

SF 335.405  
So 1

**PER**

# Australian MARXIST Review

5 FEB 1976  
STAT LIBRARY  
OF VICTORIA

*Theoretical journal of the  
Socialist Party of Australia*

- 1975 Election Result
- The Ultra Left
- Aborigines
- Dialectical Materialism
- Technological Revolution

STAT LIBRARY  
5 FEB 1976  
OF VICTORIA

---

QUARTERLY, VOLUME 5 No. 1 JANUARY 1976 – PRICE 30c

---

# Australian MARXIST Review

EDITOR: W.J. Brown  
EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS  
G. Curthoys  
W. Gould  
E.V. Elliott

## CONTENTS

New Challenges in the 1975 Election Result	W. Brown.....1
The Ultra Left	A. Miller.....6
The Australian National Minority	Dr. H. Middleton8
Some Views on Dialectical Materialism	J. Booth.....14
Which Way the Scientific and Technological Revolution	T. Hickman.....17.

## NEW CHALLENGES IN THE 1975 ELECTION RESULT

by W.J. Brown

The result of the 1975 national elections — and the remarkable precedents set during the events contributing to Labor's defeat — face the Australian labor movement with new problems and new challenges.

The events leading to the December 13 elections exposed more clearly than ever how Australia is really governed not by democratic elections but by manipulation by powerful, non-elected local and foreign monopoly groupings outside parliament.

The push for power the Australian ruling class launched in October which led on to the Kerr Fraser coup of November 11 was a new and disturbing experience for the Australian people.

It showed that the real economic-political power forces ruling Australian capitalism are prepared to treat their own vaunted "democratic" conventions with total contempt when it suits their class needs.

In quick succession Australia's top bourgeois rulers underwrote a remarkable series of new far-reaching departures from their own established parliamentary practices.

The convention that senators who retire or die be replaced by a representative of the same political party from the particular State went by the board as the Liberals made their first manoeuvres for power by undemocratic means.

For the first time the convention that the Senate not be used to deny supply of finance to govern was broken.

For the first time Australia experienced a coup d'etat. This was the climax of a crisis deliberately created by the Liberals. Their manipulated Senate majority and their unprecedented denial of supply was cynically used as the excuse they needed to use the anachronistic vice-regal post of governor general to dismiss the democratically elected Labor Government.

The Liberal Party leaders, and the faceless men of monopoly prompting them from behind, were prepared to pay a dear price for power. Trampling on their own parliamentary "safeguards" and the so-called "impartiality" of their vice regal trappings meant they were prepared to seriously damage their own bourgeois constitutional processes.

The clear fact is that not Fraser or Governor General Kerr but the faceless men of Australian and foreign monopolies were the real supra-parliament forces who made the serious political-economic decisions that the Labor Government had to be destroyed regardless of the method — or cost.

Abundant evidence has been presented to show that Fraser did not launch his October putsch in denying supply to the Labor Government on his own decision. Similarly, abundant evidence exists to show that the subsequent Fraser-Kerr coup of November 11 which took the grave step of dismissing a Labor Government twice-endorsed by the people in less than three years was also not taken merely by Fraser and Kerr.

They acted with full pre-knowledge that they had the wholehearted endorsement of the highest echelons in Australian and American big business.

The Australian bourgeoisie had decided that they wanted class power directly in their hands through a millionaire conservative like Fraser to ensure that the burdens of capitalism's new economic world crisis were met at the expense of the people — not monopoly profits.

Foreign bourgeoisie, particularly in Japan and America, wanted Labor destroyed to remove the obstacle of Labor's independent policy of "Australian resources under Australian control" and to open the way for heavy investment in our nation's vast mineral wealth.

Both Wall Street and Washington wanted to restore a strongly pro-American government in Canberra. They wanted a Liberal Government to ensure tighter consolidation of war bases on Australian soil. They wanted destruction of the independent, progressive, peace-oriented foreign policy of Labor which made Australia a name respected for the first time internationally since the allied fight against fascism in World War II.

The important part played by American pressure groups for greater access to Australian uranium was exposed in an interview with *Nucleonics Week*, a McGraw Hill publication when William Jentes, attorney for the American Corporation Westinghouse gave a remarkably accurate forecast when he said "Maybe if the Labor Government is thrown out in Australia in five weeks we can get uranium we thought we had..." This was in the November issue published *five weeks and three days before the election day!* AMWU Newsletter NO 25/75).

The conclusion is inescapable that the Labor Government was deliberately destroyed by a long range plan. This went through variously carefully orchestrated stages — the series of stunts and scandals the manipulation to get a false senate "majority"; the Senate deferral of the budget (later to be taken over and implemented by the Liberals once they got power); the coup d'etat and establishment of Fraser in the advantageous position of Prime Minister to fight the December 13 elections and then the monopoly owned media putting the final touches with the most fiercely concentrated attack on the Labor Government on record.

What is to be the approach of the Labor movement to the new situation they now face?

Despite mistakes and shortcomings the Labor government had many outstanding achievements to its credit in both a progressive home and foreign policies.

Yet, when monopoly forces outside parliament decreed it had to be destroyed this is precisely what happened.

The Socialist Party of Australia wrote to prime Minister Mr. Whitlam

before the November 11 coup with a proposition that has been rendered more urgent than ever by events that followed.

It specifically warned that if Fraser was defeated in the bid he was then making for power (by blocking supply in the Senate) the monopoly forces operating behind him would find new ways for new attacks. The new attack came in the form of the November 11 coup the day after the SPA letter was posted.

Our proposal was that the Labor Parliamentarians and the ALP generally consider initiating and throwing their full weight behind a nationwide campaign to expose the dangerous growth of modern monopoly power and to develop mass awareness of the need for controls and curbs on these undemocratic, supra-parliamentary forces of wealth and privilege.

The SPA intends to throw its full weight into such a badly needed campaign. The ALP's participation — or initiation — can be a decisive factor. Indeed, in the SPA view it is an inescapable need for the Labor Party to enter such a campaign. Either the ALP meets the challenge of the power-figures of monopoly who destroyed their government or they resign themselves to the mercy of monopoly forces that can make mockery of even a moderately conceived program of reforms by any Labor or progressive coalition Government of the future.

Reformism traditionally avoids class struggle. This has been the main trend in the ALP. Now class struggle has been crudely thrust upon them by Labor's basic enemies in local and foreign boardrooms.

Dimitrov in his famous 1935 speech developing the concept of the united front against monopoly capital in times of economic crisis pointed out that when capitalism finds itself unable to govern in the old way it acts ruthlessly to substitute one form of capitalist government for another. Without exaggerating the present situation by suggesting Australia has already become a nation under fascism, the local and foreign bourgeoisie certainly substituted old forms for new in ensuring power for their direct political representatives. It is a situation that needs to be met with united front and the broadest popular front action to push back the menacing increase of monopoly power in the nation.

Indeed, Fraser's crudely pro-American course also creates possibilities for arousing some expression of national front resistance to the consequences that will inevitably flow from his "open door" policy for foreign exploitation of our national resources and for consolidation of American war bases on our soil.

The SPA will put to the Labor Party and other sections of the Labor movement the standpoint that even a moderate course that can arouse mass awareness and readiness to act on a program limited, at this stage, to curbing local foreign monopoly power will be an important start.

Some Labor Party members may consider even such a realistically based campaign to be "too radical." The alternative is to meekly accept the ruthless realities of recent developments.

On the other hand, some sections of the left may consider proposals to campaign for curbs or controls on monopoly "too moderate."

Both sections might take into account the comments of a British political commentator on the ABC interviewed on Labor's defeat.

He pointed out that objectives of the Australian labor movement were generally pitched at a low level. He drew attention to the fact that campaigns against monopolies including calls for nationalisation were a prominent policy feature of the British Labor and trade union movement.

He also pointed out that as the nation with the highest percentage of home owners in the world, a large section of Australia's population was highly property conscious and sensitive to inflationary or economic insecurity which might jeopardise their property holdings.

The observations are shrewdly sound in both cases.

The Australian Labor Party generally, not only its leftwing, needs to give a stronger lead on the decisive struggle against monopoly.

The labor movement as a whole needs to take into account that one of the basic underlying lessons of the election is that the swinging voter in Australia leans strongly towards a conservative position.

Yet these voters among farmers, small businessmen etc., are non-monopoly forces and can, with a correct approach, be won to realisation that growing monopoly power over their lives needs to be curbed. This can be a most important advance.

"Leftist" shouts for "nothing short of socialism" of full scale nationalisation, at this stage, can do no more than drive these people away. In fact, they can assist to petuate rather than make inroads into the massbase of monopoly power.

On the election result in general, the SPA will counter both right opportunist trends in the labor movement to give away the struggle in the light of Labor's defeat and left sectarian trends to lapse into super-revolution or ultra-left expressions of frustration. We will stress that both causes will, in the final analysis assist the pro-monopoly forces.

We will stress that revolutionary socialist objectives at this stage can be best advanced by building a powerful united front of the workers and the broadest popular front among farmers, academics, small business men and others against their common enemies — the local and foreign monopolists.

The solid 43 per cent (over 3 million voters) that voted for Labor despite the heavy monopoly owned media barrage — shows that there is a powerful basis among wide sections of the community for such a concept to become reality.

Fraser faces no easy path. He has no solution to capitalism's inbuilt problems of inflation and unemployment. He faces a strongly aroused labor movement of heightened unity smouldering with the deep hostility he aroused. Internationally he faces a situation where the dominant trend remains towards detente, not the die-hard, anti-Soviet cold-war dogmas he has rushed into proclaim.

His short term tactic of trying to play Mao Tse-tung off against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries will soon be exposed as embracing Australia in the insane Maoist line of "inevitable nuclear war" which threatens our nation along with the rest of humanity.

The SPA line in 1976 will be to help build not only a powerful people's movement to curb monopoly power but also to help rebuild a broad peace movement in Australia for detente, disarmament and development — with particular emphasis on removing American war bases which are making our country a front-line nuclear spearhead for Washington militarists.

Side by side with helping build such broad people's movements. the SPA will redouble efforts around its own independent policies.

Independent election campaign activity by the SPA showed great interest can be stirred in our unwavering line on socialist policies.

**During the election campaign only SPA speakers and its press and leaflets clearly brought out the dynamic contrast of the crisis-free economies of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries where unemployment and inflation is unknown. More of this needs to be done together with popularising the Program of our Second Congress which presents the SPA path to socialism in Australia.**

Another important question for the SPA is to systematise and extend its work in parliamentary election side by side with basic extra-parliamentary mass work on the widest scale.

In short, the SPA needs to follow a course combining both improved work in parliamentary elections together with basic, extra-parliamentary mass campaigning, particularly among the working class in the unions and on the jobs.

The SPA needs to select candidates well in advance in each state and where possible in districts. It needs to hold meetings, press sales drives and leaflet distribution popularising the proposed candidate around basic industrial and local issues outside of election times. Effective combination of mass activity around the people's needs with preparatory work for parliamentary election campaigns needs to be consistently developed. Some good ideas emerged in this in Sydney and other areas where record numbers of the SPA press were sold.

So the SPA sees redoubled activity to strengthen the SPA's combined mass work and improved parliamentary election participation in future together with the building of a broad, anti-monopoly, people's movement as key, positive ways to meet the challenge of the 1975 election result.

Victory for Fraser and the forces who backed him was a setback. But they have no way out. It is no empty optimism but solid reality that the most decisive forces of our time are those of the world forces for peace, national independence and socialism. These are the forces with whom the SPA stands. They are the forces of the future.

Given the correct policy there is powerful potential for their development in Australia.

## The Ultra Left

by Alan Miller

The Socialist Party of Australia has set itself the task of building a broad anti-monopoly movement. This involves the Party in building the united front of the working class and providing working class leadership to the broad movement.

Ultra left forces, such as the Trotskyist and Maoist movements, set about to destroy this process and therefore they have to be combatted and defeated.

It cannot be stressed enough that Trotskyism and Maoism have a rightwing essence. Ideas that they are just a little bit better than the ultra right and that they are — part of the left are not only inaccurate but politically dangerous. Trotskyism and Maoism are in the same position as the ultra right with their anti-Sovietism, anti-Communism and their bitter opposition to the united front and people's front. One could say that the ultra left's rightwing essence is symbolised by Peking's open partnership with the Chilean fascist junta.

Karl Marx used to say that only the mentally backward capitalist representatives were terrified of the ultra left whereas the intelligent ones understood the advantages. Hence, even in Marx's day, the police assisted ultra left "revolutionary" activity. Today, the Trotskyist and Maoist movements are weapons of the imperialists in their struggle to destroy the great world social movement which is leading to Communism.

The SPA needs to pay particular attention to combatting Trotskyist-Maoist penetration of the working class. Such undermining of the working class has enormous consequences because that class has the leading role to play in the struggle against monopoly and for socialism. The work of our Party in the NSW building industry in combatting the CPA brand of Trotskyism is of the highest order and is well documented in the publication "Six Turbulent Years". However, the Party also has responsibility to combat ultra left penetration of the middle classes and intellectual strata.

Because the Socialist Party seeks to build the united front with Labor Party forces it does not follow that it should do the same with the Trotskyists and Maoists. The ALP is made up of the rightwing which opposes the united front, but it is also made up of the leftwing

which is favourably inclined and the centre which can be won over. The Trotskyist and Maoist movements are opposed to the united front.

Of course, in the ultra left there are the misleaders and the misled, and it is possible to win over people. However, there should be no illusion that in the ultra left there is a fertile field of potential Marxists to be won. The poison goes deep and that reality must be faced. If the Socialist Party is looking for a fertile field of people to be won to its position or nearer to it, then it should concentrate on the factories and industries.

In pursuit of its aims of building the united front and people's front, the Socialist Party in the mass movement sometimes finds it is obliged to work alongside Trotskyist-Maoist forces. After all, it is the practice of such forces to "hook on" to progressive issues. The Party shouldn't run away from this situation for this would amount to helping the ultra left to have a greater influence in the mass movement. Indeed we should do battle against the ultra left and win people away from its influence. As part of the process of winning such people our Party should take advantage of the different positions occupied by various radical groupings under ultra left influences. In the final analysis, the degree to which we can win over people from the ultra left depends on our ability to build the Party and the mass movement and the initiatives we can take in this regard. This is hard but necessary work.

Working alongside the ultra left and winning people over from the ultra left is one thing, but building the united front and people's front with the ultra left is another. After all, in the struggle, it has been possible to win people away from DLP influences, but the SPA has never spoken of building the united front or people's front with the DLP. To build the united front or broader anti-monopoly movements with the ultra left would be a sure way of destroying those movements. Indeed the Party has the job of building such movements against the Trotskyists and Maoists.

The Socialist Party has the task of combatting the ultra left above all in the trade union movement but also in the women's, youth and Aboriginal movements. We can do this by building our Party, helping to build working class and democratic organisations which work for progress at one level or another and conducting a ruthless ideological and organisational war against the ultra left all this as part of developing anti-monopoly mass activity.

# The Australian National Minority

by Dr. Hannah Middleton

*This paper is intended to develop some aspects of the Socialist Party of Australia's policy on the Aboriginal national minority adopted at the Second Congress. Part I will deal with the historical background, the Aborigines as members of the working class and as members of a national minority within the Australian nation. Part II will cover the questions of land rights and autonomous areas.*

## Historical Background

### a) Traditional Society

The approximately 300,000 Aborigines in Australia before white colonisation were divided into several hundred land-owning local groups (usually called tribes). Their territory was defined and recognised; members of other local groups would have to make some kind of payment to use it. Collective ownership of a particular area of land by a local group was reflected in religious beliefs and ceremonies.

Land was the basic means of production. In their mode of production the Aborigines developed a biological division of labour — the women collected the plant foodstuffs and the men hunted the larger animals. Their intimate and detailed knowledge of the land and nature was also essential to economic success.

Traditional Aboriginal social organisation was based on their economic life and allowed them to use the available food and other resources efficiently and effectively. It was specifically adapted to their environment to ensure the continuation of the group.

The Aborigines lived as an integral and integrated part of the natural environment rather than alienated from it, not dominating or exploiting nature. They developed a social life which reflected this harmony and the co-operation between men and women and between different local groups which made it possible. In everyday life the work of hunting and gathering was shared and the food collected was shared. In times of hardship families were sometimes forced to move and would share the land, food and water resources of other groups.

This was the antithesis of individualism and competitiveness; a society in which the highest value was placed on the collective nature of its constituent communities and on co-operation and sharing between its members.

European colonisation destroyed most of Aboriginal traditional society but this sharing and concern for other people is still important for many Black Australians. In 1970 Gurindji men and women explained their attitude towards me by saying: "No matter who you are, we are here to look after each other."

### b) Colonisation and Capitalism

The establishment of a convict colony in 1788 had catastrophic effects on traditional Aboriginal society. The colonists brought with them the ideology of racism which was used to justify the theft of land and the murder of Aborigines.

The traditional economic and social organisation was destroyed as local groups were driven from their land, were killed or died from new diseases, malnutrition and despair.

Sheep, gold and later agriculture laid the basis of prosperity for the colonists in the south and cattle did the same for the north. As well as causing a dramatic increase in white population, gold (discovered in 1851) made an essential contribution to the foundation of modern Australia. It stimulated the development of an Australian local industrial capitalism and with it the growth of a local bourgeoisie and proletariat.

A distinction has to be made between the settlement of the south for sheep in the 1820's to 1860's and the later occupation from the 1880's onwards of the north for cattle. The former led to the extermination of the Aborigines living in the area while, in the case of the north, an uneasy compromise between the needs of the Aborigines and the cattle was established.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the value of the Aborigines as a cheap and controllable labour force began to be recognised, particularly in the north. This tendency developed steadily with a peak during the first world war and a decrease in the depression years followed by a sharp rise in Aboriginal employment during and after the second world war.

The destruction of Aboriginal traditional society, the relocation of the people (on missions and reserves, for example) and their increasing use as cheap labour contributed to the breakdown of tribal and local boundaries and the development of new, wider affiliations. This process (called ethnic consolidation) has continued at an accelerating pace since the second world war. In the Australian context, the process of ethnic consolidation among the Aboriginal people has taken the specific form of proletarianisation — the transformation of Aborigines from the tribal situation into wage labourers working in urban or rural occupations within a capitalist system.

The historical period in which the movement of the Australian Aborigines underwent a qualitative change was, and is, decisively determined by the October Russian Revolution, the founding of the first socialist state in 1917 and the defeat of fascism in 1945. It is an age of social revolutions and national liberation struggles.

Australia is not isolated; it has been influenced by these events and is affected by international economic and political trends. Developments in Australia will always reflect the dialectical relationship between international trends and specific national conditions.

The political and social struggle that has developed among black Australians since the second world war shows that they are part of the worldwide national liberation movement. What has and is occurring in

their fight against the form of colonialism existing on the Australian continent is an example of the extraordinarily rapid growth of a national liberation movement among a numerically small people.

Scarcely 30 years ago the majority of Aborigines were still living in a hunting and collecting society or had just emerged from it and were held in subjection by monopoly capitalism under conditions which were more like slavery than wage labour. The development of their struggle for emancipation and equality has gone hand in hand with the extremely rapid growth of their consciousness and political organisation. Thirty years ago the Aborigines' horizon was bounded by the tribe. Today their struggle has broad aims and is Australia-wide.

### Aborigines as Members of the Working Class

Classes are large groups of people differing from other by the place they occupy in a historically-determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people, one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy." — (1)

Under capitalism the direct producers, the workers, are deprived of the ownership of the means of production and are economically dependent on the capitalist system. This applies equally to black and white workers in Australia.

Aborigines have no control over the means of production and have been drawn into and exploited by the money-commodity economy of monopoly capitalism. However, this has not been and is not a simple process and there are sections of the Aboriginal population who cannot be included in the proletariat.

There are isolated Aboriginal communities on settlements and reserves in the north who still depend partially on bush foods and whose contact with white society, and particularly employment within it, has been limited.

The social breakdown of Aboriginal communities has created groups of black Australians with acute problems of alienation, juvenile delinquency, crime, prostitution and mental illness.

Certain groups can probably be best described as transitional in class terms. "Besides the basic classes, the social structure usually comprises non-basic or transitional classes connected with the survival of parts of previous modes of production in the form of special economic structures. Consequently these are either old or new classes involving either obsolete or newly-emerging forms of the social economy." — (2)

However, the great majority of the Aborigines are now members of the working class. The two major arguments against this are the low rate of

(1) V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 421.

(2) *The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy*, p. 362.

employment among the Aborigines and their consciousness.

The most recent figure for Australian unemployment is 4.8 per Cent (August 1975). Among the Aborigines the figure is about 78 per cent. The following figures on Aboriginal employment are taken from the 1971 Census:

Place	Aboriginal population	Number employ	Percentage employed
NSW	23,100	4,650	20 per cent
Vict.	5,655	1,490	26 per cent
Q'land	24,415	5,420	22 per cent
SA	7,140	1,370	19 per cent
WA	21,905	4,535	21 per cent
NT	23,255	5,805	25 per cent
Aust.	105,470	23,270	22 per cent

However, a number of special factors must be taken into consideration when analysing these figures. The Aboriginal population is increasing faster (in some places ten-times faster) than the white population and has an unusually high percentage of school-age children which will distort percentage figures for employment.

The inadequate levels of education and vocational training reduce employment opportunities for Aborigines and this is increased by the negative attitudes of many white employers toward black employees.

Aborigines form a high proportion of seasonal workers, a factor which artificially inflates their unemployment figures.

In addition Aboriginal communities in fringe settlements, on stations and reserves, particularly in the north, have traditionally been used as pools of cheap labour. Among them a high rate of unemployment has been maintained in order to ensure a regular supply of replacement labourers for those worn out (a cheaper way of getting workers than giving wages and conditions adequate for natural replacement). These labour pools have served as a form of reserve army and have helped to maintain the very low wages common to the Aboriginal work-force.

It is necessary to stress that employment as a wage labourer is not what defines a member of the working class. A worker does not cease to be a member of the proletariat because the capitalist system forces him into unemployment.

It has also been suggested that the majority of Aborigines are not members of the working class because they are not class conscious. It is, of course, true that class consciousness is not developed among them — but this is also true of many white workers in Australia today.

The proletariat conducts its struggle against capitalism in three main forms: economic, political and ideological. This is a complicated and uneven process which is further complicated in the case of the Aborigines by remnants of traditional consciousness — particularly when it is used to divide black from white workers.

It must be pointed out that "class interest is determined not by the consciousness of the class but by its position and role in the system of social production. Since the proletariat is deprived of ownership of the means of production and is subjected to capitalist exploitation, it is interested in abolishing capitalism, and thus it is a revolutionary class." — (1).

There is one final point in this connection. Aborigines are part of a widespread phenomenon: the move from country to town. As farm work is increasingly mechanised and the small-scale rural sector declines, more and more Aborigines are moving to towns and cities in search of work. Some figures illustrate this process:

	Urban	Rural
1966		
people	21,986	58,311
percent	27.3 per cent	72.7 per cent
1971		
people	46,261	56.4 per cent

One result of this is that Aborigines who were previously isolated are coming into contact in the urban situation with politically active black individuals and groups and with white workers, trade unions and political organisations.

### Aborigines as a National Minority

The working class position of the majority of Aborigines is only half of the picture. The other part is their membership of a national minority within the Australian nation.

What is a national minority?

The mode of production of a particular society determines the historical form of its social organisation, the types of social relationships that exist in it.

Most societies have developed from a pre-class tribal formation through nationalities to nations. Nations are the form of human community or social organisation that correspond to the capitalist mode of production.

"A nation is a stable community of people bound together by a common language, common territory, community of economic life and certain peculiarities of social psychology, as expressed in the specific features of the culture of the given people, which distinguish its culture from that of other peoples." — (2)

The Aborigines never developed beyond the pre-class tribal stage. They were forcibly incorporated into the Australian nation which was established by white colonisation.

As a result of this incorporation the tribal divisions of Aboriginal

traditional society were broken down in the process of ethnic consolidation. — (1) An Australia-wide consciousness of unity and common identity has developed — at an accelerating rate since the second world war.

Of course this new black consciousness does not include every Aborigine but the knowledge of and interest in other groups among even remote Aboriginal communities is considerable. As an example, in 1974 the Gurindji at Daggu Ragu (Wattie Creek) had links with and concern for the Gwalwa Daraniki in Darwin, Nomads Pty. in the Port Hedland area, groups on the Arnhem Land Reserve including the Yirrkala at Gove and the Hooker Creek and Roper River communities as well as more tenuous contacts with Aborigines in Katherine, Alice Springs, Daly Waters, Newcastle Waters and Tennant Creek (NT), Mt. Isa and Camooweal (Queensland), and Wyndham, Hall's Creek and Kunumurra (WA) and other towns, settlements and stations in the three states. Radio broadcasts and newspaper clippings on developments in the southern states connected with Aborigines also aroused considerable interest and discussion although understanding of the political issues involved was more limited.

As a national minority the Aboriginal people share a number of determining characteristics:

\* A common territory. This is the national aspect. The Aborigines have rights to land by virtue of prior occupation and ownership. — (2)

\* ethnicity. The Aborigines share a common ancestry; put simply, they are a black minority.

\* language. In their traditional society the Aborigines had several hundred languages (as well as many dialects) some of which are still in use today.

\* culture. In art, dance, myths and stories, in their attitudes towards and appreciation of nature, and in their common social and ethical values (for example, their ideology of cooperation, mutual support and sharing) the Aborigines still have a complex and distinct culture.

The breakdown of Aboriginal society, the accelerating urbanisation trend, the predominance of Aborigines of part-European descent and so on obviously influence these factors but do not negate them.

By way of illustration let us look at the case of a member of the Siberian minority, the Nanai, who moves to Moscow and becomes an engineer (his people are predominantly hunters). He remains a Nanai, keeping his language and culture and, since this is in the USSR, his right to return to his region. It may be several generations before his descendants start to think of themselves as Muscovites and even then they will probably still have links with their people and can choose to still identify themselves as Nanai.

1. This was partly because their hunting and collecting economy represented a highly developed and efficient adaptation to their environment and also because there were no indigenous animals suitable for domestication or plants for large-scale cultivation.

2. The Aborigines are the only minority in the world whose indigenous land rights have never been recognised in any way in the laws of the colonising power.

To be continued

1. *The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy*, p. 369.

2. *The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy*, p. 394.



# Some views on Dialectical Materialism

by Jack Booth

In studying Marxist philosophy and its application to current conditions, I would recommend that excellent book *Brief Course of Dialectical Materialism* by Podesetnic and Yakhot, and Bill Brown's *False Philosophy Exploded*.

Dialectical materialism is the recognition of natural laws and how they operate. Previously they operated outside of man's consciousness, but when Marx discovered how they worked he drew conclusions from them which enabled him to apply them to human society.

It is elementary that matter can neither be created nor destroyed, only its form can change. Similarly with natural laws that govern human society. The form of human society has been changing since before written history, gradually developing till it reached its point of change. Society then passed through other stages in its development — primitive communism, the slave system, feudalism, industrial capitalism, imperialism, socialism to communism: from there, there are no limits.

The point of change (nodal point) applies to all forms of nature. In astronomy it may take millions of years. In chemistry it may take seconds or minutes such as when water reaches boiling point (the node), changing its form to steam.

Dialectical materialism applies equally to human consciousness. As Marx stated in *The Communist Manifesto*: "Our mode of existence determines our consciousness".

This was very true and remains true while we live under capitalism; but when human society reaches maturity our mode of existence not only determines our consciousness, but consciousness also determines our existence. The fusion produces a planned socialist society.

Pseudo-marxists see these natural laws as a guide to perfection, but the laws of growth and decay, progress and decline, prevent it.

If the law of averages was perfect we would have the same number of male and female births. If the law of supply and demand was perfect, under socialism or communism the stimulus for demand would be lost and progress would cease. If the law of gravity was perfect we would need the same air density at sea level as, say, ten miles up.

If the laws of social science were perfect, capitalism could be overthrown simultaneously throughout the world. If the laws of cause and effect were perfect we would not have the turbulence that springs from the need for change.

This means that human society can only improve and discover; we can never reach the ultimate.

The basic purpose of dialectical materialism in social science is to facilitate the transformation from capitalism to socialism and then apply them to the new society. But all this is only elementary dialectical materialism. Its real strength lies in its all-embracing character, in all the sciences and arts, all fields of human endeavour, nature, society and thinking. For instance, how could Marx and Engels state that "matter, motion, time and space have the closest dependence on each other" at a time when Isaac Newton's theory regarded time and space as separate from matter? Fifty years later, Albert Einstein proved that Marx and Engels were correct.

Or take the bourgeois economists spending futile days trying to solve their economic problems when Marx had the answers over 100 years ago. To understand dialectical materialism requires a revolution in our thinking: it cannot be mixed up with idealism or emotionalism because it is objective thinking.

Objective thinking deals with realities that register on our sense perceptions and with the application of dialectical materialism come up with the answers. If the answers are not correct it is not the fault of dialectical materialism but the misapplication of its philosophical principles.

For example: Trotsky gave 14 "fundamental propositions" in his Theory of Permanent Revolution. Proposition Ten states: "The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable."

Had Trotsky approached this proposition in a dialectical manner, he should have concluded that since socialism is the only alternative to capitalism, it follows that the complete overthrow of capitalism within national limits is also unthinkable.

Had he taken account of the laws of historical development he would have rejected this statement.

In Proposition Twelve, Trotsky states: "The world division of labour, the dependence of Soviet industry upon foreign technique, the dependence of the productive forces of Europe upon Asiatic raw materials etc., makes the construction of a socialist society in any one country impossible." According to this we would have had to wait for all the backward countries of the world to throw off the capitalist yoke before we could get socialism.

But the laws of social development from the powerful Soviet Union to little Cuba have refuted his proposition. Trotsky wants to dot the last "i" and cross the last "t" to achieve his "complete socialism".

This is idealism and has nothing in common with materialism. Trotsky made THESE FORMULATIONS WHEN THE Soviet Union had not recovered from interventional wars, famine and economic dislocation. It was tantamount to telling the people that their struggle was hopeless.

If Trotsky's undialectical propositions had been accepted, history could have been retarded for perhaps 100 years and imperialism could have been still strong enough to exploit the wealth of countries that are now socialist. This also explains why the leadership of the CPA asserts that the Soviet Union is only "socialist-based", thereby justifying Trotsky.

The reality of Australian society is that we are dealing with opponents who do not recognise dialectical materialism and are vehemently opposed to it. After all, it is difficult to imagine capitalists meekly submitting to their own overthrow. To them their social system is permanent, even after 58 years of socialism in the USSR they still regard communists as invaders from another planet. There is no room for any real gradualism in their society; whatever social progress we have made has had to be fought for.

In spite of all the sabre-rattling and threats from neo-fascists, a peaceful revolution is possible in Australia if our allies — farmers and progressive people — rally to the labour movement, become allies of the working class. It follows from this that a political party must exist to apply natural laws, not as dogma but as a guide to action, fully recognising the laws of uneven development.

The Socialist Party of Australia follows just such a course, applying these laws as they fit Australian conditions, never losing sight of the fact that Australia is bound by worldwide influences and must plan accordingly.

It is imperative for all progressive Australians to rally round our organisation in these critical times, not to press for immediate socialism if Australians are not ready for it but to consolidate gains and press for further gains: then the point of change becomes easier.

This point of change may come in months or years, depending on national and international events and the Socialist Party of Australia must be ready for it. These are the realities.

## Which way the scientific and technological revolution

by T. Hickman

Today the Scientific and Technological Revolution is having a profound effect on all aspects of life in capitalist society.

Its rapid development has had considerable effect on the social and cultural development of the working class and sharpened the conflicts existing between the capitalist system and the working class.

These conflicts will continue despite the latest argument put forward by reformist and bourgeois ideologists, that the scientific and technological revolution has "allegedly" brought about integration of the working class into capitalist society, while private ownership of the means of production is perpetuated.

The Scientific and Technological Revolution has created major issues in the ideological struggle, mainly in the fields of economic relations, social and class structure, and on the living and working conditions of the people.

The working class cannot but be affected by any changes in production as they are the class directly involved in social production.

Bourgeois ideologists say that as the scientific and technological revolution develops further the proletariat will cease to exist.

They put forward this idea to "prove" a socialist revolution is no longer necessary to solve the problems of the working class. In this present day conditions of modern capitalist society, Marxist-Leninists analysis of the position of the working class is as true under the scientific technological revolution today as before.

How do we define the proletariat in conditions of development of modern technological process.

First, the proportion of wage labourers has grown with the development of the Scientific Technological Revolution under capitalism.

In 1900 they represented 82.2 million, in 1970 234.9 million, in advanced capitalist countries, wage and salary earners make up the bulk of those employed in manual-non manual and mental work. While not all are what is normally called working class we see a growth in those who are forced to sell their labour.

Bourgeois economists and sociologists attempt to tie the proletarianising process to one section the manual worker. Using this as their base, they claim the correctness of their theory that the working class is growing smaller and will ultimately disappear with the inevitable growth of science and technology.

The growth of automation produces these effects:

1. Increased mental work and the growing role of science as a productive force.
2. A tremendous growth of labour productivity in the field of material production.
3. A growth of those not involved in manual labour i.e. salesman office workers etc.

But still they are hired labour, thus they are worker or proletariat in the real class category.

Despite this process the absolute number of manual labour is growing as the Scientific Technological Revolution develops.

Those needed to service the machines are increasing and the organisers of production have increased.

While the Scientific Technological Revolution is having an effect on the basic position of the old manual worker more mental work combined with physical work is required to be performed by the industrial proletariat.

This has brought about basic change in the education system in capitalist countries. In Australia, even the bourgeois state run by the labor government realises that the standard of education does not meet the requirements of bourgeois-owned industry and is trying to solve this question by educational reforms to service their needs.

The place of the working class is defined in the World Marxist Review No.1 1971.

The working class "Is largely determined by its alienation from the ownership of the means of production and its association with the means of production, through the process of the sale and purchase of labour, and the appropriation by the capitalist class of the surplus value of the worker."

What are the main characteristic features of the working class?

The social boundaries of the working class are expanding to include non manual, mental (office) and certain groups of the intelligentsia.

This analysis does not mean that we arbitrarily place all those whose labor is for hire in the classification of the working class. Class divisions are brought about by the owners of the means of production, who take the surplus value of those who sell their labour.

Today there is a marked increase on the whole, of intellectual workers and office workers.

It is an economic fact that most of them have been turned into hired workers. This, in a relative sense, has been true for some time. But a new feature is the rapid growth of this section of the population and the greater role they play in production.

The development of the Scientific and Technological Revolution has led to great changes in their previous status. Where as once they were only 9 to 5 workers they are being required to work shift work and overtime, a feature not normal to the past history of these workers.

Because of the Scientific Technological Revolution some of them are able to gain higher status. This is due to their greater direct service to capitalist production management. However most of them are being

greatly exploited and being drawn closer and closer to the industrial proletariat because of the capitalist need for organised labour to gain super profits.

This development of the proletarianisation of the white collar workers and the intellectual due to the Scientific Technological Revolution is an outstanding feature of the development of society in capitalist countries.

This development has led to objective changes and has different effects on the class struggle. Revisionists claim that the main mass of the proletariat has been integrated into the capitalist system and that new revolutionary forces have come up with the development of the Scientific Technological Revolution and are assuming the leading role in the construction of a new society.

They claim that the working class has ceased to play the main role. They develop the theory that the scientific technical and highly qualified workers and student groups now play the main role.

This idea is justified by saying that the brain worker now plays the main role in society, in so far as the modern function of a qualified worker gives rise to a new revolutionary character and a new degree of progressiveness.

This is the main essence of Roger Garaudy's conception of a new "Historic Bloc." This boils down to a denial of the leading role of the working class. It tries to prove that those in charge of technological process and its development become the vanguard of the revolutionary process.

What he and others who have come up with new theories governing the revolutionary process fail to realise is (and I quote, again from another article in Socialism Theory and Practice No. 1, 1973) that "The community of interest of the various sections of the proletariat stems first of all from its subordinate position in the system of capitalist exploitation and social oppression. It goes without saying that the most numerous sections of the brain workers are now displaying a growing opposition to capitalism and are coming to play a more and more active role in the class struggle."

This process has been brought about by their incorporation in to the system of exploited hired labor.

The Scientific and technological revolution has only widened the gap of incomes between hired labor and the bourgeoisie. It has developed the intensification of labor by capital. It has produced an insecure standard of living.

This has increased nervous and mental strain. Greater unemployment has arisen from the anarchy of production brought about by capitalists drive for super profits.

The production of large amounts of surplus capital are used to suppress the revolutionary process.

Capitalism is producing more and more reserves of technical labor to service it's new technology. This accounts for the number of technical labourers unemployed and the number of school leavers with

a higher education unable to find work.

We know that the power of the working class to develop its technical knowledge is unbounded, but is held back by the capitalist system.

The scientific technological revolution makes way for a great change in man's relationship to the instruments of production. It gives rise for the working people to not only satisfy their growing intellectual will, but to satisfy their material requirements.

By this fact, capitalist ownership of new technology does not decrease the contradictions between productive forces and productive relations.

With the development of the scientific and technological revolution the demands of the working class are changing and motives for their social behaviour has changed.

Mass militant action is increasing as workers are demanding a greater say in economic management and in organised public life.

Workers are more and more looking toward the socialist mode of production.

These are the main objective tendencies determining the growth of the struggle under capitalism which is laying the base for the transition to socialism.

If we look at what are the results of the scientific technological revolution of capitalist economy we see that it has demanded one basic question for its development — centralisation of capital on a gigantic scale.

It would be impossible to provide the vast investments of capital required by modern technology without the further centralising of capital. This is so mainly because the individual plant is no longer the basis economic unit under capitalism. More and more mergers of the economic complexes controlled by the capitalist are taking place, giving rise to super monopolies.

The emergence of these super monopolies is the main characteristic of the scientific technological revolution in capitalist society.

With this great amount of centralised capital most developed capitalist countries are in the economic strangle hold of the multi nationals.

It becomes virtually impossible to control or govern their own economy as the present day crisis is proving because not one of the developed capitalists countries has escaped the crisis. Australia's present position is a vivid example.

Many lessons can be learned by the Australian and international working class.

New Times, No. 6, 1973 said: "The main and most important feature of the scientific technological revolution which has developed it that it has created the productive forces capable of satisfying the material need of all sections of society, ensuring every individual his daily bread and transforming labour from a burden to a creative endeavour in which all men can find fulfilment, but this potential cannot be fully harnessed within the confines of capitalism, this can only be done under the new social order *Socialism*."

## Subscribe to **THE SOCIALIST**

...Fortnightly newspaper of national and international events from a socialist viewpoint.  
News stories, politics, economics, peace, democracy, for unity against monopoly and reaction.

6 issues	\$1.50
12 issues	\$3.00
24 issues	\$6.00

Send cheque or money order to:  
**SPA Publications, 111 Sussex Street, Sydney NSW 2000**

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....P'CODE.....

# NEW ERA BOOKSHOPS

531 George St Sydney, Phone 26 5016  
350 Victoria St North Melbourne, Victoria  
95 Goodwood Road Goodwood South Australia, Phone 71 0417

*Learn more About Economics  
and Socialism*

Monetary crisis of Capitalism	2.45
Political Economy of Capitalism	2.20
Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy	4.15
Social partnership of class struggle	2.10
The Philosophy of Revolt	1.60
Problems of the Communist Movement	2.45
Philosophical Tradition Today	2.50

---

Subscribe to...

## *World Marxist Review*

...the most authoritative journal of the world Communist movement. WMR is a monthly publication containing articles by Communist leaders and theoreticians from all over the globe. It is published in handy paperback, pocketbook form. Cost: 50c (Postage 40c Extra)

SPA Publications, 111 Sussex St., Sydney N.S.W. 2000