

australian marxist review

Theoretical journal of the Socialist Party of Australia

★ *Capitalist and socialist
world contrast*

★ *Stages in the general
crisis of capitalism*

★ *New feature on
Study Classes*

*The scientific and
technological revolution:*

★ *1 Problems under capitalism*

★ *2 Prospects under socialism*

★ *Eurocommunism*

★ *Soviet psychiatry and
the struggle for peace*

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EDITOR: W.J.Brown
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CONTENTS

Capitalist and socialist world contrast	Pat Clancy.....1
Stages in the general crisis of capitalism	Tom McDonald.....8
Soviet psychiatry and the struggle for peace	A. Bakaya.....13
Eurocommunism	Steve Mavrantonis.....25
New feature on Study Classes	Education Committee....28
<u>The scientific and technological revolution</u>	
Prospects under socialism	Prof. D. Gvishiani.....29
Problems under capitalism	Brian Rooney.....33
Book Review	Ray Clarke.....37

Capitalist and socialist world contrast

by PAT CLANCY

We have the highest level of unemployment since the great depression of the 1930s, inflation continues to be a very serious problem, our manufacturing industry is in a state of serious decline, the building industry is in a most depressed state, the undercapacity operation on a world scale of the steel industry, and the general economic decline in the 24 developed capitalist nations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development have meant that overseas income from minerals and coal has also suffered a serious setback.

The economic crisis facing our country is not something special and peculiar to Australia, it is part of the general decline affecting all countries of the capitalist system.

While the degree of this crisis varies from country to country, the general picture is one of a system in a state of serious crisis.

The 24 member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the co-ordinating centre of the capitalist world, have an officially recorded total of unemployed of 18 million, and this official figure greatly understates the nature of unemployment.

To this figure must be added the many millions more of partially unemployed and many millions more who are not recorded in official figures because of the variety of statistical requirements in the various countries.

It is also estimated that in the countries of the third world there are approximately 300 million unemployed and the World Bank's official figures of people living in conditions of dire poverty in the world are that 800 million people are in that sad and tragic position.

The depth of the economic decline is shown by the fact that the world's steel industry, a basic economic indicator when examining economic growth in the country, is operating at 60% capacity and this undercapacity operation of the basic industry is sending shock waves of uncertainty through every other area of economic activity.

The struggle between the strongest capitalist economies, the USA,

Japan, and the European Economic Community headed by West Germany, is indeed very fierce.

WORLD TRADE

In the figures of world trade, the United States will this year have a \$30,000 million trade deficit, while the Japanese International trade will show a surplus of \$27,000 million.

With West Germany dominating it the European Economic Community (the Common Market) is carrying forward a policy of trade restrictions and an invasion of industrial and agricultural markets in a way which makes it a serious threat to the economically weaker economies such as Australia.

Together with a picture of internal economic decline and fierce struggle in the international trade scene, the capitalist world is in the grip of a severe monetary crisis.

MONETARY CRISIS

In place of a stable world monetary market with general recognition of a single international currency, the US dollar, we have the picture of devaluation and revaluation of currency in the various countries and a continuing weakening position of the US dollar.

An appreciation of the severity of the international monetary crisis of capitalism can be gained by study of the changing "fortunes" of the US dollar.

At the war's end it was accepted at the "Bretton Woods Conference" (which met at the end of the war and set up the World Bank), that the US dollar was the world's monetary unit and equivalent to gold.

This favoured position of the US dollar enabled penetration of the economies of many countries by the US multinationals and gave it a dominating position in the world's monetary market.

Gold was fixed in price at 35 US dollars per ounce and remained in that position until the 1960s.

Taking advantage of their favoured economic position the US Government printed many billions of US paper dollars, sparking off the world-wide inflationary cycle by financing its Vietnam invasion by use of the printing press pouring many billions of dollars into the world currency.

This paper money has rapidly lost its value and the US dollar is no longer accepted as the only unit of world currency.

With its multibillion dollar trade deficit it no longer has the economic backing for the dollar and this is shown by the present position of the US dollar in the world monetary scene.

GOLD PRICE

From the time gold was freed from its artificial fixation its price in terms of US dollars has soared.

Only a few months ago speculation was rife in the monetary world as to whether the price of gold would go beyond the "magic" figure of \$200 per ounce.

It has passed that figure and in a very short time has gone to its current price of \$227 per ounce and this price fluctuates from day to day with the general emphasis upon further increases.

The rise in the price of gold means that the US dollar is worth about 10 cents compared with its immediate post war value.

The position of the US in its competition with the strong capitalist economies of Japan and West Germany is also reflected in the position of the US dollar viz a viz, the Japanese yen and the German mark.

Eighteen months ago the US dollar was equivalent to 400 Japanese Yen. Today the equivalent is one US dollar to 180 Japanese Yen.

The same picture applies to the position of the US dollar and the German mark.

Even the weaker British sterling has appreciated in value and for the first time ever it now takes more than 2 US dollars to buy one British pound.

MULTINATIONALS

Competition between the strong rival capitalist economies is also shown by the change in the picture of penetration by multinationals.

When one speaks of multinationals it is generally thought that this means penetration of other markets by US multinationals. But the picture is different today. Japanese industry is penetrating even the

US economy.

At present Japanese multinationals have 85,000 million dollars invested in industries in the United States and recently one of the large Japanese TV manufacturers bought out a strong West German TV firm and now Japanese TV sets are being manufactured in West Germany.

Last month the Peugeot-Citroen car firm took over the operations of the American firm Chrysler in Great Britain, Spain and France and the Japanese car making firm of Mitsubishi is in the process of taking over Chrysler in Australia.

The general economic decline and the fierce struggle for economic supremacy amongst the powerful rivals in the capitalist world is having its effect on Australia's international economic and trade position.

TECHNOLOGY LAG

Our technologically backward manufacturing industry is unable to compete on equal terms with the more technologically advanced industries of the stronger capitalist countries.

Our agricultural products are being shut out from the European markets by the policies of the Common Market and also by the subsidised agricultural exports of the European Economic Community.

An example is the invasion of the sugar market in Papua New Guinea by the European Common Market which has subsidised its sugar beet industry very heavily and is able to undersell Australia in a market right next door to us.

The market for our minerals and coal has diminished because of the under capacity operation of the Japanese steel industry and is also threatened by the recent Japan-China agreements signed in Tokyo in late October.

This agreement opens up for Japan a new market for its manufactured products and also an avenue for the same raw materials which Australia produces.

Together with a picture of diminishing international trade prospects goes the present picture of an excess of money going out of Australia to the overseas owners of much of our industry, which is not balanced by a corresponding capital inflow and as a result our international reserves are declining.

They are at present being propped up by a huge programme of overseas borrowing by the Fraser Government, a policy for which they condemned the Whitlam Government, but an expedient to which they are now resorting because of the dangerous position of our overseas reserves.

The real nature of our economic decline is able to be masked by this expedient but it is a short term policy which will have its adverse effect later on.

Money borrowed has to be repaid and with interest and the repayment of these overseas loans will further deplete our international reserves.

This brief analysis is intended to emphasise the serious nature of the present economic situation confronting our country and also intended to emphasise that it is not some short term decline that will go away within a brief period.

It is presented so that we may calmly assess the situation and come forward with our own alternate economic policy.

While we agree with the assessment of the ACTU Congress economic policy declaration that there is no easy and short term solution to the problems, we do believe that there are alternatives that can and must be adopted.

On the international economic scene there is also another picture, and that is the picture of the position of the socialist world.

SOCIALIST BOOM

While the capitalist world economy is in a state of serious decline the socialist world economy is booming, there are high rates of economic growth, no unemployment and no inflation but constantly rising living standards with wages going up and prices remaining stable or declining.

The member countries of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (USSR, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Romania, Mongolia, Vietnam, Cuba) have shown a growth rate 12 times above their position at the inception of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance with the exception of Vietnam, the newest member.

The member states have been joined by a whole group of associated countries, with Yugoslavia being in a special and fully participatory position, and the advantage of a socialist economy in a single country

is added to by the all round economic mutual co-operation and assistance of the socialist countries joining together and multiplying the initial advantages of socialism many times over in the economic development of these countries.

ANOTHER MARKET

As well as substantiating the firm belief of the Australian Labor movement that the only effective way forward for Australia is a socialist system to really cure our economic ills, the booming economies of the socialist world also provide a rich potential market for Australia in the immediate period and offer prospects greatly improving our international reserves, an obvious alternate market which could be entered into on the basis of mutually beneficial trade between Australia and the socialist countries.

The socialist countries have demonstrated their willingness to enter into trade on this basis and our policy should be one which demands that the Australian Government take a realistic view of international trade possibilities and pursue this policy of seeking alternate markets with the socialist world as an urgent necessity for the economic strengthening of our position.

We would also put forward the necessity for an alternate economic policy within Australia.

The present economic policy of the Fraser Government is one which is seeking to solve the crisis at the expense of the working people.

Its policy of depressing wages, of increasing taxation on the working people, of slashing social welfare provisions and wrecking our health scheme is aimed at solving the crisis in the interests of the tiny minority of powerful interests who control and direct the economic policy of our country.

The extent of this minority control is shown by the fact that a mere 4% of the top share holders in the big companies control more than half the shares and by means of that control dominate the economic scene in Australia.

ALTERNATE ECONOMIC POLICY

An alternative economic policy of the trade union movement is being worked out by an ACTU Executive Task Force for presentation to the trade union movement. It will be the means of continuing active campaigning by the working class for adoption of it as the economic policy that will serve Australia's best interests.

All unions should play a part in working out the details of this alternate economic policy and presenting proposals to the ACTU for consideration.

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Stages in the general crisis of capitalism

by TOM McDONALD

Imperialism is the final stage of capitalism and in this stage the general crisis develops — that is, the decay process sets in.

By general crisis we mean an all embracing crisis of capitalism as a social system. The general crisis is the product of the internal contradictions of capitalism.

Some bourgeois theoreticians try to explain away the crisis as being caused by foreign communist agents and as a communist plot to over-throw capitalism.

Rather than socialists creating the crisis, the crisis creates socialism. It is the internal contradictions that produce the general crisis; the basic contradiction being the social character of production and the private capitalist form of appropriation.

This contradiction is expressed in the limited purchasing power of the masses. In other words the people are unable to purchase and thus consume all the goods and services that they are capable of creating.

External factors such as the growth of socialism accelerate the general crisis of capitalism but do not create the crisis. The “final stage of the general crisis” is the stage of state monopoly capitalism. State monopoly capitalism is a fusion of the power and the resources of monopoly and the State in the interests of monopoly.

Lenin called State monopoly capitalism legalised embezzlement of public funds. The other aspect is that large scale socialisation of production in the period of imperialism creates the material prerequisites for socialism.

The general crisis commenced with the first world war. Whereas the economic crisis proceeds by way of cyclical crisis, the general crisis goes deeper and deeper in an irreversible process. When the first world war began, the process of the final decay of capitalism commenced. Stage one ended with the establishment of the USSR, the first socialist country in human history.

Up until this development the capitalist system had undisputed domination of the world. This was only just over 60 years ago so we are looking at events that have taken place within the life of the average person,

This is not a long period of time historically.

The period between the first and second world war was marked by industry working below capacity, accompanied by chronic unemployment. The loss of the Russian markets plus the worsening standards of living on the one hand and the growth of the productive capacity on the other led to a sharpening rivalry for world markets.

So the capitalist class resorted to increased suppression of the working class to force down the workers' living standards and produce goods more cheaply, in order to gain greater profits and a bigger share of the world markets. But then, as now, it solved nothing.

The most repressive forms of oppression were expressed in fascism and Japanese militarism.

The second state of the general crisis commenced also with a war, the second world war. The most important features of the second stage were:

1. The establishment of socialism as a world system, with countries in Europe and Asia taking the road to socialism; and
2. The start of the disintegration of the colonial system of imperialism.
3. The disintegration of the colonial system into the third stage of crisis. For example between 1955 and 1970, 60 countries in Asia, Africa and Americas cast off the shackles of colonial oppression.

The struggle against the remaining colonial and racist regimes is now entering its final stage in Africa. It is interesting to note that the Maoists try to describe this development as "Soviet imperialism," as, of course, the propagandists of imperialism describe it.

The Maoists fail to see the whole scientific Marxist analysis of the general crisis of capitalism.

The third stage of the general crisis started in the late 1950's in which socialism started to become the more powerful of the two social systems.

For example in the ten years immediately preceding the second world war the socialist economies developed at two and a half times the rate of the economies of the capitalist countries.

In production terms socialist production went from 20 to 27% of the world production. Today socialism is the stronger of the two systems. This is of fundamental significance for it means that imperialism can no longer impose its will upon mankind.

Stage three also saw victories in North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam and socialist developments in Africa and other countries. Vietnam proved that imperialism could no longer stop progress through its military power. However overthrow of the progressive Allende Government in Chile shows that the struggle does not proceed in a straight line without set-backs. The coup in Chile shows that imperialism is still a powerful aggressive, reactionary force.

Page 6 of the Socialist Party of Australia's Program describes the general crisis as the disintegration and revolutionary collapse of the capitalist system on a world scale.

When the Program talks about the "revolutionary collapse" it means the actions, or the impact of the actions, of people on the whole revolutionary process.

It is these actions which are accelerating the rate of development and progress towards socialism. One aspect of this is the development of the communist movement in the non-socialist world.

There are, in the countries where Marxist Parties are legal, some five million communists who have over 40 million voting supporters. The struggle of the people against capitalism and imperialism is reflected in the strike actions, where figures show in four years ending 1975, 235 million people participated in strike action.

The struggle of the liberation movement are well known to all of us and the results obtained have already been referred to.

Of course the imperialists do not surrender easily. They resort to new forms of struggle. The efforts to destroy or ideologically corrupt communist movements is one such form. The results achieved as far as the Australia Communist Party is concerned is an example.

The imperialists make efforts to replace the trade union movement with worker participation as in West Germany. Another form is to create public relations organisations that spy on the unions and set out to identify their weaknesses and to exploit those weaknesses. Another is an effort to destroy the unions. For example in the United States less than 20% of the workforce are members of trade unions.

They make efforts to divide the international communist movement and go so far as to seek to develop an anti-Soviet front with China.

We should note their increased reliance on force, although this is not new, but rather highlights the desperate position of imperialism.

Before dealing with the economic crisis, which is itself part of the general crisis, we should look at some of the other main expressions of the general crisis. There is the inability of the system to function in a way acceptable to the masses. Its inability to rule and to function in the old ways.

Dealing with the economic crisis we must bear in mind that capitalist economy proceeds in a cyclical process, a four stage process, boom, crisis, depression, recovery.

To the average worker it may appear that there have been only two economic crises since the first world war, one in the 1930's and the other today. The facts are that we have had many such crises.

With exception of the two big ones, the others have happened in one or a limited number of countries while the other capitalist countries were in a state of boom.

As a result the surplus production of the countries in crisis could be sold in the countries of boom where the demand was high. This was done even if it meant the surplus being sold on the cheap.

So what makes the crises severe is when they happen in all the main capitalist countries at the same time, as in the 1930's and now. The thing about the economic crisis is that things do not go down and down and down and collapse, but rather recovery takes place and gives the appearance that capitalism can solve its problems after a long of suffering.

Each recovery is not the same, for each recovery leads to a further development of the productive forces (that is, the capacity to produce) which in turn deepens the effects of the basic contradiction. Industry produces more and more with less workers, therefore the gap between what the workers produce and what they can afford to buy back becomes wider and wider. This will lead to a new crisis.

The Socialist Party correctly talks about certain features of the economic crisis becoming permanent features. It is important to bear in mind that in the 1930 crisis, unemployment reached, in Australia, 30 in 100, and industrial production in the capitalist world dropped by 46% and unemployment went to 26 million. Capitalism never recovered from that crisis up to the period of the second world war.

It took the second world war to destroy the surplus production capacity, machinery factories, roads, hospitals, schools, cities, what have you. In other words, as a temporary and partial "solution" to the crisis

of capitalism surplus production capacity, surplus goods and services were destroyed, thereby creating new demands. This meant that capitalism "needed" a war. (In itself, this fact is a serious reminder of the vital nature of the current struggle for durable world peace in the nuclear age).

After the war there was demand for homes and all of the things that had been destroyed as a result of the war. This led to temporary revival of the capitalist economies.

Today, the trend is for unemployment to become a permanent feature of capitalist society. Experiences in the United States over the last 20 years lend weight to the view that unemployment will, or has, become a permanent feature of capitalist society.

So that each economic crisis, whilst leading to a recovery of a particular type, creates the conditions for an even more serious economic crisis by widening the gap between the capacity of society to produce and the limitations that capitalism places on the ability of the masses to consume that production.

Because each economic recovery sows the seeds for a deeper economic crisis, the economic crisis becomes part of the general crisis. It in turn is impacted by the general crisis.



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Soviet Psychiatry and the struggle for peace

This scholarly Marxist article is published in full because of its great value in answering one of the latest forms of anti-Soviet slander.

by A. BAKAYA

(from The African Communist No 73, 1978)

Following on from the 1975 Helsinki Accords for European security, a vast campaign has been launched against the Soviet Union primarily, and the Socialist countries in general, around the concept of human rights. Emotions have been stirred about the so-called abuse of psychiatry and the western press and some organisations have unashamedly used dubious information to sensationally whip up anti-Soviet feelings.

Psychiatry and dissidents have become the new bogeys to stir up fear and hatred against socialism which in only 60 years in the Soviet Union has produced unprecedented advances in all spheres in the lives of Soviet citizens. Maternity care, child care, health care, education, housing, protection of the environment for people, security in jobs, rights for the elderly, scientific advances, respect for one's fellow citizens, facilities for sport and culture for all, internationalism and peace — these are achievements which even the most reactionary elements in our world have to admit.

Every single citizen in the socialist system is guaranteed security for the necessities of life and within this security each man, woman and child has the opportunity to develop to the fullest potential of his or her individual being. These are human rights which every human being in the whole world, regardless of race, colour or creed needs as a foundation! They constitute the right to life without which there can be no contentment and lasting joy in being a member of human kind.

Whose interests are being served when the agreements for a basis of peace for Europe and the world are being challenged on the issue of human rights? Who benefits from racism and apartheid, from racial discrimination in the capitalist countries, from unemployment, from poor educational and health facilities? Only the profit makers and exploiters. "Abuse of Psychiatry" in socialism is a capitalist red herring, a trick to sow confusion amongst people seeking a way of life that capitalism is unable to provide.

At the 6th World Congress of Psychiatry held in Honolulu, Hawaii,

in 1977 a resolution condemning Soviet psychiatric practices was supported by only 19 countries, while 33 countries voted against, including countries like Sweden, India and Greece. The resolution was sponsored mainly by the British, Australian and New Zealand Psychiatric Associations and supported by the USA. (Three countries at this international meeting of scientists produced spoilt ballot papers, though nobody knows how they managed to spoil their papers. At any rate their votes were not counted). However, on a card vote, the resolution was carried by 90 votes to 88. The voting system used gave delegates a number of votes based on the number of paid-up members in their association. This favoured the developed countries at the expense of the undeveloped. For instance, India, the second most populous country in the world with 500 million citizens, had only 1 vote. This is how 33 countries could muster only 88 votes on the card vote, while 19 countries mustered 90 votes and thus carried the resolution.

Developing countries, especially from the Afro-Asian sector of our world, ought to take heed, since reactionary circles often advance the argument that voting rights at the United Nations should be weighted according to each country's financial contribution to the UN coffers. It can easily be seen that this would serve the interests of the rich countries at the expense of the poor, and nullify the principle of one country, one vote while now prevails.

The text of the resolution which was forced through the conference in this way was, in part:

“That the World Psychiatric Association take note of the abuse of psychiatry for political purposes and that it condemn those practices in all countries in which they occur and call upon the professional organisations of psychiatrists in those countries to renounce and expunge those practices from their countries; and that the WPA implement this resolution in the first instance in reference to the extensive evidence of systematic abuse of psychiatry for political purposes in the USSR.”

No convincing evidence to support the charges against the Soviet Union was presented to the conference.

THE SOVIET SCENE

The Soviet delegation was made up of psychiatrists from Moscow, Leningrad, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Estonia and led by Dr. E.A. Babayan, Deputy Minister of Health of the USSR and Head of the Council of Psychiatry and of the Permanent Committee on Narcotics. The corridors and foyers of the conference hall were

flooded with anti-Soviet propaganda and propagandists. Central to the propaganda campaign was a book published a few weeks before, by Bloch and Reddaway, in which they list some 200 Soviet citizens who they allege are in mental hospitals because of political dissent.

Dr. Sidney Bloch is not known to be a passionate dissenter about psychiatric services in South Africa, his birthplace, where he studied medicine before specialising in psychiatry abroad. His non-medical British collaborator and co-author, Peter Reddaway, lectures in political science in London. Reddaway knows that the economic structure of the apartheid system gives rise to the evil social conditions in our country, of which psychiatric cruelty is only one example.

Conference under the chairmanship of the W.P.A. president, Dr. Rohm, had a procedural device which restricted the Soviet delegation from dealing with all non-scientific, non-medical allegations that were poisoning the scientific atmosphere of the delegates to some facts, namely that many of the list of 200 had nothing to do with politics but were in psychiatric institutions for acts of violence such as the use of knives against others and even murder. They were in psychiatric institutions because under Soviet law they were found to be not in control of their behaviour and hence not liable because their acts were related to mental illness.

Forensic psychiatric examinations generally involve a board of three psychiatrists and if they diagnose mental illness the patient is subsequently examined by psychiatrists in the institution to which he or she has been sent for treatment and not with the intention of punishing them.

This procedure of expert examination is aimed at the reliable diagnosis of the mental illness and this influences the nature of the treatment received. Others of the list of 200 had never been or were even considered to be mental patients but were in prison for acts illegal in Soviet law. Some had committed offences, had been suspected of being mentally ill, sent for a forensic psychiatric examination and found not to be mentally ill and thence returned to face criminal charges. Reference was also made, by name, of people who had been in psychiatric treatment in the USSR and had left to be in the "free world." Some of these had subsequently found themselves in psychiatric hospitals in the USA, Vienna and Paris; one is known to have committed suicide in the West.

Some former Soviet citizens were now in the West and they have allegedly been wrongly diagnosed as mentally ill by USSR psychiatrists. Dr. Babayan asked whether they had since been examined by western psychiatrists on their psychiatric condition which would be evidence

of healthy people being diagnosed as being mentally ill.

In addition, the Soviet delegation, in accordance with medical ethics, presented to the Psychiatric Association documentation of their diagnosis of mental illness for those individuals who had been committed to mental hospitals.

There is also the opinion of prominent western psychiatrists who held international office in psychiatry and who had been invited to the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry to examine patients whom Soviet psychiatrists had diagnosed as suffering from mental illness. Those who accepted the invitation and inspected the Institute were satisfied that all the patients they saw and the psychiatric documentation they examined did not indicate that persons were being detained in a mental institution if they did not have a mental illness.

It is not surprising then that 33 countries voted against the anti-Soviet resolution. In the light of the facts presented to the Conference by the Soviet delegation, Dr. Weinberg of the USA switched the attack from "abuse of psychiatry" in the USSR to one of Soviet psychiatrists perhaps making diagnostic errors. As Dr. Babayan of the USSR delegation pointed out: the question of diagnostic mistakes is a medical-scientific question; the matter of Soviet psychiatry abusing medicine for political purposes is a political question.

The Honolulu Conference of the World Psychiatric Association also heard scholarly papers from Soviet psychiatrists on biological mental illness and physiological features in mental diseases. Dr. Babayan read a paper on the organisation of psychiatric services in process for psychiatrists to adhere to in arriving at a conclusion to detain an involuntary patient in hospital. He discussed Soviet studies and guardedness about the use of electro-convulsive therapy (ECT); the total legal prohibition on the brain surgical procedure known as leucotomy and lobotomy; the guarantee of rights of mental patients to rehabilitation in work, payment of pensions etc. This paper was well received by the more than 4,000 delegates at the Conference.

CAUSES FOR CONCERN

Proof of my argument that the Honolulu Conference was rigged against the Soviet Union for political, not scientific reasons is provided by the fact that reprehensible practices in psychiatry in other countries, including our own South Africa, were ignored.

The New Zealand Psychiatric Association, which was one of the sponsors of the anti-Soviet resolution might look into some of the

research going on in its country. Sleep deprivation (i.e. forcibly keeping a person awake for 36 or more hours at a time) is being employed as a treatment for depression. What is the scientific rationale for such a "treatment?" How does this method, used by the torturers in South Africa and Northern Ireland to break the psychological balance of political prisoners, become a treatment for severe and chronic depression? How humane are the experiments in the USA in planting electrodes in the brains of prisoners to control their behaviour? What of the brain surgery like leucotomy or lobotomy that is employed for mental patients in Britain and the USA and some other countries?

Western psychiatrists who use electro-convulsive therapy so freely on their mental patients might consider more carefully the Soviet Ministry of Health's reluctance to use electric shock as a treatment because "upon repeated applications (it) may lead to changes of micro-circulation in the central nervous system, to point haemorrhages, to changes in the glial-tissue of the CNS and so on." (p.3 Babayan, 1977)

We all know of the risks to psychological well-being of the drugs LSD and LSD-25. Since 1967 these have been unconditionally prohibited for use on human beings in the USSR. In the "free world" it is a human right for individuals to volunteer to take the drug for scientific experiments!

RACISM, PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERN

"Between 8000 and 9000 Africans suffering from mental disorders are detained against their will in privately owned institutions in the Republic of South Africa. These Africans are the object of a business deal between the State and profit-making White-owned companies which receive Government subsidy on a per capita basis against the provision of custodial care for mental patients referred to in a Government publication as the 'sediment of mentally maladjusted persons and deviates.' There is not a single Black psychiatrist in South Africa, and vital decisions about thousands of African patients are made by *part-time physicians who do not even speak the language of the patients.* (My emphasis) While the majority of the White mental patients are receiving care in services provided by the State (the provision of psychiatric beds per 1,000 of the White population is 3.3 times greater than for Africans), the majority of the African mental patients are certified as mentally ill by the State and transferred involuntarily to profit-making private 'sanatoria.' About one third of the whole mental health budget of the Republic of South Africa subsidises this operation." (Abstract: WHO Study "Apartheid and Mental Health Care," April 1977. U.N. Document. 77 — 06695).

These private institutions made a profit of R3,404,000 for 1974-75 and increased profits to R5,252,000 for 1975-76, from the mental suffering of Black patients. The majority of the above psychiatric patients are probably suffering from severe mental diseases. Mostly no service or very little exists for persons suffering from neurotic disorders. Suicide figures for Durban in 1971 (cited by Fatima Meer) show that Africans now have the highest suicide rate in the province. Moreover African suicides are by young persons whereas White suicide is predominantly a phenomenon of advanced age.

The World Health Organisation study condemns apartheid as a source of psychosocial stress and illustrates this point by reference to the ferocity of apartheid in its disregard for the Africans as people with an interest in their own lives as well as the future of their children. The life of the African is one of forced uprooting from a geographical residential area and the social community so created. Blacks in general and especially Africans suffer under laws that legally force splitting of families; we live under enforced economic deprivation and poverty and have forced upon us an inferior status. The laws and the social system which the police brutally maintain project us as general creatures. "Jy is maar net in kaffer/koellie/hotnot" — we are not considered to be persons and so a process of de-individualisation and alienation is actively fostered against us.

Basic insecurity about one's rights to live in the city forces one to unbearable tolerance of insult and exploitation because to lose one's job carries with it the risk of being endorsed out of the city. Pass law harassment and arrest for technical infringements involve imprisonment, loss of wages, payment of fines. One appears helpless and children and family grow up seeing and experiencing this atmosphere of helpless insecurity and the absence of simple continuity of family life.

Protest and attempts to bring about a change from apartheid are inhibited by fear of Bureau of State Security (BOSS) informers and agents. Arrest carries with it the terror of social isolation; torture by days and nights of sleep deprivation; standing in one position thus limiting proprioceptive feedback stimulation as well as disrupting blood circulation and thereby creating central nervous system disorientation; electric shock and blows and kicks to every part of the anatomy; the insult and humiliation of nakedness and helplessness while being taunted by the security police between unexpected blows. Such as the state of human rights and the terrorisation of humanity that President Carter and the World Psychiatric Association might address themselves to.

Of 48 persons known to have died in detention and while under interrogation by the security police (up to the end of 1977) 38% are officially said to have died by suicide; 12% are said to have died by falling, some down stairs others by falling out of high windows in the interrogation building. Only 26% are said to have died from illness.

A scientific body concerned about human rights and its abuse should not be able to overlook this, but these issues were never raised at Honolulu. How could the delegates overlook this absence of human rights and also similar reports of terrorisation of the people in countries such as Chile and Paraguay?

When President Carter of the USA talks of human rights it would be good if he looked at the medical services available for the Black Americans, the Chicanos and other of the deprived people who because of racism and exploitation are the poorest people, the first to be unemployed, the least likely to get a higher education in their wealthy and scientifically and technologically advanced society. Let President Carter and the American Psychiatric Association who are so concerned about human rights check the slanderous suggestions of their Professor Jensen and his collaborators who propagate theories about the genetic inferiority of Black people. Do Black people not have human rights? Is the suggestion that they are born inferior not an infringement of their human rights? Let the American administration and the various American scientific bodies check Daniel Moynihan (former U.S. Ambassador to the U.N.) when he suggests that Black family ties are loose and therefore are the cause of many of the social difficulties Black people live with. Such a statement is an insult to Black people because it suggests we do not share the need for the social function that the family provides as an initial social base. Moynihan's thesis is that we are slightly different from the White races (meaning White Americans and other White people in capitalist countries) and perhaps therefore human rights are different for us. Unless you control such people who produce pseudo-scientific theories that "justify" our oppression you cannot assure us the right to realise our human potential. Capitalism and racism can produce the excuses, it is the provision of the facilities and services we need that will be proof of concern for our human potential and our human rights.

THE ORGANISATION OF SOVIET PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES

Psychiatry is a specialist medical service as is any other specialist branch of medicine. In the USSR all psychiatric treatment is part of the general care of the population and is guaranteed as a right by the

Soviet Constitution. Mental disorders are generally precipitated by stress and treatment includes helping the patient by reducing stress. At the same time, the patient should not, wherever possible, be deprived of as normal a life as is possible. Of the 832,000 doctors in the USSR some 20,000 are specialists in psychiatry and all work in the health service. None is in private practice.

The majority of psychiatric patients in the USSR (90%) are *out-patients* or in day hospital treatment and these services are conducted from what are called dispensaries. There are locally based clinics under the direction of a psychiatrist to which a person may go of his own accord or be referred from a physician to a neurologist and thence to a psychiatrist.

The psychiatrist examines the patient and will prescribe medicines if these are necessary or advise on other specialist treatments which are conducted from the dispensary. Such other treatment is done only by psychiatric staff or by other professional personnel under the direction of the psychiatrist.

Follow-up care is also organised from the dispensary and the regular check-ups that are conducted on discharged patients are done by psychiatrists or skilled nursing staff who visit the patient in his or her home to ensure that the person is not relapsing or deteriorating and is taking his medicines where this is necessary. The psychiatrist might advise a change of job or, for example, recommend a stay in a non-medical rest home (sanatorium) if he considers this to be in the patient's interest. As Soviet law guarantees the right to work there are no practical difficulties. The doctor's advice is acted on. The trade unions will help financially if the patient needs to go for a rest to a non-medical rest home.

The rights of citizens also apply to the patients. Such services are available to all patients, whether psychiatric or general medical cases. Patients requiring hospitalised treatment go to mental hospitals. In these hospitals the patients are divided into what are called "quiet patients" and "non-quiet patients." The latter are usually violent and suicidal patients, i.e. patients who are a danger to themselves or others. The psychiatric and other hospital staff are obliged to treat all patients with dignity and with consideration for the wellbeing. Patients who have to be restrained e.g. when they are being violent, are taken care of by trained nursing staff. There are no individual hospital cells and well staffed wards ensure that the staff can cope with the patients. A patient who is in the "non-quiet" category can be transferred to the "quiet" category and vice versa.

One of the problems with some psychiatric conditions is that patients refuse or do not recognise the need for treatment. Should a person require hospitalisation and if he or she refuses to accept treatment voluntarily then a board of three psychiatrists must do the initial examination to try to make a diagnosis. The members of the board have to sign such a certificate individually. The patient will then be seen by the psychiatric staff at the hospital to which he is sent and their opinions are recorded. Thus up to seven psychiatrists might have examined the patient within the first 24 hours of his involuntary hospitalisation.

We detail this aspect of medical care to indicate the material services that make the right to health care in the Soviet Union a real right. The training of medical, nursing, occupational therapist, psychological and other staff is costly; paying salaries and maintaining buildings and equipment costs money. All this is a service that is free to the citizens of the USSR. To carry out treatment and the care of psychiatric patients requires a lot of staff. For example to calm a patient by giving a hot bath with constantly running hot water for three hours is more expensive in staff terms than it is for a nurse to give an injection to tranquillize a patient who is over-excited. Adequate trained staff and free medication are part and parcel of health care for psychiatric patients.

Patients' progress is regularly reviewed and nobody is kept in hospital for longer than is necessary. Also this implies that patients are not discharged earlier than they should be because of shortage of hospital beds. The constitutional rights of all citizens ensure that the rehabilitation of patients advised by the doctors on discharge from hospital is guaranteed to the patient.

Follow-up care which also requires the service of professional staff is part of another principle in Soviet health care — namely preventive medicine, technically called psychoprophylactic services. It is in the interests of the patient to prevent illness, mental illness included, rather than wait for the illness to become full blown and then be engaged in trying to cure the patient.

All these services involve an elaborate network of state-provided facilities and all the services are free to the citizens.

In most Western countries, treatment services in all branches of medicine, but possibly more so in psychiatry (where such is available) is inadequate. Private practice (i.e. fee paying patients) flourishes and as the cost of treatment is very high, only a wealthy minority obtain a

decent level of service while the majority of people either get an inadequate state hospital service or are permitted to wander the streets and parks and, as is sometimes debated, they are free to exercise their right to choose to kill themselves (suicide) rather than suffer the misery which is part of their illness.

DEMYSTIFICATION AND PSYCHIATRY

Psychiatry and mental illness provide a superb area for propagandists to employ in their anti-Soviet campaign, mainly because the thought of being considered mad stirs all kinds of passions in all of us. The layman probably believes that psychiatry is all about treating people who have totally lost contact with reality and are either raving lunatics or caught up in absurd beliefs of being grandiose persons such as Napoleon or Jesus Christ. Such cases do exist but are few and far between and recent advances in psycho-pharmacology make the possibility of helping and restoring them to normality a much more encouraging prospect.

The bulk of patients who require psychiatric treatment are people who maintain normal behaviour patterns but are in distress because they find they cannot act in accordance with what they rationally know to be the facts. Their emotions become disturbed. Their self-confidence is shattered.

Psychiatry recognises that delusions are a sign of a more complex morbidity. Delusions are false opinions and beliefs which do not correspond with the true position of things and which cannot be dispelled by producing rational evidence. Delusions may take various forms and for the purpose of this discussion, I quote from a Soviet textbook on psychiatry (Russian edition 1965) published in English in 1969. Delusions of grandeur may be present as a sense of "exaggerated importance, of greatness.....or unwarranted confidence in one's intellectual powers or in the great social importance of one's personality. A patient maintains that he can easily write a masterpiece of literature, that he has great talents as an actor, or that he can hold high social positions or high public office and influence world affairs." (p. 47, *Psychiatry*, Portnov and Fedotov).

Some delusions may be based on a false presumption but may involve a formally correct pattern of reasoning. Such a delusion includes ideas of persecution since the sufferer interprets the non-recognition of his false presumption as the result of intrigues by his enemies.

These examples have been included to indicate both the difficulty

and complexity of a psychological disorder. Any person might have a false belief or idea but such ideas do not remain inflexible in the light of objective reality and reasoning and do not persistently dominate the person's thoughts and actions. The problem for the expert is to differentiate a *false belief*, however strongly held, from a *delusion*. The importance of this distinction is that a delusion occurs in the context of a more general morbidity and it is this illness that has to be treated. One does not treat a delusional idea.

Western psychiatry has been very extensively influenced by Freud's idealistic interpretations of the workings of the mind. Freud's theories, while containing some interesting observations, are idealistic because they concentrate on describing how ideas have become distorted and therefore unrelated to objective reality. Such theories have been criticized in the West by many psychologists and psychiatrists as unscientific. The alternative to Freudian psychology in the West generally takes the form of a mechanistic view of man and this thread runs through the research on leucotomy and also behaviourism.

Pavlov has been a major influence on Soviet psychiatry and psychology. His main influence has been in emphasizing the dialectical relationship between mind and body. Psychiatric problems are therefore viewed as resulting from faulty workings of the nervous system, and treatment is sought through the protection of the nervous system from undue stress. Methods of treatment are influenced by this scientific background and are being continuously developed. But in addition, such a theoretical approach to the workings of the mind requires the services and facilities of a vast social and medical network.

An example is in the use of insulin therapy — the patients are put into a coma by medicine. In the coma they have to be maintained so that secondary complications do not occur. In a deep sleep for a lengthy period of time, the patients must be artificially fed; their heart, lungs, kidneys etc. have to be stimulated so that these vital organs are not disturbed from their normal functioning. Such treatment is expensive in time and personnel. Doctors, nurses and other hospital facilities are intensively employed. Soviet psychiatric scientists report the value of such treatment for some forms of schizophrenia. Why do western psychiatrists ignore such reports? Is it because they cannot provide such a service for their patients?

Preventive psychiatry is another area on which Soviet health care concentrates attention. This requires vast individual and environmental monitoring. Soviet psychiatry has much to teach western psychiatry. Soviet psychiatrists learn from the west: it would be for the good of

mental patients living in the west if the "free world" psychiatrists learned from their Soviet and other international scientific colleagues. (Wing, 1974) This is what a World Congress of Psychiatrists ought to be about: exchange and debate about scientific issues for the benefit of human kind. To relieve the misery and distress of the psychiatric patients is the objective of psychiatry, not to capitalize on their illness for political purposes.

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Eurocommunism and the struggle for ideological clarity

by STEVE MAVRANTONIS

One of the most striking aspects of our era — the era of transition from capitalism to socialism — is the sharpening of the struggle between the two opposing systems and their ideologies.

In the conditions of this sharp struggle, clarity and correct understanding of fundamental political issues is of vital importance to any Marxist-Leninist Party.

We can not dissociate the effort for ideological clarity from our every day political party activity.

We can not wait for the party to grow in strength and numbers first and then bother ourselves with the question of ideological clarity and the correct understanding of basic concepts of our theory.

In fact the smaller the party, the greater the need for strengthening of its ideological work.

For, the party can never grow and become a viable political force unless it has a clear understanding of its mission and the laws of the class struggle.

Often we are faced with the following question, from enemies and misinformed friends: "What kind of a communist are you — a pro-Moscow Communist, a Eurocommunist, an Australian communist?" and the like.

We can not brush aside such questions by merely saying "we are Australian communists," full stop.

We can never convince our friends or win the ideological battle with our enemies unless we are prepared to seriously debate the issue and point out with factual evidence that there is only one type of communism. There is only one ideology of Marxism-Leninism with universal application.

This of course should not be interpreted that the application of

Marxist-Leninist principles is identical in form to all countries and under any conditions and circumstances.

Genuine Marxists always maintain that the specific conditions of each country should be taken into account and they, to a certain degree, determine the particular form in which the Marxist-Leninist principles are applied.

The specific conditions however do not alter the essence of the principles and fundamental ideological concepts. The correct understanding of the relation between the specific and universal is basic for the creative development of Marxist-Leninist thought.

The upholding of revolutionary principles while creatively developing Marxism-Leninism, in the light of new experience, has also been declared in the documents of the 1969 International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties.

“Communists regard it as their task firmly to uphold the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism in the struggle against all enemies, steadfastly to make them a living reality, constantly to develop Marxist-Leninist theory and enrich it on the basis of present experience of waging the class struggle and building socialist society. Communists will always be true to the creative spirit of Leninism.”

(International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties Moscow 1969 — page 41).

So let us have a quick look at what really is EuroCommunism and its aims.

From a philosophical point of view this concept tends to imply that Marxism-Leninism is not a universal theory but it is decided on geographical grounds.

Further it implies that the Marxist-Leninist concept of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, as the transitional period of working class power, is only applicable to some geographical regions and to some historical conditions, but not to others.

There is however an obvious contradiction in this geo-political consideration of Eurocommunism. It fails, first of all, to take into account the fact that the socialist countries of Europe, are also part of Europe. From this point of view alone therefore this geographical division does not hold any water.

Besides Lenin always insisted that there might be a variation of forms of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The form may differ but the essence is always the same.

Life itself and historical developments have proven the correctness of this conclusion of Lenin.

But what are the real aims of Eurocommunism?

Its strategic aim is to form a long term alliance of parties of western countries primarily directed against the CPSU and the USSR, on the basis that these countries should follow a different brand of communism, a peaceful and pluralistic form of socialist transition.

One fundamental question however does not seem to enter the minds of all these people who peddle the Eurocommunist nonsense: What is the class enemy going to do? Is he going to allow us to choose at will the forms of struggle best suited to our purposes?

The history of class struggles has shown that our class enemies are not renowned for such generosity and kindness.

Now what is the tactical aim of Eurocommunism?

It is to create in the ranks of the international working class movement, utter confusion with a constant barrage of well phrased and sometimes not so well phrased ideas, alien to Marxism-Leninism so as raise illusions about different brands and types of communism and thus hide the shameful betrayal of Marxism-Leninism, which is the real essence of Eurocommunism.

The question therefore for us and for the other communist parties in the world is: should we take up seriously the challenge of Eurocommunism and resolutely combat it or should we abstain from doing so, in order not to offend some people.

Turning away from the ideological battle is not a feature of communists.

Further we ought to declare that we categorically reject and refute such concepts as Eurocommunism as alien to Marxism-Leninism and that we are, at all times, prepared to defend our ideology against all forms of deviations and distortions.

New feature of Australian Marxist Review

STUDY CLASSES

A 10-day National School for Socialist Party of Australia members will be conducted by the Socialist Party of Australia from December 31 to January 8.

Main theme will centre on study of what is meant by **“a Marxist-Leninist Party and the struggle for a Marxist-Leninist Party in Australia.”**

As a new feature of the Australian Marxist Review we publish a number of theoretical references listed for study at the school. In addition, some of the articles in this issue of the Review are to be used as reading at the National School. These include the article on Eurocommunism by Steve Mavrantonis and the articles on the Scientific and Technological Revolution by B. Rooney (South Australian State Secretary) and Soviet professor D. Gvishiani.

For the benefit of readers who may like to undertake the course (or part of it) in private study we publish below some of the recommended reading matter. Students are encouraged to read in full most of the books listed.

As part of another new feature associated with this approach, readers of AMR are invited to submit answers to any of the questions raised or to make proposals for any reading as extra or (in their view) better reference material for classes. **Write to the Secretary, CC Sub Committee on Education, 392 Sussex St., Sydney.**

International and Australian reading material includes:

- Manifesto of the Communist Party. Marx and Engels.
- What is to be done. Lenin
- Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy. Chapter 13.
- History of Australian Labor Movement — Campbell
- Historical research notes — Brown (September AMR)
- False Philosophy Exploded — Brown
- Articles in AMR indicated above.

Prospects under socialism

by PROF. D. GVISHIANI, Corresponding member of USSR Academy of Sciences (slightly abridged)

In socialist society, the scientific and technological revolution assumes a form consonant with the objective requirements of social development, while man finds in it a material means of his genuine self-fulfilment as an active history-making force.

In conditions of socialism, the scientific and technological revolution cannot but be oriented towards man in the same manner as the flowering of the individual is unthinkable without incessantly improving the material and technical foundation of people's life.

The transition in the Tenth Five-Year Plan period to intensification in all sectors of the country's economy is an important step towards organically fusing the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution with the advantages of mature socialism. It is perfectly clear that raising the efficiency of production, ensuring a dynamic and well-balanced development of the national economy and the high quality of work are for our Party not an end in itself, but only a means of attaining the humane goal — concern for the working man, his present and future.

Article 20 of the Constitution of the USSR reads: "In accordance with the communist ideal — 'The free development of each is the condition of the free development of all' — the state pursues the aim of giving citizens more and more real opportunities to apply their creative energies, abilities, and talents, and to develop their personalities in every way."

It is clear how great in extending these opportunities is the role of scientific and technological progress, on the one hand, and of the labour and social activity of the popular masses, of improving socialist democracy, on the other. Indeed the very scale of the processes of scientific and technological development and their importance for the destinies of people presuppose the application of the knowledge and experience of broad sections of the working people vitally interested in their state's successful economic activity.

Scientific workers' efforts alone are not enough to ensure further scientific and technological progress and its favourable influence on the

economy of the country and all aspects of society's life. The enlistment of all the participants in social production, of all segments of our economic mechanism in this process assumes ever greater importance.

In socialist society, scientific and technological progress is subordinated to the solution of major social and economic tasks. The use of its achievements is directed towards improving the conditions of work, removing heavy physical labour, reducing unskilled, manual work and constantly raising the creative content in the activity of each worker. The combination of the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution with the advantages of the socialist system finds its embodiment in the emergence of a worker of a new type, in whose activity physical and intellectual work merge ever more harmoniously. On this basis there steadily grows the intellectual potential of society, its ability to raise and carry out ever more complex tasks ensuring the acceleration of the pace of communist construction.

Strongly advocating that the entire vast potential contained in the scientific and technical revolution should be placed at the service of man and showing its humanistic essence, the CPSU develops the Marxist-Leninist conception of a materialist understanding of history according to which the perfection of material production provides the basis for social progress.

The advantages of the socialist system of organising the life of society are convincingly revealed in the face of global problems with which mankind is confronted today and the acuteness of which will inevitably increase in the future unless appropriate measures are adopted. There is a growing need for wise management of the processes of social and economic development, control to ensure that the achievements of science and technology are used for humane purposes, that they are not opposed to man, are not subordinated to narrow selfish interests, to the creation of means of mass annihilation of people, and do not cause irreversible destructive effects on the ecological environment.

Global problems by their very nature concern the development of all mankind. Foremost among them are the establishment of lasting peace, equitable international relations, the long-term availability of natural resources, the question of the preservation of the environment, population reproduction and many others. The solution of these problems cannot be effected by the efforts of one country or a group of countries; it calls for broad cooperation by the peoples of all continents of our planet.

Science and technology, being an inexhaustible source of people's power in cognizing and transforming the world, are potentially able to ensure the realisation of the most complex tasks now facing humanity. But this does not occur automatically and in any social conditions. Only the

new society, only socialism created the necessary objective conditions for the use of scientific and technological achievements in the interests of man and society and, consequently, for a genuinely humanist and just solution of global problems.

This, however, does not mean that one can allow himself to sit back and wait calmly for when the whole of the world will embark on the road of socialist development, and not to take immediate measures the need of which is dictated by the threat to the Earth. The realistic foreign policy course of the Soviet state and the programme of further struggle for peace and international cooperation put forward by the CPSU 25th Congress proceed from the need in the era of peaceful coexistence between different socio-political systems to work for broad cooperation of all states and peoples of the world in trying to resolve the problems facing mankind.

It is obvious that the achievement of a profound understanding of the essence of these problems in all their complexity, variety, interdependence and relationship with the general laws governing the social and economic development of human society constitutes the primary task. This today is one of the most important lines of research on the impact of scientific and technological progress on people's life.

Being to a considerable extent the "culprit" of the dangerous development of planetary processes, the scientific and technological revolution at the same time arms us with such effective instruments for their study as modelling methods based on the use of electronic computers. With their help it turns out to be possible to examine in a coherent and mutually related way a great number of heterogeneous factors — natural, technological, economic, social and cultural — and to make a fuller and more comprehensive study of the possible alternatives of world social and economic development. The inter-disciplinary, systems approach underlying these methods is ensured by the teamwork of representatives of the social, natural and technical sciences.

It goes without saying that the study of global development cannot but go beyond the level of political, ideological-theoretical and socio-class conclusions. It is not a mere coincidence that the "global models" offered by Western authors contain serious elements of criticism against the capitalist social system and, willy-nilly expose its anti-humane nature. While admitting this, however, it should be borne in mind that a number of these projects have an apologetic direction expressed, above all, in that they keep silent about the socialist alternative of social development and veil those fundamental advantages of the new social system which are becoming more and more obvious in the process of the scientific and technological revolution. As distinct from foreign models that are oriented to the factors of biological "survival," the approach of the Soviet scientists to modelling

global development rests on the recognition of the determining role that socio-economic factors have to play in the progress of society and in the formation of a harmoniously developed individual.

The working out of the theoretical fundamentals of global modelling on the sound basis of Marxist-Leninist social science and the application of the methods of systematic analysis to the building and study of such models will contribute to the creation of a productive instrument of cognizing social processes occurring in conditions of the scientific and technological revolution. But "mere knowledge, even if it went much further and deeper than that of bourgeois economic science, is not enough to bring social forces under the domination of society. What is above all necessary for this, is a social act", Friedrich Engels wrote.

A world-wide social act of prime importance is the struggle for detente, for ending the arms race and channelling the means currently spent for military purposes to the solution of global problems, above all to the insurance of the progress of the developing countries. Comrade Brezhnev said: "The scientific and technological revolution opens up unprecedented opportunities for prosperity for all mankind. At the same time, many countries are faced ever more acutely with such problems as the energy, food and other problems...Every one of them requires special attention and joint effort by many states. There is no doubt about one thing: the ensuring of a lasting peace and the development and deepening of detente is an indispensable condition for success in solving all these problems."

That is why the struggle for detente is, at the same time, a struggle for the use of the achievements of science and technology in the interests of people, a struggle for the harmonious development of relations in the scientific and technological revolution-society-man system.



Problems under capitalism

by BRIAN ROONEY

The recent Telecom dispute highlighted the effects that technological development is having on the working class. Science and technology is developing at a rapid rate, and will continue to do so in the future.

It is of tremendous political and ideological importance, that we see the significance of the scientific and technological revolution as a factor in the working class struggles.

It is a known fact that under Socialism, science and technology is used and developed in the interests of society as a whole, whereas capitalism hinders the development of science and technology, and in the main, when new technology is introduced it is used for private profit interests.

The root cause of the distorted, uneven development of science and technology in capitalist society is the basic contradiction of capitalism, the contradiction between the social character of production and the private form of appropriation.

With the advance of science and technology, the monopolies have turned research into one of their main weapons in the competitive struggle. Of note, is the fact that it is only the most powerful monopolies that can afford the expenditure required. More often than not, the state meets the bill for research.

The scientific and technological developments lead to a further socialisation of production, under capitalism. Concentration of capital gains momentum. All branches of the capitalist economy are unified by a comprehensive system of division of labour, and production becomes a gigantic social organism.

The productive forces, their development accelerated by the new discoveries, are seeking outlets for expansion.

Planning, designed to ensure the correct proportions between production and consumption, between supply and demand, and between the various branches of the economy now becomes imperative and necessary. This cannot be achieved under capitalism.

Because of this, scientific and technological progress in the capitalist countries is accompanied by growing contradictions and overall crisis.

The mode of production is in conflict with the mode of distribution and the productive forces with the mode of production from which they stem. These contradictions are expressed in the economic, political, and in fact, every facet of society. Fundamentally the scientific and technological revolution sharply intensifies the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production.

The faster the rate of scientific and technological progress, the more rapidly fixed capital becomes obsolete, and this, in turn, tends to shorten the economic cycles.

Capitalism is searching for a way out of these contradictions through greater state monopoly regulation of the economy. But although this may help monopoly capital to find a temporary solution for one or another problem, in the long run, it can only aggravate the contradiction between the productive forces and the production relations.

No less acute is the problem of markets. Every advance in technology, especially automation, rapidly expands the production capacity, and this in turn makes it imperative sharply to extend both the home market and the foreign market. Yet the fact remains that in those capitalist countries where the biggest headway has been made in automation, the home market tends to shrink, not only relative but sometimes even in absolute terms, as a result of reduced employment and the elimination of the technologically backward enterprises.

We need to take note of the changes that are taking place in the organisation of production and management. In the main, the production process has become too complex, and requires too wide a range of knowledge for the capitalists to direct it themselves.

Consequently, in most cases, their place in the actual management of production is taken over by a growing number of managerial experts.

This does show that the capitalists are superfluous to modern social production, and lays bare the parasitic nature of the capitalists.

With the advance of science and technology, there is an intensification of exploitation, although it takes more complex and disguised forms.

The higher productivity of labour at automated enterprises sharply reduces the necessary labour time and increases the proportion of unpaid labour. As a result, the rate of surplus value and the degree of exploitation of the workers is increased. Furthermore, cost of production is lower

in the automated industries, yet the monopolies maintain high prices on their output, netting big profits from the growing difference between cost of production and monopoly prices.

The tendency of the average rate of profit to decline, prompts the monopolies to raise the monopoly prices and to step up their expansion overseas especially in the technologically less advanced countries. Monopoly prices are used to rechannel into their own coffers, value and surplus value created not only at home but in other countries as well.

The living standard of the working people of the capitalist world is lowered accordingly.

The monopolists are tightening the squeeze on the workers in order to compensate for the devaluation of operating capital as a result of rapid technological progress and the consequent obsolescence of plant. Moreover, modernisation frequently acts as an indirect stimulus to intensified speedup, also in enterprises unable to afford modern equipment, chiefly small and medium sized plants whose owners seek to shift the burden of the competitive struggle on to the shoulders of the workers by employing sweatshop methods.

Another direct result of automation, is a sharp rise in the organic composition of capital. The share of constant capital in the total capital is rapidly increasing, while the share of variable capital, expended on labour power, decreases. This is an economic law.

It is a known fact that technological progress under capitalism causes large scale unemployment. Automation, then, creates even in boom periods conditions tending to reduce employment, creating potential unemployment which becomes actual unemployment the moment the rate of economic growth begins to decline.

The technological revolution necessitates far-reaching changes in the structure of the productive forces. Under capitalism this process, though generally dictated by economic laws, assumes the form of destructive structural crisis affecting entire economic areas, and large segments of the working class. (Coal mining areas etc).

Our approach is well known, we are not opposed to scientific and technological progress. We don't resist the scientific and technological revolution, but oppose the achievements being used for the benefit of the monopolies, the use of science and technology to intensify the exploitation of the working people and to prepare for another war.

We are aware that it is only under Socialism, that we can be free from

the negative consequences of technological progress. But we can't sit down and wait for Socialism to arrive.

There is a need to, in a concrete way, offer to all sections of our society, the farmers, intellectuals, and the small and non-monopoly sections, a democratic solution to the problems posed by the technological progress under capitalism. The objective conditions created by this progress are highly favourable for rallying all sections of the population suffering from the monopolies for joint struggle against them. This struggle should aim to curb monopoly influence on the technological revolution, to free the key positions in science and technology from the stranglehold of the monopolies.

As our program points out: "demands for immediate selective nationalisation should be advanced." (pp 18)

A big role in breaking the grip of the monopolies can be played by democratic nationalisation of sectors of the economy with the most direct bearing on scientific and technological progress.

Also, working class struggle to place technology at the service of the people is part of the struggle for general and complete disarmament.

Disarmament alone will make it possible to put science and technology on a peaceful level, and will save huge amounts of money that are wasted at the moment.

Also, it is important that the working class have a democratic say in regard to new technology.

The struggle for the democratic uses of the scientific and technological achievements is an important part of the struggle for Socialism.

It should be borne in mind that the technological achievements, contradictory though they are under capitalism, overall accelerate the creation of the material basis of Socialism.

★ ★ ★

EUROCOMMUNISM AND THE STATE **by Santiago Carillo**

An old road to Social Democracy

“Is it realistic in the developed capitalist countries to envisage the first step in the socialist revolution as the destruction, by an act of violence, of the coercive apparatus of the State.” (page 9).

So Carillo poses the question as if such formulations were put forward by his “fellow-communist” critics. Such a proposition might be accepted by the Red Guards who have kidnapped Moro but is completely un-Marxist. Carillo then proceeds to demonstrate the absurdity of this formulation and puts in its place an old form of opportunism riddled with anti-communism commonly known as Eurocommunism.

Despite his protestations that the programme outlined is not a programme for social-democracy....“it is not a question of retreat to social democratic positions” (page 9)...“we are not going back to the traditional positions of social democracy” (page 33)...“we are not returning to social democracy!” (page 33), the proposals outlined as the economic basis for a socialist society do not go beyond social democratic concepts.

Carillo is specific, he says:-

“It is certainly the case that the democratic road to socialism pre-supposes a process of economic transformations different from what we might regard as the classical model. That is to say that it presupposes the long-term co-existence of public and private forms of property” ... “A political regime in which the owners (of private property) will be able to organise themselves not only economically but also in political party or parties representative of their (class) interests.”

“This will mean that investments of foreign capital and the functioning of the multi-nationals in our country will not be hindered and consequently that foreign capital in Spain would extract profits. A socialist democracy in Spain would have to maintain a policy of remaining open to foreign investments and to the multi-nationals which suit our economic development.”

There can be no question, despite the experience of Chile, that peaceful transition is possible. As the program of the SPA affirms; "The SPA aims for a peaceful transition to socialism because that accords with the interests of the working class and the people as whole. But such a peaceful transition depends on the strength of the peoples forces engaged in the many sided struggle for their rightful demands against monopoly power, the tremendous strength of the existing socialist countries and other progressive forces and the steady decline of imperialism, makes it possible to achieve socialism by peaceful means, i.e. without civil war or imperialist intervention." But this involves a tremendous mass movement, inside and outside Parliament, and a vigorous and constant struggle against monopoly capital.

Nowhere in his book does Carillo raise the question of the need to break the power of monopoly by developing this struggle; on the contrary, the multi-nationals will be guaranteed their right to extract profits even in a socialist Spain.

The world socialist system "in the epoch in which socialism is beginning to be a reality" — (but... "is only in a very preliminary stage") holds no attraction for Carillo.

Our aim is a Europe independent of the USSR and the United States, a Europe of the people, oriented towards socialism in which our country will preserve its own individuality".

"What then are we to do with the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat", Carillo asks and proceeds to completely reject, not only the formulation but the essence of the concept. He argues that this particular concept was valid at the time of the Russian revolution but not in the conditions of developed capitalist societies in Europe.

So instead of the objective of the socialist revolution replacing the class rule of the bourgeoisie with the class rule of the working class and its allies, we get "unless we work out a firmly based conception of the possibility of democratising the capitalist state apparatus, thereby adapting it for the building of a socialist society, without its forcible total destruction, we shall be accused of unscrupulous tactics identified with social democracy".

Lenin pointed out that the substance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is not solely or chiefly violence. Its main essence is in the building of the new social system, the building of a classless socialist society.

Carillo seeks to justify his revision of basic Marxist concepts on the ground that other leading Marxists have done the same thing. He says... "Lenin also revised himself on several occasions. The New Economic Policy adopted

in 1929 revised the entire economic policy”.

Lenin characterised the New Economic Policy “as a strategical retreat...that is necessary to pave the way for the solution of the economic problem, i.e., that of the economic transition to socialist principles”.

It merely revised an economic program which life had demonstrated was not meeting the needs of the revolution. Not exactly revisionism in the Marxist-Leninist sense.

A careful reading of Carillo’s book confirms his own estimate of himself... “I am very far from regarding myself as a theoretician”. Not only that, but he pays little attention to facts.

One example:- Discussing the role of the state in present day Soviet society, he says ...“In Krushchev’s day, the thesis was developed of ‘the state of the whole people,’ which is no longer being stressed today.”

For Carillo’s information the Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (adopted 1977) proclaims:-
“Article 1. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a socialist state of the whole people...”.

The term Eurocommunism is a misnomer. As Carillo says “its scientific value may be doubtful”. Further, despite the fact that there are some areas of agreement between some of the European communist parties on what is called Eurocommunism, there are also wide divergencies of opinion. Further there are some European communist parties of growing significance, including the Portuguese, Greek, West German parties which do not associate themselves with the basic concepts set forth by Carillo. Within the Spanish left they are also under challenge.

It is not new for Carillo to argue that the experience of the Russian revolution was only valid for the Russians. Such arguments were produced immediately after the 1917 revolution.

In a speech “On the Italian Question” (vol.32, pp464), Lenin said, “What is the meaning of the tales told by Serrati and his party about the Russians only wanting everyone to imitate them ... WE WANT THE VERY OPPOSITE”

In the statement issued by the International meeting of Communist and workers Parties (Moscow 1969) it is stated:- The Communist and Workers Parties are conducting their activity in diverse, specific conditions, requiring an appropriate approach to the solution of concrete problems. Each Party guided by the principles of Marxism-Leninism and in keeping with concrete national conditions, fully independently elaborate its own policy,

determines the directions, forms and methods of struggle, and depending on the circumstances, chooses the peaceful or non peaceful way of transition to Socialism and also the forms and methods of building socialism in their own country.

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WHO TO CONTACT

CENTRAL COMMITTEE
392 Sussex Street, Sydney, 2000.
Phone 233 1722
P Symon, General Secretary
P Clancy, President

MARITIME BRANCH OFFICE

111 Sussex Street, Sydney, 2000
Phone 290 1331
J. McPhillips, National Organiser
and Secretary, Maritime Branch.

NEWCASTLE: Mrs B. Curthoys, 5/ Hickson
St Morewether NSW 2291 — Phone 63 2314

QUEENSLAND Mr J. Henderson, Room 3
Royal Geographical Building, 177 Ann St
Brisbane QLD. 4000 — Phone 221 5569.

VICTORIA Mr T McCandless, 469 Elizabeth
St, Melbourne — Phone 329 5369

SOUTH AUSTRALIA: Mr. B. Rooney, 95 Goodwood
Rd. Goodwood S.A. 5034 -- Phone 71 0417

TASMANIA: Mr I Crane, 20 Athol St Somerset
Tas. 7322

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