

Notes of the Month

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

'We have to show that we are a modern mid-twentieth century party.'

Rt. Hon. Hugh Gaitskell at the Blackpool Labour Party Conference, November 28, 1959.

WE are entering the second half of what an indignant critic has termed 'the so-called twentieth century' and what the most venerable survivor of the dying social order has termed 'the terrible twentieth century'. Never before has the course of human

history been so plainly charted in advance or become so clearly visible ahead. 'Mid-twentieth century' has of late been adopted as a fashionable code word of the oddly termed 'New Thinkers'. Mr. Gaitskell assured his startled Blackpool hearers that, if he wished to delete the aim of common ownership from the Labour Party programme and substitute a ragbag of nineteenth century liberal ethical platitudes as a more 'adequate' basis, this was only to bring the Labour Party up-to-date as 'a modern mid-twentieth century party'. Could irony go further? Even Euclid with all the subtle aid of Mr. Bevan could hardly straddle this spanning of the centuries.

The twentieth century has proved and is further proving in practical experience to be the era of the transition to communism. The first half of the twentieth century has seen the victory of communism over

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one-third of the earth. There is sufficient ground for certainty that, whatever the intervening struggles (and the strength of socialism now achieved, and of the extending ideas of socialism among all peoples, has brought within view the possibility of diminishing these birth-pangs), the second half of the twentieth century will see the fulfilment of communism triumphant over the entire globe and reaching for the stars.

Marxism Vindicated

Marxism already at the opening of the twentieth century, and Marxism alone, had correctly foretold its character. Marxism already in the years before the opening of the twentieth century had foretold in some detail the character and course of the approaching first world war and its outcome in the Russian Revolution. Marxism had foretold the future role of the Russian revolution as the vanguard of the world revolution. Marxism had foretold the union of the working class struggle for socialism in the advanced industrial countries with the national liberation struggle of the subject peoples as the key to the victory of the world revolution. Marxism had explicitly warned against narrowing the perspective of socialism to Western Europe in place of recognising the world expansion of capitalism, which had rendered such a perspective out of date, and the consequent world character of the struggle and revolutionary transformation in prospect.

Living Marxism versus Revisionism

Thus the experience of the first half of the twentieth century has abundantly proved in practice the truth of Marxism as the science of historical development and of the advance to communism, and the guide to the victory of the socialist revolution. But surely, the indignant questioner will ask, the twentieth century has brought new conditions which Marx and Engels in the nineteenth century could not have foreseen? Certainly. Lenin carried forward Marxism into the era of imperialism and of the beginning of the world socialist revolution, just as the international communist movement charts new paths today in the ever expanding advance. But Lenin carried forward Marxism by restoring in the first place its true teachings in the new conditions, against those who sought to abandon it in the name of 'Revision' to meet the new conditions, and against the gross philistine distortions of Marxism by the majority of the leaders of the old Second International, who in practice

capitulated to the revisionists and fell into all the traps against which Marx and Engels had warned.

Old and New Revisionism

Revisionism flourished in the first decade of the twentieth century. The present attempted revival half a century behind the times by the antediluvian 'New Thinkers' is no more than a weak and watery echo of the original article. Revisionism is the philosophy of surrender to capitalism in the name of realist facing of modern conditions. Revisionism bows low before the apparent might and success of modern monopoly capitalism and hastens to jettison socialism as obsolete. During the first decade of the twentieth century this was by comparison comprehensible. This was the era of the booming 'prosperity' and seemingly limitless expansion of the 'golden' Edwardian years; of the seemingly invincible might of the European imperialist Great Powers ruling and dividing the world, and crushing every revolt, so that the very conception of revolution was declared 'out of date' in the face of modern armaments; of the flowing tide of liberal social reform and Lloyd George's inauguration of the Welfare State, in imitation of Bismarck, to cut the ground from under the feet of socialism. Socialism had won no victory yet. No wonder the shallow and the servile began to proclaim that this was a 'new capitalism' which belied all the hoary dogmas of Marx based on mid-nineteenth century capitalism. The Old Revisionism went down in mud and blood in the first world war.

Belated Revival

But today? Today, after the victory of the socialist revolution over one-third of the earth, after the visible discordant antagonisms and confusions of the shrinking imperialist sector, after the demonstration of the superiority of socialism in the rate of advance in every sphere of productivity and raising social standards to overtake and leave behind during the next few years the highest levels of the most privileged and advanced centres of capitalism—at this moment to attempt to resurrect the hymn to the 'miracle' of the 'new capitalism' or 'contemporary capitalism' as supposedly disproving the hoary dogmas of Marx is really a comic relapse into second childhood on the part of those who fear 'the challenge of communism'. The New Revisionism is indeed a puny child. But since this puny child is at the moment giving trouble in the for the

time being politically backward corner of the world represented by Britain, it is necessary to resume the battle of half a century ago for Socialism against Revisionism. This is the lesson of the Blackpool Conference.

Storm in a Teacup?

Marx once said, long ago, writing from Cologne on December 31, 1848, that 'a revolution of the economic conditions of any country of the European Continent or even of the whole Continent is but a storm in a glass of water unless England actively participates in it'. And again in the same article: 'any social revolutionary upheaval in Europe must necessarily miscarry, unless the English bourgeoisie or the industrial and commercial supremacy of Great Britain is shaken. . . . And old England will only be overthrown in a world war'. Those days are long since past, precisely because the truth underlying this penetrating prediction, which equally understood the limitations of 1848 in Europe and the conditions of future revolutionary advance, has been demonstrated by the outcome. The industrial, commercial and financial supremacy of Britain was finally ended in the first world war. Therewith the ultimate counter-revolutionary power of the English upper class, which defeated the French Revolution and Napoleon, joined the Holy Alliance and strangled 1848, was broken for ever. In vain Churchill, true heir to the tradition, sought to strangle 1917. The world socialist revolution swept forward, and has continued to sweep forward, in spite of the rulers of Britain.

Ironic Reversal

Britain has fallen behind the United States and Western Germany in the capitalist sphere, behind the Soviet Union and the advance of socialism on a world scale, soon also to be overtaken by China. In this situation, in face of the scale of the world transformation now taking place, in face of the magnitude of the world issues now coming up for decision and typified in the new relations of the United States and the Soviet Union and possibilities of peaceful co-existence, the internal policy crisis in the Labour Party over the programme of domestic economic reconstruction might appear a minor flurry, little more than another spasm in the gradual disintegration of Social Democracy out-dated by events. The irony of history might be claimed to have reversed a century later Marx's 'storm in a glass of water'. The storm in a teacup is now in Britain,

while Socialism sweeps forward in the world. However, there is more in it than that.

Imperialism and Socialism

Britain was the classic country of capitalism. Britain was the classic country of the birth of the working class movement. Though both priorities have long since given place to being overtaken by later comers, the significance of what happens in Britain has not disappeared. Britain is still the centre of the largest world empire, even though diminished. The loss of political rule over wide territories has not yet meant the parallel ending of the operations of the octopus of British finance-capital drawing rich tribute also from the peoples of territories now politically independent, but still with colonial economies. The struggle for economic liberation is still only beginning. The ferocity of the resistance over the Suez Canal Company nationalisation or Iran oil nationalisation has shown how intense this battle will be, once it is fully launched. It is this battle which will finally undermine the old imperialist basis of Britain's economy, and thereby compel, if not already undertaken, the advance to socialism in Britain. Understanding of this is the key to the economics and politics of modern Britain.

Illusions of the End of Empire

Illusions about the liquidation of imperialism are the main factor which has falsified the current discussion, on both sides, about socialism in the Labour Party, as if it were a utopian discussion about the ideal form of domestic economic organisation in a country like Sweden or Switzerland, or rather (since even these have their specific, though more limited, role in the imperialist complex) Ruritania. Similar illusions appear, to judge from reviews, to be the theme of the latest book of the Labour Party theorist and veteran hero of the war against the Malayan Liberation Army, Strachey, recently published under the title *End of Empire*. In this book he has apparently followed up his previous volume entitled *Contemporary Capitalism*, which echoed the current illusions about the supposed new transformed capitalism as the refutation of a caricature of Marx's theories of the laws of capitalist development (exposed in these *Notes on Economics and Politics of Increasing Misery* in December, 1957), with a similar reflection of the current fashionable illusions about the end of empire as a supposed refutation of Lenin. Judgment can only be provisional, since author and publisher, preferring discretion to valour, have abstained from ser-^{ing}

a review copy to *Labour Monthly* or the *Daily Worker*, evidently in panic fear that a Marxist critique might prick the gossamer bubble of illusion.

Hamlet Without the Prince

The facts of modern Britain are not so easily exorcised. The vast pleasure park of the wealthy extending over so much of Southern England and the Home Counties is the visible symbol of the parasitic rentier economy of the coupon-clippers of the giant overseas monopolies, whose luxury is sustained, not only from the exploitation of the British workers, but from the plunder of hundreds of millions of colonial and semi-colonial slaves. To discuss socialism in Britain without facing this central fact of Britain's present economy (or even with the added insolence of sanctimonious sermons parading the poverty of the colonial or 'under-developed' peoples as an object for patronising charity, or even as an excuse for cutting the standards of British workers) is to live in Cloud-cuckooland.

Taming the Tiger

It is precisely this role of Britain as the historic first centre of world imperialism and imperialist economy, now weakened, now faced with chronically renewed economic difficulties, but still struggling to maintain itself, that makes every political development within Britain of wide international significance. For it was from the superior resources of the world industrial monopoly in the nineteenth century, and of the advanced imperialist economy in the twentieth century, that the British ruling class has been able, and still continues to be able, to lead the way in the arts of circumventing the class struggle; to control, tame, influence or limit the development of the working class movement within permitted channels, by winning the practical acquiescence in the system from considerable sections of better paid workers and according rich prizes for collaboration to many of the leadership.

'We Are All Middle Class'

Britain was the first country, as Marx said, to develop, not only a bourgeoisie and a bourgeois aristocracy but also a trend towards a 'bourgeois working class' among a section of the workers (please note that this was said a century before Macmillan's brilliant discovery of the supposedly 'classless' Britain). Lenin repeatedly

noted that in Britain 'the number of factory and office workers who live a petty-bourgeois life is exceptionally high owing to the practical enslavement of hundreds of millions of people inhabiting the colonies', and that many of these better paid workers, restricting themselves to 'improving their sometimes tolerable petty-bourgeois position', lose sight of their class mission and become 'captives of bourgeois and imperialist prejudices'. In short, the 'never had it so good' slogan is no startling innovation of 1959, but was long used in corresponding forms for appropriate sections in the Victorian era. This was the social basis of Disraeli's discovery of 'Tory Democracy' in the nineteenth century, or Macmillan's 'Middle Way' theories and 'Butskellism' in our day.

Retarded Development

The understanding of this peculiar set-up in Britain was always the central feature of the political analysis of Marx and Lenin in dealing with the political situation in Britain and the reasons for the slower development of the political labour movement and of socialism in modern Britain since the vanished and long forgotten days of Chartism.

All the best revolutionary elements in the working class who are dissatisfied with the slow progress of development which in England, perhaps, will be slower than in other countries, will come over to us. Development is slow because the British bourgeoisie is in a position to create better conditions for the aristocracy of labour and by that to retard the progress of the revolution.

(Lenin, Speech on the Labour Party at the Second Congress of the Communist International, 6th August, 1920).

The modern political labour movement in Britain (following the formation and tireless pioneering work of the tiny socialist groups) only emerged in a very rudimentary form long after mass Social Democratic Parties had been organised and matured on the Continent. Similarly today Communism is still at an early minority stage in Britain long after the main mass Social Democratic Parties had become mass Communist Parties on the Continent.

Citadel of Conservatism

For three-quarters of a century since the general democratic extension of the suffrage Conservative Governments have been returned in Britain for two-thirds of the time by the votes of a population with a working class majority. Only twice has Conserv

been decisively beaten at the polls, once in 1906 in the inter

upsurge following the Russian Revolution of 1905, and again in 1945, following the alliance with the Soviet Union and the joint victory with the Soviet armies over fascism. The Liberal Imperialist caucus in the Cabinet and secret preparation of the first world war wrecked the Liberal-Radical-Labour mass victory of 1906. Similarly the Attlee-Bevin policy of co-operation with imperialism, lining up with the cold war of monopoly capitalism, led by the United States, against socialism, wrecked the constructive side of the work of the first Labour Government and soon dissipated the majority of 1945. The same surrender to Tory imperialism has ensured increasing Tory majorities for three elections.

Cracks in the Citadel

Today a new moment has come. The series of continuous and extending electoral reverses over the past decade and a half since the ending of the war has created what Mr. Bevan has not incorrectly termed 'a crisis' (*Tribune*, December 11, 1959) in the policy and leadership of the Labour Party. Already in 1955 *The Times* editorial, 'In Decline?', found that

the shocking fact about the election was the steep fall in the Labour vote for the first time in a quarter of a century.

(*The Times*, June 4, 1955.)

The editorial concluded that

the next year or so will either see the turning point or a more rapid and disastrous decline which would leave the British political scene in a state of difficult and dangerous transition.

But 1959 has seen a further decline. Thus the British ruling class was already in 1955, and is still more today, in open alarm about the situation and prospects of the Labour Party. They express alarm lest the Labour Party might be beginning to lose its hold on the workers. Why? For love of the Labour Party or a political labour movement? Hardly. They do not conceal their fear that a continuance of the 'shocking' and 'disastrous' decline in support for the Labour Party might open the way to a 'difficult and dangerous' political situation in Britain.

Ruling Class Hopes in Mr. Gaitskell

The openly expressed alarm of ruling class circles, consequent on the series of Tory electoral victories, is lest the Labour Party might prove unable to continue to fulfil its role as the indispensable safety valve partner of Conservatism, the 'In and Out' loyal opposition of the two-Party system. Not because it is too revolutionary

to fit into these requirements. On the contrary. Because its very bipartisanship and failure to present an alternative programme, and the consequent contradiction between its class structure and practical politics, might so erode the basis of its support as to render it incapable of maintaining the swing of the pendulum which is essential to the stability of the British political system. Hence the universal concern of the entire capitalist press with the problem and crisis of the Labour Party. Hence the enthusiastic support for Mr. Gaitskell's 'brave stand' (*Economist*) or 'courageous endeavour' (*Sunday Times*) to solve the dilemma by jettisoning the inherited remnants of class conceptions or socialistic objectives and returning to the safe and tried nineteenth century formula of the 'classless' liberal-conservative alternation. Not of course the Liberal Party of Mr. Grimond. But the revival of the Victorian liberal-capitalist content under the continuing label of a 'Labour Party' which has lost even its original meaning as a name, and which publicly denies its class basis, while greedily striving to keep the trade unions within its disciplinary grip in order to prevent the emergence of working class politics in the broad movement. Such is the vision of paradise presented to the anxious British capitalists by Mr. Gaitskell.

Raising the Socialist Banner in Reverse

But Mr. Gaitskell's would-be 'solution', so far from solving the crisis, intensifies it. For the net effect of his offensive has been to bring the question of socialism and the socialist objective into the centre of controversy more sharply than it has ever been raised before in British politics. Mr. Gaitskell could have, if he had chosen, quietly left in possession for automatic endorsement the existing policy, which has already long ago repudiated socialism in practice and offers instead the so-called 'mixed economy' (modern monopoly capitalism integrated with the state) and all the ideas of Mr. Gaitskell and his friends. He could have left undisturbed the dust to continue gathering on the icon relic Clause 4 ('common ownership of the means of production') as a museum piece for occasional genuflections by the faithful on Sundays. Nothing would have been easier than to let the sleeping dog continue his slumbers and conduct one of the usual exercises in 'interpretation' of the holy text. Thus, for example, not merely the Shareholding State, but equally a Tory 'Property-Owning Democracy', with stock holdings spread throughout the community, could clearly be argued to be a form of 'common ownership of the means of production'. Instead, Mr. Gaitskell chose to open a direct offensive against

Ark of the Covenant. Thereby he ensured the maximum opposition even from sections which had placidly accepted without a murmur the practical repudiation of socialism in *Industry and Society*. Mr. Bevan had to intervene to rescue Mr. Gaitskell from the anger of a significant proportion of his audience. By raising the Banner of Anti-Socialism, Mr. Gaitskell had compelled the Banner of Socialism to become the centre of battle in the Labour Party. With what aim in view?

Mr. Gaitskell's Tactics

It would be a grave error to underestimate Mr. Gaitskell's tactical judgment and aim in this offensive. His all-wise mentors and tutors in the more influential organs of the conservative press, while commending his courage, have accused him of making a tactical blunder in concentrating his offensive on a front at once the most difficult and the least practically important (since no one bothers about the constitution anyway), in place of choosing more easily attainable and practically useful aims, such as a few trifling organisational changes to bring the Labour Party up-to-date in line with the practice of the Conservative Party, diminish the role of the Annual Conference and the trade unions and increase the effective powers of the parliamentary leadership. But Mr. Gaitskell knew the conditions of his problem better than his mentors. There is every reason to believe that the brutality of his offensive was deliberate, and that there is the fullest intention on his part (with the threat of resignation if his demand to delete the existing clause about common ownership in the party constitution is not accepted), and of the dominant leadership, to force through this change, whatever the protests of the more articulate socialist sections in the Labour Party.

New Programmes of Social Democracy

No one can fail to understand the significance of this offensive to expunge the socialist aim, not merely from practical policy (this has long ago been done), but from the formal constitution of the Labour Party. For this is the same process which has been happening in the current period in all the Social Democratic Parties, as in the new basic programmes of the Austrian, German, Belgian and other Social Democratic Parties. It might seem extraordinary that this process of the open, ostentatious, publicly proclaimed retreat from socialism should take place at the very moment of the greatest advance and triumphs of socialism over the world. But in fact these

are two sides of a single historical development. The new programmes are presented as the answer to what the leaders call 'the challenge of Communism'. The new programmes are presented as the solution to the deepening crisis and visible failure of Social Democracy in Western Europe since the war, demonstrated in the successive electoral reverses of the Labour Party or the capitulation of the French Socialist Party to De Gaulle.

Bolting the Door Against Socialism

Mr. Gaitskell understood very well that if the Blackpool Conference, which had been originally called to perform an inquest on electoral defeat, had registered a verdict on the policies and leadership which had led to continuously extending electoral reverses ever since the war, that verdict could only have been a condemnation of the policies and leadership which had led to such a disastrous outcome. But these were precisely the policies of the repudiation of socialism and glorification of the 'new' 'reformed' capitalism in the name of 'new thinking', with which he himself had been most closely associated, which he and his friends had forced on the party and justified as indispensable for electoral success, and which had been proved by experience to be electorally damning. Hence a verdict in accordance with the evidence could only have been a call for a reversal of these policies, and for a radical turn to the type of popular aggressive policies, with at any rate the public proclamation of socialist aims, which had been proved so successful in winning majority mass support and in obtaining the only absolute parliamentary majority ever won by Labour. In other words, for a turn to the left, for militant policies against the monopolists and imperialism, for independent working class politics, for peace and socialism. To forestall this menace Mr. Gaitskell has set himself the aim to bar the road in advance by permanently banning the aim of socialism (save as a meaningless term of philanthropic aspiration) from the programme and constitution of the Labour Party—that is, to make socialism, in the concrete sense of social ownership of the means of production, in effect one more proscribed issue (suspected of communist associations, 'monolithic', 'totalitarian') incompatible with membership and support of the programme of the Labour Party.

Clause 4

This direct offensive against socialism now launched by dominant Labour Party leadership opens a serious battle. B

also opens a splendid opportunity for all fighters for socialism, provided there is unity, political clarity and full mobilisation in the battle. For the first time in the half century of history of the Labour Party the question of socialism, not as a rhetorical aspiration, but as a defined aim of the 'common ownership of the means of production' in order 'to secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry', has become a central issue of controversy throughout the Labour Party from top to bottom. When the famous Clause 4, against which the offensive has now been opened by the dominant leadership, was originally introduced forty-one years ago in 1918, there was no such battle. The original clause was not carried by the left against the opposition of the right. The original clause was devised and inserted by the right wing leadership of that time in face of the revolutionary ferment following the victory of the Russian Socialist revolution in 1917. The new constitution of 1918, with its proclamation of a socialist aim, was devised by the right wing leadership to counter the demand for a socialist revolution with the promise of a future peaceful constitutional advance to socialism—which was then universally seen, by both sides, without dispute, as the social ownership of the means of production replacing class ownership and profit-making capitalism.

Undisputed Aim

Even up to the second world war, that is, so long as a parliamentary majority had not been achieved to bring professions to the test, this aim was still universally proclaimed also by the right wing leadership. As late as 1937, Mr. Attlee in his *Labour Party in Perspective* was still declaring:

All the major industries will be owned and controlled by the community.

Similarly Mr. Morrison had declared in 1934:

The important essentials of socialism are that all the great industries and the land should be publicly and collectively owned.

The old standard Labour Party textbook, Fred Henderson's *The Case for Socialism*, originally published in 1911, with a revised edition in 1924, declared:

This is Socialism: Community ownership of the land and of the means of producing and distributing wealth.

There was no dispute at that time between right and left about this aim. The dispute was about the method of achieving it. Social Democracy declared that it could peacefully and constitutionally

achieve this aim by a parliamentary majority. Communists warned that the Social Democratic practice of repudiation of the class struggle and close daily collaboration with capitalism would render impossible of achievement this professed aim, of wresting the means of production from the capitalists, since this aim could only be achieved by the strength of a united working class and its allies in relentless class struggle against the monopolists. Communists were accordingly accused by the Social Democrats—falsely, against the evidence—of advocating violent revolution in preference to peaceful parliamentary methods.

Lessons of Experience

Today all this has changed. The experience of the Third Labour Government, with an absolute parliamentary majority, proved the incapacity of Social Democracy, even with an absolute parliamentary majority, to carry through the change to socialism. The Attlee-Bevin Labour Government could carry through important social reforms, such as the health service. It carried through measures of nationalisation which were salvage operations for capitalism in distress, either in neglected industries (coal and rails) which were becoming unprofitable, and where only state action could undertake the necessary costly modernisation and simultaneously force the extraction of surplus from the workers for the old owners and the new lenders of capital (thus guaranteeing fictitious 'deficits' of nationalisation and rendering the operation of this type of nationalisation highly unpopular with the public and with the workers concerned), or in auxiliary industries, such as electricity, where unified operation was essential for the service of the main spheres of private profit-making capitalism. But it could make no change whatever in class relations, that is, in the class ownership of wealth and the means of production, and the extraction of surplus from the workers for the private owners. It left the capitalist monopolies more strongly entrenched than ever, as subsequent Labour Party pamphlets have admitted. And its devoted bipartisan fulfilment of the imperialist politics of the cold war and rearmament, with the consequent burdens on the working class, weakened its basis of working class support and prepared the way for the long run of Toryism in the fifties.

New Controversy

It is from this experience of the failure of West European Social Democracy since the war that the new controversies have e

In the light of this experience the Labour Party and modern Social Democracy in Western Europe could only choose one of two courses. Either to recognise the justice of the criticism of former policies, and move over to a new socialist programme, that is, to unity of the working class against the monopolies, in order to carry through the necessary socialist transformation by taking over all the decisive means of production out of the hands of the monopolists. Or to abandon the aim of socialism. Either to maintain the aim and change the method. Or to maintain the method and abandon the aim. The Labour Party dominant leadership and modern Social Democracy have chosen the second path—the public retreat from the aim of socialism. Hence Mr. Gaitskell's new offensive, which is the exact counterpart of the new basic programme of German Social Democracy.* It is now the Communist Parties which are the advocates of the peaceful and constitutional path of transition to socialism by the support of the majority of the people expressed through a parliamentary majority (the Communist Party's *British Road to Socialism* since 1951). The peaceful transition to socialism, which was once regarded as the hallmark of Social Democracy against Communism, has now become the hallmark of modern Communism, while modern Social Democracy, denouncing social ownership as 'totalitarian', has moved over to open liberal capitalism. The whirligig of time brings odd revenges.

Well Worked, Old Mole

So the impossible has become possible. The dialectic of development is bringing a new political landscape in spite of all. Under the impact of the extending triumphs of socialism in the world, and under the impact of the simultaneously extending electoral reverses and consequent inner crisis of the Labour Party, the question of socialism has for the first time become the centre and forefront of burning controversy in the Labour Party from top to bottom, and, through the reflection of this, also in the front pages of the millionaire popular press, even in the conservative climate of Britain, even through the agency of such a champion of capitalist stability as Mr. Gaitskell. The old mole works well.

*The new basic programme of German Social Democracy, adopted by the Executive in September, 1958, as of the Austrian Socialist Party, adopted in May, 1958, substitutes the ethical-humanist definition of socialism ('free development of the human personality', etc.) for the old conception of social ownership of the means of production (now condemned in modern social democratic language as a 'totalitarian' conception), and emphasises the importance of 'free enterprise' and 'free initiative for employers' as 'basic foundations'. The text, remarks the *Liberal Manchester Guardian* (November 13, 1959) 'reads very like the Conservative Party Manifesto'.

Twofold Offensive

The battle is now on. It is a twofold offensive that is being launched against the working class and socialism, alike in the industrial and in the political field. The Tory Government and all the forces of capitalism, assisted by certain elements in the Trades Union Congress General Council and the Labour Party Executive, are simultaneously conducting an offensive against any trade union that shows militancy, against strikes, against shop stewards and against socialism. This twofold offensive calls for the united resistance of the industrial and political movement. The political fight for socialism cannot be separated from the current industrial struggle in which millions of workers are at this moment ranged against the monopolist owners of industry on behalf of their demands on wages and hours. Equally the political role of the trade unions needs to carry the decisive weight in the Labour Party in defence of their traditional aims to win the wealth they produce into the hands of the workers and defeat the offensive on behalf of rent, interest and profits now being conducted in the Labour Party.

Battle for Socialism

This battle for socialist consciousness in the labour movement will require a big work of political clarification. The weakness of the debate in the Blackpool Conference was that the issue of socialism was presented in the main speeches on both sides in an abstract form, divorced from the real class confrontation and class issues, and disguised in a formal discussion about more or less nationalisation as a technical form of organisation under the state, to be contrasted with the advantages or disadvantages of other forms of organisation. To judge from the published reports, nothing appears to have been said about such sordid matters as rent, interest and profits, or exploitation. Thus the heart of socialism disappeared from view. On this basis the attempt may no doubt be made to evolve on behalf of the Labour Party Executive some new 'compromise formula' which shall replace the plain aim of the 'common ownership of the means of production' (the indispensable foundation for all social and economic emancipation) with a medley of high-sounding phrases and ethical aspirations and economic good intentions capable of acceptance by any Liberal or Tory and equally capable of interpretation by anyone in any direction. But the realities of class society and the necessity of socialism in the modern world will not be so easily banished. The present situati

calls for the united co-operation of all who stand for socialism, whether they are communists, socialists in the Labour Party, trade unionists or co-operators, to combine their efforts to defeat the anti-socialist offensive and win the battle for socialism within the labour movement as the indispensable condition to be able to win the battle for socialism in Britain.

December 14, 1959.

R.P.D.