

LABOUR REVIEW

Vol. 2

MAY-JUNE 1957

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The Engineers' Strike

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Editorial

The Debate Goes on

IN this editorial we carry forward the discussion we began in the editorial of our last issue. We want to make a further contribution to the 'great debate' on the future of Marxism in the British Labour movement which has been going on, at a quickening pace, during the last fifteen months. Since Khrushchev made his speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party the icy grip of Moscow 'orthodoxy', which had held as in a vice large and important sections of those who wanted to find out how Marxism could help the British Labour movement, has been considerably weakened. In the first phase of the debate it was the intellectuals of the Communist Party who appeared to set the pace. Large numbers of them announced in clear, unambiguous terms their revulsion and anger at the revelations which Khrushchev had made of the crimes of Stalin. They went on from this to demand that every dogmatic tenet of 'Stalinist Marxism' should be examined afresh as a preparation for reconsidering the whole strategy of the Marxist movement in Britain.

As might have been expected, this ferment among socialist intellectuals has rapidly spread until it now involves much wider circles: militant workers inside and near to the Communist Party, intellectuals in and around the Labour Party, rank-and-file Labour Party and trade union members, and, of course, the various groups of Marxists outside the Communist Party. The whole Left in Britain—and, indeed, everywhere else in the world too—has now become involved in a far-reaching discussion of socialist prospects, carried on with an intensity and depth unknown for forty years.

By no means all the credit for initiating this liberating discussion should go to Khrushchev. His speech was only one important product of the force which sustains the present debate: the growing upsurge in working-class activity throughout the world. There is no need to remind readers of *Labour Review* that the class struggle is assuming acuter and more far-reaching forms. Two million engineers and shipyard workers have recently been on strike. Their unanimity terrified not only the bosses but also some of their own

trade union leaders. In recent months large numbers of workers and peasants throughout the world have been actively involved in resisting and defeating British and French imperialist aggression in Egypt. The echoes of the Trafalgar Square demonstration of November 4, 1956, will resound in Britain for many a day yet. The recent agreement between Macmillan and Eisenhower on a programme of extended production and testing of atomic and hydrogen bombs, guided missiles and other instruments of push-button war is making people aware of what is at stake. The people are moving to halt the atomaniacs and to end the social causes of war and threats of war—capitalism itself.

It is important therefore to remind ourselves that the 'great debate' is not taking place in some imagined isolation of university lecture halls or academic 'discussion circles', whose members sometimes imagine that ideas develop only through the cut and thrust of intellectual debate. The class struggle invades every discussion, every 'Forum', every political debate, every theoretical disputation. It is an elementary proposition of Marxism that in so far as the impelling influence in political discussion of the class struggle is consciously recognised, that discussion is thereby made more fruitful.

The present re-estimations of socialist strategy are taking place in the shadow of these great developments in the fighting strength of the working class and of the opportunities which flow therefrom. But opportunities by themselves are not decisive; they have to be grasped—by the intervention of conscious Marxist thought, by a rejuvenated communist movement, cleansed of the distortions, betrayals, opportunism and crimes of Stalinism.

The supreme task of today is to create this new movement. To this end *Labour Review* is dedicated.

In the 'great debate' attention has properly been concentrated on the search for a Marxist explanation of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution under Stalin, and of the social function of the bureaucracy which today rules Russia. It is very important for socialists to understand these questions if they are both

to defend the achievements of 1917 and rid the international Labour movement of the vileness of Stalinism.

BUT this analysis of the character of the Russian bureaucracy, if carried to its conclusion, has another, equally important, function to perform. It leads directly to an understanding of the social origins and rôle of *all* bureaucracies in the modern Labour movement. There is scarcely anything we need more than an understanding of the origins and function of the bureaucratic apparatus of Great Russell Street and Transport House, which dominate the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. The huge, immensely powerful apparatus manipulated by the Right-wing Labour leaders (Parliamentary and trade union alike) is, as Lenin showed, a cancer on the British Labour movement. As in the case of Stalin, a 'devil cult' theory is no real explanation of why a man like Ernest Bevin, shrewd, wily, ambitious in the extreme, but intellectually crude, could dominate British Labour politics for more than a decade. The Marxist looks for the explanation of such puzzling phenomena in the class struggle, in the correlation of class forces. The Right-wing bureaucracy which dominates the British Labour movement (and also the Labour movements of many other imperialist nations) has evolved a political ideology which is an accommodation to the powerful pressures exerted on the Labour movement by the imperialist ruling class. Right-wing Social-democracy is an *agreement to live with* the ruling class. It is the political theory of leaders who have betrayed the workers' struggles and agreed to class collaboration and the indefinite postponement of the socialist reconstruction of society.

But Stalinism is also a reactionary response to the same pressure of imperialism—a response which is different only in so far as it reflects the special conditions of areas where the Labour movement is particularly advanced, militant and powerful. In its origins Stalinism is the ideology of the bureaucracy which fastened hold on the Russian Revolution—an accommodation to the very heavy pressures exerted on the international Labour movement by the imperialists throughout the world. Stalinism is an *agreement to live with* the imperialists. Therefore Stalinism, like Right-wing social-democracy, is the political theory of those who in their own special interests have betrayed the workers' struggles in every country of the world and who have agreed to an indefinite postponement of socialism. The latest fine phrase for this betrayal is 'peaceful co-existence'.

Naturally both the social-democratic and Stalinist bureaucracies do very well for themselves out of the bargain they strike with the imperialists. They are superficially different forms of what is essentially the same political ideology—an opportunist adaptation to imperialist pressures of individuals who have a privileged position in the bureaucratic apparatus.

Now it is a matter of simple observation that since the Khrushchev speech and the Hungarian events many good militants inside and outside the British Communist Party have begun to react against Stalinism in a way that brings them closer, theoretically, to the views of the 'Left' spokesmen of the Right-wing Labour leaders, such as, for example, John Strachey and

G. D. H. Cole. These good militants reason something like this: 'Perhaps the Strachey-Cole type of reformism isn't so bad after all. Are these writers not very clever people? Are their books not learned studies, written without jargon or dogmatism? Have they not always spoken up in favour of socialism? And are they not believers in that very democracy which we have just discovered to be so lacking in Russia? Perhaps the Russian Revolution was, after all, just Russian and perhaps we British (or Americans, or French, or Germans, or Italians) are an "exception" to revolutionary development.' But the paradoxical fact is that, in direct line with this 'spontaneous' turn to reformism by honest militants in the British socialist movement, the Stalinist leaders of the British Communist Party have adopted a political programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, which is indistinguishable from some Strachey-Cole version of a 'Left' Parliamentary programme for British socialism — though perhaps the latter would be somewhat more radical than the Communist Party programme. This turn to reformism all fits in with the fashionable Kremlin chatter about there being 'many roads to socialism'.

Nowadays nearly everyone condemns the murderous crimes of Stalin. But some people, either in the embarrassment of shame for giving Stalin this support in the past, or as a long-established instinctive reaction, appear to forget the equally bloody crimes of the Right-wing social-democratic leaders. In this world of capitalist decay anyone may find plenty of crimes against humanity to condemn with the moral fervour of sincere humanism, and by no means all these crimes can be laid at the door of the Stalinists. In Algeria French imperialism, directed by the 'socialist' Mollet (using powers voted to him by the French Communist Party) is carrying out daily massacres and tortures of the Algerian people. Have we forgotten how Butcher Noske, the 'socialist', drowned the German socialist revolution in blood? Nearer home, have we forgotten how this brilliant intellect of the Left wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party, John Strachey, toggled up and joined a military patrol hunting out the Malayan People's Army when he was Minister of War in the Labour Government? No, it was not a Minister who held up in front of the camera the severed heads of Malayan democrats — those who held up the heads were soldiers in the army that Minister directed. Let us not forget how a Labour Government trampled on elementary human rights when it banished Seretse Khama from his people. Let us recall that it was the 'socialist' Lord Attlee who, as Labour Prime Minister, used the Tory Emergency Powers Act in order to bring the full weight of the State forces to crush the dockers' strike. No, let us not try to add up and balance the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy against the crimes of the British Labour bureaucracy in order to discover which one of the evils is the lesser. Rather should both sets of crimes be seen as a joint betrayal of socialism and the working class.

Labour Review believes that those who remain inside the Communist Party—or indeed those who have left it—who gravitate to social-democracy are not merely following some particular whim or some individualistic logic. They are still accommodating themselves to the pressures of British imperialism on the Labour movement, though they are not aware of this.

WE must say frankly that only those who remain faithful to basic communist principles will show themselves to be the true representatives and leaders of the workers' movement. Only communists, armed with Marxism, can lead the British people to socialism. This means they must learn to resist all the pressures of imperialism, whatever form they take; for accommodation to such pressure leads either to Stalinism or to Fabianism.

For British Marxists, communists, socialists — call them what you will — the most important task is to consider how best to intervene in and guide the mass movement of the British workers and how to help prepare it for taking over State power. Therefore we have

to consider, most carefully all the various effects this new Spring is having on old and new ideologies, groups and sects. Many different trends are taking part in the 'great debate'. All sorts of tendencies are emerging, with scars from the past, perhaps, but with bright hopes for the future.

The 'great debate' in British socialist politics is now approaching a critical phase. *Labour Review* believes that this debate will prove most fruitful if it now begins to apply itself to the key question of the day — how are Marxists to carry on real mass work in the Labour movement of Britain as it exists today?

In our next issue we shall return to this question and suggest some answers to it.

HAMMERSMITH AND AFTER

THESE LINES are written under the immediate impact of the 25th (Special) Congress of the Communist Party. Some of the conclusions here set forth are tentative, and will require further discussion and elaboration in the light of the developments of the next few months.

Hammersmith brought to an end the first stage in the struggle within the party which began with the Krushchev revelations. That first stage itself fell into three phases. From the 24th Congress, held at Easter 1956, to the Executive Committee statement of July 15 was the initial phase: a period of growing dissatisfaction, during which John Gollan replaced Harry Pollitt as general secretary, Togliatti's suggestion about the degeneration of Soviet society was flirted with and commissions were set up to discuss inner-party democracy and a new draft of *The British Road to Socialism*. The 'hard' statement of July 15, following a visit to Moscow by Pollitt, Gollan and Bert Ramelson, fully endorsed the CPSU decision to halt de-Stalinization. There opened the second phase, during which the leadership strove to turn the members' attention to 'positive' topics of discussion, while the discontent, heightened by Poznan, continued to simmer and found its most articulate expression in the publication of *The Reasoner*. The third phase opened with the Hungarian revolution of October 23-November 4. Another 5,000 members joined the 2,000 who had already resigned. Despite some wavering inside the Political Committee on the first Russian intervention the decision was taken to steamroller through the line of uncritical support of Soviet policy, while agreeing to the holding of the special national congress for which a large section of the membership was clamouring. The leadership had four months to prepare for the congress. With over half the critics out of the party it was comparatively easy to stage a congress where the opposition could be isolated and shown as incapable of presenting itself as an alternative leadership. Nationally and at district and area level, despite the workers' growing mass struggle, party functionaries devoted their main efforts to securing the election of delegates who could be trusted to back up the Stalinists. The congress was thus rigged, and its decisions pre-determined.

I A congress of re-Stalinization

The *first outstanding feature* of the 25th Congress was that no concessions of any description were made, either political or organizational. In its policy declarations the congress endorsed down to the last comma the current Kremlin line of re-Stalinization, denouncing 'national communism' as 'the denial of working-class internationalism', reaffirming the leading rôle of the CPSU, praising incontinently Stalin's 'great services', attributing his 'mistakes' to his personal defects of character (Gollan) and repudiating the use of the word 'Stalinism'. The panel of 42 recommended for election to the new Executive, and later endorsed with minor changes, threw not a single sop to the critics. Not even the middle-of-the-road critics, such as Jack Gaster and the group around him (Maurice Cornforth, Margot Heinemann, Chimen Abramsky) were granted a seat on the E.C. The solitary consistent critic, Brian Behan, was unceremoniously thrown off. The new E.C., like the old, consists of the Old Guard of bureaucrats, plus an assortment of regional functionaries, plus several workers chosen for their docility and thrown in for shop window purposes. The dismissal of Emile Burns for age reasons, and of Phil Piratin for refusing to continue as *Daily Worker* circulation manager while circulation was falling, can hardly be construed as concessions to the opposition.

Not content with arranging a congress where 44 delegates were full-time party workers and at least as many again dependent on the party and its ancillary organizations for their bread and butter, a congress where 257 out of 547 delegates had been in the party sixteen years or more, King Street made doubly sure of its victory by packing the committees which sat permanently during the proceedings and in which the real business of congress was transacted. The endorsement of these committees by the congress itself when it began its work was a mere formality; in fact they had already met the previous weekend. The main responsibility for steering the proceedings fell on the Congress Arrangements Committee, run by William Lauchlan, the national organizer. It was this which chose the speakers—87 out of the 257

who applied to speak—and which made sure that the balance was heavily on the side of Stalinist orthodoxy. Other committees, dominated by James Klugmann, R. Palme Dutt and Burns, selected the amendments for discussion. Out of 2,246 amendments (plus many more that were 'lost', or that could not be printed for 'technical' reasons!) scarcely twenty were discussed. Bertha Sokoloff charged those who made the selection of the amendments to the report of the commission on inner-party democracy with deliberately selecting amendments of an 'extreme' nature, on which the opposition vote would be least. The treatment of branch resolutions, too, was curious. Only one was discussed, out of 58 submitted; many of the others dealt with such embarrassing subjects as independence from Russian control, the treatment of Lukacs and Harich, the execution of a twenty-year-old girl in Hungary and the distortion and suppression of unpleasant facts by the *Daily Worker*. The solitary branch resolution discussed called on the USSR 'to show moral leadership to the world by announcing the cessation of all future H-bomb tests'. This was defeated on a show of hands, but about eighty delegates appeared to support it. Pollitt as chairman, however, refused to have a count taken, saying this was 'not necessary'. Last but not least, the congress was refused the right to change the rules of the party.

Even this organizational gerrymandering and stage-managing did not exhaust the rich inventiveness displayed by the Stalinists. They impudently came forward with brand-new 'theoretical' and 'ideological' justification for their root-and-branch condemnation of the critics. Hence the words 'revisionism' and 'liquidationism', 'revisionist' and 'liquidationist', never before heard at a British party congress, which ran like a gurgling drain through the speeches of the faithful. The reports of George Matthews on *The British Road to Socialism* and of John Mahon on inner-party democracy, as well as Gollan's political report, were worthy of a party whose ignorance of its own past history is only surpassed by its abject theoretical poverty. These contributions to latter-day Stalinist 'theory' were pitifully threadbare, yet speakers seized on them gratefully to fill the hole in their minds left by the withdrawal of the *History of the CPSU(B), Short Course*.¹ Since *The British Road to Socialism*, in its first, second and third versions alike, is a model of the revisionism condemned by Lenin, and since the King Street bureaucrats have succeeded in liquidating a fifth of their membership in the course of a year, the choice of these particular labels could, to say the least, have been happier.

Clearly, the leadership's principal aim at the congress was to show its machine in full working order again, thus restoring the confidence of its own supporters, rallying those important layers of members which have not yet drawn general conclusions from their own specific and often hesitant disagreements, isolating as far as possible the opposition and provoking critics to walk out.² In the main the leadership succeeded in thus consolidating itself, for the time be-

¹A 'theoretical' contribution of some interest, however, was J. R. Campbell's somewhat impish assertion that he had just been reading the discussion on the national question in Vols. V and VI of the *Works* of J. V. Stalin. Was this intended to convey that Campbell regards Stalin's chauvinistic treatment of the Georgians, criticized by Lenin, as a model for British Stalinists?

ing, on a narrower basis. But it was not able to prevent explosions. And it was not able to resolve the crisis.

II The opposition

The *second outstanding feature* of the 25th Congress was the emergence, for the first time at any Communist Party congress since 1932 (and then the oppositionists were expelled before the actual congress took place) of a genuine Marxist opposition. It would of course be idle to exaggerate the strength and influence of this opposition. It had no effect on the published decisions of the congress; but it did have some effect on such delegates as had gone prepared to listen to arguments before casting their votes. One of the greatest obstacles the opposition had to meet was an unmistakable atmosphere of intimidation which inhibited not only the free exchange of views but also the free casting of votes. One has only to compare the open votes with the secret votes to see the attractive power of the ideas for which the opposition was campaigning, and of the personalities with whom those ideas had become associated in the minds of uncommitted delegates.

There voted for the minority report on inner-party democracy 23; for the reinstatement of Peter Fryer 31; for the rejection of the official line on Hungary about 50; for the condemnation of the second Russian intervention about the same; for the appeal to the Soviet government to stop hydrogen bomb tests about 80. All these were by show of hands. But there voted for Hyman Levy as candidate for the Appeals Committee 100, and for Brian Behan as candidate for the E.C. 188.

According to the Election Preparations Committee's report to the closed session there had been objections to practically every one of the leading Stalinists. Syd Abbott, Campbell, Mick Bennett, Dutt, William Gallacher, Gollan and Arnold Kettle were objected to 'for political reasons'. Bennett was objected to by Phil Piratin for 'telling members of the *Daily Worker* staff too much', Bennett was objected to by Syd French, Surrey district secretary, for his 'attitude to Surrey', whatever that might mean. Kettle and Matthews, putative heir to the editorship of the *Daily Worker*, were objected to 'for handling the intellectuals wrongly'. Klugmann was objected to for his attitude to Yugoslavia, and for the state of party education, for which he is responsible. John Moss, secretary of the Young Communist League, was objected to for his attitude to conscription. Peter Kerrigan and Pollitt were objected to for the situation that had developed in a 'mass organization'—i.e. in a trade union under Communist control whose affairs are supposed to have become complicated. Forty members of the recommended list received between 410 and 493 votes (it is significant that Mahon got only 410, Matthews 415 and Klugmann 423—a clear sign of plumping). The other two were Pascoe, Behan's successor, who received 380, and Bennett, whose journalistic skill as *Daily Worker* assistant editor earned him a contemptuous 274.

That Behan was runner-up; that a swing of only

²Not merely is the leadership content to lose another 4,000 or more members. At the present stage it **does not want the party to grow**. How else to explain the absence of any recruiting drive? Even Gollan, the party builder, who not long ago said he and his colleagues should be judged by the growth of the party, made only slight and muted references to this one-time *leitmotiv* of party congresses.

43 from Bennett to Behan would have defeated the panel: this is the clearest evidence of the disquiet which not even such a rigged congress could conceal. This disquiet found unequivocal expression in the speech made by Levy and in the spirited interruptions by John McLoughlin, the victimized Briggs shop steward, during the speech of Andrew Rothstein.

In Levy's speech, expressing the anguish of an honest man whose illusions were shattered by what he himself saw and heard in Russia, there came to a focus all the misgivings of the rank and file. Levy was one of the few speakers who addressed himself to the purpose for which the congress had been called. His questions to the leadership on why they had kept quiet themselves and told others to keep their mouths shut were never answered—unless Lauchlan's demagogic reference to the rise of fascism (on which 'Pollitt's eyes had been fixed') can be called an answer. But the lasting importance of Levy's speech lay not so much in its passionate outburst of indignation and revulsion, but in the way it raised the whole question to the level of philosophy. To show, as Levy did, that Stalinism is, epistemologically, idealism of the purest water; that its practitioners, rather than start from facts, from objective reality, proceed from a dream-world of ideas, wishes, preconceptions; that this compels them to conceal or twist uncomfortable facts, facts which contradict their cosy illusions—this was to challenge Stalinism in the name of Marxism, in the name of dialectical materialism, in the most profound and principled way. Levy understands what Stalinism cannot understand, that the workers *need* materialism and *need* the truth if they are to accomplish their historical mission. It followed from what he said that the Communist Party as it is at present is not a Marxist party, because its leaders are philosophical idealists, and because they tell lies.

Nor was this understanding confined to an 'intellectual'. It was grasped, too, and expressed with dramatic sharpness, by McLoughlin. What essentially was the meaning of McLoughlin's outburst ('You are the enemy, you lying old swine!') when Rothstein began bespattering the intellectuals with insults? It was the crossing of Levy's T's and the dotting of his I's, in workshop language. All the instinctive revulsion of the working class towards the bureaucrats who batten on them, delude them and crush them with tanks welled up in this worker's outburst. It was the clearest possible warning to the platform that the proletarian members of the party, once they see what has been and is being done, will settle accounts with the GPU, the AVO, the aristocracies of functionaries, the lies, the corruption, the rottenness—which Rothstein personifies.

McLoughlin's outburst smashed once and for all the crude attempt, renounced in words by Gollan, but repeated in practice by Reg Birch and Rothstein, to pretend that only the intellectuals are opposed to Stalinism, its crimes and its defenders, to drive a wedge between the intellectuals who revolt against Stalinist betrayal in the international field and the workers who revolt against Stalinist betrayal in the domestic industrial field. Levy the intellectual spoke up on behalf of the workers. McLoughlin the worker spoke up on behalf of the intellectuals. Levy defended the workers against the deceptions practised on them by the bureaucrats. McLoughlin defended the intellectuals from the

bureaucrats' smears and slanders. Thus together Levy and McLoughlin did precisely what the Stalinists have been mortally afraid of since the Twentieth Congress: they built a bridge between the revolutionary intellectual's understanding of and revolt against Stalinism and the worker's understanding and revolt against it. On the strengthening of this brigade depends the awakening and re-education of a whole further layer of members of the Communist Party in the coming months.

III A faction in power

The *third outstanding feature* of the congress was its exposure, in the very midst of a heated debate on what was called inner-party democracy, of the fundamentally factional nature of the Stalinist domination of the party. Many delegates had been studying—and this study is going to deepen and bear fine fruit—just how the Bolshevik Party operated in the days before its bureaucratic degeneration began. The contrast between this vision of a party where all Marxist tendencies could find full and free expression, in open, comradely debate, could find representation on the leading bodies, could campaign for their points of view, and the sordid reality of bureaucratic centralism that clogged the pores of party life at Hammersmith—this contrast was inescapable. Whatever the shortcomings of the minority report on inner-party democracy, it did provide for a break with the misuse of authority, the suppression of debate, the denial of members' rights, the one-way traffic in ideas, which enable the Stalinists to retain their dominating position.

The leadership so bitterly opposed the minority report for the very simple reason that the leadership is a faction, whose position would be made untenable the day Leninist practice was introduced into the party. It reserves and exercises rights which it denies to the membership. It meets weekly at a committee, the Political Committee, which is not even mentioned in the party rules. In the pyramid of party power all authority, all rights, all political wisdom, all initiative, are concentrated at the apex. By imposing its authority in this way, by denying to minorities the rights of association, publication of views, setting forth of platforms, factional discipline—all the rights it exercises itself—this faction blocks any possibility of minorities becoming majorities. It is a faction in power. All talk of fighting it by 'constitutional' means is so much day-dreaming; Hammersmith was the final proof of this.

If there is any reader who finds this characterization harsh, let him ponder the following instructive fact: the one and only amendment the E.C. was prepared to accept to anything during the whole course of the Congress was one *deleting* a provision in the majority report that no more than fifty per cent of the E.C. should be full-time party workers.

If anyone wishes to claim that the oh, so democratic debate on the future of the British Empire, or the free vote on conscription (with the odd result, incidentally, that the Communist Party is alone in supporting conscription), were the heart and soul of this congress, he is at liberty to do so. But the task of Marxists is to go further than appearances, and the amount of democracy vouchsafed to the floor at Hammersmith could, like the schoolmen's angels, dance on the point of a needle.

IV The future of the Communist Party

From the foregoing it might appear that we are disappointed with the results of the congress. Certainly the opposition could have been more effective. But we expected no spectacular victories. And we are persuaded that these four days have accelerated the already advancing Marxist re-education of the communists who retain their belief in communism and who do not look to social-democracy for shelter. Examining the congress quite soberly, no Marxist could say that the crisis is over. It has merely passed over into a new stage, in which there will be new problems, new tasks for the communist Left, new opportunities for winning clarity, new ways of uniting working-class and intellectual members in a single powerful stream of opposition. This, we suggest, is the *fourth outstanding feature* of the Hammersmith Congress.

It is too soon to say how many members will leave. The figure will almost certainly run into thousands. We suggest, however, that the convinced Marxist, who has the future of the socialist movement in Britain at heart, should not yield to the feeling of disgust and frustration which this congress is bound to engender. He should not surrender to the leaders his right to fight as a communist against this new betrayal of communism.

The task of conscious Marxists inside the Communist Party is not an easy one. But if they are to lay

the foundations for the breakaway from Stalinism of fresh layers of militants, and at the same time to assist their own Marxist understanding, they should place the responsibility for their own break from the party squarely on the shoulders of the leadership. One thousand, two thousand individuals turning in their cards are a symptom of the disease; five hundred Marxists frankly rejecting the decisions of a phoney congress and convincing their branches that they should refuse to operate them are the beginning, at least, of a cure. There are times when form is just as important as content, and the shape of the Marxist movement of the future, the speed of its development, the assurance and skill with which it leads, the calibre of its *cadres*, may well depend to a very large extent on *how* this inevitable break is made. *Labour Review* puts forward these considerations with all humility, but believing that so serious a problem demands the attention of a serious Marxist journal.

Each day of the Communist Party congress a duplicated paper, **Congress Special**, was handed to delegates outside the congress hall. Produced by the editors of **Labour Review**, it discussed the problems facing the congress from a Marxist point of view. The day after Professor Levy spoke, it provided delegates with a verbatim report of his speech, a service which was widely appreciated. Some 400 delegates accepted **Congress Special** each morning, and the extra issue published at the close of the congress. There were many favourable comments on these five issues, and on **Labour Review's** initiative in producing them.

A Congress Document

An Undelivered Speech

This is the text of the speech which Peter Fryer would have delivered to the 25th National Congress of the Communist Party if he had been allowed to make his appeal against expulsion before the full Congress.

THIS CONGRESS will almost certainly confirm my expulsion. That grieves me. I cannot feel any other emotion at being excluded from a movement I joined fifteen years ago because I wanted to fight for the emancipation of man from every kind of chain that fetters him. I joined the Communist Party because I saw in every man who fights for liberty a brother and a comrade. The African who fights for liberty against the hideous crimes of imperialism, the Hungarian who, though his chains are decked with 'people's democratic' flowers, fights for liberty against bureaucracy and tyranny—these are my brothers and my comrades. Do you ask of me that I should stay silent while one or the other is crushed and broken by his oppressors? Much as it grieves me to be cast out from the party, it would grieve me still more to stay silent about the sufferings and gallant resistance of the Hungarian workers.

You can cross out my name from the membership list with a stroke of the pen. But you cannot cross out the truth about Hungary with a stroke of the pen. Mark Twain said that a lie goes half-way round the world while truth is tying up its boot-laces. But in the long run truth always overtakes even the biggest lie and smashes it. The truth about Hungary is known perfectly well to many of you who will vote for the rejection of my appeal. In the privacy of his office J. R. Campbell speaks of Kadar as a puppet. I am expelled for blazoning abroad what Campbell knows to be the truth. But he is not the only one. Pollitt has been to Russia fifty times since 1917. Of course he knew about the degeneration of the Soviet State! Of course he knew about the crimes of the

bureaucracy, of which Stalin's crimes were only the most terrible expression. He knew these things and excused them in his heart. Therefore he long ago ceased to be a communist. He and his faction, for a faction is what they are, are no more communists than Rakosi is.

Stalin the murderer; Rakosi the pupil; Pollitt the accomplice and defender: this is the Unholy Trinity of British Stalinism.

To be expelled for protesting against imbecile docility and subservience to bureaucrats and murderers; for protesting against an utterly vicious and obscurantist system of mass deception; for fulfilling the elementary duty of a communist journalist—telling the truth: this is a matter of pride to me. The London District Committee, the Appeals Committee, the Executive Committee, have honoured me. How could it be anything but an honour to be expelled for standing unequivocally in support of the real communists of Hungary—George Lukacs, Julius Hay, Laszlo Benjamin, Miklos Gemes? Any communist who stands aside and lets these comrades rot in jail is guilty of the vilest betrayal of the most elementary requirements of international solidarity.

Officially I was expelled for using the Daily Express as a platform from which to declare my support for these comrades and to tell the truth about the revolution they helped to prepare and lead. But if I were given the task of sticking up posters in a town to warn the inhabitants about an outbreak of plague, ought I to refrain from sticking my posters on the walls of gambling dens and brothels? Our party had to be told of this plague that was eating at the heart of the Hungarian

party, even if many comrades refused to believe the truth when they heard it. And how little it becomes this leadership to complain of my using the capitalist Press for this purpose when they themselves welcome to this very Congress a representative of the . . . Daily Express, while refusing to issue a Press ticket to Tribune, a Socialist weekly!

Not a single delegate to this Congress, if he had seen what I saw at Magyarovar last October 27 — the bodies of eighty men, women and children vilely murdered by a Stalinist police force — would have tolerated any gag whatever which the British Stalinists sought to impose on him.

STALINIST INHUMANITY

Not a single delegate, with the bodies of those victims of Stalinist inhumanity and terror lying there before him, would have failed to vow to wage the most implacable fight against every rotten trace of Stalinism inside the British Communist Party.

This crime, and the incomparably greater crime of November 4, were committed in the name of resistance to a fascist conspiracy, to protect the Hungarian people from counter-revolution and White Terror. But in a report on the present situation in Hungary The Times wrote on April 15:

‘With so little co-operation from the people, the regime is having to make use of almost anyone, even those with fascist backgrounds, in its administration.’

So the Kadar government, like the Rakosi-Gero regime whose worthy successor it is, must recruit fascists as officials. The new AVH like the old is composed of Horthyite dregs of humanity who would serve any regime that paid them well. On October 23, 1956, the Hungarian workers rose to free themselves from the domination of these thugs and their masters. Had it not been for Russian aggression they would have won, and the workers’ councils — this magnificent re-awakening of the Hungarian soviets of 1919 — would have taken over control of their country’s economy and brought into being socialist democracy.

While the fascists are rallying to the support of Kadar there are sinister signs of an approaching show trial of the Hungarian communists who resisted Stalinism. In a speech in the Kremlin Palace on March 27, reported in No. 3599 of Soviet News but not in the Daily Worker, N. A. Bulganin spoke as follows:

‘One must make particular mention of the sinister role which was played by the Imre Nagy-Losonczy group in the staging of the counter-revolution in Hungary. The undeniable facts make it abundantly clear that long before the October events in 1956, Imre Nagy, masquerading as a Communist, was in fact in the service of the enemies of the Hungarian people. He and his group, while coming out under the false banner of “a new deal in building Socialism”, were in fact working to weaken the young people’s democratic State and push it off the road to Socialism. But it was not until Imre Nagy took the reins of power that the true face of this group was revealed completely. Everyone remembers the tragic days of October last year when the Imre Nagy and Losonczy men came out into the open in an attempt to destroy the very foundations of the people’s democratic State.’

Bulganin went on to accuse ‘the Imre Nagy group’ of organizing ‘a reign of murderous terror against the revolutionary forces of the Hungarian working class’, described Nagy and Losonczy as ‘traitors’ and compared them with ‘the ring-leaders of the counter-revolution of 1919.’

Now these accusations are quite new. This is the first time that Nagy (who was the one communist leader who could have united — indeed had already largely united — the whole Hungarian people around him) and Losonczy (who was jailed for several years by Rakosi and ‘rehabilitated’) have been spoken of as counter-revolutionaries, in language all too reminiscent of the well-worn phrase invented by Stalin, ‘enemies of the people’.

If Nagy and Losonczy were placed on trial while the infamous Rakosi, Farkas and Gero went scot-free this would be a crime no less monstrous than the murder by Stalin of the leaders of the Bolshevik Party and of Rajk, Kostov and Slansky. And should we then be told, after five, ten, twenty

years, that Nagy and Losonczy, too, were victims of a ‘violation of socialist legality’, of a ‘mistake’? When, comrades, do we have the right to say that we can no longer and shall no longer countenance these perversions of everything socialism has ever stood for? I suggest that we have the right now, and must exercise it.

POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS

Hungary tore the last veils off the decay and degeneration of the political life of the Socialist States. It was the third in the series (but the first really full-scale, mass example) of **political revolutions** by the proletariat of these States. These revolutions, forecast by those who in the dark years of Stalinist theoretical decay kept alive the priceless heritage of the Marxist tradition, are in essence attempts to overthrow a bureaucracy which has usurped the rule of the workers. They are not aimed at restoring capitalism, but at preserving and strengthening the socialist economy and allowing it full scope for its development by removing those bureaucratic obstacles which fetter it.

The Hungarian revolution was ruthlessly crushed. But it was the harbinger of further political revolutions, which will not be confined to the outer rim of the Stalinist regime, where national oppression is blended with bureaucratic despotism to make the peoples twice oppressed. One day the Russian workers, too, faithful to the glorious traditions of 1905 and 1917, will settle accounts with the gang of unscrupulous vodka diplomats and hucksters, filing clerks and ideological fortune-tellers who have robbed the Russian proletariat of its power.

And the guarantee of this act of historical justice in the land that still bears the proud name ‘Soviet’ is twofold:

First, the Russian workers have retained (however warped in inessential aspects) the one imperishable, fundamental, epoch-making achievement of the October Revolution: a socialist economy, a social system which has done away with capitalism and capitalist relations of production.

Secondly, and no less important, the Hungarian revolution has once again proved the resilience and viability of the soviets as organs of insurrection and of popular self-government, as the highest expression of the creative initiative of the proletariat. The political revolution in Russia will see the flowering once more of this long-buried but unquenchable form of working-class struggle. There will be soviets again in the Soviet Union.

The contradictions between the socialist economy and the rule of the bureaucracy force the latter to twist and turn, to make concessions, to make admissions about the past, to zig-zag between de-Stalinization and re-Stalinization, to adopt grandiose plans and scrap them. But the contradictions remain, and will be solved by the workers in their own way. Then the flames of freedom lit at Berlin and replenished at Poznan, flames which sprang up afresh in Hungary for twelve unforgettable days, will become a cleansing fire that no secret police, no censorship, no imprisonment, no tortures, no murders, no yellow Stalinist terror, will extinguish or withstand.

When that day comes British Communists will have to decide whether they are on the side of the workers or the bureaucrats. With or without Peter Fryer in the party this problem will face you! If the party continues to be dominated by Stalinists, then it will once again cover itself with dishonour and will irretrievably lose any chance of winning the respect of the British workers. If it throws off this bankrupt, discredited faction it can yet become a real Communist Party, practising genuine international solidarity.

This is my appeal to the Congress: not for my own reinstatement, but for something infinitely more important — the transformation of this Party into the revolutionary Marxist vanguard of the British working class, exercising the right to interpret and apply Marxism for itself, giving to members the right of free and forthright controversy. Such a party, cleansed of the filth and dross and poison of Stalinist theory and practice, its members enriched with an understanding of the real Marxism that Stalinism sought, but failed, to destroy, would take its rightful place at the head of the mass movement, would flourish and go forward.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF BRITISH CAPITALISM—I

Tom Kemp

Economic thought and economic reality

TODAY there is need for a thorough discussion among socialists on the character of British capitalism in the fifties and for an attempt to estimate where it is heading. This discussion must proceed, not from some preconceived thesis, but from a study of facts and trends within the framework of world economic development and against the unfolding process of interaction between Britain's internal development and the changing international pattern. The present modest contribution starts off from a Marxist standpoint, not however to verify some quotation but to use Marxism as a method and a system.

Too much of what in recent years has passed for Marxism in economics has been at the best scholastic and at the worst ill-informed and dogmatic, and has shown that would-be Marxist economic theory can be just as sterile as anything concocted by the marginal utility theorists if it does not root itself in an analysis and understanding of facts and, in the course of its diagnosis, constantly refer to concrete data concerning the real world of capitalism. That it is necessary to say this is in large part attributable to the influence of the Soviet Union on Marxist thought in other countries. The state of theoretical economics in the Soviet Union, as well as of the social sciences in general—especially the trivial stuff which has come from Russia purporting to describe and analyze the course of post-war development in the capitalist world—should be warning enough that no body of thought is necessarily free from 'theoretical blight'. Fortunately these caricatures of Marxist economics do not represent the richness of what a creative application of Marxism to the problems of economic development has to offer the Labour movement.

Partly as a consequence of the sterility of so much self-styled Marxist economic thinking there is, in the Labour movement, a theoretical void which thinkers of reformist tendencies, such as Crosland and Strachey, have only recently sought to fill. The contribution of British socialist writers in the economic field within recent years has not been impressive, and to a large extent they have been content to follow ideologically in the train of the leading bourgeois thinkers of our epoch. The tendency among professional economists, understandably enough, has been to shun broad perspectives and, especially, prognostications. Their views are apt to be coloured by the experience of the immediate past (to which, in some cases, they will probably be applying some particular theory popular a decade or two before) and also by preponderantly 'liberal-conservative' views current in their own special *milieu*. Theoretical fashions in economics change, and the real world is liable to be oddly refracted through the particular prism currently being employed. Since about the early forties the fashion has been set by the Keynesian school. Keynes has in these years provided the major inspiration for economists both of the 'left' and of the right.

Keynes was primarily concerned, when all is said and done, with discovering the determinants of the trade cycle and with the practical problem of overcoming the contractionist tendencies which appeared to him to be inherent in a 'mature' capitalism. The tools which he fashioned, and those developed later by his disciples, have since been applied chiefly to the problems of economic expansion and inflation. The spectres with which Keynes grappled in the thirties (cyclical deficiency in demand and chronic unemployment) are now generally held, by reputable economists, to be completely under control because of the timely counteractions by the State. Thus Professor Meade writes:

There can be no reasonable doubt that all important countries, and not least the United States of America, would react with effective domestic measures of reflation against any heavy fall of demand and rise in employment domestically.¹

When leading figures in the profession speak with such confidence it is not surprising to find that similar assumptions are made at lower levels, and by socialists like John Strachey. Quotations like this could be multiplied a hundredfold, the same idea being asserted with varying degrees of certitude. Most professional economists see the major problems of the future, primarily, as those likely to impede balanced growth and so to prevent the realization of that doubling of the standard of living in twenty-five years of which Mr. Butler once spoke. Fabian-minded socialists merely add their riders about inequality, monopoly power and so on. Consequently a great deal of attention is now directed to inflation, its control and the structural distortions which accompany inflation. These were the main theme of the *Report of the Economic Commission for Europe* (February 1956) and of the *First Congress of the International Economic Association* held in the summer of the same year. Summarizing the Commission's proceedings, another leading academic economist wrote:

The general view was that we do now understand the maintenance of economic activity and that, given the underlying position, governments would be successful in preventing any major slump.²

Only Professor Lewis, a distinguished reformist connected with Socialist Union, stated a dissident point of view and it is significant that he begins from an empirical, rather than a theoretical, standpoint.³ There are, of course, other economists who share Professor Lewis's misgivings, but, if we can judge from their published writings, most British and American economists face the future with the same kind of optimism, and even the same fears, as would not have been out of place a century ago. (The fact that this year we celebrate the centenary of the first real international economic crisis, coming in the midst of mid-Victorian

¹Meade, J. L. *The Three Banks Review*, Sept. 1955.

²Sayers, R. S. *The Three Banks Review*, Dec. 1956.

³See the articles which he has contributed to 'The Manchester School' in recent years.

prosperity, is purely coincidental.) One is inevitably reminded of the quasi-unanimity to be observed among economists during the reign of the neo-classicists — roughly the first four decades of this century — and the fate of the 'spurned heretics' whom Keynes himself restored to some degree of respectability.

Economists are neither more nor less prone than other people to believe unconsciously what it is comforting and convenient to believe. A guarded confidence in economic stability and progress, given the existence of certain conditions which require no great faith to imagine being realized, is largely characteristic of those who teach or write about economics today. Faith in capitalism has been strengthened by the great expansion and the full employment of this last decade. Perhaps some would prefer the old free market capitalism, but not many would consider it politically advisable. As for the vast majority of the reformist socialists, they are, today, convinced Keynesians. Nor is this surprising. For success, reformism requires smooth, peaceful development, undisturbed by cataclysms. Reformist tactics and strategy in the political arena are based upon precisely these expectations, and without them gradualism can hardly hope to succeed. As the reformists see it, Keynesian policies in practice (and it seems in the interest of the capitalists themselves to practise them) smooth out the trade cycle and maintain full employment, so preventing the major cataclysmic factor—slump—from occurring in the future. Keynesianism thus provides, at one and the same time, a confirmation of reformist strategy and a confounding of those incorrigible Marxists who still believe in the inevitability of capitalist crisis.

The subjectivist sin of the reformist socialist economists arises from their pressing need to prove that a certain kind of capitalist development is possible in order to justify their particular political strategy and tactics; they seize upon those theories which fit in with this concept of socialist strategy and unscientifically take for granted what has to be proved. Marxists have sometimes been guilty of similar subjectivist thinking, and there is even less excuse for it in their case. For example, some Marxists have assumed that there will not be a sharpening of class consciousness, nor a possibility of overthrowing capitalism, without a major crisis. Hence they are over-anxious to discern the symptoms of the impending slump, quote Marx when they should be applying Marxist analysis to the observable facts and trends and, instead of making that 'creative contribution' to which they give lip service, only succeed in discrediting themselves and that very Marxism which they claim to be using. To a large extent this approach is to be blamed on the dead hand of Moscow-orientated orthodoxy. If British Communist Party economists had any doubts about Stalin's views in his now notorious *Economic Problems* they certainly kept them to themselves. If they have recently eased up on their rigid adherence to certain shibboleths is it not primarily because of the successive changes which have been introduced into the Soviet textbook on political economy? If few translations have been made of Soviet 'Marxist' works on economics, it is because the abysmal theoretical level they represent would make it quite impossible for even British Communist economists to accept or defend them.

But it is certainly true that Marxists have not yet

analyzed carefully enough, nor adequately explained, the present phase of capitalism. Certain observations can be made about it. Capitalism has its ups and downs. Long-period economic upswings such as that which we have been living through are not new phenomena in the history of capitalism. New factors, too, have come into the picture, not least the role of government policy. Very special conditions have been prevailing in the recent past and they may yet last for some time. Many professional economists—as we have noted—appear to assume that these conditions will last for ever. The major weakness of contemporary economic thinking is that it is too apt to generalize from the immediate past and to concentrate its attention upon short-term diagnoses. The Keynesian aphorism 'In the long run we are all dead' expresses a reluctance to undertake long-term analysis, a reluctance which is only slowly being overcome. It may be assumed, too, that the confidence which so many economists have in the future prospects of British capitalism has insecure psychological foundations. The outspoken confidence may include the *sub voce* qualification *après moi le déluge* — since 'in the long run we are all dead'.

For Marxists the sustained prosperity of the recent period should give no cause for surprise or for defeatism. There is no basis in Marxism for assuming that economic crisis or decline is a necessary basis for vigorous action against an outmoded social and economic system. The example of the thirties in this and other countries shows that there is no automatic connection between crisis and working class strength. Unemployment drains the trade unions of many of their members and diminishes their fighting power. Insecurity and fear demoralizes people and prepares the ground for demagogues to build up mass support for fascism from among the threatened petty bourgeoisie and sections of the working class. Today, on the contrary, we find the trade union movement strong and sensitive to every threat to its newly-won positions. A tremendous capacity to wage struggles has been built up in the Labour movement. This strength gives hope that before misery and frustration on the scale of the thirties could recur the necessary leadership and sense of purpose would be created in the Labour movement to end capitalism itself. It should be clear that the Tories and the employers are playing with fire every time they make an attack on the gains of the last two decades. These attacks, of which we have seen the first probings in the last year or so, grow out of the contemporary problems of British capitalism, of a crisis which is no less real because it does not reproduce the forms of the thirties, but whose origins and potentialities have to be understood if the Labour movement is to take hold of the new opportunities with which it will be presented. However refurbished to meet the increasingly severe scrutiny of the working class, capitalism in Britain carries within itself the seeds of crisis.

The changed world position of Britain

Any fundamental analysis of Britain's economic position and prospects must begin with the diminished rôle which she now plays in the world, compared with 1900, 1914 or 1939. By 1914, she had lost her world industrial predominance but still retained the leading position in finance, commerce and shipping — though by then her rivals were creeping up on her. As a result of World War One, great inroads were made into Bri-

tain's capacity to shape the nature and course of the world economy. Although her chief continental rival, Germany, had been temporarily vanquished, the old international division of labour had been shattered in the process and, in the newly-emerging pattern, Britain now operated under less favourable conditions than in the past. The strengthening of the industrial might of the United States and her rôle as a major creditor—in direct competition with Britain—made the peculiarly ambivalent Anglo-American relationship a major factor in world economics. At this stage, however, the imperialist base of British economy had been broadened—although the virus of colonial revolution was spreading. She still held immense foreign investments, but was no longer able to resume the export of capital on the pre-1914 scale. However, Britain retained a strategic position in world trade and finance.

The main burden of the readjustment to new international conditions in the inter-war period fell upon her basic industries: coal, heavy engineering and textiles. Unemployment and stagnation for years held these parts of her industrial structure in their icy grip. The onset of the world economic depression in 1929 found her economy by no means fully recovered either from the effects of the war or from the over-valuing of the pound sterling after the return to gold in 1925. Structural changes had, however, now begun and considerable relief was experienced from the favourable shift in the terms of trade upon which her manufactured exports exchanged against imported primary products. The failure of the expansion which took place in the twenties to restore anything like boom conditions in Britain meant that the effects of the economic blizzard which swept the world after 1929 were felt, actually, in a less acute form than in the USA and Germany, serious as these were. The abandonment of the gold standard and of traditional free-trade policy, as a sequel to the manipulated political crisis of the summer of 1931, which brought the Labour Premier Ramsay MacDonald in as Premier of a Tory Government, gave a certain fillip to the economy and served to cushion it from even more severe shocks. Depression, however, remained endemic, particularly in the older sectors of the economy, with only partial recovery — until the rearmament drive of the late thirties.

During these years of depression Keynesian economic theories remained something of an official heresy, though all the time they were more and more deeply influencing the new generation of economists. With the outbreak of war unemployment was reduced to the low level from which it has hardly diverged since. It was this simple fact, more than anything else, that established the prestige of the Keynesian analysis.

Meanwhile, despite the shocks of the war, the depression and the plight of the basic industries, British economy remained during all this time immensely powerful. In 1938 overseas capital holdings were back to something like the same volume as those of 1914 and income derived from them covered about one-fifth of the payments which had to be made abroad.

America and Britain

The Second World War had a much more adverse effect on Britain's economic position than either the 1914-18 war or the depression. The extent of the ad-

verse change that has taken place has to some extent been cushioned and concealed by a variety of factors. The effects are, however, well known. From being a great international creditor, Britain capitalism is now the largest debtor on international account. The terms of exchange of her manufactured exports have greatly worsened. Loss of net income from such sources as shipping freights and heavy overseas military expenditure has further burdened her balance of payments. As a result, only foreign aid and a great increase in exports could prevent a disastrous decline in living standards. This has meant that the whole of British economy has become even more dependent on the world market than ever it was in the past. It is, therefore, more prone to shocks transmitted to it from outside.

Parallel to Britain's decline, which has been shared by that of Europe as a whole, has been the impressive growth in world economic importance of the United States of America, which had been temporarily hindered by the depression of the thirties. This increasing importance of the USA had been accelerated by the embarrassments of European capitalism after 1939, the tremendous boost which the war gave to her industrial and financial machine and her enviable position as universal provider in a world hungry for both capital and commodities after the war. In the first post-war decade, the British economy alone was underpinned in grants and loans to the extent of 6,500 million dollars. Without dollar assistance on this scale agonizing problems would undoubtedly have had to be faced both in Britain and her dependent territories: for example, any outflow of fresh capital from Britain to the colonies (and to other areas) would hardly have been possible. Likewise, Britain has benefited indirectly by the various loans and aid made to other countries. Certainly this 'generosity' implied some 'strings'; it also represented an important element in American stability. Of this there is no question. The result has been that new economic and political relationships between Britain and the United States have been established, relationships which are full of complexities and contradictions which cannot be summed up in a simple formula. It will hardly be disputed that as far as a 'partnership' exists, its terms are defined in Washington and Wall Street rather than in London. Yet Britain is clearly not a satellite or a potential fiftieth state of the USA. Bitter rivalry in some areas and in certain periods has been followed by apparently harmonious operation in others. Britain has been able to resist complete synchronization of her policies as a result of her entrenched positions in strategic areas of the world, the undoubted prestige and experience of her agents and the blunt fact that it is in the interests of neither to allow the persistent underlying rivalry, which sometimes rises so nakedly to the surface, to upset the common front against the Russo-Chinese bloc. The full extent of the political and economic antagonisms inherent in this British-American partnership is therefore concealed.

If British and West European stability had not become necessary to American economic and political foreign policy it is doubtful whether capitalism could have survived at all in those countries. *It is here that the deliberate policies of Moscow served the same ends as those of Washington: the dupes being those in the working-class movements who supported one or other*

of the two leaderships and thus surrendered their claim to take power into their own hands. The period after 1945 is the period of the great tragedy of lost opportunities. These opportunities — the victories of the Resistance movements in West Europe, the Labour landslide victory of 1945, whose energies were dissipated in these tragic years — have now been largely forgotten in the gains in wage levels and social services and higher employment levels of the past decade, much as the revolutionary energies of Chartism were submerged beneath the economic upsurge of the mid-Victorian decades.

Under these conditions, necessarily complicated by a host of other factors, it appears that a large part of the working class has become reconciled to capitalism, or at least has become less militant. The reasons for the new economic situation, the factors responsible for full employment and the chances of its continuance must therefore be given very careful attention, especially since we are faced with the apparent paradox of adverse changes in Britain's international position and the loss of colonial territory coinciding with improved living standards and greater job security.

Full employment since the war

Socialists used to be accustomed to thinking of capitalism as inseparably associated with chronic unemployment, except perhaps in wartime and at the peak of a full-scale boom. But this country has now experienced twelve years of peacetime 'full employment'. The indefinite continuance of this state of affairs is now often assumed by reputable economists and by the framers of Labour Party policy documents. But it is necessary to stress that this post-war period has been unique. It may be said that the preservation of high levels of employment in Britain and the USA has been less a result of conscious purpose than of a unique combination of circumstances. The factors making up this full employment economy have operated internationally, though this has not prevented some countries from experiencing periods of unemployment, open and concealed, or chronic depression, as in the case of Italy. It cannot however be clearly established that either the politicians of the capitalist States or the great business magnates have decided to maintain full employment as a matter of self-interest. On the contrary, there is a persistent trickle of half-concealed opinion expressed in such circles that a little unemployment would have a salutary effect upon the workers. Whatever complaints may be made about inflation, it is incomparably easier to cope with this and other concomitants of expansion than it is to overcome a depression which has already begun. Just because a particular concatenation of influence has kept the whole international capitalist structure at a high level of activity, little experiment has had to be made to test any of the over-advertised specific remedies for unemployment.

It cannot be denied, however, that government activity played an important part in sustaining a high level of employment. The acceptance by capitalist governments of a more direct rôle in investment is one of the wartime practices carried over into the period of reconversion and reconstruction. In particular, gov-

ernment-sponsored investment in constructional work, including housing, has made a substantial addition to the total level of activity. As a result Britain has experienced a building boom. In the past such a boom in house construction has been part of a characteristic building cycle, followed, for reasons which need not be discussed here, by a decline. Unless the building cycle is a thing of the past, there will presumably come a time when the boom will exhaust itself and the level of building construction will slacken off. It is conceivable, too, that government measures designed to deal primarily with problems in other parts of the economy may provoke contraction in the constructional trades, including building. It is clear that the whole question of the rôle of government in modern capitalism needs further analysis.

The antagonisms between the two rival world-systems, the Soviet bloc and the Atlantic powers, expressed in the umbrella term 'Cold War', has had its own economic reflection in a very high level of arms expenditure. Undoubtedly this high level of arms expenditure has, at times, created its own special difficulties, and it has often been argued on rational grounds that 'we' in Britain should be better off if the resources absorbed by the armaments race had been applied to peaceful production. But is capitalism a rational system? Could consumption and demand have been maintained at a level at which these resources released from armaments would have supplied goods, maintaining full employment in the process? If the answer to the first question is 'No, capitalism is not rational', it would be unwise to give an unequivocally affirmative reply to the second.

In the thirties there was abundant evidence that capitalism had apparently exhausted its potentialities. Everyone was forecasting its early demise. Paradoxically, for a whole series of reasons, the Second World War temporarily gave capitalism a new draught of life. *As a result of this, the main danger at present is that we should overestimate its resilience.* What the war did, among other things, was to inaugurate a new, intensified phase of technological development. Its new name is automation. Perhaps the economic system itself should not receive much credit for this; in the pre-war period, capitalist society had done much to hold back science and frustrate its best representatives. In recent years it has been able to squander millions on research for war preparations while starving peaceful medical, agricultural and other research of vital funds. Out of wartime scientific industrial research and development, however, came a whole new series of commercially applicable products and processes suitable for post-war markets. Rapid development has taken place in such important fields as electronics, petro-chemistry, nuclear energy and the production of consumer durables, plastics, man-made fibres for textiles, and so on.

Fresh technological spurts on this scale have, in the previous history of capitalism, been able, if not to obliterate the cyclical movement, at any rate to bring about sustained upward swings in the long-term pattern of development. The new fields for investment and profit-making opened through technological advance have, undoubtedly, been a significant factor in determining the rate of growth of British capitalism in the post-war period.

Britain and the world market

As we have seen, British economy has become more sensitive to the condition of world economy than before the war. An important element in its own high level of activity and employment has been transmitted to it from outside. The relationship between Britain and the world economy is one of interdependence and mutual interaction, with Britain playing a less positive, determining role than in the past. In the recent period, increasing demand for manufactured goods, particularly capital equipment and consumer durables, has had favourable consequences for Britain's vital export trade. Because of better prices, better terms of trade and a higher level of demand for their products, the primary producing countries have been able to increase their imports of industrial goods. Colonial emancipation and capital investment in underdeveloped countries have together operated in the same direction. The expansion of this market has been important in enabling Britain to increase the volume of her exports quickly enough to keep the balance of payments problem within reason-

able dimensions. True, this was coupled with less favourable terms of trade for manufactured goods — the obverse of the jacking up of demand on the part of the primary producing countries. This association of less favourable terms of trade with prosperity in the manufacturing countries is familiar from the experience of the world economy before 1914. In the past, however, sooner or later, the balance has tilted in the opposite direction: terms of trade for industrial commodities have *improved*, but this has coincided with a dampening down of the rate of growth of industrial production, with falling prices on the export market and, finally, with the onset of depression in both the industrial and the primary-producing countries. Perhaps this picture is also now a thing of the past. Perhaps this particular contradiction has been overcome through commodity control schemes and similar measures. But the practical proof that this is so has yet to be given; as will be shown in the second part of this article, certain symptoms of such a change have already become apparent. •

(To be continued in the next issue)

The Engineers' Strike and the Labour Movement

Robert Shaw

NOTHING LIKE the recent engineering and shipbuilding strikes has been witnessed in Britain since 1926. This date was on the minds, if not the lips, of everyone: workers, employers, trade union leaders and Government alike. Each section looked over its shoulder at the experiences of the General Strike and was either inspired by hope or struck with fear, depending on its place in the class struggle. In twelve short months the pattern of post-war labour relations has been disrupted. The old servility of the wage application, the long-drawn-out negotiations, the hypocrisy of arbitration and Government inquiries—none of these things can ever be the same again.

If strikes were undertaken by the rebellious rank and file in the past, then Transport House would thunder and Labour MPs would solemnly warn of the danger to the economy; but the engineering and shipbuilding workers have changed all that. Now this old, stately class collaboration dance has been rudely interrupted and the trade union leaders must jig to the workers' tune. But are not the workers, as the capitalist Press announced, better off than before? Are they not earning good money and buying television sets and expensive furniture? Have not the Fabian theorists pontificated on the falseness of Marx, on the disappearance of the class struggle and the gradual and inevitable betterment of society in general? Why then has the old spectre refused to be laid? How has it happened that shipyard workers and engineers have engaged in 'old-fashioned' battle?

The solidarity of the strikes was a shock to the employers and a portent of the future. After seventeen years of full employment and prosperity, the workers' movement has emerged strong and fresh, invigorated

by the emergence of new generations who have not known the defeats of the twenties and thirties. These battalions are determined to defend the higher living standards won from capitalism after the war.

'Collective Bludgeoning', wrote the *Economist*, calling on the engineering employers to hold fast while demanding no interference from the Government. In full-page advertisements in the Press the engineering employers declared their wide-eyed innocence at being so cruelly held to ransom. The Government was powerless to prevent a clash on a large scale; all the time-worn methods of arbitration, conciliation and inquiry were useless. What went wrong? Has the British movement entered a new phase of revolutionary development?

Above all, the trade union militants need to analyze the retreat that was forced on the rank and file by a section of the trade union bureaucracy. How can the militant wing be strengthened and the treacherous leadership removed? What is the way forward for the British trade unions? Are we heading for another 1926? These are the questions we must answer.

The developing crisis in the economy

Behind the industrial struggle is the fight for profits. Though 1955 and 1956 marked a new high point for dividends there began to emerge unmistakable signs of growing difficulties in the economy. The trade unions correctly pointed to the fourteen per cent increase in engineering profits for 1956, which made a mockery of the employers' claim that they could not afford to give wage increases. The employers' resistance was stiffened by the policy of the Government, which

sought to peg down wages in an attempt to solve the financial crisis, further aggravated by the Suez adventure. The attitude of the Government on wages was a logical extension of the policy it adopted as a result of the drain on the gold and dollar reserves and the threat of national insolvency. Macmillan's action in curtailing credit and raising the Bank Rate precipitated the slump in the car industry, already operating in conditions of increasing world competition.

In Birmingham and Coventry there were ominous echoes of the thirties and the return of mass unemployment. During 1956 production of cars and lorries dropped by 37 per cent and 32 per cent respectively and this drop was shown in the sharp decline in the profits of the motor car manufacturers. In 1956 Ford's profits dropped £5 million below the 1955 figure; the British Motor Corporation declared that no profits had been made in 1956; other motor manufacturers showed similar declines. Nor were these profit falls confined only to motor car firms. As the company reports for 1956-7 are published, it becomes clear that there were big drops in net profit, and in some cases actual losses were shown. David Brown's showed a net profit of only £108 as against £612,684 for 1955. The North British Loco Company declared a net loss of £508,083 as against a profit of £101,510 in 1955. Although these figures are not the general pattern they are signs of the growing difficulties faced by sections of British capitalism in the world market. Many firms have invested large amounts of capital in expensive automatic machinery, in modernization and in extensions of factory equipment. All this is capital which demands employment. Lower profits in one sector of the economy eventually worsens the situation for the whole and threatens the rate of profit. No wonder, therefore, that the engineering bosses get tough; their rate of profit is at stake.

What has now emerged is the pattern of a conspiracy between the Government and the employers to hold down wages. Macmillan stated when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer that 'another round of wage increases such as there had been in the past two years could be disastrous.' (May 25, 1956). The engineering and shipbuilding employers could readily subscribe to these words; they understand that a drop in profits would be a disaster. They aimed to sweat out of labour the last ounce of expanded profit. It was to be a fight, and the weakest would go to the wall. For the employers the fight began in 1956 at Standard Motors, Norton's and the B.M.C., where the issue of redundancy and unemployment was fought out at the factory gate, on the picket line.

The trade union movement

Both the weakness and the strength of the trade union movement were demonstrated in the car industry strikes of 1956. What was at stake was the defence of the basic principle of 'no sackings'. The workers understood that they must defend their right to employment, in answer to the intentions of the employers and the Government to create a pool of unemployed. The car workers demonstrated the fighting spirit of the rank and file when given adequate leadership (as demonstrated at Norton's) and awoke to the strength of the trade union movement if only the top leadership could be forced to fight. There also emerged the new

pattern of betrayals at the hands of the trade union leaders.

At Norton's the local leaders stood firm by the principle of 'no sackings', and for 28 weeks defied attacks from employers and the Press and resisted the insidious pressure from the trade union bureaucrats. This heroic struggle stood in violent contrast to the treachery at Standards' and the B.M.C. In these strikes the Right-wing bureaucrats were aided and abetted by the conciliatory policy of the British communist leaders, transmitted through the strong Communist Party organizations in both firms. This is a feature we shall certainly meet again in the further development of the workers' struggles.

In their own way the Right-wing trade union leaders understood the lessons of the B.M.C. and Standards' and drew conclusions which, of course, fitted in with their own interests. It is as well for us to understand what these interests are.

The British trade unions were formed and grew in the period of capitalist expansion and their rôle was that of obtaining concessions from the employers when times were 'good' and defending their members' interests as best they could when times were 'bad'. Unions conducted in this way were 'tolerated' by the capitalists, who also tried to get into the leadership of the unions pliable men, men who would act 'reasonably', *i.e.* in the general interests of capitalism. The growth of monopoly capitalism and the beginning of the decline of Britain in the world economy disrupted this relationship. The ruling class increasingly demanded that the trade union leaders serve the 'interests of the nation', by which of course they meant the interests of big business. They also perfected methods for getting a stranglehold on the rank and file. Gradually their function became one of acting as the policemen for monopoly capitalism, until in the nineteen twenties the trade union leaders in general not only sold out to the employers but also crushed the militant opposition to their rule and imposed a rigid control of the union apparatus.

The growing crisis of British capitalism again brings before us the part played by reformist-led trade unions. Today the leaders are faced in every dispute with a solid wall of employers backed by State power. Nowadays the State increasingly throws off the pretence of impartiality (just as it did in 1926) and holds over the workers' heads a club with the warning 'Submit!'

Hence the need for the trade unions—in so far as they remain reformist (*i.e.* adapt themselves to private property) to adapt themselves to the capitalist State and to contend with the employers for its co-operation. In the eyes of the reformist leaders the chief task is to 'free' the State from the embrace of capitalism, to weaken its dependence on the great capitalist combines, to pull it over to their side.

But in the epoch of imperialism the State becomes more and more the direct agency of monopoly capitalism. In Britain today, behind the Parliamentary façade, the Macmillan Government acts in the wage dispute only in the interests of the engineering employers; it is not and cannot be impartial. Of course, the Labour leaders hasten forward with their fig-leaf to hide this fact from the working class. Otherwise the Labour Parliamentarians themselves would be exposed.

In the *Stock Exchange Gazette* of March 22, 1957, a writer pointed out that when the trade union leaders threaten 'to disrupt the country', they do so only to justify their own existence, since failure to obtain wage increases would lose them their power and their jobs. This is of course a vulgarization of the truth, conveniently over-simplified for class-conscious members of the Stock Exchange. When the bourgeois writers state that the trade union bureaucrats are afraid of their members they state only half the truth, for the bureaucrats fear the monopoly capitalists much more and so hasten to sell out the workers in the interests of the monopolists.

But, it may be asked, did not these same people recently initiate mass strikes and, beating their breasts, threaten the engineering employers? Certainly—though some did so reluctantly and because they felt themselves between the devil and the deep blue sea. In the past the bureaucrats were able to balance the workers' pressure against the needs of big capital, but with the growing economic crisis and the changing social relations impelling the two classes into violent conflict the juggling act of the bureaucrats is disrupted.

Does this mean that the trade union leaders have become new men? Must the trade union movement take as genuine coin their 'new' words? Only the naive would do so. If these leaders hasten to knuckle under to the employers when three thousand workers are to be sacked, and if, when a wage battle is in danger of being won, these leaders are divided because some stand for outright capitulation, is it not clear that the leaders at the very top of the trade union apparatus, cushioned from the chill wind of class conflict and more than bourgeois in their outlook, will never lead the workers in any decisive battles except for the specific purpose of betraying them and teaching them a lesson?

It would, however, be foolish for us to assume that the reformist leadership will automatically be discredited and replaced by the rank and file, for they are not unaware of the rank-and-file pressures on them and they adjust themselves accordingly. Moreover they are not homogeneous but represent many different layers, some of which are much closer to the rank and file, subject to closer scrutiny from the workers and therefore less ready to sell them out. But the influence and big votes are in the hands of the most centralized and undemocratic unions, whose leaders are among the most servile. Even here, however, sections of the bureaucracy were forced in 1956 to change their tactics and to lead mass strikes as part of their strategy. Some of the local trade union leaders in Birmingham even found themselves, much to their embarrassment, giving a hand on the picket line.

In the present engineering dispute William Carron can be said to represent the extreme Right-wing group. Even so some of Carron's supporters among the Catholic Irish (e.g. Byrne of Glasgow) were obliged to speak critically of the open sell-out perpetrated by the Confederation majority. To the Left there are Ted Hill and the Communist Party trade union leaders, with Frank Cousins voting with this group. The Communist Party spokesmen are not always to be found on the Left; their rôle is a special one. Having failed to pursue an independent policy throughout the strike, the Communist Party supported the least compromised wing of the bureaucracy. In Frank Cousins, in particular, are

expressed all the contradictions of the bureaucracy engaging in militant actions, actions which some of his predecessors would look upon as dangerous heresy. But Ernest Bevin also played a Left tune in his time and during 1926 was given the task of drawing up the plan for the General Strike. Cousins said little during the engineering dispute, was dithery about the strike action, but voted for its continuation.

It may be asked how Ted Hill comes into this category of trade union bureaucrats. Hill represents one of the smaller craft unions. He often makes 'Left' statements and has hinted in his union journal at the use of industrial action to bring down the Tory Government. He claims to be a Marxist. But his handling of the dispute on the Clyde in November 1956 was critically received by the rank and file, and in the recent dispute he was content to shelter behind the discipline imposed by the Confederation majority. Ted Hill represents a Centrist tendency within the trade union leadership, a tendency which is now beginning to emerge and to exercise greater influence.

These Centrists are feeling their way towards leadership and beginning to challenge the old Right wing. In the past they tailed behind Stalinist or Left-reformist ideas, with no clearly thought out programme of their own. Cousins flirts with the Centrists while formally remaining in the same Right-wing camp. At the 1956 Trades Union Congress he was put up by the Right wing in an attempt to head off the drift to the Left. The changing situation and the growth of militancy among the rank and file push forward this process of adaptation by the leadership. Rank-and-file militancy is, of course, the promise of revolutionary events; but there is yet no revolutionary wing in the General Council.

The mass strikes

Small local strikes are accepted by the bourgeoisie and by the trade union bureaucracy. Both can understand the logic of such strikes and they can adopt traditional attitudes to deal with them: return to work, negotiations, a few concessions, a sell-out. There are few repercussions.

It is qualitatively different when millions of workers are involved. In such times the movement begins to learn. The new militant talk of the leaders, the strength of the challenge to the employers, the lessons of the defeat: all combine to produce within the movement a growing awareness of class relationships, a growing consciousness of the aims of the Labour movement and a feeling that something should be done.

For the capitalist a small strike is safe, something he understands, something controllable by trade union officialdom. But given the interaction of those factors which stimulate the conscious feeling of the workers for struggle, the factors generated in the trade unions by the employers' resistance and the factors which impose upon the trade union leaders themselves the necessity of a clash, then the strike movement can grow from small beginnings into mass proportions, bringing into the struggle more and more workers, at different levels of trade union and political consciousness. The strike movement develops according to a logic of its own. For this very reason the mass strike becomes a risky undertaking for the leading trade union officials, and serves to underline their dilemma.

At the outset of the recent strike the engineering and shipbuilding unions were confronted by a blank refusal to raise wages by one penny, and this refusal was obviously endorsed by the Government. In this situation the trade union leaders were forced to take desperate measures. By declaring a strike they set in motion forces they were not sure they could control. Their hesitancy is indicated by the lengthy notice of strike action given to the employers, by the 'snowball' tactics adopted in the engineering strike (the Centrist wing voting for an immediate national stoppage). This was the first major nation-wide stoppage since the war; the response is indicative of the fighting mood of the working class. From the very beginning of the strike the active militants began to take the lead. Here was something they could get their teeth into. Reports tell of insistent demands from the rank and file to the district committees for action against scabs and against 'black' work. In some cases the officials were confronted with impatient demands and were sought out in their committee rooms and prodded into action. The workers organized their own strike committees where official committees did not exist, and in the remotest corners of industrial life the strike was strongly felt and discussed. Preparations were made to mobilize support.

Mass movements always draw into action sections of workers who have never previously engaged in struggle. The militancy penetrates the thinking of the hitherto most backward sections, and the whole class leaps forward in class consciousness. In the later stages of the strike the workers were becoming impatient with the dilatory 'do-nothing' attitude of the leaders and mass demonstrations were organized. Clashes with scabs and police began to take place and the mood of the strikers stiffened. Most significant of all, here and there workers were beginning to ask pertinent questions on the political implications of the strike—on the conspiracy of the employers with the Tories and on the need to direct the main fire against the Tory Government.

Naturally the capitulation of the Right-wing bureaucrats to the employers and to the Government acted as a setback. But it was not a crushing defeat. The strike had remained united and unbroken and the workers retreated in good order, defending their ranks from victimization. The strength of the mass movement prevented the retreat from becoming a rout. The bureaucracy had opened the gates to the enemy without caring how the workers would defend their positions. This was the same sort of treachery as that of the General Council in 1926.

The political ferment

The explosion which is now maturing threatens to be even more violent than 1926. Not only have the working class enjoyed what is for capitalism an unusually long period of full employment, but the political climate since the war has taught them many lessons. The experiences of the Labour governments from 1945 to 1951, with all the hopes and disappointments they engendered, the attacks of the Tories on standards of living, the Suez crisis and the growing difficulties of the economy: all these make the workers think deeply about their experiences. Moreover there have been a number of revolutions since the war, particularly the

Chinese revolution, all of which expose the decay of capitalism and its predatory nature. They show who are the agents of capitalism and who will do its dirty work. These factors combine to expose the intensity of capitalist exploitation and the burdens of class society. Effects of all these factors are to be seen in Britain, adding up to a growing feeling for the launching of mass action against the employers and the Tory Government. The Suez crisis taught the British Labour movement many lessons. The great Trafalgar Square demonstration and many smaller ones showed support for the Arab struggle for liberation from imperialism. In a different way the Hungarian revolution drove home many valuable lessons in spite of the attempts made by the Right wing and the bourgeois Press to exploit it to their own advantage.

The rank and file do not separate widely industrial struggle and politics. True, there is a tradition that politics are not the concern of the trade unions, but this 'law' is honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Most Labour Party members are trade unionists and the active ones attend both their party and trade union branches. The workers air their political complaints in the trade union branch and take their industrial troubles to the Labour Party ward. It is part of a common experience and the division is never absolute. When we survey the world of the Labour leaders we find a different state of affairs. Here political life and trade union life are completely separated. Each department has different spokesmen, carries out different actions, works in different spheres and propagates different policies. Interrelation is recognized only formally. The trade union leaders concern themselves only with obtaining concessions from the employers for their members and the Labour Party leaders delicately decline to step outside the strictly limited sphere of Parliamentary reforms.

As the trade union movement embarked on the engineering strike, there developed a clear contradiction between the strength of the mass movement, its vitality and determination—and the weak, vacillating policy of Parliamentary reformism, which advances the ideas of compromise and conciliation. Gaitskell scolded the Tory Government for failing to remain impartial and Bevan invited the employers to use a conciliatory formula as a solution to the crisis.

The workers have seen how the mass movement strikes fear into the heart of the Government and their lackeys. The movement is found to grow in stature and confidence and to think in terms of turning the strike weapon to political ends—and this before any slump has arrived! The further development of this mass movement must take on the form of a movement to end the rule of the Tory Government. Some form of alliance between the engineers and railwaymen in the recent strike was only averted by the Government-inspired concession to the railwaymen of a five per cent rise. The Government hopes thus to buy time. But now the whole future of the capitalist system is being questioned. It is no longer a simple question of a five per cent wage increase. There is also the question of shorter hours and the rational fear that depression will follow boom. The workers will raise the demand for a sliding scale of hours and the right to work or full maintenance.

The capitalists' attack on wage levels on the one hand and the rise of unemployment on the other set

before the workers the question of taking control to defend their class interests. Already the militants are raising in the trade unions fresh demands for nationalization and for the operation of a plan to ensure full employment. To operate this programme successfully the trade union movement needs to build a militant leadership from among rank-and-file workers; but in the engineering strike this is what the main political tendencies sought to prevent.

The rôle of the Communist Party

During the strike the Communist Party leaders maintained a significant silence on the part played by the trade union bureaucracy. The events of 1926, when mentioned at all, were recalled only in the vaguest terms. No statements were made by the leading Communist Party trade union officials. No articles appeared in the *Daily Worker* from Joe Scott, Frank Foulkes, Frank Haxell or Arthur Horner. During the whole strike these people were strangely silent; if we had not known otherwise we could fairly have assumed that no important trade union posts were occupied by members of the Communist Party. True, the party was for the strike and it called for support for the fight for the full ten per cent. (To retain any of its dwindling membership it could hardly do otherwise. The Stalinist leaders, too, are in a dilemma.) But Communist Party propaganda carefully refrained from linking the wage movement to the political question of removing the Tory Government. No special pamphlets or leaflets were issued, and the party trod on tiptoe, anxious not to draw attention to its presence. Moreover during the strike the Right-wing officials were given a build-up in the *Daily Worker*, lengthy articles being published in the form of interviews with Carron, Brotherton and Hill. No word of criticism accompanied these sycophantic articles.

Harry Pollitt was featured on March 19 as an old boilermaker. The furthest he allowed himself to go was in urging the General Council to 'inspire the whole movement with a new united fighting spirit which can sweep every obstacle standing in the way of better conditions ruthlessly aside'. Pollitt might just as well have asked Genghis Khan to lead a movement against capital punishment. He writes as though the General Council's 1926 betrayal had never taken place! Thus does Stalinism set out to 'educate' young militant workers. It teaches them to rely on 'appeals' to . . . the General Council. Not once did the Communist Party officially point to the need for the working class to remove the Tories by strike action. This is a measure of its betrayal of socialist principles. The Communist rank-and-file militant who fights the boss on the shop floor or on the picket line may find this criticism unpleasant to believe. But the truth stares out from the pages of the *Daily Worker* and from the silence of the communist trade union leaders. There is no need to embellish the facts; they speak for themselves.

As in 1926, when the working class mounted a massive assault on capitalism but one which was still based on the groundwork of purely trade union demands, the task of the revolutionary wing now is to assist the militant vanguard to learn many lessons from betrayal and retreat. The 1926 strike was not a revolution and, in the given situation, could not have been—if only because there was no party able to give the lead

for the overthrow of capitalism. But it was a gigantic blow against capitalism from which the movement could learn a great deal. In 1926, instead of applying itself to the task of exposing the Right wing, who were bound to betray the struggle, the Communist Party, in pursuance of the Comintern line of support for the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee, pulled its punches. The trade union leaders eventually betrayed the General Strike and delivered the movement into the hands of the Government. But a magnificent opportunity to teach the lesson of social-democratic subservience to capitalism had been nullified by the communist leaders' previous antics.

Today these leaders play the same rôle as in 1926, and with equally deadly effect. The rank-and-file communist militant vaguely senses that something went 'wrong' in the Standards and B.M.C. strikes—and maybe in Briggs too. But now, he believes, the Party is fighting on the picket line; it is wholeheartedly behind the strike; there is no betrayal. But betrayal can occur in more ways than one and not simply in the manner of Jimmy Thomas. Pollitt's stirring appeals to the TUC General Council and Arthur Horner's diplomatic silence can be traced directly to Moscow, and its latest euphemism for the betrayal of the Left: 'peaceful co-existence'.

Tasks of the Marxist movement

Today the task of Marxists is to prepare for the next round of industrial battles and for the mounting of a political offensive against capitalism. At this stage, the mass movement needs to turn its hand to ousting the Tory Government and placing a Labour Government in its place. A Labour Government would greatly accelerate the present slowly developing radicalization of the workers. During the twenties the Communist Party started along this road. It built (though it later smashed) the Minority Movement, fought against the Black Circular and opened the way for the emergence of a revolutionary wing in the trade unions.

Rank-and-file communists today sometimes argue that if we were now to call for the turning of the mass strike into an attack on the Government, we would be exposing the strike to attacks from the bourgeois Press. The shop stewards would be singled out as communists and 'agitators' and the movement would be split. Basing itself on this honest, but confused, view, the *Daily Worker*, in its editorial of April 4, called for unity of the ranks 'at all levels', at the same time calling on the militant rank and file to carry their views into the trade union branches for the purpose of deciding union policy. The *Daily Worker*, however, does not tell us how to clean up the unions and fight for rank-and-file demands while maintaining unity with Carron, Brotherton and Williamson. Thus the very call for unity becomes in the *Daily Worker* a slogan of confusion.

Naturally the militant worker feels the need for a united movement to increase his strength in overcoming the employers' resistance. But King Street's opportunism besmirches this honest but limited slogan and transforms it into a means of chaining the rank and file to the trade union bureaucracy. No observer who has studied the Communist Party attitude during the 1955 dockers' strike and its condemnation of the 'Blue' movement (a determined rank-and-file attempt to smash the reactionary leadership of the Transport and General

Workers' Union) can doubt this. There the treacherous policy was given classical form. The British workers should learn this lesson thoroughly.

British Stalinism accepts the political leadership of the Moscow bureaucrats, bases its strategy on the peaceful evolution to socialism through Parliament and its trade union tactics on the gaining and maintenance by various means (not all of them healthy) of official positions and 'prestige', at the cost of socialist principles. It can intervene in the mass struggle only by acting as the 'Left' shield for the trade union bureaucrats. Present-day Communist Party trade union policy aims at containing mass discontent within traditional channels, seeking to head off the emergence of a genuine revolutionary Marxist trend, which will put paid to King Street's domination over militant trends in the Labour movement.

The proletariat now needs to organize strikes on a massive scale, yet Stalinism supported the 'snowball' tactic during the engineering strike. The workers need to launch an offensive against the Tory Government. Stalinism sidetracks this issue. The workers need to break away from the Right-wing bureaucracy. Stalinism calls for unity with these bureaucrats. Socialists need to level the most merciless criticism of every act of betrayal. Stalinism—for very obvious reasons—refuses to embark on such an analysis. The socialist movement needs to lead the workers to break away from reformism and begin to build revolutionary trade unions. But it is now clear to all that this can be accomplished only by breaking with Stalinism as well as with reformism.

The road to power

All the contradictions within the British economy are going to become very much sharper. Already the economic basis for reforms has been undermined. The ruling class will of necessity call to its aid the State power in undermining the workers' gains. But the workers will resist and will therefore come into collision with the interests of monopoly capitalism and its State and of the trade union bureaucracy. The British working class is even now entering a stormy phase of struggle, surpassing that of 1926 and raising the question of workers' power. Three years after 1926 the

Labour Party formed a government, to be followed two years later by the MacDonald betrayal and split. Is this the road for the future, too? Is the MacDonald experience inevitable? This question is beyond the scope of this article and anyway its answer cannot take the form of a blueprint prediction.

Undoubtedly the first form of political expression of the movement must and will be the election of a Labour Government. But it would be foolish to allow the workers to remain tied to the old illusions. The clash with monopoly capitalism and its interests will be overcome only by the victory of one side or the other, the elimination of capitalist control or the crushing of the workers' movement. From the strike struggle there already emerges a growing awareness of the tasks ahead and a feeling of the strength of the workers' forces. But this rather diffuse awakening must be given more solid expression in the rebuilding of the militant wing of the trade unions. This new 'Minority Movement' must take up again the tasks left unfinished by its predecessor: the democratization of the trade union movement; the granting of official status to shop stewards; the clearing out of the bosses' men from among the leadership and the consequent establishment of rank-and-file control over all levels of the trade union apparatus. This will mean yearly elections, the right of recall of all delegates and officials and the same kind of pay for full-time officials as is received by the man on the job. The trade unions must be changed from bureaucratized reformist unions, designed to plead for concessions from capitalism, into revolutionary mass organs for its overthrow and for workers' power.

There are many obstacles on the road to power and Marxism does not pretend to lay down *a priori* the exact form it will take in Britain. Nor are there any exact historical parallels which can serve as a substitute for accurate political thinking. The further development of the movement will establish a synthesis of the theoretical achievements of the Marxist movement, transmitted through its Press and its *cadres*, and the growing desire of the working class to throw the exploiting class off its back. This synthesis will help to forge the revolutionary tendency which will engage in struggle against the bureaucracy—the indispensable preparation for the final battle against capitalism.

ZIONISM AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL

E. S. Hillman

THE STATE OF ISRAEL was set up with the declared object of solving the Jewish problem by the establishment of a Jewish State, which Jews the world over could look to as a guarantee of their security. In principle, of course, no socialist has ever objected to, or opposed, the establishment of a Jewish national home. But the Israeli assault on Egypt, so soon after the nationalization of the Suez Canal, with the active support of all the die-hard reactionary social forces in Britain and France, cannot by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as preparing the ground for a settlement between the Jews and their Arab neighbours in the Middle East. Are the Jews in Israel and the Jews

who look to Israel as the guarantor of their own well-being more secure, in the long run, as a result of the Israel attack on Egypt or not?

The facts

No one can doubt that today there exists a wall of hatred between the Arab countries and the State of Israel. Moreover the combined Anglo-French-Israeli assault on Egypt has enormously strengthened the deep-rooted belief of the Arab masses that Israel and the imperialist powers have one fundamental policy in common: *opposition to the legitimate and historically*

necessary advance of Arab nationalism throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

It is difficult for any socialist who has hitherto regarded Israel in some shape or form as the 'solution' to the age-old Jewish problem to remain unaffected by the perilous position that the Jews in Israel are now placed in as a result of the Suez adventure. Two points stand out:

1) Israel's political and economic future is dependent more than ever upon the continued support of her Western allies, however unreliable they may be.

2) The security of Israel's frontiers is dependent not upon the goodwill of the Arab peoples, but upon the extent to which Britain, France and the United States find their strategic and economic interests in the Middle East (oil, rights of navigation through the Suez Canal, military and air bases) coinciding with the continued existence of Israel.

It would, of course, be a gross over-simplification of the facts to argue that the State of Israel is only the forty-ninth State of the United States, or even a mere satellite of France or Britain. Israel has, since the Declaration of Independence (June 1948) manoeuvred between the old imperialist powers. Israel has even flirted with the idea of involving the Soviet Government to help guarantee her existence and security against the rising tide of Arab nationalism. But, after we have added all the necessary qualifications and reservations, the central fact remains; Israel's foreign policy has been contained within the framework of the involvement of the imperialist powers (either separately or in combination) in the affairs of the Middle East. For this reason, the existence of the State of Israel and the fate of its Jewish population is bound up entirely with the continued influence of imperialism in the Middle East.

The rapidly changing status of the Arab States over the last few months makes it very difficult to see how Britain and France can maintain their footholds in Iraq and Iran for any length of time.

Israel's rôle

The Government of Israel is directly attempting to entice the United Nations to fill this 'vacuum' generated by the humiliating and painful defeat suffered by Anglo-French imperialism over Suez. It is still pursuing its policy of involving the United Nations—which essentially today means the United States of America. For a United Nations 'police' force could never exist without the military backing of the USA. Israel conceives this United Nations force as a shield from the hostile actions of the surrounding Arab States. Occupying the Gaza Strip and a strip of territory between the Israel and Egyptian armies and policing the Gulf of Aqaba, this United Nations force would separate the belligerents and impose on Egypt and the other Arab States a 'settlement' to the advantage of Israel and bring peace to the Middle East. This argument, whose apparent simplicity commends it, has now been taken over by leading spokesmen in the Labour Party such as Hugh Gaitskell and Aneurin Bevan.

In *Tribune* of February 1, 1957, a joint article by Aneurin Bevan and Ian Mikardo summarized, with modifications, Israel's case:

Egyptian belligerent rights over the Gulf of Aqaba should be denied to her. The Gaza strip should be administered by the United Nations. The passage of Israeli ships through the Suez Canal and of all other shipping should be guaranteed.

It may be necessary that these should be accorded to Israel before she withdraws her troops, but it is essential that both operations should proceed simultaneously. Private assurances by Egypt are not sufficient. They are not binding, for they are not recorded and can be easily repudiated or not admitted.

Granting the *status quo* in the Middle East (that is, the continued exploitation of the Arab States in the interests of the imperialist oil companies) peaceful co-existence between States and treaties imposed upon or accepted by governments, represent only the present relationship of economic, political and military power between the Arab States freeing themselves from their former oppressors, and the imperialist powers trying to hold on to their spheres of interest. Treaties agreed by the contending states in dispute merely sanctify the *status quo*. The core of the problem is simply left untouched.

The creation of an armoured shield of a United Nations force round the body of Israel in order to protect her militarily and to ensure the free navigation of her shipping through the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba, means not the triumph of the Arab peoples over imperialism, but their rebuff.

The commando raids

But what about the repeated violations of Israel's frontier by Egyptian and Jordanian irregular units? Should not all this be stopped? The *Fedayen* raids express only the bitter resentment the Arabs and particularly the Arab refugees, feel towards Israel. On every issue concerning the Arab world Israel has taken the side, not of the Afro-Asian bloc in the United Nations, but of Britain, France and the United States. Israel voted with France to prevent the Algerian question being debated in the United Nations. Yet France is the most brutal, decrepit and widely-hated of all the imperialist powers. Israel opposed the withdrawal of British troops from the Suez Canal Base, a withdrawal carried out by an unwilling Tory Government. Yet the Israel Government is led by a Labour and professedly Socialist party. Israel opposed the withdrawal, aligning her avowedly Labour and Socialist Government with the views of the last-ditch Suez rebels of the Tory Party, led by Captain Waterhouse.

The Israeli Labour movement

The Israeli Labour movement has been ill-served by these politics. The three important (and, together, decisive) Labour parties in Israel's political life — Mapai, Mapam and Achdut Avodah — have had, and still have, within their grasp the whole future of Israel and, with it, the destiny of Jewry in a hostile Arab world. They have the power to make a notable and historic contribution to the solution of the Jewish problem in the Middle East. This would mean linking up, unconditionally, the Israeli Labour movement with the revolutionary anti-imperialist changes now taking place throughout the Middle East and North Africa. The Israeli Labour parties have no interests separate from the interests of the Arab workers. They have the same interests as the land hungry fellaheen of Nasser's Egypt.

All are victims of the same international system of class rule which gives rise, in its decline, to anti-semitism in the metropolitan imperialist countries and oppression of the Arabs, Africans and Asians in the colonial countries. That the Jew should find himself counterposed to the Arab in the Middle East is itself a tragedy brought about by the ultimate expression of declining capitalism —Hitlerite Germany.

The 'Zionist solution', which propelled the remnants of European Jewry left after the holocaust of World War II to Palestine, was inevitable after many countries had closed their frontiers to Jewish refugees. The Jews in Israel have become the tools of the very forces which drove them towards the quasi-revolutionary 'Zionist solution' of their problem of survival at the end of World War II. The revolutionary zeal and courage of European Jewish youth, sustained by the memory of hundreds of years of persecution and struggle, spurred on by the heroic deeds of the Resistance against Nazi tyranny (e.g. the 1943 Warsaw ghetto rising led by Mordechai Anilewicz) found an outlet in evading the vigilant eye of the British mandatory power in their 'illegal' passage, in 'illegal' overcrowded ships, to Palestine. The 'building up' of the State of Israel through the Kibbutzim (collective farms) was regarded as a specifically Jewish method of constructing socialism, a socialism indissolubly linked with the materialization of a 'ghost nation', the Jewish 'nation'.

The Kibbutzic youth became the backbone of the new generation in the Israel Labour parties, contributing much to the practical implementation of Zionist Socialist policy and to its ideological development. Undoubtedly the theoretical and ideological problems thrust right into the forefront of Israeli Labour thinking have been complicated by the rapid turn of events following the Suez crisis, above all, by the uncertainty of Israel's position in the Arab world.

Zionist Socialism in theory

The Zionist Socialist ideology which makes it difficult for Jews to think through the fundamental problems of Israel's Labour movement, is an ideology fusing Zionism and Marxism. Its founder, Ber Borochov (1881-1917), aimed at constructing a Zionist Socialist ideology opposed both to the bourgeois Zionism of the Herzl-Weizman school, and to the internationalist Jewish socialist school. For Ber Borochov, Zionism and Socialism were not separate ideologies, incompatible one with the other. He saw them as complementary. His Marxist training and revolutionary experience (he participated in the early Russian Social-Democratic movement in Tsarist Russia), made him acutely aware of the existence of the class struggle not only in Gentile society but in the Jewish community itself. His experiences in Germany, Austria and particularly in Hungary, with their then largely assimilated Jewish bourgeois communities, led him to make some shrewd and penetrating observations about the Jewish community itself. He wrote, for instance, in 1906:

The Jewish bourgeoisie finds its interests best served by assimilation, and were it not for the 'poor Ostjuden' (the poor Jewish immigrants from Russia to Central Europe), the Jewish upper bourgeoisie would not be disturbed by the Jewish problem. The continuous stream of immigration of East European Jews and frequent pogroms remind the upper bourgeoisie of Western Europe only too often of the miserable lot of their brethren. The East

European Jewish bourgeoisie is, of course, more directly affected by the status of Jewry (as the pogroms strike at all Jews indiscriminately). The West European upper bourgeoisie, however, considers the entire problem to be a gratuitous and unpleasant burden. And yet, it cannot find a safe retreat from our East European masses. Since the Jewish upper bourgeoisie would like, above all else, to lose its individuality and be assimilated completely by the native bourgeoisie, it is very much affected by anti-semitism. Anti-semitism menaces both the poor helpless Jews and the all-powerful Rothschilds; the latter, however, understand very well where the source of trouble lies; the poverty-ridden Jewish masses are at fault. The Jewish plutocracy abhors these masses, but anti-semitism reminds it of its kinship to them.

Two souls rest deep within the breast of the Jewish upper bourgeoisie — the soul of a proud European and the soul of an unwilling guardian of his Eastern co-religionists. Were there no anti-semitism, the misery and poverty of the Jewish emigrants would be of little concern to the Jewish upper bourgeoisie. It is impossible, however, to leave them in some West European city (on their way to a place of refuge) in the care of the local government, for that would arouse anti-semitic ire. Therefore, in spite of themselves, and despite their efforts to ignore the Jewish problem, the Jewish aristocrats must turn philanthropists. They must provide shelter for the Jewish emigrants and must make collections for pogrom-ridden Jewry. Everwhere the Jewish upper bourgeoisie is engaged in the search of a Jewish solution to the Jewish problem, and a means of being delivered of the Jewish masses. This is the sole form in which the Jewish problem presents itself to the Jewish upper bourgeoisie.¹

These observations go right to the heart of the Jewish problem as seen by the Westernized Jewish bourgeoisie. A little more than fifty years after this essay was written, his analysis retains all its validity. Only because of the fact that the large American Jewish bourgeoisie is now the dominant financial, political, ideological supporter of bourgeois Zionism does the picture presented by him need modification.

The Zionist Socialist solution to the Jewish problem was simple: the mass immigration of the Jewish petty-bourgeois, professional people, artisans and workers to Palestine. There the internal class struggle of the Jewish nation could adequately develop, so preparing the ground for the victory of the newly-created Jewish proletariat, which would gain control in Palestine. In other words, Borochov's Zionism flowed from his concept of historical necessity; the economic and political position of Jewry in a capitalist world driving the poor and oppressed of Jewry to a revolutionary socialist conclusion in Palestine, a socialist conclusion indissolubly linked with the creation of a Jewish nation in the fullest sense of the word.

Zionist Socialism in practice

The economic and political structure of the present Israeli State is founded on this Zionist Socialist ideology — at least in theory. In practice, however, the utopian Zionist Socialism of Ber Borochov has now become transformed into its opposite. Instead of the poor, dispossessed Jews driven to Palestine in desperation (the doors of Western capitalist countries having been closed to them) forging an alliance with the young Jewish agricultural workers, an alliance directed against those who wanted to create a Zionist State dependent upon philanthropic (i.e. bourgeois-Zionist) support, the Zionist Labour leaders have been able to win the Jewish masses to support of just such a bourgeois-Zionist pol-

Ber Borochov, *Selected Essays in Socialist Zionism*, pp. 45-6.

icy. It must be admitted nevertheless that because of the utopian, quasi-revolutionary character of Borochoy's theories this outcome was inevitable.

The State of Israel came into existence in June 1948, not independently of and in opposition to the bourgeois-Zionists, whose attitude to the Jewish masses Borochoy had correctly analyzed—but at their instigation. Now that the Israeli Labour movement has created its own political and even economic power through its trade union, the Histadrut, with its countless associated enterprises and through the Kibbutzim, which dominate the agricultural life of the country, it has in its hands, in theory at least, the opportunity of realizing Borochoy's revolutionary socialist dream. But in practice all these powerful instruments of economic and political power, including the collective farms, are tied to the World Zionist Organization, which, with its energetic fund-raising campaigns and its organization of investments in Israel, holds the Israeli Labour parties to ransom. One single genuine socialist step in Israel would be quite sufficient for Israel's economy to be strangled by the powerful financial interests behind the Right-wing Zionist parties, whose base is conveniently situated thousands of miles away in New York or London, and which represent the interests of the Jewish capitalists not only in Israel, but also in America and Britain. This fact is very well understood by Israeli Labour leaders like Prime Minister Ben Gurion, who has, until very recently, championed the cause of national unity to the point of insisting that all political parties in Israel, except the Right (the Cherut) and the pseudo-Left (the Communist Party) should participate in the running of the Government. The Heath Robinson economy of Israel is artificially sustained by outside financial assistance and is incapable of achieving anything like the degree of stability of the economies of even Britain or France.

Israel's economy is such that, while it exports only citrus fruits, textiles, fruit juice and cut diamonds, it has to import foodstuffs, wood, iron, steel, machinery and crude oil. This distorted, unbalanced economy, cut off as it is from the Arab market and wholly dependent for its continued existence on outside capitalist aid, is of course, the result of the attempt to create a specifically Jewish socialist economy *in isolation*. Instead of concentrating on the problem of creating an economy integrated with the Arab world, Israel's leaders have built up Israel on the shaky foundations of the capitalist economies of the United States, France and Britain. The future of Israel's economy, if it continues along these lines, is, to say the least, problematical.

Israel and the future

Along the road which is now being charted by Israel's Zionist leaders there is no future. Israel's permanent economic crisis has already struck at the poor Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, the Yemen, Iraq, Morocco and Iran. Eventually it will strike at the privileged 'labour aristocracy'. This 'labour aristocracy' includes the members of some of the older, more prosperous collective farms, who represent the main forces behind the present Zionist Socialist coalition. The Jews now coming from the Arab countries will soon find themselves voicing the same grievances as the Arabs who are the main official minority in

Israel. The class struggle continues to express itself in Israel in spite of the class collaborationist policy of the Zionist Labour leaders. In Israel, as in all capitalist countries, the same questions eventually push themselves to the front — which class in society shall bear the burdens of the economic crisis? Israel will be least able of all the capitalist countries to prevent these questions coming to the forefront of her political and economic life.

The internal contradictions of Israeli Labour thinking, with its attempts to solve the Jewish problem independent of, and in opposition to, the rise of Arab nationalism must sooner or later lead to a questioning of Israel's basic policy. Israel has only two choices. She must either continue on her course of antagonizing and inflaming the Arab world with her pro-Western policies, or tie her destiny to the Arab world. The first course leads to suicide, the second would represent a major contribution to the solution of the Jewish problem.

For Israel's Labour parties a re-estimation of Borochoy's theory has now become an urgent question. The present Israeli Labour leaders have consigned Borochoy to the same 'religious' status to which the German Social-Democratic leaders have consigned Karl Kautsky. Borochoy founded the Israeli socialist movement, but was 'perhaps too dogmatic in defining the class struggle as the exclusive force in historical development', to quote one of Borochoy's friendly critics. In spite of the utopian character of Borochoy's theories, they did proceed from an acceptance of the class struggle. Moreover, he insisted on class-consciousness as the basis of revolutionary, proletarian Zionism. He scornfully rejected any collaboration with the bourgeois Zionists and opposed, on the grounds of socialist principle, the participation of his party (Poale-Zion — the Workers of Zion) in the Zionist Congresses of his day.

A new evaluation of Ber Borochoy

Israel's Labour parties have this major task ahead of them: to make a new evaluation of Borochoy's ideology, to separate his revolutionary class outlook from the unworkable and utopian aspect of his ingenious synthesis of Marxism and Zionism. Once the class struggle is recognized as the 'exclusive force in historical development', the Jewish problem will be seen in its proper historical setting. Israel's Labour movement will then have in its hands the key to the solution of its immediate problems. A number of important political conclusions will follow. First, the recognition of Egypt's right to nationalize the Suez Canal. Second, the recognition and support of the Arab peoples in their struggles against imperialism and colonialism (opposition to the Baghdad Pact and the establishment of military bases in the Middle East). Third, support for Algeria against France. This means the identification of the Jewish Labour movement in Israel with the just and legitimate demands of Arab nationalism. This new outlook would mean the integration of the Arab minority and the Arabized Jews from North Africa, the Yemen, Iraq and Iran into Israel's political and social life and particularly their participation in its socialist parties and trade unions, in co-operation with Arab socialists and trade unionists in Egypt, Syria, etc. It would mean the removal of all bars to full social and political rights for the Arabs in Israel; full support for Jewish and Arab workers in their efforts to secure higher wages to

combat the economic crisis; and withdrawal from the World Zionist Organization.

Along this road the Jewish Labour movement has the power to transform the situation in the Middle East and to make a historic and lasting contribution to the settlement of the Jewish problem. Jew and Arab will once more become partners, friends and comrades in the development and planning of the vast, untapped mineral and oil resources of the Middle East. Schemes like the Jordan Valley Authority could change the dry and barren deserts into fertile irrigable land. The Kibbutzim, imprisoned in the warped capitalist economy of Israel, could well become the organizational form of a rapid agricultural development of formerly barren and waterless stretches of country. But all this needs a comprehensive economic plan for an Arab

Federation of States. Jewish technicians and engineers could play an important part in allying their skill to imaginative planning in the former lands of the absentee oil moguls.

Of course this contribution to the solution of the Jewish problem could be *only* a contribution. The Jewish problem, which is not only limited to the capitalist countries but finds an expression in the Stalinist regimes, is only part of a world problem; how to end the continued exploitation of man by man. Jew and Arab, Jew and Gentile have this common problem to face. The reconstitution of the foundations of world capitalist society on a socialist basis offers the only final solution to the basic economic and political problems that face all mankind — not least of all the Jewish people.

The Law of Uneven and Combined Development—III

The Coming American Revolution

William F. Warde

(This is the third and last part of William F. Warde's article. The first and second parts were published in Nos. 1 and 2 of *Labour Review*.)

THE previous section of this article showed how the law of uneven and combined development enables the Marxist to unravel the twisted course of the Russian revolution. Every socialist today recognises the supreme importance of arriving at a satisfactory explanation of the degeneration of the Soviet Union and so of reliably estimating the significance of the conflict between the progressive character of nationalized property in the USSR and the reactionary bureaucracy which rules that country. Second in importance only to the Russian question for the international socialist movement is an understanding of the dialectics of the development of the socialist movement in the United States of America, the most highly developed and most powerful capitalist country in the world. How, in essence, has the law of uneven and combined development shown itself in the principal stages in the history of the USA? How does an understanding of this law help us to forecast the possible future course of the socialist movement in America? There can be few subjects of more vital concern to the Labour movement in Britain and in the rest of the world.

If we are to avoid making over-simplified analogies between the Labour movements of the two countries, if we want to understand concretely how the two Labour movements in Britain and the USA impinge upon, react upon and help each other, we shall need to make a detailed analysis of American revolutionary forces — not merely express 'fervent hopes' and offer our 'superior' advice as that of the 'elder brother'. The law of uneven and combined development will be found to be an indispensable tool for making this analysis of the American socialist movement.

The 'War of Independence'

Prior to breaking loose from British rule, the North American colonies of Britain were certainly underdeveloped in many respects—compared, that is to say, with the mother countries of Western Europe, particularly with Britain herself. The first American revolution, which we in this country usually call the 'American War of Independence', was a mighty effort on the part of the Colonies to come abreast of the Old World.

In preparing, organizing and conducting the War of Independence, the American Patriot Party profited abundantly from the 'privileges of backwardness'. Its merchant leaders had acquired wealth and power by developing the latest techniques of shipbuilding and the practices of world trade. The people acquired freedom and democracy by taking over those forms of party organization (Whigs and Tories) and governmental forms of legislative representation and local government which had been worked out in England and brought over by the Colonists. To justify their demands, the Colonists found ready-made theories of natural law in the writings of ideologists of the English revolution of the seventeenth century like Milton, Harrington and John Locke. In addition the Colonists created a new technique of warfare, uniting their experiences of hunting in the wilds of the North American plains and mountains with the potentialities of the musket. These new tactical methods were important in helping the Colonists to defeat the British Redcoats of George III. As a result of its victory America not only caught up with the Old World but, politically, *surpassed* it. This was the first victorious colonial revolution of modern times and it established what was then the most progressive democracy in the world.

However the American revolution of the eighteenth

century, like the Russian revolution of the twentieth century, could not draw upon unlimited resources. The *political* progressiveness of the Yankee republic became combined with *economic* backwardness. For example, the War of Independence did not, and could not, uproot slavery or curb the power of the slaveowners. The backwardness of the USA in this decisive sphere took its revenge upon the American of the nineteenth century.

The American people had for some time to endure the rule of the Southern slaveowners, who later became so reactionary and insolent that they not only prevented further progress of the country but even endangered the democracy and unity achieved by the first revolution. Fortunately a new combination of social forces had been created in the meantime, and this new combined formation proved strong enough to meet and overthrow the slaveholders' counter-revolution.

Historically considered, this second American revolution (*i.e.* the Civil War) represented, on the one hand, the price paid by the American nation for its *economic* backwardness which it had inherited from its colonial youth. On the other hand, the impetus provided by the Yankee victory in the Civil War jet-propelled the USA once again into becoming the leading nation of the world. After all the pre-capitalist forces and formations, from the barbarism of the Red Indian tribes to the slavery of the Southern States, had been disposed of, American capitalism was able to leap forward with mighty strides, so making the USA today the model and most advanced capitalist nation and the paramount world power.

However, this dominant position was not accomplished all at once but in two revolutionary leaps separated by an interval of gradual progress and political reaction.

Major sources of unevenness in American life

What are the major penalties of progressiveness and the privileges of backwardness to be found in the USA today? American technical know-how is the most advanced and American industry and agriculture the most productive in the world. This not only enriches the capitalist monopolists but showers many benefits upon the American people—ranging from an abundance and wide variety of foodstuffs to a plethora of television sets, refrigerators, motor-cars and other 'luxuries'. This is one side of the picture. On the other side, the American capitalists are the most efficient of all the capitalists in the world in exploiting both their own working people and the rest of the toilers of the world. While the American worker enjoys the highest standard of living of any worker in the world, he is also the most heavily exploited. This tremendously productive working class gets back for its own consumption a smaller part of its output and hands over in the form of profit to the capitalist owners of the instruments of production a greater part of its output than does either the English or the French working class.

The greatest unevenness of America's social development is this: its economy is so advanced that it is fully ripe for collective ownership and planned production (that is, it is ripe for socialism) and yet this economy remains encased in a strait-jacket of capitalist and nationalist restrictions. This contradiction is the main

source of the social insecurity of our age and of the main social evil of our time, not only in the USA but also throughout the whole world.

The high productivity of the American economy, along with the privileges of the dominating position of American capitalism in world economy, is primarily responsible for another phenomenon of American life, and one which always impresses foreign observers—the extraordinary backwardness of American politics in general and the backwardness of the political ideology of organized labour in particular. In this field, it may be said, a colonial cottage is standing upon foundations suitable for skyscrapers. The workers and even the farmers of Britain, or even for that matter the peasants of China, are today influenced and, to some extent, guided by socialist ideas while the working people of America remain captive to the crudest bourgeois ideas and organizations.

This is the second outstanding feature of unevenness in the social structure of the USA. The political life of America lags far behind that of most of the rest of the world and even further behind the economic and social development of the country itself. This lag is, ironically enough, part of the price America is paying for the successes of its two previous revolutions and for its resulting outstanding achievements in industry and agriculture. The third American revolution, the socialist revolution, is being retarded precisely because its forerunners accomplished so much.

Unevenness also prevails in other sections of the American social consciousness. The ideology of the American ruling class is one of the most highly developed in capitalist history. This ruling class not only has a militant, positive philosophy to justify its privileges, a philosophy which it assiduously disseminates inside the USA and internationally, but also is simultaneously engaged in an unceasing offensive against the ideas of communism and socialism, even though Marxist ideas have spread amongst the people of America to the most limited degree. This anti-communist, anti-socialist crusading zeal, together with its acute class sensitivity and consciousness of the class struggle, expresses the American ruling class's forebodings about its own future. But in contrast to this class consciousness of the capitalists the American working class has not yet reached the level of generalizing its own particular class interests even in the form of the most elementary social-reformist notions. This indifference to socialist ideology is one of the most pronounced peculiarities of the American worker. This is not to say that the American worker is devoid of class feeling and initiative. On the contrary, he has asserted himself time and time again as an independent fighting force, especially in the industrial field—often with brilliant results. But these experiences have not led to the establishment of a conscious and permanent challenge to the capitalist order, *i.e.* to a mass socialist movement.

The hyper-development in America of bourgeois ideology and the corresponding under-development of working-class consciousness are the inseparable products of the same historical conditions. They are interdependent aspects of the present stage of social and political development in the USA.

Today the political complexion of the whole world reflects the major unevennesses of American society—

one in the domain of production, another in political organization and a third in social consciousness. The gap between the economy's ripeness for socialization and its capitalist-monopolist ownership and administration, and the gap between the high level of labour's trade union organization and its political and ideological immaturity, are the most striking peculiarities of American life. This situation sets the most difficult theoretical and practical problems to all socialists, especially to those who have to operate in such an environment. To the whole world of labour these gaps in American social life sometimes look like bottomless pits into which the peoples of the whole world must be dragged to their nuclear destruction. Sometimes it seems impossible to imagine that forces could ever come into existence to fill up or bridge the abyss.

Prospects of American development

But will things in the USA remain like this for ever or even for the remainder of this century? Will the contradictions in America's social life persist indefinitely without essential changes? Will the gaps between the level of American economic development and the forms of ownership, between the present weakness and the potential power of the American working class, remain as they are today? The capitalists, the reformists, the Fabians, the liberals, the pragmatists and pseudo-Marxists of all kinds not only think they will but try also to induce everyone else to share their convictions.

But all these people, like their brethren in Britain, reckon without the movement of world history, a movement which has been considerably speeded up in our time. They reckon without the contradictions of the capitalist system on a world scale. These contradictions will, in time, generate new and more devastating crises. They reckon without the development of the class conflicts in our own time and above all they underestimate the creative capacities of the American working class. Again, not being Marxists, they leave out of their calculations the operation and effects of the law of uneven and combined development.

Let us see how the law of uneven and combined development can help us to penetrate below the surface and to expose the kernel of present realities. As we have seen, this is certainly not the first time in the history of America, nor is America the only place in the world in the twentieth century, where economic relations, political structures and social ideas have lagged far behind the development of the forces of production. The undeniable facts of history are that, in the past, the only way in which similar disparities have been resolved, and unevenness eliminated, has been through revolutionary upheavals whose function, on each occasion, has been to place new progressive forces at the head of the nation. In our time only the working class can perform once more this historically necessary function. There is no adequate reason for believing that, whatever else intervenes, the extreme contradictions in American life can be resolved in any other way.

At this point an astute critic may object: 'According to the law of uneven and combined development, and this exposition of it, events do not necessarily reproduce themselves in the same way even within the same social system, but, under a different set of circumstances, the course of events may take a different line of

development. Why then does the USA have to follow the same revolutionary path in the twentieth century as it did in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries? Why must the USA necessarily follow the course taken by the backward countries like Russia and China in our own time? Is it not possible for America to make a detour around the socialist revolution and by easy and gradual stages arrive at a higher form of social organisation and a better life?'

In a somewhat different way and under different conditions this same question has been posed many times here in Britain. It will help us to solve our own British problems more effectively if we follow through the answers which need to be given to this important question in its American setting. For it is certainly a legitimate question that has to be squarely faced and realistically answered. There is perhaps no more crucial question in the international socialist movement today, because upon the answer depends one's view of the right direction for the struggle for a socialist America and world peace itself.

Now it is certainly true that no historical precedent, however superficially apposite, can properly replace the direct analysis of the real concrete situation; precedents can only guide and supplement the specific investigation. Of course, it would be more advantageous for the peoples of the whole world if the transition from capitalism to socialism in America (or, indeed, in Britain or anywhere else) could be effected by mutual agreement between the classes. Marxists have never denied this nor desired otherwise. But this pious wish, unfortunately, does not dispose of the problem. The question then arises: is this ideal and desirable prospect a realistic one? Should it be made the basis for practical socialist politics—here in Britain or in the USA? This same question has once more been raised in the British and American Communist Parties in the 'great debate' which has followed the Twentieth Congress.

The 'peaceful' road of development to socialism in America presupposes that American capitalism can proceed without further devastating economic convulsions, social crises and world wars, and that if these do occur the rulers, discredited by these catastrophes, would step aside and voluntarily relinquish their power, property and privileges, in answer to the demands (and perhaps votes) of an aroused people.

Can it be realistically expected that the most profound social conflict in all history, the conflict which involves the final abolition of exploitation of man by man, will, in the advanced capitalist countries of 'Western democracy', be resolved through diplomatic negotiations between the classes backed up by peaceful forms of mass pressure and by the counting of votes? Incidentally, there are no precedents for such 'revolutions' in British, French, German or American history. It can, however, be easily shown that the most powerful reasons exist indicating why the capitalist monopolists of today, in the USA and elsewhere, are even less likely to relinquish voluntarily their ruling position, to act against their basic material interests and to commit 'social suicide' than were the Courts of Charles I, George III and Louis XVI, the slaveholders of the Southern states of the USA and, for that matter, the Court of Tsar Nicholas II, in their day.

The powerful financial and industrial magnates who rule America today have long been accustomed not only

to rule but to believe in the rightness and eternity of their rule. Moreover they realise that they would not merely be relinquishing their own supremacy but also that of capitalism on a world scale. For should the American workers assume State power in the next decade or so, this would not be just a minor shift of power within a single social system. It would represent the decisive act in the most fundamental and far-reaching of all the transformations of society. Nothing less would be involved than the world-wide historical *coup de grâce* of capitalism and the passing of decisive sections of mankind to a higher social system, to socialism. Fundamentally the fate of two world historical systems, capitalism and socialism, are at issue in the struggle between the American capitalists and the American working class. The recognition of this key position of the American working class is of fundamental importance for the socialist movement in every country of the world, including Britain.

With so much at stake, the reflex action of the American capitalists to the threat of displacement by the working class would most likely be, as McCarthyism indicated, a sharp turn towards military dictatorship or fascism. In any event, it would be unrealistic and irresponsible for a serious Marxist to count only upon the most favourable line of development and to ignore the probability that, instead of facilitating the transition to socialism, the representatives of capitalism will try to throw up new barriers against socialist advance and to fight to retain their sovereignty, however illegal and 'undemocratic' their resistance might be.

However, if this last stronghold of world capitalism, the USA, is the least likely of all countries to escape the necessity for revolutionary struggle on its road to socialism, this certainly does not mean that the pattern of this struggle will duplicate precisely the path taken in other countries, say, for example, Russia. It is an elementary proposition of Marxism, which to suit their own temporary aims the Stalinists are now busy 're-discovering', that the revolutionary class in each country will proceed in its own peculiar way in achieving State power and in building socialism.

After decades of the most discouraging and demoralizing delay, the American workers obtained their industrial organization in one mighty leap during the thirties through the CIO. They compressed several stages of development in this leap. The American motor-car workers did not proceed through craft unionism to industrial unionism, but went at one bound from a state of non-organization to the highest form of industrial organization, skipping the intervening craft stage which industrial workers in Britain found it necessary to pass through.

The contrast of American and British Labour

Similar spectacular leaps will most probably be repeated in the forthcoming political development of the American working class. The value of the law of uneven and combined development consists in helping us to anticipate such leaps. When Britain lost its paramount position on the world market around the beginning of the twentieth century, the most progressive elements of British labour began to draw the necessary

political deductions by turning away from the Liberal Party and establishing their own class party around a programme of social reform—albeit social reform supplementing and expressing itself through a quasi-socialist ideology. American labour has yet to reach the point reached by the British workers over half a century ago. The American trade union movement still remains politically attached to the Democratic Party, the American equivalent of the old and now obsolete Liberal Party in Britain.

How are the American working class likely to respond to radical changes in their economic and political conditions? Can they be expected to follow in the footsteps of the British workers? A Marxist, dialectical thinker can only answer this question thus—yes and no. The American worker will follow the British worker but only in the most general way. He will certainly find it imperative to cut loose from the capitalist parties and to create an independent class outlook and organization, just as the workers of Britain have done. But the specific forms, the special features and the rate of political development of the American workers not only need not, but most certainly will not, simply duplicate the features of British development, because the world historical conditions under which they will set up their class political party will be vastly different from those under which the British Labour Party was created.

When the British working class launched itself into independent politics at the turn of the century world capitalism was still ascending and no country had yet overthrown capitalist rule. Today capitalism on a world scale is on the defensive, while the anti-capitalist powers and the socialist and colonial movements have become a mighty reality.

Nor is the America of today, internally, anything like the Britain of the first half of the twentieth century. Today America is the last stronghold of capitalism and, unlike the British capitalists of Edwardian days, the US capitalists have little room for strategic retreat. These differences will ensure that there will be great differences between the British Labour Party and the American Party of Labour which still remains to be created. Accordingly, the American working class will enter this new chapter of American political events in a mood very different from that of their British predecessors.

In the USA it will take a severe acute crisis to jerk labour loose from the old moorings, rather than the sort of chronic long-drawn-out crisis which was the case in Britain. The impact of these social shocks will run up against the stunted political development of the USA working class at a time when capitalism is on the defensive and the anti-capitalist forces on the offensive in the rest of the world. The offensive of the working class will not only collide with intensified resistance from the capitalists, but also with the inertia and short-sightedness of the trade union bureaucracies—as it has already done in Britain. But the American reactionary trade union bureaucracies will also have to operate under far different conditions from those which obtain in Britain. The critical situation will, on the one hand, dictate the most radical measures. On the other hand, the bureaucrats will be challenged for the leadership of the militant workers by a strong and solid revolutionary socialist grouping.

'Explosive expansion'

Such a combination of a strongly organized, highly cultured and newly radicalized working class with a leadership equipped with the most advanced theory and far-seeing policies as is in process of gestation in the USA today will have extraordinary explosive power. There has already been a small anticipation of this in a small colonial country like Ceylon, but this combination will manifest its full potentialities only in the land of the American titan.

At such a juncture in world history, the penalties of backwardness from which the American socialist movement now suffers will be certain to show their other, more hopeful side. The American workers will be receptive to the boldest revolutionary prospects and will be prepared to assimilate them readily and to act upon them.

New species, it was noted earlier, have experienced 'explosive expansion' when they have broken into virgin territories under favourable conditions. An analogous acceleration in development can be expected when the American workers enter the field of independent class political action and take possession of the ideas of scientific socialism and the methods of Marxism. In these days of grave social crisis this amalgamation of a previously politically backward but potentially powerful working class with the science of society and of political action, *i.e.* with Marxism, can effect the greatest leap forward any society has yet achieved—greater than any leap forward in American history—and, by this single act, raise the whole of humanity by a head.

We have, for various reasons, illustrated this law of uneven and combined development by dealing in some

detail with the problems of socialist advance in Russia and the USA. There is clearly now a need to apply the law in investigating the many special problems of the Labour and socialist movement in Britain. We hope that such an investigation will soon be carried out and made available to British socialists.

Conclusion

In this article we have tried to elaborate and illustrate a universal law of historical development—the law of uneven and combined development. By indicating a method of analyzing the concrete facts of the political scene this law helps scientific socialists to forecast, to anticipate, the main lines of social and political development. This anticipation of the trends of development in political life enables us to make the necessary preparations for future battles and so to ensure their favourable outcome. Consequently this law is no mere descriptive law; it is not a simple extrapolation of past tendencies of academic interest only to scholars and to passive students of history. Above all, it is a scientific law which represents an instrument for the use of men and women devoted to political action—a tool for the use of political organizers and working-class militants.

As an integral part of Marxist theory it serves to illuminate the road ahead, so helping to bring the inescapable clash of social forces to rapid and fruitful conclusions. The socialist theory embodied in this law of uneven and combined development should be used as a guide to the work of all scientific socialists—and in so using it socialists will find that its truth is verified, a hundred times each day, by living practice.

SHORT STORY

Private Opinion

by D. GRANIN

THE young engineer's arrogant stubbornness irritated Minayev and yet at the same time attracted him. Olkhovsky would not agree to any of his requests. Every now and then he would grasp the lid of the inkstand on Minayev's desk and shift it about over the glass top of the desk with his thin, nervous fingers. The unpleasant, penetrating squeak this made merged with the unpleasant meaning of Olkhovsky's words, and the impression left by his article, which was just as unpleasantly sharp. To tell the truth it was the undeniable correctness of the article that had proved most irritating. Olkhovsky had shown convincingly that the new motors designed by Academician Stroyev were uneconomic. Minayev could not allow an article like that to appear. It was useless to try and explain to this youngster that criticism of Academician Stroyev was bound to give rise to many complications both in the work of the Institute and for Minayev himself; he had not yet been confirmed in his appointment as director.

'I advise you, as a friend, to cut out everything that relates to Stroyev,' he said gently. 'And the critical part of the article should be played down a bit, to make it easier to publish.' Olkhovsky started up, his pale face pink and his small hands clenched into fists.

'But what will my article be about if that's done? Nothing!' he exclaimed in a high-pitched voice. 'Don't you understand, this will mean the wasting of thousands of tons of oil? How can you suggest...?' His level brows shot up in bewilder-

ment. 'No. No cuts at all. Not at any price. It would be contrary to principle.'

'Good lad!' Minayev thought. There was something amazingly familiar about Olkhovsky's reaction... And all of a sudden Minayev found himself recalling a long forgotten episode when he, too, had clenched his fists and shouted in a ringing, strained voice... There had been a time when his hair was as tousled, and on the lapel of his shabby jacket, too, there used to be a Komsomol badge. The remembrance moved him but found no expression at all in his extinguished eyes wearily half closed by heavy eyelids. The lips of his large energetic face firmly preserved in their corners that non-committal expression which anybody might interpret as he wished.

'You like to make a clatter with that word "principle",' Minayev said, coldly. 'You just try to put it into practice. Earn the right and the means to put it into practice! Yes, Comrade Olkhovsky,' he repeated with malicious satisfaction, 'put it into practice, don't just proclaim it. And to do that means sacrificing a thing or two.' Olkhovsky bent over the table. His black eyes peered at Minayev contemptuously from under his mop of hair. 'What about you, Vladimir Pakhomovich, have you earned the right to stick to principle?'

The childish impudence of the question angered Minayev. He put on his smile, that benign, amiable smile which always come in so useful at difficult moments, and said condescendingly: 'Careful, you'll upset the ink.' Olkhovsky

blushed and moved back a little. 'You see,' Minayev went on, 'it's important to check yourself in time.'

A VENOMOUS REPLY

The conversation left a painful impression on Minayev. Ah well, he thought, the most important thing now was the order confirming his appointment. After that had come through, he could help Olkhovsky. Even Stroyev wouldn't be so fearsome then. He could hold his own with anybody then. It's not enough to have an opinion, one must be in a suitable position as well. . . . Thoughts like these smoothed everything over pleasantly; they appeared, obligingly, each time that a disagreeable turn had to be made.

It was not long before a letter arrived, inquiring about Olkhovsky's article. This was signed by one of the instructors of the City Committee of the Party, Loktev. Enclosed was a letter from Olkhovsky to Loktev. When he read the letters Minayev became angry. ' . . . Minayev's cowardly policy strengthens Stroyev's Arakcheyevism! . . . Isn't it high time for a man holding a post like this to allow himself the "luxury" of maintaining his own opinion? . . . The whippersnapper! The impudent brat! The smart-Alec! Minayev wrote the answer himself. It was laconic, polite and at the same time deadly venomous. He exploited to the full Loktev's suspiciousness, which was very well known to him. Olkhovsky emerged as a slanderer and troublemaker who robbed other people of their time with all these importunities of his; and his work as likewise absurd and slanderous in character. In places the letter merely asserted things, but Minayev knew that the more assertions there were, the more convincing the letter would seem. In signing the letter he scratched the paper awkwardly with his pen, and the sound of it made him wince. . . . After all he just couldn't risk losing everything on account of this boy's stubbornness, at the very moment when his dreams were about to come true. It was Olkhovsky himself who had obliged him to write such a letter. And after all it was all the same, wasn't it? The time would come when everything could be put right. He added Olkhovsky's personal file to the stack of papers in his tray.

* * *

Minayev had a profound respect for Petrishchev, the Deputy Minister, and that perhaps was why he did not feel particularly glad that Petrishchev was visiting the Institute. In the Deputy Minister's presence, Minayev always experienced a strange, timid feeling of guilt. True, this burdensome feeling never prevented Minayev from smiling and making jokes, and at times he was quite surprised at the way his facial muscles, his voice, and his hands behaved as was required without any effort on his part.

Minayev showed Petrishchev over the laboratories, acquainted him with the subjects they were working on and listened to the observations made by the Deputy Minister. Although these observations did not differ from those which Minayev himself had made to his subordinates, he nevertheless asked an assistant to take a note of everything that was said; he thought such attentiveness would gratify Petrishchev.

In one of the laboratories, while he was showing the Deputy Minister a vibrator, Minayev saw Olkhovsky pushing his way towards them. The young man was paler even than usual. His pointed chin was trembling. His dark eyes, wide-open, gazed at the Deputy Minister with hope and fear. Every moment that he had to wait sapped Olkhovsky's resolution; seeing this, Minayev switched on the apparatus. A wailing noise shot up like a fountain towards the ceiling, to fall and fill the room with a dense drone. Minayev threw a menacing glance at Olkhovsky in an attempt to stop him by showing that he had chosen a most unsuitable moment to bother the Deputy Minister with his complaint. After all, there was only a week to wait. Olkhovsky's egoism angered him, but when at last the young man began to speak, Minayev calmed down.

ROARS OF LAUGHTER

Instead of setting forth the essential points of his case right at the start, Olkhovsky began by talking about the roots of conservatism, the system of responsibilities, and so on, getting confused among the long phrases he had prepared in advance. Nobody could make out what he was after. Minayev

¹Rigid and brutal dictatorship, named after Arakcheyev, minister to Tsar Alexander I.—Trans.

caught the twinkle of sympathetic attention in the Deputy Minister's eyes and suddenly felt ashamed of Olkhovsky. 'Why is he dragging it out like this? Silly little snotty-nosed theoretician,' Minayev thought angrily. 'What a muddlehead he is! Any moment now Petrishchev will interrupt him.'

'Excuse me,' said Petrishchev, 'but what is it, exactly, that you want?' Olkhovsky fell into embarrassed silence, his dry lips continuing to work, but soundlessly. Minayev lowered his eyes. God, what a clumsy brat! Olkhovsky plunged his hand into his pocket, pulled out with a jerk a manuscript that was frayed at the folds, and thrust it at Petrishchev. The Deputy Minister opened out the folded manuscript; within lay a crumpled one-rouble note, amid shreds of tobacco. Somebody burst out laughing, and the Deputy Minister, unable to restrain himself, began to laugh too, as he held out the one-rouble note to Olkhovsky. Then at once everybody standing around roared with laughter. There was nothing offensive in this laughter; in such a situation one should laugh with the rest and make a joke of it, but instead Olkhovsky blushed with agonizing embarrassment. An absurd, shy smile crossed his face and he seemed about to burst into tears on the spot.

'Please examine it yourself,' Olkhovsky began gabbling, in that state of desperation in which it seems not to matter what one does; only a moment was left and everything had to be said.

'Or else you'll send it. . . . Vladimir Pakhomovich here. . . . 'Of course we'll examine it,' the Deputy Minister replied, in a markedly calm and unhurried manner. When they were back in Minayev's office, Petrishchev asked what the manuscript was that the young engineer had given him. It would have been stupid to reveal his fears regarding Stroyev, so Minayev began like this: 'The manuscript. . . . ' Then came a pause. 'Well, if you don't mind, the head of the department where Olkhovsky works can tell you about it better than I.'

'I can do no other,' he thought, justifying himself, as he imagined in advance all that was going to happen. Olkhovsky's departmental chief mentioned the interesting methods of computation which the young man had worked out, but at once made a reservation about him—what was needed was a careful follow-up, without all intrigues, rows, complaints, letters and what not. . . . He was trying to avoid giving offence to Minayev while at the same time maintaining an objective attitude towards Olkhovsky. 'So it must have been a surprise to everyone that he made such a nuisance of himself today?' said Petrishchev, in astonishment. 'I was at college with him,' said Minayev's assistant. 'He's always been like that. . . . ' The assistant turned his forefinger round and round pointing to his temple. Minayev appreciated that his assistant was saying this because he thought Minayev wanted him to, but all the same it was going too far.

A HARMFUL ECCENTRIC

'There are such people amongst us, certainly,' said the Deputy Minister. 'They scribble protests, demand investigating commissions, adopt battering-ram tactics. Later on it turns out to be a lot of demented raving. But there are people whom people call demented. . . . ' He frowned, evidently remembering something from his own career. 'However that may be, the problem itself is worth attending to,' said Minayev hastily, in that rather bluff, independent way that Petrishchev liked. Petrishchev agreed and handed over the manuscript for him to deal with. Although this confidence shown in him by the Deputy Minister was pleasant to Minayev it also gave him a vague sense of guilt. Minayev reassured himself; he had no moral duty towards Petrishchev, for the latter had no alternative but to agree with him. He could not but show confidence in the man whom he was going to confirm as Director. There's no help for it, you impose your will on such circumstances, but they also impose themselves on you, when you encounter them.

Now that the question had been settled, he at once began to feel sorry for Olkhovsky. At bottom, Petrishchev had been convinced that Olkhovsky was a troublemaker, and a harmful eccentric. That was bad. Ruining a fellow just because he had shown himself so awkward at presenting his case. One can't do such things.

What pleasure it would have given him to fling aside all his calculations and speculations and say what he thought. But his life remained shut; seated in his office chair he listened to what the Deputy Minister was saying, his gloomy face expressing imperturbable attention to the matter in hand.

When he became Director, Minayev forgot about Olkhov-

sky amid his mass of new responsibilities, and it took an inquiry from the Central Administration of the industry to remind him of that affair. As before, a letter from Olkhovsky was enclosed with the inquiry. Bitterly, clumsily, the young man was continuing his hopeless fight. In his artless way, Olkhovsky despised such things as typewriters and so these letters of his, written in a round childish hand on pages torn from a school exercise book made a poor first impression on their readers.

The first few paragraphs were written with care, but after that the handwriting became more and more slanting and the lines hastened to turn down at the ends. Minayev was confident that nobody but himself had read this letter right through.

Olkhovsky was attacking, with naïve fury, the system under which scientific works were published. 'A pernicious "one-sided responsibility" reigns here,' he had written. 'What is the use of publishing a sharp or controversial article on a scientific subject—you can get into trouble for it, be made to answer for it, whereas if you decide not to publish the article, nobody will bother you...'

'Correctly observed,' thought Minayev. It looked as though the youngster was trying to get to the root of the matter. Olkhovsky was no longer concerned so much about the fate of his own work as about the nature of the tough, impenetrable obstacle against which he had bumped for the first time in his life. Anger had given maturity and depth to his ideas. With a feeling of repentance, Minayev discerned a note of embitterment and even at times of desperation in what Olkhovsky had written. He did not reply at once to the Central Administration; he would try at leisure to think of some way of helping Olkhovsky. The sense of tact which he had developed over the years held him back from making a premature onslaught on Stroyev. He must consolidate his position... these arguments of his amazed Minayev—he had become Director at last, but it turned out that nothing had changed....

PLANTING THE KNIFE

At a Party meeting Olkhovsky launched a criticism against Loktev, the instructor from the town Party Committee, for utter failure to understand the nature of scientific work, for 'corpse-like indifference to living thought...' Olkhovsky's foolhardiness alarmed Minayev. Everything that the young man was saying was true, but Olkhovsky did not take into account that just because Loktev was such a mediocrity he never left unpunished a single attack upon himself. Sooner or later he found a suitable moment to plant a knife—whispering, spreading rumours, disdaining no means that offered to get his revenge.

As he listened to Olkhovsky fearlessly attacking an adversary so obviously stronger than himself, Minayev felt pity and sympathy for him. He even gave a groan of vexation. What a pity it was—but there was nothing to be done about it. Olkhovsky had gone too far in his struggle, and to back him up would mean coming into conflict with a lot of influential people. In the depths of his heart Minayev felt acutely envious of Olkhovsky's reckless freedom of behaviour—it was nothing to him what he lost; prudence probably seemed to him the same thing as faintheartedness and patience the same as weakness.

On the day after the meeting Minayev placed the inquiry and Olkhovsky's letter in a folder and marked it: 'To my assistant, for reply.' That evening his assistant, a smooth-haired young man, with a pale yellow face, wearing spectacles with frames of the same pale yellow colour, came into Minayev's office, treading noiselessly on thick rubber soles, and gave him for signature a letter typed on paper bearing the red seal of the Institute. The vaguely benevolent style of the reply could give no offence to anyone, and preserved the right to delay a decision indefinitely.

Minayev gazed with curiosity from under his weary half-closed lids into his assistant's impassive face.

'What do you think of Olkhovsky? He's a capable lad, isn't he?'

'Yes,' answered the assistant, inclining his smooth head, 'he is capable.'

'And what would you have written, my polite friend, if you were sitting in my chair?' Minayev wanted to ask. But he knew how to get inside people's minds and so what he actually said was, retaining his interrogative tone:

'It's a simple matter for you now, but if you were in Academician Stroyev's place...'

For the first time Minayev saw his assistant come to life and in a youthfully brisk way pass his hand through his hair, spoiling his wonderful parting.

'Vladimir Pakhomovich, I just typed without thinking... You know, such a saving of fuel—'

'Why then do you think up answers like this to my questions?' Minayev asked him sharply. 'Answers that don't coincide with your real opinions? Why do you act the Molchalin?'

'I WRITE AS YOU WISH'

The assistant slowly and firmly smoothed down his ruffled hair.

'I write as you wish me to write, so that one day I may be able to write as I think best,' he said, staring hard into Minayev's eyes.

'Oh indeed! And you hope that will happen one day?' said Minayev, with a thoughtful grin. Lifting a blue pencil from the glass pencil holder he affixed a bold signature to the letter his assistant had drafted.

Olkhovsky never again appealed to Minayev. Several times their paths crossed in the corridors of the Institute; Olkhovsky passed him by, his head sullenly lowered and his long arms dangling as though they belonged to somebody else. Minayev longed to stop him and have a heart-to-heart talk, give him advice, tell him to have patience; he, Minayev, would soon be visiting the Ministry, and would find an opportunity to have a talk with somebody there... But he sensed that Olkhovsky would not believe him, and that was disagreeable; Minayev wanted to show him that he was not guilty, that it was not to any great extent his responsibility.

The day before his visit to the Ministry, Minayev was summoned to the Town Party Committee. He knew that Loktev was trying to get Olkhovsky dismissed. But, after all, who was Loktev? A mere instructor for the Town Party Committee... 'What right has he to interfere in my affairs? If it had been necessary to get rid of Olkhovsky, I myself would have done it. By what rule am I obliged to indulge the petty, wounded self-love of this functionary? No; and that's that. Loktev's not my boss, and it's not for him to give me orders. It would be different if it were the Secretary of the Town Party Committee—but this instructor fellow... I'm not a child any longer, Comrade Loktev, nor is my position...' That's what he would say: 'nor is my position...' That would make things quite clear. He mentally repeated that last phrase, very significantly, with a faint smile. Approaching the building of the Town Party Committee he mechanically passed his hand over his smoothly-shaven chin, and straightened his tie, and as he did so he thought that this habitual gesture of his was not becoming to him. Enough, the time had come when he could allow himself some independence; he was as good as any of the other directors. On this occasion especially he could and must unmask Loktev. Ascending the wide staircase of the Party headquarters, walking down the long spacious corridor, Minayev held his head high, and his heavy features expressed, instead of his usual secretiveness, a harsh resolution.

* * *

He left the Party headquarters within the hour. It had begun to rain. Little drops pattered on the gleaming asphalt. Minayev stood for a long time beside his car. Innumerable small wet patches covered the grey surface of the road. The drops fell on Minayev's summer overcoat; he could feel their faint drumming on his shoulders.

'Please get in, Vladimir Pakhomovich,' said his driver. Minayev raised his head and stared at him with a surprised air.

'You go on,' he said, and slammed the car door.

The Zim drove off, leaving the space it had occupied neatly outlined on the asphalt. Minayev watched the raindrops spotting the light-coloured dry rectangle.

'You go on,' he said again, listening to his own voice.

He began walking straight ahead. Wherever it might lead, it was ahead. He could go to the Square, or he could turn down to the Embankment. The only thing he could not do was to turn back to the Party headquarters. Whatever he might

¹Hypocritical time-server in Griboyedov's play, 'The Misfortune of Being Clever'.—Trans.

tell himself, however he tried to persuade himself . . . the occasions in his life when he had had to take a look at himself had been rare. No, that was not true. He had thought about himself enough, he had tried to foresee every one of his actions, to think before he spoke; but he had never before thought why he acted in a particular way and not otherwise.

DANGEROUS THOUGHTS

A painful sort of psychologizing had set in . . . the dexterity acquired by long training, with which even now he turned away from dangerous thoughts, amused him. 'But what was it that happened at the Party headquarters?' he asked himself, suddenly and point-blank. Loktev had proposed with brutal frankness that Olkhovsky be transferred to the experimental station at Nikolayev. As he listened to Loktev, Minayev had asked himself by what right this dreary smatterer, this dull official, with the dead, somewhat stale-looking face, who had never created anything and was incapable of doing so, was sitting and deciding the fate of men like Olkhovsky. And Loktev didn't even ask, for form's sake, about Stroyev's motors, which constituted the heart of the matter under consideration—he didn't care a damn about that! He had been firmly convinced that Minayev would do as he, Loktev, wished. From where did he get that vile certainty of his?

The river was still thick with the last of the ice. In places it was entirely white, as though frozen over. The icefloes drifted against the granite piers of the bridge, and gently-cracking angular fragments circled round and disappeared under the spans. Leaning over the parapet of the bridge, Minayev looked down. It was as though the icefloes were stationary and the bridge was moving. Cold air came off the dark water, long, sparkling crystals of ice tinkled as they broke against the granite, and, shimmering, disappeared beneath the water. Taking a grip on himself, Minayev turned away from the parapet. His chest hurt, and suddenly he felt lost. He removed his hat and wiped the sweat from his brow with his sleeves. The cold raindrops seemed to scorch his hot skin.

He felt old and weary of life. Suddenly he saw himself as though from outside—a bald, flabby man with a puffy face, walking across a bridge clutching his hat in his hand. God, how quickly he had aged. When had it happened. He, Volodya Minayev, had sung in the school choir, had been secretary of the Party cell in his faculty. . . . Suddenly he felt frightened by the thought; was he really an old man already?

With terrifying distinctness there arose before him Volodya Minayev, a bright-eyed lad with a thin neck like a chicken's, just as he had been when he arrived at Selkhoz-mash. 'Do you remember that affair with the suspension engine? Perhaps we could begin with that?' He remembered it. The workshop manager had said to him: 'It's early days yet for you to be sticking your neck out, Minayev. Where do you think you'll get with your little efforts against the Chief Designer? He'll block your whole future. What are you? A foreman. People like you have to swallow whatever comes, without chewing it over.' He remembered the humiliated helplessness he had felt when the chief designer, sipping his tea, after listening to his passionate speech, had replied, intentionally getting his name wrong: 'Now listen, Linayev, if you push yourself forward once more with this nonsense, I'll kick you out of the factory. Be off with you.'

DEBTS TO THE FUTURE

Together with some friends he had gone on trying to resist, rushing about and arguing with people. It had all been in vain. One could waste three, five, ten years in hopeless struggle like that without getting anywhere. There had been three of them. First one was dismissed from the factory, then another. It was Minayev's turn next. Then he had pretended to submit. He consoled himself by thinking that he was only playing for time. It was necessary to take a roundabout way, first of all achieving independence and authority—then he would give these bureaucrats what for. Gritting his teeth, he pressed on towards his goal. He was appointed assistant manager of the workshop. He taught himself to be patient and hold his tongue, for the sake of the day when he would be able to do what ought to be done. He made himself swear to

¹A great agricultural machinery works built under the first five-year plan.—Trans.

endure everything. He became a yes-man to the stupidest ignoramuses. He voted 'for' when his conscience told him to vote 'against'. He spoke words which he did not believe. He praised what he should have cursed. When things grew unbearable, he held his tongue. Silence is the most comfortable form of lying. It knows how to live on good terms with conscience, it leaves one the covert right to hold one's private opinion, and perhaps one day to express it. But not now. Not while workshop manager and not while head of the technical section, and not while chief engineer of the factory either. Nor in one's degree thesis. Too soon. Each time it had been too soon! And the list of his debts to the future had grown ever longer. Life had thrown up new ideas and had come up against new obstacles. How many men like Olkhovsky had he left behind him. . . .

Tireless as an ant, he had raised up the edifice of his own position, striving to make it ever stronger. Why? What had he achieved? The higher he climbed, the less he was himself. The harder it was for him to take risks. What prevented him? Why could others do it? . . . Why could Petrishchev, who had been unjustly punished, demoted, dismissed, yet had always broken through, pushed on and triumphed. No, nothing prevented him, Minayev, it was just easier for him to behave like that. He admitted that it was easier.

And when Loktev, brandishing a copy of Minayev's reply to the inquiry from the Party Committee, reproached him with duplicity—'You write one thing and say another; what is it you really want to tell the Secretary?'—he had realized that there was no reason why he should be afraid of Loktev. He had the right to be frank and should go for him this time, as it would be easy to do.

Everything Loktev had proposed was base, base through and through, but what startled Minayev was something different—Loktev at least said what he meant. Loktev and Olkhovsky. All the others involved in this business thought one thing and said another. All of them, beginning with Minayev himself, and ending with his assistant. Each one of them played the hypocrite and lied in his own way, and probably that was why Loktev did not need to lie.

MUTUAL SUPPORT

'What a scoundrel he is!' Minayev had thought with hatred as he gazed into Loktev's prominent eyes. 'He ought to be thrown out of the Party Committee on his neck! And not merely out of the Committee but out of the Party. A spiteful nonentity, that's what he is. Why, if they threw him out he wouldn't get a job even as a shop manager.' The more strongly he hated and despised Loktev, the more calmly he dissuaded him, and when Loktev began to insist and threaten, he asked him to postpone dealing with the question for a few days. Soberly estimating the total amount of unpleasantness that Loktev was able to cause him, he was hoping to enlist support in Moscow.

'All right, but don't drag the thing out,' said Loktev, when parting from him. 'You yourself have put it on record that Olkhovsky is a troublemaker. The Institute needs a clean-up, the atmosphere needs ventilating.'

'What a rotter he is,' thought Minayev, as he firmly shook Loktev's hand.

In Moscow, at the Ministry, the Institute was blamed for non-fulfilment of its plan, and although in the majority of instances this was the fault of the Ministry itself there was no point in making that objection, since Minayev was regarded as a new man, and all such reproaches would be put down not to him but to the previous leadership of the Institute. Thanks to following these tactics, Minayev managed to get in an application for equipment which was in short supply. Academician Stroyev supported the Institute in this ticklish matter; after which Minayev found it inconvenient to bring up the Olkhovsky affair. The preoccupations of his trip to Moscow pushed that affair to the back of his mind; here in Moscow it seemed somehow petty, and it returned to the surface of his memory only in the train, when Minayev found himself in his compartment of a half-empty sleeping car. It was probably the rain that was responsible. It began imperceptibly and soon covered the window with slanting glittering streaks. Tiny drops made their way in zigzags down the pane, absorbing the drizzle that fell, merging with other drops and gliding jerkily, faster and faster, to the bottom. Remembering the promise he had given to Loktev, Minayev sighed; probably he would storm and swear, but there was no help

for it, he'd have to transfer Olkhovsky to Nikolayev. Just temporarily, of course, until tempers cooled down.

THE THREE MINAYEVS

Against the background of the night's dense darkness, the double window mirrored a heavy figure in striped pyjamas, with a puffy face with a cigarette in the corner of a firmly-shut mouth; and another, less distinct, figure made up of sparkling drops of rain. The cigarette smoke, drifting against the cold glass, formed clinging blue tendrils. Through them, out of the black depths of the window, from somewhere outside the carriage, that young man gazed at Minayev wearing the sodden cap and shabby jacket of his student days. Streams of water ran down his pale cheeks, down his chicken-thin neck. 'There, you see, you've put it off again; you're just a trifter, that's all. It makes me sick to look at you.' 'One has to take real circumstances into account; it's easy to indulge in fantasies when you don't know what life is like, but I've studied it.' 'You promised that you would remain yourself. All right, you said, wait till I'm made director, I'll be strong then, but now...' 'What a naïve lad you are! As though a director were God. Now, if I worked at the Ministry I wouldn't be dependent on Loktev. I'd be able...' 'Just think, you could ignore Loktev's threats and go to the secretary of the City Party Committee, or even to the Central Committee.' 'I have behaved honourably, and am doing all I can. Everything will be all right with Olkhovsky, too; I'll look after that.' 'No, you've betrayed me, your youth. How can I have any confidence in you?' 'Fine-sounding, those words; I've no time for that sort of thing. If I am yielding now, it's only so as to be able to help not just Olkhovsky alone. I'm responsible for a great Institute, and there I can help dozens of fellows like Olkhovsky...'

And there was yet a third Minayev who listened to the old one reassuring the young one, confidently demonstrating that all that had happened was inevitable, promising that he would help Olkhovsky as soon as the necessary circumstances existed; and this one knew that it would never be so. He would always deceive himself, carrying on this endless game, unable to find the strength to tear himself out of the prison-house of his own duplicity. He would always be able to justify himself. He would always be trying to be an honest man tomorrow...

The blue threads of smoke clouded over the wet face outside the window, and it floated away into the darkness of the night, together with the past. Where had his past life gone? The only thing that was left was his feeling of expectation; it seemed that all his years had been filled with unceasing expectation.

Next morning Minayev's assistant met him at the station. Dressing slowly, Minayev listened to the news from the Institute.

'Oh, by the way,' he asked, 'did Loktev phone, from the Town Party Committee?'

'He phoned several times.'

'I see,' said Minayev.

They moved slowly through the crowd along the platform, past the carriage in which Minayev had arrived. He looked at the window of his compartment. The dusty glass reflected nothing, and through it, in the half-darkness, could be seen a rumpled bed and a dirty ashtray, full of cigarette stubs.

(Translated by Leonard Hussey from *Novy Mir* (Moscow), No. 8 (August) of 1956. A novel by Daniel Granin, entitled 'Those Who Seek,' has been published in this country by the Russia Today Book Club.)

A Note on *Private Opinion*

This story has been subjected to the same sort of attack as has Dudintsev's 'Not By Bread Alone'. The journal *Party Life* published a letter from a certain Colonel Starodubtsev, deploring the appearance of 'A Story Which Causes Bewilderment'. This provoked letters from a number of other readers, supporting Granin and opposing any attempt to discourage him. Among the readers who wrote in this way was Vera Ketlinskaya, whose 'Days of Our Life' came out not long ago in an English translation published by Lawrence & Wishart. She upheld 'Private Opinion' as 'a story that touches on an important subject and denounces an utterly disgraceful and still widespread phenomenon.'

Party Life, in its editorial rejoinder, declared that the trouble was that Minayev was shown 'not as an anomaly but as a common phenomenon of our reality and as something inherent in it'—the implication being that Minayev's fault was not just personal. If he became a time-server and double-dealer, 'the fault lies with our reality'. Even Petrishchev, the leader-writer complains, 'is shown as a bureaucrat and a heartless person, although this is done very subtly'.

The article concludes on a note of fatherly warning to all concerned: 'In publishing Colonel Starodubtsev's letter the editors of *Party Life* meant to help the writer of the story and the editors of *Novy Mir* to realise the mistake they made. If they succeed in doing this, it will be useful to both the writer and the magazine.'

Book Reviews

It Still Goes on . . .

My Recollections of Lenin by Klara Zetkin (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. London: Central Books, 2s. 6d.)

Wings, A Play in Four Acts, by Alexander Korneichuk (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. London: Central Books, 1s.)

AT THE Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party the historian Pankratova spoke out boldly against the mutilation and alteration of books about Party history, not excluding the works of Lenin himself, which had taken place under Stalin. Unfortunately, the new English version of Klara Zetkin's famous collection of interviews with Lenin, which recently arrived in this country from the USSR, shows that the practices condemned by Pankratova still go on.

Comparison of the new version with the one well-known

in this country and America, where it was published in 1929 and 1934, reveals a number of cuts. Thus the passage in which Lenin acknowledges that Radek's advice against the march on Warsaw had proved correct has been omitted. Lenin's references to Thalheimer as 'a good and well-informed theoretician' and to Bela Kun as 'an excellent revolutionary' are no longer to be found. Lenin is not now permitted to ask Zetkin, in the course of his chiding of her for some ill-considered political action: 'Why didn't you write to Zinoviev?' During the famous conversation on sex-problems, Lenin followed up one of his remarks by advising Zetkin to 'speak to comrade Lilina about it. She has had much experience in her work in educational institutions of various kinds, and you know she is a thorough communist and entirely unprejudiced.' The Foreign Languages Publishing House editor does not allow Lenin to give such advice in his edition, presumably because Lilina was Zinoviev's wife. . . .

In two places the text has not been merely cut but 'improved'. Where Zetkin wrote of the battle of Perekop being won by the Red troops 'under Comrade Pyatakov's brilliant

and bold leadership', it now turns out that what she really meant to write was: 'led by the gallant commander Frunze'. And where Zetkin imagined the Russian peasants during the Civil War, threatened by the return of the landlords with the White Armies, saying: 'Little Father Lenin will save us, and Trotsky with his Red Army', she now appears as putting these less embarrassing words into their innocent mouths: 'Ilyich and the Bolsheviks together with the Red Army men will come to our rescue'.

These changes may be explained by concern to remove all mention, or at least all favourable mention, of those whom Stalin transformed into 'unpersons' during his years of dictatorship. A more subtle explanation must be sought, however, for the excision of this passage from one of Lenin's soliloquies: 'Do you think that the Bolshevik Party, which you so admire, was ready and finished at one blow? Even friends have sometimes done unwise things'.

A particularly cynical flavour is imparted to this arbitrary handling of a famous Marxist book by the retention of the foreword written by Krupskaya, with its ending: 'It is important, essential for us to know what Klara Zetkin, who loved Lenin so dearly, had to say about him'.

* * *

Krupskaya died in 1939, and Zetkin in 1933, but Korneichuk is still alive, and so presumably consented to the changes made in the text of his play 'Wings' as it is now at last presented to English readers. Though the date '1954' stands at the end of the play it differs in a number of places from the work which caused such a sensation when it first appeared in 'Novy Mir' for November 1954, and when performed on the stage shortly afterwards.

Not only have the historic lines, referring to the security police: 'How much evil and pain, how many tears, were brought upon people by the mistrust that that gang sowed amongst us under the guise of vigilance! They blinded our eyes and we believed them—how we believed them!' now become: 'How much evil, pain, and how many tears has lack of faith brought upon people!' We also look in vain for the exchange between the new party secretary and the old bully from whom he is taking over, in which the former snaps: 'There are no "generals" in the party', as well as the passage where the bully, taking up a 'you-can't-do-this-to-me' line, adds: 'Me, a member of the Central Committee!'

In one place a curious insertion has been made, the point of it being apparently to enable someone to say that 'there will be no equalization under complete communism'; in another such insertion, a character points out that human nature rather than the system is at the root of the abuses being exposed—it wasn't the administration that turned you into officials and bureaucrats. You spoiled yourselves...

LEONARD HUSSEY

The Birth of Marxism

The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Critique, by K. Marx and F. Engels (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 7s. 6d.)

AT LONG LAST we have a passable translation of the whole of this seminal work of scientific socialism. **The Holy Family** was the first fruit of the collaboration begun between the 26-year-old Marx and the 24-year-old Engels at their second meeting, in August 1844—though Engels' contribution is in fact much smaller than his friend's. In its pages we can study Marxism in the very process of being born, as Marx casts off the Hegelian and Feuerbachian trappings and sets foot once and for all on the path of communism.

It is this which gives **The Holy Family**, together with the **Theses on Feuerbach** written a few months later, their peculiar fascination. Marx is here settling accounts with the school of 'Young Hegelians' (their leading lights were three brothers, Bruno, Edgar and Egbert Bauer: hence the book's title) who grossly caricatured Hegel by holding that his 'Absolute Idea' had found expression in their own abstract 'criticism' of all 'mass movements'—from Christianity to the French Revolution and English industry. But Marx is also performing another and much more important task. He is

settling accounts with his own teachers and forerunners. In doing so he is evolving a philosophical method which is more truly dialectical than Hegel's, since it seeks both its data and its test, not in men's minds, but in the unity and conflict of social opposites: 'proletariat and wealth'—the negative and positive, 'self-dissolving' and 'self-satisfied', destructive and conservative forms of the world of private property. (p. 51) And he is evolving a humanism which is an advance even on that of Feuerbach, since it steps forward from the abstract theoretical recognition that 'man' is shaped by his circumstances to the demonstration that circumstances must be changed, and men made human, by the practical revolutionary struggle of men themselves—of the proletariat, in fact. In **The Holy Family** is to be found, along with the shadowy intimations of the concepts of relations of production and of surplus value which were to be elaborated during the subsequent forty years, the first germ of the Marxist theory of proletarian revolution, of the historical task of the proletariat to abolish private property, abolish poverty, abolish itself as a class, and thereby abolish 'all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation.' (p. 52)

Now Marx is here creating Marxism, as an aid to both understanding and changing the world, by boldly bridging the gap between theory and practice which had misled or limited all previous thinkers. He is bringing philosophy to the 'dehumanized' proletariat to guide its struggle for human conditions of life. He is bringing the revolutionary proletariat into the very heart of philosophy. This unity of theory and practice, which is the kernel of Marxism, and which marks a clear-cut break with the old philosophy, finds expression here in two main ways. First, as we have seen, dialectics is brought to earth. The dialectics in the human head are a reflection of the dialectical processes taking place in the material world, including human society, where the proletariat is engaged in a practical struggle in which it can be 'victorious only by abolishing itself and its opposite.' (p. 52) Secondly, materialism is transformed from an abstract theory about the relationships of being and consciousness into an approach to the pressing questions of social life, an approach which flows from the proletariat's conditions of existence. The class which proves each day in its labour, and in its being exploited, the objective reality of nature, of class relationships, of the whole material world, is the living proof of materialism. The proletariat 'are most painfully aware of the difference between being and thinking, between consciousness and life. They know that property, capital, money, wage-labour and the like are no ideal figments of the brain, but very practical, very objective sources of their self-estrangement and that they must be abolished in a practical, objective way for man to become man not only in thinking, in consciousness, but in... being, in life.' (p. 73)

A class which can attain human dignity only by abolishing itself as a class; which is continuously changing the objective world through labour; which is exploited every moment it functions as a working class: this class has nothing to fear from a revolutionary, dialectical, materialist philosophy. A philosophy which shows how everything in life contains the seeds of its own destruction, and how men's ideas are determined by their real social relations: this philosophy has no purpose or meaning except as the theoretical weapon of the revolutionary proletariat. In 1845, when **The Holy Family** was published, such an audacious challenge to the conventions of society and of controversy alike seemed bizarre. But the whole development of the proletarian movement and of philosophy since then has confirmed the truth of Marx's central ideas.

* * *

It is a commonplace of present-day 'sociological' criticism that between the young and the old Marx there was a gap; that the writer on human 'self-alienation' of the early forties had moral preoccupations, quite different from those of the author of **Capital**. On the other hand, many of those who are now turning in revulsion from Stalinist crimes and Stalinist theoretical decay would have us believe that this degeneration was inevitable, since Marxism implies no moral code, has nothing to say about individual freedom and has nothing in common with humanism. To study **The Holy Family** and then to return to its authors' later works, is to see how profoundly erroneous are both these claims.

The first was deliberately fostered by Stalinist theory, which pretended that the whole concept of 'self-alienation'

was a kind of Hegelian hangover which had nothing to do with the main body of Marx's work, which Marx soon grew out of, and which it was better not to talk about too much. The fact that we have had to wait so long for the present translation—the equally important **Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts** of 1844 are still in the limbo of the **Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe** — shows how carefully the Kremlin sought to lop off one vital part of Marxism in order to conceal its own failure to end the dehumanization of men and to give man 'the positive power to assert his true individuality.' (p. 176)

The second claim is the result of Stalinist practice, which has long abandoned every shred of respect for human beings and human values. That many now blame Marxist theory for the immorality of those who have in fact turned their backs on Marxism, perverted it, negated it and buried it under a junk-heap of petrified quotations and formulas, is itself one of the crimes for which Stalinism stands arraigned before the working-class movement. **The Holy Family** is instinct with fervent, exuberant, optimistic humanism. 'Materialism... now coincides with humanism.' (p. 169) 'Each man must be given social scope for the vital manifestation of his being.' (p. 176) 'Man has lost himself in the proletariat, yet... is driven directly to revolt against that inhumanity.' (p. 52) To his dying day Marx never lost that confidence in human progress. If he never developed the theory of human alienation in class society, that is because he was occupied with one detailed, gigantic application of historical materialism to a specific period of human history, as well as with the practical leadership of the socialist movement.

Despite its name the theory is not hard to grasp. Since the workers do not own the means of production they work for somebody else, and their work is not a real expression of their faculties. A man's labour belongs to somebody else, and instead of leading to the all-round development of the individual, it splits his life into 'work' and 'leisure', stunts and stifles all but one of his faculties, subjects him to the domination of the means of production and of the product, estranges him from himself and from his fellow-men. 'The class of the proletariat feels annihilated in its self-alienation' and is indignant at 'the contradiction between its human nature and its condition of life, which is the outright, decisive and comprehensive negation of that nature.' (p. 51) Marxism is the only real humanist philosophy of today because it alone shows the way to overcome this contradiction. Socialism will restore to men their working time, secure for them the conscious social control of their means of production and of their products, and make possible the all-round development of the many faculties latent in each individual. This is the basis of real human freedom. The Soviet bureaucracy has only succeeded in deepening the 'self-alienation' of the proletariat whose power it has usurped. The tasks set forth by Marx have yet to be accomplished. But their accomplishment is a certainty—not, as Marx explains, because proletarians are gods, which they are not, but because the proletariat's 'aim and historical action is irrevocably and obviously demonstrated in its own life situation.... Not in vain does it go through the stern but steeling school of labour.' (pp. 52-3)

* * *

There is no room in this present notice to do more than draw attention to the important section (pp. 167-79) on the history of English and French materialism, part of which is already familiar to readers of **Socialism: Utopian and Scientific**. It is odd that the translator seeks to improve on the well-known translation of Engels himself, 'Materialism is the natural-born son of Great Britain', with the version 'Materialism is the son of Great Britain by birth'. Is this really an improvement? Similarly, the English publishers are so little proud of the translation of the sub-title that they wisely have made it 'Critique of Critical Criticism' in their Press advertisements. There are a number of other inexplicable changes, never for the better, and many examples of sloppy proof-reading (Hargreaves' name misspelt on p. 22, e.g.) There is no subject index. But it is good to see in the name index that the Russians have apparently abandoned some of their irrelevant claims to have forestalled other nations' inventions (though Arkwright was inevitably 'using a number of previous inventions' (p. 292) when he designed a spinning frame).

Leaving aside the shortcomings and eccentricities of this edition, it remains ironic that this translation comes to us

from Moscow. Truly they do not know what they are putting in the hands of students of Marxism who have the courage to compare the forecasts of liberty shining from these pages with the way the human spirit is still shackled forty years after the October Revolution. **The Holy Family** is destined to play no small part in the great renaissance of creative Marxist thinking on whose threshold we are standing. It will help us to hack away the poisonous growth that has often concealed the healthy trunk—and to prove that the trunk itself is sound and capable of new sturdy development in the service of the working class.

PETER FRYER

Peasants in Revolt

The Peasant War in Germany by Frederick Engels
(Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House. London:
Lawrence & Wishart, 4s. 6d.)

THIS modestly-priced and well-bound volume is of more general interest than the title suggests. **The Peasant War**, originally written in 1850, is accompanied by a preface, written in 1874, which seeks to explain its contemporary political point. In an appendix there are two useful essays on German agrarian history, **The Mark** (1882) and **History of the Prussian Peasantry** (1886) and notes and Marx-Engels letters which together show the scope of Engels' later thought and work on German history and the Peasant War of 1525, 'the critical episode', as he says, in the Reformation ('bourgeois revolution no. 1'). Around this central thesis Engels planned to write an outline of German history, but he never had time for it; hence the interest of the rough notes.

The Institute of Marxism-Leninism (Moscow) provide the preface to this collection of material. **The Peasant War** is described as a 'classical model of research on anti-feudal peasant movements, applicable not only in Germany's case, but in that of other countries as well.' This is misleading.

Of course this little work has reminded Marxists of the revolutionary history of the feudal peasantry; it has mapped out fields for later Marxist research; it has provided a model for Marxist historical writing. But, as we normally understand the words, not a classical model, and not of research. Engels, as he tells us himself, wrote the work hastily, in the summer of 1850, as two political articles, 'under the immediate impression of the counter-revolution just then completed.' He was quick to see that this abortive revolution of 1848-50 had a striking parallel in 1525: for example, a 'ludicrous similarity in the behaviour of the city burghers' in both; in both, the failure of the local revolts through lack of central direction. So he plundered the factual content of a large work by Zimmermann on the Peasant War, published in 1841-3. Engels' method was to summarize the political narrative and to seek to explain and illuminate it by an analysis of the class structure of German society in relation to its economic stage of development, including some suggestions about why class struggles then 'were clothed in religious shibboleths', why there was a contrast between the thought of the burgher reformist Martin Luther and the plebeian revolutionary Thomas Munzer. The latter's 'anticipation' of communism 'in fantasy' interested him more than the sober demands for redress of economic grievances by peasant leaders. Such then is the model.

Engels' hasty formulations on his highly complex subject-matter are sometimes penetrating; more often they seem incorrect or crude, whether on religion, politics or the peasantry. This is partly because a century of historical work has been done since Engels wrote, partly because Engels' purpose in writing was purely political. He wrote to point a moral, which he elaborates in the 1874 preface. The oppressed would not always be beaten down by their oppressors. Step by step the proletariat was advancing behind the big bourgeois, who were inevitably creating conditions for its victory. But this victory could be hastened if the workers, being in a minority, could draw to their side other groups who stood to gain by the destruction of feudal, bureaucratic or bourgeois oppression: in particular the poor peasants and the agricultural labourers who were the biggest group in the countryside wherever large and medium sized estates persisted.

It was this conclusion which was impelling Engels for-

ward to research into German agrarian history and to the threshold of a Marxian theory of the development of landed property and peasant society under feudalism and capitalism. He was still dependent for material on the work of professional historians, but took immense critical pains, for example in the study of G. L. Maurer for the essay called *The Mark*. This formed an appendix to the 1882 pamphlet *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. As he wrote to Marx in sending him the manuscript, 'the first draft was all of one piece but unfortunately wrong. I mastered the material only by degrees and that is why there is so much patching.' (p. 204)

M.G.

Automation & Society

Automation and Social Progress by S. Lilley, M.Sc., Ph.D. (Lawrence & Wishart, 21s.)

THE TWO great advances of the post-war years are nuclear energy, the greatest fruit of theoretical science since the discovery of fire; and automation, the child of modern technology. These two developments are only ten years old. It is the latter that is the concern of this book, and it is fitting that this exciting new phenomenon should be presented in such an exciting book.

Those readers who are already acquainted with the previous works of Dr. S. Lilley will expect a book which is enthralling and stimulating, which takes into the sweep of its imagination theoretical problems and future prospects. They will expect to find this against a background of factual detail, written clearly, and simple to understand. They will find just that.

The book begins with the prehistory of automation. It shows how the work of the skilled craftsman was broken up and converted into unskilled work by the application of the principle of interchangeability of standard parts. These parts are fitted together on the assembly line, and this is the basis of modern mass production, the most typical example of which is the car industry. In this process each item of work is so simplified and standardized that the worker is reduced to functioning like a machine. The next step obviously is to replace him by a machine; and this is the first stage of automation, which uses the 'transfer machine' to replace the machine-like unskilled worker. The higher stages are then described, from the automatic assembly line to the programme-controlled machines. The discussion ends by considering not only future possibilities in the way of automated factories, but also the complete reorganization of the principles of engineering construction. Two fascinating byways are described: one the application of automation to industries other than engineering; the other, its application to 'white collar' jobs. Here the sober description of what is now actually being done commercially reads like pages from a science-fiction magazine. The speed of development in this field is well illustrated by the fact that the book refers to work on the development of machines for translating one language into another. These machines now exist and their product is readable and comprehensible.

Having dealt with the purely technological aspects of automation, Lilley goes on to consider its social significance. He emphasizes that this is fundamentally no different from previous technological advances, except that it is so much faster. The economies in human labour give an overall increase in productivity, not of five to twenty per cent as before, but of the order of five to twenty times. Only human society can decide whether this will lead to increased wealth, in all its aspects, or increased unemployment and economic crisis. A brief outline of fundamental economics serves as the basis for a chapter which demonstrates that only under socialism can full advantage be taken of this new stride forward. The contrast between what has been going on in the Soviet Union and the capitalist world is then given specifically and in detail. Perhaps the most illuminating parts of this section are those dealing with automation and monopoly, and the factors retarding the development of automation.

Coming down to further details, the book contrasts the attitude of the TUC and the trade union leaders to the implications of automation under capitalism, with that of the car industry shop stewards. The former have expressed them-

selves in vague platitudes and pious hopes; the latter called two conferences in 1955 and their resolutions gave a clear programme to the organized workers. The book ends with suggestions for action that may be taken even under capitalism, the main emphasis being on the need for active participation of the trade unions before and during all changes, and the role of East-West trade in opening up new markets.

* * *

This brief outline of the work does scant justice to it. For those who are philosophically minded, it will be of profound interest to see how the author brings out clearly the change from the skilled worker making small quantities of goods to the unskilled worker making vast quantities with simple machines, and then back to the skilled supervisor of automatic machinery making even vaster quantities. Again, it is interesting to learn how the first introduction of transfer machines to mass production, which needs a standard product made for a large market, can be applied only by increasing the standardization and where even larger markets are available; but the new forms of programme-controlled automation can now be applied to the production of small quantities of goods in runs of many different varieties. There is a further question of some importance: how is it that the Soviet Union is lagging behind in the application of transfer machines, but is developing and introducing the very highest forms of automation. Dr. Lilley makes it clear that only in a planned economy is it possible to skip the earliest stages, as these require much capital investment which would be wasted by becoming out of date too quickly.

M.H.

A Valuable Reprint

The New Course by Leon Trotsky (New Park Publications, 3s. 6d.)

IT WOULD be difficult to imagine any work of the early twenties having a more striking and immediate relevance for socialists today than this collection of articles written by Trotsky in 1923. 'The party was living, as it were, on two storeys: the upper storey, where things are decided, and the lower storey, where all you do is learn of the decisions.' (p. 15) 'The apparatus, in spite of the ideological growth of the party, continued obstinately to think and decide for the party.' (p. 16) The comparison between the problems of the Russian Communist Party in 1923 and our own problems in Britain today is not accidental, but derives from similar necessities, in each case demanding a 'new course'. Again a quotation will serve to highlight the comparison: 'The party as a whole is about to move on to a higher historical stage. The bulk of the communists are saying in effect to the leaders: "... We not only want to be led by you but to participate with you in the leadership of the class."' (pp. 14-15) Not only in the Communist Party, but in the British Labour movement generally, there exists a contradiction between the growing militancy and need of Marxist leadership on the one hand, and the persistence of a conservative bureaucracy in hanging on to effective control on the other.

The situation analyzed by Trotsky not only provides historical parallels with our own, but is also a decisive part of the same continuous process. In 1923 the end of the post-1917 revolutionary wave was clearly recognizable, and set the stage for the dominant tendencies in the movement subsequently: in the Soviet Union and the Communist Parties of the capitalist States, the sacrifice of the world revolution to the interests of 'socialism in one country', and in the reformist parties and trade unions the open rejection of independent working-class politics. To initiate this process in the Soviet Union, Stalin's bureaucracy had necessarily to destroy the revolutionary traditions of the Bolsheviks. Trotsky's articles published in this booklet expose the process in its very origins, thus forming an essential part of the answer to that question so many of us are asking: How could it all happen? Here one can see the soil in which the full flower of bureaucratic degeneration was later to prosper. The defeat of the German working class, the completion of a long and exhausting period of isolation and intervention, tremendous industrial difficulties—all these factors encouraged that weariness in the class leading the struggle that has succeeded every great re-

volution. With the working class thus weakened, and the petty bourgeoisie revived by the New Economic Policy, a bureaucratic regime, backed by the dogmatic theory of 'socialism in one country', was well in accord.

In the first two sections of this book, Trotsky attempts a task most unfamiliar to communists of today; he analyzes the party itself in a historical, dialectical way, under the headings 'The Question of the Party Generations' and 'The Social Composition of the Party'. In the following chapters, 'Groups and Factional Formations', 'Bureaucratism and the Revolution' and 'Tradition and Revolutionary Policy', there is described, on the basis of this analysis, the type of party needed to restore a truly revolutionary spirit and type of work. The final chapters, 'The "Underestimation" of the Peasantry' and 'Planned Economy', will serve to dismiss some hoary myths about Trotsky's views later put around by the Stalinists.

The timely re-issue of this material will prove an admirable beginning for the re-examination of a vital period, especially as it deals specifically with such important problems. Trotsky's basic conclusion, that the question of factions and splits is only solved by revolutionary action based on Marxist analysis and undertaken after truly democratic discussion, is a warning to modern heresy-hunters. 'To avert [a split] the leading organs of the party must lend an ear to the voice of the broad party mass, not consider every criticism as a manifestation of factional spirit, and thereby drive conscientious and disciplined communists to maintain a systematic silence or else constitute themselves as factions.' (p. 28)

S.



We hope to publish the article by Bob Davies on 'The Inadequacies of Russian Trotskyism', which is still being prepared, in the next issue of **Labour Review**.

A number of letters, including one from George Gray (Manchester) criticizing the views of Wolfgang Harich (the savage sentence imposed on whom demands the protest of every socialist), are unavoidably held over to the next issue owing to shortage of space.

Our Contemporaries

WE WELCOME the forthcoming appearance of **The New Reasoner** under the editorship of John Saville and E. P. Thompson. We go to press before the first number is published, but the contents as announced will clearly be of great interest to readers of **Labour Review**. They include articles by Professor Hyman Levy on 'Soviet Socialism', Peter Worsley on the 'Anatomy of Mau-Mau', E. P. Thompson on 'Socialist Humanism' and Eric Hobsbawm on 'Dr. Marx and Victorian Critics'. **The New Reasoner** costs 4s. per copy or 15s. for four issues and can be obtained from E. P. Thompson, Holly Bank, Whitegate, Halifax.

We welcome too the first of the series of Reasoner pamphlets: **The Communist Party and the Labour Left 1925-1929** by Joseph Redman. It will be reviewed in our next issue.

Lastly we offer congratulations to the energetic students who have brought out **Universities and Left Review** and whose club of the same name in London, at which contributors to the magazine lead discussions, is helping the great new ferment of ideas on the Left.

Books Received

The following books have been received and will be reviewed in forthcoming issues:

The Case for Industrial Partnership by G. D. H. Cole (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.)

Watcher on the Rhine by Brian Connell (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 21s.)

The Story of Lola Gregg by Howard Fast (Bodley Head, 10s. 6d.)

Social Class and Educational Opportunity by J. E. Floud, A. H. Halsey and F. M. Martin (Heinemann, 12s. 6d.)

Guilty Men 1957 by Michael Foot and Mervyn Jones (Gollancz, 12s. 6d.)

The Uses of Literacy by Richard Hoggart (Chatto and Windus, 25s.)

The Rationalist Annual, 1957 (Watts, 5s.)

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