

Socialist Review

WHITHER
BRITAIN?

VOL.
ONE

Nº 6 NOV.-DEC. 1951

SIX
PENCE

THE "SOCIALIST REVIEW" STANDS

for the nationalisation of the mines, industry, transport and banks without compensation and their operation under the control of workers' committees;

for full and immediate freedom to all the colonies;

for an international workers' fighting front against imperialism and war;

for a Socialist Britain in a Socialist Federation of Europe and the world;

against secret diplomacy and the imperialist division of the world;

against the American Imperialist Power bloc and against the Russian Imperialist Power bloc.

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW, BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

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Editorial

-1- AFTER THE ELECTIONS

Now that the election is over it is necessary to draw up a balance sheet to evaluate the result and to learn from it how to do better in future.

As soon as it was known that there was going to be an election, the Tory press confidently predicted a landslide. Its statisticians and "experts" on public opinion calculated that there would be a Tory majority of 100 or more. The mood of the Labour movement was rather hesitant at first, but there was a rapid change when once the election battle began, and we may be very proud of the tremendous strength and loyalty shown by all ranks of the Labour movement. Labour polled more votes than in the 1950 elections, and many more than in the 1945 elections, so that all the Tory prophecies of a rout of the Labour Party proved unfounded. Instead there was a certain setback. The pendulum swung a little to the Right, just enough to give the Tories a small majority. Why did this happen? The concentration of Labour voters in industrial areas, resulting in very large majorities for some Labour members, gave the Tories a certain advantage. But this was a factor in the two previous elections, and does not by itself explain why the 1945 Labour majority of 150 seats dwindled to only 7 in 1950 and disappeared altogether in 1951.

The day after the election results were announced, the "Daily Herald" gave three reasons for the defeat of the Labour Party.

- 1) "Conservative propaganda has ceaselessly tried to conceal the world causes of rising prices, and to pretend that every difficulty is due to the Labour Government's policy."
- 2) The fact that in 1950 the Liberals put up hundreds of candidates but in this election far fewer, coupled with the fact that more of the Liberal votes went to the Conservatives than to Labour.
- 3) The Bevan campaign. "It was a misfortune for Labour that three of its Ministers should have resigned a few months before the Elections and were actively campaigning against Government policy right up to the time when Mr. Attlee announced the date of the poll. The Tories exploited this division of opinion very vigorously."

The last point can be readily dismissed, for all the Bevanites who contested marginal seats - Freeman, Driberg, Wilson, Mikardo, Foot and Byng - were elected. The working class is not frightened by nor antagonistic to open democratic discussion. On the first two points, the editor of the "Daily Herald" thinks that he has answered the question by merely posing it. The question should be put in this way: Why is it that the Labour Government, which after the 1945 election had an overwhelming majority in the House, failed to undermine and destroy the mass influence of the Tories? Why did millions of poor people continue to vote for the Tory clique which represents the handful of rich people in the country? Why has popular support for the Tories even increased,

some millions voting for them who did not trouble to vote at all in 1945? According to the 1931 census, 79 per cent of the earning population of Britain are wage and salary earners. A small number of the salary earners are not members of the working class, such as Lord MacGowan, who has a salary of £50,000 a year, but the great majority are poor and exploited, and even if their outlook approximates to that of the petty bourgeoisie, their material conditions of life are little different to those of wage earners. After years of Labour in power why did the majority of the population-79% as shown-not vote Labour in 1951? It is vital for the Labour Movement that this question should be answered correctly. Responsibility for the defeat must be laid at the right door. This requires an analysis of the right wing policy of the leaders of the Labour Government.

First of all, under the economic policy of the Labour Government millions of workers, although enjoying a slight improvement in their conditions of life, experienced no basic change. For millions of salaried people, lower middle class, etc., there was no improvement at all. The main reason was that only at the cost of profits could the conditions of the great majority of the British people be improved, but the Labour leaders did not dare to encroach boldly on the interests of big capital.

The share of the capitalists in the national income did not decrease at all under the Labour Government, as can be seen from the following table:

Proportion of the National Income going to Different Classes

<u>Before Tax</u>	<u>1946</u>	<u>1947</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1949</u>	<u>1950</u>
Profits, rent, etc.	39	41	40	40	40
Wages	35	36	37	37	37
Salaries	20	20	21	21	21
Pay of armed forces	6	3	2	2	2
<u>After Tax</u>					
Profits, rent, etc.	32	35	34	33	35
Wages	40	40	41	42	41
Salaries	21	21	22	22	22
Pay of armed forces	7	4	3	3	2

("Labour Research", May, 1951)

The table does not take into account the appreciation of capital. When a capitalist sells for £20,000 shares whose former value was £10,000, he does not pay income tax on the £10,000 profit, and such profits are not included in the item "profits, rent, etc." in the table. While the relative share of the capitalists in the national income did not decline under the Labour Government, notwithstanding so much talk about the "soaking of the rich by taxation", their profits in absolute figures shot up alarmingly. According to the "Financial Times", the profits announced by 2,729 public companies in the first eight months of 1951 were £1,339 million compared with £1,062 million in the first eight months of 1950, i.e., a rise of 26 per cent in one

year. Actually the rise would have been bigger if the hidden reserves had been taken into account. The ordinary capital of these companies rose from £1,362 million to £1,421 million, declared reserves from £2,137 million to £2575 million, an increase of £438 million. The official limitation of dividends, the imposition of excess profits tax, etc., do not prevent capitalists enriching themselves. The big companies are astute enough not to divulge their increasing profits by a big rise in dividends. I.C.I., for example, whose declared profits in 1949 were £17 million and in 1950 £31 million, raised its dividend only from 10 per cent to 12 per cent.

The rising prices were explained away in the Tory press by a demagogic outcry against the mismanagement and inefficiency of the Labour Government. The right wing Labour leaders tried to belittle the extent of the rise in prices and to blame it only on factors outside the control of Britain - the rise in the price of raw materials after the outbreak of the Korean war, etc. Neither drew attention to one important reason for this rise - the increase in profits.

A policy of dividend limitation, excess profits tax, etc., was not adequate to deal with the increasing profits of the capitalists and the undiminished or even increased part of the national income absorbed by profits. A socialist government would have opened the books of all the companies to the inspection of the trade unions and workers' committees, so as to prevent increasing profits leading to a rise in prices. Measures would have been taken to lower prices by reducing profits. Such a step would not have meant the establishment of Socialism, but it would have been a step in that direction.

The Tory press, appealing to the prejudices of the petty bourgeoisie, pretended that the high taxes, the high price of tobacco, beer, cinema tickets, etc., was due to the Labour Government's policy of food subsidies, social services, etc. The same explanation was given for a different reason by the Labour leaders. Subsidies, Government expenditure on housing and on the other social services, make up a very small percentage of the budget. In the last budget, the cost of all the social services, including education, food subsidies, national insurance, health, housing, grants to local authorities, etc., was only 7/7d. in every pound of government expenditure. The year before it was 9/3d. Against the £410 million in the present budget year for food subsidies, £584 million went to payment of interest on the national debt, the largest part of which goes to the big financiers. The interest on the national debt alone cost nearly four times more than all the housing expenditure, grants to local authorities, etc. The "defence" budget alone is equal to the total cost of the social services.

The workers and the lower middle class make a much larger contribution to the Government's income than they did before. Indirect taxes, less subsidies, on personal consumption, rose from £543 million in 1938, to £1,436 million in 1950. By far the greater part of these indirect taxes are paid by the poor. During the same period income tax on wages rose from £2 million to £219 million. Direct taxes on salaries rose from £52 million to £280 million. So, while making social inequality less pronounced by helping the poor with food subsidies, the national

health scheme, education, housing, etc., the budget did not change the general pattern of wealth distribution. The total taxes imposed on the rich in the present budget year is not enough to cover even the "defence" budget. The whole burden of the social services and of a big part of the "defence" budget falls directly on the poorer people (not to mention the fact that the profits of the capitalist on which he pays taxes, are created by the same people).

The rearmament drive played directly into the hands of the Tory demagogues, who blamed the Labour ministers for the higher taxation and increasing scarcities.

A socialist policy would have abolished immediately all indirect taxes that fall on the poor, and imposed a high taxation and capital levy on the rich. On the expenditure side of the budget it would first of all have abolished the national debt, and any compensation for shareholders in nationalised industries.^x

A socialist policy would have prevented any profiteering on defence preparations. Yet the day after Gaitskell declared his "war" budget, the value of stocks increased by more than £1,000 million in 24 hours. It is well-known that in every imperialist war "the proletarians fall while the dividends rise" (Rosa Luxemburg). A socialist policy would have demanded the nationalisation without compensation of all war industries, (which under conditions of total war means the greater part of industry), and, as a first step towards the elimination of war profiteering, the opening of the books to workers' inspection. A socialist policy would of course have meant an entirely new conception of military defence and a new approach to the question of the military budget, which would have been the result of a socialist foreign policy, a question with which we shall deal later.

One of the strongest attacks in the Tory propaganda against the Labour Government, and one which brought them hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of votes, was the housing shortage. The bottlenecks in the building industry, resulting mainly from monopolies in the building

^x The excuse of the Labour leaders, that this would have inflicted hardship on the small shareholders and owners of government securities, cannot be taken seriously. The great majority of shares and securities are concentrated in the hands of a very small number of people. There are one and a quarter million shareholders of joint stock companies in the country, but the share of those who have a holding of not more than £2,000 is only 2 per cent of the total stock of the joint stock companies. It would be imperative for a socialist government not to expropriate these small shareholders, who scraped together their property by hard work. But to achieve this the government would only have to apply a "capitalist means test" by which only the people with very small means should ^{not} be expropriated. Thus, the amount of compensation would have been only a small percentage of the amount that is actually being paid.

materials industry, and the exorbitant prices for land demanded by the landowners, is a question we cannot enter into here (it was dealt with fully by Comrade Peter D. Morgan in his series of articles in the "Socialist Review"). Even if it is assured that the shortage of building materials, building workers, etc., prevented more houses being built than were built during the six years of the Labour Government, one measure could certainly have been taken: the big houses of the rich could have been distributed among the needy. A socialist policy would have demanded the creation of tenants' committees all over the country to control the allocation of existing housing space. If a tenants' committee, representing workers, employees, small shopkeepers, etc., had insisted that as a first step towards the solution of the housing problem a number of families should be settled in the mansions of the local rich (the backbone of the Tory Party) all the propaganda of the Tories would have been exposed as hypocritical. In this immediate, if partial, solution of the housing question, the Tories would have shown themselves to everybody as enemies of newly-married couples, overcrowded families, and others needing houses and flats.

The way the Labour leaders carried out nationalisation also played into the hands of the Tory enemy. Only the neglected industries which were already in serious straits were nationalised. For many years before nationalisation the railways were given subsidies of more than £40 million a year, the coal mines and the power and gas stations were very badly equipped. Under such conditions nationalisation meant nationalisation of losses. After nationalisation there was very little possibility of increasing wages for the workers while cutting the price of goods and services produced by the industries. Compensation aggravated the problem. The Tories could shout: "You see, nationalisation has not produced cheaper goods, nor better conditions for the workers to any considerable extent. Nationalisation of industry, socialism, is bankrupt!" The fact that the increase in railway fares and the prices of coal, gas and electricity was less than the average increase in the price of goods produced by private enterprise did not prevent the Tories from making a lot of political capital out of the difficulties of the nationalised industries. A socialist policy would have demanded nationalisation without compensation. It would also have demanded nationalisation not of the bankrupt industries, but of all the key industries of the country. It would have demanded their operation under the control of workers' committees. Attlee knew of course that any step towards the nationalisation of a very profitable concern like I.C.I., especially without compensation and in order to run it under new masters - the workers' committees - would have met strong and persistent opposition from the bourgeoisie. The course which the Labour leaders took meant much less struggle, but it discredited socialism by misrepresenting state capitalist measures as socialist measures, and therefore making it easy for the Tory press to expose "socialism".

One important reason for the Tory capitalist mass influence is its control over the vast majority of newspapers. The democratic principle of "one man, one vote" does not apply at all to the British press, whether the Prime Minister is Churchill or Attlee. The voice of Lord Beaverbrook is much stronger than that of John Smith. The Labour Government made a grave mistake in not changing this state of affairs.

A socialist policy would have established the principle that, let us say, every hundred thousand readers would have been given the means of running a daily paper, thus wresting control over the press from the capitalists.

It is the home policy of the Labour government which led to the Tory victory. This must be stated clearly and frankly because otherwise even if Labour wins the next election there would be no final solution of the social problem.

In these days of swift, worldwide communications, the narrow boundaries of the national state have become obsolete. No country can divorce its home policy from its foreign policy. When wars are total wars, and the whole economy is subordinated to preparation for war, the connection between housing and armaments, butter and guns, is very close. Modern war demands years of preparation during the period of so-called "peace" and so even in peace-time any aspect of domestic policy has immediate repercussions in foreign affairs. Nothing is easier for the government than to say, "The rise in prices, the housing shortage, etc., are all caused by our need to devote more of our resources to national defence". This does not adequately explain the high prices, shortages, etc., as it ignores the question of the class division of the national income: profits, compensation in nationalised enterprises, interest on the national debt, the distribution of housing space, etc. It is equally superficial to "explain" the country's difficulties by blaming the international antagonisms as though foreign policy can be considered apart from the question of the class nature of the foreign policy of Britain under the Labour Government. Was it a socialist policy, or was it a capitalist, imperialist policy?

At the end of the war, Britain was occupying the Ruhr, the heart of German industry. Again and again Bovin declared that it was imperative to nationalise heavy industry in the Ruhr and to expropriate the rich monopolists who backed Hitler. But these were only words. The monopolists were left in control and they are now entering into a cartel arrangement with French, Belgian and Dutch industrialists (the so-called Schuman Plan). If the Labour Government had not prevented the nationalisation of the industries of the Ruhr, which was demanded so vigorously by the German trade unions, and if those industries were now being run under workers' control, what a citadel of socialism this would have been! The Ruhr ^{even} under Hitler produced more steel than the whole of the USSR is producing today. The Ruhr workers would have become so powerful that instead of the Schuman Plan there could have been put forward a socialist plan of production, a socialist integration of the basic industries of Western Europe (Britain, Germany, France, etc.), instead of a cartel of monopolists. What a strong bulwark this would have been against the Russian bloc on the one hand and against American imperialism on the other. But the Labour Government's policy preserved in power the monopolists in Western Germany, and so gave a fillip to all the reactionary capitalist tendencies in Germany, and encouraged Right wing elements in all the other countries of Western Europe.

The same lesson can be drawn from Labour's colonial policy. In the struggle of the Powers, Russia is very weak indeed compared with the

United States. U.S.A. has two-thirds of the world's industrial production, but Russia produces only 12 per cent. U.S.A.'s steel capacity today is 105 million tons a year, Russia's 25 million, and so on. In the struggle between the Powers the decisive factor is the millions of working people, the thousand millions of Asia and Africa, the three hundred million of Western Europe. Western Europe alone has an industrial capacity twice as great as Russia's. By the weight of numbers the thousand millions of Asia and Africa can play a big part in deciding the struggle of the Powers for world mastery. The strength of Stalin lies mainly in the power of appeal and organisation of his agents, the Stalinist parties. Between 1945 and now, no Russian troops have taken an active part in any of the struggles in Asia. There were and are English and Dutch in Indonesia, French in Indo-China, American, English, French, etc., in Korea - no Russian soldiers anywhere. It has become almost habitual for every Western statesman to speak of helping the backward countries (Point 4 of the Truman Plan). The Labour Government has repeatedly stated its will to help the backward countries, and explained the meagreness of its help by the lack of means in Britain and by the war preparations. Instead of big promises and plans for the future, a socialist government in Britain could have done something in the present. Instead of promising to lend India some millions of pounds in the future, a simple thing could have been done immediately, the expropriation of all British enterprises abroad, calling upon the colonial workers to take them over and run them in their interests. If British industry, run according to a socialist plan, supplied India, Malaya, etc., with hundreds of thousands of tons of steel a year, with locomotives, trucks, tractors, and so helped to modernise these countries, what tremendous political effect this would have all over Asia. (We must not forget that Yugoslavia broke with Russia mainly because the latter did not supply enough means of production for the industrialisation of Yugoslavia and charged exorbitant prices for the goods supplied).

How many allies a socialist Britain could have gained by a socialist, anti-imperialist foreign policy!

This in turn would have meant that less material means would have been needed to withstand a Russian imperialist attack. The astronomical figures of American war preparations - far surpassing anything that Russian war industry is producing or can produce, is the result of the anti-popular character of American foreign policy. A federation of socialist states could have defended itself with much less material means than an alliance of a number of plutocracies headed by Wall Street. And the burden of armaments would have been shouldered by the workers with much greater readiness, and even enthusiasm, when they knew that they were being produced in the interests of Socialism, with no Armstrong Vickers to make millions out of it.

The foreign policy of the Labour Government has been a policy of defending capitalist imperialist investments all over the globe, of alliance with reactionary capitalist governments in Europe, of the preservation of the magnates that backed Hitler, of subservience to American imperialism, of opposition to the anti-feudal, anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, mass movements in the colonies, and, when compelled to retreat from any colony (as from India and Pakistan) retreating in such a

way as to cause the minimum of disturbance to the social system, allying with the rich and corrupted local ruling class. The war budget was only one aspect of this general foreign policy.

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The right wing policy of the Labour leaders led to a Tory victory. The danger is that the Labour movement will allow its leaders to continue the same policy even if under a little more "Left" phraseology now that Labour is in opposition. The fact that in the House of Commons the Tories have such a slight majority can help the Right wing Labour leaders to try to limit the "struggle" to parliamentary tactics: "A small swing to the Left and we are in again. What is necessary is to succeed in getting a few hundred thousand liberal voters, to achieve which we must play down any socialist demands, we must appeal to the Liberal voters by adapting ourselves to their mentality." Such a policy, even if it succeeded, would mean abdication of Socialism, and a see-saw policy, today Tories up Labour down, tomorrow Labour up Tories down, and so on, without any fundamental change. The Editorial in the "Daily Herald" the day after the elections hinted at a policy of this kind.

But this policy would come into conflict with the immediate needs of the working class. The millions of British workers who were ready to agree to a "wage freeze", even if grudgingly, when it was imposed by a Labour Government, a government to which they are tremendously loyal, will not stand for a similar policy from the Tories. At the same time, the vested interests represented by the Tories, and the increasing war preparations, will inevitably push the workers towards industrial struggle on a large scale.

Today more than ever, no group or section of the working class can to any extent improve its conditions of life and work or defend the existing conditions by a purely industrial struggle. When a government decision on subsidies, on rent control, on arms expenditure, is decisive for the level of prices, scarcity, etc., it is absolutely essential for the workers to combine their industrial struggle with the political struggle.

To generalise the struggle, to draw the essential political conclusions from it, a political organisation is needed. There are two candidates for leadership of the industrial struggle, and for making it a bridge to the creation of an important political factor, the Left Wing of the Labour Party and the Stalinist Party.

Let us first deal with the Communist Party. The election of 1950, and even more that of 1951, showed a big decline in the influence of the Party, an influence that was never very great in Britain at the best of times. In 1945 Gallacher got 17,636 votes in West Fife, in 1950 he got 9,301 votes, in 1951 the Stalinist candidate in the same area got 4,728. In Rhondda East Harry Pollitt got 15,761 votes in 1945, in 1950 4,463, and in 1951 the Stalinist candidate got only 2,948. (Of course after burning their fingers in 1950 they were not so foolish as to risk Harry Pollitt and Gallacher losing their deposits, but they put up lesser known figures.) Nevertheless the Party has a good cadre of militant trade union-

ists, well-organised and disciplined, and if no other well-organised, clearly militant tendency arises to lead the industrial struggles before us, there is a danger that the C.P. will fish in the troubled waters.

Much more important than the C.P. as a candidate to lead the industrial struggle and generalise it politically, is the Left wing of the Labour Party. The fact that the Stalinists lost in the elections of 1950 and 1951 show that the workers had a healthy suspicion of the C.P. as the agent of a totalitarian foreign power, as splitters of the united workers' front against the Tories (we must not forget that in 1950 in four constituencies the Tories got in only because a few hundred votes were taken from Labour by the C.P.) At the same time, the Bevanites who stood in marginal constituencies, did well in the last elections, which shows that the workers tend to support anyone who within the framework of the united Movement, puts a Leftist policy forward. The emergence of a Left wing, however hesitant, inside the Labour Party - the Bevan "rebellion" - was received very badly in Washington, and the American press was not slow to express fears of Bevanism. The Russian press was equally unhappy over the Bevan affair. "Trud", the official trade union paper, of June 26, opened a full-scale attack on Bevan soon after he resigned from the government. The "Daily Worker" was equally unenthusiastic. Both the American bourgeoisie and the Russian bureaucracy know very well that the only alternative to their policy and in opposition to both is militant revolutionary socialism. Any step in this direction cannot but be a setback for the two contending world powers.

In face of the Tory enemy the whole Labour movement must close its ranks. We must support and defend Attlee against Churchill. In the face of a right wing policy inside the Labour movement we must support any left wing tendency, however half-hearted, hesitant and opportunist it may be. We must defend Bevan from any attack by the Transport House bureaucracy. At the same time we must be absolutely clear that, whether Labour is in power or not, the only consistent way to fight the Tories, the only way to break their popular mass support, the only way to galvanise and consolidate the overwhelming majority of the people in the Labour movement is by putting forward a really consistent programme of socialist demands. In face of rising prices, it is necessary to insist on a sliding scale of wages and on opening the books of the factories. In face of the housing shortage and the certain failure of the Tories to fulfil their promises, to demand a state-financed national house-building plan directed by the building trade unions and tenants' committees, and allocation of the existing housing space by tenants' committees. In face of a Tory attempt to denationalise the steel industry, to use every means to oppose it; just as the Tory Iron and Steel Federation sabotaged the nationalised steel industry, so the steel workers must be no less class-conscious, no less loyal to their class, and oppose any transference of the industry into private hands. In the face of the Tory's "devolution" and other administrative changes in other branches of the nationalised industries, the workers of the industries must put forward clearly the demand for the operation of the industries under the control of workers' committees. If the Tories try to "put the worker in his place" by creating mass unemployment (as was openly proposed by the "Economist" of 20th October) the Labour movement will have to put forward the demand for a sliding scale of hours to absorb the unemployed.

without wage reductions.

In face of the strong-arm imperialist policy of Churchill, the Labour movement must struggle openly and clearly for the right of self-determination of the colonial people, for the withdrawal of British troops from these areas, for the expropriation of British capital invested abroad, and its transference to the colonial toilers. In face of conscription and increasing militarisation, the Labour movement must struggle for the dissolution of the standing army and its substitution by a workers' militia organised under the control of workers' committees. The Labour movement must oppose the alliance with Truman, Adenauer, Syngman Rhee and other representatives of "Western Democracy", they must fight for an alliance with the millions of toilers of Europe, Asia, Africa and the rest of the world.

If the Labour Government had put forward such a programme instead of the retreat of 25 October we should have had an absolute rout of the Tories. The new Tory government is far from stable. It has only a small majority in the House, and what is much more important, it has no support from the workers in the basic industries, the railwaymen, the miners, the engineers, the millions without whom no war can be launched, the millions who have the decisive power in the class struggle. With a real socialist programme the Tories can be exposed and crushed, whether they have twenty more or less M.P.'s in the House. From the defeat of 25th October we must draw the real lesson in order to bring a real victory for Labour.

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1 9 3 1 A L L O V E R A G A I N ? In 1931 the Tory attack on the workers was prefaced by the symbolical act of cutting the Ministers' salaries. If the important Minister in the prevailing crisis was ready to sacrifice, the unemployed, the poor pensioners and the workers should most certainly also be ready to give something to the "nation". The cutting of the Ministers' salaries today by £1,000 a year is an empty gesture, as it hardly touches the pockets of these gentlemen. All of them fall within the brackets which pay a high income tax and surtax. The highest income brackets pay 19/6 in the £, so that a Minister who falls within this bracket loses only £25 by the cut. £25 is a mere 1 per cent or thereabouts of the net income of these gentlemen. The rise in prices in any recent month has put a much bigger burden on the worker, the pensioner and the housewife than this cut on the self-sacrificing Ministers.

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BRITAIN AND EGYPT

by C. Tariq

It is seventy years since the occupation of Egypt by British troops, and all we hear of the attitude of the Egyptian people to it after this long tutelage is mass demonstrations demanding the evacuation of the country by Britain. The stubborn persistence of the Egyptian masses in their demand is given a clear explanation when we see the balance sheet of the seventy years of Britain's direct and indirect rule over the country.

IMPERIALIST CAPITAL DOMINATES EGYPT During the years 1883-1910, British bankers gave a loan of £60 million to Egypt. The interest alone paid during this period amounted to £105,600,000. Nevertheless the debt did not decrease but even increased, in 1910 being £95 million. During the same 28 years the Egyptian Pasha paid a sum of £30 million for the maintenance of the British occupation army in the Sudan which protects the interests of the British plantation companies. At the same time English, French, Italian, Belgian, German and other contractors were wringing millions of pounds out of the Egyptian people by the construction of works at very exaggerated prices. Thus, for instance, the Assuan dam, which according to the estimate of Sir William Willcocks, the British irrigation expert, should have cost £2,500,000, actually cost £7,000,000, excluding the £1,200,000 for repairs. During these years, in which foreign capitalism drew out of Egypt a sum of about £200 millions, the Egyptian Education Department received the almost infinitesimal sum of £3,600,000 (less than £130,000 a year) and the Ministry of Health £3,400,000. Is there any better proof of the civilisatory role of imperialism!

In the last few decades there has been a change in the direction of imperialist capital investment. The place of state loans has been taken by investment in railways, trams, light and power, water, banks and industry, etc. Today all the key positions in the economy of the country are in the hands of foreign capitalists.

According to an estimate made by French circles ("L'Egypte Independante par le Groupe D'Etudes de L'Islam", Paris, 1938, pp. 144-5) foreign capital in 1937 amounted to £450 million, the entire wealth of the country being estimated at £963 million, which means that foreigners owned 47 per cent of it.

According to another estimate, capital investment, besides land, in the same year amounted to £550 million (A. Bonne, "The Economic Development of the Middle East," Jerusalem, 1943, p. 73). Seeing that the price of land is estimated at £500-600 million (and according to another estimate £670 million) the total property of Egypt amounts to £1,000-1,100 million. According to another estimate of 1937 based on English calculations, foreign capital invested in Egypt amounted to £500 million. Thus the property of foreigners constitutes 40-50 per cent of Egypt's total

property, which sum does not differ from that arrived at by the French experts.

As far as land is concerned, foreign capitalists have direct proprietorship over 8 per cent of the cultivated land of Egypt, i.e., land worth £50,000,000. If we deduct this sum from the total of foreign capital invested in Egypt, we get, according to one estimate, £400,000,000, and according to the other, £450,000,000.

Taking Bonne's estimate of capital investment, besides land, we see that foreign capital accounts for 73-81 per cent.

Thus foreign capitalists own nearly half the total property in Egypt and about three-quarters of all property besides land.

WORKERS' CONDITIONS The conditions of the urban workers in Egypt are terrible. For instance, in the textile industry, the prevailing wage of a skilled worker is 2/6 a day. Workers in the large sugar factories, owned in the main by French capital, get no more than £2 a month. The municipal workers of Alexandria get 2/- a day. When the workers in the British army camps in 1944 complained to the Health Department that they did not get a cost of living allowance in spite of the rapid rise in prices during the war, after long negotiations the military authorities agreed to pay every worker who earned less than 2/- a day an additional 2½d.

On these low earnings a very large family must live. On the average a worker has to support a wife and three or four children. It is not to be wondered at that they rarely taste any meat, that the children never get eggs or milk. Connected with the low standard of living is a very high incidence of disease. An investigation revealed that of 6,000 printing workers in Egypt, 62 per cent suffered from diseases of the digestive system, 85 per cent from anaemia, and 45 per cent from lead poisoning ("Al Ahram", June 14, 1943). Of the school children of Cairo investigated, 93 per cent showed signs of malnutrition, and 96 per cent suffered from chronic diseases. The number of tuberculars in the country, the majority of whom are urban workers, was 300,000 or about 2 per cent of the total population, which is a very high percentage indeed.

On the other hand, capital is doing exceptionally well. It was calculated that on every £ paid as wages in industry the capitalist gets £3 or £4 in profit, i.e., the rate of exploitation is 300-400 per cent. In the United States the rate of exploitation in 1929, as calculated by the Marxian economist, Lewis Corey, was 155 per cent ("The Decline of American Capitalism", 1934, p. 83). Egypt therefore gives a rate of exploitation double that of the United States. The rate of profit in Egyptian industry is about 14-15 per cent, while in America, in 1929, the peak year of prosperity, it was 7½ per cent.

IMPERIALISM STRIVES TO KEEP EGYPT BACKWARD Seeing that imperialist capital desires to monopolise the Egyptian market for its manufactured goods, and the raw materials produced for its industries, it strives to hinder industrial devel-

opment there and especially the rise of a machine industry which would make for economic independence. Seeing that the profits of imperialist capital are dependent on the low wages paid to the Egyptian workers and the low prices paid for the products bought from the peasant, imperialism is interested in keeping the countryside in the most backward conditions, so that it will be an inexhaustible reserve of labour power and cheap raw materials. Imperialism is further interested in this for socio-political reasons; firstly because only backward, illiterate, sick masses dispersed in tiny villages far away from one another can be ruled easily, and secondly because the imperialist fifth column in the colonial countries, its most faithful agents, are the feudal landlords. Thus imperialism is intricately involved in the agrarian question.

THE AGRARIAN QUESTION Three-quarters of the Arab population lives in the country, subjugated to a tiny handful of big landowners. 0.5 per cent of the landowners have 37.1 per cent of all the land, while 70.7 per cent have only 12.4 per cent of the land. Three hundred and thirty-one men have three times more land than 1½ million poor peasants and there are more than a million land cultivators who have no land of their own whatsoever. One plantation company alone owns such a large area of land as to employ 55,000 workers. The king's estate covers a similar area, and maintains about 30,000 small peasants. A calculation of Emile Minost, Director General of Credit Foncier Egyptian, a bank connected by many ties with the existing economic and social order, and therefore not likely to exaggerate the extent of exploitation of the masses, gives the division of the net income from agriculture as follows:

	per cent
To taxes	6.3
" large landowners	56.6
" merchants	12.1
" fellaheen	25.0
	<u>100.0</u>

Thus a few thousand landowners receive twice the sum that three million fellaheen receive. On an average, a poor peasant before the war did not earn more than £7-8 a year. During the war his nominal income rose, but the cost of living rose more, and his real income therefore decreased. The income of the agricultural worker was even lower. The daily wage of a male agricultural worker before the war was 3 piasters (7 1/5d.); of a female 2; and of a child 1-1½, and they were sentenced to extended periods of unemployment every year as the season of work lasts 6-8 months. Even a foreman did not receive more than £2 a month, a clerk £3, and a cart driver £1 to £1 4s Od. Although during the war wages about doubled, the cost of living rose by much more; and there are places where, even today, the wage of a male agricultural worker does not reach 1/- a day.

With such low incomes, the food position is obviously terrible. As a matter of fact it is comparable only with that of the Indians. It has been calculated that the consumption of the average Egyptian, which is of course much higher than that of the poor peasant worker, is only 46 per cent of the optimum in wheat, 25 per cent in sugar, 23 per cent in

meat and fish, and 8 per cent in milk products. Furthermore, the nutritional position is not improving, but steadily deteriorating.

The hard economic conditions of the masses impair their health very much and cause terrible mortality, as the following table shows (1938):

	<u>Mortality per 1,000</u>
England	11.6
Belgium	13.0
Poland	13.8
India	24.3
Egypt	26.4

	<u>Mortality of infants below a year to every 1,000 born alive</u>
England	52
Belgium	73
Poland	140
India	167
Egypt	163

Only India reaches the death rate of Egypt!

Besides "normal" deaths, famine and epidemics take their toll of life. Thus during 1944, malaria managed to wipe out tens of thousands of fellaheen in Upper Egypt, whose bodies, weakened by continued hunger, were susceptible to the disease in its severest form. According to one estimate which we may be sure is not exaggerated, 140,000 died in the epidemic that year ("Al Ahram", April 14, 1944). Five hundred workers of the land company Kom Ombo alone, died ("Al Ahram", March 1, 1944).

Because of the poor conditions of health, the expectation of life is very low, males 31 years, and females 36. In the United Kingdom the expectation of life is 60 years for a male and 64 for a female. Those who live to be adults are very weak. Among those conscripted from the villages in 1941, only 11 per cent were medically fit for army service. 90 per cent of Egypt's population suffers from trachoma, 50 per cent from worm diseases, 75 per cent from bilharzia, 50 per cent from ankylostoma.

Poverty is inevitably accompanied by ignorance, which in Egypt reaches fearful dimensions. Some idea of its extent may be gained from the very succinct remark of "El Mussawar", when it discussed the results of the 1937 census (August 28, 1942): "We have 30,000 holders of diplomas as against 14 millions who know neither how to read or to write."

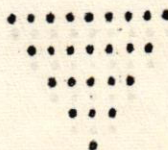
Ignorance is the product of the existing social system, and also one of its pillars, and the ruling class knows very well that the illiteracy of the masses is one of the greatest assets of the regime. Thus a certain Egyptian senator thanked God that his country took first place in ignorance. ("Al Ahram", July 7, 1944).

Riches, pleasures and hilarity of some tens of thousands of Egyptians and foreigners on the one hand, and hunger, disease and ignorance of the millions on the other - this is the picture of agricultural Egypt!

THE PRESENT CONFLICT The ruling class of Egypt today tries to use the genuine and justified hatred of the Egyptian people towards British imperialism in order to get full control over the wealth of Egypt and the Sudan, thus becoming the sole exploiters of the two peoples. The weakening of British imperialism all over the world tempts them to this at the present time. British imperialism relies on its bayonets and on the help of French and American imperialism. French imperialism has a direct interest in the quelling of any national revolt in Egypt, as its present hold over the Arab countries of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco is very shaky. American imperialism, in the interests of its world rule, cannot afford the disintegration of the British and French empires.

It will not be to the advantage of the British working class if British imperialism emerges the victor in Egypt. Morrison's policy can bring it no benefit, as it has nothing to do with socialism. A really Socialist British government would have carried out the following policy. It would first have withdrawn all the occupation forces from Egypt and the Sudan; it would have renounced all its property rights in both countries; it would have called upon the industrial workers employed by British companies to take the factories and run them; it would have called upon the hundreds of thousands of Egyptian and Sudanese agricultural workers employed in the large British plantations to take over this property and run it either as cooperative enterprises, or if the majority of them wished, to divide it among themselves. With the most important industrial enterprises under workers' control, and a large-scale agrarian revolution, the demagogic King of the Casino, with his entourage of rich landlords and capitalists, would have found themselves an object of the people's hatred and anger. The workers in the former British-owned enterprises would attract the rest of the Egyptian workers and peasants and would go forward to the establishment of a workers' and peasants' government. Such a government would be a true and loyal friend of Socialist Britain, a reliable antagonist of all imperialist oppressors, American, French or Russian. The signal would be given for socialist revolution in the Arab countries of the whole of North Africa, and its repercussions would have been widespread.

For seventy years British capital^{has} exploited the Egyptian masses and supported its allies, the Egyptian landlords. The time is ripe, nay overripe, for the British workers to fight against this exploitation and to gain millions of allies in the struggle for socialism, against imperialism and its wars for the division of the world, and for a socialist peace.



"TO OUR ENGLISH COMRADES..."

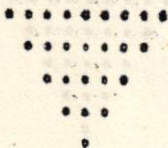
(from "LA LUTTE", 1st September,
1951)

The rift between Stalin and Tito, which exposed the reactionary nature of Stalinism, brought about a number of splits in the Stalinist Parties - in France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Norway, etc. The split-away organisations stand for a socialist policy, independent of the two Power blocs. Thus the "Socialist Review" has a lot in common with these tendencies, and we shall try to establish an exchange of views, discussions and a clarification of the path of revolutionary socialism, in the camp opposing both Washington and Moscow.

One of the most important tendencies is that of the "Independent French Communists." In the last general elections (June 1951) although they put up only a small number of candidates and had but meagre resources, they polled more than 30 thousand votes.

In the coming issues of our paper we shall publish articles from their paper, as well as from papers of other tendencies which stand for independent, internationalist, working class struggle.

"Following the visit paid to us over a month ago by members of the English organisation, grouped around "The Socialist Review," of young revolutionaries who are struggling against the opportunist betrayals of the Labour leaders on the one hand and the betrayals of the English Stalinist leaders on the other, friendly contact has been established with the leaders of this tendency. They have recently sent us Comrade Cliff's document on the Soviet Union. As soon as the translation of this work is completed, we shall publish the text as a pamphlet and extracts in "La Lutte." Just as our young English comrades will, if there is an opportunity, study and criticise our papers and our struggle, we, for our part, will in an honest and fraternal way, give our views on the struggle which they are carrying out. We hope in this way that the bonds of comradeship will be strengthened. Since we are trying to establish the same relations with revolutionaries in Germany, Belgium, Italy and various Central European countries, we can today envisage the rapid development of international relations with tendencies which, built up anew, will in future give birth to a genuine international Movement based on the equality and independence of all the constituent national groups."



THE TSARIST EMPIRE THROUGH STALINIST EYES.

by Roger Tennant

For generations Russian socialists and democrats thought Tsarist Russia a "prison of the peoples" and Tsarist imperialist oppression of the Poles, Finns, Lithuanians, Estonians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, etc., a most reactionary force. Stalin's Russia gives a different teaching.

"Prosvetaniye istorii v shkolye" (History Teaching in School), No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1950, writes: "...annexation by Russia represented the only path of social-economic and cultural development and also salvation of national existence for the peoples of the Caucasus and Transcaucasus threatened with conquest by backward, feudal Turkey and Iran or with Colonial enslavement by capitalist Britain and France." "For the people of Transcaucasus...the annexation by Russia was the only means of saving themselves, preserving their ancient cultures and developing economically and culturally..."

"Voprosy istorii", No. 10, Oct. 1950 writes: From the 16th century onwards, the feudal monarchies of Turkey and Iran conducted a long and stubborn struggle to seize various territories in the Caucasus.

Many Caucasian peoples, unable because of their dispersed character, to withstand foreign aggression, "sought salvation and intercession from the Russian state, turning to it for assistance and patronage". In the middle of the 16th century the Circassian (Kabardian) princes appealed to Ivan IV to give them Russian citizenship and to protect them from the raids and plunderings of Turkey and the Turkish vassal, the Crimean Khan. The Transcaucasian peoples established ties with Russia towards the end of the 15th century, and these ties were strengthened in proportion as the military danger presented by Turkey and Iran increased. By their actions against Turkey and Iran, "Russian troops often saved the peoples of the Caucasus from military danger." How well put! The Tsarist troops which occupied the Caucasus saved it from military danger!

In the "Diplomatic Dictionary", Vol. II, the article on Bogdan Khmelnytsky, quoted by "Voprosy istorii", No. 2, Feb. 1951, reads: "Since it was unable to form its own independent state, the Ukraine was faced with the choice of being absorbed by gentry Poland and the Sultan's Turkey, or coming under Russia's rule. This latter prospect, despite the fact that it meant extending Tsarist autocratic oppression to the Ukraine was, in the given historical circumstances, the best way out for the people of the Ukraine. Khmelnytsky's greatness as statesman and diplomat lay in his realisation of this historical necessity and his stubborn pursuit of this goal."

"Pravda" of July 20, 1951, comes back to Khmelnytsky: "For many years the Ukraine bore the heavy yoke of foreign rule (Poland). But nothing could break the will of the freedom-loving people, and they rose to fight for their freedom. The Ukrainian people's long and stubborn struggle against their enslavers was crowned with success - the Polish gentry were driven from the Ukrainian land. Bogdan Khmelnytsky's deeds

as statesman and warrior became a glorious page in the history of the liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people." Not a word about the Russian gentry who enslaved the Ukraine! Not a word about the 200,000 Jews massacred by Khmel'nitsky to cement the annexation to Russia!

"Literaturnaya Gazeta" July 10, 1951, writes: "The annexation of Kazakhstan by Russia, which took place in the 18th century, was of profoundly progressive significance. This historic act was conditioned by economic and political causes, by the entire course of historical development of the Kazakh people tormented by incessant raids of the feudal states of the Moslem East. It created the conditions for the mighty impact of Russian economy and culture in Kazakhstan.

"The Kazakh people made their historic choice wisely and correctly. At that time, besides Russia, the Kazakhs could have fallen in the bondage of Central Asiatic Khanates backed by Britain. Not spurning any means, British capital crept up on Kazakh lands and resources, calculating on rich gains". "...the working people (of Kazakhstan) through their daily experience, comprehended the advantages of life in a mighty state, Russia."

The Kazakh people chose to be annexed by Tsarist Russia! They preferred to be in "a mighty state"!

"Pravda", Dec. 26, 1950, wrote: "The annexation of Kazakhstan to Russia began in the first third of the 18th century and continued up to the sixties of the 19th century. The annexation was of profoundly progressive significance. It determined the historical fate of Kazakhstan and secured the economic and cultural intercourse between the Kazakh people and Russia". "The Kazakh working people were vitally interested in the annexation of Kazakhstan to Russia."

On the conquest of Georgia 150 years ago by Russia, "Pravda", Jan. 7, 1951, wrote: "The Georgian people are eternally grateful to the great Russian people who extended the hand of aid to them in their most arduous times".

"Vestnik akademii nauk SSSR" (Herald of the USSR Academy of Sciences), Dec. 1950, criticises a number of books on the history of the Kirghiz people for the following "crime": "The annexation of Kirghizia to Russia has been equated with the conquests of the Manchu emperors and the Kalmyk and Kokand Khans, which could not but lead to politically pernicious conclusions..."

"Literaturnaya Gazeta", Jan. 9, 1951, writes: "The settling of Alaska by the Russians bore a clearly marked labouring and democratic character dissimilar to the trading and plundering colonisation of the Anglo-Saxons who recruited their agents from among tramps, adventurers and criminals." This was said about the 18th-19th century! In 1867 the Tsar sold Alaska to the United States, an act of ^{which} the Stalinist historians are very critical. "The Tsarist diplomats pursued a policy of concessions with respect to Russia's overseas possessions. In 1867, taking advantage of the weakening of Russia as a consequence of Tsarism's

(continued on p. 25)

STALINIST RUSSIA - THE FACTS

HOUSING IN RUSSIA

by T. Cliff

(from a series of articles appearing
in INFORMATION DIGEST in March, April,
May, 1949)

(We publish here the fifth of a series of articles on Russia with the object of bringing before the British workers the real situation in Stalinist Russia, based on facts. The workers in Britain are becoming more and more uneasy about what is taking place in Russia, and in order to answer these growing doubts, the Stalinist Parties have poured out a spate of lying propoganda about the situation in Russia. These articles are based entirely on official Russian material and their accuracy cannot be challenged. Even when other sources have been quoted, they have been checked with the original Russian sources.)

.....

The concentration of the means of production in the hands of the state, and their planned use, caused a tremendous rise in Russian production, notwithstanding the mismanagement, embezzlement, etc., which inevitably result from the lack of democracy and any control by the workers over the officials and managers, but because of the rule of the officials, the masses drew no material benefits from the big successes of the plan. Let us exemplify this by giving some facts about the housing activity of Stalin's government in the same years that the annual production of cement, the most important building material, about quadrupled itself.

In this article we propose to show only the housing conditions of the Russian masses under Stalin's regime. In the next article we shall show the food and clothing situation, and in the one following the conditions in schools, health and social services.

While the urban population increased very rapidly during the Five Year Plans, the bureaucracy was not at all zealous in its allocation of workers, machines, and materials to build houses for the increased number of workers. While the Russian press was proclaiming Russia's supremacy over all other countries in the sphere of house building, the actual housing situation was far from inspiring, as the following table shows:

<u>Years</u>	<u>Urban Population</u> (in millions)	<u>Total Floor Space</u> (million sq. metres)	<u>Floor Space per Capita</u> (sq. metres)
1927/8	26.3	160.0	6.1
1932	35.6	185.1	5.2
1937	50.2	211.9	4.2

4.2 metres, or 44 sq. feet, is the average floor space per person! And this includes not only the bedroom, but the passage, kitchen, bathroom, lavatory, etc. Besides, we must not forget that the bureaucrats have much more living space than the average, so that the masses have even less than this amount.

COMPARISON WITH ENGLAND In order to understand how little this is, we must remember that in England "The Ministry of Health normally allows a maximum of two people to a house containing only one room of 110 sq. ft., or over. The number allowed increases with the number of such rooms, being 2, 3, 5, $7\frac{1}{2}$ and 10 for houses up to five rooms in size. This standard is now considered by many to be too low." ("Facts for Socialists", 15th edition, Fabian publication, March, 1944).

Thus English law, that of a capitalist country, does not permit less floor space per person than 55 sq. ft. (and this not including kitchen, bathroom, lavatory, etc.) if the house has one room, 77 sq. ft. for a house of two rooms, 66 sq. ft. for a house of three rooms, 57 sq. ft. for a house of four rooms, and 55 sq. ft. for a house of five rooms.

EFFECTS OF THE WAR The war caused the housing situation in Russia to deteriorate considerably. The German imperialist army left 25 million people homeless (according to the Russian papers). Faced with this acute situation, the Government promised the construction of housing space of 84 million sq. metres in the Fourth Five Year Plan (1946-50). This would give a little less than 3.5 metres per capita to the homeless population. But let us not too readily assume that even this meagre plan was realised. We must remember that the house-building quota of the First Five Year Plan was 53 million sq. metres; actually only 25.1 million sq. metres were built. The Second Five Year Plan promised 64 million sq. metres; only 26.8 were built. At the same time the urban population increased much more than the plan laid down.

The Russian papers, which do not give any figures summing up housing activity on a national scale, nevertheless do publish letters, and many small news items and articles showing the terrible neglect prevailing. A few examples will show this.

The paper "Trud", of 2nd April, 1946, tells us that in the province of Krivoi Rog the following is the picture of housing: 43 iron mines are already in operation, and another 15 will be put into operation before the end of the year; the number of workers in the mines is bigger than it was before the war, and in addition there are thousands of temporary workers busy rebuilding the destroyed plants; furthermore, two-thirds of the dwelling houses of the district were destroyed or very heavily damaged.

Despite all this, building activity is almost non-existent. Even where houses are begun, their completion is always long overdue, because of the lack of windows and doors, the impossibility of finding hinges and other essential parts. The local brick factory, whose output, according to the Plan, should have been 16,000,000 bricks in 1945, produced

only 6,000,000. The tile factory, whose output should have been 600,000, supplied only 54,000 tiles of very poor quality.

According to "Trud" of 30th March, 1946, in the coal trust, Molotov, the housing plan was realised only 50 per cent. The situation as regards sanitary and health arrangements is also very bad. Of the budget announced for loans to individual miners to build their own houses, only a fifth was distributed, and only a half of the latter sum was spent, as it was impossible to find building materials.

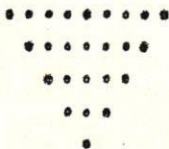
QUALITY OF HOUSES "Trud" of 23rd March, 1946, says that in the Electro-Steel Factory, a new house was built for the workers - containing twelve flats. Those lucky enough to get a flat here, found great difficulty in moving in, as the passage and stairway were so narrow, that the furniture could not be got through. The ovens were out of order and consumed an inordinate amount of fuel. The stoves had place for only one pot.

The correspondent of "Trud" who visited the new house says that it looked old and dilapidated. The walls and ovens were full of cracks, and the plaster was already falling off.

POWERS OF THE MANAGERS The same paper says that the machine factory of Dnepropetrovsk received prefabricated parts for the workers' houses. But the Director of the factory took the building workers off the construction of workers' houses, and put them to work building a house for himself. In the meantime many of the prefabricated parts disappeared - nobody knows where.

In a letter to the paper "Trud" a Red Army soldier's wife complains that while four people live in one room, the payments for the room are shockingly high and without any stability. For instance, in January they paid 28 roubles for heating, while in February they paid 148 roubles. The management of the house claimed that the price of fuel rose very much, but the paper proves that the management was to be blamed, having wasted the money of the tenants owing to its lack of accounting skill, or other, worse reasons. ("Trud", 8th April, 1946).

In such a situation it is very easy to understand what a tremendous weapon the Director of a factory or mine has at his disposal if, as an Order of the Commissariat of Labour of 26th November, 1932, allows him to do, he can take the worker's living quarters away from him as a punishment for any misdemeanour or disobedience, determined arbitrarily by the manager himself.



WHAT'S BEHIND THE PURGES IN THE UKRAINE?

by Vs. Felix

(Released by VPERED, Western Germany, July, 1951.

VPERED is the organ of the Ukrainian socialist revolutionary movement published by its members in emigration, recording the thinking and activities of the revolutionary socialist, anti-Stalinist resistance movement in the Ukraine.)

The Russian Stalinist press has again announced a new attack on Ukrainian "nationalists" in the Ukraine. The Central Committee of the C.P. of Ukraine, several district committees, editorial boards of the central papers, cultural and scientific institutions, and prominent personalities have been sharply criticized for "deviations". The Kremlin's attack on such a big scale is the first in the last five postwar years. It is therefore of serious significance, and needs some explanation.

I

May 24, 1945, was the date which should be reckoned as the beginning of the era of unconcealed Stalinist Great Russian nationalism. On that day Stalin himself, speaking before the assembly of generals and officers of the army, announced for the first time that the Russians "are the most eminent nation of all the nations which constitute the Soviet Union," and that the "Russian people...is the leading force of the Soviet Union among all the other peoples of our country." (Cf. I.V. Stalin: "On the Great Fatherland War of the Soviet Union", Moscow, 1949, page 197).

OPEN RUSSIAN CHAUVINISM

From that time on, the Stalinist press and all the publications were overflowing with propaganda for Russian nationalism. For instance, we quote a couple of examples from quite recent publications:

"The Great Russian people have been generally recognized by all the peoples of the Soviet Union as the leading force in the country." ("Pravda" editorial, "Under the Banner of an Unshaken Friendship of Peoples," April 13, 1951).

"The arrival of a new era in the history of mankind is connected with Russia and the Russian people." ("Komsomolskaya Pravda", editorial, January 24, 1951).

Note that the words "Russia" and the "Russian people" are never used in Stalin's empire to mean the USSR and the people of the USSR, as they are commonly used in the U.S. There they refer only to the "Russian Federated Republic," one of the 15 republics constituting the USSR, and to the 90 million Russians of this republic, out of the 200 million inhabitants of the USSR. Besides the Great Russians, there are 181 other peoples within the USSR.

"The greatest significance in the development of the national cultures of the peoples of the USSR is possessed by the Russian language. It has a great uniting and educational role. It should be clear to everybody that without a knowledge of the Russian language it is impossible to

become a highly educated and cultured man." ("Narodnoye Obrazovaniye", No. 8, August 1950 - the organ of the Ministry of Education).

GENOCIDE The nationalist course has been pushed in all aspects of life in Stalinland. Zhdanov's attack on the "cosmopolitans" in cultural life was in reality an attack against the Russian internationalists. Later came anti-Semitism and "pogroms" against the Jewish intelligentsia. Then came the attacks on the historians of the Central Asiatic republics and the purge of Russian historians who wrote the history of the Ukraine and the Caucasus. The rebirth of the Great Russian Orthodox Church and the glorification of the tsarist generals, an announcement that all the scientific discoveries in the world were made by Russians, the now All-Union hymn with the words "all the peoples of the Union are once and forever united by Great Russia", etc. etc. - all these followed in the post-war years.

At the same time there was a real occurrence of genocide. The following non-Russian regions of the Union were totally liquidated: (1) Checheno-Ingush Autonomous Republic; (2) Crimean Autonomous Republic, Tatar population only; (3) Kalmuck Autonomous Republic; (4) Volga-German Autonomous Republic; (5) Balkarian Autonomous Republic; (6) Karachayev Autonomous District; (7) Kyzlar National Region; (8) Population of Adygey Autonomous District; the district exists still but now with a Russian population; (9) National minorities of Taman Region.

The native population of these nine areas have been entirely resettled in Siberia and their territories inhabited by Russians. At the same time there took place several mass deportations from the Baltic republics and the Ukraine to Siberia.

II

RUSSIANS DISAFFECTED This time the discontent in the party and apparatus does not go along the lines of the former party oppositions of the '20's and early '30's. This time it is a question of discontent inside the bureaucracy itself. It goes along the lines of the question of nationalities and from there it goes on to all other questions. The regional and provincial bureaucracies in the governments and party committees of the national republics are not satisfied with the growing centralism of Moscow, which infringes on their power and position in society.

The important issue is that though this new opposition starts from the question of nationalities, it is very often not native-national in essence. The Russian-majority Central Committee of the C.P. of the Ukraine has now been accused of lack of vigilance toward the growing Ukrainian nationalism. The "Pravda Ukrainy", the Russian central paper in the Ukraine, has been accused of the same deviation. Several secretaries of party district committees recently attacked are also Russians. The same course of events is now taking place in other republics. Several months ago members of the government of the Baltic republics who were dismissed were accused of Titoism, among them several Russians. The purge of the Azerbaidjan C.P. swept from the central posts not only the native bureaucrats but the Russian ones too.

ONE-WAY LOVE But the national schism does not limit itself to the party bureaucracy only. Among the technicians and directors of several big industrial enterprises in the Ukraine and Central Asiatic republics there took place recently new dismissals, without any clear explanations and despite the fact that the enterprises did fulfil the plan and all the obligations.

The Moscow authorities have officially found the source of growing nationalism in the cultural field. There was recently held in Moscow a performance about Ukrainian culture called "The Ukrainian Decade". The Moscow officials were present and found it "nationalistic". Right after that, the attack upon the Ukrainian cultural workers began.

The strongest complaints in the Russian press arose over a poem by the Ukrainian poet Volodymyr Sosiura, a long-time member of the party, several times decorated with orders, an old man. In his poem "Love the Ukraine", which has been "reprinted many times in the whole press", he addresses himself to the Ukrainian youth and says: "Young men! It is impossible to love the other peoples without loving your own! Moscow got furious and hopping mad at that phrase. It is now permissible only to love the Russian people.

III

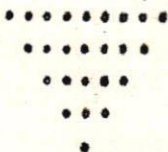
But neither of these oppositions inside the bureaucracy and among the cultural workers is an organized one. It is only the result of discontent caused by the post-war Stalinist policies.

However, there are some indications now available that the Moscow organs of the party consider these oppositionists as an organized group inside the party. The Moscow rulers call them "cordonizatory", that is, those who want to establish the frontiers and relations between the Russian and Ukrainian republics. This name, however, is not an official one, it is used only inside the party. The cordonizatory exist especially in the highest strata of the party, among those who dare to talk more or less freely. Their strength is not yet known, however.

OPPOSITION IN LENINGRAD? Some kind of opposition has come into existence in Russia too. In Leningrad there are strong anti-Stalin feelings in the regional party committee now. There is now some testimony available from people who claim they have read certain oppositionist publications of the Leningrad party group. The Ukrainian condonizatory are being supported by the Leningrad group. Stalin's surprising agreement to stand as candidate in the election for the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federated Republic in February in 1951 in Leningrad (previously he had always been elected from Moscow) could be explained by his wish to calm the oppositionist feelings of the capital of the revolution.

However, in spite of these inner contradictions in the party, the Stalinists up till now did not intend to carry out any kind of general purge of the party. There were some individual dismissals from the leading party posts even in Leningrad (A. Kuznetsov and P. Popkov) and in several other centers, but there has been no general purge. All of Stalin's dissatisfaction with his lower bureaucrats has been limited only to inner-party criticism.

The recent announcement in the "Bolshevik" requesting a "security check" has as its aim the strengthening of the power of the district committees over the rank-and-file members only. The absence of any purge on a big scale, as well as the twelve years' delay of the party congress (the last was held in 1939) indicates that there really exists some kind of uneasy situation inside of the Stalinist bureaucracy.



(contd. from p. 18) defeat in the Crimean War, the United States bought Alaska for a paltry sum, 5 cents a hectare." What a shame for Tsarism - giving up Russia's rights over her "labouring and democratic" colony, and only for "5 cents a hectare."!

If the construction of the Tsarist Empire was a progressive step, obviously every national movement of liberation from Tsarist Russia is to be attacked. Thus the Murid rebels who rose against Russia in the Caucasus (1830's-1850's) led by Shamil, were declared reactionary by "Prepodavaniye istorii v Shkol'ye" (History Teaching in the School), No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1950. The Kazakh national revolt of 1820-40 is likewise called reactionary: "retarding the annexation (to Russia) it was contrary to the hopes of the advanced section of Kazakh society." ("Pravda", Dec. 26, 1950). The Uzbek revolt of 1898 against Russia was reactionary because it "would have thrown the Fergana Valley back to the Middle Ages, to the times of the rule of the Khans." ("Literaturnaya Gazeta", Feb. 1, 1951). What an argument for Mussolini against the opposition of the Abyssinian Rases!

Stalin, the builder of the biggest Russian empire that has ever existed, cannot but be sympathetic to his Tsarist forerunners. He who oppresses the national opposition of Kostov, Rajk, Gomulka and tries - even if unsuccessfully - to suppress the national independence of Yugoslavia, can not but consider with hatred the "Tito's" who fought the Moscow Tsars of past centuries.

The Stalinists the world over repeat again and again that every man, group, nation, must choose between Washington and Moscow, that you cannot be independent of both. How natural it is for them to describe the past history of Kazakhstan as a choice between Britain and Russia, of the Caucasian peoples as a choice between Turkey and England on the one hand and Russia on the other. The working people know "the advantage of being in a mighty state", and the question for them is only which shark to be swallowed up by!



S H O P W O R K E R S R E B E L

by Percy Downey

The strike of the employees of the South Wales concerns of George J. Mason, which is a subsidiary of the International Tea Company, namely the Direct Trading Co. Ltd., Star Supply Co. Ltd., George J. Mason Ltd., Thomas Taylor & Co. Ltd. (Port Talbot and Swansea), Deverall and Pawley Ltd. (Penarth), O.G. Jones (Llandaff and North Cardiff), Treberth Stores (Royal Oak and Newport) ended in the greatest success ever achieved by workers in the private trade section of distribution.

The dispute arose over the refusal of George J. Mason to negotiate with the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied workers. The strike was supported by the union, and was the first official stoppage since the repeal of Order 1305. Five hundred grocery workers struck, closing 82 shops in the greatest act of solidarity and determination ever shown by shop workers in private trade. In an effort to better their inadequate wages, they throw down the gauntlet to one of the biggest multiple stores in the world. The Wages Council rates paid by the Company were as follows:

Age	Males			Females		
	£	s	d	£	s	d
15 years	1.	17.	6	1.	11.	0
16 "	2.	1.	6	1.	15.	0
17 "	2.	7.	6	1.	19.	0
18 "	2.	17.	6	2.	7.	0
19 "	3.	6.	6	2.	13.	0
20 "	3.	15.	6	2.	18.	0
21 "	4.	13.	6	3.	7.	6
22 "	4.	17.	6	3.	9.	6
23 "	5.	1.	6	3.	12.	6
24 "	5.	5.	6	3.	17.	0

What miserable wages! And this very firm, the International Tea Company, had made a trading profit of £1,817,917 in the financial year ending April 1951 (an increase of about £600,000 on the previous year), which enabled them to pay an ordinary dividend of 16%.

Various means were tried to intimidate the strikers. One of the directors from the firm's Birmingham headquarters interviewed each striker individually, informing each in turn that so and so had agreed to start work in the morning. Many of the managers live in the firm's flats above the shops, and in the manager's absence his wife was visited and threatened with eviction, the loss of her husband's job, etc. But all to no avail. The strikers held firm, not one broke the ranks.

An interesting feature of the strike was the part played by the customers. Despite the difficulties caused by rationing, all supported the strikers by securing emergency ration cards and buying their groceries from other firms.

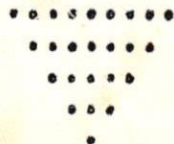
The firm attempted to break the strike by sending inspectors to South Wales from other parts of the country to open the shops. Again the militant actions of the strikers caused them to register failure. In one instance where a shop was kept open by a blackleg manager, fifty workers stood outside calling on him to come out. He retreated in shame to a back room. They next called upon the three girls working in the shop to join them, and after a few minutes the three girls did leave the shop and join the strikers. Blackleg shops were picketed and appeals made to customers to boycott them. Many strikers travelled distances of ninety miles to picket shops.

The mine workers, railway and transport workers rallied to the support of the grocery workers by taking collections at the pit heads, and refusing to carry goods to the black shops. Labour Parties and Trades Councils up and down the country supported the strikers by calling upon their members to write to the firm in question condemning its refusal to negotiate with the workers' union.

The culminating point of the dispute came when the Birmingham group of shops and the warehouse in London, employing 500 workers, voted to go on strike in support of the South Wales workers. The firm gave in, and a little before midnight on September 13th, at the Ministry of Labour headquarters in London, after nine tense hours of non-stop negotiations, agreement was reached, which gave substantial wage increases to all shop workers employed by the International Tea Company. Managers got £1 per week increase and manageresses 15/-; male assistants of 24 years of age got an increase of 14/6 and female assistants of the same age 12/-. Corresponding increases above Wages Council rates were given for all other ages.

This important dispute received very little publicity, even the left wing press almost ignoring it. But there is no doubt about its importance as an indication of the way the wind was blowing. These comparatively conservative workers, whom it is very difficult to organise, as they work in small numbers over a scattered area, and the majority of them are women, many married, acted in a most militant manner, even going to other parts of the country and speaking to audiences for the first time in their lives.

The solidarity and success of the shop workers, supported by the miners and railway and transport workers, was an inspiration to the whole working class movement, and a warning to the capitalist class of the reserve potential of the workers.



Edited,
printed,
and
published
by

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16, Rowdale Road,
BIRMINGHAM, 22a.

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Typed
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by
voluntary
labour.