

LABOUR REVIEW

Vol. 2

JULY - AUGUST

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Newcastle

EVERY HONEST socialist will register, emphatically, the strongest protest against the savage sentence imposed upon Professor Wolfgang Harich by a court of the German Democratic Republic. His courage and determination in challenging the State and party apparatus of East German Stalinism deserve our admiration and whatever practical aid we in Britain can render him.

However, this should not prevent us from recognizing the serious limitations of Harich's political testament as printed in The Observer of March 17, 1957. It is a revealing document, indicating the tendencies of his group and the complexion of the group's principles. No doubt, as The Observer pointed out, 'in its emphasis and in some special pleading [it] is probably coloured by being addressed mainly to Social Democrats'. But even allowing for this, it puts forward, certainly in all sincerity, a number of remarkable propositions.

To begin with, Harich's conception of socialism is left unclear. As he states that: 'The USSR is the first socialist State in the world' and puts forward a platform of reform, he conceives of socialism as existing in Russia despite the degeneration of party and State which he attacks. But if the USSR is already socialist, why should there be need for reform? Nor

is it clear **how** and **by whom** the CPSU is to be 'forced back at least to the Malenkov line and the position at the Twentieth Party Congress'. However, Harich does recognize that what happened at the Twentieth Congress 'was an attempt to anticipate threatening revolution from below'. But he doesn't much like the prospect of 'revolution from below'. In Germany the opposition's aim was 'to deepen the gulf between the population and the present leadership, but at the same time prevent a popular rising', which is then referred to as 'a danger' (my emphasis). In other words, although he talks about regaining 'the confidence of the working class and the entire people through a changed policy', this must be confidence in an alternative leadership coming from **within** the existing apparatus of the Socialist Unity Party, in alliance with the social-democrats in the Federal Republic. Basically, Harich does not trust the working class or believe in the efficiency of working class action. Consider another example. In the re-united Germany which is somehow to be brought about (his concept of the path to this unity is vague and based upon the most unlikely of possibilities) elections should be held. The issue will be no more in doubt than it was in Gomulka's Poland because they will be held on the single list system, generously allowing the electors 'more candidates than seats so as to give . . . a real choice'!

Certainly the political line traced by Harich is nothing if not academic. What of his theoretical conceptions? It suffices to give an example. He claims that Stalin was right against Trotsky in maintaining that industrialization was a prime necessity for backward Russia after the Revolution. This can perhaps be overlooked. We know that even for professors there are real difficulties in getting access to the work of Lenin's co-worker in the Revolution of 1917, Trotsky, in the German Democratic Republic today. The merest acquaintance, however, with Trotsky's writings would correct this belief about Trotsky's opposition to industrialization. Incidentally our native Hariches have no such excuse of 'unavailability'.

But Harich recognizes that 'the theory of Marxism-Leninism must be complemented and broadened by taking account of the thought of Trotsky . . .' Evidently he thinks that Trotsky's thought was **outside** of the theory of Marxism-Leninism. He goes on to add . . . 'even more of Bukharin, of Rosa Luxemburg and partly of Karl Kautsky'. (My emphasis.) Why the 'even more'? Can it be that the only thing that Professor Harich knows about Bukharin is that he belonged to the 'Right Opposition' and that Harich is conscious also of standing on the right? We are left to guess which parts of Kautsky should be brought out of oblivion. This is not all, for he goes on to say, 'it [i.e., Marxism-Leninism] must be enriched by a critical reception of the thought of Fritz Sternberg and other social-democratic theorists'. Note the words 'critical reception'. No doubt the works of Sternberg have to be handled somewhat gingerly, even in secret documents, in the German Democratic Republic since one finds in them such statements as the following: 'The ideological struggle against Soviet Russian aggression must be supported by Western military preparedness' (F. Sternberg, *The End of a Revolution*, Gollancz, 1953). In other words Sternberg is a 'State Department socialist' and the people of the countries of Eastern Europe will find little comfort in his teachings. Let us add that Harich is also willing to learn from Tito, Poland and China. Whether he would also have approved the Hungarian revolution is not clear; presumably the statement was drawn up before it took place.

All in all Harich's thought reflects the malaise existing **within** the Party apparatus and is still limited by its point of departure. Its importance for us is that it has much in common with that of some communist and ex-communist intellectuals in Britain and France, many of whom are showing the same tendency to revise Marxism-Leninism along eclectic and reformist lines. The consequence is that no clear perspective for working class initiative and action flows from the thought of Harich or from those who have reacted to Stalinism in the same way. Unless these inadequacies are overcome, the Stalinist bureaucracy will have little to fear.

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(This criticism of Harich's views is very sharp. Considering the difficult conditions under which Harich has had to develop his ideas, is it too sharp? Readers' opinions would be welcomed.—Editors).

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JULY-AUGUST, 1957
VOLUME 2
NUMBER 4
TWO SHILLINGS

PUBLISHED BY NEW PARK PUBLICATIONS LTD., 266 LAVENDER HILL, LONDON, S.W. 11. PHONE: MAC 7029
All Communications with the Board of Editors should be sent to the above Address

Editorials

The Future of the Forums

IN our last issue we published a provisional analysis of the Special Congress of the Communist Party held at Hammersmith. It is now several weeks since the delegates returned home and reported back to their branches. The full significance of this Congress is only now beginning to reveal itself.

In estimating the best way of handling this Special Congress the old leadership of the Communist Party had to choose between two methods. Soon after the Congress was called it appeared as if the leaders had decided to bend to the storm which had been raging inside the party ever since Khrushchev made his famous speech, and which had been much intensified by the Polish events and the Hungarian revolution. They appeared to be prepared to allow more democracy for the rank and file of the party, to permit more freedom of discussion of political policies and of the leaders' activities and not to insist rigidly upon public kotowing to certain Stalinist political dogmas. If such a decision was ever taken in King Street, it was soon abandoned when it was discovered how far-reaching the revolt had become among the members. It became increasingly evident that the leaders of the Communist Party, trained in the Stalin school, had, finally, only one method of political debate—the big stick. At Hammersmith, Pollitt and his protégés applied those very same bureaucratic methods of conference 'fixing' which they had so often denounced when used by Labour leaders at the Labour Party conference and Trades Union Congress. They also showed themselves quite prepared to lose another five to ten thousand members—those very members who had for long been the real prop of King Street—the honest, principled, active members of the party, who at this new stage were not prepared to obey the old demagogic call 'Close the ranks' without a thorough-going political examination of the real causes for the Communist Party finding itself in this sorry state of affairs.

'No Concession'—that was Pollitt's remedy for the Congress and, formally, his faction recorded an overwhelming victory. But on closer examination, what a victory! To adapt a famous general's remark

'Another victory like that and there will be no Communist Party'. Every single dissident amendment was either not called or defeated.¹ Every single nominee for official positions and for the new Executive Committee put up by the old Political Committee was re-elected. Even the few old EC members who had during the previous year made mild nuisances of themselves were removed from office. What an extraordinary affair it was. Twenty-five per cent of the members resign in protest against the party's policies, dozens of illegal factions spontaneously come into existence to fight those policies, the intellectuals of the party resign almost to a man, the party experiences the greatest theoretical upheaval of its existence, a Special Congress has to be called, thousands of loyal members express their opposition by adopting something like 3,000 critical resolutions and amendments . . . and the final result is—the reinstatement of the old leadership, the election to office of not a single critic and a blanket endorsement of official Stalinist policies.

But no sooner had the delegates returned home than the Pyrrhic nature of this victory became apparent. The crisis *inside* the Communist Party, in spite of the new wave of resignations, remains unresolved. On the other hand, the regroupment of a new, non-Stalinist Left took, during the same period, certain important steps forward. In striking contrast to the Hammersmith Congress, one week later, another and, we venture to say, more important conference took place at Wortley Hall, near Sheffield. Here were gathered together for a week-end of frank discussion, exchange of views and re-estimation of the future of Marxism in the British Labour movement, a substan-

¹The Standing Orders Committee deliberately selected the most 'extreme' amendments for discussion, so as to minimize the minority vote. Thus one delegate was asked to move an amendment calling for complete abolition of the 'panel' system. He protested that he did not agree with the amendment, but would willingly move one which had been submitted by his own branch, calling for changes in the system. He was told that he had missed the point—what was wanted was a demonstrative defeat for the 'revisionists'! Some delegates estimated that this tactic reduced the potential average opposition vote from about 150 to about 50.

tial number of Marxists, former members of the Communist Party, Left socialists and members of various anti-Stalinist groups. The main thing that this conference achieved was to demonstrate that communists, released from the strings of King Street, can indulge in real discussion, can give and take hard-hitting criticism and, as a result, resolve their different opinions. Not that this resolution of differences was achieved at this single conference—far from it. But steps were taken and will continue to be taken, in that direction.

Ideas were expressed at Wortley Hall which we think were 'confused'—but it is also certain that what we thought 'confused' others thought 'clear' and *vice versa*. But we *all* learned a great deal. *All* of us had *some* of our own confusions made clearer. It was a conference which began a new stage in the education of a Marxist movement. And how vigorous and healthy it all was compared with Hammersmith.

Prophecy written down in editorials is notoriously a dangerous practice, but *Labour Review* believes that, when the history of socialism in Britain comes to be written, it will be recorded that Wortley Hall, small and insignificant as it may now appear against the jamboree of Hammersmith, was a milestone in the creation of a Marxist movement. For Wortley Hall represents a movement which is growing and will, accordingly, prove invincible. Hammersmith was a phenomenon which is dwindling and decaying—i.e., is already pronounced on by history as bankrupt.

Labour Review also considers that the local Socialist Forums which have sprung into existence in most large towns in Britain to discuss, develop, and apply to particular problems of today the Marxist method of examining society, are helping forward the time when it will be possible to unite the genuine socialist forces in Britain into a powerful whole. As we see it the Forums serve the purpose of bringing together into creative discussion all those who have a positive contribution to make in applying Marxism to elucidate the problems and prospects of the British Labour movement. At Wortley Hall it was heartening to note that most ex-communists are now well past the phase of breast-beating and have entered into a new, positive phase of political activity. Yet at the same time it is necessary to say that we cannot afford to be complacent; we cannot assume that now everything will automatically become clearer to everybody.

A COMMON mistake which the Forums seem to make is to confine their discussion to too general and desultory a treatment of important subjects, such as a brief lecture on the Soviet Union one evening and an entirely different subject the next, and so on. While all this is understandable, such sketchy appraisals without serious and detailed study are leading to considerable confusion and even frustration. The feeling is gaining ground that everything is being left very much in the air and none of the real political problems is being tackled properly.

Supplementing this state of affairs are those elements who call for an all-inclusive unity in some new political party among various trends on the non-

Stalinist Left, before any serious attempt has been made to resolve fundamental political differences.

The slogan of unity is always an attractive one, and it is true that until the working-class movement is united in action socialism will remain a dream. But, because of its attractiveness, it is not difficult for the unscrupulous to use the slogan of unity to divide rather than to unite—to use it as a stick to beat those who refuse to sacrifice principles for expediency. The Communist Party's unity campaigns are excellent examples of this and, unfortunately, it is a practice not unknown elsewhere. It is well known that the thief who joins the pursuers in order to hide his identity cries 'stop thief' the loudest.

The strength of a political party, as the history of the Bolshevik Party showed most clearly, is not estimated simply by counting party cards. A party's strength is estimated best by the aptness and truth of its political programme and by the degree of real agreement among its members on the main lines which the party's activity should follow. How strong would a 'united' party be, for example, in which (however much overtime the computer might be working, adding up the membership contribution each group had brought to the party, and however devoted these members might be to certain abstract principles of socialism) half the members were convinced that any form of electoral activity is a betrayal of socialist principles, while the other half believed that the party should actively campaign to get a Labour Government elected at the next General Election? Formal unity in one party would hide, for a time, the real existence of two parties within a party. The activity of one half of the party would cancel out the activity of the other. Such a 'united' party, to say the least, would have little impact upon the country's political life. Lenin of course was always in favour of real unity, but on an issue of principle apparently one hundred times narrower than the principle we use in this example, was prepared to split the young socialist party of Russia into two, and later, reflecting this same split, the whole of the Second International. Was he wrong to do so?

Every sincere socialist wants unity of the Marxist Left, but it must be a real unity, unity on principles—not a false, illusory, negative, and even positively harmful type of formal, organizational unity. Therefore unity must grow organically; the pace cannot be forced. Time and time again, experience shows that unity cannot be won by signing unity documents. Often such unity has to be declared void before the ink is dry on the signatures. Unity must grow out of discussion which resolves fundamental disagreements. This is, as everyone knows, the *raison d'être* of the Forums. But unity comes from agreement on principles, programme and strategy, not because we like the colour of each other's eyes.

In the opinion of *Labour Review* the Socialist Forum movement should set up small study groups which would investigate, prepare papers and recommend suitable reading material on important problems. This approach would help to avoid 'free for all' confused discussion. It would concentrate the discussion on the most important issues, in an atmosphere where a genuine, principled agreement can be reached.

A study of the practical tasks of today suggests to

us a list of discussion topics for the Forum movement which we think will bring the richest harvest:

(1) What is the character of the social system of the USSR and the bureaucracy which dominates it? How do bureaucracies arise in all sections of the Labour movement?

(2) What effect had the development and growth of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union upon the communist parties outside the USSR?

(3) Should Marxists stand for the defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attacks, and if so, why?

(4) Have post-war economic developments discredited Marxism, and what are the prospects before capitalism, especially in Britain?

(5) If Marxists join the Labour Party, is this tantamount to 'liquidationism'? Does it necessarily follow that any socialist who works as an active member of the Labour Party has thereby abandoned Marxism and set out along that road which the one-time Marxist John Strachey has found so easy to travel?

These are some of the more important questions which, as it seems to us, the Forum movement should tackle. For our part we intend to give this discussion all possible help.

The New Phase of the Stalinist Crisis

NOT since the world's communists woke up one fine morning in 1929 to discover that three eminent members of the Soviet Communist Party's Political Bureau, Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky, were engaged in 'anti-party activities' has there been a crisis in the Kremlin so severe as that announced on July 3. The removal of Molotov, Kaganovich and Malenkov from the Central Committee and from their Government posts eclipses even the Twentieth Congress revelations in the light it sheds on the internal stresses that rack the Soviet bureaucracy, and in its potentially unsettling effects on Eastern Europe and on Communist Parties.

Molotov, Lenin's 'best filing-clerk of the revolution', Stalin's 'comrade-in-arms'—and accomplice in the murder of Lenin's colleagues—the man to whom any dirty job could be safely entrusted, at last falls victim to a veritable *coup d'état*. A generation's faithful service to the bureaucracy is rewarded with a pitiless indictment of his narrow-mindedness, conservatism—and 'anti-party' activities. In the whole voluminous compass of Molotov's speeches there occurs but one striking and memorable phrase: 'All roads lead to communism.' Perfectly true; but with a little foresight he might have added that for the major obstacle on the Russian path to communism, the Soviet bureaucracy, all roads lead to convulsions, intrigues, shocks and tumbles.

This is the destiny which the bureaucracy cannot escape. Those who try to hold back historical progress always find their most cherished dreams and illusions turn into their opposites; and the more these men who cling to the power that by right belongs to the Russian workers shout about 'collective leadership' and 'party unity' the faster does the monolith crumble into warring factions. Stalin was able to hold the privileged upper stratum together, not because of any exceptional personal powers he possessed, but because the period of his dominance was the period of the Russian workers' weariness and apathy, reinforced by the defeat of the revolution in the West and the terrible sufferings of the Second World War. But this is a new historical epoch. The old incantations and formulas no longer work. The cracks are widening rapidly as the whole structure is shaken from below by the still inarticulate,

but immensely strong, Soviet proletariat. *July 1957 is the outward and visible sign that the crisis of the whole Stalinist régime has entered a new stage.* The face of the waters has suddenly become troubled; massive and irresistible currents are stirring in the depths.

The bureaucracy is now acting as an unbearable fetter on Soviet life. Its chains bite into the living flesh of Soviet society at a hundred and one points. In industry and agriculture the tail ends of a series of unfulfilled plans litter the planners' desks. In literature, music and historiography administrative methods designed to compel conformity and stifle creativeness succeed only in revealing the bureaucracy's philistinism and fear of the truth. Not least of all, in the sphere of ideology, the ruling caste can only mutter that *it* has nothing to learn from Mao Tse-tung.

The bureaucracy is actuated by two economic impulses. It must protect the nationalized property relations; it does so in its own way, of course, but do so it must, since these are the soil that gives it life. And it must safeguard its own privileged position. As with every parasite, this latter is its primary consideration. The discussions in the Kremlin have not been about improving the conditions of the Soviet workers, but about how best the bureaucracy can defend its positions: whether to give concessions, what concessions to give, to whom to give them, and so on.

This was a fight behind closed doors, at which the contestants could hear the first premonitory tappings of the giant outside. They did not take the discussion outside the Central Committee—not even into the ranks of their heavily bureaucratized party, for that would have exposed their real motives. The views of those expelled have nowhere appeared in documents from their own hands. After one preparatory article in *Pravda* a *fait accompli* is presented to the Soviet people. Yet this is supposed to be 'inner-party democracy', and these men have the audacity to refer to the Tenth Congress to support their strictures on factional activity.

Lenin, however, never intended the proscription of factional platforms as anything more than an extraordinary and temporary measure during a critical period. Open groupings and open discussion had been

the tradition of the Bolshevik Party from its inception; the Stalinist parties cannot tolerate them because they cannot tolerate the clash of opinion. The crisis of 1957 is fundamentally different from the crisis of 1921: then an infant workers' State was menaced by foreign intervention; now a bureaucracy is menaced by an awakening people thirsty for knowledge about the past of the movement. The reference to the Tenth Congress may therefore boomerang back at its authors.

The gravity of the crisis is shown above all by the tone of the document issued on July 3. This is no product of a calm academic dispute between 'liberalizers' and 'anti-liberalizers'. Its harshness is the barometer of the mass pressure. The dominant faction is speaking not only to its ousted enemies, but also to the masses of the people. There is a threat between every two lines.

Can the struggle be seen simply as one between 'Stalinists' and 'anti-Stalinists'? By no means. The lines are not drawn so simply and neatly as that. Neither the Khrushchev faction nor the Molotov faction nor the Malenkov faction is homogeneous. It may well be that each of these factions has chosen to adopt as its own various popular demands. We should be-

ware of over-simplified interpretations of a conflict whose outlines are in many ways still misty. The important thing is that the motive force of this cataclysm, and of those which will certainly follow it, is the re-suscitation of the Russian working class.

For this class, new magnificent opportunities are opening out. The essential feature of this new stage of the crisis is that the workers will more and more come on to the arena. It is not ruled out that they may temporarily use reactionary members of the bureaucracy as instruments, before they reach the stage of building their own new, revolutionary leadership. But no threats, no terror, no concessions, no manoeuvres can prevent the discussion coming into the factories, can prevent the emergence of political trends, can prevent the Russian workers from organizing, can prevent the rise of a rejuvenated Marxist movement in the USSR. The Labour movement of the West must rebuff all attempts by imperialism to take advantage of the crisis, and must rally to the support of the Russian workers.

The night has lasted for a generation, for three long, dark decades. Now it is ending. The bankruptcy and impotence of a leadership torn by internecine strife are the clear signs of an approaching dawn.

TOWARDS THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

WHEN the annual conference of the Labour Party meets at Brighton on September 30 many problems will confront the delegates. Before they tackle the conference agenda they will have to decide for themselves what sort of a conference this is to be. Will they be content with a leisurely discussion of the various policy statements which have emanated from Transport House? Or will they look upon the conference as the starting point of a great campaign to drive the Tories out of office and return a Labour Government to power?

On the answer to these questions depends the sort of policy which will emerge from Brighton. For Labour will never rally the necessary support at the polls if it depends only on the criminal record and 'mistakes' of the Tory Government. What the rank and file of the Labour movement expects from the Brighton conference is a positive Socialist policy: not just a tinkering with the capitalist system here and there or the pie in the sky of a better pension in 1990, but a policy which will establish the definitive foundations of a socialist economy immediately after the next General Election. Labour needs a policy which will so fire the imagination that it will force the Tories out of office long before the 'normal' three years which remain of this Parliament have passed.

In this past year Labour had great opportunities. The old-style imperialist attack on Egypt last November roused the workers as nothing has done since the end of the war. All they needed was a call from Transport House and the Trades Union Congress and

the people broke out of the strait-jacket of Parliamentary formalism and demonstrated on the streets. Yet if the Tory leaders still live in the age of Palmerston and gunboat diplomacy, the official Labour leadership behave as if we were still in the pre-1914 era, when concessions could fairly easily be wrung out of a British capitalist class enjoying world supremacy. However the unmistakable mood of the workers in the mines and factories, the militant demonstrations up and down the country halted Eden's Suez madness. Gaitskell's two-faced speeches in the House of Commons achieved nothing. The Tories ran away before the all too obvious hints of extra-Parliamentary action. If such action had taken place, who could tell whether there would not have been more than a mere replacement of Eden by Hugh Gaitskell at No. 10—perhaps, a pressing forward to the ending of the capitalist system itself?

If the workers were roused to action by the nakedly imperialist foreign policy of the Tory Government, they were stung to fury by the openly anti-working-class character of the Rent Act. The publication of the Rent Bill was another golden opportunity for many-sided working-class action: in Parliament, in industry and on the streets. On this issue, too, the tradition of working-class struggle was on the side of industrial action, for it was the striking workers of Clydeside who in 1915 won the first battle for Rent control. Here again the Labour leaders lost a fruitful opportunity. They confined their opposition to the new Rent Bill almost entirely to Parliamentary debate. To

add insult to injury, Morgan Phillips announced a nation-wide campaign for May, only a few weeks before the Bill was due to become law. This campaign never got further than the Transport House circular letter.

Labour and the middle classes

The hypocrisy of the Right-wing Labour Party leaders was also exposed in another way by this failure to wage a militant campaign against the Rent Bill. For years we have been hearing from Herbert Morrison and others how important it is for Labour to win the support of the 'middle classes'. Here, if ever, was an issue on which that support could have been won. Wide sections of the middle class were shaken out of their sense of security by the Rent Act's implied threat to their homes. They looked round desperately for leadership—and this should clearly have come from the political and industrial wings of organized Labour. All the middle class received, however, was a set of Parliamentary speeches which achieved practically nothing. There can be no doubt that at Brighton the Labour leadership will be called to account for this abject failure.

Unlike the Labour leaders, however, the rank and file are expressing their determination to launch a counter-offensive against the Tories. In South Wales, for example, the miners have called for direct industrial action against the Rent Act. This mood is matched in other centres throughout the country. Even now, after this vicious measure has become law, the workers are eager to fight to prevent the landlords from putting the Act into operation.

This same militant spirit is also reflected in the anger which has greeted the anti-nationalization speeches of Sir Hartley Shawcross and Richard Stokes. Aneurin Bevan, sensitive as ever to the changing moods of the rank and file of the Labour Party (he has an unerring instinct for saying today what the workers were saying yesterday) calls for total opposition to Britain's manufacture and testing of the H-bomb and supports a policy of bringing the workers out on to the streets to make this demand felt.

This, then, is the mood of rising militancy which the platform will have to face when the delegates assemble at Brighton. The Right-wing leaders will try to direct the discussion into safe channels, and the agenda will undoubtedly arrange for most of the discussion time to be given over to consideration of the various policy statements which Transport House has issued since last year's conference.

These statements are undoubtedly very important. They merit the closest attention. It is because of their importance that *Labour Review* has decided in this and subsequent issues to publish editorial comment and criticism of Labour's policy statements. We hope our readers will send us their own comments for publication. It is the clear duty of the Marxist movement to try to help the delegates at Brighton to prepare the ground for a General Election programme for Labour, a programme which will win a large majority of the electors and put an end, for all time, to Tory domination of British political life.

Labour's colonial policy

We begin this series of discussion articles with this review of the three pamphlets dealing with Labour's

colonial policy. We start with the colonial question not only because these pamphlets happened to be the first of the series to be issued but also because the sincerity of any socialist living in a metropolitan country is tested by his attitude towards the struggles of the colonial peoples for national independence, for their right to determine their own form of government.

The first of the three pamphlets on colonial policy, called *The Plural Society*, is already official Labour policy; it was adopted last year at the Blackpool conference. Two more statements, *Economic Aid* and *Smaller Territories* still remain to be debated at an annual conference.

Plural society

'Plural society' is the term used to describe those British colonies where people of different races are living together. It is an omnibus term of ever there was one, for it is used to group together such countries as Trinidad in the West Indies (where the descendants of African slaves live side by side with people of European, Indian and Chinese origin), Malaya (where we find Malays, Chinese, Indians and Europeans) and Southern Rhodesia (where a tiny white minority exercises a monopoly of political power over the African people).

The general tone of the pamphlet betrays its Fabian origins. It talks about the British Government impersonally—as if it is a matter of no importance whether a Labour, Liberal or Tory Government is in power at Westminster. On page 10 for example, we read: 'But the British Government could not overlook the fact that there were large African populations to whom it owed as much responsibility as to the small European groups.' The intention behind this method of treating the problems of colonialism is clear. It is to maintain the tradition of a 'bi-partisan' approach to colonial questions. As a result the Labour theoreticians are quite unable to come to grips with the real state of affairs in the colonial areas today. Naturally no importance is attached to the fact that the British Empire came into existence as an essential part of the development of British capitalism. On the contrary one is left with the impression that we are still expected to believe in the 'white man's burden', in the hoary old fable that the British Empire grew up as a result of a missionary zeal to bring civilization to primitive backward peoples. We are apparently expected to ignore the 'nasty' materialistic explanation which talks of capitalism's drive for new markets, for new sources of raw material and, later, for profitable fields of investment of surplus capital.

To maintain the imperialist grip on these colonies, successive colonial administrations (those appointed by Tory, Liberal and Labour Governments alike) have deliberately fostered in colonial territories a policy of 'divide and rule', carefully nurturing the privileges of the white minorities and, with equal care, ensuring that the native colonial populations provided capitalist enterprises with cheap labour-power to produce super-profits for British capitalism. This has always been the sole aim of colonial policy, and any realistic analysis of British colonial policy has to start from this point.

It seems to be impossible, however, for the 'official' thinkers of the Labour Party to break from the ideology of imperialism. Imperialism is of course pre-

dominantly a system of economic exploitation; in order to conceal it, a flowery ideological superstructure has been erected, an ideology stressing the 'civilizing' role of the conquerors. The Labour leaders do their utmost to foster this justification of imperialism inside the Labour movement.

Thus throughout 'Plural Societies' we find again and again a patronizing attitude. 'We are determined to establish democratic societies in the colonies.' 'The common electoral roll is indeed the vital test of political democracy in the plural society.' 'We cannot expect however to establish the common roll immediately everywhere.' This paternal attitude—'we' will do this, 'we' will do that, 'we' will not allow the other, is very, very far removed from a socialist approach to the question of freedom for the colonial peoples. In it there is not a breath of suggestion that the African peasant and the British engineer are in reality comrades and allies in a joint struggle against a ruling class which denies freedom to both.

In every colonial country today there has grown up a movement for national liberation. These organizations of the exploited colonial peoples themselves are actively leading the fight for national liberation. Traditionally, and in our own direct interests, the British Labour movement has one duty and one duty alone towards the colonial people: *to give every assistance to these colonial movements, to help them in every way to fight and win their battles against imperialism.*

It is not for 'us' to decide what form of government any country should have. That right belongs, exclusively, to the people of the country itself. And if the forms of democracy which they fashion for themselves do not conform to the definitions of democracy laid down by the Transport House 'experts' on democracy, that is for Transport House to worry about. They can always rewrite their definitions.

Parliamentary democracy on the British model, for example, if applied (by 'us') to countries like Kenya or the Rhodesias, would inevitably mean the continued political supremacy of the economically dominant white settlers. This would be true even if there were universal suffrage. For neither in Africa nor Britain is the State an independent organ above class, but rather the instrument of those who own and control the means of production. For this reason the workers and peasants of Rhodesia and Kenya, for example, will find it necessary *to work out for themselves* a form of democratic government which will wrest political and economic power out of the hands of the white minority. When however the people of British Guiana, through the electoral victory of their Peoples' Progressive Party in 1953, looked like doing this, the legally and democratically elected government was illegally and unconstitutionally overthrown, on orders from Whitehall, and its Ministers put in jail. The British Labour Party officially identified itself with the repressive action of the Tory Government. At the Brighton Conference it has another opportunity to wipe out the shame of this decision by promising full support for the national liberation movements in all British colonies, with special assistance for their socialist wings.

Economic aid

If a different attitude to colonial freedom had

been put forward in *The Plural Society*, then *Economic Aid* would undoubtedly have been very different from the present pamphlet of that name.

Certainly capitalist Britain owes an enormous debt to the colonies. For several centuries the British ruling class has sucked untold wealth out of the colonial peoples. It has organized the economic structures of these countries in a lop-sided manner to suit its own ends. Largely as a result of this super-exploitation of the colonies, the average annual income per man, woman and child in Britain today is £300, compared with a mere £60 for Jamaica and a pittance of £18 in Kenya. Here is an international debt which must be paid: only a Socialist Britain will honour it.

A working-class, socialist government in Britain would immediately and unconditionally recognize the right of the colonies to national independence. Then it would negotiate with the new governments of the former colonial countries a series of economic agreements which would benefit all the countries concerned, including Britain.

British economy, reorganized on a social basis, would be able to increase very rapidly indeed the productivity of industry. As a result Britain would be placed in a position where it could grant massive assistance to the former colonial countries to help develop their own natural resources and increase their own industrial production.

We believe that British workers would not hesitate to accept some sacrifices in order to make good the ravages inflicted on the colonial peoples by British capitalism. But there would in fact be no need for any 'sacrifices' to be subtracted from British workers' living standards. Ernest Bevin once threatened in a demagogic way that every workers' pay packet would be emptier if the colonies gained their freedom. But, as usual, he was wrong. *Economic Aid*, which repeats this threat, is wrong too. The Labour leaders hesitate to apply a thorough socialist plan to British industry and therefore cannot envisage the tremendous surge in industrial productivity which socialist industrial relations and planning would create very quickly once the capitalist deadweight had been lifted. British industry would be able to create an abundance of goods. From this fund Socialist Britain could play a very important part in developing the economic resources of the former colonial countries.

This is the real possibility of the future; but *Economic Aid* is content to announce, in words which sound very noble, that 'an average of one per cent of our national income over a period of years' will be Britain's contribution to the development of backward and colonial territories.

Colonial policy cannot be separated from domestic policy. Capitalist Britain grew to be a world power through exploiting the peoples of half the world. Socialist Britain will find ways of developing still further her productive resources without the 'benefits' of imperialist super-profits. In so doing she will enter into economic agreements with the former colonies on a basis of complete equality, without economic or political strings. Agreements of this sort, unlike the economic *diktats* of the imperialists, will bring lasting benefits to the peoples of Britain and of what are now her colonies.

THREE SPEECHES

An Analysis of the New Course of the Chinese Communist Party

Michael Banda

THIS article is based on three speeches made by three leading members of the Chinese Communist Party. They are, in order of importance:

1) Mao Tse-tung's 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People', made at the Seventh Session of the Supreme State Conference (February 27, 1957).

2) The political report of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to the Eighth National Congress, given by Liu Shao-chi (September 15, 1956).

3) Chou En-lai's report to the Fourth Session of the National People's Congress (June 27, 1957).

These three speeches, taken as a whole, constitute the basic line of the new trend in the policy of the CCP.

It is not possible to deal with every aspect of these speeches in a single article; but it does seem necessary, in view of what is being said not so much against but *for* the speeches, that an attempt should be made to explain their motivation, summarize their major tendencies and indicate their probable implications.

The revolution in permanence

The development of the productive forces of world capitalism within the Procrustean bed of capitalist property relations has made the transition to socialism on a global scale not only possible but also imperative. The breakdown of the capitalist system in its imperialist phase, however, has followed a complex and unique course unforeseen by the pioneers of scientific socialism. Marx and Engels, although they did understand and formulate the idea of the permanent revolution during the German revolution of 1848, nevertheless did so on the assumption that capitalism would break down first of all in its metropolitan centre. The uneven and combined development of capitalism determined an altogether different course for the socialist world revolution. The collapse of capitalism, as Russia and China have shown, proceeds from the more backward, less developed and weaker peripheral regions to the more advanced and well developed centre, not the other way round. But, as Trotsky forecast in 1903, the historical belatedness of these countries, their backward agricultural economies, makes the transition to socialism infinitely more difficult and more protracted, and makes them greatly dependent on the prospects of the proletarian revolution in the West. Continued isolation from the resources of world economy can only lead to bureaucratic degeneration and to 'the hellish logic of the police State'.

China can in no way claim exemption from this historical prognosis.

What has been achieved

China today stands on the threshold of a new and higher stage of development in her revolution. The last vestiges of imperialist domination on the mainland have been shattered, the bureaucrat-comprador bourgeoisie has been smashed, the landlords have either been physically eliminated or 'reformed through labour', the middle and liberal bourgeoisie have been partially expropriated and the power of the rich peasants has been severely curtailed.

The liberation of China, the carrying through of the land reform programme, the State ownership of the mines, factories, railways, banks, insurance businesses, wholesale trades and the predominance of the co-operative form of production in the countryside have laid the basis for the planned utilization and systematic development of China's national resources. All these things were done, however, not on the basis of a rationally conceived theory of development but on the basis of empirical adjustments and improvisations. Consequently the overhead cost was high and the dizziness produced by the initial successes even higher. Nevertheless the changes in the State, industry and agriculture—despite the Stalinist miseducation and backwardness of the leadership—provide striking proof of the correctness of the theory of the permanent revolution, which states that the victory of the democratic revolution in a backward country is conceivable only in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat leaning upon the peasantry—and the overthrow of capitalist property relations.

Industry and agriculture

Whether we take cement production, steel production, newsprint consumption or output per man hour we see that China comes at the bottom of the international ladder.

China (says Chou in his address) is an agricultural country, a poor country, economically and culturally backward, with a large population and a small area of arable land. This being so our living standards are very low compared with those of highly industrialized countries. Though our industry and agriculture have been rapidly rehabilitated and developed since the Liberation, the increase in output per capita is still rather slow . . . Between 1952 and 1956 our output of consumer goods increased on the average each year by about 3,000 million yuan. If we deduct the small amount to be kept in reserve and the part consumed by the increased population each year, only four yuan per head per year could be used to improve the people's livelihood. These figures indicate that the improvement in living standards each year is limited.

Added to her industrial backwardness and the low productivity in agriculture China is also beset with enormous demographical problems and smitten by re-

gular natural calamities. A progressively increasing population, a shortage of arable land and the recurrence of droughts, famines, floods and windstorms places an enormous burden on Chinese economy—a burden which can be lightened only by access to the capital reserves and the agricultural surpluses of West Europe and North America. This, however, has not been possible. Up till quite recently China has had to rely exclusively on the meagre aid of the Soviet Union. Russian loans to China in 1956 did not amount to more than 2.3 per cent of the budgetary revenue! Was it for this that the Chinese leadership supported the rape of Hungary?

China's industrial development, despite the successes of her first Five-Year Plan leaves much to be desired. Not even Liu Shao-chi denies this:

We have not been able to make heavy and precision machinery ourselves, and therefore cannot ourselves supply many major projects with the main equipment they need. In the case of home-made steel products, we have not been able to keep up with demands, in terms of either quantity or variety; there are many kinds of high grade alloy steel which we cannot yet produce; the non-ferrous metals industry has only a limited range of products; our radio-engineering industry is still very weak; and we have practically no organic synthetic chemical industry to speak of. . . . With regard to fuels, the output of petroleum falls far short of demand.

The situation in industry is further aggravated by the huge appropriations for defence and administration which consume 32 per cent of all State expenditure.

In order to be a strong and sovereign nation China must industrialize. This means the simultaneous and planned development of heavy and light industry with priority for the latter.

The first attempt of the Peking régime to implement the 'theory' of socialism in a single country by an exaggerated emphasis on capital construction proved a flop. 'In . . . the second and third quarters of 1956 . . . we began to discover the tense situation in the supply of certain materials resulting from excessive investments in capital construction.' Thus spoke Chou En-lai. As a result capital construction in 1957 will be 20 per cent less than in 1956.

The second blow to the utopian 'theory' of Stalinism came when the régime modified its policy in relation to light industry. The point is made in Mao's speech, but is more fully elaborated in Liu's speech where he warns the party of what Trotsky once figuratively termed the 'scissors crisis' (i.e., a growing discrepancy between agricultural and industrial prices leading to a rupture between the working class and the peasantry):

There are . . . comrades who . . . want to lower the rate of development of light industry and other branches of the national economy. . . They do not realize, firstly, that with the people's demands for consumer's goods growing day by day, a shortage of commodities may result if there is no adequate development of light industry, and this, in turn will affect the stability of commodity prices and of the market. In the countryside in particular, if there is not a sufficient supply of industrial products to exchange at stable and reasonable prices for agricultural produce, the consolidation of the worker-peasant alliance as well as the development of agricultural production may be adversely affected. Secondly, light industry needs comparatively small investments and enterprises in their field can be established in a relatively short time. So the turnover of capital is relatively quick, and funds can be accumulated relatively rapidly. Furthermore we can use those funds accumulated by light industry to help develop heavy industry. This shows that funds,

raw materials and market permitting, appropriate attention to the development of light industry will not hamper but on the contrary, will benefit the building up of heavy industry.

This departure from Soviet methods will undoubtedly have repercussions in the Stalinist world—the assertions of Mao and Co. to the contrary notwithstanding.

The third and final blow to Stalinist theory was the expropriation of the 'national bourgeoisie'. For many years the national bourgeoisie was considered a constituent element of the 'national revolutionary front'—first under Chiang in 1926-27, then under Wang Chin-wei, and finally under nobody in particular. The extreme weakness of this class has enabled the régime to expropriate it without much danger to itself. The lack of trained administrators and managers hampered the take-over and it had to be done in stages. In industry the transformation was carried through by a form of joint State and private operation of enterprises. In commerce the State converted private commercial firms into commission agents and retail distributors for State-owned products. As bait for the capitalists the régime offered redemption in the form of apportioned profits and, at a later stage, fixed interest payments on investments. The bourgeoisie however exert pressure on the régime in a thousand and one ways. During the Korean war the régime was forced to undertake a series of purges in order to curtail the operations of this class. Again, during the Hungarian revolution the bourgeoisie used the justified anger and resentment of the masses to undermine the State. Their pressure finds reflection in the Communist Party too. 'The Right-wing elements,' says Chou, 'have taken their stand on bourgeois democracy to attack our State system. . . . They attempted to set up, apart from the National Peoples' Congress—the supreme organ of State power in our country—certain other organs of State power, such as what they called a "Political Planning Council", a "Rehabilitation Committee", and such like.'

This statement flatly contradicts the assertion of Mao that the antagonism between the capitalists and the workers if 'properly handled' (?) can 'be resolved in a peaceful way'.

Bureaucracy

Potentially the most sinister and evil phenomenon in China today is the prolific growth of bureaucracy in the State and party apparatuses. The further growth of this cancerous formation threatens to separate the party and the State from the people. Such a state of affairs would inevitably lead to a new Hungary on a much vaster scale. The Chinese leaders are not unaware of the lessons of the Stalin era and the bloody precedent of Rákosi and Gerö. *Their speeches are motivated by the fear of history repeating itself on their own soil!* That is also the meaning of the new 'rectification' campaign in China, which has already unleashed a spate of denunciations concerning the excesses of party *cadres* in Government posts. One such denunciation from a Peking University lecturer seems ominous. Writing of the scandalous extravagance and the luxurious living standards of certain government workers he warned the régime that unless *real* changes were ushered in soon 'the masses will beat you down, kill you, overthrow you'. Mao makes a belated acknowledgment of this fact in his speech. Speaking of disturbances and

strikes in factories, farms and universities he states: 'A more important cause was bureaucracy on the part of those in positions of leadership.' And he recommends: 'In order to get rid of the root cause of disturbances, we must stamp out bureaucracy, greatly improve ideological and political education . . .'

Liu is even more explicit: 'Since our party came to power, however, the tendency to corruption and degeneration, violation of laws and moral degeneration has developed to a certain extent. We must resolutely put an end to this grave state of affairs.'

The growth of bureaucracy has already created a serious situation in the relations between the State and the peasantry. Liu says: 'Over-estimation of the present economic capacity of the agricultural co-operatives by many party organizations and organs of State authority and their abuse of the so-called "convenience" brought about by co-operation have given rise once more to a tendency towards bossiness in village work.'

In an attempt to prevent further bureaucratic plundering of the villages the Government, according to Mao, is 'prepared to stabilize the total amount of the grain tax and the amount of grain purchased by the State at approximately something over 80,000 million catties a year'.

Bureaucracy also manifests itself in the administration of the national minorities, who constitute six per cent of the total population but occupy fifty to sixty per cent of the total land area. Tibet is the major worry for the régime. The Greater-Han chauvinism of the Chinese administrators and colonizers provoked a number of local rebellions. The régime has since made a retreat on the minorities front.

Referring to the projected reforms in Tibet, Mao says: 'We should not be impatient. When this will be done can only be decided when the great majority of the people of Tibet and their leading public figures consider it practical.' Democratic reforms have been postponed till the third five-year plan.

Chou—who could not recognize bureaucracy in Hungary when he saw it—is forced to describe and explain the same apparition in his own country: 'Bureaucratic ways still exist, even to a serious degree, in our administrative organizations at various levels . . .' Then follows a sad admission: 'The people's level of literacy and culture is still not a high one and this inevitably limits in one degree or another their exercise of the right to take part in the management and supervision of State affairs. For these reasons, it is possible for bureaucracy to develop in our governmental offices. . . .'

The growth of functionarism and bureaucratism can be combatted only by relying on the initiative and supervision of the working masses. This is not in itself a guarantee of success—but it certainly is an indispensable condition for struggling against bureaucracy until the revolution in Japan and Western Europe comes to the rescue. The widest and fullest possible application of proletarian democracy means first of all the legalization of all socialist trends and groups in the working-class movement and a recognition of their right to put forward their own policy before the masses of the people, to contest all elections to the People's Congresses at all levels, etc.

Secondly, it means the right to form factions inside the CP and the right of minorities to struggle to transform the policy of the party and change the leadership if necessary, within the framework of democratic centralism and without fear of administrative reprisals.

Thirdly, it means the adoption of the principle of social management through workers' councils in all enterprises, and the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its alliance with the semi-proletarian masses. This requires producers' councils and the granting of greater powers in administration and management to local assemblies.

Lastly, it means a conscious orientation of the foreign policy of the workers' State in an anti-Stalinist and anti-imperialist direction. A socialist foreign policy must *not* passively reflect the struggles of the colonial and metropolitan workers, nor must it lull the consciousness of the workers at home with the soporific of 'peaceful co-existence'. On the contrary a socialist foreign policy must consciously help the struggles of the workers of foreign lands for international socialism. The greatest thing about Lenin and Trotsky was their internationalism, no moralizing sentimentality, no cheap shibboleths. It was a very practical consideration for them. That was why they formed the Communist International—as an instrument for the prosecution of the world proletarian revolution. That too was why they waged a merciless struggle against the League of Nations and all those who supported it.

Do the record and policies of the Chinese Communist Party meet these qualifications? Not even half way.

The CCP tolerates all forms of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leagues, parties and associations, but its record in relation to opposition groups in the working-class movement has been—and still is—an extremely macabre one. I refer specifically to the persecution and repression of Chinese Trotskyists and the liquidation of the entire organization in the Kwangtung province in 1951. What was their crime? They consistently fought for a proletarian socialist China and opposed the reformist policy of the Comintern under Stalin! The acid test for the policy of letting 'all flowers bloom' will be the recognition and legalization of Trotskyism in China. Freedom, as Rosa Luxemburg once observed, is always freedom for the man who thinks differently.

For the first time since its foundation thirty-six years ago the Chinese Communist Party has granted a certain licence to opposition minorities. Says Liu:

It is provided in the draft constitution that the party members have the right to give full play to their creative ability in work, and, while unconditionally carrying out party decisions, have the right to reserve and submit their own views to a leading body of the party, in case they should disagree with them.

This is an extremely limited definition of inner-party democracy. While it is sufficiently explicit to justify dissent it nevertheless does not indicate what *forms* dissension can take. Moreover the bureaucratic fashion in which the Kao-kang-Jao Shu-shih faction were dealt with brings into question the *bona fides* of the leadership. Even now there is no explanation of the Kao-Jao affair. Only a vague and unsubstantiated claim that they 'tried to seize the leadership of the State and party by conspiratorial means'.

At the Eighth Congress the question of workers'

councils was not even broached. There was much talk of strengthening the supervision of the State through the party, the people's congresses, etc., and of the necessity to readjust the administrative powers and functions of the central and local authorities. Mao too does not mention anywhere the role of workers' councils. Yet in Chou's speech the following statement appears:

To encourage the mass of workers and staff to take an active part in managing enterprises and in exercising supervision over administrative work, we are promoting a system of workers' councils in the enterprises. In agricultural co-operatives, we are instituting a system of general meetings of members and management committees in accordance with the policy of democratic management of co-operatives.

Having attacked Tito and the Yugoslav communists in the most nauseating manner during the Hungarian events Chou adopts a specifically Yugoslav contribution without even acknowledging it! If it needed a revolution to teach the Chinese Communist Party the value of workers' councils how long will it be before they recognize the virtues of producers' councils?

It is in the sphere of foreign affairs that the pragmatic and eclectic nature of the Chinese Communist Party leadership reveals itself. The foreign policy of the Peking régime is a direct reflection of its trade policy. On the one hand it seeks to appease the Soviet bureaucrats as it did during and after the Hungarian revolution; on the other hand it seeks to neutralize the colonial bourgeoisie and exploit the rivalries of the imperialists in a purely opportunist way. At Geneva it helped to sell the Indo-Chinese revolution to imperialists by cynically agreeing to the division at the 17th parallel. At Bandung it proclaimed the non-revolutionary theory of 'peaceful co-existence' and Panch-Sila. In place of a revolutionary foreign policy we get instead an emasculated policy of 'co-existence' to be achieved by means of a 'summit' conference! The European workers might well say: 'Tell me what your foreign policy is and we will tell you what you are!'

Where is China going?

By broaching the question of contradictions under socialism Mao has opened a new and important discus-

sion in the Stalinist world—a discussion whose dangerous logic is already beginning to have effects in Eastern Europe and perhaps even in the USSR. Its symptomatic significance cannot be denied—no matter what the subjective desires of Mao may be. It constitutes a new factor in the disintegration of Stalinist ideology, which has always denied that contradictions exist, between the State and the people and between the working class and the peasantry. Now all the tenets of Stalinism are being brought into question almost immediately after Stalin himself was downgraded! Stalinism has always recognized the legitimacy of only *one* school of thought: Stalinism. By posing the question of letting 'a hundred schools of thought contend', Mao implicitly challenges Stalinist orthodoxy. Already the literary opposition in the USSR is being nurtured by the debate on artistic and literary freedom in Peking.

So far the Kremlin has made no attempt to curb the Peking heresy. But the experience of the Yugoslav revolution proved that the Soviet bureaucracy can co-exist with a living revolution only in so far as the revolution does not threaten the immediate interests and privileges of the bureaucracy. So far the Kremlin has been able to co-exist because the Peking leadership gave it no offence and because the blockade of China and the threat of imperialist aggression increased the dependence of China on Russia. However the growth of the Chinese working class (from 13 to 24 million in the last six years) and the successes of planned economy, together with the new international situation characterized by the breaking of the American embargo, have not only provided the Peking régime with a leeway it did not possess before but have also placed new strains and stresses upon Sino-Russian relations.

This is one contradiction that Mao refuses to acknowledge but it is in fact the most important and decisive. It is a contradiction that can only be resolved by the violent overthrow of the Kremlin oligarchy. A leadership that does not prepare *consciously* for such a bloody eventuality will end up by cutting its own throat.

British Communist History

Joseph Redman

IN JULY 1956 the Executive Committee of the Communist Party decided 'to proceed with the preparations for the publication of a history of the party'. In September the composition of the Editing Commission for this work was announced—with Harry Pollitt as chairman and R. Page Arnot as executive officer. Since then no news has been given out as to the progress or prospects of the party history. It is hardly surprising that a number of comrades have been doing some digging on their own account without waiting—'it may be for years, and it may be for ever'—for something to emerge from the Commission. One such free-lance effort has already been published—my short study of *The Communist*

Party and the Labour Left, 1925-29, which came out in April as *Reasoner* Pamphlet No. 1. Since I wrote it I have read, discussed and thought further on the period and the problems involved, and am glad to have this opportunity of presenting, in *Labour Review*, some self-critical considerations which I hope may prove helpful to comrades studying the history of the party, and may perhaps stimulate original work by others.

The principal shortcomings of the pamphlet seem to me to be twofold. First, the *international setting* of the developments in Britain in 1927-29 is not shown **sufficiently**—the changes of a similar kind that were made in other Communist Parties in this period, as part

of a world-wide 'turn', with more or less equally disastrous consequences in the various countries concerned. In this connection, comparison with China is especially striking and instructive. Second, the years 1925-27 are dealt with somewhat sketchily, and in particular, those weaknesses of a 'Right-opportunist' nature in communist policy which, by leading to setbacks and defeats, provided the basis for the 'Left-sectarian' turn that began at the end of 1927. Here, too, there is a significant parallel with what happened in China.

Comintern policy in China, following the betrayal of the national revolution first by Chiang Kai-shek and then by the Wuhan Government, took a violent swing to the Left, signalized by the Canton insurrection of December 1927. While the revolutionary tide had been sweeping forward, the slogan of soviets had been banned, the workers held back from anti-capitalist actions and the peasants from seizing the land. Now, with some of the best *cadres* of the communist movement annihilated, the masses stunned and reaction in the saddle, an adventurist, putschist policy was suddenly adopted, resulting in further heavy losses, to no purpose. The Canton affair coincided with the Fifteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and a spokesman of the Stalinist majority there hailed the news as evidence that an era of direct struggle for working-class power was opening in China. A few months later, experience having shown the tragic folly of such a claim, the Sixth Congress of the Comintern characterized Canton as 'an heroic rearguard action' . . . The 'New Line' in its Chinese edition led to the destruction of virtually all communist positions in the cities and towns of China for a long time to come, dooming the Chinese revolution to take the long way round through a series of peasant wars unassisted by urban struggles. (Another consequence was the provision of ample scope in China for several years for the expansion and strengthening of Japanese imperialism. Not for the first time, or the last, a Stalinist policy 'justified' by the needs of the defence of the Soviet Union produced results full of danger to the Soviet Union.)

Anyone can be wise after the event, but it should be more widely realized that the 'Left turn' of 1927-29 was warned against *at the time* by L. D. Trotsky, both in relation to China and in relation to Europe, including Britain. The conventional image of Trotsky presented by Stalinist propaganda since 1935 shows a man whose political wisdom consisted in always trying to push Communist policy Leftward, regardless of circumstances. It is fascinating to observe the ingenuity with which J. R. Campbell conceals from his readers in his widely-read *Soviet Policy and its Critics* (1939) and other anti-'Trotskyist' writings the fact that Trotsky denounced the 'social-fascist' nonsense of 1928-34 from start to finish and never stopped urging that a united front of all workers' parties against fascism should be the aim of the communists in Germany. At the time, every effort was made by the Stalinist leadership of the British Communist Party to prevent knowledge of Trotsky's critique of Comintern policy reaching the members at large. Comrades in South-West London who in 1932 printed (in *The Communist*, a sort of predecessor to *The Reasoner*) Trotsky's views on the situation in Germany, and urged that, in Britain, the party should at least stop calling on the workers to spoil their ballot-

papers rather than vote Labour, were slandered and expelled. . . .

In his letter to the Sixth Congress of the Comintern (1928), Trotsky offered the opinion that 'nothing is more fruitless than showing one's fist after the battle' and argued that, contrary to the official 'Third Period' thesis, 'an inter-revolutionary period of indefinite duration' was opening, to which communist activities must perforce be adjusted in a realistic manner. Now this situation had not come about by itself, but as a result of a series of blows suffered by the working-class movement internationally—above all, the betrayal of the General Strike in Britain and that of the revolution in China. These defeats, in turn, were not unconnected with the flaws in communist policy in the 1925-27 period; and it is to this theme, in its application to Britain, that I would now direct attention.

The slow growth of the Communist Party in Britain in the early twenties made impatient the Zinoviev-Stalin leadership of the Comintern, producing in them a sceptical attitude to the party and a tendency to seek alternative instruments for revolutionary policy in this country. Already in 1924 at the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, Zinoviev hinted at what was to come in the following year:

In Britain we are now going through the beginning of a new chapter in the Labour movement. We do not know exactly whence the communist mass party of Britain will come, whether only through the Stewart-MacManus door [Bob Stewart and Arthur MacManus were prominent British communists.—J.R.] or through some other door. And it is entirely possible that the communist mass party may appear through still another door—and we cannot lose sight of that fact.

Knowing his Zinoviev and recognizing the instinctive preference of the Soviet bureaucracy for influencing world affairs through pacts with other bureaucrats rather than through developing mass movements, already in the same year Trotsky warned, in his *Lessons of October*:

It is true that the British trade unions may become a mighty lever of the proletarian revolution; they may, for instance, even replace workers' soviets under certain conditions and for a certain time. They can, however, fill such a rôle not apart from a Communist Party and certainly not against the party, but only on the condition that communist influence becomes the decisive influence in the trade unions.

Looking back on the period 1925-27 in his essay *On the Draft Programme of the Comintern* written in 1928, Trotsky observed that: 'The point of departure of the Anglo-Russian Committee . . . was the impatient urge to leap over the young and too slowly developing Communist Party.' This Anglo-Russian Committee was a joint committee of the British and Soviet TUC General Councils formed in 1925 to promote world trade union unity in general and closer relations between British and Soviet trade unions in particular, for the common cause of Labour. On it there served, from the British side, a group of trade union leaders, Purcell, Hicks and Swales, who rapidly acquired a reputation as Left-wingers almost entirely on the basis of their attitude to the USSR. In this same period the British communists were steadily and painfully building up the Minority Movement in the trade unions, that broad alliance of militants which at the height of its development embraced a quarter of the total membership of the trade unions. The Minority Movement was essentially a *mass*

movement; it worked for and achieved the election to office of militant trade unionists, notably A. J. Cook, who became the miners' secretary with Minority Movement support, but it never degenerated into a mere election-winning caucus. Together with the National Left-Wing Movement which arose among Labour Party members after the Liverpool decisions, as described in my pamphlet, it represented a tremendous potential force for leftward progress in the British working-class movement. Now, Purcell and the others held aloof from the Minority Movement: where Cook was a friend of the Soviet Union and a fighter for militant policies in Britain, Purcell was a 'Left' strictly in the international sphere, and his friendly relations with Russian communists did not modify his coolness towards the home-bred variety. But the importance attributed to the Anglo-Russian Committee by the Russians and the confidence they showed in Purcell and his colleagues inevitably had its effect on the view taken of these men by the British communists and militant workers generally.

It may be doubted whether the leaders of the CPSU really believed that the implications of Purcell's willingness to sit on a committee with Soviet trade unionists were as revolutionary as their propaganda around the Anglo-Russian Committee seemed to suggest. Already by this time they saw the central task of the workers outside the USSR as that of ensuring good relations between their respective countries and the USSR, and they probably thought of their alliance with a group of established, influential British trade union leaders as first and foremost a factor for good Anglo-Soviet relations, of much more practical value than anything the rank-and-file militants could offer. Experience was to disabuse them sharply of this illusion; but in its heyday Zinoviev spoke with unbounded enthusiasm of the Committee as 'one of the surest guarantees against intervention', as well as 'a guarantee that in the course of time we shall render European reformism harmless'. Trotsky's view of the line of development was a different one. In his book *Where Is Britain Going?* (1925)¹ he wrote:

The British bourgeoisie take unerring account of the fact that the chief danger threatens them from the trade unions, and that only under the pressure of these mass organisations will the Labour Party, after radically renewing its leadership, be transformed into a revolutionary force.

The trade unions could be won through the Minority Movement, under communist leadership, and the Communist Party would 'take that place in relation to the Labour Party which at present is occupied by the Independent Labour Party'—then the principal political organization within the Labour Party.

Under the pressure of the rising tide of militancy led by the Minority Movement, the TUC General Council defied the Baldwin Government and the mine-owners on 'Red Friday', July 31, 1925, forcing a postponement of the showdown over miners' wages and hours till May of the following year. Instead, however, of mobilizing all the workers' forces to ensure victory when the showdown came, the Labour leaders at once began taking steps to break up the movement that had obliged them unwillingly to make a stand. The Liverpool conference ban on communists in the Labour Party followed directly from Red Friday. A. J. Cook campaigned for preparation against the fateful day, but none of the alleged 'Lefts' of Anglo-Russian Com-

mittee fame would join him. In his *History of the British Communist Party* (1937), Tom Bell, one of the party's leaders of the time, wrote:

The Labour leaders made no effort to prepare for action. They lulled the trade unions into a false sense of security by encouraging reliance on the findings of the Coal Commission. At the same time in many places it was tacitly assumed that secret preparations were being made by the General Council. The fact that there was a Left wing on the Council (comprising Purcell, Swales, Hicks, Tillett and Bromley) lent colour to this idea.

One may add that the source of this notion, accepted by the British communists as well as by others, that there was a Left wing on the General Council, was the association of the individuals named with the Anglo-Russian Committee, and the illusions which were being built up around this Committee. R. Page Arnot, in his study of *The General Strike* (1926) writes:

Knowledge of the existence of this Left wing was at once a stimulant and a narcotic for the masses. It gave them a rallying ground, lent confidence to their leftward mood; but, then, it put vigilance to sleep, and led to over-trustfulness, so that when the breakdown of May 12 came, workers in the localities were looking at one another in dismay, naming the individual leaders of the Left and complaining that it was these men who were responsible in chief.

It is important to realize that from the end of 1925 onwards the membership and prestige of the British Communist Party was rising rapidly. Given the mood of the workers, the arrest and imprisonment of some of the party's leaders produced exactly the opposite effect to what had been intended by the Government. A greater opportunity than ever before since the days of 1920 was coming to the British communists. One observer wrote (*Bulletin communiste*, January 1, 1926) that where the party had had ten sympathizers before the arrests, now there were a hundred. But the attitude to the 'Left' TUC leaders inculcated on the basis of their membership of the Anglo-Russian Committee prevented the party and the Minority Movement from striving for the leadership of the workers and even weakened essential measures of preparation for the coming struggle. At the Comintern Executive's plenary meeting in February 1926 Aitken Ferguson defined the rôle of the Minority Movement as being 'to bring pressure to bear upon the reactionaries and to stiffen up the hesitating and wobbly elements', and George Hardy admitted that the formation of factory groups of the Minority Movement was still 'something which we have to tackle'.

In an article published in the *Communist International* shortly after the General Strike, 'Problems of the British Labour Movement', Trotsky quoted passages from his correspondence of January-March 1926, which are of great interest in enabling the historian to see with the eyes of a contemporary 'what went wrong' in those vital months preceding May Day, 1926. He pointed to the danger that 'the forming of the proletarian vanguard might lag behind the development of the revolutionary situation. Faced with the necessity for

¹This remarkable book should be reprinted. When the English version of it appeared, a reviewer in the Labour Monthly wrote: 'A challenge may safely be issued to the critics to name a single book by a single English author or politician, bourgeois or Labour leader, which is as close to the essentials of the English situation as Trotsky's book. It cannot be done.' The reviewer was R. Palme Dutt.

decisive action, the proletariat might be unable to find the necessary political leadership'. There was a risk of taking the 'Lefts' in the General Council too readily at their own valuation. 'The masses are immeasurably more Left than the Left-wingers themselves. . . . In the British Labour Movement, international questions have always been the line of least resistance for the "leaders".' They used the prestige gained in the international sphere to impose a reactionary policy in domestic, class-struggle spheres. If the British communists were not to miss the boat as the Germans had done in 1923, they must 'aid the Left wing to find the proper orientation for action (the *real* Left wing and not Lansbury or Purcell)'. Apart from private correspondence, Trotsky managed to bring into an article in *Inprecorr* for March 11, reviewing events in Britain during the year since the publication of his book, a cail for 'systematic unmasking' of the 'Left' leaders. King Street remained, however, under the guidance of the dominant faction in Moscow, blind to this aspect of the situation. George Hardy, who was acting secretary of the Minority Movement during the General Strike period, records in his memoirs (*Those Stormy Years*), that, when the strike was called, 'at first many of us gave the Left wing on the [General] Council the credit for this victory, which seemed to bring into being that solidarity which we had worked so hard to create'. (After describing the betrayal of the strike, Hardy remarks: 'Although we knew of what treachery the Right-wing leaders were capable, we did not clearly understand the part played by the so-called Left in the union leadership'; and draws the conclusion that 'the main point for preparing for action must always be to develop a class-conscious leadership among the rank and file'.)

In the midst of the General Strike itself, Trotsky wrote (May 6) in his preface to the second German edition of his *Where Is Britain Going?* that the success of the struggle depended on the extent to which the workers realized the need to change their leaders and succeeded in doing this.

An English proverb says that one must not change horses while crossing a stream. This practical wisdom is true, however, only within certain limits. It has never yet been possible to cross a revolutionary stream on the horse of reformism, and a class which enters battle under opportunist leaders is compelled to change them under the enemy's fire.¹

The common betrayal of the strike by 'Rights' and 'Lefts' alike on the General Council came as a surprise to the British communists, and, in the words of J. T. Murphy (*The Political Meaning of the Great Strike*), 'the shock . . . was too great to make any quick throw-up of a new leadership possible'. The workers turned towards the party in greater numbers than ever in the months immediately following the betrayal, and by October 1926 the membership was double what it had been in April. Thereafter, however, especially with the forced surrender of the miners, a drift out of and away from the party began which was to continue steadily for many years. And the party has never since recovered the standing it enjoyed among the workers in 1925-26, even though paper membership from about 1936 onward has markedly exceeded the figure of that period. As Trotsky had warned it could, 1926 proved as tragic a year of 'might have been' for Britain as 1923 for Germany. A prominent member of the Communist Party in the General Strike period, in a so far unpublished

MS., sums up the lesson like this:

It is my considered opinion, in the light of after-happenings, that if the workers of Britain had been equipped with a leadership at all equivalent to their splendid courage, resolution and sense of solidarity, May Day, 1926, would have been the opening day of a proletarian revolution. Unhappily, history shows us by many examples that, if such a chance is missed, it takes long and many years before it can be induced to return.

The Anglo-Russian Committee had been formed to ensure mutual aid and support between the trade unionists of the two countries. But after the workers of the USSR, amid scenes of tremendous enthusiasm, had levied themselves to the extent of £1,250,000 to help the British strikers, this money was flatly rejected by the General Council. Hicks, one of the actual members of the Anglo-Russian Committee, was widely reported as denouncing 'this damned Russian gold'. It was a slap in the face which evoked moods of confusion and disappointment among the Soviet workers, feeding the cynicism about the world revolution which had already been implanted by the failure in Germany in 1923 and which was the main moral foundation for Stalinism. They had been led to believe that Purcell, Hicks, etc., were the men who were going to bring about the social revolution in Britain—and here these men were, rejecting the solidarity of the Soviet working class. A few days later these same men betrayed the strike. And, from the Soviet point of view, there was worse to come. . . . A demonstrative break with the General Council might have helped to rally the British workers by stripping the last shred of political respectability from the pseudo-Lefts. That, however, would have meant that Trotsky and the Opposition, who were calling for this very action, were right. So it was not done, and the Soviet trade union leaders added to the confusion among the British workers by continuing to hob-nob with the strikebreakers for a year after their curt rejection of Soviet aid.

The Anglo-Russian Committee was kept alive on the initiative of the Soviet partner alone, the attitude of the British leaders growing colder and colder. The spectacle of the Soviet trade union leaders running after the British had its effect in blunting the edge of the militants' criticism of the latter. In August a meeting of the Committee broke up without any agreement being reached on a Russian proposal for a joint international campaign for aid to the miners. Yet the Committee remained in being; and this undoubtedly influenced the Minority Movement's spokesmen in their adoption of a mildness of tone in their criticism of the General Council, at the Trades Union Congress not long after, for its responsibility for the failure of the General Strike, a mildness which bewildered great numbers who had been hoping for a bold lead on that occasion. A few months later, the General Council issued an ultimatum to trades councils, forbidding them to affiliate to the Minority Movement. Some of the largest trades councils in the country, such as Glasgow, Sheffield and Manchester, were opposed to this ultimatum, and a defiance could have been organized which

¹One may compare with this J. H. Thomas's statement in the House of Commons on May 13: 'What I dreaded about this strike more than anything else was this—if by any chance it should have got out of the hands of those who would be able to exercise some control, every sane man knows what would have happened. I thank God it never did.'

might have stirred the trade unions to the depths, revived the spirit, now fast draining away, of the Nine Days, and brought a salutary change of leadership. But no, King Street advised the trades councils to submit without a fight. As J. T. Murphy, one of the party leaders of that time, puts it in his *Preparing for Power* (1934): 'The workers could not understand this new alliance of the communists and the General Council, and their resistance was killed.'

Now came the final phase in the story of the Anglo-Russian Committee, and the real value of this fetish to which so much had been sacrificed was at last put to the test. In April 1927 the Committee met in Berlin. The Opposition in the CPSU demanded that the Russian representatives call for immediate action against British intervention in China. But the question was not even raised; instead, the Russians accepted a new paragraph in the Committee's constitution, demanded by the British side, forbidding any criticism of their conduct by the Russians. Even this they were now ready to swallow, though the Comintern 'theses' on the General Strike had made a point of mentioning that 'the trade unions of the USSR entered the Anglo-Russian Committee without in any way tying their hands in the matter of criticism'. This was the price they were prepared to pay for the support of the General Council against those Tories who were working for a break with the USSR. On May 12 came the Arcos raid, and shortly afterward the breaking-off of diplomatic relations. The Soviet trade unions called for an emergency meeting of the Anglo-Russian Committee to plan action to force a reversal of this move—and were refused. The house of cards had collapsed. The Anglo-Russian Committee was dead. What was supposed to function as 'the organizing centre for the international forces of the proletariat in the struggle against all attempts of the international bourgeoisie to start up a new war' had gone absent just when it was most needed.

In an article dated May 16, 1927, Trotsky recalled that 'the Opposition foretold in its writings that the maintenance of the Anglo-Russian Committee would steadily strengthen the position of the General Council, and that the latter would inevitably be converted from defendant into prosecutor'. 'Our real friends, the revolutionary workers, can only be deceived and weakened by the policy of illusions and hypocrisy.' If the Soviet trade unions had broken with the General Council in good time, 'such a policy would have forced the Left capitulators of the General Council to fight for the remnants of their reputation . . . in a word, to show the workers that they, the Left, are not half as bad as the Moscow people present them'. At the Central Committee of the CPSU on August 1, Trotsky showed how the Stalinist leadership had preferred to rely in its British policy upon the Anglo-Russian Committee rather than upon the Minority Movement: 'You rejected a small but sturdier prop for a bigger and utterly rotten one'. Comparing what had happened in Britain and what had happened in China, he went on: 'Your present policy is a policy of rotten props on an international scale. . . . Each of these props broke at the moment when it was most sorely needed. Thereupon, first you said . . . "This

is utterly incomprehensible!" in order to add on the very next day: "We always foresaw this."' (In his reply Stalin affirmed that 'the importance of the British Communist Party is growing from day to day'—something which had been true twelve months previously but had now for some time sadly ceased to be so.) *What We Gave and What We Got: The Balance Sheet of the Anglo-Russian Committee* was the title of Trotsky's article of September 23 reviewing the story of the whole sorry episode after the TUC had formally wound up the Committee, and drawing the political lessons from it. The General Council had utilized the moral support of the Soviet trade unions to help it over the politically difficult period following the General Strike; then, when securely back in the saddle again, it had kicked the Russians away with the minimum of protest among the bewildered and disappointed rank and file. This was the inevitable penalty for trying to skip over the necessary stages in building up the British Communist Party and its influence, in favour of would-be clever manoeuvres of a diplomatic character with sections of the trade union bureaucracy. What was at best a temporary and auxiliary device had been made the pivot of international communist policy in relation to Britain, so fostering dangerous illusions and sowing confusion among the genuine Left elements in Britain, communists and others. Trotsky called for publication of all the documents of the controversy around the Anglo-Russian Committee, so that comrades might judge for themselves and decide what political conclusions to draw.

In place of this, what happened was the expulsion of the Opposition from the CPSU in December 1927, and along with it a somersault to the Left in international communist policy. Having burnt its fingers in China with Chiang and in Britain with Purcell (also, incidentally, in Poland with Pilsudski) the Stalinist leadership rushed into the ultra-Leftist excesses of which my pamphlet gives some account so far as Britain is concerned. Just when, as a result of the 'Right' mistakes of the period 1926-27, the Communist Party had lost its former ascendancy and social-democratic ideas were re-establishing themselves among the workers, so that a policy of strengthening links with the masses (such as the National Left-Wing Movement) was more than ever necessary, the order went out to the communists to retreat into isolation and separate themselves from the broad movement. The genuine Left, Cook, was to be reviled as unrestrainedly as the pseudo-Left Purcell had been praised. Trotsky, with his characteristic bitter humour, spoke of people who could not distinguish the face of a revolution from its backside, and recalled 'the very well-known hero of a Russian folktale who sings wedding-songs at funerals and funeral-hymns at weddings. He gets a sound thrashing in both places'. Unfortunately it was the Communist Parties of the world and the working class generally that paid the price for the unprincipled zigzags—'zigging', as somebody said, 'when they should have zagged, and zagging when they should have zigged'—carried out by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Study of the history of the international communist movement may help us to avoid the repetition of old mistakes, at least, in new situations.

THE INADEQUACIES OF RUSSIAN TROTSKYISM

R.W. Davies

THIS IS NOT a point-by-point reply to William Hunter (*Labour Review*, vol. 2, no. 1). I concentrate on what seem to be our main differences. These concern:

- 1) The nature of 'Stalin's Russia';
- 2) The nature of the Trotskyite alternative;
- 3) The present situation in Russia.

In this article I have space to deal only with the first two.

STALIN'S RUSSIA

William Hunter treats Stalinism and the 'Stalinist bureaucracy' as regressive factors from 1923 onwards, leading astray and then crippling the Revolution, both in Russia and abroad. Trotsky summed up this view in three words: 'The Revolution Betrayed'.

I regard Stalin and the sections of the population which most actively backed him as having been dynamic and progressive in the pre-war years, leading the industrial (and educational) revolutions which were essential to the survival of the Soviet Union and which on the whole hastened the spread of socialism throughout the world. I would term it: 'The Revolution made into Russian flesh'.

Who is right?

I suppose there will be no disagreement that the Russia of 1957 is substantially in advance of the Russia of 1923. A backward peasant country at a level somewhere between India and Southern Italy has become an advanced industrial nation in which there is complete literacy, nearly half the population live in the towns, and industrial output per head of population is approaching that of Britain. Moreover this industrial revolution has created the conditions for the Soviet people to eliminate the bad side of the Stalin period and to move forward into the next stage of Soviet socialism.

If I understand him correctly, William Hunter has three replies to this.

ARGUMENT ONE: THE BUREAUCRACY

The advance was made in spite of 'the bureaucracy'.

I am sure there is no serious case for this view. What William Hunter calls (after Trotsky) 'the bureaucracy' includes, according to Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*, all managers, technicians, teachers, intellectuals, doctors, officials, etc., and their families. These semi-professional and professional sections of the population grew from one and a half per cent of the employed population in 1913 to eleven per cent in 1955. They are principally former manual workers and their children who were trained in the technical schools and universities in the intensive education schemes which began to mature during the first five-year plan.

The training of people to fill leading posts, and the posts themselves, are a necessity in any industrial revolution, capitalist or socialist; and there is no doubt that these sections of the population have played a progres-

sive part in both capitalist and socialist revolutions. You may argue that they should have been trained differently in a social sense and therefore have behaved differently. But they were undoubtedly the spearhead of industrialization and not a hindrance to it.

ARGUMENT TWO: THE TROTSKYITE ALTERNATIVE

By Trotsky's methods, it is argued, the same good results could have been obtained, but without the price that was paid.

We must examine this in some detail.

Trotsky's alternative policy may be conveniently divided into two main periods: 1923-27, when he was active in Russia, and 1928-40, when he was in exile.

a) Trotsky in opposition

In the first period there were two main occasions on which he opposed the policy of the majority of the party Central Committee.

In 1923-24 he emphasized unified national planning and priority for industry as the way out of the scissors crisis¹, warned against the bureaucratic degeneration of the party and its Old Guard, and emphasized the need for close links with the 'masses' (the Russian name for ordinary men and women), especially with the young people.

In 1926-27 the criticism went much further, partly because Trotsky had the benefit of support from experienced party administrators like Zinoviev and Kamenev. The home policy programme put forward by the 'United Opposition' could be summarized:

1) Down with the narrow nationalist conservatism which leads the party; it is in alliance with private trader and well-to-do peasant (*kulak*), and will gradually restore capitalism.

2) Take the offensive against private trader and *kulak*, and strengthen industry.

3) Improve the standard of living of industrial workers: make wages more equal, and increase them as fast as productivity.

4) End the goods shortage and the inflation.

5) Down with the party, trade union and soviet bureaucracies.

Taken as a whole, these policies clearly suffer from fundamental defects which were not present, for all their faults, in the policies of Stalin and his supporters. The common feature which runs through the Opposition programmes in 1923-27 seems to me to be that they tended to reflect the views of people who had spent much of their lives in the heady, romantic and argu-

¹In 1923, as a result mainly of the slower recovery of industry than agriculture after the Civil War, and of the monopoly position of State industry on the market, the prices of industrial goods rose more rapidly than those of agricultural goods, threatening good relations with the peasantry. This became known as the scissors crisis (after Trotsky).

mentative atmosphere of small political sects in exile at home and abroad, and looked on Russian history, conditions and problems largely through the eyes of Western intellectuals.¹ They did not base themselves firmly on the conditions and needs of the construction period, and looked on the way in which the Russian people were constructing an industrial society as a betrayal of revolutionary ideals. They could not bridge the traditional gulf between the Russian revolutionary intellectual and the common people.

For example, in 1923-24 Trotsky built his economic policy round an emphasis on planning. This was a time when planning and planning technique were in their infancy. The training of communist workers to manage and plan industry was just beginning. Elementary machinery for collecting statistics had not been established. The great controversies with the 'bourgeois economists' about *how to plan* had not taken place (they occurred in 1926-30), but it was in these controversies that top planners such as Strumilin worked out Soviet planning methods. Without this preparation and experience, talk of planning was empty: yet Trotsky put forward his proposals for central planning as an *immediate* solution to the dangerous economic situation of 1923-24. It is not surprising that his proposals found little response among the industrial workers or among economists and State administrators, and were widely supported (as far as I can find from the evidence) only by managerial and technical personnel in industry.

The prevailing attitude to his 1923-24 proposals was expressed in speeches at the Thirteenth Party Congress in April 1924. Uglanov said that instead of talking about the plan 'it would be better if Trotsky, with his rich artistry, would help us illiterate leaders of provinces to compile province budgets properly'. He added that long schemes on planned economy were very difficult to understand. Rukhimovich argued that it was not the word 'plan' that mattered, but a proper approach 'within the limits of the possible': the party, he said, was moving from the preparatory grade to the first form, and was well aware that a socialist economy implied planning above all, but "plan" in inverted commas sometimes leads to Utopia'. Rudzutak (in an otherwise rather tendentious speech) argued that planning was impossible till the currency was stabilized, so it was no good shouting about it on street corners.

In 1926-27 it was not the Opposition proposals to industrialize which were unrealistic. On the contrary, in 1929 and 1930 the industrialization drive went further and faster than the Opposition had postulated. But their policy was inadequate, and, in practical terms, irrelevant. They failed to see that in economically backward Russia, with a largely illiterate peasant population, the industrialization drive necessarily involved

¹One of the reasons that so much of what Trotsky wrote in 1923-27 seems so prophetic and timely to dissident communists today is that he saw Russia's problems through the same kind of eyes as those with which they view the crisis of British communism today. They should try reading Menshevik attacks on Lenin before the First World War; they seem even more appropriate. But Russia 1927 is agrarian Russia and Britain 1956-57 is industrialized Britain. Contemporary struggles should not be allowed to warp historical judgments. (Such appeals to Trotsky are the mirror image of the facile comparison that some ultra-orthodox communists make between Kronstadt and Budapest.)

greatly increased control from above: priorities had to be centrally decided, the standard of living had to be kept down, wages had to be more sharply differentiated so as to encourage the rapid development of skills, and the whole thing had to be run by the firmly based party machine. What one might call the 'democratic socialist' programme of the Opposition was not compatible with rapid industrialization in Russia; it was suitable only for an already industrialized country, with a literate population.

Trotsky's 'Western eyes' also led him to lack confidence in the capabilities of Russia to build up its social economy in isolation from the rest of the world (a lack of confidence which finds curious echoes in William Hunter's article). Thus Trotsky tells us that in 1927 the Left Opposition held that if capitalism continued to flourish for decades, 'then the talk of socialism in our backward country is pitiable tripe'.¹ He was a man of the heroic period, not a practical administrator; and he never fully appreciated the economic potentialities of the backward countries. He thought that owing to the 'world division of labour', 'modern productive forces are incompatible with national boundaries'. Socialism in One Country meant 'limiting ourselves to the curbed and domesticated productive forces, that is, to the technology of economic backwardness'. The world capitalist market would prove stronger than the new socialist economy: 'the control figures [of the Plan] are . . . controlled by world economy', and 'the intervention of cheaper capitalist commodities constitutes perhaps the greatest immediate menace to socialist economy'. All this led him to conclude that the proletariat of the advanced countries would 'seize power long before we have overcome our backwardness'.² In fact what is happening is that in the course of a mere half-century first Russia and then China and India are breaking the bounds of their economic backwardness and coming to stand as industrial equals to first Western Europe and then the USA; in this sense the world division of labour is being overcome. This prospect was never taken sufficiently seriously by Trotsky (in spite of the law of uneven and combined development!).

So the Opposition of 1926-27 did not accept the need for controls from above, and tended to lack confidence in Russia's ability to 'do it alone'. This led them to see the party and the party machine as inherently conservative, and to believe that powerful conservative elements within it (led by Rykov, Tomsky and Bukharin) had gained the upper hand over the 'industrializing' elements led by Stalin, Molotov and Kuibyshev. This of course proved wrong: the party machine in fact became the driving motor of the industrialization process. But their wrong assessment led them to see it as their duty to attack the party bureaucracy as a whole in a frontal assault, instead of putting forward practical detailed proposals on all the issues involved. They ended up in demagogy. Thus in 1927 Trotsky supported 'the elevation of real wages to correspond with every growth in the productivity of labour', and demanded that goods shortages should cease. But rapid industrialization could not have been carried out if large resources had not been diverted to investment, and real wages held down. And no country and no economist has yet devised a way

¹The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 280-81.

²Trotsky, *The Draft Programme of the Communist International* (1928).

of industrializing a backward country through State investment without inflation and goods shortages (compare India today)—‘the goods shortages are the fellow-traveller of the first stages of industrialization’, as Sokolnikov said when breaking with the Opposition at the Fifteenth Congress in December 1927. (Trotsky was later to argue persistently that the inflation of 1928-32 was unnecessary and likely to prove fatal, an argument which was economic nonsense.)

What kind of attitude did the rank-and-file Russian communists take to the Opposition? Trotsky made the mistake of believing that they were bound to support him. But the absence of traditions of political freedom in Russia, and the realization by sensible Russian citizens that Trotsky’s policies were largely irrelevant, combined to deprive him of serious support. The majority of party members took the attitude that the controls and discipline which were gradually introduced from 1921 onwards were necessary if socialist Russia were to survive in a hostile world, and the ideology offered them by Stalin of ‘Socialism in One Country’ summed up their outlook and united them under his leadership. They came fairly easily to accept the view that just as the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries could not be allowed freedom of speech outside the party (as Trotsky entirely agreed), so ‘Opposition voices’ could not be tolerated within it. Trotsky never really understood this: like Peter Fryer in different circumstances, he attributed the support given to the Stalinists by rank-and-file party members to intimidation and pressure, and not to genuine conviction. Of course Stalin was a political boss, and did what he could to run the machine his own way. But he was able to do this only because most of the members supported him. Trotsky had originally approved of the induction of 300,000 workers from the bench into the party after the death of Lenin; but they proved firm supporters of Stalin. These people judged the party leaders by the extent to which they were prepared to join in the practical hard work of building up the socialist economy. As early as 1924, Gnutenko, from the Donbass, took the attitude at the Thirteenth Congress that to criticize the fact that the secretaries of basic party units were appointed and not elected was to make play with trivia! Over sixty per cent of the party were politically illiterate, he argued; in the working-class areas it was the secretaries and the representatives of district committees who were active and gave reports. What was needed was to send more trained people to the Donbass, and have less in the centre taking part in discussion. This reflected a mood that later became dominant. Kollontai argued that ‘workers and the more advanced peasants are up to their eyes in important everyday work’. There had been a ‘growth in the direction of consolidating communist thinking’, and as a result, the lower you went down the ladder the more resentment about the Opposition you found. The organizing principle in the period of construction must be unity in thinking and action. The Opposition were ‘not in harmony with the moods predominating in the rank and file of the party’.¹

From our historical judgment seat, we can see that there was much that was crude and one-sided in the

¹Translated in *Inprecorr*, vol. 7, no. 64, November 17, 1927.

The above paragraph is not intended as proof that the majority of party members supported Stalin: this would require a separate article.

political outlook of the majority of Russian communists in the late nineteen twenties. The Chinese and Indians will be able to be less one-sided. But at that time, whether Trotsky liked it or not, it was people of this kind who were beginning to build socialism in Russia; there was no other social force available. If you wanted to take part, you had to learn to work with them. Trotsky failed to do so, so out he went.

b) Trotsky in exile

Trotsky in exile would accept much of this assessment of the Stalin period. When he was cross-examined by the Dewey Commission, he agreed with his questioner that bureaucracy was inevitable at the beginning of the transition from capitalism to socialism: it was an ‘iron necessity to give birth to and support a privileged minority, so long as it is impossible to guarantee genuine equality . . . to a certain degree, not an absolute measure, but to a certain degree it is an historical necessity . . . the growth of bureaucracy in the Soviet Union is the reason [evidently a misprint for ‘result’—R.W.D.] of the backwardness of the Soviet Union and its isolation.’ It was necessary that the bureaucracy should grow up ‘in so far as the Soviet Union remained isolated’.¹

But in his view the ‘bureaucracy’, from the beginning, was ‘the worst brake on the technical and cultural development of the country’; it ‘possesses all the vices of the old ruling classes but lacks their historical mission’.² This wrong assessment of the rôle of the professional and administrative sections of the Soviet population led Trotsky into strange waters during his exile in the thirties. He was in favour of rapid industrialization, but nowhere explained how this would have been possible without training a State apparatus, factory managers, etc., and giving them a higher standard of living. As his isolation in exile grew, the whole weight of his analysis became negative, hostile and panicky. In 1928 he feared that Bukharin would take over the party and lead the country back to capitalism: the attack on the *kulak* is too late, one of his followers (Bakayev) suggested at the Fifteenth Congress. In 1933 (‘Sound the Alarm!’) he spoke of the ‘profound dislocation of the Soviet economy’ and in a hysterical statement warned of the catastrophe which would result if the ‘bureaucracy’ were not overthrown. In 1937, in *The Revolution Betrayed*, he told us that in the present situation ‘a backslide to capitalism is wholly possible’, and that war ‘must lead to a bourgeois Bonapartist counter-revolution’, if the ‘bureaucracy’ was not overthrown.

Trotsky gradually came to advocate a political revolution against the Soviet government, and to argue that in the event of war, while fighting against Hitler, his supporters inside Russia should ‘conduct revolutionary propaganda against Stalin, preparing his overthrow at the next and perhaps very near stage’, their slogan being ‘For Socialism! For the World Revolution! Against Stalin!’³ These were the policies of a man who had lost touch with Soviet reality, and fortunately for the world they found little support inside Russia.

¹The Case of Leon Trotsky (1937), pp. 358-62.

²In *Defence of Marxism* (1942), pp. 6-7. At one stage Trotsky acknowledged ‘the progressive work accomplished by the Soviet bureaucracy’ in following ‘the logic of its own interests’ (*The Kirov Assassination* (1935)).

³In *Defence of Marxism*, p. 20.

ARGUMENT THREE: THE WORLD REVOLUTION

The third aspect of the Trotskyite position might be put like this: *You may be right that Stalinist Russia was an inevitable stage, but it was inevitable only in so far as we think of Russia in isolation. But Russia was isolated only because of Stalin's policy. If Trotsky's international policy had been followed, the revolution would have triumphed in China and Germany in the twenties, and possibly in other advanced countries as well.*

I am not an authority on the history of the world communist movement, but it does seem to me that this argument will not stand up to historical criticism. In addition to Russia, at least three countries have carried out successful communist revolutions on their own internal resources, without large-scale Soviet military aid: Yugoslavia (1945-49), China (1933-49) and Poland (1956). In each of these countries, what happened *inter alia* was that the Communist Party leaders ceased to rely primarily on the advice of Russian politicians for their basic policies (in each case they specifically rejected it, apparently, at the critical point). Instead they built their revolution on their own experience and on popular national support. But in Germany 1923 and China 1926-27, if I understand the position correctly, the choice was between two sets of Russian policies: the faction fights reflected quarrels in Moscow about German and Chinese policies. The blunt truth was that Trotsky, Stalin and Bukharin were all incapable of giving proper advice to Germans, Chinese or British. When R. P. Dutt called on Trotsky to carry forward his interpretation and elucidation of British politics, and to elaborate his analysis 'which is so much needed in England'¹, he was uncovering the immaturity of British communist thought as strikingly as when Stalin-supported solutions to our problems were accepted in 1929 (and 1951?). When did Tito or Mao Tse-tung become leaders of their nations? When they saw Trotsky was right and Stalin was wrong? No; only when they had sufficient experience in political leadership and knowledge of their own country's history and needs to find their own way forward.

Let me make it clear that I am *not* one of those who thinks that 'Russian tutelage' was a harmful thing for the world communist movement from the beginning. That Pollitt and Rothstein emerged as an alternative to Macdonald and J. H. Thomas in the twenties was a very good thing for British socialism, and the young Communist Parties would probably have fallen apart without the centralized control of the Comintern, however peculiar and Russian-flavoured the leadership of Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin. But once firmly established, every Communist Party has to find its own painful way forward to independence or drastically lessen its influence in its own country. Such independence does not necessarily involve a break with the world communist movement, as the Chinese and Polish examples have shown (the Italians too, both Togliatti and his 'revisionist' critics, have made serious contributions to Marxist political thought within the framework of the world communist movement). And it has never involved becoming Trotskyite: indeed, in the thirties to become a Trotskyite meant to advocate political revolution in Russia, and therefore to deprive yourself of

¹Labour Monthly, 1926, p. 241.

serious influence in any Communist Party. Mao, Tito and Gomulka would not have got where they are if they had been Trotskyites in the thirties.

What I am saying is this. Socialism outside Russia was unachievable because of the immaturity of working-class thought and of the Marxist parties, not primarily because of Stalin's good or bad advice.¹ Compare the experience, maturity, influence and numerical strength of the Chinese communists in 1926 with that of the Bolsheviks in 1917. Were the Chinese communists really in a position to lead, or capable of leading, a successful proletarian revolution? And after discussions with both 'Stalinist' and 'anti-Stalinist' German communists I am not surprised that neither Ruth Fischer nor Thaelmann became Premier of a German People's Republic; what does surprise me is that six million Germans voted communist!

If I am right in concluding that Stalin's influence on the revolution outside Russia was marginal, then he must be judged by his success in building up the economy of his own country.

And what of Trotsky?

TROTSKY IN PERSPECTIVE

Trotsky was not the first person to be placed in a dilemma by the economic and cultural backwardness of revolutionary Russia. Sukhanov in his Notes on the 1917 revolution² was preoccupied with this dilemma, and came to the conclusion that the Bolshevik revolution was a mistake: the proletariat should not 'take up arms against the entire old world . . . in our ruined, half-wild, petty-bourgeois, economically-shattered country'. Instead it should have collaborated, he said, with the petty-bourgeois revolutionary parties—Lenin's policy 'obliged the new government and the Bolsheviks themselves to perform tasks they knew to be beyond their strength'. Sukhanov and his colleagues, like Trotsky ten years later, found themselves described as 'deserters and lackeys of the enemies of the people'. Fifteen years later, Ciliga, a disillusioned supporter of Trotsky, also came to the conclusion that the Russian Revolution was a mistake; Russia was too backward for it to succeed. Inside the Communist Party, the Workers' Opposition and Democratic Centralist groups fought a losing battle against Trotsky and Lenin in 1919-21 for essentially the same kind of policy as that which Trotsky supported in 1927. Trotsky is a link in a long chain of failures.

But the conclusion to be drawn is not the absurd one that the Russian Revolution should not have taken place. Nor is it sensible to argue that Sukhanov 'ought to' have come to power in 1917, Shlyapnikov in 1920, Trotsky in 1924-27, or Tomsy in 1930. We have seen that social backing inside Russia for a 'democratic' socialism was lacking. Any of them, in power, would have had to have behaved more or less like first Lenin and then Stalin, if rapid industrialization was to take place, and the Revolution was to be firmly grounded in the Russian nation and its history. The proper con-

¹I leave aside here the question of how far objective conditions, independent of what communists did, made revolutions impossible anyway. There was a marked tendency by communists in general and Trotskyites in particular to exaggerate the prospects of revolution (see Borkenau, *The Communist International*, for evidence of this).

²Partly translated in Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution: a Personal Record*.

clusion is that the Russian Revolution has been through a difficult but necessary phase, and that it is now our job to study it and draw lessons from it.

I have been concerned in this article with clearing away certain Trotskyite misconceptions. But that is a small and easy part of the work which British socialist students of Soviet society must undertake. It is foolish and unhistorical to paint Utopian pictures, as the Trotskyites tend to do, of what the world would have been like if—. But it is a proper function of the historian to dissect Soviet experience, and to reach conclusions from it. The Chinese and Indian peoples want to minimize suffering and widen the bounds of freedom in their industrialization. British socialists and communists want to work for a socialist society in our country which is compatible with our traditions of civil liberty, and does away with our traditions of narrow-minded and philistine nationalism.

If Soviet experience is to help to show us what to do and what to avoid, we must analyze carefully the social contradictions and ideology of the Stalin period. In this work, Trotsky's stimulating writings, shorn of their excesses, must of course be used. I welcome in this connection G. Healy's declaration (quoted in *The Newsletter*, no. 1, May 10, 1957) that no one should be put on a pedestal, and that we should all read, study and

examine every point of view.

But if the Trotskyites want to contribute seriously to creative Marxism, and not get in the way of the new start that is being made, de-Stalinization is not enough. The Trotskyites must be thoroughly de-Trotskyized. They must abandon their excursions into syndicalist romanticism and their hourly expectation of bloody revolution in the Old Town Square. They must drop this silly stuff about 'For Soviet Britain'—the Communist Party got over that a couple of decades ago, and no one is going to waste time arguing with them in such terms. They must cease in practice as well as in words to treat Lenin and Trotsky, those politicians of a past era, as the main oracles on things Russian and British. Their reports on Soviet affairs must be fuller and more realistic, discussing the past writings of (say) Bukharin, Kamenev, Mikoyan and Kalinin as well as those of Trotsky, telling us what we can learn about Soviet society from Ovechkin as well as Dudintsev. They must study and learn from Stalin and Mao Tse-tung, the greatest practical exponents so far of the art of constructing socialism in backward countries. If the Trotskyite egg is to be merged in our new Marxist omelette, its hard dogmatic shell must be thoroughly smashed.

Or is it premature to think that British Marxists have reached the stage when they can begin an objective study of the history of the world communist movement?

SOME NOTES ON DETAILS

(1) My article in the *Marxist Quarterly* was not, as William Hunter suggests, 'walking in the footprints of Khrushchev'. It was written months before the Khrushchev speech was published, most of it in fact in the summer of 1955 before the Twentieth Congress, as a footnote specifically stated.

(2) The published article was dealing primarily with the post-war period: I stated that 'the section dealing with the pre-war period has been considerably abridged here for space reasons'. I eventually decided not to publish the pre-war section, as most of the points it covered were dealt with more adequately in the Togliatti interview.

(3) I did not say that the Trotskyites were opponents of industrialization in 1923-29, as William Hunter implies. I said they 'thought that socialism could not be built in this backward country without the help of revolutionary governments in the West'. I agree, however, that my statement that in the early thirties 'restrictions were placed on the political rights of opponents of industrialization' was wrong and misleading. I should have said 'restrictions were placed on the political rights of opponents and critics of the Soviet government, who were regarded as endangering the industrialization process'—a very different story.

(4) I do not wish to found yet another school in the 'Is Russia really Socialist?' controversy. In this article I have argued that the view that the Russian State in the thirties was a step back

from the twenties is erroneous. William Hunter is right that industrialization by the State is not necessarily full socialism; but the point is that industrialization is a necessary stage in the achievement of socialism in a backward country. I therefore cannot accept Trotsky's term 'a workers' State degenerated' for the thirties (though I tend to agree with the use made by Togliatti of the word 'degeneration' for the early fifties). Nor do I find the term 'state capitalism' (Tito 1954 and Tony Cliff) appropriate: it does not make clear the differences in structure and values between the social systems of Russia and America. The statement that what has happened so far in Russia is 'early socialism' and that she is now entering the stage of 'middle socialism' corresponds most closely to my view (on this point, see J.M. in *Soviet Studies*, vol. VII, no. 4, April 1956, p. 436).

(5) William Hunter asks me to 'tell us how "inner-party democracy" can be concerned with the "formation of policy" when anyone who even tries to question the correctness of what the bureaucrats say is denounced as a "rotten element"'. The short answer is:

a) the extension of inner-party democracy must go a lot further;

b) inner-party struggle is in fact already changing policy in the USSR much more than it did in the past—see Ovechkin's sketches, summarized in *Soviet Studies* from 1953 onwards.

A Comment

Leonard Hussey

THE ARTICLE by R. W. Davies is on an altogether different plane from the traditional type of Stalinist critique of Trotsky. Instead of the counterposing of 'Trotskyism' to Leninism, we have a frank bracketing of Lenin and Trotsky as 'those politicians of a past era'. Instead of the familiar bogey-image of Trotsky as arch-militarist and would-be dictator, we have Trotsky judged as a man who wanted to carry democracy beyond the bounds of 'realism'.

Nevertheless, though Davies' approach is more honest and more frank than usual, his case is founded on a series of misunderstandings.

To begin with, it is not true that Trotsky was against having officials and specialist personnel in a workers' State. Indeed, his first clash with Stalin, Voroshilov and their group took place in 1919 over his insistence on using the services of ex-Tsarist officers in the Red Army. Trotsky, however, like Lenin, appre-

ciated that if a workers' State was to remain a workers' State its officials must be subject to strict democratic control and must not be allowed to become a privileged caste, while a steady campaign should be undertaken to draw the masses of the people into the work of government with a view to the eventual complete 'withering away of the State'. The 1919 programme of the Russian Communist Party showed full awareness of this problem. Bukharin and Preobrazhensky wrote in their official commentary on the Party programme—published here in 1922 by the CPGB as *The A.B.C. of Communism*: 'The workers did not destroy the old official-ridden State with the intention of letting it grow up again from the roots.' The (non-'Trotskyist') historian of Bolshevism, Arthur Rosenberg, expresses thus the contrast between what should have happened and what did happen:

A genuine dictatorship of the proletariat could not dispense with able officials. These officials, however, would in such a case be subject to a continuous democratic control exercised by the masses and would thus maintain connection with the masses. In the Russian dictatorship, on the contrary, the official ruled the masses with the aid of party and State discipline. Hence the ex-proletarian under this system, on entering the service of the governmental machine, ceased psychologically and actually to be a member of the working-class.

Neither Trotsky nor any of his associates ever called for the immediate introduction of equality of income.¹ What they protested against was something for which Davies seems to have a blind spot—the monstrous expansion of a legitimate and necessary 'income-differential' until quantity turned into quality and a social system came into being in which a comparatively small group at the top was annexing the surplus value produced by the majority. (David Dallin, in his book *The Changing World of Soviet Russia*, estimates that an upper group comprising twelve to fourteen per cent of the Soviet population nowadays takes from 31 to 35 per cent of the distributed national income—about the same proportion as is taken by the workers and more than goes to the peasants.)

Is democracy a luxury?

To Trotsky it seemed that the despotism of Stalin had for its *raison d'être* the maintenance of this pattern of distribution. Davies, on the contrary, sees the suppression of democracy in the USSR in the Stalin era as something which was necessary for the building up of the Soviet economy. Now, in this connection, since Davies tells us that he omitted the section dealing with pre-war events from his *Marxist Quarterly* article because 'most of the points it covered were dealt with more adequately in the Togliatti interview', it is important to note that Togliatti did not endorse Davies' paternalistic attitude on the question of democracy.²

¹Never before has the Soviet Union known an inequality comparable to that which now reigns. . . . Naturally a certain inequality is still inevitable at present; but the point is that this inequality increases from year to year, and assumes monstrous forms—and that it is being paraded as . . . socialism'. (*Bulletin of the Opposition*, Oct. 1936)

²Perhaps the principal reason why the British Stalinists have refused to publish Edvard Kardelj's speech of December 7, 1956, on the events in Hungary, is his forthright assertion that 'socialism cannot make progress without a parallel development of democracy', and that when a process of bureaucratization is allowed to get under way in a communist-ruled country 'it begins to engender not only Stalin but also the Hungarian events'.

The Italian communist leader regretted, in that famous interview, the 'sterilizing of the activity of the masses in the very places and organs . . . where the real and new difficulties of the situation should have been faced'. He declared that the bureaucratization of the USSR, by hindering 'the democratic functioning of the State', produced 'obvious and very real damage'.

There is a vital difference of principle here. Davies sees democracy as a luxury which is beyond the means of backward countries trying to modernize themselves. Togliatti, in the interview quoted, follows Trotsky in presenting democracy as *essential* for successful and healthy progress. Forecasting, back in the early nineteen thirties, the very disproportions and devastations in the economy which have been revealed since 1953, Trotsky warned against the bureaucracy's conception of itself as something like Laplace's fantasy of a 'universal brain', able to plan everything on the basis of comprehensive knowledge. Instead of what they hoped, there occurred such disasters as the loss of horses between 1928 and 1935 in numbers representing a greater traction power than was provided by the manufacture and import of tractors in the same period. After 1928 Stalin never went to look at the state of agriculture for himself, and so the errors in this sphere piled up year by year, creating the appalling situation with which Davies, as a student of Soviet economics, is fully familiar. Would not Soviet democracy have prevented this? In his pamphlet *The Assassination of Kirov*, Trotsky argued that 'an equilibrium between the various branches of production and, above all, a correct balance between national accumulation and consumption, can be achieved only with the active participation of the entire toiling population in the elaboration of the plans, the necessary freedom to criticize the plans, and the opportunity of fixing the responsibility and of recalling the bureaucracy from top to bottom'.

Davies challenges anyone to deny that the USSR has made great progress economically. That is certainly true, and testifies to the advantages of public ownership and planning, even under bureaucratic management. (Commenting on the achievements of the British coal industry, the *Daily Worker* of June 6, 1957, could observe: 'Even capitalist nationalization—with excessive compensation for the old owners, with managers trained in the old traditions and therefore suspicious of workers' participation—has, because of the economies possible in a unified industry, begun to yield good results'.) It is important, however, not to get these successes out of proportion—but that is the method systematically practised by the Stalinists. Already in 1926, at the Fifteenth Party Conference, Trotsky made this point.

It is brought up against me that I have stated that 'a real advance of socialist economy will only be possible after the victory of the proletariat in the most important countries of Europe'. Perhaps, comrades, we have grown careless in the use of certain terms. What do we understand by 'socialist economy' in the strict sense of the term? We have great successes to record, and naturally we are proud of these. I have endeavoured to describe them in my booklet *Towards Socialism or Capitalism?* for the benefit of foreign comrades [translated in *Labour Monthly*, 1925—L.H.]. But we must make a sober survey of the extent of these successes. . . . If we speak of socialist economy, and of a real advance in socialist economy, we mean: no antagonism between town and country, general contentment, prosperity, culture. . . . And we are still far indeed from this goal. . . . What we have accomplished is

not yet a real advance of socialist economy but only the first serious steps on that long bridge leading from capitalism to socialism.

(Six years later, when Trotsky protested against the way the Stalinists were discrediting the name of socialism by claiming that Russia was already 'entering into it' at a time when there was not enough milk for the children to drink, Radek, then functioning as Official Spokesman, blandly replied: 'Milk is a product of cows, not of socialism.')

Was Trotsky unpractical?

Davies depicts the Left Opposition as unpractical persons, ignorant of Russian reality¹ and of the actual problems of administration, unable to put forward workable plans. He dismisses Trotsky's call for planning in 1923 by saying that the preparatory work needed for planning to begin (in 1928) did not start until 1926. It is not clear why this work could not have been started in 1923, which would have made the commencement of planning possible in 1925. And that would have made a big difference, for the *kulaks* were nowhere near so strongly entrenched in 1925 as three years later (when the 'grain strike' broke out which provoked the terrified bureaucracy into its disastrous forcible collectivization campaign). Trotsky, far from being remote from administration, suffered, in Lenin's opinion (in the 'Testament'), from the defect of being excessively keen on it! Already before 1923 he had given evidence of the possibilities of large-scale planning by his work to restore the railways ('Order 1042', on which see Chapter VII of Trotsky's book *The New Course*.) And nobody should take seriously Davies' dismissal of the Opposition 'platform' of 1927 (*The Real Situation in Russia*) as a document without practical proposals. It was the very practicality of its proposals to increase taxes on the *kulaks* and reduce the swollen bureaucratic apparatus that brought down the wrath of Stalin and Bukharin upon its authors. (Incidentally, the proposal in the 'platform' to increase wages in accordance with the increase in the productivity of labour is not to be taken, as Davies appears to have taken it, to mean that the entire new surplus product should be distributed. As the context makes clear, what is meant is this: if workers are producing 100 units of value and receiving back, say, 50 units, and then they increase production to 150 units, they should receive back 75 units (not 100). Trotsky and his comrades envisaged productivity advancing through incentives to the mass of the workers.)²

¹Whoever thinks Trotsky was ignorant of the life of the ordinary Russian people should read his book *Problems of Life* (1923; English edition, 1924). Devoted to an examination of the task of raising the cultural level of the Russian masses, it stresses their backwardness in matters taken for granted in the West, and the need for persistent, painstaking work, at first for modest aims (such as more laundries), instead of big, boastful talk.

²The actual words of the passages in the Opposition platform to which Davies refers are as follows: 'At the same time all data go to show that the growth of wages falls behind the growth in the productivity of labour. The intensity of labour grows, the unfavourable conditions of labour remain the same. . . .

'The most immediate task is the increasing of wages, at least in keeping with the increase which has been achieved in the productivity of labour. To steer a course for the systematic increasing of real wages parallel with a further growth in the productivity of labour. . . .'

In his discussion of the reasons for Stalin's triumph over Trotsky, Davies leaves out of account the well-attested intimidation of the party rank and file by the bureaucracy in the period 1923-25. At the Fourteenth Party Congress, Krupskaya spoke of the existence of 'a secretariat invested with enormous powers that enable it to remove party workers from their posts, and which actually enjoys unlimited authority'. Opposition manifestos were kept from the membership and their circulation made an offence, while sympathizers with the opposition were victimized by being transferred to remote districts, and so on. Such methods had their effect, especially in conjunction with international developments. The defeat of the revolution in Germany in 1923 and in China in 1927, the betrayal of the General Strike in Britain in 1926, Pilsudski's victory in Poland (with Communist backing) also in 1926—all these events helped to discredit the internationalist outlook and reinforce the appeal to baffled and bewildered Russian workers of Stalin's doctrine of 'socialism in one country'. Davies claims that the part played in these international setbacks by the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy was 'marginal', but there is, perhaps, more to be said on this matter than he appreciates.

Stalinism and world revolution

If the Chinese Communist Party, for instance, was weak in 1927, did that circumstance not owe something, at least, to the policy followed by the Comintern since 1923, when it admitted the Kuomintang to its ranks? On Moscow's orders, the Chinese communists submitted passively to Chiang Kai-shek's Canton *coup d'état* in March 1926, and thereafter tailed helplessly behind him until he turned upon them and decimated them a little over a year later (just after Stalin had boasted about how he was 'using' Chiang and would throw him aside in due course 'like a squeezed lemon'). In Malraux's novel *Man's Estate*, which is laid in China in this period, a Chinese worker, full of foreboding on the eve of the debacle, mutters that 'the Russians did as they wished' in October 1917, without any Comintern being there to cramp them. Plenty of evidence exists that the Comintern, which in 1919-22 undoubtedly helped the development of world communism, played from 1923 onwards a sadly negative role in crisis after crisis in the revolutionary movement in the capitalist world. In the case of Germany, for instance, we have Piatnitsky's own complacent testimony that the German communists had qualms about joining with the nazis in the fatal referendum of 1931 and that they were brought into line on this question by the emissaries of the Comintern.

Perhaps the most serious negative influence which Stalin exerted upon the world revolutionary movement, however, was achieved through the consequences of his domestic policy.¹ In the Togliatti interview mentioned by Davies the Italian leader tells how the Stalinists in charge of the Lenin School drummed it into him and his fellow-students that they must not reveal to the workers of the West the frightful sacrifices which the Soviet workers were making. In the end, though, the

¹The 1934 Theses of the Fourth International on war observed: 'The monstrous development of Soviet bureaucratism and the wretched living conditions of the toilers have extremely reduced the attractive power of the USSR for the world working class.'

workers of the West learnt the truth—and were all the more adversely affected because of the attempt the Communist Parties had made to conceal it, and to put across propaganda diametrically opposed to it.

In conclusion, Davies does Trotsky, at any rate, an injustice when he writes of a tendency of 'Trotskyists in particular' to 'exaggerate the prospects of revolution'. In 1924-25 and again in 1929-32 it was Trotsky who fought against the 'revolution-round-the-corner' illusions of the Comintern, especially in relation to Germany.¹ What Davies seems really to object to, though, is the principled stand taken by Trotsky and his associates on fundamental questions of the working-class movement. Thus Davies writes that 'the Trotskyists . . . must drop that silly stuff about "For Soviet Britain"—the CP got over that a couple of decades ago. . . .' What, incidentally, does he mean by 'got over'? Early in 1935 the British communists issued their programme, *For Soviet Britain*. In August the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern took place. Thereafter, there was certainly no more talk of 'Soviet Britain'—but when was there any discussion as to *why* this prospect had been abandoned? Then, nearly a generation later, in 1951, equally suddenly, *The British Road to Socialism* was

¹See for example Trotsky's **World Unemployment and the Five-Year Plan** (1930), which set forth a plan for a campaign for what would now be called 'East-West trade'. This was a terrible heresy in those days, and all the more so when Trotsky advocated it. The unfortunate J. T. Murphy was expelled from the CPGB in 1932 for calling for something like it—and the fact that it was he who had, in his time, moved the resolution expelling Trotsky from the Comintern, did not help him in his own hour of need!

promulgated, with its full-blown parliamentary conception and its sneer at soviets.¹ It is not only Trotskyists who have doubts about the new conception and 'hanker after' soviets—Davies will recall, for instance, the remarkable letter in *World News* of March 9 by Peter Cadogan, during the pre-congress discussion. He wrote, of course, of workers' councils, not of 'soviets'; and indeed no party could advance the slogan 'For Soviet Britain' today, because the word 'soviet' has lost its original associations for most workers and now stands in their minds merely for Stalinist Russia. Hence the bitter anomaly of the 'anti-Soviet soviets' in Hungary—obverse of the situation in the Soviet Union, 'the Soviet land without soviets'. That Davies, a communist, can write so contemptuously of workers' councils as the political instrument of transition to socialism is the measure of the confusing and distorting effect which Stalinism has had on the thought of Marxists who, having fallen captive to its specious appeal in the period of the Popular Front, have not yet learnt the lessons of the last twenty years. It is to be hoped that further study of Trotsky's writings, plus—dare I say?—'life itself', will enable Davies to shake off the incubus, and in the very near future too.

¹In his speech at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern (published as a pamphlet: **Unity Against the National Government**) Pollitt had still declared British communists' rejection of the idea that socialism could be won 'through Parliament'. The version of this speech given in **Selected Articles and Speeches of Harry Pollitt**, vol. I, published by Lawrence & Wishart in 1953, changes the phrase to 'through Parliament alone'. Thus are historical documents edited and difficulties 'got over'.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF BRITISH CAPITALISM — II *Tom Kemp*

The stability of capitalism

EMPHASIS was laid in the first part of this article upon four major related determinants of the recent expansive phase of British capitalism. They are as follows: (1) government-sponsored investment, especially in housing; (2) arms expenditure; (3) the technological spurt; and (4) world market expansion. It may be observed that the alleged structural changes within the system with which Strachey begins his analysis of *Contemporary Capitalism* have here been passed over, and the forces and relationships which have been instrumental in opening up new avenues of investment and demand have been brought into prominence. The validity of Strachey's concept of 'last stage capitalism' needs to be considered at length. But for this article it seemed almost wholly irrelevant. We have seen that a favourable combination of factors, operating on an international scale, and containing the seeds of their own exhaustion, have been sufficiently powerful to eliminate unemployment for over twelve years and to bring about a fairly sustained upsurge in the economy of Britain and of other countries. This outcome has, however, little to do with the 'growing enlightenment' of

the representatives of capitalism or with the influence of Keynes on politicians or, indeed, with the economic consequences of democracy. Furthermore, those who believe that the problem of maintaining full employment has now been solved, implicitly assume the continuance of these conditions or the ability of a British government to counteract the of course depressive effect of one or more of them petering out.

It is impossible to *disprove* the thesis that British capitalism is capable of a long, sustained, peaceful and prosperous advance. But it is fruitful to appraise it on the basis of probabilities, drawing upon historical experience and upon the results of the analysis and diagnosis of past and current trends. Very well! We shall not shirk the job.

Will there be unemployment in Britain?

The period since the war constitutes only a brief period in the history of British capitalism. While it is clear that important new factors have arisen in the last two decades, it is equally plain that the adverse changes in Britain's world position have been overlaid by a series of special, favourable circumstances. Crystal-

gazing apart, it is impossible to say which of these favourable factors are likely to remain operative and which of the adverse factors are likely to continue to operate, whether with reduced or heightened effect. It would seem to be particularly foolhardy to draw optimistic conclusions about the future prospects of British capitalism when it is realized that the special factors which have been sustaining it in this post-war period, far from being the sort of built-in factors which are self-perpetuating, may well be simply using themselves up without prospect of renewal and becoming less and less significant.

Nevertheless, many professional economists appear to accept the most favourable view of the future of British capitalism. This view, essentially Keynesian, rests upon a simple proposition to which reference has already been made—namely, that known, proved measures for maintaining full employment exist and that they will be made timely and successful use of by future governments *should need arise*. If this is accepted there is, of course, no further argument about the possibility of future crises and unemployment arising from a deficiency in demand. Government-steered capitalism is, these economists believe, capitalism without crisis, capable of further unlimited growth. Even at a superficial level there are certain flaws in the argument. For example, it is founded on a certain naïve faith in the perspicacity of politicians which was not shared, say, by Adam Smith. It also contains implicit assumptions about class harmony in society which some people would say are not very realistic. Moreover, the remedies imply some renunciation of economic sovereignty by individual countries in the interest of maintaining full employment in others.

In Britain, regardless of what happens elsewhere, the maintenance of full employment cannot be regarded as a foregone conclusion. It is well known that the very idea of a 'full employment economy' has always been regarded with scepticism and hostility in some quarters. Such terminology as 'brimful' and 'over-full' employment itself betrays a belief that unemployment levels are pathologically low. From time to time the *Economist* and other journals present persuasive arguments recommending increases in the unemployment rate—to squeeze the 'slack' out of the economy. A Tory government, when pressed, might well be prepared to sacrifice full employment for other objectives, such as for example, a desire to inflict some crushing industrial or political defeat on the trade unions or Labour Party. Alternatively, a Tory government might be prompted to take drastic action to curb internal uncontrolled inflation which was seriously threatening Britain's external status.

The present large investments in 'automation' in some branches of industry are a further possible source of crisis. Until the summer of 1956 the rapid introduction of automated machines and the consequent displacement of labour which had taken place in some sectors of industry was concealed by the buoyancy of the market and the expansion of production at a sufficiently rapid rate to reabsorb labour displaced by technical improvements. It is not difficult to see that if home and foreign demand do not remain high (in fact this demand must continue to increase at a steady rate) there will be 'overproduction'. The ensuing technologically-induced unemployment will necessarily be followed

by the spread of other kinds of unemployment and perhaps by the ignition of a general crisis. The heavy investment undertaken in some sectors will then prove to be an incubus on profits and as a result large cut-backs in the labour force and the closing of some plants could then be anticipated. Such eventualities have already been foreshadowed by the recent 'labour redundancies' in the motor industry, but the main effects of this were soon counteracted by other factors which continued to keep the overall demand for labour at a high level.

Without our following through these arguments in detail there is a *prima facie* case for stating that a sharp change in any one or more of these rather special features of the post-war economy could detonate a crisis of the classic type—that is, there would be shrinking markets, falling investment, declining prices, unemployment and a pessimistic re-assessment of future prospects in business and industrial circles, which would provide the first really serious practical test for the theories of how to apply 'counter-cyclical' measures. Moreover, international complicating factors are already on the horizon.

The permanent crisis in the British economy

If the economy of Britain, and that of the capitalist world at large, has not experienced a crisis of over-production of the classic type since the 1939-45 war, the term 'crisis' has been on all our lips so frequently as to depreciate somewhat its meaning. An economy in which 'crisis', whether actual or impending, can be diagnosed with such monotonous regularity would, on the face of it, be regarded as inherently unstable. In most years since 1945, strains of varying character have been present, including, for example, the coal shortage of 1947, a depression in the cotton industry, incipient unemployment in some other sectors of industry, 'redundancy' in motors in 1956 and the current consequences of the Suez affair.

Inflation appears to have become inherent in the economy and the pound has steadily lost value since 1939; the ever-present risk that this so far 'suppressed' inflation should assume a runaway character, which would mean social chaos and breakdown, can hardly be associated with a healthy organism. Underlying all this, a mirror of the adverse change in Britain's world position, has been the ever-recurrent 'balance of payments' question, which has assumed crisis dimensions at various times between 1945 and 1951 and has been on the agenda once again since 1955. Of course, in the short intervals between these dates, a good deal of optimism was stimulated by each temporary improvement in the position. Each time talk has been heard of restoring the convertibility of sterling. Since 1955 a tense struggle has been necessary to avoid even a further devaluation, and such a possibility should not be excluded for the period ahead. Meanwhile the gold and dollar reserves have become a sensitive index of the condition of British economy and threats to these reserves always now result in the sudden application of emergency measures, such as the 'credit squeeze' in the summer of 1955, only a few months after the Conservative election victory. Indeed the problem of the balance of payments is closely related to that of internal inflation, since upon relative prices depend the prospects of British goods in export markets. This has

meant that the more or less normal, though hardly successful, guerilla struggle against it (by every means from 'premium' bonds to raising the price of babies' milk) has turned into a more open and intensive campaign to curtail demand in the home market whenever the external stability of the economy has been threatened. Increases in the bank rate, restrictions on hire purchase, removal of food subsidies, cuts in public expenditure have, therefore, all been determined primarily by the external situation. The whole operation of cutting living standards is closely watched by speculators at home and abroad and bears the contingent risk of overshooting the mark and precipitating a downward plunge in some major segments of the economy.

The importance of inflation

It is not surprising that inflation has become a main focus of attention for economic opinion in recent years. While some measure of inflation seems to be inseparable from full employment under capitalism (and to this extent it has its defenders) it is also responsible for serious distortions, inflexibilities and 'disincentives-to-effort'. Potentially, inflation is a source of complete economic prostration should confidence in the monetary unit ever disappear. The allocation of responsibility for inflation gives rise to serious problems; undoubtedly a major share today lies with the government and with its control of the monetary and credit system, reinforced by supply and demand conditions in world and national markets. Like all similar phenomena, inflation feeds on itself and, having gone on so long, tends to be taken for granted. So much is this the case that one of the surprising features of the situation is the willingness of the public to go on saving in terms of a unit which is continuously losing purchasing power.

A convenient scapegoat for the continued inflationary pressure has been found in the trade unions and their wage demands. This takes the form of pleas for 'wage restraint' and the argument, which appears in various guises, that if wage-earners would forego some present consumption (i.e. allow prices to move ahead of wages) this would enable a more rapid rate of investment and provide a solid basis for a rise in real wages in the future.

It is most important to grasp that the weakness of this argument lies not in its logic. A socialist government would be fully justified in asking for such a sacrifice to be made to enable a more rapid rate of investment in socialist industry to take place. Even so it would need to explain fully the reasons for the call and have the full confidence of the workers in carrying through its policy. But in a capitalist society this argument means, in effect, that workers should *abstain* from consumption (by foregoing wage increases) in order to increase the rate of capital accumulation while capital is privately owned. Indeed there are not even any guarantees that profits would be 'ploughed back'—for the profits of business might simply increase without any new investment being undertaken. But certainly the capitalists will guarantee no security for the workers' jobs, and there is no certainty that crises would be avoided in the future. This argument makes, therefore, a wholly unjustifiable assumption about the nature of class relations in capitalist society and about its future prospects. It asks the working class to abandon all its hopes for ending the system in which one man exploits

the labour of many. It calmly ignores the whole gravamen of the socialist's criticism of capitalism.

The wide circulation and influence in the Labour movement itself of such exhortations rejects both the bankruptcy of official trade union policy and the absence of all economic theory—except ordinary capitalist theory—among many trade union officials.

Post-war economic policy in Britain has had the appearance of a succession of more or less unrelated expedients to meet unforeseen emergencies. In this respect the change in 1951 from a Labour to a Tory government made little fundamental difference. Both governments were favourably assisted by persistent expansionist forces in the world economy which enabled crises in Britain to be limited or localized. Such limited crises have come up for solution one after the other rather than occurring simultaneously, and in the circumstances 'muddling through' has not been disastrous. Under the Labour government more reliance was placed upon direct controls inherited from the war period, but its policies showed little coherence. No more than lip-service was given to the much-vaunted planning which was to solve the problems of the post-war world. The Tories have ended a great many of the war-time physical controls on the economy and, taking the credit for the relaxation of some irksome restrictions made possible by improvements in supply conditions, have, to the satisfaction of banking and business circles and many professional economists, depended mainly upon the old style monetary and fiscal measures still masquerading in Keynesian garb. Certainly, on its record, neither government has offered evidence of being able to cope with a crisis situation of the type which struck the country in the thirties. They take shelter behind the spurious reasoning that the American economy is the main source of crisis, today as it was in 1929, and they are confident that the American government *will* take the necessary measures.

It is clear therefore that to a very large degree the maintenance of full employment in Britain since 1945 owes more to a highly favourable world conjuncture than to changes in capitalism or to deliberate policy. Meanwhile the economic situation has been undergoing continuous change. The world of 1957 is by no means the world of 1945; nor is it, economically, much like what would have been expected by *anyone* surveying the prospects at that time. Certainly some of the more pessimistic estimates have not been realized. The ability of modern societies to bear wars and recover from them proved greater than then seemed possible to socialists. The post-war boom, followed by the crash, which seemed the obvious deduction to make from the experience of the economic aftermath of former wars, turned into a more or less sustained boom. Industrial production began an upward march almost everywhere with a particularly rapid growth from the early fifties. Under these conditions economists have largely put behind them those portions of their analysis dealing with the problem of inadequate demand. But it would be premature for the socialist movement to do likewise.

Present trends in Britain's economy

A brief examination of the more recent signs of expansion in British economy indicates possible sources of its own limitation, and the signs of future contraction are perhaps to be seen, if as yet only dimly. The

impact of the Suez war (which itself shows how unexpectedly new factors can come into the situation) and the petrol shortage which succeeded it have further revealed the weaknesses in Britain's position.

The Economic Survey for Europe in 1955, published by the Economic Commission for Europe, an agency of the United Nations, was devoted mainly to the problems of 'balanced growth' growing out of the expansion then proceeding. It included, however, a brief but significant analysis of some recent trends in Europe's trade with the rest of the world. Europe's prosperity is closely bound up with the ability of the rest of the world to buy its exports, which, in turn, depends upon the ability of non-European countries to sell to Europe or to borrow (i.e., to postpone payment until some future date). Now although the European economy as a whole expanded during 1954 and 1955, it took rather fewer commodities from the non-dollar countries, which exported, mainly, agricultural goods to Europe. In other words, their ability to purchase European manufactures from current earnings *declined*. One reason for this is that on a world scale there has been an improvement in food production and the market is turning once again to a surplus of supply of food over demand. This is based, of course upon ability to pay, regardless of the world's under-nourished millions and the possibilities of their securing a fairer share of the food supplies of the world.

When agricultural products coming on to world markets were in short supply their value in terms of manufactures rose: the terms of trade of countries like Britain, which export mainly manufactured goods, therefore deteriorated. We heard a lot about this in the years after the war. In the last few years the movement has been in the opposite direction: the terms of trade of the industrialized countries have improved at the expense of the agricultural exporting countries. This factor has been of advantage to the British balance of payments position. But the dependence of Europe as a whole upon outside sources of food, while still large, has been diminishing, and is likely to diminish still further. This simple and apparently beneficial change can lead to serious complications. First, if the agricultural countries sell no more, and possibly less, of their goods to Europe, then unless they can find other markets or borrow they will have to reduce their purchases of manufactured goods from Europe. Second, the expansion which has been proceeding in Europe has been building up export capacity. Consequently, if one segment of the market contracts, just when capacity has been increasing, there is the possibility, as the report states, of 'increasingly strong competition on export markets and the risk of considerable instability of export prices'. This would seriously disrupt the drive towards more liberal trade relations—strongly backed by the United States. It could also foreshadow a more general crisis, with the expansion of the past few years culminating in overproduction, excess capacity and an intensified struggle for markets in both the manufacturing and the agricultural countries.

Some other trends underlined in this report are also worth considering. The whole economic upsurge of Europe in the recent period 'was predominantly a reflection of the strong demand prevailing in the industrialized areas of the world, particularly Europe and the dollar countries'. Characteristically, the boom was feed-

ing on itself and spreading its effects to all the participants in the trading system of the capitalist world economy. A break anywhere might prove just as contagious and spread its effects widely and swiftly throughout the system if on a sufficient scale. Each country would then be under strong pressure to try to insulate itself from the impending disaster: deflationist measures would necessarily have to be applied early, vigorously and with a fair degree of international agreement. But it is worth bearing in mind that the old nationalist ideas are deeply entrenched in national capitalist economies, despite the internationalist gloss which they have acquired in recent years.

Needless to say, Britain would be among the most vulnerable should the present expansion end in such a way. A substantial part of her exports consists of capital goods and durable consumer goods which can expect to prosper only during an investment boom and a period of rising incomes oversea. These also happen to be the kind of goods whose productive capacity has been greatly increased in other industrial countries as part of the general expansion process. As long as markets have been growing, order books full, and the home market so buoyant as to draw goods away from the export market, foreign competition could be discussed without alarm. But what if the markets do not hold?

New competitors

Then of course there will develop once again that sort of intense trade rivalry under the old, old slogan of 'export or die', characteristic of the inter-war years. Competition will be cut-throat, and there can be no doubt that this renewed competition is already growing in significance. If the reappearance of Japan and Germany has not so far caused alarm in all industries it is because there has been room for them within the universally expanding market. A glance at the record of Western Germany gives an idea of what may be in store for Britain. Germany has now reassumed her position as the leading capitalist power on the European continent—and this even without East Germany. Some four million new jobs have been opened up in the past few years in a country which only a decade ago had an immense refugee problem and seemed doomed to a low standard of living and economic stagnation for a generation. As it was, in 1955 German industrial production rose a further fifteen per cent and in 1956 it was up again (taking an average on the basis of the first six months) by ten per cent. Exports have taken an increasing share of industrial production and they have grown faster than imports. This has strengthened Germany's international financial position by enabling her to build up a large currency reserve. Germany's specialities—machinery, electrical goods and chemical products—are highly competitive with British exports. There is no doubt that should the market shrink (as we have suggested it will) German industry will try to increase its share of the contracting market at Britain's expense and will be well placed for doing so.

From this, an intense 'imperialist' rivalry will develop between the two countries for spheres of influence and fields of investment, reminiscent of the period before 1914. Before the Suez war, for example, Egypt had become Germany's most important market in the Middle East and one to which considerable attention was being paid; no doubt her salesmen will do their best to

take advantage of the fallen esteem of Britain and France in the whole Middle East. Likewise in South America, India, Indonesia and other vital areas competitive prices, long term credits, keen enterprise and high quality have enabled German industry and finance to re-establish a strong position. In any future trade war British capitalism will find itself hard-pressed.

The instability of British capitalism

A worsening of the trade situation can take place quite rapidly. Indeed previous crises in the 'balance of payments' have been marginal affairs and some future adverse change which goes a little further than the others may cause irrevocable damage. Some time ago it was stated in *Barclays Bank Review* that a 'comparatively small reduction in imports and expansion in exports, visible and invisible' was 'all that was needed to shift the balance from "red" to "black"'.³ In the same article the point was made that the severity of the foreign trade crises of the post-war years was 'due to the inadequate reserve of gold, dollars and international credit with which oscillations in the balance of payments could be cushioned'.

This reserve has become a sensitive barometer of the international standing of British capitalism, regarded with concern both in the City and in Westminster. It can be influenced by transactions outside the normal run of current trade, for example, by the sale of the Trinidad Oil Co., and by the dollars recently obtained from the International Monetary Fund to make good the losses consequent upon the Suez affair. Speculation and future expectations of the exchange rate, into which all kinds of political and economic factors enter, also influence the level of the reserves. Experience shows that while it may take months, or even years, to increase the size of the reserve appreciably, a sharp unfavourable turn in the situation can allow the whole gain to drain away again before counter-measures can be applied. Safeguarding the reserve (which now forms a much smaller proportion of annual imports than before the war) has at all times to be a major preoccupation of economic policy, and the current low level of the reserve is an indication of the diminished field for manoeuvre in the near future.

The future prospects of British capitalism are, therefore, geared to a multitude of factors operating on an international scale, political as well as economic. In general these prospects have been made more dubious by the events of last autumn. As the *Economist* wrote at the beginning of the year: 'The new year starts under

the shadow of the crisis of confidence in sterling that has resulted from the Suez adventure'.⁴ That crisis has by no means been overcome at the time of writing and has been complicated by the trial of strength now proceeding in shipbuilding and engineering, unprecedented since the war. The optimistic forecast which the *Economist* made at the same time of a long term 'massive increase in production', following a future 're-expansion' to begin later in the year, seems unlikely to be fulfilled.

Summing up

Our assessment of forces and trends in the British economy suggests that when we dig below the tinsel of superficial appearances and examine the fundamental features of British economic development, very little evidence remains for a belief in the smooth and uninterrupted progress of British capitalism.

Our analysis suggests that those theories now current in the Labour movement which are founded on this assumption of smooth and uninterrupted progress should be treated with a good deal of suspicion.

Finally, it is abundantly clear that a more penetrating analysis of contemporary capitalism needs to be made, to form the basis of a fruitful socialist economic policy.

¹The consequences of a bureaucratic forcing through of such a policy in a nationalized economy have been strikingly revealed by events in Poland and Hungary last autumn. This whole problem needs to be carefully thought out by socialists, with special attention to the need to win and maintain working-class support for high investment policies (where they are really necessary) and to avoid the rapid creation of a crust of bureaucrats out of touch with popular feeling.

²A recent example comes to hand in Gaitskell's speech at Wellington, reported in *The Observer*, March 24, 1957. While putting the main blame on Government policy, he talks abstractly as follows: 'What we [Who?—T.K.] need at the moment is a recovery in production without too big a rise in consumption. We want the increased output to take the form of more exports—since without them we cannot pay for the increased imports of raw materials—and of higher investment, because this is the basis for future prosperity. What stands in the way? It is unfair to British management to say they are not sufficiently bold and adventurous. [My emphasis.—T.K.] That has not been, and is not now, our main trouble. The real problem is to combine rising production with enough savings . . . of the extra output.'

This is the essence of the 'restraint and responsibility' approach. With nothing more than this to guide it, a Labour Government will merely be shoring up capitalism and dampening down the militancy of the working class.

³*Barclays Bank Review*, November 1954.

⁴*Economist*, January 5, 1957.

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Book Reviews

Strong on Stalin

The Stalin Era by Anna Louise Strong (New York: Masses and Mainstream, 8s. 6d.)

... they first turn mad

'IT IS too soon to sum up the era, and yet one must try to—so writes Miss Strong in her foreword, and why 'one must try to' is indeed obvious. The paean writers of yesterday are now faced with the problem of Khrushchev's secret speech, of Yugoslavia, Poland and Hungary, etc. How does Miss Strong face the problem?

This book has been taken up by the leadership of the Communist Party in this country. Indeed it needs to be, because a decision which formerly faced a few individuals inside the Communist Party is now facing almost all the members—namely, what political conclusions do you reach and what political action do you take when you become aware of the mass terror that existed inside the Soviet Union? Deceit, silence and slander will no longer hide the problem. It has to be faced, and Miss Strong has come forward to prevent workers reaching the 'wrong', that is, the anti-Stalinist conclusions.

It would be gratifying to report that 'The Stalin Era' contained an examination or analysis more serious than that of a Mr. Gollan who says that the revelations of the Twentieth Congress came as a great shock to the Executive Committee of the Communist Party, or indeed of a Mr. Khrushchev who naively wonders what text of what speech is being referred to in a recent interview. But unfortunately there is no attempt at serious analysis. 'The Stalin Era' lies in the lightweight class.

For example, the Georgian oppression is dealt with, but only to be misrepresented. Lenin's criticism of Stalin's great-nation chauvinism becomes merely his criticism of Stalin's 'ruthlessness', or his 'brutalities', and oh, the philosophical vacuity of the word 'excesses' in Georgia! But Lenin's criticism was not of arbitrary actions against individuals but of an impermissible relationship between the Soviet power and the Georgian people. Lenin was a Marxist and not a professor of moral philosophy, and understood that the ruthlessness was the result not of the policeman's ulcer but of a wrong relationship between police and people, between the Soviet State and the Georgian nation.

Miss Strong's explanation for the embalming of Lenin's body for public show condemns both her and her idol, Stalin.

It was done by Stalin 'over the protests of Lenin's widow and some other Bolshevik intellectuals'. (This is one of several disparaging references to intellectuals contained in the book.) Why not just 'some other Bolsheviks'? 'Stalin understood better than any of the Europeanized Bolsheviks how the Russian people, still largely peasant, could be moved by a shrine and a saint with "incorruptible" flesh.' The Bolsheviks did understand it and all their lives had been fighting such backwardness, not catering for it.

Miss Strong should bring the career of the mortician Bolsheviks up to date. Do they think, thirty years later, after building socialism under the 'wise leader Stalin' that the Russian people need yet another shrine and saint with 'incorruptible' flesh?

'The Great Madness', the chapter on the terror, finds Miss Strong writing twenty years too late, and developing her gloss on events with ingenious subtlety. It is one of these she-knows-that-we-know-that-she-knows situations. She knows that we know that Zinoviev, Kamenev, Trotsky, Bukharin and many others were, like Rajk, innocent. But she knows that we know that Khrushchev has not yet said so and won't. (Can the most able man Stalinism has produced afford an examination of the question of the Moscow Trials?) Therefore

she knows she may safely get away with her explanation that Stalin became 'sickly suspicious' when he found former comrades trying to assassinate him. So the 'treachery' of his comrades is to explain Stalin's actions!

There is also the story of her closest friend who after arrest by the GPU had those 'interesting discussions' with her jailer. A proper Marxist discussion group it was, a sort of fore-runner to the Socialist Forums! Her explanation of the terror seems to have influenced Miss Strong. We, however, are advised against hasty explanations until we have some definite statement from the CPSU. Miss Strong, rather illogically, does advance a theory that may be summed up in her statement: 'They will find the key most probably in actual extensive penetration of the GPU by a Nazi fifth column . . .' Only one fifth column! What about the second fifth column that purged the first one and so on? What fifth columns were variously responsible for the deaths of successive heads of police? (The reviewer in Dutt's Labour Monthly quotes this same phrase with evident support. The 'sun-spots' are now clearly seen to have been swastikas.)

'Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty and justice, not only under capitalism, but even more so under socialism.' Thus writes our chastened authoress, but Marxists will not identify with this unqualified 'socialism' the bitter experience of the masses of the people under Stalin. 'Eternal vigilance' is no substitute for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Engels recognized it in the Paris Commune, and when it comes to over three million people estimated by Mosa Pijade to have been killed by Stalinism in the USSR in 1936-38, 'eternal vigilance' is criminal phrasemongering, not honest humane analysis or leadership.

The Labour movement is in a mood to go deeper in its analysis of the Stalin Era (or is it perhaps the Lenin Era?) than this addle-pated apologia. It contains no serious thought. It is journalistic, evasive, slick. As an aid to an understanding of the Stalin Era it is valueless and can only act as a weak prop for what it claims to study.

The problem for the revolutionary trend in the Labour movement is that the Great Madness left some in high places permanently mad.

H. and R. HUNTER

Soviet Verse

Russian Poetry 1917-1955. Selected, Translated and with an Introduction by Jack Lindsay (London: The Bodley Head, 15s.)

JACK LINDSAY as anthologist adopts the pell-mell method, customary in Soviet Russia since the dissolution of literary movements, whereby major poets are represented cheek-by-jowl with song-lyric writers, mediocre popular versifiers and makers of rhymes for children (the latter often very nice). As a means of giving a cross-section of Soviet Russian verse output the method is defensible, though not for the whole period 1917-1955 but only for its shadowed later half, beginning roughly with Mayakovsky's suicide in 1930. To apply it, by hindsight as it were, to the twenties is historically wrong and results in such absurdities as the inclusion of the prosy Demyan Bedny and the strident Pyotr Oreshin coupled with the omission of Ossip Mandelshtam, whose greatness both as a poet in his own right and as an influence on others, notably on Boris Pasternak, cannot be dimmed by temporary disfavour; Eduard Bagritsky, a lovely poet whose progress from extreme individualism and experimentation to a positive acceptance of revolutionary unity resembles Mayakovsky's on a smaller scale; and Pavel Antokolsky, less brilliant, more plodding than these two, but a poet of importance for all that.

In any case, do we want an anthology which is merely a

cross-section, even if it were a fair one? Is it not rather the compiler's responsibility, especially as this is the first work of its scope to appear in Britain, to apply values beyond those of popular and official approval in the country of origin? The newspapers can tell us what poems the Soviet man in the street likes to read. An anthology should acquaint us with the best of what Russia's admirable and courageous body of poets has produced under conditions ranging from the difficult to the asphyxiating. Why, if space is precious, waste it on the facile verse journalism of a Simonov and a Surkov when only five of Pasternak's poems are chosen (and not very sympathetically chosen at that), only three of Anna Akhmatova's (surely Zhdanov's murderous attack on her in 1947, if nothing else, should have aroused the compiler's curiosity), none of Margarita Aliger's, none of Zabolotsky's? Nikolay Tikhonov, the one-time Chairman of the Board of the Union of Soviet Writers, is by all accounts a very decent man indeed. Original poems of Jack Lindsay's in the past testify to the affection and esteem he has for Tikhonov; and the 'Ballad of Nails', rousing translated here, is by now a classic. But to single him out for generous representation in all four sections of the book, thus indirectly suggesting that he is the only Soviet poet with a consistent record of development since the twenties, betrays a faulty critical sense.

I wish, too, that Jack Lindsay had made the scope of his intentions clear by inserting the word 'Soviet' in the title. This is not hair-splitting as it may at first appear; the fact is that very interesting Russian poetry was produced in exile, particularly in the twenties. Soviet editors are beginning to recognize this. An important anthology called 'Dyen Poeta' ('The Poet's Day'), published in Moscow in 1956, contains some posthumous poems by Marina Tsvetayeva, who left Russia in 1922, wrote the bulk of her extraordinarily vivid and exciting work in Paris, returned to Russia in the late thirties and committed suicide as the Germans drew near Moscow in 1941. She had, beyond doubt, the richest talent of any Russian poetess at any time; a book called 'Russian Poetry 1917-1955' ought at least to mention her in passing. This omission, like the others, suggests that though Jack Lindsay sees 1955 as the end of an era, he cannot yet free himself from the values—false ones as I believe—which governed Soviet literary criticism in its latter part.

And yet, when all is said and done, this is a book to be grateful for. English translations of Soviet verse have been few and far between and poor in quality. Back in 1933 George Reavey and Marc Slonim did bring out a book called 'Soviet Literature' which contained a short poetry section; the renderings were not very good but on the whole they conveyed more urgency and fervour than Jack Lindsay's. Still, that was long ago, and since then we have had all too little to go on with. Here at last a serious poet brings his skill and experience to bear on the difficult task. In some instances the result is really good (e.g., Esenin's 'Not vain in the winds' and Svetlov's touching, melodious 'Grenada').

As an editor Jack Lindsay is pretty slapdash; he consistently mis-spells the name of Stepan Shchipachev (though for my money this tepid lyricist might just as well have been left out altogether), makes two people out of Vsevolod Ivanov, and doesn't even get Simonov's surname quite right. But never mind. What I do resent is that he does not, either by his selection or in his cautious foreword, help his English readers to distinguish between those who conformed to the pattern and those who did not. Here is how Mayakovsky, shortly before his death, summed up the conditions under which Soviet poets had to write:

Manifold
 is our nature:
 Thunder for battle,
 for bed a whisper.
 Today for love and battle alike
 the strains of marches:
 To martial music
 you're invited to shuffle to bed.

Whatever the political rights and wrongs, our interest and admiration must go to those Soviet poets who produced something other than 'strains of marches' of one kind or another.

The 'Dyen Poeta' anthology which I have already mentioned is full of hopeful signs. Leonid Martynov, who first began to publish in the forties, writes on a high level of poetic thought. Robert Rozhdestvensky, another young poet,

is original and inventive. And there are several others. Though the official traffic lights have not yet turned to green, the manifoldness of the poet's nature is beginning to assert itself again.

ANNA BOSTOCK

Workers' Culture

The Uses of Literacy by Richard Hoggart (Chatto and Windus, 1957, 25s.)

THIS BOOK has already received an enthusiastic welcome from the progressive Press and it is easy to see why. One reason is that it is so well written that reviewers are tempted to read it from cover to cover. Your present reviewer, having tasted the apple, eagerly wolfed the lot—core and all. Some hours later, however, a certain emotional gnawing led me to ask myself what were the specific causes of the book's indigestibility. It was then that I saw what was wrong—Hoggart is a liberal idealist and liberal idealists are excellent at discovering social diseases but have no effective therapy.

In the Preface, Hoggart states his aims. 'This book is about changes in working-class culture during the last thirty or forty years, in particular, as being encouraged by mass publications'. On reading this opening sentence, I feared the worst. I imagined that I had been let in for yet another of those long-winded trivialities—a sociological monograph with a plethora of useless statistics, a British version of a 'Kinsey Report' on the British Press. Mercifully, we are spared this ordeal by graph.

Hoggart's book is a work of significance for sociologists not so much for the ideas it propounds as much as a source book. Hoggart's method is essentially anecdotal and even autobiographical. Hoggart himself is a teacher in the University of Hull, having risen (if, as he himself questions in an important section *Scholarship Boy*, to rise is the right verb) from a working class family in Hunslet (Leeds) whose forgetting mechanisms, praise the Lord, failed to work. I myself can record a sociological history almost identical with that of Hoggart—but 100 miles away from Leeds. What so fascinated me about the early chapters was Hoggart's faithful recording of the phrases, attitudes, beliefs, which must have made me substantially what I am today. Memories long pigeon-holed but well assimilated, were jogged once again into consciousness and I was astounded to discover that Hunslet's working-class culture is not like that of Stoke-on-Trent but practically identical. I kept on saying to myself, 'Dr. X' (a colleague—a man of essentially South of England petit-bourgeois stock) 'would just not comprehend this at all', so vastly different is Hoggart's background from his. I well recall the snob distinctions between families who had tinned peaches on Sundays as against those who only (!) had pineapple chunks.

Hoggart wisely recognizes some of the limitations of his method.

'A writer who is himself from the working classes has his own temptations to error, somewhat different from but no less than those of a writer from another class. I am from the working classes and feel even now both close to them and apart from them. In a few more years this double relationship may not, I suppose, be so apparent to me; but it is bound to affect what I say. It may help me to come nearer to giving a felt sense of working-class life, to avoid some of the outsider's more obvious risks of misinterpretation. On the other hand, this very emotional involvement presents considerable dangers. Thus it seems to me that the changes described in the second half of this book are, so far, tending to cause the working-classes to lose, culturally, much that was valuable and to gain less than their new situation should have allowed.'

But it is not sufficient to recognize that one has an Achilles heel—it is just as important to learn how to protect it. It is this which Hoggart fails to do and which, finally, mars the book. Properly enough, Hoggart defines what he means by the word 'working-class'. He defines it by listing a page of 'attributes'. The workers live in Hunslet, Ancoats, Brightside, etc. They get a wage rather than a salary and in 1954 averaged £9 to £10 per week. If they don't work in a mine or factory they keep a shop in the working-class districts. They are the cobbler, the grocer, the bike-mender, and so on. Summing it all up, in spite of cheap mass-produced clothes, Hoggart (and

so can most of us) can simply tell a member of the working class (or his family) by looking at him and listening to him. A constellation of attributes (some definable, some not) separates him from middle-class and upper-class people.

You will see that this is no Marxist definition but it suits admirably Hoggart's limited purpose—though it should be recognized that the circular reasoning it involves proves, finally, to be Hoggart's undefended Achilles heel. For essentially he defines workers culturally, and then investigates their culture. As a methodological tool for investigating the laws governing the growth and changes of class cultures, Hoggart's concept of class is useless. As a schema for Hoggart's descriptive essay it is eminently suitable.

In all the fascinating and many-sided details given in Hoggart's description of working-class culture, we can single out one working-class 'value' as dominant. Let Hoggart speak for himself.

'Certainly working-class people have a strong sense of being members of a group, and just as certainly that sense involves the assumption that it is important to be friendly, co-operative, neighbourly. "We are all in the same boat"; "it is no use fighting one another"; but "in unity is strength". One's mind goes back to the movements of the last century, to the hundreds of "friendly" societies, to the mottoes of the unions: the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, with "Be United and Industrious"; the Provisional Committee of the National Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers choosing, in the late 'nineties, "Love, Unity and Fidelity". And the "Love" in the last recalls the strength which this sense of unity acquired from a Christian background.

The friendly group tradition seems to me to have its strength initially from the ever-present evidence, in the close, huddled, intimate conditions of life, that we are, in fact, all in the same position. You are bound to be close to people with whom, for example, you share a lavatory in a common yard. That "luy" which is still the most common form of address, and not only to people in their own class, by tram and bus conductors and by shop-keepers, is used automatically, but still indicates something. To call anyone "neighbourly" or "right sociable" is to offer a high compliment; a club may be praised because it is a "real sociable place"; the most important recommendation for lodgings or seaside "digs" is that they are "sociable", and this outweighs overcrowding; and a church is just as likely to be weighed in the same scales. "Ar' Elsie got married at All Saints," they will say, of the church they chose from several nearby, not one of which can claim them as parishioners—"it's a nice friendly church". The story of a Christmas party at the local will end, "It was a luvly night. Everybody got real friendly." Good neighbourliness consists not just in "doing fair by each other", but in being "obliging" or "always ready to oblige". If the neighbours in a new area seem to lack the right kind of neighbourliness, the newcomer will insist that she "just can't settle".

Hoggart gives many examples of the all-pervasiveness of this sense of one-ness felt by the working-class—an attitude which has a respectable name in the labour movement, solidarity. The feeling of solidarity is a typical, normal working-class sentiment. It would be narrow and one-sided to imagine that these feelings of solidarity have to be specially inculcated into factory workers as part of a trade union attitude towards the boss. Without these feelings, however, trade unionism is impossible. A sense of class solidarity is inculcated and maintained as Marx showed, by the capitalist mode of production itself as a defensive weapon against exploitation. Although this is its real source, as a moral attitude solidarity is imbibed at every working class mother's knee. Lenin wrote that the only weapon the working class has is that of organization. What was implicit in his concept of organization was working-class solidarity. It is precisely because capitalism forces the workers to develop, as a class, feelings of solidarity that we can speak of capitalism producing its own grave-diggers.

Of course it is easy to sentimentalize this concept of neighbourliness and solidarity. Hoggart is able to show how far wide of the mark middle-class Marxists can be in sentimentalizing working-class behaviour patterns. But if solidarity is the central feature of a working-class outlook on the world, where does it come from, what produces it, what sustains it and what will result from it? This is the question the sociologist has to try to answer, but it is here that Hoggart's method loses its validity. He expresses surprise at the slight influence mass-produced cultural media appear to have upon the young

people in the working-class districts just at the time when other intellectuals are complaining of the omnipotence of the printed word, radio, television and cinema. He records how strong are the oral traditions of the working class and sees that the mass media controlled by the ruling class enable the workers to lead a double sort of life, one real, the other fantastic.

Moreover, the ruling class do not have full control even of these media. In the interests of mass circulation, their newspapers and magazines find it necessary to reflect to some degree, the attitudes of the workers. Hoggart shows this in a study of weekly magazines and popular songs. The mass circulation newspapers are even driven to attacking 'them'—leading figures of society. Hoggart's illustration, necessarily fictional, is an attack in a Sunday newspaper on the 'Arch-bishop of Pontyholoth' for his 'humbog, hypocrisy, smugness and reaction'. Hoggart, however, points out that these are for the most part pseudo-attacks, empty and wordy, and belonging not to politics but to the field of entertainment.

'When one of these papers says, "We give the facts . . . astounding . . ." this is not so much a statement of their attitude as an entertainer's patter of the same order as "There's nothing up my sleeve".'

Hoggart shows, however, that particularly in printed magazines there is much which is increasingly violent, sadistic and absolutely repulsive. Some of his examples taken from modern sex and violence novels are as bestial as, surely, human beings can ever think up. 'Even the new style man and woman come together without love . . . as physical enemies.'

How far will these reactionary anti-humanist values, the product of the violent decay of capitalism, fare in capturing and debasing the working class as Hoggart describes them? Here Hoggart would have been helped by a grasp of dialectics, which would show him how the material conditions of existence are finally dominant in shaping man's ideas. The violent 'Western', seen through the eyes of a working-class boy steeped in his class sense of solidarity, becomes a different film from that which the producer had in mind. The 'Right' which finally bands together in a posse to put down 'Might' is refracted through the prism of his mind as 'Us' against 'Them'.

Hoggart, however, has no answer to this all-important question except the 'liberal' answer—one which unfortunately boils down to the expression of a set of pious hopes. It is clear also that Hoggart has himself little confidence that his hopes can be realized. I would like to hazard a guess that a man like Hoggart could discover the road out of this intellectual trap, in which capitalism has enmeshed us all, if he were again to study Marxism. He would then discover how socialism will realize to the full the 'uses of literacy'.

J.D.

Too Many Gaps

British Constitutional History Since 1832. Robert Livingstone Schuyler (Corinne. Anvil Books, Macmillan, 1957, 8s. 6d.)

THIS is a collection of documents on British Constitutional History, mainly since 1832, although extracts from writings by Charles I. Blackstone, the Duke of Richmond, Tom Paine and Bentham are all included to set the scene. It is interesting to read Grey on the Reform Bill of 1831. In the Lords he said:

'Do I propose that your Lordships be deprived of any part of your legitimate power or influence? God forbid! The respect due to your rank, and the influence which, from property, you necessarily possess, will belong to you after the passing of the Bill, as fully and in as great a degree as they now do . . .'

But the greatest single force which challenged the powers who created the Constitution which is here so much admired, the labour movement, gets but one document—an excerpt from the *Clarion* of a report on the formation of the Labour Representation Committee. The General Strike, with its far-reaching constitutional implications (which were certainly not lost on the ruling class even if historians think them unimportant) gets not a solitary word.

Ninety-five pages of introductory matter attempt to com-

pensate for this particular documentary vacuum, but the chapter **From Democracy to Socialism** should not alarm readers. What is referred to is not the socialism of workers' councils. The climax of this section concerns a series of measures of 'Regency Legislation' carried out by various Tory groups to ensure the avoidance of national catastrophe while the sovereign has—mumps! Real socialist legislation on the future of the monarchy will prove to be less teasing of our legal ingenuity than these complex measures seem to be.

Perhaps a well-written constitutional history could be of help to the working-class movement. But surely, the crying need is that the workers should write it—in deeds, directed against the 'influence, which, from property' the ruling classes possess.

This is one of a series of paperbacks on political questions. The others may be more interesting to readers of **Labour Review** than this one is. Sidney Hook is announced as one performer, on **The Ambiguities of Marxism**, and John Shelton Curtis is announced as a contributor to the series with **The Russian Revolutions of 1917**. There will also be a book on **The Negro in the U.S.**, a history by R. W. Logan.

Cole's 44th

The Case for Industrial Partnership. G. D. H. Cole, 1957 (Macmillan, 7s. 6d.)

G. D. H. COLE has apparently written 43 books since the **World of Labour**: it is a sign of the sterility of Fabianism that the 44th has to say again much of what the first said: but more politely, leaving out a lot that would have made it a better book. The **World of Labour** was written at a time when syndicalism represented a real challenge to 'Sidney Webb realism'. In it Cole put his feet on the ground at least some of the time.

It is now commonly recognized that political institutions ought to rest on a foundation of equal citizenship for all: I have steadily maintained that this requirement holds good no less for industrial institutions, and that until this principle is recognized and applied in practice our formally democratic political institutions will never work in a really satisfactory democratic way'. These are brave words and because we have forgotten the name of De Leon, and because the lessons of the Russian Revolution are still to be learnt by our working class, perhaps this book deserves a wide, but critical, working-class audience. The concepts of 'partnership' advocated by Professor Cole are not likely to influence the motor-car strikers of last year, who have fewer illusions about the partner-seeking impulses of the bosses than he has. In any case, the events of April 1957 revealed a boss-class as uninterested in industrial democracy as ever! It becomes apparent that Lenin knew more about all this in 1917 than Professor Cole does now.

Suez Apologia

Guilty Men of Suez by Frank Verity (Truth, 2s.)

THIS STRANGE, almost psychopathic pamphlet, after a bout of private detection modelled on Sax Rohmer rather than Miss Dorothy Sayers, discovers, among many others, the main guilty men of Suez. First, naturally, Nasser—the 'tool of the Kremlin'. Second, Khrushchev who, among his many other crimes, called Israel the 'tool of imperialists'. Third, John Foster Dulles whose 'speciality was the sermon on colonialism. British, of course'. Fourth, Gaitskell, for changing those opinions he expressed in August 1956 on the need to 'react sharply' to Nasser's nationalization of the canal. Fifth, and all-important, Britain's 'Left-wing politicians' and especially the arch-devil himself—Bevan.

If this hysterical defence of Eden's Suez adventure was merely the product of the lunatic fringe of British Right-wing

politics, **Guilty Men of Suez** would be intriguing only as light entertainment. Unfortunately it is becoming evident that this witch-doctor political-jungle lore is being taken up by a growing number of Conservative MPs.

There is, of course, no answer to Verity's book—a logical answer would elevate it into the sphere of rationality where it finds no place. But the student of politics could profitably note the many new pathological symptoms of diehard Toryism which the book so clearly illustrates.

J.D.

Sturdy Annual

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

AS USUAL, this year's issue of the **Rationalist Annual** makes delightfully fresh reading. Margaret Knight has written a fascinating psychological-statistical analysis of the postal avalanche which descended upon her after her BBC broadcast on non-Christian humanism. In a characteristically amusing but pointed essay, J. B. S. Haldane locates three 'theorems on which we do in fact rely' in making up our minds what to believe. The result has been that your reviewer feels almost as intellectually guilty for past errors in inductive logic as does, so obviously, Professor Haldane himself. Benjamin Farrington's essay on 'Creative Labour in Ancient Greece' is an important addition to Marxist historiography, while A. J. Blackham's analysis of the 'covenantal' nature of Jewish and Christian theology would be an excellent starting point for a larger work designed to explain how and why Christian theology has taken its present form. Royston Pike's timely article on Mark Rutherford is delightfully written but misses some essential points about Rutherford's contribution to the British radical movement. The Annual ends with an important essay on the perennial topic of determinism by Ernest Gillner. A splendid five shillings' worth for any rationalist socialist.

J.D.

Unofficial Marxism

Arguments, vol. I, no. 3, April-May 1957. (Single copy 150 francs; subscription (six issues) 650 francs. Editions de Minuit, 7 rue Bernard-Palissy, Paris VIe.)

DESCRIBED as 'a bulletin of research and discussion', this bi-monthly journal, appearing in a French and Italian edition, is a promising product of the intellectual ferment now taking place on the Left.

The main feature of this number is the first chapter of Lukacs' 'Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein' (History and Class-consciousness), entitled 'What is orthodox Marxism?'. This work was severely criticized by the Comintern soon after its first appearance in 1923 and its author subsequently retracted certain of its ideas. The French translation should make this very significant essay (to which it may be possible to return later) available to a wider circle of readers. It is followed by two comments which try to throw light on the problem of how such a penetrating thinker—the most distinguished Marxist philosopher of his time—could, on occasion, renounce his writings, at the bidding of Zinoviev, Zhdanov or Stalin and yet re-emerge as a leading figure in the Nagy Government. Incidentally, it is a reflection of the state of Marxist studies in this country that, except for one volume of literary criticism, brought out by a private initiative, his works are not available in translation and that he is best known for his rôle in the Hungarian Communes of 1919 and 1956.

A plea on behalf of Israel as a progressive force, with a comment, and a review of a new critical work applying concepts derived from existentialism and Marxism to Pascal and Racine make up the rest of the issue.

T.K.

A Question of Dialectics

WILLIAM F. WARDE's series 'The Law of Uneven and Combined Development' must have been very stimulating to British Marxists. In the complex and rapidly moving world of the twentieth century a formal notion of eternal sequences for the development of societies is as useless as the idea that there are no law-governed processes at all in social life. Warde therefore does a service in highlighting that aspect of materialist dialectics which explains the result of a clash between, or a combination of, phenomena at different levels of development, e.g., American technical efficiency with semi-feudal—or recently tribal—economies and the accompanying customs.

The place of this law of uneven and combined development requires a systematic treatment as part of the dialectical method; meanwhile one question seems to be raised from Warde's own material. A scientific law should outline the particular sets of conditions which give rise to a typical result in the given sphere of investigation. In sociology, a law of this kind is the law that the productive forces develop to a point where they demand a change in, first, the economic structure and then the political and ideological superstructure of a society. A definite dependence of one set of facts on another set is clearly stated. Can the law of uneven and combined development be seen in the same way? It states that factors developed to an uneven extent, either between societies or within one society, combine to form single formations of a contradictory character. If this generalization is to be accorded the status of a law it should give clear guiding lines to the following problem, among others. Will the processes at work give rise to a dialectical leap forward in history, as in the October Revolution in Russia, or will they give rise to degenerative processes, as in the bureaucratic distortions of Stalin's régime, or the destruction of the Tasmanian aborigines? One does not expect of course an answer to all questions which will be a substitute for analysis of each particular case, for that is the essence of the scientific method. But a law should state the characteristics of progressive as against regressive combinations. If this point can be cleared up, then other fruitful controversial problems can be raised later.

C.S.

I DO NOT clearly see why C.S. hesitates to accord the law of uneven and combined development the status of a law. Lawfulness is derived from ascertaining materially conditioned, necessary connections among phenomena. Laws formulate such necessary relations among the factors in a certain sector of reality in a generalized way. In natural science, for example, the early physicists Boyle, Charles, Gay-Lussac and Avogadro established simple relationships connecting the volume, temperature and pressure of gases which they formulated in elementary, empirical laws.

Since different aspects of reality have their own laws, different laws do not operate on the same level of generality nor do they have the same degree of necessity. The broadest laws are formulated in the materialist dialectic of being and becoming, which embraces universal processes and modes of development. The law of the interpenetration of opposites belongs in this class. On the other hand there are particular laws which apply only within the limits of specific social-economic formations—as, for instance, the law of the growing concentration of capital which pertains exclusively to the capitalist system.

The law of uneven and combined development stands midway between these two types in its scope of operation. It belongs not to philosophy or to political economy, but primarily to the science of sociology which seeks to discover the general laws of human evolution. It formulates certain important aspects of the historical tendencies of social development. It is more concrete than the law of the interpenetration of opposites, of which it is a specific expression, and less limited than the law of the concentration of capital.

1) Historical materialism starts from the factual premise that men cannot exist without eating, drinking, etc. This is the supreme law of life.

2) This inescapable, physical contradiction between eating

and living which animals overcome by direct appropriation of and consumption of food, is solved by mankind through labour activities.

3) The development of society is determined by the development of the productive forces at men's command.

4) These productive forces give rise to certain definite social relations of production which shape the rest of the social structure.

5) The further development of the productive forces eventually comes into conflict with the existing relations of production, initiating a revolutionary period which, if progressively resolved, results in the establishment of a higher social-economic order.

These are the main links in the chain of necessity which governs social development and in the logical reasoning of the scientific socialism which explains them. The law of uneven and combined development enters this chain at the following point: the productive forces which are the mainspring of the entire social movement developed unevenly from one time and place to another, from one people to another, and from one social formation to the next. These differences in the degree of development, in turn produce disproportion not only between different segments of society but also among the various elements in any given social structure.

The fundamental lawfulness of the phenomena, theoretically expressed in the law of uneven development comes from the observed, verifiable fact, running throughout history, that disproportions of various types emerge from the different rates of economic development. Given these disparities, certain consequences inescapably follow in the subsequent unfolding of the social process.

To prove the contrary, i.e., the lack of historical necessity in this law, it would have to be demonstrated that society proceeds in a different way; that the productive forces develop evenly and that the resultant social organizations and cultural superstructures consist of harmonious elements perfectly proportioned to one another.

From this basic starting point, the process goes on to a second stage formulated in the law of combined development, which is the essential supplement of the first. The diversely developed elements are united, not in simple homogeneous structures, but in complex, heterogeneous and sometimes highly contradictory ways.

The contradictory characteristics of the combinations do not depend only on the fact that the various formations and factors have evolved independently of one another and co-exist on different levels of social development. The manner and consequences of the merger also depends upon the historical period in which they come together. It can make considerable difference whether the elements are united in precapitalist times, during the capitalist period, or under post-capitalist conditions.

After such combinations are brought into being, the process passes over to a still higher stage in which the emergence of new unevennesses in the situation leads to the conflict and dissociation of the previously synthesized, contradictory factors.

This sociological law, whose operations and effects can be observed throughout the course of history, has attained its maximum strength and scope under capitalism and during the period of transition to socialism because all the accumulated disproportions of historical development inherited from past ages come to a head and are entangled in the most acute contradictions at this juncture.

The single difficulty raised in the remarks of C.S. is that the law of uneven and combined development ought to indicate without ambiguity what the specific outcome of its operation is going to be. It should enable us to foretell what the combination of factors at different levels of development will culminate in; a leap forward or retrogression.

The law cannot do that because its action and results do not depend upon itself alone as a theoretical formulation of general tendencies, but even more upon the total situation in which it functions. The latter is decisive. What determines the

specific outcome of its operation are the material factors in their totality: the living structure of a society, the dynamics of its inner forces, and their historical and international connections.

One and the same law can give different results at different stages in the development of the same economic system, as the objective conditions of its operations change. The law of value, which is the supreme regulator of the capitalist system, energetically promotes the productive forces in its progressive period—and then in its further operation leads to the restriction of the productive forces in its declining monopolist-imperialist stage.

The law of uneven and combined development likewise leads to different results according to the specific circumstances of its operation. Under certain conditions the introduction of higher elements and their amalgamation with lower ones accelerates social progress; under other conditions, the synthesis can retard progress and even push it back for a time. Which trend will be dominant, whether progress or reaction will be favoured, depends upon the specific weight of all the factors in the given situation and the depth of the penetration of the higher ones.

Advanced elements cannot, in and of themselves, guarantee a comprehensive and uninterrupted forward movement unless and until they reach down into the foundations of the social system, revolutionize and reconstruct them. Otherwise their efficacy can be restricted and distorted.

Consider in this light the evolution of the Soviet Union since 1917, as Trotsky explained it in 'The Revolution Betrayed' with the aid of the law of uneven and combined development. On pages 229-230 Trotsky pointed out how, in the first place, 'the law of uneven development brought it about that the contradiction between the technique and property relations of capitalism (a universal feature in its death agony) shattered the weakest link in the world chain'. The Russian Revolution was, as he stated elsewhere, a national avalanche in a universal social formation. 'Backward Russian capitalism was the first to pay for the bankruptcy of world capitalism.'

Trotsky then observes that in general 'the law of uneven development is supplemented throughout the whole course of history by the law of combined development.'

What was its specific result in Russia? 'The collapse of the bourgeoisie in Russia led to the proletarian dictatorship—that is, to a backward country's leaping ahead of the advanced countries.' As we know, this caused a lot of grief to the schematic theorists in Russia and Western Europe who insisted that the workers could not and should not take power until capitalism had elevated the national economy to an advanced height.

But it also brought much genuine grief to the Russian people, as Trotsky goes on to explain. 'However, the establishment of socialist forms of property in a backward country came up against the inadequate level of technique and culture.' That is, new types of unevenness emerged on the basis of the preceding achievements and on a higher historical level. 'Itself born of the contradictions between high world productive forces and capitalist form of property, the October Revolution produced in its turn a contradiction between low national productive forces and socialist forms of property.'

While the achievements of the revolution—the nationalized property and planned economy—exercised a highly progressive action upon the Soviet Union, they were themselves subjected to the degrading influence of the low level of production in the isolated workers' State. From this fundamental condition, flowed all the degenerative effects witnessed in the Soviet state under the Stalinist régime, including that régime itself. The most advanced ideas and progressive productive relations could not prevail against the inadequacy of their economic sub-structure and suffered debasement as a result.

Thus unevenness prevents any simple, single straight line of direction in social development, and what we have instead is a complex, devious and contradictory route. The theoretical task is to analyze the dialectical interplay of action and reaction of the contending forces in their connection with the historical environment.

In this now the progressive tendencies and now the reactionary counter-forces assert themselves and come to the fore.

This dialectical interplay can be observed in the contradictory consequences brought about by the same historical factors in the neighbouring countries of China and Japan.

Both of these formerly isolated and backward countries felt the impact of capitalist forces upon them in the 19th century. Western capitalism invaded China, penetrated its economy, and established political and military control over its main centres. Only the rivalry of the contending imperialisms saved China from outright division amongst them.

Although the intrusion of capitalism with the latest techniques in production, transport, commerce, finance and knowledge mangled and shook up China, these instruments of modern capitalism did not, on the whole, modernize Chinese life or emancipate it. On the contrary, entrenched imperialism propped up the most archaic institutions, the feudal landholding system, and helped the comprador bourgeoisie, landlords, officials and militarists prolong pre-capitalist forms of social organization. Its grip prevented China from passing through a genuine bourgeois democratic renovation or having any independent capitalist development.

In the same period that these capitalist influences were stunting Chinese development, they were stimulating Japan. There the introduction of Western capitalist civilization promoted a reorganization of the country's pre-capitalist structure from on top without revolutionary convulsions from below. Along with the Meiji Restoration, the capitalist agencies of change strengthened new classes of industrialists, merchants, financiers, who developed large-scale industry, trusts, banks and military power after the most advanced Western models. Instead of being a victim of Western imperialism, Japan became the supreme embodiment of Eastern imperialism, avidly flinging itself upon China for its share of the spoils.

Thus, in the first stage, under the given historical conditions, the law of uneven and combined development led to the degradation and subjugation of China, while Japan experienced a tremendous surge of national energy and achievement under capitalist auspices. Little wonder that in Japan nationalism poured into imperialist channels, while across the China Sea nationalism had to seek other outlets along anti-imperialist lines.

However, as we know, the world historical process swung in a different direction following the First World War and the Russian Revolution, and this affected the trend of development in the Far East.

Even during the first period of the merger of Western capitalism with Far Eastern life, tendencies emerged that ran counter to the dominant direction of development in both countries. In Japan, the imperialist régime—product of the highest stage of world and national evolution—was headed by an Emperor cult carried over from pre-feudal times. Its capitalist structure bulged with bizarre combinations and extreme disproportions. Modern factories and workshops sprang up in the cities while feudal relations in the countryside remained unaltered. Light industry was over-developed, while the heavy industry from which contemporary mastery is derived remained under-developed. The military, equipped with the latest weapons, remained animated by feudal traditions. Because of its reformation from above instead of revolutionization from below, democracy was feeble and parliamentary life flimsy. This incomplete modernization of Japan's social structure culminated in a supreme disproportion: the imperialist programme imposed upon that late-comer by the needs of national capitalist expansion and world competition were beyond the capacities of its forces and resources. The result was the debacle suffered by Japanese militarism in the Second World War.

Meanwhile, China's backwardness under imperialism built up the impetus for its forward leap at the next stage. Along with the venal and weak comprador bourgeoisie, represented by Chiang Kai-shek, the Westernization process created a modern proletariat. The unsolved but pressing problems of national unification and independence, agrarian revolution, industrialization, etc., which imperialism blocked and Chiang's régime could not tackle, gave an explosive force to the popular movements for their solution.

After the Russian Revolution, world historical factors of a higher order intervened in the Far East and with special force in China. The influences emanating from the October Revolution and the Soviet Union permeated China more effectively than the capitalist ideas and forces of Western imperialism had penetrated Japan.

Thanks to the power of these influences on an international and national scale, China, so long dragged down by imperialism and its servitors, rose up after the Second World

War. In the process of tackling the long-postponed historical task, the movements of the proletarian and peasant masses lifted the country over native capitalism into the first stage of a workers' State.

This mighty leap reversed the relations between China and Japan. Under the pressures of world capitalism, Japan had climbed from feudalism to imperialism in a couple of generations, while China was held down by the same forces. Then, at the next stage, under the combined pressures of reactionary imperialism and progressive socialism (intermixed with Stalinism) China vaulted beyond capitalism and took the lead from Japan. Today revolutionary China is better equipped to take Japan in tow than vice versa, since the defeated nation has still to pass beyond the confines of capitalism.

Thus each of the two series of historical influences, the first issuing from capitalism in the nineteenth century, the second from post-capitalist movements in the Twentieth century, had very different impacts upon the development of the two neighbouring countries. This demonstrates how the consequences of the law of uneven and combined development depend upon the action and reaction of the new forces upon the old; the concrete reality at any given stage is a resultant of the dynamic interplay between them. These can acquire the

most divergent forms.

A sociological generalization like the law of uneven and combined development can serve only as a guide to the investigation and analysis of the processes at work in a given social environment. It can help us understand the peculiarities of past history and orient us in respect to the peculiarities of unfolding social processes. But it cannot categorically tell us in advance what will issue from its further operation. These are determined by the struggle of living forces on the national and international arenas.

The law of uneven and combined development expresses certain features of the dialectics of history. The dialectic is 'the algebra of revolution' and evolution. That is to say, it formulates certain necessary aspects, relations or tendencies of reality in a general form, extracted from specific conditions. Before its abstract algebraic qualities can be converted into definite, 'arithmetic' quantities, they have to be applied to the substance of a particular reality. In every new case and at every successive stage of development, specific analysis is necessary of the actual relations and tendencies in their connection and continual interaction. The dialectical formulas are abstract but 'the truth is concrete'.

Correspondence

IN the very interesting article on 'Hammersmith and After' in Labour Review No. 3 the point is made that for the first time since 1932 a genuine Marxist opposition developed at Congress. This statement is not correct, and flows from either (a) lack of knowledge, or (b) an attempt to rewrite history in the Stalinist fashion. I hope it is a result of (a) and not (b).

A genuine Marxist opposition did develop at the Nineteenth Congress of the party held in 1947, which ultimately resulted in a number of comrades being expelled and one branch, Welwyn Garden City, being disbanded and Hertford 'reorganized'.

The fight developed around resolutions first submitted to the South-East Midlands District Congress from Welwyn Garden City and Hertford.

The nature of the opposition can be gauged by the following quotations (Hertford Amendment to South-East Midlands Fourth Congress):

'1) This Congress of the S.E. Midlands District of the Communist Party rejects the resolution of the District Committee as we feel it entirely neglects the main principles of Marxism-Leninism, and as a result the policy presented is reformist and not revolutionary.'

'5) Imperialism is not a policy preferred by the monopoly-capitalists but a definite stage in capitalist revolution; there is no middle course; the transition from capitalism to socialism is the act of revolution. There cannot be an imperialist policy abroad and a progressive policy at home.'

'7) For the British working class and the people of the British Empire, the main enemy is now British imperialism, and to turn our main attention to American imperialism is to deflect the British workers away from their main task, i.e., the destruction of British finance capital.'

The arguments were further developed in a letter which was severely emasculated by the editor in World News and Views (February 1, 1947), in which I wrote: 'Right Opportunism has now become deeply rooted in our party. . . . I believe we can change this position, first by fierce self-criticism by "consulting with Lenin" and by learning more of Leninism than that "Marxism is not a dogma", under which phrase all sorts of revisionism and distortions are carried out by the Right opportunists in our party.'

At the Party Congress, in moving the resolution on behalf of Welwyn and Hertford, I made the point that the policy of Pollitt, Campbell & Co. was a betrayal of Marxism and an acceptance of Left social-democratic theories, revisionism of the Kautskyist brand. I attacked their policy on production (they supported an all-out drive to increase production); on strikes (they opposed strikes); on conscription (which they still support); on nationalization (which we supported, but opposed the leaders who made it appear that Socialism was thereby being introduced). Above all we opposed the theory

of diminishing contradictions put forward in Pollitt's 'How to Win the Peace' and 'Answers to Questions'.

This opposition was composed of both intellectuals and workers. I am a joiner; other comrades were, for example, electricians and engineers, while some (a minority) were graduates from Oxford.

It is interesting to note that at the time Socialist Appeal had the following to say about the opposition:

'The outstanding feature of the Communist Party Conference this year was the revolutionary opposition among sections of the rank and file which succeeded in penetrating to the floor of the conference. This revolutionary opposition tendency was most firmly and consistently expressed by the amendment from Hertford and Welwyn Garden City which criticized the policy of the party. The amendment from Hertford showed a genuine attempt to return to the policy of Lenin . . . in its main essence it was a Leninist position in relation to strategy. . . .'

In conclusion, perhaps the writer used the 'genuine' to mean that the opposition was not centred around the question of the Soviet Union. However, one did not have to accept the Trotskyist theory of the degenerated workers' state to know that something was fundamentally wrong with the British party's policy. It is true that the Welwyn Garden City opposition did not attack the leadership of Stalin. We had not then fully realized the connection between the degeneration here and the policies of the Soviet bureaucracy. However we did understand that the leadership in Britain was betraying the interests of the British and Colonial workers and we said so. We also attacked the policies of the French and Italian Communist Party leaders who disarmed the partisans and then took part in bourgeois governments. We received our answer. We were isolated and finally expelled.

As I see it, Marxism is a science, and not a series of pronouncements by leaders. Trotsky was correct on many things, and his works must be seriously studied with great profit to us all. Most of his analyses of the Soviet Union I accept. However I also consider that Rosa Luxemburg was a genuine Marxist, yet she had severe differences with both Lenin and Trotsky.

Let us be as exact as possible in our appraisals of the past and keep the record straight. There have been other genuine Marxist oppositions in the Communist Party since 1932, and the Welwyn Garden City-Hertford opposition was one of these.

Liverpool

Eric S. Heffer.

By the words 'genuine Marxist opposition' we had in mind an opposition on a national scale. We certainly did not wish to imply that the Welwyn Garden City opposition of 1947 was not 'genuine'. Unfortunately its voice was smothered by the 'machine' before party members in other areas could seriously discuss the Welwyn programme.—Editors.

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