointed to control an essential service has dictatorial powers to direct all the operations of the industry, including requisitioning property and authorising entry on land;
- * union members quoted in the press as supporting a strike are breaking the law; they are automatically guilty and must prove their innocence;
- * judicial notice is to be taken of every national television station, every national broadcasting station, every commercial station in Australia, placing great limits upon the freedom of the press.

The Act bypasses and overrules the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission and the Industrial Court. It gives emergency powers, not to parliament, but to the Governor-in-Council (that is, cabinet plus the Governor).

On September 25 last year, Sir William Knox, the Queensland Health Minister,

foreshadowed legislation to close the few so-called loopholes in Queensland's anti-abortion laws which are already the harshest and most restrictive in Australia.

The government's proposed legislation is aimed at closing Queensland's only abortion clinic. It aims to make abortions available only in public hospitals, but this in no way means that abortion will be readily available. Under present Queensland laws, hospitals have already been geared to make abortions available only in exceptional circumstances.

If the legislation is passed, only women in imminent danger of death will be able to have legal abortions. Pregnancy as a result of rape or incest will not be considered sufficient reason for an abortion, nor will exposure to rubella. All this will be done under the liberal pretence of attempting to stop backyard abortions. The government's "concern" seems to overlook the fact that backyard abortionists are only able to flourish if abortions are not freely available.

While this rightwing offensive was reflected indirectly through the election of Ed Casey to head the Queensland ALP, Casey has consolidated his own position by isolating and attacking the socialist left, using undisguised "red baiting" as an ideological cover.

A member of the Right to Life organisation, Casey tried to "out-Joh" Joh, by presenting a petition to state parliament calling for the closure of the Greenslopes abortion clinic.

He has failed to show any real opposition to the Essential Services legislation and has refused to support the strikes by power workers which prompted the legislation in the first place.

In a period when the expansion of the urban workforce, combined with mass resentment of the state government, offers Labor a militant base of support, the ALP strategy revolves around recapturing the conservative rural vote, which it lost over 20 years ago.

Again Queensland represents only the most advanced phase of a process which is going on nationally. I am referring, of course, to the growth of the right wing in the labor

movement and particularly in the Labor Party. For example, around Australia, the conservative press has given full support to Bob Hawke in his bid to take control of the federal ALP. The capitalist press will always support members of the labor movement who talk in terms of "the national interest" rather than from a class point of view — they find it far easier to allow the labor movement to be neutralised through rightwing leadership than face an all-out confrontation.

At this point, I want to turn to a brief examination of the fate of the civil liberties movement.

To commence I should say that the organisation of the Civil Liberties Campaign Group is now essentially dead. There are several contributing reasons for this, and we must cast our minds back over a year to understand why.

December 7, 1978 was a climax for the movement. Over a year of rallies, marches and arrests had finally forced the Queensland Trades and Labor Council to sponsor a confrontation over the street march ban. On that day, prominent ALP and union officials from around Australia came to Brisbane to spend a night in the watch-house. Members of the state ALP were noticeably absent, reflecting the threats of their newly elected leader, Ed Casey.

At this point, it was fully expected that one or two more such confrontations would force the government to repeal the anti-march laws. However, pressure from Casey was sufficient to force the TLC (who are hardly a group of raging revolutionaries at the best of times) to back down from further confrontations.

This produced enormous demoralisation among people who had campaigned long and hard for trade union support. The March 15 demonstration was called off and the April 28 rally voted against marching. Sectarian infighting was rampant and a section of the movement argued that the Civil Liberties Campaign Group (CLCG) should focus the thrust of its attention against ALP leader, Ed Casey.

This approach has been consistently argued against by those in the CLCG who believe that most Queenslanders see the Petersen government and not the Labor opposition as the principal enemy and that

the way to fight Casey is to expose his position in the broader context of carrying on the fight against the Queensland government.

By the time of the July 26 rally and march, total confusion beset the movement, little propaganda work was done and only 2,000 people attended, with trade unionists being notably absent.

Shortly after this, the state government was on the verge of introducing the Essential Services legislation and it issued two march permits in an attempt to defuse the civil liberties movement, which had for two years been its most consistent and dangerous opposition.

The first of these was issued to the Campaign Against Nuclear Power for Nagasaki Day, two days after Hiroshima Day for which they had originally applied and on only a few days' notice.

Both Bjelke Petersen and Charles Porter had earlier claimed the civil liberties movement was dead and they hoped that the short notice and changed date of the permit would produce a small march to back up their claims.

However, over 4,000 people marched that evening and both anti-uranium and civil liberties themes were well understood by the public.

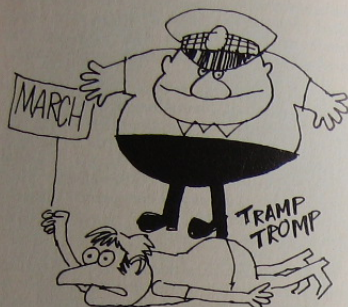
Following this, the government issued one other permit to a student march from Queensland University. This time no chances were taken as the conditions of the permit specified a maximum of 500 people in the march.

As 1979 drew to a close, the Essential Services and anti-abortion legislation became the most important issues facing the Queensland left and the civil liberties issue was overshadowed, if not forgotten.

Thus, a series of factors has contributed to the organisational demise of the CLCG. But it would be quite wrong to suggest that the movement against the Petersen government is dead.

National Party electoral support is at its lowest for many years and for this the civil liberties campaign must take credit.

In *The Australian* of November 11, 1979, the results of an opinion poll were published



which revealed that 56.5 per cent of Australians thought that police should have more power to deal with law and order. Only 16.2 per cent thought that police needed less power. In Brisbane, the figure differed considerably. Only 37.6 per cent thought that police needed more power, and 25.9 per cent thought that they needed less. Brisbane had the lowest percentage of any capital city of people who thought that police needed more power, and the highest percentage of people who thought that police needed less.

It is obvious that the constant conflict between police and demonstrators in the streets of Brisbane has had a poor effect on the public image of the police force. It also appears that the majority of people in Brisbane resent the way in which the police are used by the government to implement unpopular laws.

The civil liberties movement has highlighted and exacerbated rifts in the coalition. It has united broad sections of the left and progressive movements against actions of the government. It has formed links with the trade unions and many other organisations, and developed alliances which will exist for some time to come, if we work at encouraging this unity.

The problem which confronts us in Queensland today is one of finding a new and more appropriate organisational form for the movement against the government. Now that the initial outrage over the banning of street marches has subsided, civil liberties can no longer be presented just as a

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high and mighty principle. We must point out to people how the issue of civil liberties affects them personally.

Over the coming months, I have no doubt that you will see a growing movement of extra parliamentary opposition to the Queensland government. The main thrust of this movement will be the Essential Services Act, the anti-abortion legislation and the 1980 state elections. Every time this, or any other progressive movement, takes to the streets in a mass way it must confront the ban on street marches. The civil liberties issue in Queensland, therefore, cannot die — it will simply be reborn in new forms.

What does the future of Queensland politics hold?

We have an embattled National Party, struggling to be seen as the one political force capable of carrying through the economic development and modernisation of Queensland. But it is in a growing void as the need to stress the mining and manufacturing sectors places it increasingly out of step with its rural power base, as the manufacturing sector itself faces growing international competition and as popular discontent with its rule grows.

We have a Liberal Party which has finally decided to compete with the Nationals electorally in an attempt to wrest power from them. But, the Liberals are still caught by narrow, Brisbane-based support and by the fact that although the excesses of the National Party offend the morality of many Liberals, the success of the anti-union, anti-democratic assault by the Nationals is crucial to the economic survival of those same Liberals.

And we have a Labor Party which is totally, politically disoriented. Rather than come to grips with the new realities of economic life, it opts for increasingly conservative solutions. Because it does not want to change the system but merely to administer it better than the coalition, it never challenges basic economic conditions and is simply a pale shadow of state and government policies. The ALP has successfully destroyed its leadership of its own class base.

As the need for a working class counter-offensive to the growing rightwing push becomes even more obvious, so does the

vacuum of political leadership for that counter-offensive.

I believe that the only possible form of leadership is that of a broad alliance of forces, including progressive sections of the Labor Party, communists and other sections of the left. For these groups to work together effectively will entail a reduction of the sectarian mistakes of the last two years and the only way to achieve this is through the common acceptance of a realistic analysis of Queensland politics.

Such an analysis should lay the basis of a left strategy, one part of which would be mutual assistance by campaigns for democratic rights in most states and nationally.

The Australian left cannot blind itself to the reality of Queensland politics.

For as long as that state is seen as a laughable anachronism, the politics of Queensland can only deteriorate and the rest of Australia can only become more like Queensland.

REFERENCES

1. Indeed, much of Australia's post-war economic history can be explained in terms of the hegemonic struggle between contending British and American capital — a struggle which American capital won in the 1960s.
2. Earlier this year, the Petersen government received wide condemnation when it threatened to introduce a political watchdog into the State Industries Commission who would oversee the activities of the other five. This was directly precipitated by a State Industrial Commission decision to grant higher wages to rural workers.
3. One of the major partners in this Australian consortium was Thiess Holdings. After denying Thiess work on the big powerhouse contract, Petersen has turned around and attacked the bid by southern-based CSR to take over Thiess.
4. In the last three years, the state government has taken both the Electricity Authority and the Water Board from the Brisbane City Council and placed them in its own departments. These were attempts to centralise the production and distribution of power in anticipation of the expansion of energy-intensive industries, particularly aluminium smelting.

Economic Notes

The New Monetarists

Well, it's official. Recently, President Carter took breath from his other crises and announced that the United States had entered a period of recession. "The Wolf Has Arrived", *Time* headlined, but reassured us that it was "better late than never". This curious judgment is based on the belief that the recession, like a crisis in a long, wasting disease, is a Good Thing. It should have come a year ago, *Time* argues, but was delayed by a "bad case of inflationary psychology".

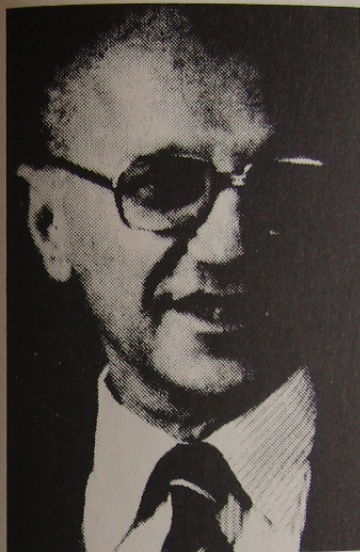
For months, consumers (Yes! It's their fault again!) have been rushing out to buy in the belief that prices, no matter how high already, could only go higher. "This has ballooned inflation to an annual rate of more than 18 per cent", *Time* regrets. It also had the effect — though here the news magazine is silent — of keeping the economy afloat.

It was only in the middle of March that someone "pulled the plug on the economy". That someone, *Time* tells us, was Paul A. Volcker, Chairman of the Federal Reserve System. Volcker has long been arguing for a deliberately induced recession as the only way of beating inflation. He wholeheartedly accepts the proposition that the present

combination of economic stagnation and rising prices can only be dealt with by defeating inflation first.

Volcker, like most political leaders and economic gurus in the advanced capitalist world, believes the way to do this is to control the money supply. Once the money supply is reined in, the argument goes, inflation will fall and we will have achieved the necessary condition for economic recovery. This doctrine — or at least its recent revival — owes much to Professor Milton Friedman; so much so, that Friedman has become the chief economic influence on such figures as Chile's General Pinochet, Britain's Mrs Thatcher, our own Mr Fraser, and even Hollywood's Mr Reagan.

Thus, it is probably worth looking a little more closely at just what the new monetarists argue and what evidence there is for their position. This task takes on even more importance when we note that it is not just conservative politicians and economists who have fallen under the monetarist spell. In Britain, for example, it was the last Labour government that handed over economic policy making to the monetarists,



Milton Friedman

or at least this is the argument of three Labour Party economists writing in a recent Fabian Tract on *The Politics of Monetarism*. "The most significant development in economic policy over the last two or three years has been the conversion of almost everyone concerned with the management of the British economy to the doctrines of monetarism", the three authors say.

"This development has had the full support of the financial establishment and of the Conservative Party, as well as that of most of the leading figures of the last Labour Government." Thatcher's victory has not, therefore, meant any vital change in direction, they argue. The monetarist consensus simply continues to prevail.

The same thing is likely to occur in Australia. Any future Labor government here would no doubt face this same sort of consensus in Treasury and throughout the public service, among academic economists and among those "experts" paid directly to

put the views of the owners and controllers of our economy. One purpose of taking issue with the monetarist consensus here and now is to make it harder for the Australian Labor Party to be captured in the same way its British counterpart was.

Since Professor Friedman has been selling this consensus so successfully over the last few years (even converting the five economists of the Nobel Prize Committee of the Swedish Academy of Science, who awarded him the 1976 Nobel Prize in Economics) we may as well start by looking at his version of the theory.

From the Horse's Mouth

"In its most rigid and unqualified form the quantity theory asserts strict proportionality between the quantity of what is regarded as money and the level of prices," Friedman writes. "Hardly anyone has held the theory in that form, although statements capable of being so interpreted have often been made in the heat of argument or for expository simplicity."

"Virtually every quantity theorist has recognised that changes in the quantity of money that correspond to changes in the volume of trade or of output have no



tendency to produce changes in prices. Nearly as many have recognised also that changes in the willingness of the community to hold money can occur for a variety of reasons and can introduce disparities between changes in the quantity of money per unit of trade or of output and changes in prices."

These two "modifications" to the most "rigid and unqualified" version of the quantity theory of money can be illustrated in the theory's famous equation. If we let P be the price level and Y be the total output of the economy measured in "real" terms, then PY is the money value of the output of the economy. This, in turn, is equal to the money supply, M , multiplied by the number of times, on average, the money supply is "turned over" in a given year to buy or sell this national output. If we call this last number V , the "velocity of circulation" of money, the quantity theory equation becomes:

$$PY = MV$$

Thus, if the money supply, M , expands by five per cent, the price level P must also go up by five per cent, unless the level of real output, Y , increases. Only if the increase in the money supply exactly matches an increase in output will prices be stable — assuming all the time that the "velocity of circulation" of money does not change. We will come back to this last point, but let's first note what Friedman thinks these "modifications" amount to:

"What quantity theorists have held in common is the belief that these qualifications (that is: changes in the quantity of money corresponding to changes in output or changes in the "willingness or the community to hold money") are of secondary importance for substantial changes in either prices or the quantity of money, so that the one will not in fact occur without the other."

The policy implications follow directly. "Acceptance of the quantity theory clearly means that the stock of money is a key variable in policies directed at the control of the level of prices or of money income. Inflation can be prevented if and only if the stock of money per unit of output can be kept from increasing appreciably."

We ignore this simple prescription at our peril: "Monetary authorities have more

frequently than not taken conditions in the credit market — rates of interest, availability of loans, and so on — as criteria of policy and have paid little or no attention to the stock of money per se."

"This emphasis on credit as opposed to monetary policy accounts both for the great depression in the United States from 1929 to 1933, when the Federal Reserve System allowed the stock of money to decline by one-third, and for many of the post-Second World War inflations." If only we had watched the money supply, Friedman is saying, both the Great Depression and the current inflationary crisis could have been avoided.

Too Good To Be True

It all seems to good a tool to be true. But unfortunately, in the real world, there is no such simple link between the money supply and inflation, though in this matter, as in so many others, it is much easier to become famous by peddling an easily understood and plausible view that happens to be wrong, than by giving true insight into a complex, contradictory and fundamentally irrational system.

The difficulties start back with the quantity equation:

$$PY = MV,$$

or at least with two of the four terms. Unfortunately for the monetarists, they find it very hard to say anything certain about the two "monetary" notions in this equation: the "money supply" itself, and the "velocity of circulation" of money. Let's take them in turn, and see what some of the problems are.

First, the more straightforward of the two: the "velocity of circulation" of the existing money supply. Of the four variables in their equation, this is the one the monetarists have least to say about, preferring everyone else to forget that it is there. The reason is clear. For their theory to hold, the "velocity of circulation" of money has to be more or less constant. If the money supply is held down, but that money supply is "turned over" more rapidly, it is still possible for inflation to take place. Alternatively, an increase in the money supply might not translate into higher prices if the velocity of circulation falls at the same time.

In practice, all sorts of combinations are possible. Thus, in Britain, between the first quarter of 1971 and the first quarter of 1974, the velocity fell quarter by quarter from 3.111 times to 2.345 times as the supply of money was increased. When the Labour government came to office and the increase in the money supply slowed down, the velocity of circulation increased quarter by quarter to 3.094 times in the third quarter of 1977.

In other words, the velocity of circulation of the money supply changed in such a way as to make up for changes in the money supply itself. Something else, apart from the factors the monetarists consider, must be at work. This "something else" was recognised as long ago as 1810, in a famous report of a Select Committee of the House of Commons on *The High Price of Bullion*:

"That committee pointed out that "the mere numerical return of the amount of bank notes in circulation cannot be considered as at all deciding the question whether such paper is or is not excessive.... the quantity of currency bears no fixed relation to the quantity of commodities.... and any inferences proceeding on such a supposition would be entirely erroneous."

The committee concluded that: "the effective currency of a country depends on the quickness of circulation.... as well as the numerical amount" and that "all the circumstances which have a tendency to quicken or retard the rate of circulation render the same amount of currency more or less adequate to the wants of trade."

If it is the "wants of trade" that really matter, and the velocity of circulation of money merely adapts to this, there is little left of the monetarist position. But this point, recognised so long ago, is not the only one that leads to problems for the quantity theory.

The other term in their equation that the monetarists have difficulty with is M itself: the money supply. Everyone knows there are different "definitions" of money which include or exclude different sorts of financial assets as money, ranging from a narrow definition which includes only cash and bank deposits, to wider ones which include progressively less "liquid" assets. Now the question of which definition to use might seem just a technical one, and has been

treated this way by the monetarists. However, it is not the technical difficulties the monetarists face that we want to highlight; rather it is the fact that any attempt to control the money supply under one particular definition, in violation of the "wants of trade", will make that definition irrelevant.

Nicholas Kaldor, in his critique of Friedman, has made this point well using a parable: "Every schoolboy (and, we would presume, every schoolgirl — T.O.S) knows that cash in the hands of the public regularly shoots up at Christmas, goes down in January and shoots up again around the summer bank holiday."

Kaldor acknowledges that nobody, not even Friedman, would suggest that the December increase in note circulation is the cause of the Christmas buying spree. "But," he asks, "there is the question that is more relevant to the Friedman thesis: could the 'authorities' prevent the buying spree by refusing to supply additional notes and coins in the Christmas season?"

How could this be done? One way, Kaldor suggests, would be by instructing the banks, for example, not to cash more than £5 at any one time for each customer and to keep down the number of cashiers, so as to maintain reasonably long queues in front of each bank window. "If a man (sic) needed to queue up ten times a day, half an hour at a time, to get £50 in notes, this would impose a pretty effective constraint on the cash supply," he concludes.

But would it stop Christmas buying? Naturally there would be chaos for a few days, but soon all kinds of money substitutes would spring up: there would be a rush to join the Diners' Club and everyone who could be "trusted" would get things on "credit". Those who are not so "trusted" — Kaldor suggests this applies to the mass of the working class — would be paid in chits issued instead of cash by, say, the top five hundred businesses in the country (who would also, for a commission, provide such chits to other employers).

These five hundred firms would soon find it convenient to set up a clearing system of their own, by investing in a giant computer which would at regular intervals cancel out all mutual claims and liabilities. Once this

had happened there would be a complete alternative money system, side by side with "official money".

What, at any time, is regarded as "money" are those forms of financial claims that are commonly used to clear debts. But, Kaldor points out, any shortage of commonly used types is bound to lead to the emergence of new types. (This is how, historically, first bank notes and then cheque accounts emerged.)

Thus the difficulties the monetarists have in "defining" the money supply is not accidental; and, what is more, the more successfully they try to control it, the harder they will find it is to define it.

The Theory in Action

Despite these theoretical difficulties, and despite the fact that they have had no success so far in defeating inflation, monetarists around the world continue to preach their doctrine of putting a clamp on any economy that shows any life.

Americans will feel the cost more and more this year and next, unless Carter, in a fit of pre-election nerves, modifies aspects of his monetarist advisers' economic package. At least for Americans — and this perhaps applies for us in Australia — election timetables might serve to delay the worst aspects of the monetarist freeze. The British, however, have no such luck. They've had their election, and now they're paying.

This was spelt out by Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Geoffrey Howe, when he presented the Conservative government's second Budget last month. The 1980-81 Budget is unmistakably deflationary. Output is expected to drop 2.5 per cent this year. Unemployment will increase, as will inflation. Real incomes and demand are forecast to fall. Recovery is not forecast till 1984, which just happens to be when the next election is scheduled.

The Budget called for more cuts in government spending, hitting particularly education, the financing of nationalised industries and social security, but covering virtually every other area. The exceptions are interesting: defence spending is to increase by three per cent in real terms this year, and expenditure on law and order by

two per cent. The aim is to reduce the deficit from £9 billion to £8.5 billion, and to continue the process over the next four years so that the money supply will then be growing at only six per cent, instead of the present 11 per cent.

Somehow, sometime, this is all supposed to lead to a fall in the inflation rate and then to an economic recovery, but neither Sir Geoffrey Howe, nor Mr Volcker in the United States, can demonstrate either the "how" or the "when" of this connection. They both, like their Australian counterparts when pressed, fall back on one or other tenet of their monetarist faith.

They might do better, though, if they looked more closely at the history of their faith — or at least they might not do as much harm. For it is a remarkable thing that Friedman, for all his fame, his Nobel Prize, and his access to the great, has discovered nothing. All he has done is revive a very old theory, in fact, one of the first theories developed to explain how capitalism works. Over three hundred years ago the English philosopher David Hume developed a version of monetarism that was, in many ways, more sophisticated than Friedman's. It was certainly more humane in its policy implications.

Hume, writing in 1752, formulated the quantity theory of money this way: "It seems a maxim almost self-evident, that the prices of every thing depend on the proportion betwixt commodities and money, and that any considerable alteration on either of these has the same effect either of heightening or lowering the prices. Encrease the commodities, they become cheaper: encrease the money, they rise in their value. As, on the other hand, a diminution of the former and that of the latter have contrary tendencies."

We might conclude from this, Hume suggests, that an increase in the price level following an increase in the amount of money circulating (he was thinking of the "price revolution" in Europe following the importation of silver and gold from the Americas in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries) would just leave everything the same. It might have more effect, either good or bad, he says, "than it would make any alteration on a merchant's books, if instead of the Arabian method of notation, which requires few characters, he should make use

of the Roman, which requires a great many. Nay, the greater quantity of money, like the Roman characters, is rather inconvenient and troublesome; and requires greater care to keep and transport it."

But there is another effect of changes in the money supply which Hume was very much aware of, but which the modern monetarists wish to ignore: "But notwithstanding this conclusion," he continues, "which must be allowed just, 'tis certain, that since the discovery of the mines in America, industry has encreas'd in all the nations of Europe, except in the possessors of those mines; and this may justly be ascrib'd, amongst other reasons, to the encrease of gold and silver."

"Accordingly we find, that in every kingdom, into which money begins to flow in greater abundance than formerly, every thing takes a new face; labour and industry gain life; the merchant becomes more enterprising; the manufacturer more diligent and skillful; and even the farmer follows his plough with greater alacrity and attention."

How can this be, if increasing the money supply simply increases the price level? Hume has an answer: "To account, then, for this phenomenon, we must consider, that tho' the high price of commodities be a necessary consequence of the encrease of gold and silver, yet it follows not immediately upon that encrease; but some time is requir'd before the money circulate thro' the whole state, and makes its effects be felt on all ranks of people."

"When any quantity of money is imported into a nation, it is not at first dispers'd into many hands, but is confin'd to the coffers of a few persons, who immediately seek to employ it to the best advantage. Here are a set of manufacturers or merchants, we shall suppose, who have receiv'd returns of gold and silver for goods, which they sent to Cadiz. They are thereby enabled to employ more workmen than formerly, who never dream of demanding higher wages, but are glad of employment from such good paymasters."

"If workmen become scarce, the manufacturer gives higher wages, but at first requires an encrease of labour; and this is willingly submitted to by the artisan, who can now eat and drink better to compensate his additional toil and fatigue."

"He carries his money to market, where he finds every thing at the same price as formerly, but returns with greater quantity and of better kinds, for the use of his family. The farmer and gardner, finding, that all their commodities are taken off, apply themselves with alacrity to the raising of more; and at the same time, can afford to take more and better cloths from their tradesmen, whose price is the same as formerly, and their industry only whetted by so much new gain. 'Tis easy to trace the money on its progress thro' the whole commonwealth; where we shall find, that it must first quicken the diligence of every individual, before it encrease the price of labour."

It is this effect, on real income, that Hume wants to highlight. Since real incomes have increased, prices do not go up by as much as the increase in money supply. "The prices of all things have only risen three, or at most four times, since the discovery of the West Indies," Hume notes, but the increase in the amount of gold and silver in Europe has been much greater than this. The reason? "More commodities are produc'd by additional industry, the same commodities come more to market, after men depart from their antient simplicity of manners. And tho' this encrease has not been equal to that of money, it has, however, been considerable, and has preserv'd the proportion betwixt coin and commodities nearer the antient standard."

Hume explains the case of a shortage of money by reversing the argument, and paints a picture that is becoming more familiar: "A nation whose money decreases, is actually much weaker and more miserable than another nation, who possesses no more money, but is on the encreasing hand. The workman has not the same employment from the manufacturer and merchant; tho' he pays the same price for every thing in the market. The farmer cannot dispose of his corn and cattle; tho' he must pay the same rent to his landlord. The poverty and beggary and sloth, which must ensue, are easily foreseen."

Easily foreseen, perhaps by David Hume's readers in 1752, but not by Milton Friedman's in 1980.

— Terry O'Shaughnessy,
May 4, 1980.



RADICAL HOMOSEXUAL POLITICS TODAY: A Legacy of the Seventies

Craig Johnston

In 1969 a Homosexual Law Reform Group was set up in Canberra. In 1970 an Australian chapter of the US lesbian organization, the Daughters of Bilitis, was set up in Melbourne as the Australasian Lesbian Movement; later that year, two homosexuals in Sydney came out and publicly launched the Campaign Against Moral Persecution. Thus the homosexual rights movement was launched in Australia. These first steps were very tentative: the ACT law reform group was not specifically a homosexual group, the Australasian Lesbian Movement had a heterosexual spokesperson, CAMP admitted heterosexuals to membership. But they initiated the process of the development of a movement of homosexual for homosexuals, which exists in a stronger form today, in numbers and diversity. This movement has also had some sort of impact on Australian society generally — in terms of contributing to the mellowing of attitudes towards homosexuality in some circles and, at the formal level, of majority public support for equality before the law, and in terms of a new, more positive, self-identity among many homosexuals themselves.

This article looks at aspects of the new 'gay consciousness' as it evolved throughout the 1970s and attempts an assessment of the

usefulness of the concepts developed within the movement, as a contribution towards the continuance into the 1980s of the (arrested and unfinished) project of 'sexual revolution'.

The Social Construction of the Homosexual

Homosexuality refers to a behaviour pattern, the enactment of sexual intercourse with a member of one's own biological sex. This is natural in the sense that all humans have a homosexual and heterosexual potential at birth, that is, we are born with a non-formed sexuality. But it is not 'normal' in the sense that all societies (perhaps with rare and debatable exceptions) have up till now socialized their children into a heterosexual norm because of the historic, animal-derived equation between sexuality and procreation linked with the need to perpetuate the species. However, homosexuality can be found in most societies.(1)

It can take different forms, depending on the social relations of production dominant in a particular social formation, but the immediate placing of homosexuality in the totality of social relations appears to be related to ideological and political relations,

primarily the ideological. In particular, there has been some early connection between homosexuality, the vocations of priests and healers, tendencies towards magic, and initiation ceremonies for women and men.(2) That is, there seems to be a definite relationship between the form it takes and religious ideology in particular.

With this in mind, the concept of a homosexual can be introduced. A homosexual, as distinct from someone who commits a homosexual act, is someone whose mental structures have as a common feature the choice of a sex-object of one's own biological sex; this relation could exist in the unconscious, in fantasy or in the act. (3) As Freud put it:

What decides whether we describe someone as an invert is not his actual behaviour, but his emotional attitude.(4)

For this to be the case, there must be something in the social formation to enable the transition from homosexuality as activity to homosexuality as a social role. It is here that the link begins with the situation of women. Whether consistent homosexuality (among men, that among women having less chance of social tolerance on an historic, world scale) is tolerated or not is related to the particular mechanisms for social control of women in each society (male-bonding as socialization in the case of the pederasty of the Ancient Greeks, quasi-women in the case of the Amerindian berdaches).

With the development of capitalism, the emergence of the distinctiveness of the homosexual took a higher form. While some content of the oppression of homosexuals is not specific to capitalism (especially related to patriarchal and Christian ideologies), the form it takes is quite specific and is bound up with capitalism's past, present and future development.

The phenomenon of the homosexual with a distinctive identity and sub-culture integrated into the mainstream of the society and subsidiary to the dominant culture was made possible historically by urbanization, which drew large numbers of people together, decreasing the isolation and sense of deviance evident in pre-class societies. Urbanization enabled new patterns of family life, sex roles, courting and sexual

behaviour. Prior to the rise of capitalism, in Europe homosexuality was institutionalized only in certain closed communities, nunneries and monasteries, knightly orders, royal courts.(5) But as early as the mid-1500s, male homosexual beats existed in Paris(6), and male homosexual brothels existed in France and England early in the eighteenth century. But then urbanization was not sufficient. Industrialization accelerated the process of urbanization and caused havoc to traditional kinship structures releasing homosexuals from many of the social bonds of less complex societies. This enabled the transition of the homosexual as subordinate, deviant and individual to homosexuals as subordinate, deviant and mass.

Following Weeks, we can discern three aspects of the development of the homosexual under capitalism.

A distinctly homosexual role, conceptualizing homosexuality as a condition which characterizes certain individuals and not others, was a relatively late development, being fairly generally recognized in Britain by the late nineteenth century.(8) There is some evidence that a male homosexual role emerged from the late seventeenth century — associated with an embryonic sub-culture, a particular mode of behaviour (often transvestite) and slang. But the critical formative period was the late nineteenth century; the term 'homosexuality' itself was not coined till 1869 and entered into English currency only in the 1890s.(9) The increasingly complex male homosexual sub-culture in cities like London and Dublin was paralleled by developments in cities like Berlin. Although lesbian organisations are reported to have existed in France in the late eighteenth century, lesbian sub-cultures did not generally emerge till the turn of the twentieth century, in Paris and Berlin.(10)

A medical model of homosexuality emerged at the same time, though its roots were earlier. This idea of homosexuality as a 'disease' both supplanted and supplemented the earlier notion of it as a 'sin'(11), according with the bourgeoisie's rational and 'scientific' ideologies more than the feudal-religious conception.

There was a development of homosexual self-image and identity. Fitting in with the demands of British capital in the 1880s as

it confronted its twin threats, imperialist rivals and the working class, the family was elevated as a buttress to social stability, corresponding to the class needs of both the bourgeoisie and the labor aristocracy.(12) The anti-male homosexual Labouchere amendment to the British Criminal Law Amendment Act was made in 1895. In this social climate, the commitment necessary to homosexuality was much more demanding; conversely, male homosexual consciousness was more sharply defined in the wake of possible 'exposure and blackmail.(13) The self-identity of most homosexuals was composed of a sense of 'differentness' caused by social isolation and persecution and reinforced by internalization of the religious and pseudo-scientific ideologies of guilt and sickness. As an expression of this new identity, organizations for homosexual rights were established: in England, the Order of Chaeronea in the 1890s; in the USA, the Cercle Hermaphroditus in 1895; and the most important, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee in Germany in 1897.

While homosexual identity and subculture developed, the attitude of the state — feudal, absolutist and capitalist — was overwhelmingly hostile. The Napoleonic Code of 1810 made consenting homosexual acts legal but homosexuals in countries covered by the code were not exempt from state persecution and harassment. Nevertheless, the revolutionary spread of democracy in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, would seem to confirm that "...the explicitly political dimension of liberalism is essential for a homosexual world to flourish".(14)

With respect to the post-capitalist societies the more advanced, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Germany and the Soviet Union, have embryonic homosexual sub-cultures but the repressive political environment retards their development. Though some of them, like the G.D.R., have liberal legislation, clearly bourgeois ideologies of sexual repression persist in these societies.

The Social and Political Significance of Homosexuality

The oppression of homosexuals today takes a number of forms involving the

complex interactions between the concepts of homosexual as one who is sexually and emotionally attracted to her own biological sex and one whose identity is a deviant. This is manifest in the confusion in attitudes to homosexuals and is fired by repressed latent homosexuality among heterosexuals.

Homophobia has been used to describe fear of and hostility to homosexuality and homosexuals, like all ideologies operating in an unconscious as well as a conscious way. As a concept to explain homosexual oppression its value is limited because it is based on the primacy of the homo/hetero distinction, i.e. that distinction is seen as central to the problem of homosexual oppression. The political solution then becomes the liberal one of 'education'.

The hegemony of heterosexual gender role stereotypes maintained and reproduced in the ideological apparatuses has been called **heterosexism**. According to whether one is female or male one is expected to have 'feminine' or 'masculine' attributes, i.e. gender roles corresponding to biological sex. This is, of course, ideological mystification of a male supremacy based on the sexual division of labor.

Heterosexism operates against homosexuals because by not conforming to the 'normal' processes of sexual object-choice, lesbians and male homosexuals are assumed also to want to be the opposite sex — threatening the stability of determination of the dominant sex by simple biology. Whether an individual lesbian or male homosexual actually conforms to the gender roles of her or his sex is irrelevant; heterosexism involves the belief that homosexuals as a group do not. In a male-dominated society this assumed masculinity of lesbians and effeminacy of male homosexuals appears to subvert the dominant gender roles and hence the underlying male supremacy.

The Australian homosexual movement does not use the term 'heterosexism' in the sense defined here. The Perth Gay Liberation newsletter *Gay Images*, for example, defines it as basically "the pervasive assumption by anyone that everybody is heterosexual".(15) That is, the concept is seen to rest on the distinction homosexual/heterosexual (again, this has definite political implications). But I have defined it in terms

of the distinction feminine/masculine. As such heterosexist relations affect homosexuals as well as heterosexuals; they correspond to the basic male supremacy of a capitalist social formation.

This basic male supremacy has been called **sexism**. This term itself is the source of a theoretical confusion. It is usually used as an analogy to racism to denote oppression on the basis of sex. With sexism, divisions are made between people on the basis of chromosomes or genitalia and these divisions are supposed to determine a person's personality, ability and behaviour. At a societal level, the supposed differences are embodied within the total culture, connected with either sex's ability to get and hold power and ideological justifications for the sexual status quo.(16)

A sexist society, then, is not necessarily patriarchal. Sexism is necessary but not sufficient for patriarchy; patriarchy is not necessary for sexism.(12) Theoretically, a patriarchal society might be just as sexist as a patriarchal one.(18) Historically, there is no conclusive proof that there have been patriarchal societies preceding patriarchy, despite the strong tradition that this view has had in the socialist movement following Engels.

In recognition of the confusion over the word 'sexism', and to stress the immediate problem of patriarchal-sexism, many feminists and radical homosexuals use patriarchy in preference.

If one takes patriarchal government to be the institution whereby that half of the populace which is female is controlled by that half which is male, the principles of patriarchy appear to be twofold: male shall dominate female, elder male shall dominate younger.(19)

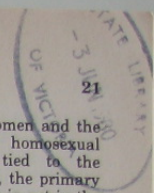
Patriarchy is marked by its ubiquity throughout all social relations; differentiation within each sex along the lines of more masculine/less masculine; its foundation on the sexual division of labor; its maintenance and reproduction through kinship structures, ideological apparatuses and the state; and by the attribution of gender roles according to biological sex. It is with this latter feature that we see the **juncture of patriarchy and heterosexism**. Here is the interconnection

between the oppression of women and the oppression of homosexuals: homosexual oppression is structurally tied to the oppression of women. Indeed, the primary site of homosexual oppression is not in the homo/hetero distinction but in the relations between women and men.(20)

It has often been stated that the sexual division of labor in the capitalist mode of production is not historically specific to it. Such a division predates the division based on class and continues to be reproduced in the post-capitalist societies. However, under capitalism the sexual division of labor has acquired particular forms which are economically, politically and ideologically specific to it. These specific aspects can be seen with reference to two broad areas within the production process: commodity production and the domestic unit. A woman's position is by no means the same within these two areas; her subordination and exploitation on the factory floor do not necessarily correspond with her subordination within the family. However, there is a tendency for a woman's subordination within the family and workforce to reinforce and maintain one another. A woman's ideological subjection, her relative political and economic isolation as a house worker, follow her into the workforce to facilitate the reproduction of her subordinate position within the larger area of socialized production.

The separation of material production between its socialized form and private labor performed mainly by women within the home, institutionalized patriarchy as a part of the capitalist mode of production. Part of the consequence of this was the perception of the family as separate from the economy and personal life as a separate sphere of life divorced from the larger society. For socialists, the consequent tendency was to see personal life as an entirely subjective phenomenon, having meaning only for the individual.(21) One of the features of the feminist and radical homosexual analyses of society has been to stress the role of the individual ('the personal is political'), and thereby contribute to the development of a fuller understanding of the workings of ideology and power.

Important here has been the examination of familial ideology, and the connection



between the role of the capitalist nuclear family and the oppression of homosexuals. These questions have been taken up elsewhere. One aspect which needs repeating is the reproduction in the family of heterosexual gender roles, the potential subversion of which is at the core of the oppression of homosexuals. Homosexuals are oppressed to protect the ideology that justifies the oppression of women. Millet says:

But as she minces along a street in the Village, the storm of outrage an insouciant queen in drag may call down is due to the fact that she is both masculine and feminine at once — or male, but feminine. She has made gender identity more than frighteningly easy to lose, she has questioned its reality at a time when it has attained the status of a moral absolute and a social imperative. She has defied it and actually suggested its negation. She has dared obloquy, and in doing so has challenged more than the taboo on homosexuality, she has uncovered what the source of this contempt implies — the fact that sex role is sex rank. (22)

Above all, this exposure of the arbitrary nature of gender roles, of the irrelevance of biology to 'destiny', is evident in the act of sex. For women, any sexuality independent of men is repressed, and for men, the possibility of sexual 'passivity' is seen as a break in the solidarity of men as the dominant sex. (23) Each sexual act between homosexuals questions the pairs feminine/female, masculine/male. It is this which perhaps explains why male homosexuals are more overtly oppressed as homosexuals than lesbians: we threaten "men, who psychologically must retain the initiative of force or action, in order to be 'men'". (24)

While the oppression of male homosexuals shares a similarity with lesbians at the level of gender roles, it is clear that the situation is in fact more complex. Lesbians are doubly oppressed, as women and as homosexuals. As a man, the male homosexual is an oppressor of women; as a homosexual, the male homosexual is oppressed by patriarchy. It is this contradiction which heightens the difference between lesbians and male homosexuals in the homosexual

movement, probably the only movement of the left where this question comes to the fore, and which has provided the impetus for a significant section of radical male homosexuals to support feminism as the resolution to the contradiction (and, at the same time, explains the assertion of an ultra-masculinity by many male homosexuals).

The subversive potential of male homosexuality is in its potential to divorce sexuality from power (its repressive potential is psycho-sexual misogyny on an organised level). (25)

It is this internalization of the ideology of the oppressors that distinguishes the generalized social discrimination against women, blacks and homosexuals from discrimination against socially disadvantaged groups such as pensioners or tertiary students, and defines only the situation of the former as oppression. Movements of the socially oppressed have expressed the need to "reclaim our history and our identity from what must be called cultural terrorism" (27) with slogans like sisterhood is powerful, black is beautiful, gay is good.

Towards a Response: Freud and the Left

One of the questions that has concerned bourgeois pseudo-scientific study of homosexuality has been 'why?'. Given that this is asked by ideologues of sexual orthodoxy and social conformity, radical homosexuals have denied the hegemony of the question. No one asks this question of heterosexuals. And the question is motivated not by 'scientific impartiality' but by a desire to stamp out homosexuality ('therapy' or 'treatment'). In effect, the answer of the homosexual movement to the theoretical question has been to assert that gay is good, and brook no discussion. (28)

But the question hasn't gone away. An understanding of the formation of homosexuality is part of a total understanding of sexuality. If the questions 'why?' and 'how?' are directed at sexuality generally, including heterosexuality, then answers should be sought. Thus for Freud:

...the exclusive sexual interest felt by men for women is also a problem that

needs elucidating and it is not a self-evident fact based upon an attraction that is ultimately of a chemical nature. (29)

This involves the need to look at the 'sociology' of heterosexuality; if everybody can make a homosexual object-choice at some stage as Freud suggests, then why does the majority suppress this?

There have been various theories offered to explain homosexuality: a form of vice, a genetic aberration due to inherited or constitutional factors, a glandular disease, a psychological disorder, or some combination of these. Of them, those based on psychology have had the most durability, most of the views being based on prejudice and speculation. It is probable that homosexuality is determined by a number of variables: psychological, and cultural and situational, the form it takes being explained primarily by the latter. Even in the psychological explanation that Freud offered, he said that the particular process he singled out was only one among many. So any reductionism would not aid but hinder understanding. Unfortunately many of the old myths, including crude distortions of Freud's theories, linger on.

Many socialists have accepted psychoanalysis as a science, but in so doing have noted that there are many aspects of Freud which are "decidedly culturally and socially specific, and thus in the last instance, ideological". (30) For radical homosexuals, psychoanalysis can make two contributions to a critique of heterosexism: the refutation of a biological basis for exclusive heterosexuality, and a fuller understanding of the acquisition of gender roles.

Freud says that in all of us throughout life, the libido normally oscillates between female and male objects. (31) From their studies of human sexual behaviour, Kinsey and his associates concluded that the capacity of an individual to respond erotically to any sort of stimulus is basic in our species. One of the most basic distinctions between humans and other animals is the human capacity to choose our own sexuality. Humans can dispense with the equation, sexuality = procreation. (32) Patterns of homosexuality and heterosexuality represent learned behaviour. Nevertheless, all sorts of

pressures ensure that heterosexuality is the choice of the great majority.

Theories that people were born homosexual were discredited by Freud's discovery of infantile sexuality. This discovery itself opened up the arena for the discovery of the initial acquisition of gender roles. From the fact that each individual effectively possesses traces of the genital organs of the other sex, Freud concluded that each individual carried the psychological characteristics of the other sex. (33) This was a biological reductionist view whereby femininity and masculinity are equated with passivity and activity in the psychology of people. (34) In fact, 'bisexuality' in terms of feminine or masculine gender roles depends on cultural and social factors, which explains the different manifestations it takes in different social formations. For a capitalist society, the central site of socialization (and of immersion into patriarchy) is the Oedipus complex: if all goes well, the 'bisexually' disposed child will emerge from this phase in her/his sexual development as a properly constituted female or male, and with appropriate cultural and social values. (35) That heterosexuals learn their gender roles at this early stage is to add to the understanding of the hegemony of patriarchal ideology, through its operation in the unconscious.

With both of these contributions to a critique of heterosexism, I have simply asserted the position. In the former area, a fair amount of work has been done by bourgeois sex researchers; in the latter area, there is much still to be done since the question of the value of psychoanalysis for the left was raised by Juliet Mitchell's *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*.

Towards a Response: Gay Liberation

At the end of 1971 a Gay Liberation group split off from the CAMP in Sydney and quickly established itself as the dominant and most vital homosexual group. A group with that name now only exists in Perth (and it was not established until 1976), those in Adelaide, Canberra, Newcastle, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Sydney having folded, but Gay Liberation gave its name to the whole homosexual movement, as well as a certain militancy, structure, analysis and 'image'. (36) Gay Liberation attracted the

imagination of the homosexual youth on the fringes of and identified with the counter-culture and the Left, developed an enmity with established homosexual groupings and the bar-beat-sauna scene, grabbed media attention, and defined for most people what homosexual radicalism meant.

Gay Liberation ideology had a number of features. From the US black movement were adopted the concepts of pride and redefining one's identity, including an analysis of the politics of language (hence, 'gay'). This involved refusal to remain hidden (coming out), and analysis of the politics of experience ('the personal is political'). Sexuality was discussed as an important theoretical question, and gender confusion ('radical drag') was used as a tactic to challenge gender roles. Liberal conceptions of tolerance of homosexuality were rejected, in favour of support for 'liberation', in alliance with other oppressed groups (particularly women)(37). The pull between the maximum program of liberation and the minimum program of democratic rights on the one hand, and the political activism and the personal 'revolution' on the other, by 1974 had led to the hegemony of liberalism in the movement: among the women, lesbian separatism; among the men, reformism.

1973 was the first peak in the history of the movement, with large demonstrations in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney in September. It was also a watershed in that it was the last time that there was any significant contact on campaigns between militant lesbians and male homosexuals until the Gay Solidarity campaign of mid 1978.(38)

The increasing criticism and exit of most lesbians from Gay Liberation was accompanied by some support for effeminism among radical male homosexuals. The effeminist reaction to feminism was to accept (radical) feminist analysis, to commit oneself to fighting one's own masculinity, to "realise that the phenomenon revolution is an all-embracing revolution but a series of male coups", and to refrain from defining a women's revolution.(39) This uncritical acceptance of radical feminism did not last long, but effeminist ideas added to the radical homosexual understanding of homosexuals'

oppression and were the first major differentiation inside Gay Liberation between the reform-minded majority and a minority who wanted to develop a revolutionary perspective. Effeminism found some support in polemics of socialist male homosexuals against gay liberation politics.(40)

From within the homosexual movement, the dominant gay liberation ideology began to be criticized by socialists, though the notions that the oppressed from their experiences know best how to end their oppression, that respect for autonomy of movements of the oppressed meant no criticism, and that the revolution consisted of each of the protest movements battering the system on their own ('poly-vanguardism') were accepted by most of the left. From 1974, as Gay Liberation lost its momentum, voices emerged among male homosexuals decrying its disarray, pointing to the political weaknesses of individualism, sexism, reformism, anti-intellectualism and structurelessness. In patriarchal terms, campaigns by male homosexuals for gay rights were seen as male rights unless linked to a feminist perspective. Moreover, the struggle for women's liberation took programmatic precedence:

...in the unity of struggle, ...some struggles will play a more crucial role than others. The struggle for women's liberation is such a struggle and that of male homosexuals is not: just as the struggle for workers' power is primary in the last instance, because it is decisive.(41)

And this recognition opened up for discussion the question of whether lesbians and male homosexuals could work together for homosexual rights, something most lesbian-feminists denied or questioned.

A feature of the development of a left discussion inside the gay liberation group was to also point to the need for a class analysis of homosexual oppression and of the homosexual movement, for alliances with the socialist left and for an orientation to the working class. This latter point was slow to develop, but at the Second National Homosexual Conference (Sydney, 1976) the Socialist Homosexuals Caucus proposed that the topic "homosexuals at work and in their unions" be a major item for discussion

at the Third Conference, and at the Third National Homosexual Conference (Adelaide, 1977) socialists successfully proposed "homosexuals at work" as the theme for the Fourth Conference (Sydney, 1978).

By the end of the decade the post-Gay Liberation phase of the movement featured a certain style of politics. From its origins in Gay Liberation it retains a definite militancy (gay pride and coming out) but the general radical rhetoric is less evident as is any attempt to theorize or analyse homosexual oppression. Instead the movement is fragmented into a number of different types of organisation and institutions appealing to different types of homosexual. All of these constitute what is now called the 'gay community'. Within this 'community', the activist movement is a distinct minority. Reflecting the diversity of the social and political composition of homosexuals, most of the activist groups — though this is more applicable to Sydney and Melbourne rather than other cities — focus on particular areas or campaigns: Gay Teachers, Lesbian Mothers, Gay Trade Unionists, Law Reform Coalition, etc. The effect of this is to focus on 'discrimination' and act as pressure groups rather than as sexual radicals. Not that it is not important to fight any manifestation of homosexual oppression wherever it sheds its customary everydayness, but that such battles inevitably remain holding operations.

Towards a Response: Socialist-Feminism

Despite the important role played by lesbians in the women's liberation movement there has been little clear analysis of lesbian oppression. The analysis of lesbianism by socialist feminists has approached the question primarily from a feminist angle, not a class angle(42). This is especially true of the special lesbian issue of *Scarlet Woman* in July 1976.

This primacy of a feminist analysis over a socialist one can also be seen in the socialist-feminist contributions to the discussion in the homosexual movement on the working relations between women and men.

Walsh argued that lesbians are a greater threat to capitalism than male homosexuals: male homosexuals do not

upset the process of production unlike lesbians, since the sexual division of labor is kernel to the operations of capitalism... and male homosexuals do not have the same importance as lesbians regarding reproduction of children since they are physically unable to bear children.(43)

The latter point seems to place too much importance on the fact that homosexuals do not reproduce in explaining our oppression. While the need for reproduction of the species, within prescribed kinship structures, was and is an important factor in enforcing universal heterosexuality, a role for deviants has been provided in a number of societies historically, and the connection between sexuality and procreation has become less relevant under late capitalism. Moreover, it has always been and still is the case that both sexes are needed equally for conception.

The former point corresponds to the statement by du Beauvoir that

what gives homosexual women a masculine cast is ... the whole group of responsibilities they are formed to assume because they dispense with men. (44)

De Beauvoir uses this to deny the gender subversion in the sexual activities of lesbians. Walsh commits the same mistake. She says:

Lesbians are oppressed because we are women. (45)

Heterosexual women in their sexual activity do not generally subvert heterosexual gender identity. If lesbians are only oppressed as women, and not doubly oppressed as women and homosexuals, then what is the point of talking about them as lesbians? If all that's at issue is the role in the production process, then any 'masculine' woman might well be (and often is) subversive, irrespective of whether she is heterosexual or homosexual. In attempting to minimize what lesbians and male homosexuals have in common, the apparent challenge to gender roles in the sex act (albeit in different ways), Walsh obscures the difference between lesbians and heterosexual women.

The argument about the relation of lesbians and male homosexuals to patriarchy has been more forcefully put by

Bebbington and Lyons.(46) They too argued that lesbians have a greater stake in revolution. This is partly based on the recognition that male homosexuals are men and thereby enjoy all the power benefits of being male in a patriarchy, whereas lesbians, as women, cannot, unless they become 'like men'. Where their analysis becomes confused is their linking of the oppression of lesbians and male homosexuals to coming out:

Men are only potentially victims of oppression; they can, and often do, choose to pass as straight... As lesbian women we can choose to hide our lesbianism, but we can't hide our womanhood.

That male homosexuals may be victimized on coming out does not mean they are only oppressed when something happens; that this could be so is in fact symptomatic of their oppression. That lesbians cannot hide their womanhood points to their double oppression, but does not invalidate their oppression as homosexuals.

What Walsh and Bebbington and Lyons were talking around is the contradictory position of male homosexuals in a patriarchy of the type we live in. Many patriarchies have accorded male homosexuality a role in initiation of boys into adult society — Hittites, ancient Greeks, etc; others have given it a special place in religion. None has allowed it to question the basic relations between women and men. The idea that male homosexuality might be the 'ultimate manifestation' of patriarchy,(47) however, is based on only one aspect of the contradiction and has no relevance to capitalist societies.

Towards a Response: the Socialist Left

Since the rise of the homosexual movement, there has been fairly general support for it from the left, though little contact. Most of the activists in the socialist parties that have proliferated in number since the Communist Party lost its 'monopoly' in the 1960s, and most of the activists in various protest organizations (student, anti-war, feminist, anti-racism, ecology and anti-uranium, international solidarity, etc.) have common petty-bourgeois class backgrounds, like the homosexual movement. The influence of the

'counter-culture' has added a unifying factor at the level of lifestyles. The most significant breakthrough was in the Australian Union of Students in 1975 which saw the adoption of a homosexual rights policy and delivered resources, both human and material, towards the revitalization of the homosexual movement (including the first national conference in 1975). The limitation of this was the relative isolation from the left in the trade unions, but even this is slowly beginning to break down. The first contact was with the then CPA-led Builders' Laborers' Federation in Sydney in 1973, and subsequently in the three teachers' unions in Victoria. At the Fourth National Homosexual Conference (Sydney, 1978), a public forum on homosexuals at work was addressed by prominent trade union officials; the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations sponsored a national meeting on homosexual unionists in Melbourne on August 10, 1979. Gay Trade Unionist Groups operate in Melbourne and Sydney and there are a number of homosexual caucuses in various industries and unions.

The main problem with the support of socialists to the homosexual movement at a theoretical level is the reduction of the question to one of 'gay rights'. Quite clearly homosexuals are subject to everyday oppression, often revealing itself in individual cases of injustice; a number of cases have moved the homosexual movement into protest since it began: Peter Bonsall-Boone, George Duncan, Jeremy Fisher, Penny Short, Mike Clohesy, Sandra Wilson, Greg Weir, Tony Collins, Terry Stokes.(48) But, as I have argued, the liberal analysis of the situation of homosexuals in terms of discrimination is inadequate, and consequently so is the political response that focuses on gay rights. The early feminist argument about gay rights being male rights in a patriarchy is relevant here, but to leave it at this could lead to an abstention from campaigns for democratic rights/civil liberties. More important is the need to understand how campaigns for the rights of the marginalized fit into a struggle for the transformation of the very structures of oppression that individual cases of discrimination are merely a reflection of. The problem is thus one confronting all radicals, how to link

'minimum' and 'maximum' demands to effect a transitional strategy.

This is not a problem that has been confronted by socialists in relation to the homosexual movement. The typical position is one of support for democratic rights and to leave it at that. This often also involves support for the autonomy of the homosexual movement as the basis of the equality of all movements of the exploited and oppressed, and for the mass public campaigns of the movement.(49) Generally this has meant a lack of critical analysis and an uncritical acceptance of the theory and practice of the movement. Socialists putting these positions have, unsurprisingly, received a better response from radicalising homosexuals.

Those more obviously pushing a 'class line' have earned themselves greater hostility. This is not because of any pointing out of the limitations of a civil rights perspective, nor the need for a class line as such, nor that other struggles have been recognized as more socially important than those of homosexuals — many radical homosexuals have long been arguing along these lines. Rather, there is a correlation between those who seek to promote a class line and those who are unprepared to say that homosexuality is a valid form of sexual expression. Given this, calling for the subordination of the defence of homosexuals to the defence of the working class and denouncing the activities of militant homosexuals,(50) or opposing any sort of independent homosexual movement(51) and proscribing coming out for homosexual socialists,(52) have earned such advocates hostility.

Those socialists who ignore the question or deny it exists in their particular socialist paradise earn only derision. The Socialist Party of Australia has never determined a policy on the question. The Maoists originally saw gay liberation as a sign of the decadence of US imperialism but as feminism made more of an impact, the line softened. This did not prevent the eruption of a debate inside the AUS in 1977 about the anti-homosexual practices of Maoists, though in that year homosexuals had some impact with Students for Australian Independence, especially in Adelaide. Australian Maoists have not been helped by the alleged non-existence of homosexuals in

China and by the homophobia of Maoists internationally.(53)

And in spite of the apparently more radical rhetoric, the sectarians on a practical level still see the question as one of civil liberties: "sexual identity or personal characteristics of the individual are not the concern of others".(54) Like Pierre Trudeau, they want to keep the state out of the bedrooms of the nation.

Radicals, on the other hand, want to take the affairs of the bedroom publicly into all aspects of daily life. Said the Lavender and Red Union, a socialist homosexual group in Los Angeles, the position of homosexuals could not be simply understood as a question of democratic rights:

one must analyse the continuance of gay oppression and sexual repression in general and its ties to the nuclear family and morality that springs up from it.(55)

Thus the political significance of the homosexual movement is not simply one of another marginalized grouping seeking recognition of its humanity, but of its potential to challenge established sexual mores and the repressive function they serve. The sexual practices and personal identities of homosexuals, less tied as they are to gender identity and sex role, are lessons for a political practice which can breach the hegemony of capitalist Oedipal sexuality.

The State, and Liberation

In May 1978 a survey of 2,000 people showed only 29 per cent strongly opposed to equal treatment in law for homosexuals. In 1977, 33 per cent in a survey were strongly opposed to the legalization of homosexual relations between consenting adults; in 1974 this was 39 per cent, in 1967 64 per cent.(56) What happened through the 1970s was a gradual general erosion of public hostility to homosexuals, expressed in a weak liberal tolerance on some legal questions. This has accompanied the depiction of explicit and implicit homosexual imagery and practices in the mass media (the Don Finlayson syndrome), homosexual law reform in South Australia and the ACT,(57) awareness of the potential of a lucrative market among single, petty bourgeois male homosexuals, expansion of the commercial gay scene

(especially in Sydney), (58) development of a new gay pride and a homosexual rights movement, and a growth in feminist consciousness. Advances have not been spectacular, but they have been steady.

The emphasis by the homosexual movement on democratic rights has raised the question of whether those rights which were not won by or from the bourgeoisie in its ascendance can be conceded in its decline. If the survival of the taboo on homosexuality in the twentieth century is part of the unfinished business of the Enlightenment, (59) then it seems clear that it is one of the many questions which capitalism cannot solve. As with all democratic rights under capitalism, homosexual rights are tenuous, partial and reversible (if conceded). To a certain extent they may be conceded and homosexual demands and movements may be co-opted — which belies the claim that homosexuals are inherently revolutionary. On the other hand, the tolerance evident at the moment is based on the radicalised and liberalised sections of the petty bourgeoisie and therefore has an uncertain future. The attack by police on Gay Solidarity Group demonstrations in Sydney on June 24 and August 27, 1978 showed how limited tolerance is. Ideologies have a resilience and hence strength which should never be underestimated. Liberal attitudes are confined to small circles of people.

The conditions favoring the radicalization of the 1960s gave way to uncertainty and pessimism by the mid 1970s. As the economic crisis deepens into the 1980s the ideological conditions in which radical homosexuals operate change, including the reassertion of the ideologies of motherhood and domesticity. Already the forces of moral conservatism have begun to mobilize — without necessarily immediate success — to try to put back together the shattered facade of the conservative hegemony, to reassure the mums, dads and kids as times get bad. Whether this is a desperate and doomed attempt to bring back the past, or a threat for the future is hard to tell. For homosexuals, the idea of a 'right-wing backlash' is problematic since any advances have been few and marginal (while important) — it can only be a relative setback.

When overviewing the development of homosexual radicalism, and then

attempting to assess its significance, it is not possible to do this outside the context of what was happening in the feminist movement, radicalized petty bourgeois youth generally and the relation of forces in the class struggle. Since 1970 we can outline the following balance sheet: (a) the uneven development of a coherent analysis of homosexual oppression; (b) some dramatic if not earth-shattering advances in 'public opinion' at the democratic rights level; (c) expansion and fragmentation of the movement's organisational manifestation; and (d) somewhat more nebulous, the creation of near 'liberated zones' in the daily lives of many homosexuals, the result of the onslaught against self-hate and heterosexual prejudice by 'gay pride' and 'coming out'.

If a strategy which focuses on gay rights is not the key to homosexual liberation, then what should socialists advocate instead? A marxist analysis of homosexual oppression leads to a number of political conclusions.

The first is the need to develop further marxist theory on this question. The Australian homosexual movement has been infected with the anti-intellectualism of Australian society and of the Australian left and labor movements, and is quite content to ignore any wide understanding of the situation or to simply rely on concepts developed in the early days of Gay Liberation. This has gone hand in hand with the lack of discussion about strategy. Discussion of tactics there is. But how these fit into a broad perspective of social change there isn't.

In 1921, Kurt Hiller said that the liberation of homosexuals can only be the work of homosexuals themselves. It is true that no one has more of a stake in the issue than homosexuals, but Hiller's dictum can be interpreted too narrowly. An independent homosexual movement is necessary: in fact it already exists, so the more pressing problem is how do socialists work in it. From a marxist analysis which relates the oppression of homosexuals to patriarchy and capitalism, it follows that what is needed is a homosexual movement allied to the labor movement, especially its socialist wing, and to the women's liberation movement. That is, a homosexual movement which is explicitly pro-feminist, and which has extensive

networks of caucuses in unions and industries which not only fight discrimination but is partisan in the class struggle.

Such a homosexual movement must fight for democratic rights, but must be alert to the opportunity for exposing the social function of sexual repression. In 1979 in Melbourne a homosexual student was excluded from a campus residential college because of his open homosexuality; through militant tactics the decision was overturned. But the campaign while successful, missed an opportunity. The student had been accused of having another man in his room overnight (a charge which was not proved), thus breaking the college's no-sex rule. The homosexual militants fought the case on the question of no discrimination. They did not raise the demands of abolishing the conservative anti-sex role — of the right of students, heterosexual and homosexual, to have people in their rooms for sex. Perhaps it could have been argued that to have done so would have been diversionary. In the short run, it might have been. Nevertheless, the radical potential of homosexuals is in their challenging of dominant conceptions of sexuality. A radical homosexual movement cannot just demand 'gay rights', but sexual liberation for all.

ENDNOTES

- See Clellan S. Ford and Frank A. Beach, *Patterns of Sexual Behaviour* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965).
- Raymond de Becker, *The Other Face of Love* (London: Sphere, 1969), p. 28. The connection between homosexuality and religion is not something foreign to capitalism; see David Hilliard, "Unmanly and Unenglish: a look at Homosexuality and Anglo-Catholicism", *Gay Changes*, II, 3, Autumn 1979, pp. 22-24.
- Michel Bon and Antoine d'Arc, *Rapport sur l'homosexualité de l'homme* (Paris: Editions universitaires, 1974), p. 73.
- Sigmund Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1964), p. 37.
- Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain, from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quartet, 1977), p. 35.
- Arno Karlen, *Sexuality and Homosexuality* (London: Macdonald, 1971), p. 122.
- Ibid.*, p. 140.
- Jeffrey Weeks, "Sins and Diseases: Some Notes on Male Homo sexuality in the Nineteenth Century", *History Workshop Journal*, 1, Spring 1976, p. 212.
- Ibid.*, p. 213.
- De Becker, p. 121; Weeks, *Coming Out*, p. 87.
- Weeks, "Sins and Diseases", pp. 215-216.
- Weeks, "Sins and Diseases", p. 214.
- Weeks, "Sins and Diseases", pp. 214-215.
- Dennis Altman, "The State, Repression and Sexuality", *Gay Left*, 6, Summer 1978, p. 5.
- "What Do We Mean by 'Heterosexism'?", *Gay Images*, 3, July 1978, p. 2.
- Editorial, *Refractory Girl*, 6, June 1974, p. 2.
- Hobart Women's Action Group, "Sexism and the Women's Liberation Movement", *Refractory Girl*, 5, Summer 1974, p. 30.
- Editorial, *Refractory Girl*, 6, p. 2.
- Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (London: Abacus, 1972), p. 25.
- Michael Hurley and Craig Johnston, "Campfires of the Resistance: Theory and Practice for the Liberation of Male Homosexuals", *Papers and Proceedings, First National Homosexual Conference*, Melbourne, 16-17 August, 1975 (Melbourne: Homosexual Conference Collective, 1976), p. 54.
- Eli Zaretsky, *Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), *passim*.
- Millett, p. 343.
- See David Fernbach, "Towards a Marxist Theory of Gay Liberation", *Gay Marxist*, 2 July, 1973.
- Phyllis Chester, *Women and Madness* (New York: Avon, 1972), p. 186.
- Hurley and Johnston, p. 55. The repressive potential is perhaps most obvious in some of the sado-masochistic aspects of gay 'leather' bars and the latest macho tendency among many male homosexuals. See Edmund White, "Fantasia on the Seventies", *Christopher Street*, II, 3, September 1977, pp. 18-20; and Seymour Kleinberg, "Where have all the Sissies gone?", *Christopher Street*, II, 9, March 1978, pp. 4-12. One should not however take the ideology of masculinism of this tendency as seriously as it does itself; an important part of it is a response to the social conservatism of the late 1970s. Says Kleinberg: "Macho, of course, isn't a new closet; indeed, many have suspected that it's

- the oldest closet in the house" (p. 12).
26. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968), p. 250.
 27. Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, *Black Power: the Politics of Liberation in America* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 49.
 28. See Sue Wills, "Intellectual Poofier Bashers", *Camp Ink*, II, 11, pp. 4-11; "August 8th University of N.S.W. Demonstration", *Sydney Gay Liberation Newsletter*, I, 2, August 1972; Jeff, "Aversion Therapy", *Gay Rays*, December 1972; "A Visit to the Doctor, or how we zapped the Gynaecologist", *Boiled Sweets*, 1, 1973; John Ware, "Psychosurgery in Australia", *Camp Ink*, III, 4, 1973; D. F., "Zapping the Psychiatrists", *Tribune*, August 14-20, 1973; Robin Winkler, *A Critique of Aversion Therapy for Homosexuals* (Sydney: Sydney Gay Liberation, 1973); Lex Watson, "The Patient as Victim", *Gay Liberation Press*, 4, October 1974, pp. 23-32. See also Sue Wills, "The Psychologist and the Lesbian", *Refractory Girl*, 9, Winter 1975, pp. 41-45.
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 32. Bon and d'Arc, p. 56. Bieber is correct in pointing out that in no other species in which reproduction depends on female-male sexual coupling have deviant types appeared that fear or abhor heterosexual mating and engage in homosexual behaviour as consistently, exclusively and in highly organized patterns as humans. For him, this is an example of homosexuality's pathological nature—Irving Bieber, "Clinical Aspects of Male Homosexuality", in *Sexual Inversion: The Multiple Roots of Homosexuality*, ed. Judd Marmor (New York: Basic Books, 1965), p. 254; for us it can only be an example of liberation from our biology.
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- The activity denounced by the Socialist Labour League for bearing "the unmistakable stamp of adventurist publicity seeking and highly unstable middle class revisionism" was a Gay Solidarity Group march of 1,000 in Sydney on June 24, 1978, which was attacked by police with 53 arrests.
51. "Marxism and Homosexual Oppression", *Australasian Spartacist*, October 1976, p. 3; Matt and Pat, "Lavender or Red? Trotskyism and Gay Liberation", *Militant*, January 20, 1977, p. 9.
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 53. See "Homosexuality 'not a problem' for Chinese", *Gay News*, July 13-16, 1978, p. 11. Says the pro-'Gang of Four' US Revolutionary Union (now Revolutionary Communist Party):
The best way to struggle out such contradictions in our personal lives is in stable monogamous relationships between men and women based on mutual love and respect. Because homosexuals do not carry the struggle between men and women into their most intimate relationships they are not prepared, in principle for the arduous task of class transformation... In reality, gay liberation is anti-working class and counter-revolutionary. Its attacks on the family would rob poor and working people of the most viable social unit for their survival and for their revolutionary struggle against the imperialist system.
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VIETNAM'S FOREIGN POLICY, 1980

Interview with Nguyen Khac Vien

The following is an abridged version of one chapter in a Vietnamese publication Viet Nam 1980. The whole pamphlet is an interview with prominent Vietnamese intellectual Nguyen Khac Vien.

World public opinion at the moment is focussed on the question of Kampuchea and particularly on Viet Nam — Kampuchea relations. How can one assess the situation in that country?

The government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea is in complete control of the situation there. One year after liberation it can be affirmed that the rebirth of this country which was literally disintegrated by four years of Pol Pot rule is an undeniable fact. Six hundred and fifty thousand

hectares of land have been brought back under cultivation and the first harvest has already been gathered. Together with international aid, which is becoming larger and better distributed, this has averted the threat of famine. Though there are still serious problems in the food supply, this does not alter the fact that the alarmist reports which appear so frequently in the Western press have more to do with psychological warfare than with news. The situation has become irreversible, in the sense that no force in the world is any longer capable of putting agents of Beijing or any other power back in the saddle in Phnom Penh.

Where does the Heng Samrin government's strength come from? In the West it is often claimed that this regime is only held up by the support of the Vietnamese forces.

The Pol Pot regime, barbaric as it was, was unable to prevent the creation of a resistance, which began as early as 1975. Though forcibly repressed, this resistance nevertheless managed in about mid-1978 to form itself into a solid organization, notably among officers and political cadres of the army. President Heng Samrin is himself one of these officers of the Pol Pot army who realised that Pol Pot's political line was leading the country straight into total extermination. Then the National United Front for the Salvation of Kampuchea (NUFSK) was set up and the present government was formed from this organization. The base of the Heng Samrin government is this vast opposition to Pol Pot's reign of terror, it is the grim determination of the whole population never again to let the agents of Beijing and the imperialist powers return to power. For that would mean a new massacre followed by another war against Viet Nam.

Why are Vietnamese troops still stationed in Kampuchea? And how long will they stay?

The Vietnamese forces came firstly to pursue the Pol Pot troops who had attacked Viet Nam, and then at the request of the NUFSK to help to save the Kampuchean people from genocide. Now the routed Pol Pot troops have regrouped in Thailand, where they are fed and equipped by Beijing. Pro-American forces, the Khmer Serei are also based in Thailand. The Khmer Rouge and Khmer Serei are recruiting among the

refugees, and combine to form a real counter-revolutionary army, which Beijing and Washington are trying to get back into the country in order to unleash civil war and overthrow the government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea. This government, which is in the process of consolidating itself, asked for help from Viet Nam and an agreement was signed in February 1979 between the two governments. Under the terms of this agreement, Vietnamese troops will stay in the country until the day when the Kampuchean governments asks them to withdraw. The day when the Kampuchean government will be capable by itself of resisting the threat of the pro-Chinese and pro-American forces, it will ask the Vietnamese forces to leave. All the Vietnamese hope fervently that this day will come as soon as possible: Vietnamese troops will not stay a day longer. But as long as the Kampuchean government has not made this request, no force in the world can oblige them to withdraw. Certain governments have pressurized Viet Nam by cutting off economic aid, China is threatening to make war on us. Viet Nam will accept any hardship and sacrifice to keep its commitments to the Kampuchean people.

Why such stubbornness? Hasn't Viet Nam had enough of war? And isn't aid to Kampuchea a very heavy burden?

Viet Nam has to send to Kampuchea troops, workers, technicians, doctors, and specialists in a variety of fields, to help our Kampuchean friends defend and rebuild their country. The Pol Pot men destroyed even families' crockery, even school stationery. We have had to send foodstuffs, medicines, cooking utensils, exercise books, pens and pencils, although our people also suffer serious shortages of food and goods. Our government has no difficulty convincing the Vietnamese people to make these sacrifices, because for every Vietnamese person to defend Kampuchea and help it to rebuild, is to defend and help Viet Nam itself.

It is said that the Vietnamese and Kampuchean peoples are motivated by aged feelings of mutual hostility.

It is true that in past centuries the Vietnamese and Kampuchean monarchs were often at war. In the 13th century, an Angkor king tried on two occasions to invade

Viet Nam, then from the 17th century onwards, Vietnamese kings invaded Kampuchea repeatedly and annexed the lower part of the Mekong delta. But if one goes back through the centuries, it was the Thais (formerly called the Siamese) who destroyed the Angkor Empire, and not the Vietnamese; and the last annexation of Kampuchean territory by the Thais was not in the 17th century, but in 1940 when with Japanese support they took from Kampuchea vast areas of Battambang, Stung Treng and Kompong Thom provinces. Neither the mass media of Beijing, nor those of the West mention this age-old hatred between Kampuchians and Thais. When this ancient hostility between Vietnamese and Kampuchians is evoked and when attempts are made to keep it going and worsen it, this is for precise political objectives. Another historical trend which has developed since the colonial conquest is forgotten, or deliberately ignored: the militant solidarity between the Vietnamese and Kampuchean peoples in opposition to colonialism for the reconquest of their independence.

Would you please give us an idea of this militant solidarity?

During the war of liberation against the French forces, from 1945 to 1954, Kampuchean patriots created a National Liberation Front and called for the aid of Vietnamese troops. So Vietnamese and Kampuchean patriots fought side by side for many years, yet the Vietnamese forces withdrew as soon as the French colonialists retreated from Kampuchea. From 1954 to 1970, the Sihanouk government succeeded in maintaining its independence and neutrality. But in 1970 Sihanouk was overthrown by the pro-American government of Lon Nol, and in order to resist the American and pro-American forces, Sihanouk called for Vietnamese troops. Once again, the Vietnamese came to fight side by side with the Khmer resisters, only to withdraw straight away in 1975 after the liberation of Phnom Penh. So it is not the first time that Kampuchean patriots have called for Vietnamese help.

What is Sihanouk's attitude to this question?

Sihanouk is a complex and changeable person. On the one hand, he is a feudalist and a paternal despot wielding a completely

personal power. On the other, he is on occasion a patriot. According to the circumstances, one side or the other may dominate. Until 1953 he found little difficulty in accepting the French protectorate and then Japanese domination, and then French tutelage again. The armed resistance against the French from 1945 to 1954 worried Sihanouk as much as it did the French. In 1953, to check the resistance, the French signed an agreement which restored independence to Kampuchea, giving power to Sihanouk, who was there and then proclaimed as a great patriot who had seized independence from the hands of the French. From 1954 to 1975, Sihanouk did recognise that the great enemy of Kampuchea was American imperialism, which had already taken hold of South Viet Nam and part of Laos, and that he could count on Viet Nam to resist the American domination. He had enough lucidity to see that the Americans could not win in Indochina, but he lacked the courage to refuse in 1969 the renewal of mainly American military aid. He also refused to democratise political life in the country, concentrating all power in his own hands.

Though his political cleverness allowed the country to keep its neutrality until 1970, his mistakes opened up the way for the manoeuvres of pro-American groups and led to the coup d'état of March 1970. From 1970 to 1975 he lived in Beijing; from 1975 to 1979 he was the prisoner of Pol Pot, then exiled himself to Beijing again. Since 1970 he has had practically no contact with the Kampuchean people, for whom the most important thing today is to oppose the return of the pro-Chinese forces, whether they are led by Pol Pot or Khieu Samphan or Sihanouk. I think that the collusion between Beijing and Washington has deeply impressed him and led him to think that the revolutionary movement of the Indochinese peoples would never be able to defeat such a massive force.

In any case, all those in Kampuchea who seek foreign help to try and oppose the present government are doomed to failure. In face of the Chinese threat today, the Indochinese peoples are more united and stronger than ever.

How can one explain what happened in Kampuchea under Pol Pot?

Pol Pot's politics have two principal aspects: genocide at home, and war to the death against Viet Nam in foreign policy. Two factors came together to cause this: firstly the Pol Pot—Ieng Sary—Khieu Samphan group's own political line, and secondly, Beijing's projects. Briefly, it could be said that the Pol Pot group is made up of adventurists with a mixture of ideas, leftist and nationalist, often lunatic; the political support and material aid of Beijing unfortunately gave them the means to put their disastrous program into action. This group dreamed of:

— reforming the great Angkor Empire, taking back from Viet Nam the entire lower Mekong delta, including Ho Chi Minh city;

— carrying out a radical revolution, suppressing in the most brutal way everything which they believed to be the curses of the old society (money, commerce, the arts, religion, science, etc.) which led to the massacre of intellectuals, Buddhist monks, artists and even sportsmen.

To realise these visions they had to raise a large army and force the entire population to work day and night on huge projects, mostly irrigation; anyone who opposed this crazy policy was mercilessly done to death.

For Beijing, the Pol Pot clique was an instrument for attacking Viet Nam from the south and thus facilitating a Chinese attack on the northern border. A firm hold over the Pol Pot regime, plus the crushing of Viet Nam, would allow Beijing to establish its domination over the whole of Indochina, and thence to advance towards all Southeast Asia where 20 million Chinese already hold important economic positions. In 1975, Pol Pot possessed six divisions of 5-6,000 men each, with no artillery, armour nor aircraft. Beijing furnished arms and advisers to bring this army up to 23 divisions, providing it with heavy armaments and aeroplanes.

One can see why from May 1975 Pol Pot began to launch the first attacks on Viet Nam and why for four years he consistently refused all offers of negotiations made by the Vietnamese. Certain of Chinese support, he believed he could defeat Viet Nam.

The events of January 1979 are easy to explain: in December 1978 after the great floods which had ravaged our country, Beijing thought that Viet Nam was



Vietnamese woman and child killed by Pol Pot forces.

completely worn out and set the Pol Pot troops at the attack, while Chinese troops were being concentrated at Viet Nam's northern border. The Pol Pot attack would oblige the Vietnamese forces to look to the south and give Beijing a pretext to attack Viet Nam on the northern border. Deng Xiaoping received Washington's sanction for this. Both Beijing and Washington underestimated the strength of internal opposition to Pol Pot and the vitality of the Vietnamese revolutionary movement.

Some would reproach you for your alliance with the Soviet Union, your membership of Comecon. Perhaps China would not have attacked you...

Imperial China attacked us frequently over the centuries. France attacked us in the 19th century, although the Soviet Union did not yet exist. The USA attacked us although we had not yet signed a treaty of friendship and co-operation with the USSR and were not yet in Comecon.

Our alliance with the USSR and our membership of Comecon are the logical and necessary consequences of the general line which our people and our Party have followed for the last 50 years. In the long and arduous struggle that we have been leading against the imperialist and reactionary forces, the revolutionary and progressive forces of the entire world have been our most precious allies. The Soviet Union has since its birth constituted the strongest support for the liberation movements of colonised peoples. Today, not only for Viet Nam, but also for Cuba, for Angola, for Afghanistan, and for all the other peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the existence of the Soviet Union and other industrially developed socialist countries, allows underdeveloped countries like Viet Nam to skip the

stage of capitalist development and go directly to socialism. Material and technical aid and economic and scientific co-operation with the developed socialist countries are decisive factors for the modernisation of our economy. We entertain economic relations with many capitalist countries, but these economic relations are subject to the fluctuations of the market and to the more or less hostile policy of the governments. It is only in promoting organic co-operation with the developed socialist countries that we can build up our economy. The treaty of friendship and co-operation with the USSR and our membership of Comecon have therefore reinforced our national independence, politically as well as economically. These links don't prevent us from having the most friendly relations with other countries like India, Algeria, Mexico, etc.

Is this an abandonment of the former policy of maintaining a balance which Viet Nam followed for many years, remaining linked to both the USSR and China?

Between the two partners, China and Viet Nam, which is it that has changed "in its heart and in its guts", as we say in Vietnamese? As long as the Beijing government was following a policy of anti-imperialism in foreign affairs and a policy of real aid to our country, we had fraternal relations with China, just as we did with the Soviet Union. We hoped for a long time that the disagreements between the two big socialist countries would eventually be settled. Unfortunately, the Chinese leaders gradually moved on to a policy of collusion with imperialism on the one hand, and on the other hand, hostility followed by aggression towards us and towards the socialist countries and the progressive forces of the whole world. So we can't stay half-way between the Chinese and Soviet positions. Quite independently, we took up a position which accords with our national interests and with those of the world revolutionary movement, a position which is in contradiction with that of Beijing, not because the latter is Chinese, but because it is reactionary.

Some think that the Beijing leaders are, however, still revolutionaries and that their alliance with Washington is only a tactical one.

A revolutionary power can follow a policy of temporary compromise with imperialism in order to avoid adventurism, but not a policy of systematic alliance in every domain, as the leaders in Beijing are doing today. Communists in some country or other can formulate reserves or criticisms of certain aspects of the policies of other countries, but not affirm that these countries are the bitterest enemies of humanity, the first to be struggled against, who must be punished. This sort of foreign policy is a truly reactionary one: there is nothing communist about it and it is indicative of home policy too.

In the face of the Washington—Beijing axis, isn't Viet Nam's position particularly difficult?

We don't hide the difficulties. But as we say in Viet Nam, Beijing and Washington may sleep in the same bed, but each has its own dreams. Washington is looking for a market, raw materials and Chinese mercenaries to fight the USSR and the Asian revolutionary movements. Beijing is looking for American aid to increase its own power, while at the same time pushing the USA to war against the USSR, which would be China's opportunity to rise from the ruins of the two greats as the world's most powerful nation. From 1972 to 1975 we fought the military might of America with Beijing's political support; today we face the threat of an eventual armed aggression by China, which enjoys the support of Washington. But the Washington-Beijing alliance is rent by contradictions. We won in 1975 and again in 1979.

How would you assess the present situation between China and Viet Nam?

Large numbers of Chinese troops are being concentrated at our northern border. Every day commandos make incursions into our territory, carrying out sabotage, kidnapping or assassinating local people and officials. Politically, as either side of the border is inhabited by the same *montagnard* ethnic groups, Nung, Hmong, Zao..., the Chinese authorities are trying to regroup these peoples in order to set them against our government. On the sea, from the border down to Da Nang, Chinese naval units provoke incidents from time to time.

At the negotiating table, we have made concrete proposals: the withdrawal of troops



to a fair distance either side of the frontier, establishment of a demilitarised zone with a joint control commission, negotiation on the recommencement of normal relations between the two countries. The Beijing side has laid down the precondition that the Vietnamese government change its policy towards Kampuchea and the Soviet Union and recognise Chinese sovereignty over the Hoang Sa islands (Paracels). It's not a negotiating point, it's a diktat, and it's not for China to dictate our foreign policy. The Chinese leaders have spoken openly on several occasions of inflicting a second punishment upon Viet Nam. We are obliged to hold ourselves ready for any eventuality.

Let us not forget either that Beijing is putting very strong military pressure at the Laos-China border, and that all the former partisans and mercenaries of the various old pro-American parties have regrouped in China. Attempts at subversion of the present Lao government are being made in parallel with this military pressure at the borders; the possibility of an attack against Laos should not be ignored. As at the time of the fight against French and American imperialism,

Viet Nam and Laos have to co-ordinate their efforts. Laos has only 3 million inhabitants in an extensive territory with very long frontiers: the Lao government called on Vietnamese forces to help defend itself. For Vietnamese fighters and technicians, to defend Laos, and aid it in the economic and technical fields, is to defend and aid Viet Nam itself.

In the present conditions our policy is to:

- seek to negotiate, letting escape no opportunity to find a peaceful solution, accepting any compromise so long as it does not sacrifice our independence and sovereignty. We did this in 1946 and 1954 with France and in 1973 with the USA;
- if combat is forced upon us, we shall take up the challenge and fight to the end for our independence and freedom. Either they will notice in Beijing that it is impossible to crush Viet Nam and will change their policy, as happened in Paris and in Washington; or, in the long term, the Chinese people themselves will force a change of policy towards Viet Nam.

NICOS POULANTZAS and MARXIST THEORY

Ian Campbell, Harry David, Chris McGuffie, Russell Wright

Nicos Poulantzas was both an important and influential marxist theorist and a committed communist. He was a member of the Communist Party of Greece (Interior) — he stood as a candidate for parliament in the last Greek elections — and he contributed forcefully to the strategic debates of the West European workers' movement.

Poulantzas' writings, from the early *Political Power and Social Classes* to the most recent book *State, Power, Socialism*, were serious attempts to further a marxist understanding of issues which are central to any project of socialist transformation in the advanced capitalist societies; the character of state power and state apparatuses, their internal and external connections with class struggle, the differing forms of bourgeois domination, the composition of social classes, the relationship between struggles for socialism and democratic forms, etc. His initially somewhat "formalistic", again and again which combined both theoretical rigor and a sensitivity to the demands of a socialist politics. In the course of his work he produced a number of original and innovative insights. Quite deservedly, his writings opened up and provoked important debates and discussions in which he

himself participated and which, of course, still continue.

With the tragic death of Nicos Poulantzas, marxism has undoubtedly lost one of its leading theoreticians. We mourn the loss of a communist, a comrade, and a marxist who made a major contribution to the renewal of marxist theory.

Prompted by Poulantzas' death, *Australian Left Review* published what we consider to be a deplorable article (Peter Beilharz, "Poulantzas and Marxist Theory", *ALR* 73). The article is presented as an "appreciation" but it is marked by the fact that it avoids any serious contact with Poulantzas' work. Instead, and worse, the author uses the occasion of Poulantzas' death to launch a sweeping attack on what he loosely refers to as "Althusserian" or "structuralist" marxism. In the course of this attack a ludicrous caricature of Louis Althusser's work is constructed and then demolished by means of a few references to "bullshit" (?) and "nonsense", a manipulation of philosophical categories ("structures", "subjects", "objects"), and a rather inane appeal to the need to "change the world". Insofar as Poulantzas figures in the article it is chiefly as someone who supposedly had begun to emerge from the "structuralist labyrinth" and come to see the world with "growing realism". In this way Poulantzas is

reduced to some kind of minor philosopher whose career can best be used as a moral lesson regarding the dangers of "Parisian fashion". Although the author does merit, we have also warned that "a reformed Althusserian has about as much credibility as a humanist stalinist".

We consider that this article is quite inappropriate and that, even in other circumstances, its methods would be at variance with the principles of marxist debate. It in fact exhibits one of the worst traits of the work of left intellectuals in Australia: an insular and slightly hysterical arrogance combined with a tendency to caricature the objects of the criticism. Such an approach can only have the effect of closing off the possibility of informed discussion.

We feel that Beilharz' article demands some kind of response. We cannot discuss the pros and cons of Althusser's work, nor its relation to the work of Poulantzas. This would have to be the task of a more in-depth article. Nor can we provide a thorough assessment of Poulantzas' achievements (or, indeed, of his deficiencies). Instead, we will simply attempt to provide an alternative "appreciation" of his work by outlining his contribution in three important areas: 1) his analysis of the capitalist state; 2) his analysis of the new petty bourgeoisie; and 3) his reflections on democratic socialism.

■ ■ ■

1. The capitalist state

Poulantzas' work first became widely known to an English-language audience with the publication of the spirited debate with Ralph Miliband and the subsequent publication of an English translation of his first major book *Political Power and Social Classes*. In both cases his central concern was with developing an adequate marxist theory of the capitalist state.

In the writings of the 1960s marxist analysis of the capitalist state was extremely backward. Indeed, it can be argued that in the strict sense — which understands the "capitalist state" as a concept which needs to be theoretically produced — such an analysis was in fact non-existent. Most marxists tended to rely on a traditional, vulgarised notion that the state in capitalist societies is merely an "instrument" of the capitalist class (or section of the capitalist class) to be manipulated according to the demands of that class. Insofar as there was any kind of attempt to move beyond this perspective, it mainly took the form of assimilating traditional bourgeois conceptions which treat the state as a set of institutions inhabited and governed by "elites". In the latter case, analysis tended to be reduced to tracing the

personal interconnections of the elites in the different institutions of the state and the society as a whole. Poulantzas referred to these as the conception of the state as a *thing* and the conception of the state as a *subject*. His great merit lies in the fact that he was able to avoid the false dilemma posed by these two alternatives. He was able to develop a conception of the capitalist state which does not fall into the error of treating the state as a mere instrument but which nevertheless retains the marxist emphasis on classes or, more correctly, the class struggle.

In developing his theory of the capitalist state Poulantzas returned to the classic texts. But he did not return directly to the analysis presented by Marx in *Capital*; instead he took up the fragmentary political writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Gramsci. He justified this approach by invoking the useful but ambiguous concept of "relative autonomy". Drawing on the work of Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, he argued that the articulation of the elements of the capitalist mode of production entails a separation of the political and the economic in which the political is constituted as a relatively autonomous sphere. He argued that because of this separation it is possible to construct a distinct marxist theory of the political sphere without direct reference to the economic sphere.

Whatever the merits of this procedure — and we think that the notion of the separation of the political and economic does represent an important insight — it allowed Poulantzas to proceed directly to a sophisticated analysis of the capitalist state in relation to the specific character of class struggle. He began by concretising the concept of "relative autonomy" so that it now referred to the **necessary autonomy of the capitalist state in relation to the bourgeoisie**. Thus, he argued that by virtue of the nature of the capitalist mode of production the bourgeoisie is inevitably divided and does not possess an inherent unity which could somehow simply be expressed at a political level, in the capitalist state. Instead, extending Gramsci's reflections on the role of the bourgeois political parties, he argued that it is only through the capitalist state itself that the bourgeoisie is **organised and unified**. In other words, it is only through the capitalist state that the bourgeoisie is truly constituted as the dominant or hegemonic class. But in order for the capitalist state to operate in this way it is necessary that it should enjoy a relative autonomy from the given components or "fractions" of the bourgeoisie — this relative autonomy is therefore central to the very nature of the capitalist state.

This approach enabled Poulantzas to develop an analysis which opens up the path to rich empirical studies. The concept of relative autonomy implies an emphasis on what Poulantzas called the "materiality" of the capitalist state, i.e. the distinct structure or form which necessarily

conditions the way in which classes or class fractions operate in the struggles which take place throughout the state. Taking up the remarks of Gramsci and Althusser he was able to sketch in an account of the component parts of the capitalist state — the "repressive state apparatus" and the "ideological state apparatus".

Most importantly, Poulantzas' approach implies an emphasis on the class struggle and a conception of the state apparatuses as sites of class struggle. We have already gestured towards one aspect of this — the struggle among the different fractions of the bourgeoisie. Drawing in particular on Gramsci's work, Poulantzas argued that although this struggle is never finally completed it tends to be resolved in the formation of a "power bloc" in which certain fractions are represented and in which one particular fraction has established its dominance. But there are of course other groups to consider — in particular, the petty bourgeoisie and the working class. Poulantzas stressed that just as the bourgeoisie is organised through the state so too are the subordinate classes disorganised through the state. The analysis here opens up into a number of crucial areas which are bound up with the complexity of class struggle. Poulantzas investigated, for example, the way in which the state represents itself as "the unity of the population" and individualises the process of political participation. He pointed to the fact that the power bloc will seek to safeguard itself by mobilising in particular ways the petty bourgeoisie and social categories such as intellectuals. But the process cuts both ways and he also took into account the specific interests and struggles of these groups. In a point which was to become important for the discussion of strategy, he argued that the working class can and must proceed to exploit the contradictions that are a necessary feature of the operation of the capitalist state.

In place of the traditional conceptions which treat the state as either a thing or a subject Poulantzas offered an alternative conception of the capitalist state as a social relation. But it is a social relation of a particular kind — like capital itself it is a class relationship. As he defined it his most recent work, the capitalist state is "a material condensation of forces, or more precisely the among classes and class fractions, such as this is form" (*State, Power, Socialism*, pp.128-9). By provide a framework which facilitated the investigation of the specific character of the capitalist state and its apparatuses but which at the same time clearly established the primacy of class struggle. He thereby avoided the familiar error of simply dissolving the state into a set of diverse institutions. He could, for example, insist that power should be seen not as an attribute of the

state apparatuses but rather as an attribute of the classes or class fractions whose dominance is established through the state. In this way he was able to argue that, in spite of the contradictions within the state and the fact that class struggle traverses the state apparatuses, there is nevertheless a unity of state power.

Poulantzas' general position on the capitalist state changed over time. The "formalism" which, on his own admission, marred the earlier works was increasingly jettisoned; the narrowly political focus which characterised his approach was qualified and he showed more appreciation of the parallel work of both the German "capital-logic" school and the economists of the French Communist Party (PCF); and he began to develop more clearly and systematically his ideas on the primacy of class struggle. We cannot of course discuss these changes here. But it is worth pointing out that these were not changes which followed in the wake of any political or philosophical "conversion". They represented a development of Poulantzas' work as he deepened his study and as he responded to the debates on his work and the changing questions thrown up by the political practice of the European workers' movement. As such they are the sort of changes we associate with any serious work of marxist research.

Irrespective of our reservations concerning certain aspects of Poulantzas' position, we regard his general conception of the capitalist state as a major achievement. In particular, it opened the way for and prompted the sort of empirical studies which are crucial to a renewal of marxist theory. Although we have concentrated here on his general conception of the capitalist state, mention should be made of Poulantzas' own attempts to develop such a program of empirical studies. Thus, in *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, he presented a theoretical outline of the different forms of capitalist state in relation to the different stages and phases of the development of the capitalist mode of production. In *Fascism and Dictatorship* and then in *The Crisis of the Dictatorship* he undertook concrete studies of what he called the "exceptional regimes" of fascism and military dictatorship. In *State, Power, Socialism* he investigated the increasing authoritarianism characteristic of the operations of the capitalist state in the current period. In this respect too he made an important contribution.

2. The "New Petty Bourgeoisie"

In his important work *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, Poulantzas discusses the general characteristics of the present phase of monopoly capitalism and then proceeds to an analysis of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie in the present phase. Although the work as a whole deserves an extended discussion, we will focus

here on the analysis of the petty bourgeoisie since this has proved to be one of the most original and at the same time one of the most contentious aspects of Poulantzas' work.

Poulantzas takes his starting point from the fact that under monopoly capitalism there has been a considerable increase in the number of non-productive wage earners, i.e. groups such as office and service workers, commercial and bank employees, etc. He points out that the development of an alliance with such groups is of vital importance for any project of socialist transformation. But for this purpose it is necessary to develop a precise understanding of their specific interests and of the forces which shape their position in the class struggle.

Poulantzas takes issue with most previous writings on these new wage-earning groups. He rejects those theories which attempt to dissolve them into either the bourgeoisie or the working class, as well, of course, as those theories which treat them as a "third force" in order to prove the obsolescence of all concepts of class and class struggle. He also contests the theory of the PCF which presents the new wage-earning groups as "intermediate strata" between the working class and the bourgeoisie. In opposition to all these theories Poulantzas argues that these groups should be seen as part of the petty bourgeoisie. He argues that such a recognition of their distinct class membership is essential for establishing the correct basis for a popular alliance under the leadership of the working class.

Marxist theory has traditionally understood the petty bourgeoisie as comprising those who own their means of production but are themselves the direct producers and do not exploit wage labor, e.g. "small producers", "small shopkeepers". Poulantzas, however, argues that this is only one section of the petty bourgeoisie — what he calls the "traditional" petty bourgeoisie. He concedes that the new wage-earning groups occupy a quite different place within the social division of labor as compared with the traditional petty bourgeoisie. Thus, to focus just on the economic level, they resemble members of the working class in that they do not own the means of production and instead have to sell their labor power in return for wages. But he goes on to argue that the exclusion of both groups from the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie and the working class entails similar effects at the political and ideological levels and that this is sufficient to justify their inclusion as different sections of the one class, the petty bourgeoisie. In this way the new wage-earning groups come to be designated as part of what is called the "new" petty bourgeoisie.

The major thrust of Poulantzas' analysis of the new petty bourgeoisie in *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism* is directed towards a more precise

delimitation of the boundaries of this group. Here he draws on some of the points made in his introductory essay on the marxist theory of social classes. He stresses that he is chiefly concerned with the structural determination of classes and that this must be clearly distinguished from "class position", i.e. the specific position adopted by the class or class fraction in a concrete situation of class struggle. He also stresses that in marxist theory the structural determination of classes cannot just refer to a place within the relations of production but must involve an analysis of the place of the group within the social division of labor as a whole. In other words, we cannot just look at the economic relations but must also look at the ideological and political relations (ideological and political relations of domination/subordination). He argues that this last point is of crucial importance for the proper understanding of the class determination of the new petty bourgeoisie.

We cannot discuss Poulantzas' analysis of the class determination of the new petty bourgeoisie in any detail. We will just summarise some of the main features of this analysis. It can be noted, first of all, that Poulantzas argues that the exclusion of the new petty bourgeoisie from economic ownership or possession of the means of production and the related fact that they work as wage-laborers establishes a clear division between this group and the bourgeoisie. The main question therefore becomes one of the relationship of the new petty bourgeoisie to the working class. With respect to the economic level Poulantzas establishes a demarcation line by employing a restricted version of Marx's concept of productive labor. He then moves on to the political and ideological level where he introduces a discussion of management and supervision and the division between mental and manual labor. What he offers here is an exclusive definition of the working class according to which the criteria on all comprises only those who meet groups such as three levels. In this way, even groups such as foremen, engineers and technicians who meet the restricted criteria of productive labor but not the criteria associated with the discussion of political and ideological relations are excluded from the working class and assigned to the new petty bourgeoisie.

Poulantzas insists on the importance of a consideration of political and ideological relations in establishing clear class boundaries between the working class and the new petty bourgeoisie. But perhaps the most valuable part of his analysis concerns the way in which he uses a consideration of these relations to investigate both the common situation and the internal differentiation of the new petty bourgeoisie. He lays particular stress here on the division between mental and manual labor and argues that the new petty bourgeoisie as a whole can be characterised by the

fact that, in contrast to the working class, it lies on the "side" of mental labor. He points out, however, that in relation to capital and the bourgeoisie the new petty bourgeoisie occupies a dominated and subordinate place in the order of mental labor and that this entails a complex internal differentiation. As part of the discussion, he investigates the increasing bureaucratisation which affects certain areas of mental labor. Then, on the basis of this investigation and on the basis of his earlier analysis of the way in which the petty bourgeoisie is necessarily fractured by virtue of the fact that the class struggle centres around the bourgeoisie and the working class, he goes on to outline the different fractions of the new petty bourgeoisie. His central concern here is with those fractions which are objectively "polarised" in the direction of the working class and he concludes by once again posing the important question of an alliance between such groups and the working class.

Poulantzas' analysis of the new petty bourgeoisie has proved highly controversial. His definitional method, his distinction between class determination and class position, his insistence on the political necessity of recognising the new petty bourgeoisie as a distinct class, and, in particular, his "narrow" definition of the working class, have all been contested. Poulantzas' work, together with the concurrent writings of Harry Braverman, has been of crucial importance in opening up this area to detailed marxist research. We feel that his analysis will continue to be a reference point for many years to come.

3. Democratic Socialism

In his later writings — *State, Power, Socialism*, the discussion with Henri Weber (*Socialist Review* 38, March-April 1978), and the interview with Stuart Hall and Alan Hunt (*Marxism Today*, July 1979) — Poulantzas contributed forcefully to the emerging debates on the need for a new socialist strategy in the advanced capitalist societies. The context for these debates had been provided by the evolution of some of the major communist parties in Western Europe towards what has been called "Eurocommunism"; an evolution which is characterised by a greater emphasis on the need to work within and preserve the institutions of the "bourgeois-democratic" state and, in particular, the parliamentary institutions. Poulantzas' contribution to these debates falls within the loose consensus of "Eurocommunism", but it is distinguished by the way in which it so clearly poses the central questions associated with socialist strategy.

In his writings on democratic socialism, Poulantzas takes his starting point from a critical survey of the main conceptions of strategy that have arisen within both the communist and social-democratic movements. He gestures towards the

conventional critique of classical social democracy as simply posing a strategy which accepts the constraints of the bourgeois state and which is therefore contained within the limits of parliamentary struggle. But his main concern is with the communist tradition and the hostility towards "bourgeois-democratic" institutions which he regards as a continuing theme within this tradition. Here he begins by summarising the position of Lenin in *State and Revolution*. He points out that for Lenin the central strategic conception is of a frontal assault on the bourgeois state in a situation of dual power. In the course of this struggle the bourgeois state is destroyed and replaced by the "counter-power" or "counter-state" which is based on the workers' councils ("soviets"). Integral to this conception is the idea of replacing the existing forms of bourgeois democracy (parliaments, etc.) with the new forms of real, mass democracy which arise from the system of workers' councils.

Poulantzas traces the evolution of this strategic conception in the subsequent history of the Third International. He notes that in the traditional "model" bequeathed to us from the Third International, Lenin's crucial emphasis on mass democracy tends to be lost. The influence of stalinism is shown by the emergence of a "statism" and distrust of mass initiative which, despite the retention of the hostility towards "bourgeois" democracy, tends to make this model formally parallel to that of social democracy.

In the development of his critique Poulantzas concentrates on the most compelling and attractive strategic conception — that of Lenin. Drawing on his analysis of the capitalist state, he argues that Lenin's conception remains marked by a view of the state as an instrument of the bourgeoisie and thus as a "monolithic bloc". It is this which allows Lenin to assume that the struggle of the working class or the popular masses as a whole will be a purely external struggle of confrontation with the bourgeois state. In opposition to this view, Poulantzas reiterates his argument that the class struggle traverses the state apparatuses and that, particularly in the present period (characterised by the extension of the political and social activities of the state), contradictions and dislocations open up within the state apparatuses. He argues that it is both possible and necessary for the popular masses to exploit these contradictions by mounting struggles within the state apparatuses. Such struggles could then create centres of resistance and breaches within the state which could help to paralyse it and throw it into political crisis.

Poulantzas extends this perspective to consider the specific and central question of democratic reform. He argues that the existing institutions of bourgeois democracy which he refers to as the institutions of representative democracy are to a large extent the consequence of democratic

struggles and cannot be sharply separated from the area of democratic liberties. On the contrary, he argues that these are in fact the material institutions which are necessary to **sustain and guarantee** such democratic liberties. Referring to the historical evidence, he contends that abolishing these institutions and attempting to rely exclusively on the mass democracy of the workers' councils — which he refers to as direct democracy — is "a path which, sooner or later, inevitably leads to statist despotism or the dictatorship of experts" (*State, Power, Socialism* p.256). He therefore argues that the socialist movement must develop an explicit commitment to the preservation and extension of the institutions of representative democracy.

As we have summarised it so far, Poulantzas' position might seem to resemble what he himself had described as the strategy characteristic of classical social democracy. But he goes on to clearly establish his differences with this strategy. Thus, he stresses that institutions of direct democracy such as the workers' councils will have a vital role to play in the revolutionary period, and he continues to stress the importance of popular struggles outside of the state. He continues to emphasise that what must be at issue is a sweeping transformation of the state apparatuses based on the increased intervention of the popular masses. And he also distances himself from the social democratic strategy by insisting that, although this transformation may be a long process, it is not a gradual process — and it will inevitably be marked by a series of ruptures leading up to a decisive confrontation. What Poulantzas is seeking is not the watering-down of the revolutionary tradition but rather the renewal of the revolutionary tradition. He argues that the success of the revolutionary project depends on the combination and co-ordination of popular struggles both within and outside of the state apparatuses. Most importantly, he argues that if this is to be a true success — one that does not simply culminate in a new form of despotism — there must be a combination of the forms of representative democracy with the forms of direct democracy.

Poulantzas' critique of Lenin and his insistence on the need for the preservation and extension of the institutions of representative democracy places him within the camp of "Eurocommunism". Thus, he describes his conception as one of a democratic transition to socialism or **democratic socialism**. But in distancing himself from social democracy he also takes care to distance himself from what is called "Right Eurocommunism" and in particular the strategy identified with the Italian Communist Party (PCI). He argues that this latter strategy falls back into the error of classical social democracy and is in the last analysis a strategy located solely within the physical confines of the state. We can therefore say

that Poulantzas' position is most accurately described as one of "Left Eurocommunism", in which a commitment to the institutions of representative democracy is joined together with a continuing commitment to the importance of mass initiative and the building of organs of popular power (workers' councils).

There remain many problems with Poulantzas' conception of a democratic transition to socialism, including, most importantly, the problem of how the institutions of representative democracy and the workers' councils would be actually "combined" in any situation of revolutionary crisis. But the issues which he took up were and continue to be crucial for the future of socialism, both in the advanced capitalist societies and indeed in the world as a whole. His extensive knowledge, his openness to the lessons of historical experience, and his deep commitment to the need for truth, enabled him to do much to clarify the nature and dimensions of these issues. This, in itself, is a worthy and necessary achievement.

Conclusion

Nicos Poulantzas made a major contribution to marxist theory. In the short space available to us here we have not been able to indicate the breadth of his achievement. Instead, by summarising his contribution in just three areas of research, we have merely attempted to break down some of the misconceptions concerning his work and to provide a brief indication of its importance and usefulness. In this way we hope to prompt people to return to his writings, or else to turn to them for the first time. These writings represent an important legacy which it can only be to our own benefit to appropriate.

We have concentrated here on a summary of the content of Poulantzas' work. But before finishing, it is necessary to bring out more clearly one point concerning the **orientation** of this work. The fundamental orientation of Poulantzas' work was **empirical and political**. In this respect he broke decisively with the previously dominant tradition in which marxism has tended to be transformed into a general philosophy; either in the form of an "ethical" and "humanist" set of beliefs or, as had been more commonly the case, in the form of a state or party ideology in which "marxism" provides sweeping formulae to justify the latest tactical switch. By contrast, Poulantzas' work represented a return to the classical tradition in which the chief concern is with the development of a strategy for the socialist movement by means of the "concrete analysis of concrete situations". In this way he played a major part in laying the basis for a renewal of marxist theory. In this respect too, as well as in the substantive content of his studies, he has left us an important legacy.

AFGHANISTAN

Jack Blake

The articles by Eric Aarons and Denis Freney (ALR, March 1980) call for comment, but before examining some of the details a brief sketch of the pattern of events since World War II may be appropriate. These events, according to US views, and lately according to those of China, have been governed by a Soviet drive towards world domination. Every step taken by the imperialist powers has been excused by the alleged need to halt Soviet expansion.

The facts belie this view. Recently top secret 1945 documents of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff have been made public. The first document, dated less than three weeks after Japan's surrender, records the general headings for preparation of a war plan against "potential enemy powers". Joint Intelligence Committee Document 329, November 3, 1945 recommends the Air Force:

To select approximately 20 of the most important targets suitable for strategic atomic bombing in the USSR and Soviet dominated territory.

The next Document — 329/1 — lists the 20 Soviet cities to be bombed, together with particulars about resources, area, population, and the situation of various air bases from which bombers of various ranges could attack. The plan called for the dropping of 196 atomic bombs on these Soviet cities. It was estimated that this atomic attack would destroy: 90 per cent of the Soviet aircraft industry, 73 per cent of the output of guns, 86 per cent of tank production, 88 per cent of trucks and 67 per cent of oil. The population of these 20 Soviet cities in 1945 was 13 million.

Clause 15 of this document says:

At the present time the USSR does not have the capability of inflicting similar damage on United States industry...

This US war plan also provided for the creation and use of an army of 164 divisions, including a hardcore of nazi divisions from the defeated German army, to invade the Soviet Union after the atomic attack. Field Marshall Montgomery's memoirs confirm this.

In 1949 the US war plan was revised. The revised plan, code-named "Operation Dropshot", retained the same targets but provided for the dropping of 300 atomic bombs on these Soviet cities.

It was not moral scruple that halted this plan. By 1945 the peoples of Western Europe and America were war weary. On this point Montgomery replied to Eisenhower:

The British people were completely fed up with war and would never have been persuaded to fight the Russians in 1945.

The people of most western countries would have been horrified by the suggestion that they wage war against an ally who had borne the brunt of the war against the nazi armies. It was the need to change this public opinion, not a "Soviet menace", that led to the anti-Soviet propaganda campaign carried out by the United States since the end of World War II. The "Soviet threat", "Soviet expansion", "Russian imperialism" have been the stock-in-trade of this campaign ever since. By the time this cold war propaganda had begun to affect the public of western countries, the Soviet Union was already producing its own atomic weapons. Those who planned using these weapons against the Soviet Union now faced retaliation in kind. The era of mutual deterrence began.

Beverly Symons, in a well-researched article (ALR, September 1979), showed that at every stage it has been the United States which initiated the war drive and the armaments race:

The first Soviet atomic bomb came four years after the Hiroshima bomb, the Warsaw Pact came six years after the formation of NATO, the US deployed "tactical" nuclear weapons in Europe three years before the Soviet Union did so, the American Polaris ballistic missile submarine existed five years before the Soviet Union had a similar submarine, the US deployed MIRV missiles in 1970, the Soviet Union did so in 1975.

That has been the pattern; a pattern which still continues. During this same period, national

democratic revolutions with varying degrees of socialist content took place in a number of countries: China, Viet Nam, Algeria, Egypt, Cuba, Kenya, Angola, Mozambique, Madagascar, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Afghanistan, Iran, Zimbabwe, and others. All these revolutions were generated by internal causes and were carried through by internal forces; all of them involved armed struggle over more or less prolonged periods of time. None of them had anything to do with Soviet "export of revolution" or "Soviet expansion".

But it is these countries and the revolutions which took place in them that United States propaganda has in mind when it speaks of "Soviet expansion", "Soviet imperialism", and the "Soviet drive towards world domination".

Two of these countries — China and Egypt — have ceased to be anti-imperialist. The governments of both China and Egypt now have close ties with US imperialism. In their de-facto alliance with the United States, the Chinese leaders are not satisfied with the huge US arms build-up or with the scope of US military activity throughout the world. Condemning people who work against the development of a new cold war, the Chinese say it is good that:

- US leaders now understand that the supply of grain, credits, technology and equipment would only whet the Soviet appetite for aggression and expansion;
- it is good that US armed forces officers now admit the US lags behind the Soviet Union in military strength and must make great efforts to catch up with the Russians;
- the US strategic arrangements have been to fight one and a half wars. Now the US has to get ready to fight several wars in different places simultaneously (*Beijing Review*, March 10, 1980).

The events in Afghanistan in the final months of last year and the beginning of 1980 are the latest developments in this process going on in the world; they are not inexplicable events arising from nowhere, unconnected with anything else.

Cutting through what seems to be first- and second-hand speculation, the main views of Aarons and Freney appear to stem from three suppositions:

- That the Afghan revolution which began in 1978 was not a genuine revolution or, alternatively, did not have mass support.
- Land reform was talked about —, even intended, but no real efforts were made to win peasant understanding and support or to prepare supplies of seed, etc.
- There were no foreign army divisions on the borders or attacking over the borders,

therefore there was no external threat to the revolution requiring Soviet military assistance.

The Afghan revolution, which began in April 1978, is still in process — it is an anti-feudal, democratic revolution which has a number of aims; but the central, the crucial, aim of that revolution is land reform — the division of the landlords' estates to give land to the peasants.

As Calaforra puts it:

Let us review what Afghan society was like on the eve of the revolutionary uprising of April 27, 1978... Daud's regime then turned against the progressive groups that had supported it, using the security and police forces trained and infiltrated by the Shah of Iran's regime and reactionary paramilitary organisations. Its target was the People's Democratic Party... operating underground because political organisations had been dissolved... The assassination of Amir Akbar Khyber led to popular demonstrations and the arrest of other leaders... this led to bigger demonstrations... fired on by the National Guard, which killed 200 demonstrators on one occasion alone.

On April 27, ten days after the assassination of Khyber, army tanks knocked down the walls of the prison, freeing the prisoners and launching the rebellion (*Gabriel Calaforra, Tricontinental*, No. 61, 1978).

In Afghanistan before 1978, about 40,000 feudal landlords owned seventy per cent of the total arable land; more than eighty per cent of Afghan people are rural. The division of the land among the peasants, leaving the landlord with as much land as any peasant, is not like a tea party; as marxists need to remember, this process involves the most bitter, the most fierce class struggle known in modern times. In India today, such landlords are burning Harijans (Untouchables) alive. Not because they are seizing land, but simply because they are claiming a mildly better deal.

Feudal landlords, through their control of the land, enjoy enormous power and privilege; they dominate the lives of their peasant tenants or labourers not only in the exploitative economic sense. They also frequently bear the title "Pir" (Saint) who is the religious and political "guide" of the peasants under his control. The Pir deprived of his power and privilege reacts with savage brutality, and because 98 per cent of the peasants he rules over are illiterate, he can trick, beguile and menace many of them into counter-revolutionary activity under his leadership.

It may be the neglect of the characteristics of this central feature of the Afghan revolution which generates the contradictions apparent in the CPA approach. Eric Aarons writes that TV

footage shows these "rebels" to be a motley, disunited and mercenary crew, and argues there is no credible evidence that they could be the main cause of the difficulties. On the other hand, Denis Freney (Tribune, January 23, 1980) quotes Le Monde as saying that as recently as last August, the "rightist revolt" had made 80 per cent of Afghanistan's territory insecure (although half the population lived in the remaining 20 per cent). These two conflicting versions in fact portray the real situation in a country whose people are making a revolutionary emergence from feudalism. I recall one TV film last year (before the snows) which showed these reactionary forces on the mountain tops happily lobbing mortar bombs (from very modern mortars) into the town of Jalalabad in the valley below. That kind of thing in a country with Afghanistan's terrain is not easy to cope with.

Eric Aarons (Tribune, January 23, 1980) says the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan will facilitate the main aim of US imperialism...to legitimize direct US military involvement around the world, which became politically impossible after the Viet Nam debacle. It was the revolution in Iran which was used for this "re-legitimization". Should our advice to the Iranians have been: behave yourselves, halt your revolutionary struggle, don't throw out the Shah and the thousands of US personnel in your country; if you go on like this, you will annoy Carter and the Pentagon and make it easy for them to re-legitimize US military involvement?

A section of the left has set up fixed criteria for granting legitimacy to revolution in a Third World country: guerrilla warfare or a repetition of the bolshevik revolution. Revolutionary events outside these criteria are labelled Red Nonpartism. This schematism ignores the fact that national democratic revolutions differ widely in both form and content; it would be hopeless as a tool for analysing how and why the Portuguese army "educated" in Angola was the initiator and motive force of the revolution in Portugal (see Ebal Ahmad, interview with Dorothy Healey, January 4, 1980).

Another view proceeds from the unspoken assumption that imperialism is not active in attempts to undermine and destroy revolutions in Third World countries. In the "logic of blocs", the Soviet Union is equated with US imperialism. It is politely suggested both should behave themselves (Romano Ledda, Rinascita, January 4, 1980).

There is a tendency to measure the events in Afghanistan by the yardstick of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. This is a confusion of two different situations, class relations and combinations of social-political forces.

In 1968, a large part of Czechoslovak society was embarked on a course of creative development; a

flowering of socialist democracy was evident. The movement of renewal was proceeding in a non-violent way and was being articulated through a re-vitalized Communist Party.

The Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia halted and crushed this progressive internal development and forced Czechoslovak society back into the rigid mould from which it was emerging. The purpose of that Soviet-led invasion was therefore profoundly reactionary both in its internal effect in Czechoslovakia and in its effects on the world socialist movement; because of this, it deserved the world-wide condemnation it received.

At the end of 1979 the situation in Afghanistan was, in virtually all respects, the polar opposite of that existing in Czechoslovakia in 1968. In Afghanistan, the anti-feudal revolution was involved in fierce and violent class struggle in which the armed counter-revolutionary forces headed by a class formation of feudal landlords, merchants and traders were able to make their bloody and destructive forays and then move to cross-the-border havens for re-equipment with US, Chinese and Pakistani arms. Thus rearmed and trained they launched fresh attacks at points they chose along 2,000 kilometres of mountainous border to kill and terrorise peasants, blow up bridges and destroy communications.

To argue that because there is no evidence of foreign army divisions in serried ranks crossing the Afghan border there is therefore no evidence of an external threat, is to ignore the clearest evidence of how these things are done nowadays. Apart from a small South African unit the main forces attacking Angola were Angolans who were supported, armed and equipped by South Africa and China. These forces were also able to make their attacks from bases across the border, causing critical destruction and disorganisation which compelled the new government of Angola to seek the support of Soviet-armed Cuban troops; it was this aid that helped bring security to Angola, and guaranteed its independence.

The same problem in different forms exists in another part of the world. Eric Aarons says that although the CPA expressed reservations about the Vietnamese intervention in Kampuchea, we have continued to support Viet Nam...and we believe they should withdraw at the earliest possible moment. I'm sure that without any urging from anyone the Vietnamese would be glad to get out of Kampuchea tomorrow, they would also like to get out of Laos just as quickly. But it is the Chinese who make the difficulties, they are the arm the Pol Pot forces who are able to operate from sanctuaries in Thailand. China is training and arming thousands of Laotians on Chinese territory and infiltrating them into Laos. So, apart from the enormous Chinese army poised on Viet Nam's northern border, these forces are not

"foreign" but they are nevertheless an external menace.

While visiting ASEAN countries during March this year, China's Foreign Affairs Minister was quite straightforward about this strategy. He said the pressure on Viet Nam would be kept up from all sides so that Viet Nam would bleed and finally end in economic and political collapse.

There should be no doubt that if we make the rule of non-intervention in the affairs of another country into a rigid principle that no revolution has the right to ask for and to receive outside help to preserve the rights it has won against the threats of restoration, then there are many countries which will lose their independence.

CPA leaders appear to equivocate if it is Vietnamese or Cuban troops operating with Soviet arms, but respond with condemnation when it is Soviet troops who have to use their own arms as in the case of Afghanistan. Eric Aarons poses the problem as though the CPA were being asked to give unqualified support to any Soviet action; there are some people who demand this but it is not the issue. The real danger is that of becoming locked into a position which compels automatic opposition to every "difficult" action of the Soviet Union. This is just as paralysing and ineffectual as the opposite position held by those who without thinking support anything the Soviet Union does.

Denis Freney expresses the view that the main reason Soviet troops went into Afghanistan was to kill Amin, that the commission of this act after earlier Soviet support for Amin showed cynicism. In fact all the evidence, including that which Denis adduces, establishes that the Soviet leadership refrained from interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. They recognised and worked with the government led by Daoud, they maintained the same relations with the revolutionary government headed by Taraki, and, evidently not with much pleasure, they maintained the same principle of non-interference with the government headed by Amin.

Babrak Karmal informed a press conference of 200 journalists in Kabul on January 10 that he returned to Afghanistan secretly from exile early in November 1979. He met with the Revolutionary Council and the Central Committee of the PDP (which already had an overwhelming majority opposed to Amin's policies). The meeting of the Revolutionary Council and the CC of the PDP which decided to ask for Soviet military assistance, took place early in December with Amin present. It was decided that Amin convey the request to the Soviet government. The relevant Soviet meeting took place on December 15. Soviet troops immediately began moving in. December 27 was only the day of the big airlift.

There is no evidence or ground for assumption that the Soviet authorities killed or arranged the

killing of Amin. The leader of the present government, Karmal, has stated that Amin was tried and sentenced by a tribunal set up by the Revolutionary Council and the CC of the PDP. It may not have been quite so tidy. The circumstances of the death of Soviet Lieutenant-General Paputin (who had some responsibility for guarding Amin) point to a chaotic situation in which Amin was killed by the members of his own party whom he had persecuted.

Whatever really happened at that point and as Denis says, we may never know, there is no doubt that Amin was the central figure in the factional struggles in the People's Democratic Party which were so debilitating and helped the forces of counter-revolution. As Denis recounts it:

...In mid September last year Amin asked Taraki to dismiss Interior Minister Watalanger and Border Affairs Minister Mazdurayr. Amin took a military escort with him to the Presidential Palace...Palace guards opened fire...Amin went away, came back with troops, stormed the Palace and killed President Taraki...Amin then sacked three Ministers, arrested 4,000 Taraki supporters and executed a number of military men.

Denis says the evidence points to Amin being a too fanatical, too devoted, and too brutal a revolutionary. Putting aside the linkage of devotion with fanaticism and brutality, what are we to make of his next suggestion: that the Soviet leaders...were not prepared to risk seeing Amin transform Afghanistan into a central Asian Yugoslavia? How on earth do we equate too fanatical and too brutal with Yugoslavia?

In another explanation along similar lines for the Soviet action Denis quotes favorably the opinion of Dr. Beverley Male that this Soviet action was to "save" Afghanistan from "an independent-minded government with no reason to love Moscow...Moscow could not risk the abrogation of its treaty with Afghanistan and the expulsion of Russian advisers".

Bearing in mind the internal relationship of class forces in Afghanistan at the time, one can only say that if this was indeed Amin's intention, that would lend credence to the most sensational and dramatic accounts of what Amin was about (accounts which I had been inclined to discount). Any attempt to put such a scheme into operation would be bound to meet with opposition from a majority of the People's Democratic Party, the Revolutionary Council and at least half the army. The outcome of the inevitable internecine conflict, opening the way for unfettered operations by the armed bands of the feudal landlords and city merchants would have been a long way from any kind of Asian Yugoslavia.

For most references see *Afghanistan: Fact - Opinion - Analysis*. CPA publication. Price \$2.00.

FILM REVIEW

In a time when it is often argued that people — particularly men — seem incapable of taking their emotional lives seriously, Woody Allen would appear to be an exception. In his last three movies (*Annie Hall*, *Interiors* and *Manhattan*) Allen follows his exemplar, Bergman, in making personal relationships — particularly, unrequited love — the subject of his films. In many ways this is quite an achievement: to be able to make movies which modestly yet successfully compete with space spectacles, exploitation pot-boilers, and flaccid sit-coms of the Neil Simon variety.

Notice that I said "to be able to make moves" because what is even more remarkable than Allen's establishing private life as a suitable case for treatment on the non-art movie house American screen is his confinement of the genre to his own private life. In film after film, we buy our tickets to peer once again into Woody Allen's life, to see, basically, how he's getting on with his girlfriends.

Now as I've indicated, this isn't necessarily a bad thing, and one could describe Allen's films much more charitably, along the lines of "honest and telling examinations of modern man's deepest anxieties about love and death". But the fact remains that unless we accept the Allen character as Everyman (which most of us who are not short, Jewish, male New Yorkers are unlikely to do), then Allen has scored a gigantic cultural coup: he has made himself, his predilections and preoccupations into a public commodity. We go to knowledgeable about — his hang-ups and obsessions, and because we know the plot beforehand (Woody finds girl-girl inexplicably but is resigned to his Fate), we sit back, relax, and wait for the very good laughs and dialogue which decorate the narrative.

How has this come to pass, that Woody Allen, comedian of the borscht circuit, parochially rooted in New York, can drag us into his fantasies about life, love, and urban living?

Well, of course, on the surface he's a sympathetic character: the loser, the underdog, without much going for him except boundless hope and a sense of humor. He is disarmingly honest about his sexual obsessions, prepared to spill his Freudian guts about childhood repressions, neurotically fearful of the new and strange, and deeply attached to his home ground, the fascinating and complex New York. But note that the New York that Woody Allen loves is only the **physical** New York for the people who live in *Manhattan* are his favorite targets: that super-sophisticated Gadarene "push" of inauthentic pseudo-intellectuals, avariciously consuming "culture" and self-punishingly producing crap at a rate of knots.

So why not be interested in this opinionated but likeably honest man who loves the place he knows and lives in, who hates phonies, and who is prepared to suffer the blows dealt by cruel Fate — disappointment, rejection and failure — in good heart? Well, once maybe — *Annie Hall*. But we have had the working and reworking of the motifs through two more films. It is because Allen is hitting his targets more squarely — *Manhattan* is far and away the best of these movies — that the audiences still come? Perhaps so. And perhaps we see a maturing of Woody Allen: at least in *Manhattan* he doesn't get all the good lines, and as protagonist, is as badly flawed as the rest of the characters. But, most importantly, we see ourselves in the Age of Total Consumption.

For in Woody Allen's world, the people don't take their personal lives seriously, in the sense of attempting to integrate their public and private demands and needs by submitting them to rigorous scrutiny involving, at the very least, careful consideration of what might justify the demands they are conjuring with. Instead, they consume their lives, submitting the galaxy of efforts to an endless talkback show, them all — what the hell is the point of all this — in a dazzling display of tolerant dissection of their bloody and palpitating emotional guts. Seriousness this isn't; narcissistic show business it is.

Manhattan is the emotional equivalent of disco dancing. Just as celebrities line up at Studio 54 to entertain themselves by being their own spectacle, the characters in *Manhattan* jockey for room in the self-revelation stakes. And everyone constantly talks: Woody talks to his 17-year-old schoolgirl lover about why she shouldn't love him and how he doesn't quite love her; Woody talks to his best friend about how he (Woody) handles his ex-wife's preference for a lesbian relationship; the

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ex-wife talks to Woody about his murderous designs on her lesbian lover, his best friend talks to Woody about his clandestine affair with Mary (the Diane Keaton character) and his relations with his wife; Mary talks to Woody about her affair with his best friend; Woody and Mary talk about how she feels about the best friend after they break up; Woody and the best friend talk (heatedly) after the best friend breaks up with his wife and takes Mary away from Woody; Woody and the abandoned wife talk; and, finally, Woody and the rejected schoolgirl talk but she, thankfully, decides not to talk to him any more, and that's the end of the picture.

Although all the words are apparently directed toward self-revelation and honest attempts at explanation of motive and intent, the most that they do is to describe rather than explain these characters and their particular dilemmas. At one point, when Allen berates his friend for stealing Mary away from him, the friend explodes: "Oh, for God's sake, don't moralise!" And the charge is just, for no one in Allen's world is ever asked to justify his or her actions. The unspoken "explanation" is that serious, sophisticated people are — and should be — free of repressive social rules and restraints, and that their search for experience and awareness justifies what in another era would be regarded as careless, callous, even contemptible, behavior.

But no one in *Manhattan* is contemptible. We have abundant sympathy for the characters: the desperately striving Mary, clutching at the straw of "love", hurting Woody "cleanly"; the desperately loving best friend, punitively pleasuring himself in tortured emotional apocalypses; the desperately tolerant abandoned wife who, like Woody, accepts and goes on; the desperately searching Woody, remorsefully letting his schoolgirl lover go and then manipulatively wanting her back again. The poverty of Allen's vision can most easily be seen in his treatment of the schoolgirl as the only "authentic" person in the film. She is the only one who doesn't talk, whose life and relationship to Woody is a constant conundrum in the movie, a relationship that continually demands explanation/justification but, of course, doesn't and can't receive it.

Everyone else in *Manhattan* purports to explain why they feel and act as they do toward someone else, but in fact they merely explain that they feel in a particular way, and the matter can be taken no further. Anything else is moralising, nagging, being a nuisance after all, how can you help how you feel? Clearly, emotions and principles don't mix.

In *Manhattan*, instead, the public world (glimpsed all too fleetingly) is the place of principles. Woody resigns his well-paid job as a TV comedy writer because his coked-up colleagues are satisfied with junk programs and canned

laughter, he criticises Mary for churning out the "novelisation" of a film; he even criticises their first time in bed as too much conscientious performance from her, not enough feeling.

Now it would be nice to say that *Manhattan* is a film about a society in decline, where massive failure of principle in the public sphere (Watergate, Nixon, Viet Nam, countless political scandals) is reflected in the private sphere. But *Manhattan* argues a different line: that principle should operate in public life but that feelings — unmediated by consensually validated values — should hold sway in private life. So the self-evident truths of *Manhattan* are those of a New Order. Gone is our endowment of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness; present instead is therapeutic permission to engage in Experience, Awareness and the Pursuit of Gratification. On and on the *Manhattan* characters talk anxious to tell all, teenagers in a constant telephone conversation; anxious to feel all, teenagers in a constant flush of narcissistic expectation.

And we, the audience, partake of the spectacle, not only recognising our own complicity and participation in such "modern" goings-on, but also applauding the primacy of the private over the public, heart over head, emotions over intellect. The portrayal of intellectuals as mouthy pseudo, emitting half-digested, unassimilated claptrap on demand, caters to our deepest anti-intellectual feelings. How much more satisfying to identify with Woody the Comedian who, like royal Fools of old, pricks the balloons of pomposity and arcane erudition, and slyly gesticulates at humorless, retributive authority.

Watching the opposition set up by Allen in *Manhattan* between the "authentic" comic and inauthentic intellectual posers, it is difficult to recall a somewhat different — and perhaps more persuasive — reality: the opposition between those truly serious intellectuals who attempt to confront and analyse contemporary crises of authority, repression and meaning and those comics who, through illusion, fancy footwork and juggling, are content to slide by problems of bureaucracy, consumption and narcissism.

What we like about Woody Allen is that he shows us the easy way out. Why should we beat our heads to a pulp trying to nut out Iran, Afghanistan, how to understand liberation as a social goal rather than a personal predilection, etc.? That would turn you into a boring, up-yourself, depressing critic. How much easier to privatistically take yourself so "seriously" in the privacy of your own homes and bedrooms, that you need never consider the social implications of the self and emotions as consumable commodities at all. Come on, now, doesn't everybody have a right to feel good?

— Kathie Boehringer.