CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE
Editorial

In the trade union struggles of the seventies, nothing has been so remarkable as the growing militancy of "white collar" public employees. The first part of the past decade was marked by repeated strike action from teachers in New South Wales and Victoria. And the second part of the decade has seen a mounting level of struggle in the public service.

In our first article in this issue, Rick Kuhn looks at the roots of the new militancy among the "white collar" public employees and at some of the implications for revolutionary work in the public service unions. Himself an activist at the rank and file level in the ACOA, Rick is well qualified to look at the implications for revolutionary work in the public service unions.

One development which could be an obstacle to effective working class struggle, in the public service as much as in any other industry, is the pervasive Australian nationalism. Everyone from the ALP right wing has been eager to substitute the Eureka flag for the red flag. It has been left to a small number of former revolutionaries with a real Marxist approach to consistently fight national chauvinism.

Tom O'Lincoln's article looks at this question in a new light. Marxists who fight nationalism, he argues, have been doing it on the basis of a crude theory which fails to take up the strongest arguments of the nationalists. If we are going to win the battle against nationalism, we need to look at the specific features of Australia's role as a springboard for the imperialism of the big powers.

Janey Stone, in the second part of her article on capitalism and health care, looks at the historic development of health care systems, their role in capitalism as a whole, and prospects for class struggle in the industry. At a time when massive books and specialised pamphlets in the area are pouring onto the market faster than most people can read them, Janey's article provides a readable and authoritative overview, written by a worker and active trade unionist in the industry.

In a period of deepening social and economic crisis, a serious and sustained attempt to analyse the world around us in some depth is absolutely essential. At the same time, the growing urgency of building a revolutionary current among the working class makes it essential to produce that theoretical work in a style accessible to more than a few specialists, and relevant and useful for activists.

We believe that in the first three issues of the revamped International Socialist we have gone some way toward meeting that double requirement. But there is a long way to go. Why not join us in the task?
CLASS STRUGGLE WITHIN THE STATE

Thin Cats and Socialism

by Rick Kuhn

Since World War II, more and more workers have been employed in clerical jobs. While blue collar workers remain central to revolutionary strategy, the level of organisation and class consciousness of clerical workers is becoming increasingly important.

Public Servants in particular have burst into the news. Not only are their unions more active, but within the unions organisations of militants have emerged, committed to radicalising their fellow workers. This article examines the increasing militancy of public servants, the changes in their unions, and the development of rank and file organisation.

In looking at public service bureaucracies, I have used the same tools to examine the organisation of work in the public sector as a marxist would use for private sector bureaucracies. This approach assumes that in both cases, the objectives of the organisation and its leadership are the same: to get the most work out of the labour power they buy for the least outlay in wages.

Rick Kuhn is a public servant and a member of the ACCA in Canberra.
The Growth of White Collar Work and the Evolution of the Unions

Since World War II, the proportion of the workforce engaged in clerical jobs has grown dramatically, from 13.7% to 17.1%. This was already an important area of employment for women as early as 1940, but by 1976 over one third of working women were employed there. One significant reason for the relatively rapid growth of clerical employment until recently has been the much lower rate of technological change in the office, as compared to the water front, shop floor or pit face.

The growth of the government sector of the job market has made a large contribution to the expansion of clerical work. World War II led to a leap in the proportion of the workforce employed by the government. Since the early 1960s about 20% of all workers have been public servants. This expansion in employment had the preconditions for growth in white-collar militancy.

Postwar

During World War II the internal labour market of the Commonwealth public service was severely disrupted by the recruitment of large numbers of workers at all levels.

After the war (as before it) the leaders of public service associations saw them as professional bodies, with an understandable common interest with the employer in virtually all matters. They participated with management in the Joint Classification Committee, Promotions Appeals Committees and Joint Council, set up by the Labor government. Classification committees restructured the structure of the Public Service hierarchy, but the process took place during the war, their procedures established by the Public Service Board.

The growth of the government sector of the job market has made a large contribution to the expansion of clerical work. World War II led to a leap in the proportion of the workforce employed by the government. Since the early 1960s about 20% of all workers have been public servants. This expansion in employment had the preconditions for growth in white-collar militancy.

The major factional groupings before World War II were along sectarian lines. Catholic and Masonic cliques were represented inside the unions. The sectarian groupings were essentially a means of advancing one's career, rather than being political organisations. Neither the Masonic nor the Catholic secret societies were committed to changing the way in which the unions operated. The advent of the Promotions Appeals Committees soon after the war largely rendered their sectarian politics irrelevant.

Ruling Class Offensive

During the late 1940s and early 1950s a series of attacks on the public service laid the preconditions for Australia's participation in the global post-war boom. The ruling class offensive included the start of the "cold war"; the disruption of union organisation by the Industrial Groups; the defeat of the coal strike by Chifley; the fall of the Labor government later in 1949 and the Labor split of 1954. Taken together, these events put workers on the defensive, allowing employers to force up the rate of surplus value. For an entire period until the late 1960s, workers' ability to respond to ruling class initiatives was reduced.

The introduction of "scientific management" into the Commonwealth and State public services during this period can be seen in the context of the ruling class offensive. The massive growth in the Commonwealth public service required a new approach to labour management. The old ideology of upward mobility (embodied in the "Career Service"), responsibility to the government of the day, and time-honoured practices of intimidation and victimisation were no longer sufficient to control the mass of employees or restrict a wage bill much larger than before the war.

The first steps in introducing scientific management into the Commonwealth service were taken under Chifley. Such techniques were, in principle, hardly new. Since its inception, capitalism has survived by continually reorganising workers' place in the labour process by simplifying jobs and arrogating decision making powers to management.

Initially scientific management was only the province of so-called "Section 17" teams, named after the part of the Public Service Act which sanctioned their activity. They operated under the label of "Organisation and Methods (O&M)" and disputes arose with the "measurement" and simplification of work, the introduction of new office machinery and the organisation of functions within departments. By 1955, 15 out of 25 Commonwealth departments had O&M branches or sections. By the 1960s all departments had them. At present these functions go under the name of Management Advisory Services.

The fall of the Labor government saw far more direct attempts to improve productivity and weed out unproductive union organisation both in the private and public sector. The recession of the early 1930s was the most severe between the end of the war and the 1970s. It was in large part a government-induced phenomenon at the result of deliberate unemployment, when coupled with the activities of the Industrial Groups, weakened union organisation and made the long boom possible.

In the public service, the incoming government imposed new ceilings that halved the number of jobs. This cut was proportionally far more severe than restructurings in other areas, and aggravated the
The Boom Years

From the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, public service employment, like the rest of the Australian economy, expanded quite rapidly. In response, the public service moved toward the introduction of computing facilities.

The Cabinets and Ministers decided to reduce expenditure through such methods as introducing electronic data processing. In 1958, previously machinery used in clerical work had merely been hand tools — typewriters, ledger machines, dictaphones. Computer technology provided a means, not only for speeding up production, but also for eliminating human labour from whole steps of the labour process.

The introduction of new technologies and the new means for controlling work embodied in them, is one of the most important methods that the capitalist class has used for maintaining its hold on the labour process, in the face of worker resistance. That is, accumulation is a direct consequence of class struggle (as well as being a mediated effect of competition between capitalist firms).

Since World War II the clerical labour process has been increasingly subject to accumulation and the substitution of dead for live labour.

The first large-scale computer facilities were introduced into the bigger Departments (Tax, PMG, Defence) during the early 1960s.

I take it we're unanimous on the subject of Machines replacing humans...
Economic Crisis and the Fraser Offensive

While November 11 1975 saw a dramatic turnaround in government policy, the underlying causes of the new policies were the same as those for the slow-down and reversal of the Labor government reforms. The Labor and conservative governments of the early seventies had used staff ceilings to restrict growth; Fraser now used them to actually cut the numbers of public servants.

The "constraint" of the Haydon budget has been transformed into severe cuts in government spending. The number of staff under the Public Service Act was trimmed by 4% in 1975-76 and a further 1.7% the following year. There was growth in 1977-78 and levels were static in 1978-79. Staffings have also been applied in a number of State public services during 1978 and 1979. The most draconian was in Victoria where recruitment was frozen in 1978. The NSW government has also got into the act.

Staff ceilings have been the most dramatic expression of the current ruling class offensive inside the public services. However other, more complimentary measures have been taken. The pressure of the crisis has revived "scientific management" in the Commonwealth service. The aim is to minimize the output of surplus value on essential state activities and to eliminate expenditure which is integral to the ruling class - hence the real level of social security payments, expenditure on old age pension, and cuts in health and education funding.

During the 1960s and early 1970s scientific management practices continued in the departments, but the Public Service Board's "interventionist role lapsed. In 1975, as a consequence of the crisis, the PSB's scientific management activities were reintroduced in the form of Staff Utilisation Review (SUR) and Joint Management Review (JMR). These reviews use productivity indicators as an important tool. The indicators are "scientific" standards for the amount of work an individual or group should do in a given period. The basis for these indicators is arbitrary, essentially amounting to the reviewer's judgement of "normal" or "average" output. Once established, workers are expected to conform to the standards. During 1977 staff savings attributed to JMR in the Department of Business and Consumer Affairs, for example, amounted to 45 jobs; in the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme an anticipated 80 jobs; and in Internal Audit an anticipated 150-200 jobs.

The consequences of SURS and JMRs are not massive in terms of total numbers of jobs abolished. But SURS and JMRs, together with efficiency audits and changes to departmental management advisory services have a more significant impact on the day to day management of Departments. They are designed to encourage junior and middle management to be more concerned with productivity, efficiency and out-put.

The Department of Social Security has mounted a large work measurement project to determine "standard times for each task that is of sufficient importance to be stated separately." The name of the project, "Productivity Control System", throws some light on its main function - to increase control over staff in the second largest government Department, and to make them work harder.

The process of accumulation in the public service was retrenched during the mid and late 1970s. Automation has been used increasingly to displace workers and discipline those remaining. In the context of staff ceilings the "microcomputer revolution" has been a godsend to senior management. With the cheap new silicon chip technology, out-fit can be maintained or increased despite staff cuts, through investment in computer technology hundreds of times cheaper than the equivalent 10 years ago.

The Commonwealth public service acquired its first word-processor (computerised typewriter with its own memory) in 1977. By 1979 it had 190 key stations (keyboards, some of which may share the same computer) at 34 sites. In certain areas word processors have the potential to replace four typists. Computerisation is an additional form of microstructure (using microchips) of file storage and retrieval set to a swathe through registry staffs.
them as professional bodies, asserting a common interest with the employer in virtually all matters.) While the rationalisation of public sector unions associated with the wages push of 1975-76 largely passed the public service unions by, the Fraser period saw them develop an increased militancy. The deepening economic crisis and the change in government made it clear that the Commonwealth government would take initiatives to erode its employees' conditions and wages rather than improve them. The behaviour of the Labor government towards the end of its term, and the ALP's move to the right in opposition, made the possibility of a repeat of the Whitlam years seem unlikely to many public servants, even if the ALP were returned to office. Increasingly public servants are realising that they can only rely on their own strength. Claims by governments, arbitration, and even some union officials to represent their interests are being regarded sceptically.

ACOA members have become more willing to take industrial action, begin to elect more left-wing union officials, and to organise "rank and file" groups. While the leadership of the union has been moving leftwards in a fitful fashion since World War II, the late 1970s saw dramatic changes. The establishment of the ACOA Reform Group (ARG) in 1975 in Victoria became a model for many years to the NCC in their stronghold. In the 1976 triennial elections, a meeting of the ARG won the Federal Vice-President position, and in the 1979 elections the ARG gained the positions of Secretary, President and Vice-President in the Victorian Branch, though they did not win control of Branch Council, the main policy making body.

The 1979 elections also saw NCCEs defeated in Tasmania, the installation of an ALP-associated Branch Secretary in the Northern Territory and the formation of ALP-associated leadership in NSW. Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia NCCEs defeated the incumbent ALP leadership in the ACT. In the positions of Secretary, Assistant Secretary and President, but the Branch Council moved left. In the Victorian Public Service Association, a candidate of the VPSA Reform Group (RGR) gained 44% of the vote in an election for General President. A dispute developed in late 1977 and early 1978 over outside recruitment, without appeal rights for public servants, into the Commonwealth Employment Service. Bans were placed on processing outside applications, and stand-downs resulted. It was out of this dispute and the sell-out by Federal officials, that the Government Employees' Action Group emerged in Sydney.

In mid-1978, the ACTCOA and ACOA initiated its most serious coordinated campaign of industrial action, involving stop-work meetings, strikes and bans on ministerial correspondence to the CERR Act. The NSW PSA conducted a successful wage campaign in late 1979 which included strike action and rallies. Its leadership is associated with the "left" Steering Committee faction of the NSW Labor Party.

During early 1979, the Public Servants Action Group (PSAG) in Canberra and Government Employees Rank and File Activists (GERAFA) in Brisbane won a bid. Both groups were formed by the example of GEAG and the ARG. After the defeat in the 1979 Branch elections, the "progressive" ARG group in Canberra set up their own spin on the ARG in Canberra. The rationalisation of public servants from 1975 was based on the foundation on which these "rank and file" groups were built, the entry of ex-student radicals into the public service provided the scaffolding. The ex-students brought socialist ideas and the experience of organising large numbers of the people to the various groups.

The changes described above have occurred in the labour process of all public services, and there has been some radicalisation of many sections. For example, the South Australian Public Service Association is engaged in building an office floor organisation. However, the most interesting developments for revolutionary socialists have taken place in the VPSA and ACOA. Today the Australian working class lacks both cohesive organisations of active unionists and also a revolutionary party. The opposition groupings which have emerged in the public service are an opportunity for significant steps towards both.

Politics in the Public Service Unions

Both the NCC and ALP factions in the ACOA have their own limited organisations. The former have small, secret structures - the existence of which is usually denied. The ALP groups have generally resorted to more diffuse and ad hoc forms of organisation, which take shape before elections, and which machine congeals around current or aspirant "left" bureaucrats. Both factions also have caucuses for meetings at various levels of the union. Neither group has an ongoing organisation of significant numbers of union members - only a core of "leaders" and a loose collection of activists in sectors which are expected to distribute literature and deliver the vote.

In the Victorian Branch of ACOA during the lead up to the 1979 Branch elections, the "progressive" (ALP-aligned) group organised a "pre-selection" of candidates, by an hand-picked electorate of "left" ACOA members. The group controlled the branch office and generally had the numbers on Branch Council. But their only regular form of organisation in non-election periods, was a pre-branch council caucus. Policies were elaborated by self-appointed committees which reported to candidates, who exercised a veto power. The NSW Branch leadership still operates through a similar Branch Council caucus. The procedures adopted in most other branches, and other public service unions are even less formal than this.

The operations of the NCC factions are more secretive and presumably more closed. They are more inclined to engage in patently undemocratic manoeuvres to retain their control of the unions. In Victoria the NCC associated faction entrenched its control of the ACOA branch by setting up new, small sections in the areas where they had strongest support. They isolated and vilified all opposition and indulged in factional and inaccurate red-baiting.

The present character of ACOA and the various unions in it appeared in the ACOA's 1979 campaign against the CERR Act. The government was apparently leaning toward the CERR Act. It became apparent early in 1979 that the government was going to introduce legislation designed to streamline procedures for redundancies and sackings in the Commonwealth Public Service. The Commonwealth Employers' Redeployment and Retirement (CERR) Bill. As a result of union pressure in 1979, the government had withdrawn similar legislation, saying it would be "redrafted.

For over a year public service union officials ignored the possibility of CERR. To ordinary union members, the prospect of the legislation came like a bolt from the blue in April 1979. In the ACT, at a meeting of the ACT Progressives, PSAG successfully moved a motion for a stoppage if the CERR went through. The motion was subsequently carried at a Branch General Meeting on May 9 without opposition from Branch officials. Similar motions were soon successful in other Branches. During the week beginning 28 May stoppages and/or meetings were held in a number of ACOA Branches. No meetings were called to coincide with stoppages in the ACT and Queensland. The most left-wing of the ACT "progressive" officials opposed holding a meeting. The only picketing of office blocks that occurred was organised by PSAG, GEAG and GERAFA. In the ACT members of the NCC faction continued and attempted to sabotage the stoppage. In Victoria they held a mass meeting and supported a stoppage, though no attempt was made to provide for membership control of the campaign there.
In some branches ALP officials called for a referendum to provide for greater membership involvement in the branches. This was most consistently followed in NSW. However, the meetings increasingly became a forum for branch officials to harangue members, rather than a means for members to define union policies. At a branch meeting in the NSW Branch, Secretary, Barry Cotter, an ALP official, admitted that he had ignored a call to adjourn the meeting for 24 hours once the ACT was passed, once he got to the Federal Executive.

The enthusiasm of the union membership for taking strike action against CERR, Federal and Branch Officials elaborated their own strategy. They wanted to re-establish control by recourse to arbitration. The level of industrial action was to be scaled down to be more acceptable to ministerial correspondence, by a small section of the union membership. The fact that there was a trend towards stoppages and stoppage meetings, (though the turnout was impressive, given the increasing number of strikes in the state of Victoria), (the lack of picketing) was used as an argument for scaling down activity.

The danger of enthusing and mobilising large numbers, through strike committees and picketing was avoided. One federal step forward, however, was called, overlapping with lunch-time, to endorse the officials' draft determination for the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission.

The draft determination the Public Service Board the right to make determinations, and to sack them for other reasons, and to seek them to sack them for other reasons. It was also an agreement to impose long as adequate warning, procedures, appeal rights and national machinery were granted. NCCEC and ALP officials joined the draft determination. The ALP officials who were influenced by Ann Farkas, a vice President of the Victorian Branch, decided not to support it. Just before Christmas the Arbitration Commission handed down a decision. It was essentially a victory for the unions, though a limited form of union was granted. ACOA officials are portraying it as a success, thus the rule against CERR. The ACOA officials in the ACT are keen to cooperate with the Public Service Board in writing the new determination, so that the Act can be made operational as soon as possible, to allow people to take advantage of its early retirement provisions. The Government's Federal Executive has decided to participate in consultation arrangements provided for in the Act, while retaining the right to oppose some of its provisions. The Executive has not expressed opposition to the Government so far.

The ACOA Reform Group was set up in early 1976 to provide a left-wing alternative to the Victorian Branch ACCA. ACOA officials are the union that initiated organizing ordinary members, rather than by converting union officials or capturing their positions. An examination of Alternative Viewpoint, the ACOA's sporadic publication, suggests that the rank and file capacity for defending their own interests.

In practice these characteristics mean that a rank and file organisation seeks to radicalise unions by providing a focus for left-wing activity within them. This focus is the "militant minority" of already radicalised and organised rank and file members. The aim in this, to turn this militant minority into a mass movement based on radical policies. This situation is not yet on the agenda in any Australian union, let alone in the Public Service. The development of the ACOA was conditioned on the growing radicalisation of the ACOA membership and the entrenched ACOA leadership in Victoria. The only way to oust Magner and co was through a large relatively tight-knit organization. Like the rank and file organisations, the ACOA is a thoroughly democratic body, involving militant unions, with extensive links with the union membership. But there has been a continuous struggle over the ACOA's policies and activities. It has been dominated by its conservative wing, which regards winning elections, especially for the ALP, as the fundamental goal, while at the same time having a formal rank and file orientation.
The Militant Minority

The action groups have not yet developed the characteristics of rank and file activism that might give them a sense of community and shared purpose. Most of the action groups have not been able to mobilize a significant workforce, and the majority of members are not engaged in union activities. However, there is a growing sense of frustration among members who feel that their concerns are not being addressed adequately by the union. Some members have begun to question the effectiveness of the union's leadership and to consider alternative forms of organization.

The key issue that has arisen is the question of leadership. There is a growing sense that the union is not adequately representing the interests of its members, and that its leaders are not sufficiently responsive to the needs of the workforce. This has led to calls for a more democratic and participatory form of union leadership, which would involve greater input from rank and file members.

The union's ability to maintain its position as the dominant voice in the workplace is under threat. There is a risk that the union will lose members to smaller, more radical groups, which are more willing to take direct action to achieve their goals. This would be particularly dangerous if the union is unable to respond effectively to these challenges.

In conclusion, the union faces a number of significant challenges. It must find ways to maintain its position as the dominant voice in the workplace, while also responding to the demands of its members for greater democracy and participation. The success of the union will depend on its ability to adapt and evolve in response to these challenges.
Conclusion

Providing a focus for militant activity is the key aspect of rank and file groups' orientation to the office floor. That is, encouraging unionists to take matters into their own hands, in the Department or office. For example, PSAG and GEA have emphasised the need to set up joint union committees to present a united front of professionals in management work places. This is particularly crucial when management is on the offensive, as in the case of Joint Management Reviews. But it is also important in cases involving accommodation and other "routine" matters.

In such cases union officials will be able to achieve little, unless unionists are prepared to take action. In many cases they must be prepared to act independently of the union officials as well as management. During 1979 and early 1980 GERAFA has been negotiating for general terms to ensure an effective rank and file controlled campaign over the union's 20% wage claim. For four months the officials were totally inactive apart from preparing a case for the Arbitration Commission. Their strategy has been the same as that used in the CERR campaign: token industrial action to get the case into the Commission, no mobilisation of the whole union membership.

In contrast to an electoralist, vote gathering attitude to office relations, the rank and file approach is characterised by "conscious militancy." One advantage of this action is that the major action decided upon by and involving the union membership will be successful in defending their living standards and extending their control over the workplace. The current crisis of capitalism and its restructuring means that one's union will be won, or defensive actions be successful, as a result of conciliation, collaboration or "reasonable" demands with bosses.

It is clear that militancy is not yet present the keynotes for all actions by officials. The majority of officials are not yet consistently militant, nor does the structure for implementing such policies exist. However, this does not mean that they are unable or impossible, only that a long term strategy for their implementation has to be adopted.

Pandering to the backwardness of sections of the union membership cannot be a part of this strategy. Such an approach only衬reaps the "conservative common sense". The central purpose of a rank and file organisation is to change what are accepted as "reasonable" policies and actions for the union. This can be done by holding a poll of the rank and file on the left; a poll in terms of the ideas put forward and also of an organisational focus. Those attracted to the focus will be militants in the union - people looking for strong rank and file action, who recognise that their effectiveness will be enhanced by joining a rank and file group. In order to do this it means making the campaign "unreasonable" and to jeopardise "credibility" in the eyes of more conservative members.

For example, the action groups have a responsibility to point out that arbitration is a dead end, and the graveyards of disputes demonstrate the commitment of public service union officials to arbitration and the widespread belief that significant gains can be won purely through the Commission. Similarly, arbitration and other "social" issues are important areas for militant action.

The availability of arbitration directly affects the ability of the public service to enter into meaningful collective agreements. The availability of arbitration directly affects the ability of the public service to enter into meaningful collective agreements. The availability of arbitration directly affects the ability of the public service to enter into meaningful collective agreements. The availability of arbitration directly affects the ability of the public service to enter into meaningful collective agreements. The availability of arbitration directly affects the ability of the public service to enter into meaningful collective agreements. The availability of arbitration directly affects the ability of the public service to enter into meaningful collective agreements.

For example, for officers, Article 9 of the industrial award, which permits the employer to review the classification of employees, is proving to be a significant issue.

In the case of Arbitration, there are plenty of examples of the lack of success of other unions' claims. Then there is the example of the CERR decision. Militants in the public service are receptive to the idea that what happens outside the Arbitration Commission is more important to the case in hand, given the importance of the setting of state neutrality in the public service, but it is not impossible that militancy will be an increasing case. In the case of service unions' wage claim was a dismal failure if this militant position is not pushed and is not available a guide to action.

With arbitration it is not a question of convincing unionists that free bargaining is easier to discuss politics with more of them and to involve them in action on the floor. It is a question of convincing unionists that conscientious activity, opening the way, not only to militant trade union consciousness but also revolutionary consciousness, is the only way to deal with the growing militancy of workers, and of maintaining the momentum. There are the people whose activities will continue the revolt.

By building the groups, through recruiting militants, the opportunities for greater contact with other workers grows it is easier to discuss politics with more of them and to involve them in action on the floor. It is a question of convincing unionists that conscientious activity, opening the way, not only to militant trade union consciousness but also revolutionary consciousness, is the only way to deal with the growing militancy of workers, and of maintaining the momentum. There are the people whose activities will continue the revolt.

Footnotes

1. The emphasis in the following account is somewhat biased to the administrative and clerical workers' Association, as this has been the main area of recent activity.

2. There is a relatively small published material written on the public service clerical unions. I am indebted for much of the information in the article to workers in the various unions. Jeff Scrivens' thesis in Sociology at Monash University (1981) is a very useful source on the VPSA. My own Honours Thesis (Monash University 1983) also includes material on the Commonwealth Public Service Labour Union process brought together elsewhere.

3. For a detailed account of how militant this class analysis can be applied to the public service see G. C. Wachter, "The Social Identification of State Employed Social Workers" in Social Praxis 3(1-2).

4. The changes to the public service labour process are conditioned by the class struggle and economic conditions in society at large and the capability of workers in the public service.


6. The CERR decision on industrial relations for the public service for example the "industrial services" section.


9. Pat Langston, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations of the Social Security (19 October 1978).

10. Answer to question on notice number 20, to the Treasurer, by Bill Hayden, 27 November 1978.

11. The following is based on the analysis of the CERR campaign, the ACOA, Social studies of the labour market (published by various) and discussions with ACOA members in various Branches.


Part Two

The Politics of Health Care

by Janey Stone

This is the second part of an article on the politics of health care. The first part, which appeared in International Socialist 9, had as its main theme health as a social issue. I discussed health care in the capitalist economy and the individualisation of health care as a mechanism of social control.

This second part touches on several other aspects of health politics. After describing the history of the capitalist health care institutions in the 19th century, I go on to consider several issues of economic and political significance today.

I conclude with a discussion of strategic issues—a critique of alternative medicine and a brief summary of the class struggle among health workers.

This article is only intended as an overview, and not an in-depth study. I suggest the use of the articles and books referred to in the footnotes for further reading.

Janey Stone is a health worker in Melbourne and the author of Radical Feminism: A Critique.

Conditions in Early 19th Century Britain

Between 1870 and 1840 Britain changed from a rural to an urban society. In 1903 there were about twice as many country labourers as town labourers; by 1840 the reverse was true. Cities exploded. Manchester, for instance, went from a population of 90,000 in 1801, to 257,000 in 1831, and 400,000 in 1861.

Assisting this change was the New Poor Law of 1834. It created the workhouse system, making it compulsory for those receiving public assistance to enter a workhouse.

The previous law had provided for payment of a small dole. This discouraged rural unemployment from moving to the cities. The new law required that workhouse care always be inferior to that available from even the lowest kind of wage labour. The effect was to reduce the market price for labour, and to force able-bodied people to migrate to the cities, creating for the first time a national labour market.

People with habits suitable to rural life now crowded into slums. One historian puts it this way:

Tweleve dirty habitations on a hillside may be a picturesque village, but twelve hundred are a grave nuisance and twelve thousand a pest and horror.

Streets were rarely cleaned, dung was left to decay, there were no drains or public garbage collection. The window tax remained in force, leaving only one seventh of houses with enough light to pay the tax. The rivers were stagnant and polluted with factory waste, and had to be seen and smelt to be appreciated.

Not surprisingly disease was endemic. The death rate in Birmingham nearly doubled between 1831 and 1834. This working class had a life expectancy at birth only half that of the gentry and professionals.

Thus the New Poor Law created the very conditions which the later public health movement cleaned up. And Edwin Chadwick, who is famous for his role in public health, was a principal force behind the Poor Law.

Medical knowledge in the early 19th century was extremely limited. While surgery had developed certain practical skills, mainly during war, doctors were still bound by medieval conventions.

They based their treatments on the theory that disease was an imbalance of body fluids or “humours.” Therefore they tried to cure the disease by adjusting fluids, by bleeding, purging and emetics. Various other equally imaginary theories existed and treatments were highly arbitrary.

Consider the treatment Karl Marx received for his carbuncles in 1836. His doctor prescribed four times the usual intake of food, plus four glasses of port and half a bottle of claret daily. When this didn’t work he added one and a half quarts of the strongest London stout.

The working class couldn’t afford doctors. Many of those who were admitted to workhouses under the 1834 laws were sick as well as destitute. Consequently these institutions effectively became a health care system for the poor. To this day many hospitals in Britain are housed in old workhouses.

The workhouses did not, however, provide tender loving care.

“Our intention,” said one Assistant Commissioner, “is to make the workhouses as like prisons as possible.” And another: “Our object is to establish discipline so severe and repulsive as to make them a terror to the poor and prevent them from entering.”

Women’s Ward in Bellevue Hospital
from 23 doctors attributing the epidemic to "spontaneous malignant cholera".

The 23 doctors were anti-contagionists. This current opposed interference and bureaucratism. They were reformers fighting for the freedom of the individual and commerce against the shackles of despotism and reaction in a group which was the base of the British Sanitary Reform Movement. In the period leading up to the revolutions of 1848, anti-contagionism was at its height. In 1842, Edwin Chadwick published his Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain. Several prominent citizens, including Charles Dickens, joined him in the Reform Movement. They attacked "the slum houses, noxious and odious factories ... inefficient water boards and offensive burial grounds."

For a time the Sanitary Movement gained high and achieved several reforms. There are three main reasons for their success. Firstly, the state of the workers' health was so bad that it was affecting their ability to work productively. The deterioration of their physical condition was so marked that by the time of the Crimean War, the rejection rate for national service was up to 60%.

Secondly, the disease was a way of spreading, and the upper classes had to protect their own health. The first Public Health Act was passed in 1848 to meet an impending cholera epidemic. Ceasepools were filled in and WC's introduced. The water supply which drained into the Thames became particularly offensive, specially to the noses of the parliamentarians at Westminster. In 1858 the drainage was altered so that sewage entered the Thames much lower down.

The third main reason for the success of the Reform Movement was the capital's need for reforms to avoid radicalism. Reformers saw themselves as introducing changes for the ruling class's own good.

Chadwick argued that the epidemic diseases were weeding out the "more responsible" workers and the less successful "taken over by a population that is young, inexperienced, ignorant, credulous, irrepressibly passionate and dangerous". Chadwick's goal was to establish a "new band for a new millenium" to be freed from the shackles of despotism and reaction, which resulted in an improved standard of living. Better drinking water, sewerage systems and better housing were the main cause of the massive drop in death rates. To sum up, the greatest change in health came about as a result of social measures on the basis of a wrong theory. The social measures were not altruistic but the result of class pressures and political necessity. Health is a social issue, medical technologies are secondary.

The Creation of the Professions

DOCTORS

Doctors as a professional group are a central component of health care under capitalism. In Britain they were already well established as a group during the 19th century. But the USA did not have the same traditions. It is instructive to see how the profession was formed.

Professions play a particular role in the social system. A recognized profession is not just a group of self-designated experts, it is a group which has authority in the law to select its own members and regulate their practice. In other words professions are the creations of a ruling class.

A profession is not based on greater expertise, but on its social role. Its social position then allows it to monopolize the means of making expertise. This can be clearly seen in much narrower powers. Later acts led to only piecemeal hierarchic changes and by 1883 medical laws were being withdrawn from public health.

It was anti-contagionists who won the day politically. And in the 1890s when the germ theory of disease was discovered, they tried to have won the scientific debate. Yet though the anti-contagionists had based themselves on new scientific theory (there are no mass grave testimonies), the profession resulted in an improved standard of living. Better drinking water, sewerage systems and better housing were the main cause of the massive drop in death rates.

To sum up, the greatest change in health came about as a result of social measures on the basis of a wrong theory. The social measures were not altruistic but the result of class pressures and political necessity. Health is a social issue, medical technologies are secondary.

A SOCIETY DISEASE.

Dr. Schmerz——Nervous prostration. You need rest.

Mrs. Affen——Why, I do nothing but rest!

Dr. Schmerz——Well, try some light employment. Watch other people work.

One way doctors managed to survive was use of the myth of female frailty. The social role of upper class women — to do nothing and do it decoratively — fitted well with this myth. As usual the medics developed pseudo-scientific theory to justify the social reality. Women were naturally weaker due to natural female functions. "Every woman should look upon herself as an invalid once a month".

Everything female was inherently sick, and headaches, nerves and even death were fashionable. Doctors cultivated the illnesses of their patients with frequent home visits and prolonged treatments. In Erehenreich's and Engels's apt phrase, "a dozen or more dead lady patients were all that a doctor needed for a successful urban practice".

Although put forward as a "scientific" theory, female frailty really was only intended to apply to middle and upper class women. Working class women, like men, were expected to be industrious and strong.
Towards the end of the century, a reform oriented Public Health Movement developed. As in Britain, the reformers were aiming to counter the influence of radicals, and protect upper-class health and business interests. For instance, the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis calculated the cost of TB among the poor in terms of absenteeism among workers, relied on the protection of their own condition.

Mrs. Plunkett, a household hygiene expert, recommended "well-trained suffragettes" to the upper classes.

The upper 10,000 are learning that their sanitary welfare is indissolubly connected to that of the lower 10 million, and it is the perception of this truth that has caused the wave of emotional interest in the condition of the poor.

The Public Health Movement ran more than a propaganda campaign. The police and other forces of the state were closely involved.

In New York City, public health was originally a police function and the first Metropolitan Board of Health included equal numbers of doctors and police officials. Public health officials actually saw themselves as a type of police. An article in 1910, for instance, called for police powers to hunt down an estimated 20,000 "toile" victims.

It was the enemy that had broken through the pickets at night and there were no police to follow them.

The case of Typhoid Mary was another example. She was a typhoid carrier who had no symptoms herself. As a cook in affluent households she was responsible for 52 cases of typhoid. In 1907 she was apprehended and placed in solitary confinement on a tiny island in New York East River for 3 years.

The American Public Health Movement did not go as far as Britain in its public counterpart. By concentrating on individual victims of disease, they ignored the root cause in the conditions of life in the slums and factories of the time.

It took socialists such as Upton Sinclair to expose these conditions. His book, The Jungle, gave a horrifying picture of the Chicago slaughteryards at the turn of the century. Even then, subsequent legislation was directed mainly at the contamination of food (to be eaten by upper classes) and the workers' conditions were largely untouched.

The American equivalent of the radical movements in Britain and Europe was the popular health movement formed by lay-healers in the 1830's and 1840's. Again, although their concern was to some extent over medical methods, neither side was based on scientific knowledge. However, the ideals of the lay-healers were probably less harmful. For instance, Taylorism and scientific management were common. They ran courses on preventive care, emphasizing such things as frequent bathing and loose fitting clothes for women.

Although popular in nature, the movement had a certain working class content and radical outlook. They advocated generalizations, as members of "nonscientific, non-producing classes", and limited development of "piecework", and "craft and craftsmen" as the four great evils.

The Public Health Movement had consisted mainly of middle class women acting in the interests of the ruling class. After 1900 big business acted directly.

The period from 1880 to World War 1 was one of drastic social upheaval and mass class struggle. Rapid industrialization followed on the victory of the capitalist mode of production in the Civil War. The new urban population related expandively to their miserable slums and horrendous working conditions. The capitalist class had to try and solve these problems without hindering the development of their social system.

The writer puts their solution this way:

The response of the capitalists, as a class, manifested itself in the traditional attitudes of the profession into technical problems. Beginning in the 1880's and 1890's, a general movement toward medicalization spread around the country. For instance, Taylorism and scientific management were introduced into industry and scientific agriculture into farming. And the professions of law, medicine, theology, and engineering were reformed and placed on a scientific basis.

The ruling class acted through the so-called "philanthropes" such as the Rockefeller and Carnegie Foundations. They felt that as long as a "nonscientific, non-producing class" could enter a profession, its role was limited. With the right training, professional could exert a stabilizing influence in social control. Restricted entry and prolonged education would ensure that the middle class was picked up through bare feet. With a higher standard of living women shoes.

Once the Commission's program was well underway, its policies and methods determined by Rockefellers, its task was hand over to the government to be funded out of public money.

NURSES

Before Florence Nightingale, nursing was either a religious occupation or a low status job. Dickson has pictured them as drunks and thieves, which is surprising given the disgusting conditions of hospitals at the time.

Nightingale did not act out of altruistic motives. She was interested in developing an occupation suitable for upper class women suffering under the enforced idleness of the Victorian era imposed on them. She certainly had no intention of creating a genuinely independent role for her nurses. When they arrived in Crimea, the doctors at first ignored them. Nightingale refused to allow the women to lift a finger to help the thousands of sick and wounded until the doctors gave an order.

With the nurses, as with the soldier, whether we think it right or not is not the question. Prompt obedience is the question. We are not in control under control.

Nightingale's search for an occupation suitable for ladies coincided with the consolidation of the medical profession and the introduction of scientific medicine in the late 19th century. The more educated doctors needed obedient nurses to carry out their orders. Modern doctoring and nursing are complementary.

Florence Nightingale was an aristocrat. Her lady nurses didn't need money and to the tradition of poor pay was absolutely. The increasingly important hospitals found that nursing schools provided a ready supply of cheap labor.

Hand in hand with obedience goes ignorance. In the early days, doctors forbade nurses to read medical histories, and even put numbers rather than names on drug bottles.

The first nursing school in Ontario (Canada) is its motto, "I see and I am silent."

This philosophy has persisted almost unchallenged to the present day. A doctor at London Hospital said in 1950.

"We have to stop nurses thinking for themselves. Anything more than they are. The fact is, the facts are out of the doctors' orders."

Today's trained nurses at a prominent Melbourne hospital are taught this chant:

Who are the patients? Patients are people. Who are we? We are nurses.

The philosophy of devotion and submissiveness, the hierarchical structure, the exploitative nature of altruism — all derive from the religious, military and aristocratic beginnings. Female condition provided exactly the right sort of personality. Women were "inductive" nurses. For instance, Nightingale fought for licensing but nurses cannot be registered and examined any more than the doctors, doctors' exploitation as workers is inexplicably bound up with their oppression as sex.

Nightingale's upper class women were rapidly replaced by working class girls and nursing remained a very backward area in terms of pay and conditions throughout most of this century.

The training of nurses, severe as it was, would not have been enough to keep nurses suppressed on its own. The idea about spiritual rewards must have grown rather than thinned the harsh realities of the job. But when nurses did organize, the false emphasis on "professionalism" in the detriment of trade union activities contributed to their further oppression.

The Royal Australian Nursing Federation (RANF) before World War II. It is a clear example. Initially called the Australian Trained Nurses Association (ATNA), it was formed in Sydney in 1939. From the beginning it considered...
Economic & Political Issues Today

Health care costs have risen dramatically in the last decade internationally. In Australia, the problem has been exacerbated by an increase in the public sector's share of health expenditure. This rose from 56% in 1970 to 77% in 1976, and included a significant increase in the Federal contribution.

Since it came to power in 1975, the Liberal government has complained about the increasing overall costs and proposed to reduce Federal government expenditure. They want to shift the burden of health costs back on to the shoulders of the individual.

Fraser has made no attempt to control costs to the community as a whole. All his policies tend to increase costs. Medicines and pharmaceuticals have gone up unchecked, doctors raise fees when it suits them and so do health insurance funds. Increasing hospital charges is part of government policy. In Victoria the government tried to make the six remaining free hospital community centres charge more for medical services than local GPs. They even expected them to charge for social work services.

So, to understand the health costs debate we have to look past the government's manipulations. Some of the undercurrents are discussed in the following sections.

Health Insurance

Throughout Australian history, doctors persistently defended their economic interests as a profession against the needs not only of the health of ordinary people, but often of the state and capitalist society as a whole. Although set up by the ruling class, the profession has taken on a certain independence. Their very exclusiveness gives them a degree of bargaining power with the state. At every stage they have resisted schemes which did more than merely guarantee payment.

Repeatedly the AMA rejected any salaried system as being "inconsistent with the individualistic basis of medical practice". During World War II more than 90% of doctors boycotted the pharmaceutical benefits scheme. Similarly, the national health act passed in 1948 was never implemented. Whenever salaries were proposed doctors cried out "civil scripture!"

In 1949, Menzies committed himself to preserving the "unique and privileged doctor-patient relationship", the doctors had won. While Britain and other countries introduced national health schemes, Australia now got "voluntary insurance" which meant government schemes for hospital patients only.

Medibank is widely believed to have been a major change to this state of affairs. And there is no doubt that it was a major advance. Although its opponents blamed Medibank for much of the rise in costs during its short life, it is not born out by the facts. Nevertheless, Medibank was never the comprehensive health scheme some saw it as. It was never more than a way of organising payment.

Fee-for-service remained at its centre, and the medical profession remained in control of its own incomes. The original scheme incorporated a levy, and it was only introduced without one because the opposition-controlled Senate blocked the levy legislation. The scheme left the boards and bureaux of hospitals untouched, and also the 90 or so private health insurance funds and their massive reserves.

Medibank fell very short of a genuine national health scheme. The scheme was not a major advance. Although Fraser's attacks are largely political, it is also the case that the economic base for a genuine national health scheme does not exist today. Medibank was introduced 30 years ago. Indeed in Britain itself, the dismantling of the National Health Service was begun under the recent Labour government. Welfare institutions are being cut back worldwide due to the economic crisis.

The Role of the Doctors in the Cost Spiral

The national health insurance scheme meant guaranteed payment for doctors, and they took full advantage of it. They charged for short telephone discussions, and for just signing a repeat prescription. Fees increased just before and 12 months after the introduction of Medibank. So much so that the fee for surgery consultations doubled.

Table I shows clearly that, while health costs are rising faster than the CPI, doctors' incomes are keeping even further ahead.

Most of this money isn't being made by GPs. Specialists have the greatest opportunities. For example, some radiologists have incomes around the $100,000 mark, often for a week under 20 hours. Doctors also stimulate consumption for equipment and other supplies. Between 1962-63 and 1975-76 there was a 300% increase in doctor-initiated diagnostic services (pathology etc.), a 52% increase in specialist referrals, and a doubling of the number of prescriptions per head of population.

The prescription sales help drug companies to the profits I discussed in Part I. The pathology racket is canvassed almost daily in the papers. An elderly lady with an ulcer, who was treated in 3 months of intensive testing, summed up the patient's point of view: "I am 84, I have had an ulcer for thirty years. The symptoms..."
Contact I.S.
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Brisbane
655 Stanley St, Woolloongabba
phone 391 5989
Ipswich (Qld)
phone 281 6113
Canberra
PO Box 1165 Canbera City
ACT 2601

Table 1.
Income of doctors in private practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Health expenditure per head</th>
<th>Ave. male wage</th>
<th>CPI</th>
<th>Total gross income of doctors in private practice</th>
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<tr>
<td>1940-67</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>1960-70</td>
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<td>164</td>
<td>151</td>
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<td>1972-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-76</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Preliminary figures. NA not available.


Restructuring and Rationalisation
There are two trends occurring in the structure of health care. One is the transfer of the profitable areas in the health delivery system to the private sector. The second is a tendency for increasing capitalisation.

The development of a two-tier system is usually looked at from the point of view of the recipients — luxury services for the affluent and a poorly staffed and equipped service for the poor. This has been particularly evident in Britain as the NHS is whistled away.

But it must also be seen in the context of Fraser's (and Thatcher's) policy of returning profitable features of the economy to the private sector. In this respect the government's policy is not so much to cut costs as to transfer costs to the mass of the population, and transfer the profits to private enterprise.

Private health funds are a good example. With the recent changes there has been a growth in commercial health insurance, which concentrates on insured, healthy people, out of whom a profit can be made. The traditional funds, such as HRA in Victoria, have kicked up quite a fuss. Yet although they are supposed to be non-profit they have their own ways of attracting money.

Table 2.
Changes in Hospital & Medical Funds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hospital benefits</th>
<th>Medical benefits</th>
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Source: Hospitals & Health Services Yearbook 1978-79.

What We Stand For
Workers' Power
Workers' control over the whole of society, based on workers' control of the factories and workplaces. Only the organised working class has the power to create a society free of exploitation, oppression and war. Rights and duties are not separate because they are based on the organisation of workers by a hierarchical union.

Smashing the Capitalist State
The state is a repressive institution that never truly liberty. The struggle against the state is a struggle for freedom.

Full Equality and Liberation
For women, blacks, migrants and all oppressed groups. Racism, sexism and discrimination against migrant peoples are all part of the capitalist system. We are opposed to the social oppression of homosexuals.

Revolutions, not Reformism
We believe in overthrowing the capitalist system, not patching it up or gradually trying to change it.

Internationalism
A socialist revolution cannot succeed in isolation. It must help build revolutions in other countries as it will be defeated like the Russian revolution of 1917. We are building an international movement, equipped to participate in and support the international working class.

Rank and File Organisation
Workers must run their own rank and the organisation of the working class.

I.S. Works
To build a revolutionary party and to support the struggles of workers who are fighting against the system.

JOIN US!
FIG. 1

CHANGES IN PUBLIC & PRIVATE HOSPITALS

[Graph showing changes in public and private hospital beds from 1973 to 1979.]

Source: Derived from a table in Hospitals & Health Services Yearbook 1978-79.

In public hospitals there is a tendency to introduce contract cleaners, serve meals out of laundries, and use commercial frozen food services (although these are often no cheaper).

Table 2 shows how the funds have grown in membership over the years with Medibank having little effect. At the same time the number of medical funds has remained the same, while hospital funds have decreased—an example of overlapping.

The Fraser government said the cutting of the private funds was part of its policy of strengthening private medicine, and so do the unions themselves. An HCF (NSW) spokesman states: "Private health insurance is the key to private medicine. We are the buffer for doctors against socialized medicine."...
Hospital workers occupy Weir Hospital, Britain.

Health Cuts

The health cuts which we are experiencing in Australia are not fully understood in the context of the structural changes which are occurring in the industry and the international economic context. The fight against the cuts should not be based on a false idea of the wonderful system that has been introduced "if only they'd been given a chance." Some of the cuts have been in building programs. The relocation of Melbourne's Queen Vic to the outer suburb of Clayton is a well-known example. First projected in 1938, the planned number of beds has been dropped from 1000 to 300. Architect's plans for the new version have not even been completed. But the more serious problem has been staff shortages. This is so bad that a number of newly built facilities have remained empty because there is no money for staff. The new wing of the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne is not even open to the public yet, although it has 100 beds. The new equipment at a rehabilitation center opened at Hobart in 1984 has never been put to use. The number of staff in Victorian mental institutions is up to 7 times higher than international standards.

In Britain, the cuts have reduced the number of hospital closures. The strategy in Australia appears to be to close wards and cut back services rather than close hospitals. For instance, with the opening of Westmead in Sydney's outer Western suburbs, Parramatta Hospital is being cut back. The maternity ward has been closed, but it is not clear if the hospital's role is now restricted to a geriatric and rehabilitation unit. Cuts are in the areas most used by ordinary people - obstetrics, mental health, long-term care for the elderly. Casualty units are more than emergency cases; many poor people go there instead of to GP. Funds and staff of community health centers have been cut so badly that even NSW Premier Wran admits they are in a mess. On the other hand, facilities for the affluent are expanding. Not only there are increasing numbers of private hospitals and pathology services. But some services as cosmetic surgery are actually booming while working class people are finding it harder and harder to pay for basic care.

Is Alternative Medicine the Answer?

The mystique of omnipotence cultivated by the medical profession is cracking today. Many people are casting about for an alternative to doctors and hospitals. A wide range of therapies have become popular under the broad cover of "alternative medicine," including yoga, health foods, acupuncture, women's health centers, imaging, and herbal medicine. They can be grouped together because of the common view about all of them, that somehow they represent an alternative to orthodox medicine - the right medicine for health workers and those concerned with health issues.

In reality alternative medicine shows many striking similarities to orthodox medicine. There is the same individual treatment delivered by fee-for-service practitioners. To the extent that prevention is considered, the emphasis is on personal behavior (diet and mental health). When illness is clearly related to disease or trauma caused by pollution, the individualistic answer is move to the country or cultivate an appropriate frame of mind.

Whether the therapy is in small groups, or whether the medical service is run collectively doesn't change the argument. The concentration on technique rather than social relations by its very nature leads to individual solutions rather than strategies for changing society.

The similarity goes beyond individualism. As with conventional drugs, "alternative" drugs are highly profitable.

Laetrile, for instance, is already a mult-million dollar industry despite its illegality. While the debate over its effectiveness against cancer went on, its discoverer Ernst Krebs lives in a castle in San Francisco and one doctor, John Richardson, took in $2.6 million in 3 years.

The laetrile promoters in America have been using their money to buy electoral support in Congress. One supporting organization, the Committee for Freedom of Choice in Cancer Therapy, is controlled by right-wing John Birch Society people.

Whether the drug works or not is beside the point. Mylan Bwyf for instance, used a fatally standard form of chemotherapy and failed in his success on the appearance of being in some way alternative.

The health food business is also immensely profitable. Here are some examples from a worker in a health food warehouse. They passed off ordinary wheat as "organic wheat" and had two year old spires in dried fruit mixture. Bran costing 3 cents a pound was sold for 48 cents a pound.
interest in alternative health "because it emphasizes more money-saving prevention and patient responsibility". A recent editorial in the prestigious journal Science suggests that "one of the cheapest ways to put a cap on spiralling health costs is through greater self-care.\(^9\) Science points to the reduction of costs by 45% in a horticultural self-care program, and a saving of $1.7 million in a diabetes project. The conclusion: The potential for cost savings inherent in such efforts argues strongly that self help groups should be encouraged and promoted.

Self help is not the only aspect of alternative medicine which fits in with government cuts in health care. Governments planning cuts regularly draw on the work of certain well-known alternative theorists.

Among these is Ivan Illich, who has some credibility on the left as a radical or even as a "hero". He has certainly had an impact on the left. Illich has also argued his case before senior policy makers in Europe. In February 1977 he was the Assistant Secretary for Health in the U.S. Australian government papers also refer to him.

To summarise Illich's arguments extremely briefly\(^5\) our medical institutions have damaged human's link to nature which is found in earth and third world cultures. Professional medicine destroys individuals ability to act for themselves. Illich proposes a retreat from industrialisation, a return to personal medicine and individual reliance on the "autonomy of the individual".

Illich assumes capitalism and state capitalism as "natural limits". For him industrial society is capitalist industrial society. He prefers to turn to early laissez-faire capitalism. But as one critic, Lawrence Miller, argues "health care fails precisely because it does not deal with the fundamental social problem that internal operation of capitalist institutions generates.

To fully understand health beliefs, activities and ideologies in an industrial society we must look beyond medical attitudes and beyond even Illich's industrial ethos, to the economic and social basis of human activity.\(^9\)

The reactionary utopianism and elitism of Illich's philosophy became very clear in a recent article.\(^9\) He takes as a social model the Aztec civilisation in ancient Mexico and eulogises their high culture and spiritual health. While the Aztecs were highly developed in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and technology, they had only minimal technology. They did not use the wheel, the plough or any beast of burden. This high culture, that builds power on weakness is unique to the New World. In this world, in which power was based on the acceptance of weakness, the goal for each man was to shape his face. The means to reach this goal was poverty.

Illich does not even mention the vast majority who could not indulge in poetry and spiritual activities. The high culture of the ruling minority was based not on 'realistic acceptance' of weakness, but on the exploitation of the peasant class and their subjugation by any sort of technology.

As one writer puts it, Illich is radical in style, but his views are now comfortably conservative in message and substance.\(^5\) Alternative medicine fails as a strategy because of its emphasis on such anti-technology themes and its avoidance of techniques. Alternative techniques might not be reformed. Either way they are not primitive anti-capitalist. If they were we would not find that acupuncture, chiropractic and other methods are widely accepted as they are. Nor would corporations use medication to increase employee productivity.\(^5\)

But what is needed is not "alternatives" that remain trapped within a capitalist logic, but a struggle which challenges that logic itself.

**Class Struggle in the Health Care Industry**

**Government welfare cutbacks** are a central pillar of ruling class attacks throughout the world. This has put government employees in the forefront of the class struggle.\(^9\)

Although most hospital workers in Australia are State employees, most of the cuts are the result of Federal policy. This gives the struggle against them a highly political character. The crucial issues are the moment are the bread and butter issues of jobs and wages, yet any action around these issues immediately raises political questions. For this reason, resistance among hospital and other health workers is important for the workers' movement as a whole.

It is essential to establish at the outset that the fight against cutbacks is a progressive one. The supposed "oversupply of doctors" is really the result of the financial pressure on the finances of the doctors. Table 3 shows that working class areas are under-supplied in all categories of total number will affect those areas first. The "oversupply" of nurses is an excuse for staffing levels and increase the workforce. The "oversupply" of hospital beds is a cover for the government's policy of cutting services and putting in the hands of the financiers of private facilities. It is essential for us to resist these attempts to use propaganda to justify them.

Hospital workers have not traditionally been militant. In an area where devotion to patient care has been used to justify apalling wages and conditions, there has been a social role of degree of struggle in the past 5 years. The deviation argument is rebonding on its initiators - because the cuts seriously affect patient care, workers feel compelled to resist.

The rise of the women's movement has also contributed to the new wave of militance. Nurses, and women cleaners and kitchen workers in this predominantly female industry are no longer prepared to accept the poor conditions with feminine docility. It was a "women's issue which started the current wave in Australia. When Hospital Employee Federation members stopped work for two days in 1975 over equal pay, But, from then on issues related to government cutbacks predominated.

In 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1979 nurses staged a sit down protest outside Parliament House, When the government successfully appealed against their 10 pay rise. Although they didn't strike they introduced a number of bans including refusing to wear uniforms. This is the form of many of the struggles took - bans supported by mass demonstrations. Actual work stoppages have been rare.

Nurses in Brisbane have fought over a number of issues. In 1978 they fought to be on community health centre.

Fighting the health cuts — When Melbourne's Austin Hospital was told to cut costs in 1977, the Board of Management tried to increase workloads from 35 to 40 hours for clerical and para-medical staff. The workers called their bluff at this stopwork meeting — and the State Liberal Minister for Health had to step in and tell the Board to back down.
Footnotes

2. Ibid. p. 306.
8. Ibid. p. 6.
17. Ibid. p. 68.
19. Ibid. p. 46.
20. Ibid. p. 68.
21. Ibid. p. 68.
22. Ibid. p. 68.
23. Ibid. p. 68.
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42. Ibid. p. 68.
43. Ibid. p. 68.
44. Ibid. p. 68.
45. Ibid. p. 68.
46. Ibid. p. 68.
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AN ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIAN NATIONALISM

An Imperialist Colony?

By Tom O’Lincoln

AUSTRIAN nationalism is a hot issue on the left. Since the War, the main Communist currents have been firmly tied to it. Today Maoists of one or another stripe are vehement proponents of an “independence movement”.

The more sophisticated among the left nationalists attempt to base themselves partly upon Lenin. Arguing that Australia is oppressed by imperialism, they raise Lenin’s slogan that the “nationalism of the oppressed” is a progressive force.

At the other extreme, also attempting to base themselves on Lenin, are those who denounce Australian nationalism as reactionary. They point to the racism and class collaboration historically associated with it, and in this we agree with them. However, they then proceed to simply invert the

Tom O’Lincoln is an editor of this journal and a member of the National Committee of the International Socialists.
The nation-state is a capitalist phenomenon. Lenin summarised the Marxist view as follows:

The establishment of the period of the final victory of capitalism over feudalism has been linked up with the complete victory of commodity production, the bourgeoisie must capture the world, and this must be politically united territories whose national languages differ. This is the economic foundation of national movements.

The complete victory of commodity production was a progressive event in Marx's day. With the triumph of capitalism came political democracy, the numerical growth of the working class and its concentration in large factories, trade unions, workers parties. In other words, the triumph of capitalism opened the way for the struggle for socialism.

Consequently Marx supported many national liberation movements. The unification of Germany and Italy, and national independence for Poland and Ireland, promised to improve the conditions under which the workers of those countries could fight their own struggle.

In addition, he saw solidarity with these national struggles as an essential part of educating the workers in the oppressor nations in internationalism.

Finally, Marx hoped that national unity and independence for the countries of central Europe would be a blow against Austro-German, which he considered a threat to democracy in Europe. It went so far as to call for a national war against Russia, the Germania, and the Hellenists.

National movements were supported as a means to an end, but never as ends in themselves. For example, Marx opposed the national movements of the Greeks and the Serbs as "nationalist".

Because the Czechs and the Serbs were then "nationalities", Marx pointed out the "nationalist" features of Russian imperialism in Europe, which was a major enemy. As the Czechs and Serbs at that time would have been regarded as part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Marx was most critical of the revolutionary movement in Europe.

Once capitalism had performed its historically progressive function, the national movement became reactionary. By 1871, Marx argued that this point had been reached in western Europe.

The highest form of nationalism is world nationalism. This is, of course, national war, and this is now proved to be a mere governmental hangover, intended to stifle the struggle of classes and to be thrown aside as soon as that class struggle bursts out into open civil war. Class rule is not possible. To digest itself in a national uniform, the national governments are in the way of the proletarian revolution.

Lenin accepted this fundamental framework, and attempted to develop it in the context of world imperialism.

He contended that capitalism had not only matured in western Europe, but had also created a world market. On a world scale, the objective conditions existed for such a movement. Nationalism was therefore more than a simple national struggle. It was a world movement, a form of struggle for the abolition of nationalism.

It followed that the alliance with national movements was temporary and limited.

Imperialism and Australian Nationalism

Turning to our own country, how can Lenin's approach to the national liberation movement be applied?

Maoists and other left nationalists predictably argue that Australia is an oppressed country. The nationalism of the oppressed is progressive, therefore Australian independence is a revolutionary demand.

An important point to note is that the progress tasks of capitalism are completed in Australia, and that capitalism is still in its revolutionary phase, Nationalism, which is a capitalist phenomenon, is reactionary too. So far, no Marxist argument.

Lenin was not without a critical argument. Taking up the Marxists' argument about the nationalism of the oppressed, he maintained that it is not simply a matter of linear progression. It is not simply a matter of the oppressed being exploited and oppressed.

Lenin argued that nationalism was not only to abolish the present division of mankind into small states and all national isolation, not only to bring the nations closer to each other, but also to merge them.

Imperialism requires the cooperation of the ruling classes in different countries, and the cooperation of the rulers of different countries. This cooperation is based on the fact that the rulers of different countries are in the same position. The rulers of different countries, therefore, work together to exploit the workers of different countries.

In this sense, the Australian people are the same as the rest of the world. They are all victims of capitalist society. They are all workers, and they all work for the benefit of the rulers of the world.

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In 1983, this cartoon summed up the Australian desire to establish British Imperialism in New Guinea.

In the past because the Australian bourgeoisie and its allies sought closer links with the dominant imperialist ( Anglo-Saxon) powers. This was the basis of a movement for independence from imperialist domination.

This argument is rather transparent. Clearly today, the Australian bourgeoisie continues to be closely tied to the dominant Anglo Saxon powers, and probably seeks closer links. This fact will inevitably give a pro-imperialist quality to any nationalist movement.

Yet there has been major change since 1920. The country has been industrialised, and capital has been concentrated. This process has made the Australian economy more independent. Here is how one writer sums it up:

According to a 1976 study of manufacturing industry by the Bureau of Statistics, 46 per cent of company profits went to the 200 largest companies. These companies produce 50 per cent of all manufactured goods in Australia and employ 380,000 workers. Of these 200 companies 113 are Australian owned or controlled. Of the last twelve companies, five are Australian controlled. Australian capitalism has launched such monopolies of world stature as Broken Hill Proprietary and CSR, both of which rank among the world's top 100 companies.

Industrialisation has made Australia significantly less dependent on imports of foreign capital, as shown in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>% OF GROSS FIXED CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1961–70</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971–80</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981–90</td>
<td>38.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991–2000</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–2010</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011–2020</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021–2030</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2031–2040</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2041–2050</td>
<td>44.6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Clearly Australian imperialism is not independent of developments in the rest of the world, as the United States is. Australia is merely a component of an imperialist system that is intimately connected to the rest of the world. This connection is not an independent variable, but is determined by the needs of the world capitalist system. The growth of the Australian economy is thus tied to changes in the global economy, and is dependent on the ability of Australian capitalists to find new markets for their products and new sources of raw materials. This dependency is not a temporary phenomenon, but is a necessary condition of the capitalist system.

Table 1: Net Capital Imports as % of Gross Fixed Capital Expenditure, Australia, Selected Periods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>SMILLION</th>
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<tr>
<td>1961–70</td>
<td>65.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971–80</td>
<td>73.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981–90</td>
<td>82.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991–2000</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–2010</td>
<td>99.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011–2020</td>
<td>108.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021–2030</td>
<td>117.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2031–2040</td>
<td>126.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2041–2050</td>
<td>134.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>2051–2060</td>
<td>143.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2061–2070</td>
<td>152.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2071–2080</td>
<td>160.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2081–2090</td>
<td>169.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2091–2010</td>
<td>178.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The connection between the Australian economy and the rest of the world is not a temporary phenomenon, but is a necessary condition of the capitalist system. The growth of the Australian economy is thus tied to changes in the global economy, and is dependent on the ability of Australian capitalists to find new markets for their products and new sources of raw materials. This dependency is not a temporary phenomenon, but is a necessary condition of the capitalist system.

Finally, the various social tasks of the bourgeois revolution have been completed. Industrialisation has created a modern industrial proletariat, which is highly organised and highly concentrated. The Australian population is highly urbanised. Farming is carried out on a capitalist basis. Bourgeois democracy has been extended as far as it is ever likely to be.

With these tasks fulfilled, capitalism ceases to have any progressive function. And if we have been, nationalism therefore ceases to have any progressive function either. Either Australia can be portrayed as an oppressed nation under the hegemony of U.S. and Japanese capital. This is the basis of the Australian workers' movement, which is optimistic and activist.

The first indication that this is not so lies in the industrialisation of the country itself. The oppression of the third world countries involves their underdevelopment. The third world is kept in backwardness by imperialism. Two-thirds of Australia's capital is invested in the third world. This is a much greater percentage than in the case of Belgium.

The second lies in the degree to which Australia itself carries on imperialist penetration of the Asian region. As one writer points out, Between 1790 and 1974, 50% of company profits in Australia went to the 200 largest companies. These companies control 50% of all manufactured goods in Australia and employ 380,000 workers. Of these 200 companies 113 are Australian owned or controlled. Of the last twelve companies, five are Australian controlled. Australian capitalism has launched such monopolies of world stature as Broken Hill Proprietary and CSR, both of which rank among the world's top 100 companies.

The table shows that Australia is not independent of developments in the rest of the world, as the United States is. Australia is merely a component of an imperialist system that is intimately connected to the rest of the world. This connection is not an independent variable, but is determined by the needs of the world capitalist system. The growth of the Australian economy is thus tied to changes in the global economy, and is dependent on the ability of Australian capitalists to find new markets for their products and new sources of raw materials. This dependency is not a temporary phenomenon, but is a necessary condition of the capitalist system.

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The book entitled Australia—the Asia Connection provides some important evidence for the thesis that Australia's role in the world is shaped by its imperial history. This is evident in the way the current government views its role in the world and the way it sees its relationship with other countries. The book also provides some important insights into the challenges faced by Australia as it seeks to navigate the complexities of the region.

Hedley Boddie refers to the "important role Australia could play in the new world order". He argues that Australia should use its influence to promote stability and prosperity in the region. He also suggests that Australia should work with other countries to address the pressing issues of the day, such as climate change and terrorism.

In conclusion, Australia has an important role to play in the Asia-Pacific region. It is well-placed to contribute to the region's development and stability. The book provides a valuable resource for understanding Australia's place in the world and for navigating the challenges it faces in the years to come.

References:

Additional Reading:

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THE FIGHT FOR WORKERS' POWER
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LEAVE IT IN THE GROUND
Mick Armstrong
50c Pamphlet
Looks at the fight against nuclear energy and gives a strategy for winning it.

4. Lenin and the Bolshevik Party........... Tom O'Lincoln
Tragedy in Australia .................. Lotta Oppara

5. Newport .......................... Phil Griffiths
Women in the Metal Trades ............. James Stone
The Right to Work Campaign .......... Doug McCarry

6. Uranium and Workers' Power ...... David Shaw
The Struggle at Fairfax ............... Tom O'Lincoln
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7. The Post-War Boom .......... Andrew Miller
Perspectives for Women's Liberation .... Jenny Stone
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Consumptive Theory - the theory of under-consumptionists ........ A. Kimbab

8. The Australian Boom .......... Rick Kahn
Queensland ......................... Carole Ferrier and John Mims
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The CPA since the war ............... Tom O'Lincoln

9. Health Care politics (part 1) ....... Jenny Stone
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