# The pattern of hegemony

## The problem of control

Socialists of the nineteenth century, though disagreeing in every conceivable way about how it should happen, were reasonably agreed that the collapse of capitalism would happen, and probably in their own lifetimes. A system so morally ugly could not last long. Marxists believed that it would be torn apart by its economic contradictions; syndicalists believed that it would be shattered by the militancy of organized labour; Laborites in Australia widely believed it would be ended by moral means, as the majority of people saw the obvious superiority of socialism.

And by any reasonable expectation, the capitalist system should have collapsed by now. It has stumbled into two frightful world wars and a disastrous depression, while working class parties have come to power, by revolution or election, in most of the countries that have been the centres of capitalism. But it has not collapsed. The hosts of Israel have compassed the city seven times, the economic trumpets have blown and the politicians have shouted with a great shout; but for some reason the walls have not fallen down. World capitalism is more productive, as vigorous, and arguably as well entrenched, as in the days of Marx and Engels. Even worse, the workers' movements have become infected with diseases that they once thought belonged to capitalism itself, ranging from bureaucratic inertia and a taste for minor privilege all the way to the police-state terror of Stalinism.

Through this rather chilling experience, twentieth-century socialism has been forced to recognize in a much sharper way the resilience of capitalism and the strength of its non-economic defences, on the one hand, and the ambiguities and internal weaknesses of working-class movements on the other. Some

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of the most important developments in socialist theory have been attempts to analyse these problems: the theories of Lukács, Gramsci, and Althusser on ideology, consciousness and cultural control; the anarchist, Trotskyite, and now Maoist critiques of revolutionary parties' corruption in power; and the many attempts to bring Freud to the aid of Marx in explaining mass support for a repressive social order. The two issues are of course closely related; and I would suggest that, given the history of the twentieth century, they must now be seen as the central problems of socialist theory. To give them a name, they can be seen as parts of the general problem of hegemony.

The term 'hegemony', as is well known, comes from Gramsci, specifically his attempts to extend Marxist concepts to analyse the situation facing Italian revolutionaries in the era of fascism. Gramsci sometimes used the term simply to refer to the leadership role in an alliance of parties or classes for a specific struggle. But he also extended it to cover situations where a kind of permanent alliance existed; where a general solidarity between oppressors and oppressed had developed, with cultural processes reinforcing the political and economic domination of the ruling group. The type case, analysed by Gramsci in a famous essay, was the southern region of Italy, which was the poorest and most oppressed but remained tightly controlled by conservatism.[1]

The kinds of mechanisms Gramsci identified as producing a hegemonic situation are plainly important; his discussions of the role of intellectuals are particularly suggestive. But it seems necessary to extend his concepts, particularly to get a grip on the problem of stability in highly industrialized regions with well-developed working-class groups; and to take account of other mechanisms of control. Theorists such as Reich and Marcuse have argued that the defence of advanced capitalism has shifted in a major way to psychological mechanisms, which mostly act at an unconscious level and require the concepts of psychoanalysis to grasp.[2] Whether or not their specific hypotheses are correct, it does seem important to bring into account the psychological forces that act to stabilize the social order.

Hegemony as a *situation*, a moment in history in which control is effectively exercised, can thus be distinguished from the *mechanisms of control* that operate in it. Situations can vary in the mechanisms that are active, and in the depth of control that is achieved. The latter point is important because there is a strong tendency in the literature, understandable but dangerous, by the mere fact of formulating a concept of cultural or psychological control to exaggerate it into a concept of total control. Control is never total — even in Nazi Germany at the height of war there were circles of resistance — though it can be pretty thorough. Hegemonic situations range from a strongly established pattern of direct controls with only marginal dissidence, through situations where a working class has formed as an economic and social category but its mobilization is being aborted, to situations where mobilization has occurred though only within decided limits. The last of these situations arose relatively early in Australia, and much of the history of the labour movement in the twentieth century has concerned battles over the limits of mobilization.

To speak of cultural control presupposes some notion of 'culture', and this is a difficult idea to pin down. In the development of socialist thought it has often served as a kind of tactical reserve, called in to do battle when orthodox economic and political analyses have failed. Or it has been seen as a soft part of social analysis, an epiphenomenon of economics and politics, lacking a rigorous theory and perhaps incapable of having one. This attitude has now begun to change, partly under the influence of the women's movement whose arguments have established processes such as personal socialization and sexual interaction, and structures such as the household and family, as central rather than marginal features of an analysis of oppressive social structures. What follows is not based on a really systematic theory of culture, but does at least sketch a framework for discussing cultural and psychological control.

There are a number of distinct levels at which one can analyse hegemony; or, to use another metaphor, different ways of slicing into the complexities of a hegemonic situation. They are illustrated severally by works of some of the theorists already referred to. When Gramsci speaks of a sociopolitical bloc, he is referring (among other things) to a commitment to particular parties, and the failure of other parties to attract support. This defines one level of possible analysis, that of personal politics, social attitudes, individual consciousness. In Reich's account of fascism, and Marcuse's account of the

American working class (and for that matter in Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*), there is an attempt to analyse the contribution of repression and displacement to social order. This defines another level at which hegemony can be analysed, the level of the unconscious. In Althusser's theory there is an attempt to specify the operation of ideology as a system of social practices, as regular patterns of action by which people are constrained.[3] This identifies a third level, that of routine interactions, which may be analysed independently of the first two.

Plainly this is not a catalogue of all ways of applying the analytic knife. But these are at least well-considered cases that have received some theoretical development. And they do, I think, correspond in a meaningful if rough way to issues that have been raised, unsystematically, in discussions of culture and mass psychology in Australia.

### The postwar hegemonic situation

An analysis of hegemony may usefully start with the event that set the pattern of postwar politics in Australia. In the late 1940s a conservative political mobilization occurred, on a scale unprecedented since the first world war. A coordinated, expensive and dramatic propaganda campaign was launched against the Labor government by the business and political leadership of the ruling class. In 1949 the conservative parties swept back to federal office, where, with a temporary interruption by the Whitlam government, they have remained ever since. In the 1950s and 1960s the remaining state Labor governments were picked off one by one; for a short period at the end of the 1960s there was no Labor government anywhere in Australia, a situation that had not been known for half a century.

The reasons for this period of decline of political Labor have mostly been sought in changes in the party images and class consciousness of the electorate – i.e. at the first of the analytic levels just set out. This is natural, as this kind of discussion is the stock in trade of politicians themselves, journalists, and others whose daily business involves parties and parliaments. Arguments range from suggestions that the working class has disappeared, to more modest ones that with increasing affluence, its outlook has become more moderate or more complacent; that Labor as a class-identified party has lost out in a period of declining class consciousness; that the expanding

groups of white-collar workers have a different political outlook from that of the workers they are replacing, among other things a greater consciousness of their own social status, and refuse to identify with a specifically working-class party.[4]

It certainly is true that, as polls and surveys measure it, the sense of class membership and class division declined in the postwar decades. Comparing Oeser and Hammond's survey in Melbourne in the late 1940s with his own in the early 1960s, Davies observed signs of 'evaporating proletarian consciousness', looser definitions of class, and a much less solid sense of one's personal position in the class structure. Union membership as a percentage of the workforce, an important long-term index of working-class organizational strength, stopped growing in the middle 1950s, and indeed went into a slight decline. The Labor vote did not decline as drastically as some discussions suggested, but the clear connection between occupational grouping and support for a particular party weakened through the 1950s and 1960s. There are indications that the differences between occupational groups in attitudes on economic issues also weakened after the 1940s.[5]

The last two observations do not imply that there was less (or much less) support for radical views, but they do suggest that the social trends of the postwar period made it more difficult to mobilize. With occupational groups less solid in their outlook, occupation-based organizations like the unions would be less able to transform radical opinion into effective action. At the height of the Vietnam struggle there were indeed some union attempts to block the shipment of war supplies, but they were never remotely comparable with the Port Kembla 'pig iron' strike of 1938 or the wharfies' blocking of supplies to the Dutch in Indonesia in the late 1940s.

The polls from the Vietnam years, as well as the landslide in the 1966 election, show that for some years at least there was widespread support for the Liberals' interventionist policy among groups who normally did not vote Liberal. The 1966 campaign is almost as interesting as 1949, though it confirmd an existing government in power rather than created a new one. And it is interesting partly for the extreme traditionalism of the two main symbolic appeals that were made by the winning side. The threat, on the one hand: foreign, Asian, communist, supposedly engaged in a 'thrust' towards Australia–even the

propaganda maps were traditional, showing red arrows slashing downwards toward Australia, greatly assisted by gravity. The appeal to affiliation, on the other: the need to show solidarity with the nation's mentor and protector, in this case the United States, so that it would keep faith in future. It is possible that the top policy-making levels of the government in the mid 1960s were themselves so ignorant that they believed these arguments, but it seems most unlikely.[6] They have a mythic quality about them, and tap into a long tradition of threat images in Australian popular consciousness.

The conscious anticommunism that was a large part of the 'threat' symbolism in 1966 goes a long way back, in a tradition of ruling-class fears of anarchy and uprisings that can be traced as far back as the convict era. Explicit anticommunism emerged in the 1920s as a confused but potent brew of anti-Bolshevik, anti-foreign, anti-working-class and anti-Labor sentiment. The Communist Party of the day being only a tiny sect, the main political payoff at the time was simply a new means of attacking the labour movement at large. But in the 1940s the Communist Party did become a real political force, controlling a number of important unions, sweeping up much of the socialist left of labour politics into its own expanded membership, and at one point, in a fit of bravado, thinking it could challenge the ALP for political leadership of the working class.

The reaction that was unleashed by this began inside the labour movement, with the emergence of an anti-communist grouping based on the Catholic church's lay organisations – the famous 'Movement' which became the basis of the DLP – at a time when the ruling-class leadership was still pre-occupied with its own internal reorganization. But its circle rapidly widened; by 1949 the Chifley government was locked in conflict with the communist-controlled mining unions, and the conservatives under Menzies were using anticommunism as a major rhetorical weapon, berating Chifley, who was doing quite well in the repression line, for not taking stronger action. Once they had defeated the ALP the conservatives moved on to attack the Communist Party, and socialism and dissidence generally under the rubric of communism. A series of offensive measures was launched: the Communist Party Dissolution Bill, state and federal Royal Commissions into communism and espionage, government control of union elections, sedition prosecutions,

withdrawal of passports, enquiries and surveillance by security police (the federal arm of which, ASIO, had been newly established by the Labor government). Little organizational damage was done to the Communist Party; a cynic might remark that its preservation in some form was decidedly useful to the Menzies government. But if, as seems likely, the main purposes were electoral appeal and intimidation of radicals, these were certainly achieved. The modest flowering of socialist thought and reforming optimism that had occurred in the 1940s was brought to a sudden end. The cultural initiative passed to conservative intellectuals; and Menzies continued to win elections.[7]

The effect of all this at the level of attitudes might have been trivial, had it not been for the economic changes that made the positive side of conservative propaganda plausible. A rising level of real incomes made their equation of free enterprise and prosperity credible; the swelling flow of consumer goods made their rhetoric of progress practically materialize in every house. The completed industrialization of the Australian economy, which had been going on for a long time but was greatly accelerated around the 1940s, made a rhetoric and iconography of 'modernity' plausible. It is not necessary to suppose that this kind of change translated directly into votes for the Liberals – who until the late 1950s were running neck and neck with Labor in the popular vote – but it probably did so eventually, and it also shaped the outlook of the opposition. The actual policies propounded by Evatt in the 1950s were very close to those of Menzies; under Calwell the Labor Party leadership began to get twitchy about its image and to seek for modernity and style; under Whitlam, who had both, the federal leadership droppped even gestures towards a working-class identification and ironically promoted themselves as better free-enterprisers than the Liberals.

This is only a sketch of the process of legitimizing the ruling class and domesticating the opposition in this period. A fuller account would have to look at the role of mass media in creating understandings of the world in which conservatism appeared to be commonsense; a classic case would be the newspapers' reporting of strikes. It would look at the ways advertising and public relations attempt to popularize particular companies and as a by-product legitimize capitalism in general

– e.g. in the corporate invasion of Australian sport in the last decade. But perhaps enough has been said to show how the hegemonic situation can be approached, if not completely explained, at the level of conscious attitudes. Let us now consider another level that was obviously relevant to the discussion of threat campaigns, the level of unconscious processes.

There are two senses in which one can speak of the unconscious. In the first, what is unconscious is simply what a person is unaware of about himself or herself – as for instance the rules of grammar which are not called to awareness, though they are obeyed, in everyday speech; or, more pertinently, the set of categories through which the social world is interpreted. The threat schema is a useful example of this. Most people would hardly be aware of carrying in their heads a system of social categories which gave prominence to a threatening alien and opposed it to a nurturant relative, though that is plainly the categorical structure that was widely activated in the Vietnam years. Threat schemata can be found widely in popular fiction, comic books, etc., from the period.[8]

But there was obviously something dynamic in the threat schema, not just an implicit set of categories for interpreting the world. This involves the second meaning, where what is unconscious is so because it has been repressed, and retains an active motivational power – the classic Freudian concept of the dynamic unconscious. The force of the threat schema, in a situation where invasion is by all realistic criteria ridiculously unlikely, presumably arises from its assimilation to repressed material which is totally inaccessible to political argument or ridicule. (Arthur Calwell vastly amused Labor Party audiences in 1966 with his sketches of the powerful Chinese invasion fleet of motorized junks and sampans setting sail for Australia; but arguments about the actual intentions and military capacities of Asian communism got no response from the electorate at large.) To be more specific, one might suggest that rape and castration anxieties are at work in the political threat schema. But, though some plausible support for this could be offered from cultural material such as the rich garbage-bin of Australian racism, the crucial evidence could only come from clinical life-histories which are not locally available.[9]

On another line of argument, we are not so shy of data.

Marcuse argues that advanced capitalism is able to relax many of the psychological repressions which had been imposed in an era of greater scarcity and need for accumulation; and further is able to turn that relaxation to account, by doing it in a way that preserves social discipline. There are a number of lines of evidence that there has indeed been a relaxation of moral constraints in postwar Australia. (The existence of the Festival of Light is not one of them: a White Cross League with the slogan 'Keep Thyself Pure' can be found in the 1930s, Bands of Hope in the nineteenth century, and evangelical denunciations of a decline in morality among Australians can be traced without a break back to the year 1788; such things are simply part of the stock in trade of ministers and priests.)[10] The relaxation of censorship, easy circulation of pornography, the more direct sexuality of literature and films and sometimes performing art, are one line of evidence. Changes in divorce laws and the much easier social acceptance of divorce, which do not seem to have affected the popularity of marriage but have weakened the constraints in it, are another. In some survey material, such as the two large Sydney studies of teenagers in 1952 and 1969, there is direct evidence of a shift of popular attitudes towards acceptance of dancing, kissing, and other minor liberties among the young.[11]

The argument proposes that this relaxation has occurred in ways that tend to stabilize rather than disrupt the capitalist system. Here it seems likely that there have been tendencies in both directions. The mention of teenagers raises one very clear case of absorption, the development of the pop industries – records, fashions, pop radio and magazines, etc. – which have turned teenage sexuality into a highly profitable business. (The mass entertainment industry more generally does this; though its characteristic products for adults, such as television variety shows and women's magazines, are much more inhibited than the material addressed to teenagers.) Here the relaxation of repression is both controlled and exploited in the same action. But there are also ways in which a weakening of repressions has led in an anti-capitalist, counter-hegemonic direction; most significantly in the sexual liberation movements that took shape in the early 1970s.

The women's movement, to the extent that it has not been simply anti-male but has sought the sources of the oppression

of women in the specific history of this society, has been very much concerned with the way a social order hooks private motivation up to the maintenance of a social structure. It has shown, particularly through its analyses of femininity, how women come to be dependent on, indeed actively want a situation in which they are subordinated. Not only does this provide a useful model for the analysis of the psychology of social subordination in general, but it has a direct relevance to this case, for the 'sex-role' pattern is an important part of the cultural structure of capitalism.[12]

This may be seen, for instance, in the consuming side of the main growth industry of the postwar period. The motor cars that were manufactured and sold to a really mass public for the first time in the 1950s were not simply sold to 'the public' – they were sold specifically to men. Their design and use has been closely integrated with a sexual division of labour, and their marketing has freely used male fantasies of power and potency. Cars quickly became a major goal of working-class boys – their sexual success largely depending on access to them – and set up pressures to maximize their short-term incomes in order to pay off hire-purchase obligations. The very structure of the car market, with an almost infinite regress of speed and price, presented men with an endless pursuit of more and more automotive prestige and, at least in fantasy, more and more elegant and expensive women.

On the other side, household consumption is repressively organized through the pattern of femininity, an organization of character and sexuality which by adulthood is practically outside conscious control. The mechanism is evident in the distinctive mass media addressed to women, the women's magazines and daytime TV shows. It is not so much that the advertisers who finance these media are directly promoting femininity: they are on the contrary promoting their products. But they do this by using the 'feminine' structure of motives, self-images, etc., to arrange sales. It is the media themselves (capitalist enterprises, but generally distinct from the advertisers) which promote – and to the extent that they fill a gap and control aspirations – enforce femininity.

One of the senses in which we can speak of a hegemonic situation, perhaps the most common in advanced capitalism, is where there exists a working class in the economic sense which is inhibited from mobilizing. It is a banal, and probably mistaken, view that affluence leads to complacency and apathy. But I would suggest that the specific kind of affluence that countries like Australia have experienced, has meshed with much older patterns of sexual organization in ways that strongly inhibit class mobilization, both in terms of unconscious dynamics and patterns of daily activity.

This now involves the third of the analytic levels mentioned earlier, that of routine patterns of interaction. The sexual distinctions and patterns of motivation just discussed are sustained by a division of labour that is most clearly expressed in the daily life of suburban households where the wife–mother stays home and does the housework and child care while the husband–father drives daily off to a paid job.

Social critics have dwelt heavily and long on the postwar expansion of suburbs and the character of the suburban lifestyle; as Rowse suggests, 'suburbia' became a symbol of the whole society for a certain kind of social criticism. A fine example is Patrick White's play *The Season at Sarsaparilla* (1961), in which he bitterly caricatures the crassness of suburbanites. Suburbia was perhaps the most canvassed cause of the decline of working-class militancy: a house, a hausfrau and a Holden were supposed to take all the sting out of life.[13]

The pattern of suburban living is indeed historically important, but it must be understood in context, in terms of the forces that persuaded or pushed large groups of the working class into the outer reaches of the cities. There was no lemming-like rush to spiritual death beyond the reach of the sewerage. There were good reasons why people should move. Governments in the grip of the 'populate or perish' syndrome, or more realistically seeking a labour force for industrial expansion, raised population pressures in the cities by large-scale immigration and incentives for breeding. As the volume of motor traffic increased (an end of petrol rationing was part of Menzies' 1949 platform) the inner-city working-class areas, now stigmatized as 'slums', became more unpleasant and dangerous to live in, especially for families with young children. Even such relief measures as the rent controls imposed by NSW Labor governments resulted in a lack of maintenance by landlords, who no longer found it profitable to keep houses in good condition, and

the decay of physical conditions in the centre (until owner-occupation later spread back).[14]

Beyond these material reasons, there was a systematic attempt to sell suburban living as the most desirable way of life. In the decade or so after the war real-estate developers, builders, consumer goods manufacturers and retailers mounted a massive campaign in the media promoting the suburbs and all the equipment of suburban living. Much of it was directed to women, playing on their sense of themselves as social managers as well as their femininity and motherhood. A fascinating example is the architectural soap opera 'Joanna Plans a Home' that ran as a serial in the *Australian Home Beautiful* in 1946. Joanna was supposed to be a young serviceman's bride, and, in successive episodes, was weaned away from her traditional tastes to a belief in modern design and 'new ideas' in living, or at least the equipment for living. Rather delicately, the sense that the reader might know her own mind about her environment was undercut, and models of the formation of taste under the guidance of experts – architects, a wealthy friend with 'a very modern house', and of course the magazine itself – were substituted.[15]

The significance of this is not so much at the attitudinal level, as in committing the newly-forming families to a pattern of life that absorbed an increasing share of their energies in private activities and bound them economically to the system. To buy the 'little piece of earth with a house and a garden' that Menzies apostrophized in a famous wartime speech,[16] normally sent a man into debt for most of his working lifetime. To fill the house with appliances and buy the car that derisory public transport often made necessary, meant a further debt load. Merely to sustain the basic way of life the husband was locked into his job. The wife was still locked into unpaid household labour (with a slowly growing tendency to add a part-time or unskilled job to it), now in a situation where the labour was much more isolated than in the higher-density inner districts. The routines of interaction that in the interwar years had provided a basis of working-class solidarity, mutual aid and sometimes mobilization were altered, and mobilization correspondingly made more difficult.

One of the features of suburb-building was the differentiation of the housing market, the range from treeless fibro develop-

ments to brick mansions in wooded hills. The differences, which were not only widely known but forced upon people's attention by estate agents, reflected marked differences in credit rating and purchasing power that in turn reflected social differentiation in the workforce. The segmentation of the working class and the emergence of privileged groups within it has been recognized as a block to working-class mobilization as far back as the time of Marx, who with his contemporaries spoke of an aristocracy of labour. There are reasons to think that the segmentation of the Australian working class increased after the mid-century. Calculations based on award wage rates indicate an increased inequality of wages from about the middle 1950s, after a period in which the dispersal of wages had fallen. The institutional recognition of differences among groups of workers was reinforced by events such as the Engineers' cases of 1961–2, of which Encel remarked that the Arbitration Commission had practically legislated to establish a profession. The informal segregation of workers was of course increased where members of non-English-speaking migrants entered, notably in heavy industry. Though more women entered the paid workforce, and to that extent reduced the greatest of all divisions in the working class, they entered segregated employment for the most part, characterized by different (and more boring) work, or simply separate work groups, and almost always unequal pay.[17]

The existence of different groups of workers is of course a technical necessity of production. What is at issue here is not the division of labour, but the embedding of that technical necessity in an elaborate structure of status distinctions, income differences, customary privileges and differential recruitment. As was remarked earlier, these are not 'soft', epiphenomenal and ephemeral matters. On the contrary, as the women's movement is finding in the case of sex segregation in employment, and as the industrial unionists found half a century before in their attempt to end craft exclusiveness in union organisation, they are extremely tough and resistant patterns of customary interaction. It is difficult to say whether a change in these patterns is a condition of general mobilization or can only be achieved by it. But either way, the fact that they were generally reinforced rather than reduced in the postwar period of industrialization and affluence was an important feature of the hegemonic situation.

## Agents and opponents

The argument so far has sketched ways in which this situation can be analysed, and some of the mechanisms of division and control that can be seen at work. Assuming that hegemony is a specific historical situation and not a permanent condition, it must be produced by processes that are identifiable in history. Gramsci's own analyses suggest that the identification may revolve on specific groups of people, notably the intellectuals.

Ministers and priests seem to be of much less importance in the Australian situation than in Catholic Italy, though some influence can be seen. The Catholic church was important in sustaining the Movement though it was laymen rather than priests who were most active. Protestant clerics, as Wolfsohn observed in a biting essay on 'ideology makers', helped to maintain the miasma of bourgeois respectability in public life.[18] Of late the mist seems a little clearer, and protestant ideologists more concerned with fighting the pornographers than calling for national purpose and social discipline.

Teachers and journalists seem likely to have been of more importance in terms of the size of their audience and continuity of contact. Both are highly unionized occupations, but both have longish preparation and qualifying periods, a claim to semiprofessional status, and a clearcut internal hierarchy of prestige and promotion. Both, moreover, work under strong constraints from superiors with well-defined traditional expectations about their activity. Understandably then, the content of the communication they engage in is for the most part perfectly compatible with the *status quo*. Is it more than compatible: can these groups be seen as active agents in the creation of a hegemonic situation?

Certainly the content of their work, if we go back to the time of the first world war and before, was so; in a period when working-class mobilization was occurring, the content of the papers was mostly hostile, while the directly political content of school lessons was nationalist and imperialist to a marked degree.[19] But that evidently did not prevent mobilization then, while in the last generation in teaching at least, the flagwaving and ethnocentrism has considerably declined. There are other kinds of influence than direct persuasion: as in the case of journalism discussed in Chapter 9, so with teachers the influ-

ence may have more to do with the concepts in which people think about the social world than with their attitudes. In some ways, also, while the propaganda content of teaching has declined, the organization of the school system has moved in a more socially integrative direction. The most notable case of this is the development of comprehensive secondary schools, in place of the sharply segregated systems of the prewar period. In practice there are inequalities within them, as shown in Chapter 8, but the comprehensive school with its general-education programmes is still an important symbol of 'community' solidarity and social integration.

So also is the army of social workers, now commonly organized in departments with titles like 'Community Welfare' that are almost banners announcing their ideological function. Administering private or state relief to the poor, traumatized, or incompetent, social workers simultaneously announce the benevolence of the system and the oddity of not succeeding in it. How far they serve as controllers of potental dissidence is unclear; certainly there is now some shift among them towards the view that they should be aiding the mobilization of their clients. But it is not hard to see the ideological effects of their activity in terms of legitimation, in terms of the definition of poverty and suffering as aberrations, on the fringe of an otherwise contented community, rather than an integral product of an integrally divided social order.[20] In this they are not alone, though they are certainly the clearest example. The state in its benign aspect, its welfare service, and general uplift departments, must be seen as an important force in the construction of hegemony. In the postwar case, an important extension of this kind of state activity occurred shortly before the conservatives took state power. Though previously quite enterprising in denouncing the extension of bureaucracy, the federal Liberals took over the welfare apparatus and ran it on much the same lines as before. They were not stupid.

Social workers are less clearly intellectuals than teachers and journalists, though there may be important elements of persuasion in their daily work. If the discussion earlier in this chapter is accepted at least as asking some of the right questions – whatever may be thought of the answers – it indicates the importance in the creation and maintenance of hegemony, of other groups who are decidedly not intellectuals. To make the

point only one case is needed – that of parents, who are plainly the social category most closely involved in the creation and transmission of sex differentiation. As we penetrate to levels byond that of political consciousness, the need to extend the account of agents becomes sharper. The idea of agency also must change, as one moves into the realm of unintended or unconscious effects. Some intellectuals are hirelings of the ruling class, though not all are; but it makes little sense to think of any parents that way, though their due performance of expected tasks may be in fact more crucial to the interests of the ruling class than the scribblings of any number of journalists or academics.

In defining hegemony as a situation, I wanted to stress its historically contingent character; or to put in plainer English, the fact that cultural control can be opposed, weakened, and overcome. It may be difficult, but it is possible. In an analysis of hegemony there should always be a consideration of counter-hegemonic activity.

Again it is useful to consider intellectuals. Though in a weak position, groups of socialist intellectuals continued to be active in the 1950s and 1960s, a number of them splitting from the old Communist Party and concentrating their activity on magazines such as *Outlook* and *Arena*. Intellectuals, especially staff and students in the universities, were an important early base for the sexual liberation movements, and a vigorous literature ana-lysing the oppression of women sprang up alongside a revived socialist literature of class analysis in the 1970s. The most important example of counter-hegemonic activity was the cam-paign against the Vietnam war in the late 1960s: counter-hegemonic as well as directly political, because it involved a violation of the dominant ideological view of Australia's place in the world, it involved symbolic law-breaking in demonstra-tions, and in the later stages a highly effective campaign of ridicule against the conscription authorities. The campaigners were a very interesting alliance of new intelligentsia with traditional working-class militants; an unstable alliance, as it turned out, though both groups were later incorporated with others in the Whitlam coalition of 1972–4, and a similar alliance was created in the 'green ban' movement against urban redevelopment in the early 1970s.[21]

The most consciously counter-hegemonic movement, though it recruited very largely from students, has had more than a tinge of anti-intellectualism. This is the counter-culture or alter-native society, the groups of fulltime or part-time dropouts who have attempted to reconstruct their lives outside the labour market around a system of collective, mainly rural, production and a sharp redirection and simplification of personal con-sumption. It is interesting, as a sign of the persistence of some pre-capitalist and anti-capitalist popular sentiment, that these groups have often been able to make effective use of rural traditions and win acceptance from country people who in terms of sexual morality, dress, speech, party preference, and general squareness, are polar opposites.[22]

That there is also latent anti-capitalist feeling in urban con-texts can be seen from episodes such as the Ford strike dis-cussed at the beginning of this book. The riot on the day of the abortive return to work, though played up as a violent episode, did not actually involve many attacks against persons; the strikers mainly directed their energies towards smashing or at least marking things that symbolized the company and its system of control-gates, signs, a wall, the administration block. That was a flash flood, but it is not the only event of its kind. There is a regular undercurrent of sabotage in large industrial plants; that this worries management is sugggested by GMH's sacking of an Adelaide shop steward in February 1975 on the grounds that he sympathized with saboteurs. Attempts have been made in the last few years to blow up a BHP oil installation in South Australia, and a pipeline in Melbourne, the latter being part of a green-ban campaign. The Builders Laborers in Sydney in the period of their recently-deposed radical leadership even experimented with the occupation of building sites, though they did not attempt to work them.

This survey can end, then, on a more discordant note than was sounded earlier. The system does not have it all its own way, even with the apparatuses of control that have been sketched. There is opposition and conflict, within cultural in-stitutions as well as job sites, as has been shown in high schools in the last few years. There are people, and there are forms of action, that have escaped the net; though in the last few decades they have mostly been fairly isolated or have been deflected from a confrontation with the core of the capitalist system. One of the most important things that intellectuals can

do through their proper work is to overcome that isolation and prevent such deflections. Being counter-hegemonic is not enough. One must be relevantly counter-hegemonic, and in sufficient masses to do real damage, and be able to carry through to the actual construction of a human society. In both critique and construction socialist intellectuals have a massive work to do.

12 D. W. Rawson, 'Political violence in Australia', *Dissent*, nos. 22 and 23, surveys violence connected with formal politics, concluding it is all fairly peaceful. A useful counter to this line of argument has now been developed by G. Lewis, 'Violence in Australian history: the Queensland experience', *Meanjin*, 1974, vol. 33, 313–19.

13 A useful compilation of this line of criticism is R. J. Thomson, 'The effects of mass media on mental health in the community', *Mental Health in Australia*, 1965, vol. 1 no. 3, 33–40.

14 The classification derives from L. Broom, F. L. Jones and J. Zubrzycki, 'Social stratification in Australia', in J. A. Jackson, ed., *Social Stratification*, Cambridge, CUP, 1968, 212–33; the census figures are from F. L. Jones, 'Occupational change in Australia, 1911–66', *Indian Journal of Sociology*, 1971, vol. 11, 123–36.

15 See the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research *Statistical Reports* in 1973 and 1974.

16 These headings are all taken from one issue of *Daytime TV*, vol. 2 no. 2, July 1971.

17 R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, St Albans, Paladin, 1973, esp. the concluding essay 'Myth today'.

18 On this point I depart from Barthes, who stresses the multiplicity of signifiers. The marked stylization and restriction of them – of course connected to the pressure of work in media organizations – seems to me a typical feature and an important clue to what is going on.

19 H. Mayer and R. Curnow, 'Hunting the P.M.: 33 traits in search of a man', *Australian Quarterly*, 1968, vol. 40 no. 1, 7–32.

20 H. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1964.

21 Or romanticizes them, as in the celebrated radio serial 'Blue Hills' which deals sentimentally with the contingencies of farming.

## CHAPTER 10

1 A. Gramsci, 'The southern question', in *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, NY, International Publishers, 1957, 28–51.

2 From a substantial literature, see especially W. Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, the current edition being NY, Simon and Schuster, 1970; and H. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, Boston, Beacon, 1964.

3 L. Althusser, 'Ideology and ideological state apparatuses', in *Lenin and Philosophy*, London, NLB, 1971, 121–73.

4 For a useful summary of this debate see D. Rawson, *Labor in Vain?*, Melbourne, Longmans, 1966.

5 For the comparison of Hammond's and Davies' surveys see A. F. Davies, *Images of Class*, Sydney, SUP, 1967, 90–2. On the occupational polarization of the vote see D. Kemp, 'Social change and the future of political parties: the Australian case', in L. Maisel and P. M. Sacks, ed., *The Future of Political Parties*, Beverly Hills, Sage, 1975, 124–64; and of opinion, M. Goot and R. W. Connell, *Social Patterns in Public Opinion*, forthcoming.

6 But for an argument that they really did believe this, see G. Clark, *In Fear of China*, Melbourne, Lansdowne, 1967. There is a useful outline of the political struggle over the Vietnam commitment in H. S. Albinski, *Politics and Foreign Policy in Australia*, Durham, North Carolina, Duke UP, 1970.

7 Material on anti-communism in this critical period, discussed from markedly different perspectives, can be found in L. C. Webb,

*Communism and Democracy in Australia*, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1954; A. Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia*, Stanford, Hoover Institution Press, 1969; R. Murray, *The Split*, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1970; B. A. Santamaria, *The Price of Freedom*, Melbourne, Campion Press, 1964.

8 An indication of their penetration (if the word can be used here) is that it was widespread among children in the 1960s. See R. W. Connell, *The Child's Construction of Politics*, Melbourne, MUP, 1971, chapter 5.

9 For illustration see the rape imagery in anti-Chinese cartoons such as the 1888 example (from a radical periodical) reprinted in J. Harris, *The Bitter Fight*, Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1970, 59. For a good, though now somewhat dated, illustration of how this kind of thing can be done with clinical histories see R. E. Renneker, 'Some psychodynamic aspects of voting behavior', in E. Burdick and A. J. Brodbeck, ed., *American Voting Behavior*, New York, Free Press, 1959, 399–413.

10 As is wittily shown by K. S. Inglis, 'Religious behaviour' in A. F. Davies and S. Encel, ed., *Australian Society*, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1965, 73f. For the White Cross League, see the Towns Papers, ML 1279/24 Item 1.

11 W. F. Connell, R. E. Stroobant, K. E. Sinclair, R. W. Connell, and K. W. Rogers, *12 to 20*, Sydney, Hicks Smith, 1975, 145.

12 This is not to imply that it is peculiar to capitalism, which would be absurd, but that it is important in it.

13 See the MA thesis by T. Rowse, Flinders University, 1976; P. White, 'The Season at Sarsaparilla', in *Four Plays*, Melbourne, Sun, 1967, 75–177. The argument is summed up in a well-known cartoon by Bruce Petty showing a suburbanite crying from his TV chair 'O life, where is thy sting?': see *The Best of Petty*, London, Horwitz, 1976.

14 For an interesting account of this cycle in Sydney, see M. Neutze, *People and Property in Redfern*, Canberra, ANU Urban Research Unit, 1973.

15 For the friend, see the episode in *Australian Home Beautiful*, April 1946, 8–11. The magazine was published by Herald and Weekly Times, the Melbourne-based newspaper chain, and served both as an advertising vehicle and general purpose booster for real estate, building, furnishing and related trades.

16 R. G. Menzies, *The Forgotten People*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1943.

17 K. Hancock and K. Moore, 'The occupational wage structure in Australia since 1914', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 1972, vol. 10, 107–22 (compare H. Lydall, *The Structure of Earnings*, OUP, 1968, 190–1); S. Encel, 'Social implications of the Engineers' cases', *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 1964, vol. 6, 61–6; the employment of women is generally surveyed in S. Encel, N. MacKenzie and M. Tebbutt, *Women and Society*, Melbourne, Cheshire, 1974.

18 H. Wolfsohn, 'The ideology makers', *Dissent*, 1964, vol. 4 no. 2, 3–8.

19 S. G. Firth, 'Social values in the New South Wales primary school 1880–1914', in *Melbourne Studies in Education 1970*, Melbourne, MUP, 1970, 123–59; and for some samples of newspaper nationalism, L. L. Robson, *The First A.I.F.*, Melbourne, MUP, 1970.

20 For illustration of emergent changes, and some further analysis along these lines, see *Inside Welfare*, Revolutionary Welfare Workers Working Papers No. 1, Brisbane, 1975.
21 A. Barcan, *The Socialist Left in Australia 1949–1959*, Sydney, APSA Monograph no. 2, 1960; R. J. Cahill, *Notes on the New Left in Australia*, Sydney, Australian Marxist Research Foundation, n.d. (1969); R. Gordon, ed., *The Australian New Left*, Melbourne, Heinemann, 1970.
22 The most comprehensive guide to this movement is M. Smith and D. Crossley, ed., *The Way Out*, Melbourne, Lansdowne, 1975.