

# **LABOUR REVIEW**

Vol. 3

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1958

No. 4

## **SOCIALISTS AND TRADE UNIONS**

<b>Three Conferences</b>	97
<b>'Export of Revolution'</b>	104
<b>Freedom of the Individual</b>	119
<b>Labour's 1951 Defeat</b>	125
<b>Science and Socialism</b>	128

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*reviewed by* HENRY COLLINS,  
JOHN DANIELS, TOM KEMP,  
STANLEY EVANS, DOUGLAS  
GOLDRING, BRIAN PEARCE  
and others

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# LABOUR REVIEW

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## Contents

### EDITORIAL

Three Conferences	97
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### SOCIALISTS AND THE TRADE UNIONS

Brian Behan	98
-------------	----

### 'EXPORT OF REVOLUTION', 1917-1924

Brian Pearce	104
--------------	-----

### FREEDOM OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Peter Fryer	119
-------------	-----

### COMMUNICATIONS

#### Stalinism and the Defeat of the 1945-51 Labour Governments

Peter Cadogan	125
---------------	-----

#### Science and Socialism

G. N. Anderson	128
----------------	-----

### SUMMER BOOKS

#### The New Ghana, by J. G. Amamoo

Ekiomenesekenigha	109
-------------------	-----

#### The First International, ed. and trans. by Hans Gerth

Henry Collins	110
---------------	-----

#### Germany and the Revolution in Russia, 1915-1918, ed. by Z. A. B. Zeman

B.P.	110
------	-----

#### Stalin's Correspondence with Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt and Truman, 1941-45

Brian Pearce	111
--------------	-----

#### The Economics of Communist Eastern Europe, by Nicolas Spulber

Tom Kemp	111
----------	-----

#### The Epic Strain in the English Novel, by E. M. W. Tillyard

S.F.H.	113
--------	-----

#### A Victorian Eminence, by Giles St Aubyn

K. R. Andrews	114
---------------	-----

#### The Sweet and Twenties, by Beverley Nichols

Douglas Goldring	114
------------------	-----

#### Soviet Education for Science and Technology, by A. G. Korol

John Daniels	115
--------------	-----

#### Seven Years Solitary, by Edith Bone

J.C.D.	115
--------	-----

#### The Kingdom of Free Men, by G. Kitson Clark

Stanley Evans	116
---------------	-----

#### On Religion, by K. Marx and F. Engels

Cyril Smith	116
-------------	-----

#### A Cockney in Moscow, by Harold Elvin

P. Bryan	116
----------	-----

# Three Conferences

THE conference of rank-and-file industrial workers in London on November 16, called by the editorial board of *The Newsletter*, will be welcomed by every militant. There is an urgent need for discussion of the problems raised by the continuing employers' offensive. This is shown by the paltry 1½d. an hour offered to the gasworkers, 3 per cent. to the engineers and 7s. 6d. to the portworkers. It is shown by the shameful revelations in the report of the General Council to the 1958 Trades Union Congress about the way the busmen were stabbed in the back. It is shown by the latest provocative effusion of the 'Three Wise Men', foreseeing more unemployment and calling for smaller wage increases. It is shown by the alarming extension of 'redundancy' sackings; by the ugly race riots in Nottingham and Notting Hill; by the fall in Labour's electoral support and the popular demand for a Left-wing policy to prove that there *is* a Labour Party. Ostensibly the problems now confronting the British workers will be discussed at the two major working-class conferences of the year: the TUC and the Labour Party conference. But no active member of the Labour movement has any illusions about the character of these two conferences. Both are dominated by the platform in such a way as to minimize the expression of Left-wing opinions and to block the reflection of those opinions in the kind of resolutions and decisions that will lead to action. Both the TUC and the Labour Party conference are run by a bureaucracy which skilfully controls the proceedings, making sure that what is decided does not overstep the limits of class collaboration, challenge the capitalist State machine or endanger the 'gentlemanly' conventions of parliamentary opposition. This does not mean that it is futile for militants and revolutionaries to work for the enlightenment of their fellow-trade unionists and fellow-members of the Labour Party, by pressing forward as energetically as possible for the ending of the present Right-wing domination of the policies and leadership of these bodies. On the contrary, patient, painstaking and consistent work within the traditional organizations of the British working class is the only way in which Marxists can effectively participate in the experience of their class and show their fellow-workers the need for a Marxist alternative to leaders who are in the last analysis agents of the employing class within the ranks of Labour. But no one who takes up this arduous task of Marxist activity in the workers' movement should expect easy victories, even at a time of growing militancy. It is uphill work: a reader of our literature won here, a contact gained there, a discussion group formed, a resolution passed, a group of militants won for the Marxist conception of struggle and strategy. Before the revolutionary crisis matures, bringing over to the banner of Marxism tens and hundreds of thousands of workers, those who see the need for such a comprehensive strategy as only Marxism has to offer are relatively few. Though few, these are the precious *cadres* of the future workers' party:

on their assembly, organization and political and ideological training no care or effort is too great.

AND so the forthcoming rank-and-file conference has a significance quite beyond the immediate problems which are the occasion of its calling. Not only will it be, as distinct from the TUC and the Labour Party conference, a purely rank-and-file gathering, dominated by no platform, run by no bureaucracy, steered by no officials; not only will it provide an excellent opportunity for an exchange of opinions among ordinary workers directly elected by, and therefore directly answerable to, the lads on the job; not only will it permit the pooling of experience, the taking of decisions on mutual help and solidarity action; not only will it lay the foundations for a rank-and-file movement linking and co-ordinating the efforts of militants in different industries; but it will also be a milestone in the construction of a genuine Marxist movement in Britain. And what kind of a Marxist movement? Not a group of embittered doctrinaires without roots or perspectives or the ability to learn from their mistakes; not a coterie of well-meaning university dons and writers who have something to say on every subject except the class struggle taking place under their noses; not a party paying lip-service to Marxism but in fact dominated by whichever faction happens to be in control in Moscow. No, the Marxist movement to whose construction *LABOUR REVIEW* is dedicated will be rooted in the pits and workshops and on the building sites; it will unite the efforts of workers for whom 'intellectual' is not a dirty word and intellectuals who have no dearer wish than to serve the working class in struggle; it will carry forward those traditions of revolutionary ardour, discipline, steadfastness and internationalism to which the word 'Bolshevik' is properly applied, and will marry them, in new conditions, to all the best traditions of our native working-class struggle. The Marxist movement in Britain will be the worthy heir to the Chartists, the Clydeside strikers, the councils of action, the Communist Party of 1920-24, the National Minority Movement, the Marxist groups of the thirties and the Revolutionary Communist Party of the forties.

WE are convinced that the bus strike was a dress rehearsal, an overture during which there appeared in outline all the principal themes which will reappear, fully orchestrated, in the coming class battles—above all the theme of the bankruptcy and treachery of the Right-wing leaders. We are convinced that the need of the hour is the emergence of new leaders, whose horizons are not bounded by reforms within the framework of the capitalist order, but who are thorough-going revolutionaries. Therefore *LABOUR REVIEW* pledges full support for the conference called by *The Newsletter* and appeals to its readers to help the success of this conference by every means in their power.

# Socialists and the Trade Unions

Brian Behan

THE background to the struggles in industry today is the attempt of the employers and their Tory Government to solve the economic crisis at the expense of the working class. In particular the employers are trying:

- (1) To offset the fall in the rate of profit, and the effect of growing competition on a limited world market, by holding down wages;
- (2) To solve the balance of payments problem by cutting the purchasing power of the working class and middle class, thus reducing the home demand for consumer goods;
- (3) To prevent the working class from regaining in wage increases the cuts in wages caused by the Rent Act and other political decisions; and
- (4) To create, by means of the cuts in purchasing power and the credit squeeze, a pool of unemployment that can be used as a scab army in future struggles.

The recent financial measures, including the temporary raising of Bank Rate, were aimed at improving the employers' position on the eve of battle. They were a declaration of war on the working class. The Government was openly committed to supporting the employers and boards of nationalized industries in their rejection of wage claims. The strategy of partial concessions to avoid strikes had been changed. Even the Minister of Labour, Iain Macleod, the 'professional conciliator', declared: 'No one welcomes strikes, but we must not be afraid of them . . . It is no part of my job to seek peace at any price.'<sup>1</sup> The ruling class was consciously preparing for the coming show-down. It was banking on the growth of unemployment weakening the working people's capacity for resistance. *The Times* wrote on September 23, 1957:

The possibility is envisaged that the new economic position resulting from the Government's drastic measures may make it possible to restore industrial discipline. It would be idle to hope that this can be achieved without a widespread struggle between employers and labour such as has not been known for a generation.

This is the first and most important lesson of the dispute: the employers had a strategy and a united front industrially and politically. The employers faced a working class more powerful than ever. It had behind it seventeen years of full employment; it had not been demoralized by mass unemployment or major defeats. It had already shown in the 1956 strikes in the Midlands, on the docks, in the 1957 bus and engineering disputes and at Covent Garden that beneath the surface of the long years of relative peace since the war there lay a militancy and self-confidence which, provided the workers were given leadership, could shatter all the employers' attempts to defeat them. Because of this the Tories decided to proceed cautiously. They sought to isolate particular sections, such as the busmen, through whom they hoped to inflict a defeat on the whole working class.

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Felixstowe, October 4, 1957.

## THE CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP

The Right-wing trade union and Labour leaders not only had no policy of mobilizing the whole movement in support of the busmen but worked consciously to isolate and destroy them. For the busmen to have won a complete victory, an extension of the strike to the Underground, road haulage and oil was necessary. The Government would have been forced either to give way completely or to move troops in and face the biggest industrial stoppage since 1926. There seems no doubt that the Tories were unable and unwilling to face such a stoppage. Out of such an extension could have come the removal of the Tory Government and the return of Labour to power. Right-wing trade union leaders did not attempt to argue against an extension of the strike on the ground that such an extension would not be successful. In their view it would be far too successful.<sup>2</sup> The rank and file of the National Union of Railwaymen, despite open sabotage by their general secretary, were already beginning to act. The tragedy of the bus dispute is that despite the busmen's heroic stand the real fruits of their efforts and sacrifices were snatched from them by a craven leadership. In the last days of the dispute the Right wing of the Trades Union Congress was quite willing to drive the busmen back under any conditions. Only the steadfastness of the rank and file and their historic vote to continue the dispute protected the busmen from widespread cuts, sackings and victimization.

The big question for the trade union movement is: Why the retreat? Why were there no real preparations for struggle against the employers? Trade union leaders and others are fond of using the excuse of 'rank-and-file apathy' as a reason for their conservatism. Yet the examples of the busmen, the dockers, the Smithfield men and the Pressed Steel (Swindon) workers show that the working class is capable of putting up a tremendous resistance to the employers' attacks. Sidney Greene, leader of the NUR, even admitted during the railway wage negotiations that his biggest worry was in restraining his members.<sup>3</sup>

The conservatism of the trade union leaders is rooted in imperialism. British capitalism has always had the slogan for Labour and trade union leaders: 'You make 'em and we'll buy 'em.' For the conservative trade union leader there is always a job on the board of a nationalized industry. Knighthoods are plentiful on the General Council of the TUC. Moreover the salaries and expense accounts of trade union leaders provide them with living standards vastly higher than those of rank-and-file workers. The growth and expansion of British imperialism have shaped a trade union leadership suited to the interests of the capitalist class. Reformism became—and still is—the dominant outlook of the trade

<sup>2</sup> Since this article was written, this betrayal has been strikingly documented in the report of the General Council to the 1958 TUC.

<sup>3</sup> 'It's not leading a strike I am worried about—it's holding the lads back' (*Daily Express*, April 11, 1958).

union leaders. During the post-war boom, they created many new forms of class collaboration and added them to the machine. The reformist trade union leader has a real stake in preventing any mass struggles against the employers, for such struggles would jeopardize special privileges won for himself; and if these struggles developed into a struggle for socialism those privileges would be ended for ever. Thus the working class is entering battle with a leadership that does not want to fight. Under these conditions, many of the coming strikes could end in defeat.

One of the main conditions for ensuring the victory of the workers is the replacement of existing trade union leaders by men and women who will consciously prepare and mobilize union members for struggle. In the long run such a leadership can be provided only by revolutionary socialists, Marxists, who are able to co-ordinate the fight on immediate issues with the political struggle for working-class power.

### THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Communist Party claims to be the Marxist alternative to Right-wing reformism, and many militant workers inside and outside its ranks have in the past seen it as the only alternative. The attitude of the Communist Party leaders, both before and during the bus dispute, shows however that the Communist Party is not a genuine Marxist alternative. They made no attempt before the dispute to prepare the working class by pointing out the danger of betrayal by the Right wing. On the contrary, the Communist Party helped to sow grave illusions about the willingness of the TUC to struggle. In estimating the 1957 Trades Union Congress, the *Daily Worker* hailed it as a victory for the unity of the progressive movement against the Tories. Yet Sir Thomas Williamson in his presidential address had made quite clear the intention of the Right wing to collaborate with the employers in preventing any real struggle by the trade unions.<sup>4</sup> The *Daily Worker* and *Labour Monthly* gave space to leading Right-wing spokesmen on the General Council to air their views. Pen portraits were given of such people as Sidney Greene which tended to foster illusions about their

<sup>4</sup> 'A greater incidence of strikes one year does not necessarily mean more industrial trouble the following year. Two years ago we had a comparatively stormy passage, with disputes in the railway, dock and newspaper industries . . . The following year industry did almost as good a job as ever in settling its problems peacefully. It need not be otherwise next year, nor in any following year, provided all concerned honestly face their responsibilities in striving for the same aim of peace in industry. Peace in industry is not a political issue nor should it be made into one by the Government, the employers or ourselves. As a movement we renounce any challenge to the sovereignty of Parliament. If we dislike a government . . . we resist the temptation to dislodge it by industrial action . . . What do I, as a trade union leader, expect from our people? I expect them to honour agreements and to use established machinery to make new ones . . . We must condemn and restrain those who organize, promote and lead unofficial movements and unofficial strikes . . . There is an obligation on employers and trade unionists not only to accept joint consultation and negotiation but to do everything possible to make it work. So let us, trade unionists and employers, seek to build on what we have so far achieved in settling our problems' (*Report of Proceedings at the 89th Annual Trades Union Congress . . . 1957*, pp. 77-8).

militant leadership. Consequently when the bus dispute broke out the Communist Party, unprepared politically to intervene consciously in the class battles, had no alternative but to act as a passive spectator giving verbal support to the strikers. Of course, a number of rank-and-file members of the Communist Party were active and did some fine work in the dispute. (So also did individual members of the Labour Party and other organizations.) The efforts of individuals do not compensate for the poverty of leadership of the party *as a party*. There was no emergency campaign to mobilize all members of the Communist Party for the extension of the dispute and for the exposure of Right-wing reformism. On the very day of the busmen's crucial vote on whether to stay out or go back, the *Daily Worker* editorial said nothing about the dispute. Not a single leaflet was issued by the *Daily Worker* calling for the extension of the dispute or for the busmen to remain out.

A good illustration of the Communist Party leaders' departure from Marxism is an article in the June 1958 *Labour Monthly* in which R. Palme Dutt puts the Communist Party's views on the disputes. In a section dealing with the unions' preparation for struggle, Dutt informs his readers that the majority of the trade union leaders are 'conscientious, serious, hard-working' men who are truly concerned with the betterment of their members' living conditions.<sup>5</sup> Their reformist outlook he sees as a handicap, but he warns against any idea that the woods are full of conscious traitors like Jimmy Thomas. He evades the key question of how a practical struggle against reformism is to be conducted in the unions and studiously avoids any mention of the need to strengthen the rank-and-file movement to counter the weakness of the reformist leadership. Unfortunately, just after Dutt had penned these words of wisdom, the majority of the conscientious, serious trade union leaders in the General Council of the TUC stabbed the busmen in the back.

Dutt's panacea is the building of a bigger Communist Party. But this is merely a device for avoiding the question of how to strengthen the workers' real struggle. What Dutt has in mind is the capture of trade unions through various manoeuvres, the principal tactic being that of working in the same manner as the Right wing itself. The Communist Party leaders' attitude to the working-class movement, an attitude stemming from their own bureaucratic outlook, is that the working class is to have its revolution made for it and will be informed on the appropriate date. This is a fundamental departure from Marxism. To Marxists there is no mystery about the attitude of the rank and file as opposed to that of the trade union leadership, for they have grasped the fact that there is a distinct relationship between the privileged living conditions of trade union officials and their conscious betrayals of the working class.

Dutt informs us that the days of the conscious reformists who are truly aware of their anti-union role are over. People like J. H. Thomas, he declares, are special phenomena. But Marxists know that these people are not just stupid do-gooders who get things wrong. On the contrary, Marxists know that trade union leaders are born out of specific social and class relationships. The soil that produced Thomas is the

<sup>5</sup> R.P.D., 'Notes of the Month', *Labour Monthly*, [vol. xl, no. 6], pp. 253-4, June 1958.

same soil that produces modern reformist leaders; they grow and flourish in it. A realistic study of the activities of the present trade union leadership shows quite conclusively that there are plenty of budding Thomases about. Individual rank-and-file members of the Communist Party could give Dutt chapter and verse on the activities of these lads. And the capture of key positions at the top by individual Communist Party members is no substitute for a live rank-and-file movement at the base. Indeed, by concentrating on such tactics instead of helping to build a conscious rank-and-file movement the individual often becomes the prisoner of reformism and is forced to carry out reformist policies.

The Communist Party cannot wage war on the reformists because its own policy is essentially reformist—however much it may be dressed up in Left phrases. One of the proud boasts of *Labour Monthly* is the number of 'respectable' trade union leaders who are now writing in its columns. Who really stands to gain from such unholy alliances between reformists and Stalinist 'Marxists'? Does the Soviet working class gain? Certainly not. A trade union bureaucrat who does not turn a hair as he sells out his 'own' workers to the bosses will hardly be worried about the state of the Russian workers. His bleatings about peace and friendship are designed to cover up bankruptcy at home on issues directly concerning his own members. For example, which trade union leader will lead a campaign to convince his members not to work on rocket sites? Militants have only to fight for this idea at union conferences to see the turn-tail reactions of so-called 'peace lovers'. Yet these rocket sites are aimed directly at the Russian workers. The fact that top trade union bureaucrats write smooth 'peaceful co-existence' articles in *Labour Monthly* disarms and confuses genuine working-class fighters in the Communist Party. How can a Communist Party militant lash out at a 'peace lover' and, moreover, a contributor to a Communist Party journal?

There cannot be any real advance in Britain unless a relentless struggle is waged against Right-wing, reformist, trade union bureaucracy. To the extent that the Communist Party gives comfort and prestige to these rascals and refuses to launch a consistent campaign exposing their anti-working-class activities, it is compromising Marxism and helping to preserve capitalism. What distinguishes a Left Labour faker from a real leader of the British working class are his actions in waging the struggle against the British capitalist class—not how smooth his words are.

Once the Communist Party accepts this policy of 'revolution' through capturing official posts in the trade unions, it abandons the idea that the emancipation of the working class has to be achieved by the working class itself. So the individual communist militant repeatedly finds himself paralysed by 'tactical' decisions of higher party bureaucrats which undermine the genuine hard work he has been engaged in.

After the collapse of the Labour Government of 1931 the Labour movement put forward the slogan: 'Loyalty to principles rather than loyalty to leaders.' This slogan is as true today as ever it was. Socialist organizations and journals must be judged on how they serve the working people in their struggle. The Marxist movement in Britain today must learn how to combine the widest and most thorough discussion of key political

questions with unity in action. It is a regrettable fact that the leaders of the Communist Party have imposed the strictest bans and proscriptions on Marxists who attempt to develop an alternative, in an effort to prevent rank-and-file members from discussing and working with Marxists who are not in the Communist Party. For example, during the bus dispute, Communist Party leaders spent much more energy in denouncing and hindering the selling of the *Strike Bulletin*, produced as a supplement to *The Newsletter*, than they did in supporting the strikers. Members of the party were threatened with disciplinary action for writing for it or selling it. Let there be differences of opinion, but this attempt to silence a militant socialist paper, produced to help workers on strike, brackets the Communist Party leadership with the yellow capitalist Press which also viciously attacked the *Strike Bulletin* and the leaflets published by *The Newsletter*.

The real basis for these bans and proscriptions is the Communist Party's abandonment of its revolutionary programme. It has deserted the basic principles of Marxism and has embodied gross revisions of Marxist ideas in its programme *The British Road to Socialism*. Marxists have always held the view that the working class is opposed not only by the employers but also by a capitalist State machine—the Government, the army, the police, the judiciary. Marxists have always taught that for the working class to achieve power the capitalist State must be smashed and replaced by a workers' State. This is the all-important revolutionary conception which must determine the long-term strategy and immediate tactics of any serious working-class struggle for socialism. The Communist Party have now apparently come round to the view that it is entirely possible in British conditions to 'capture' Parliament through the ballot box and then to 'transform' the capitalist State machine into a workers' State. This vulgar reformist conception does not differ in essence from the Right-wing Fabian theory of gradual advance to socialism. It certainly bears no relation to Marxism. With the disappearance from its political programme of a working-class conception of the road to socialism, reformist methods and ideas have come to dominate the policies of the Communist Party in industry.

#### HOW A MARXIST LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS

What are the aims of a Marxist leadership in the sphere of industrial struggle? The recent London bus strike was the first large-scale 'official' dispute since 1926 and it provides us with an opportunity to make a practical study of the way in which Centrist and Right-wing reformist leaders have proved themselves incapable of leading an industrial dispute in a way that can strengthen the working class and sharpen its fighting capacity. We have to examine closely and realistically the balance sheet of the bus strike, not in order to discover the honesty or dishonesty of this or that trade union leader, but rather to elucidate the question: What differences, if any, would a Marxist leadership have made to the outcome of this dispute?

In terms of cash, the bus strike cost the TGWU over a million pounds. Over 50,000 workers and their families were reduced to living on £4 or £5 a week during the strike and this entailed very considerable sacrifices. The net result of the strike in terms of wage increases for the busmen was very meagre. The tre-

mendous capacity and willingness of the working class to struggle was something that Marxists had expected to be shown in this strike; but it must be noted that this capacity and willingness to struggle were squandered in a hundred ways by the reformist leadership.

The capitalist Press has sedulously built up in the minds of many workers a phoney picture of what a Marxist leadership looks like. Marxists are portrayed as wild, unpractical extremists who do not care how much the workers suffer provided that some abstract doctrine is thereby preserved. This could not be further from the truth. With or without leadership the busmen had to initiate the battle for a wage increase: what sort of leadership did they need to win one? Highly 'practical', 'sober', 'down-to-earth', 'undocinaire' reformist negotiators—or a Marxist leadership basing itself on the strategy of the class war?

Because Marxists understand capitalism they understand that in any large-scale industrial struggle, particularly if it occurs when capitalism is economically weak, the workers are facing not only their 'own' employers, but the whole of the employing class. They know that behind the employers stands the State machine, controlling the police, the army and the courts, the radio and other propaganda media. They know whom the strikers are taking on—and that is always an advantage in any battle. Their studies of history have shown them that the employing class is composed of ruthless and dangerous people who, to achieve their ends, are prepared to starve men, women and children as they starved the miners in 1926. Armed with the science of class struggle, Marxists try to win a dispute despite all the difficulties. They are in a unique position for planning the best strategy—a strategy which does maximum damage to the bosses and minimum harm to the working class. Take for example the way in which *The Newsletter* discussed the impending bus strike:

Our first thought on this most crucial May Day since 1926, when the miners faced rapacious bosses and their State machine, must be for the London busmen, now beginning a struggle against no less rapacious bosses and a State machine no less determined to divide and defeat the working class.

Both sides know that the stakes for which they are fighting are higher than the immediate issue suggests. Behind Elliot stands Macmillan, who is determined to give the busmen a thrashing, thereby restoring Tory morale, discouraging other sections from pressing their claims and weakening the power of trade unionism. Macmillan will fight this strike tooth and nail as a **political** struggle, and the busmen must meet this challenge. Alone they might well be defeated; they must not stand alone. The active support of tube men, tanker drivers, portworkers and railwaymen is essential. If the busmen go down the rest will go down too, and the Tory offensive will sweep on relentlessly. Strong links must be forged in the shape of joint rank-and-file committees that can organize the necessary solidarity action. From the very first moment the busmen must wage an aggressive and energetic struggle against any form of scabbing and any sign of faltering or betrayal on the part of their leaders. The busmen's strike is the responsibility of the entire working-class movement, including the Labour Party. Every effort should be made to extend the strike to other transport workers in the London area. Especially is it vital, by reducing to a minimum the flow of petrol into London, to thwart the Government's plans for mobilizing private cars and military vehicles to break the strike.

We salute the busmen, pledge the fullest backing of our

paper and its supporters to their struggle, and call on the entire working class to rally round the strikers.<sup>6</sup>

In the course of the strike itself *The Newsletter* argued each week in favour of extending it: industrially by involving the tube men and the dockers, and politically by mobilizing the local Labour Parties. *The Newsletter* denounced the pseudo-Left line advocated as a substitute for spreading the strike and expressed in the phrase: 'The busmen are prepared to stay out till Christmas.' Marxist militants fought for spreading the strike to other sections of transport and to other industries. To ask men to stay on strike, isolated and without any real hope of final victory, was dangerous adventurism which could only weaken the working class as a whole and give golden propaganda opportunities to a ruling class now facing demands from other sections of the workers. The policy advocated by *The Newsletter* of mobilizing the whole working class, a policy based on a Marxist analysis of events, would have resulted, had it been applied, in a short, sharp dispute. The busmen would have won a clear one hundred per cent. victory. The sacrifices would have been less and they would not have been frittered away. A Marxist leadership, because of its political outlook, is a sober leadership that proceeds from the real interests of the working class, and consequently it is a practical leadership producing practical results. Strike leaders who are reformist gradualists or Centrist waverers, because of their unsound political thinking often advocate extremely adventurous and dangerous courses. It is they who are 'unpractical'.

The supporters of *The Newsletter* tried to help the bus strikers by selling up to 20,000 copies a week of the *Strike Bulletin*. This paper was a landmark. The greater part of each issue was written by strikers. It tried to organize financial help and solidarity action for the busmen. Many mass meetings were held under the auspices of the *Strike Bulletin* and much support was gained for the busmen. Leaflets were produced both for busmen and Underground workers in which the industrial and political issues were clearly stated. On the day the bus delegates met to discuss a return to work *The Newsletter* produced thousands of leaflets with the heading: 'Stand Firm for the 10s. 6d.!' The *Strike Bulletin* made no secret of the fact that it stood for the overthrow of the Tory Government and its replacement by a socialist Labour government. The aims of the paper were quite simple: to provide a link between all sections in dispute and to show the connexion between the immediate struggles of the working class and their long-term political aims.

An examination of these limited successes shows that it is entirely possible for Marxists to intervene and play their part without arousing hostility from the workers. Indeed by intervening in a correct manner, Marxists win respect. This is possible because there exists a real basis for the creation of a genuine working-class leadership.

One of the strongest barriers against sell-outs is the arming of the working class with a conscious outlook. A programme of minimum demands must be accompanied by preparations for action to achieve these demands. The working class, so armed and prepared, will be able to judge policies and leaders effectively.

<sup>6</sup> *The Newsletter*, vol. ii, no. 51, p. 131, May 3, 1958.

Marxists have confidence in the working class—not blind, mystical faith, but confidence based on an understanding of the working class, of its problems and of what must be done to solve these problems. The great experience of the bus strike was that the busmen themselves took the decision about whether or not to continue the strike—to the consternation of those trade union leaders who revel in tirades about the ‘apathy’ of their membership. The busmen, whose attendance at normal trade union branch meetings is neither better nor worse than that of other sections, decided to stand firm. Marxists are in favour of consultation with the rank and-file both before and during a dispute. The extent to which any struggle is successful is determined by their understanding of what they are fighting for and of the forces ranged against them.

### SOCIALISM THE ONLY SOLUTION

It is clear that the deeper issues in the strikes have not been settled one way or the other. The original intention of the employers to isolate and destroy the busmen has not succeeded. The Government’s aim of imposing a complete wage freeze has had to be abandoned in favour of wage increases of about 3 per cent. with strings attached wherever possible. Nevertheless the employers have not shelved their original plan for lower wages, harder work and unemployment. The state of the economy forces them to prepare for a renewed offensive against the working class. Capitalism has devised no new solution to problems that have affected the British working class for generations. The aim of the ruling class is still the same as it was in the thirties and before—to solve the economic crisis, always inherent in the system of private ownership for profit, by measures that lead to the impoverishment of the masses of the people.

In this age of great new technical advances such as automation and atomic energy, to speak of hunger and harder work would be laughable. But this is just the road that capitalism is bent on taking. The Marxist solution is the establishment of a socialist society, whose main concern will be to use all the resources of nature and the technical achievements of modern science to benefit not a tiny handful, but the whole of society.

Right-wing reformism has no solution to the ills of capitalism. Reformists are openly against any development of the class struggle to win either immediate industrial demands or long-term political aims. They want power at the next election in order to operate as a safe alternative to the Tories—i.e., power to carry out capitalist policies. The Right wing in the Labour and trade union movement is already throwing out hints about the necessity for ‘sacrifices’ by the working class, including the possibility of a wage freeze. But the workers have experienced reformist policies of collaboration with capitalism to solve the economic difficulties of the ‘nation’. This was the road reformism took after the General Strike. Mondism, the class collaboration doctrine of the time, led to the Labour Government of Ramsay MacDonald, which was even prepared to cut the dole in order to stabilize the ‘nation’s economy’. To take this path again would be disastrous.

Recent experience of the American working class confirms that where leaders are allowed to pursue reformist policies the workers pay a heavy price. During the boom reformist leaders like Meany and Reuther

proclaimed that collaboration with capitalism was necessary and that the working class must involve itself still further in practices designed to strengthen their workers’ paradise. They decried revolutionary ideas, declaring that Marxism had been buried under an avalanche of high living standards. Today the triumphant co-partnership of Capital and Labour in the United States has ended with five million American workers on the bread line.

The lesson of the recent strikes in Britain has been that all real power to halt war, prevent unemployment and build socialism rests with the working class. The lesson of British and American working-class history is that the reformist leadership of the trade unions and Labour Party will resist to the bitter end the use by the working class of that great power. A revolutionary socialist leadership, whose strategy is full use by the working class of its industrial power, not only to win immediate economic gains, but also to overthrow capitalism—only with such a leadership can the working class effectively combat the employers’ attacks. Such a leadership can be constructed only by explaining clearly and patiently to the workers the employers’ strategy, and by showing what practical steps can be taken to prevent their carrying it out.

The central task in the struggle for socialism is that of putting clearly to the working class the prospect of united struggle now to defend conditions. In the course of large-scale industrial disputes the opportunities of winning tens of thousands of workers for revolutionary policies are immense. In a strike in a nationalized industry, for example, it becomes obvious to many workers that to end compensation, introduce workers’ control and extend socialist nationalization is the only long-term answer. In fighting for wage increases it is easier to explain why vast war expenditure should be ended and resources used for things we really need. To struggle against unemployment is also to point out the degeneracy of a system that condemns a skilled worker to idleness and want.

### FUTURE STRUGGLES IN INDUSTRY

The employers know that even with the help of the Right wing it is not yet possible to launch an all-round attack on the trade unions. They have accordingly decided to proceed section by section. Despite all the Tory denials that they are making war on the workers, the pattern is clear. To defeat this offensive united action by the whole trade union movement is needed. Trade union branches and bodies of workers must help their brothers who are engaged in a fight. Solidarity action by the whole working class, whenever one section of it is bearing the brunt of the employers’ attack, is imperative. Financial and moral support are not enough. Whenever the dockers are involved in struggle, for instance, the whole of the TGWU must be drawn in to help them. A stoppage in road transport, oil and meat could thwart the employers’ plans. If troops are used the working class should reply with a total withdrawal of labour.

Solidarity rank-and-file committees to organize inter-union support along these lines are vitally necessary. Leaders of rank-and-file committees must be protected from victimization.

### UNEMPLOYMENT

The employers are counting on the steady growth of unemployment to weaken the resistance of those in work.

They estimate that the dole will act as a spur to transform unemployed workers into blacklegs. The creation of a reserve of unemployed means an end to those gains won because of scarcity of labour. It means that conflicts between Capital and Labour will be sharper, since any advances made in the future will have to depend entirely on the strength of labour at a time when labour is in excess of capitalist requirements.

Bound up with the growth of unemployment is the introduction into industry of new techniques of production, particularly automation. Although the introduction of automation is gradual and piecemeal, it can have a great effect in certain industries, particularly engineering. Motor car workers are once again on short time or totally unemployed: 'A Ministry of Labour spokesman at Luton said that some of the 600 workers to be dismissed this month by Vauxhall Motors might be facing a period of unemployment. He said there were already about 400 unemployed in the town.'<sup>7</sup>

Any sackings due to 'economies', automation or indeed any reason must be resisted. If the employers or Right wing claim that this is impracticable and cannot be done, then surely our reply is: 'Get out and let us have a try at keeping ourselves.'

Many specious arguments are now being advanced to clear the path to unemployment. E. J. Hill, in the debate on redundancy at the recent conference of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, said: 'This is a political issue. It is not an industrial issue. We ought to force this on to the floor of the House of Commons.'<sup>8</sup> The Amalgamated Engineering Union withdrew their resolution calling upon the employers to maintain workers in employment until alternative work was found, in favour of a gutless compromise, the essence of which is contained in the last paragraph:

If, in spite of all efforts, some redundancy is unavoidable, this annual meeting urges the executive council, district committees, shop stewards and members to take every practical step to make the best possible arrangements to ensure that the minimum of hardship is experienced by our members.<sup>9</sup>

The acceptance of unemployment without using the industrial power of the working class is inherent in this resolution. Yet the *Daily Worker* of August 14 carried a headline proclaiming 'Engineers to Fight Sackings'. It is worth noting that this 'compromise' resolution which means nothing was moved by Claude Berridge, a leading Stalinist. It may be argued that the Right wing was preventing the adoption of such a resolution. This is true; but when no socialist alternative is presented the

Left and the Right unite to do nothing. Then it is a task for a detective armed with a magnifying glass to distinguish Left from Right.

A national stoppage against redundancy would force the employers either to retreat or get out and make way for a government which would maintain full employment. The rank and file understand that the time to fight unemployment is now, when the workers are still in the factories.

### THE LABOUR PARTY

One of the weaknesses of the bus and meat strikes was that there was no joint action by the leaders of the trade union and those of the Labour Party, despite the fact that in every dispute the Tories as a government intervene quite actively by giving policy directions to both private and State-owned industry. The fact that Labour's parliamentary Opposition did little or nothing in the strikes strengthened the employers and disheartened those upon whom the Labour leadership relies for cash and support, the organized industrial workers. We expect this attitude from the Right wing, but unfortunately there was no evidence in the recent strikes of any attempt by the Left in Parliament to organize support for the strikers. This can and must be changed. A good feature of the strikes was the fact that a number of local Labour Parties and Trades Councils gave support to strikers, not only morally and financially, but also by offering the use of Labour Party rooms as strike headquarters and by duplicating leaflets and bulletins for the strikers.

In the coming struggles there will be big opportunities for the Left in the Labour Party to intervene more actively to bring in the support of the political wing of the movement. There can be no 'victory for socialism' if decisive sections of the working class are defeated industrially. The unity of the Left in the Labour Parties with the Left in the trade unions in common action can provide a real alternative to the Right wing of the Labour Party and trade unions.

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These ideas are a contribution to discussion of the immense problems that face all who are for socialism and against capitalism. Discussion is needed among the workers in the pits, on building sites and in factories. It will be an excellent thing for delegates from all sections of the working class to meet and work out a practical programme to guide working-class struggles at the rank-and-file conference called by the editorial board of *The Newsletter* on November 16.

<sup>7</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, August 14, 1958.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

# 'Export of Revolution', 1917-1924

Brian Pearce

'On the great Lenin's teaching, "export of revolutions" was nonsense.'

—Y. A. Malik, Soviet Ambassador in London, in a television interview, reported in the *Manchester Guardian*, February 3, 1958.

'The victorious proletariat . . . having expropriated the capitalists and organized its own socialist production, would **confront** the rest of the capitalist world, attract to itself the oppressed classes of other countries, raise revolts among them against the capitalists, and in the event of necessity, come out even with armed force against the exploiting classes and their States.'

—V. I. Lenin, 'The United States of Europe Slogan' (1915), *Selected Works*, English edition, vol. v (1936), p. 14.

'Therefore, the development and support of revolution in other countries is an essential task of the victorious revolution. Therefore, the revolution which has been victorious in one country must regard itself not as a self-sufficient entity, but as an aid, as a means for hastening the victory of the proletariat in other countries.'

—J. V. Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism* (April 1924), *Works*, English edition, vol. vi (1953), p. 111.

'The export of revolution is nonsense.'

—J. V. Stalin, interview with Roy Howard, March 1936, published as *Is War Inevitable?* by the Friends of the Soviet Union, 1936, p. 8.

CURRENT discussion around the idea of peaceful 'co-existence' necessarily involves considering the relations that exist between the Soviet Union and the international working-class movement. Is peaceful co-existence between the Soviet Union and the capitalist States compatible with active help by the former to the workers' struggle in the latter? Or does it mean that the Soviet authorities must be indifferent or even hostile towards forces that threaten their partners in co-existence? Recently this question has arisen with particular sharpness in connexion both with Soviet foreign policy and with the 'line' promoted by the Soviet Government, through the communist parties which it controls, regarding unilateral nuclear disarmament by this country, and also in connexion with the Algerian revolution. For example, was it correct for Khrushchev, as leader of the strongest workers' State, to declare that Algeria must remain within the French Union, to indicate through his Ambassador in Paris that he considered Bizerta ought to remain under French control, and to be the first foreign statesman to greet de Gaulle with a personal message on his coming to power in France? If the Soviet Union wishes to come to some sort of agreement with de Gaulle, does it follow that it should turn its back on, restrain, or even actively discourage, the fight of the French workers and the Algerian workers and peasants against him?

Consideration of these and similar topical questions is leading increasing numbers of socialists, especially members and recent members of the Communist Party,

to re-examine Soviet and communist policy in international affairs since the war, during the war and before the war. As the technique of the Stalinists in trying to hinder and frustrate such reconsideration of the past is, first and foremost, to pretend that the Soviet Communist Party has *always* pursued essentially the same foreign policy which it has followed since the later twenties, it may be useful to recall the theory and practice of that party in the sphere of foreign affairs during the early years after the October Revolution. There appears to be a good deal of ignorance and misinformation around where this is concerned: many imagine that Trotsky and the Left Opposition were putting forward new, unheard-of ideas when they began criticizing Stalin's foreign policy, and it is supposed also that what they advocated was the use of the Red Army to 'make revolutions'—rather as was done by Stalin in the Baltic States in 1940!

The fundamental approach of the Bolsheviks in power to the conduct of relations with the capitalist States encircling them was defined by Trotsky, as Commissar for Foreign Affairs, on December 12, 1917, in his introduction to a new edition of *What Is a Peace Programme?*:

We have to open negotiations with those governments which at present exist. However, we are conducting these negotiations in a way that affords the peoples the fullest possibility of controlling the crimes of their governments, and so to accelerate the rising of the working masses against the imperialist cliques. We are ready to support this uprising with all the forces at our command.

The Soviets could not refuse to deal with the surrounding world as they found it. Their dealings, however, would be guided by concern to facilitate the changing of that world in the same direction in which Russia was being changed. They put all their cards frankly on the table at this stage, when a rapid advance of the world revolution seemed probable. On December 24, 1917, the Council of People's Commissars passed the following decree:

Taking into consideration that the Soviet Government is based on the principles of the international solidarity of the proletariat and on the brotherhood of the toilers of all countries, and that the struggle against war and imperialism can be brought to a completely successful conclusion only if waged on an international scale, the Council of People's Commissars considers it necessary to offer assistance by all possible means to the Left internationalist wing of the Labour movement of all countries, regardless of whether these countries are at war with Russia, in alliance with Russia or neutral. For this purpose the Council of People's Commissars decides to allocate two million roubles for the needs of the revolutionary international movement and to put this sum at the disposal of the foreign representatives of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs.<sup>1</sup>

The key words in this decree were: 'regardless of whether these countries are at war with Russia, in

<sup>1</sup> The decree was published in *Izvestia* of December 26 and is reproduced in J. Degras, *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*, vol. i (1951), p. 22.

alliance with Russia, or neutral'. Their implications were made clear when the central committee of the Bolshevik Party voted, on February 22, 1918, in favour of accepting aid from the Allied Powers, if it could be obtained, in the form of supplies and military instructors, for resistance to German attack. The motion, which was put by Trotsky and passed by a majority of one, included the provision that 'at the same time the party . . . undertakes no political obligations toward the capitalist governments'.<sup>2</sup> When proposing to the American Colonel Robins that American engineers help to get Russia's ruined railways back into operation, with as *quid pro quo* the right to bring out of danger of capture by the Germans certain munition-dumps located near the front, Trotsky summed up the principle behind the suggested bargain in the words: 'Mutual services, mutual benefits, and no pretences!' This was put more formally in a note from Trotsky to Robins regarding possible more extensive forms of aid: 'All these questions are conditioned with the self-understood assumption that the internal and foreign policies of the Soviet Government will continue to be directed in accord with the principles of international socialism and that the Soviet Government retains its complete independence of all non-socialist governments.'<sup>3</sup> There could be no question of Soviet Russia, in return for military help from the Allies, calling on the workers of the Allied countries to abandon their struggles against their own capitalists; the imperialist war remained imperialist.

When Allied aid failed to materialize and Russia was forced to sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, this turn of events necessitated a change in the form—though not in the content—of Soviet foreign relations. Addressing the Petrograd Soviet, Lenin on February 23, 1918, replied to the objection that the treaty obliged the Soviets 'to put a stop to agitation against the [German] imperialists, to give up the preparation for a world revolution'.

I did not think (he said) that I had to do with political children here, but with old, illegal party people, who know right well how one could carry on agitation under the Tsar. The Kaiser is no cleverer than Nicholas . . . The central executive committee [of the soviets] signs the peace, the Council of People's Commissars signs the peace, but still that is not the central committee of the party. For the behaviour of the latter the Soviet Government is not responsible.<sup>4</sup>

At the Seventh Party Congress, in March, Sverdlov explained that the practical significance of this section of the treaty was that international propaganda work would have to be transferred from the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs to the organs of the party; and the Congress reaffirmed that 'the socialist proletariat of Russia will do everything within its power and will use all its resources to help the fraternal revolutionary movement

of the proletariat of all countries'.<sup>5</sup>

The fight of the Bolsheviks in the Ukraine against the German occupying forces received clandestine support from Soviet Russia during the entire period between Brest-Litovsk and the German withdrawal. It is noteworthy that Trotsky, now Commissar for War, warned against methods of 'help' to the Ukraine which were ill-considered. At the Fifth Congress of Soviets, in July 1918, he denounced the provocative behaviour of irresponsible bands operating on the Russo-Ukrainian frontier, which 'were very brave when it came to cutting off small parties of Germans and annihilating them by overwhelming force. But they would be the first to disappear at the sight of a company of German helmets.' (This roused the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries to fury; accusing Trotsky of selling the pass to Hohenzollern imperialism, they walked out of the Congress.)<sup>6</sup>

The situation was further complicated when Allied intervention began while German forces were still in occupation of Russian territory. In August 1918, Foreign Commissar Chicherin agreed with the German Ambassador that the German troops in Estonia and Finland might move across Karelia to take on the British who had landed at Murmansk, so as to enable the Red Army to be withdrawn from the northern front and redeployed to defend Moscow. In mentioning this episode, the historian Dallin appositely notes that Joffe, the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin, was at this very time redoubling his activities in support of the revolutionary movement in Germany.<sup>7</sup>

Whatever tacking between the rival imperialist camps might be forced upon the Soviet Government, support of the anti-imperialist fight in all countries without exception remained a constant element in its policy. Mentioning in his report on foreign relations to the central executive committee on September 2, 1918, that Germany had protested against aid coming from Russia to strikers in the Ukraine, Chicherin declared that 'we cannot forbid private persons and workers' organizations collecting money for the strikers, or forbid Russian citizens in general from spreading revolutionary ideas. Some of the German demands go beyond the limits of what the workers' and peasants' revolutionary government can do'.<sup>8</sup>

Lenin summed up this entire phase of Soviet foreign relations in a speech on November 27, 1920, when he said:

It might seem that what we had was a kind of bloc of the first socialist republic and German imperialism against the other imperialism. But we did not make any bloc; nowhere did we overstep the line beyond which injury or shame might have been brought upon the socialist power; we only exploited the difference between the two imperialisms in such a way that in the long run both lost. Germany got

<sup>5</sup> Carr, *op. cit.* p. 72; Degras, *op. cit.* p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> M. Philips Price, *Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution* (1921), p. 318.

<sup>7</sup> 'For a proper understanding of this policy of zigzagging and manoeuvring, one must bear in mind that simultaneously with it the Lenin Government was transforming its Berlin Embassy into a leading centre of communist activity in Germany, an effort directed against the very government whose military intervention in Russia Lenin was so anxious to secure' (Dallin, *op. cit.* pp. 68-9). See also Carr, *op. cit.* p. 83.

<sup>8</sup> Degras, *op. cit.* p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> David Dallin, *Russia and Post-War Europe* (1944), p. 146, n.4. See also W. H. Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution* (1935), vol. i, p. 404, and E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. iii (1953), p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> W. Hard, *Raymond Robins' Own Story* (1920), p. 100; Degras, *op. cit.* pp. 56-7.

<sup>4</sup> Adolf Joffe, in V. Astrov (ed.), *Illustrated History of the Russian Revolution* (Lawrence, 1928), vol. ii, p. 507. See also J. T. Wheeler-Bennett, *Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace* (1938), p. 261.

nothing from the Brest peace except a few million poods of grain, but it brought Bolshevik disintegration into Germany. We won time, in the course of which the Red Army began to form . . .<sup>9</sup>

Chicherin, formulating the principles of Soviet foreign policy for the future, had already affirmed, in the *Communist International* for October 1919, that Soviet Russia's task was 'to live in peace with all governments, or to try to do so, but to keep itself carefully apart from any coalitions and combinations serving imperialist appetites'.<sup>10</sup>

Thus the ideas that are nowadays widely thought of as 'Trotskyist' were the generally accepted foundations of Soviet foreign policy in 1917-19, and Trotsky had distinguished himself from other Bolshevik leaders in this sphere only by leading the fight for acceptance of aid from imperialist powers and by opposing adventurous methods of aiding a revolutionary movement beyond Russia's borders.

In 1920 the repulse of Pilsudski's march into the Ukraine gave rise to a dispute in the Bolshevik Party leadership whether or not to invade Poland and try to 'revolutionize' that country by armed force. According to what was the official history of the Bolshevik Party before the notorious *Short Course* appeared in 1938, 'Trotsky was opposed to the advance on Warsaw . . . due to a social-democratic prejudice to the effect that it was wrong to carry revolution into a country from the outside. For these same reasons Trotsky was opposed to the Red Army aiding the rebels in Georgia in February 1921'.<sup>11</sup> Trotsky's side of the story is given in his autobiography.

A point of view that the war [with Poland], which had begun as one of defence, should be turned into an offensive and revolutionary war began to grow and acquire strength. In principle, of course, I could not possibly have any objection to such a course. The question was simply one of the correlation of forces. The unknown quantity was the attitude of the Polish workers and peasants. Some of our Polish comrades, such as the late J. Marchlewski, a co-worker of Rosa Luxemburg's, weighed the situation very soberly. His estimation was an important factor in my desire to get out of the war as quickly as possible . . .

After mentioning the disastrous outcome of the 'march on Warsaw', Trotsky comments:

The error in the strategic calculations in the Polish war had great historical consequences. The Poland of Pilsudski came out of the war unexpectedly strengthened. On the other hand, the development of the Polish revolution received a crushing blow. The frontier established by the Riga treaty cut off the Soviet Republic from Germany, a fact that later was of great importance in the lives of both countries.<sup>12</sup>

As regards Georgia, what happened there was that the invasion began on the initiative of the local Red Army Command; Ordzhonikidze, the party representative involved, who was backed by Stalin, convinced the political bureau that a revolt with strong popular backing had broken out in Georgia and Red Army intervention would shorten the struggle. In fact, the

rising did not enjoy such backing as had been claimed for it, and it took the Red Army a fortnight of heavy fighting to reach Tbilisi. Trotsky was in the Urals at the time and learnt of the operation only after it was under way; his view was that it would have been better to carry on some underground preparatory work first, and develop the revolt, and only later, should this prove necessary, come to its aid with the Red Army.<sup>13</sup> In the book about the Georgian affair which he wrote, on party instructions (and which was a best-seller in British communist circles in the early twenties), Trotsky affirmed the right of the Red Army to assist a fully-fledged revolutionary movement, while evading a direct answer to the question whether such a movement had existed in Georgia. The passage deserves quoting:

Soviet Russia does not by any means intend to make its military power take the place of the revolutionary efforts of the proletariats of other countries. The conquest of proletarian power must be an outcome of proletarian political experience. This does not mean that the revolutionary efforts of the workers of Georgia or any other country must not receive any military support from outside. It is only essential that this support should come at a moment when the need for it has been created by the political development of the workers, and recognized by the class-conscious revolutionary vanguard, who have won the sympathy of the majority of the workers. These are questions of revolutionary strategy, and not a formal democratic ritual.<sup>14</sup>

The discussion in the international communist movement around the lessons of the unsuccessful 'March action' in Germany in 1921 gave Trotsky occasion to clarify still further the relation between the activity of Soviet Russia as a State and the progress of the revolutionary movement abroad. Some had been saying that the Russian communists had deliberately incited the Germans to a premature, doomed revolt, in order to relieve the pressure on themselves at the time of the Kronstadt mutiny. Not only was this not true, but 'if we were capable of such treachery, we would all deserve to be lined up against the wall and shot down one by one'. Others, however, had said that subsequent Russian criticism of the 'offensive' tactics of the German communists resulted from concern lest revolutions in the West should disturb the working of the trade agreements which the Soviet Government had newly concluded with certain capitalist States. This was absurd, 'because our rather tenuous trade relations with the West will never provide us with such aid as we could receive from a victorious proletarian revolution'—which, moreover, would enable Russia to reduce her burdensome expenditure on defence. Soviet Russia was 'interested only in the internal, logical development of the revolutionary forces of the proletariat, and not at all in artificially speeding up or retarding the revolutionary development'. Furthermore, 'Moscow does not at all hold a "Muscovite" point of view. For us, the Russian Soviet Republic constitutes only the point of departure of the European and world revolution. The interests of the latter are for us decisive in every major question'.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 222.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 344.

<sup>11</sup> N. N. Popov, *Outline History of the CPSU* (Lawrence, 1935), part ii, p. 101.

<sup>12</sup> L. D. Trotsky, *My Life* (1930), pp. 389-92. See also the chapter on 'The Polish War' in K. Zetkin, *Reminiscences of Lenin* (1929).

<sup>13</sup> Trotsky, *Stalin* (1947), pp. 266-8.

<sup>14</sup> Trotsky, *Between Red and White* (1922), p. 86.

<sup>15</sup> Degras, *Communist International Documents, 1919-22* (1956), p. 216; Trotsky, speech to Second Congress of Young Communist International, July 14, 1921, in *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, vol. i (1945), pp. 305-6; 'Letter to Comrades Cachin and Frossard', *ibid.* p. 162.

The year 1922 provided the experience of Soviet aid to a bourgeois State fighting against other bourgeois States—in this instance a semi-colonial country, Turkey, fighting for its freedom against imperialist Britain and the latter's stooge, Greece. According to the historian Louis Fischer, when Kemal asked for Soviet help, Stalin was against this being given, on the grounds that a strong Turkey would be a menace to Caucasia, but Trotsky, together with Lenin, supported the giving of aid.<sup>16</sup> While arms and other supplies were sent to Kemal, there was no attempt to whitewash his régime; and when he took to persecuting the Turkish communists, the Communist International, in an open letter to the working people of Turkey, denounced this development, warned that it would alienate from Turkey the sympathy of the world's workers, and pointed to the connexion between the suppression of the working-class movement and moves towards compromise with the imperialists.<sup>17</sup> Addressing the executive committee of the Comintern, Karl Radek, in words that seem prophetically to refer to the disastrous cult of Chiang Kai-shek that was to emerge later, bluntly stated that Soviet Russia's support for the Turkish national struggle did not involve 'faith in every pasha who calls himself a people's commissary and sends a telegram to Lenin'. Turkish independence was in the interests of Soviet Russia and the international working class; that was why the nationalist forces had been helped.<sup>18</sup>

The year 1922 saw also Soviet Russia's first political treaty with a major European State—the Treaty of Rapallo whereby Russia and Weimar Germany recognized each other and cancelled reciprocally all outstanding claims. Asked whether Rapallo constituted a Russo-German alliance against other States in Europe, Trotsky declared:

Germany is separated from the Soviet Republic by the same basic contradictions of property system as the countries of the Entente. This means that the possibility of talking of the Rapallo Treaty as of some defensive-offensive alliance to counterbalance other States is excluded. It is a question of the re-establishment of the most elementary inter-State and economic relations. On the principles of the Rapallo Treaty, Soviet Russia is ready to sign today a treaty with any other country.<sup>19</sup>

The limited character of the Rapallo Treaty was underlined by the central executive committee of the soviets in its resolution of May 17, 1922, wherein it said that it 'recognizes as normal for relations between the RSFSR and capitalist States only this type of treaty'.<sup>20</sup> The diplomat Joffe wrote frankly that 'whether or not this is to the liking of the German bourgeoisie and its lackeys, the Treaty of Rapallo in any case not only breaks up the united bourgeois front but also establishes a firm *rapprochement* between the working people of Russia and Germany and foreshadows a united revolutionary front. That is what guarantees its lastingness'.<sup>21</sup> The executive committee of the Comintern

spoke similarly to clear away any misconception that could arise from the treaty as regards its interest in a German revolution:

On the German side the treaty was signed by the present bourgeois-Menshevik government, but everybody understands that while the position of the bourgeois-Menshevik German government is a temporary thing, the German working class remains. The German working class will one day inevitably conquer power in their own country. Germany will become a Soviet republic. And then, when the German-Soviet treaty brings together two great Soviet republics, it will provide such unshakable foundations for real communist construction that the old and outworn Europe will not be able to withstand it for even a few years. In this sense the fate of humanity in the next few years will be determined by the successes of the German working class.<sup>22</sup>

Taking into account the experiences in relation to Turkey and Germany, Soviet participation in the Genoa and Hague conferences, the trade agreement with Britain and other connexions with capitalist States established by Soviet Russia in 1921-22, Bukharin included the following in the draft for a programme of the Communist International which he submitted to the latter's Fourth Congress, towards the end of 1922:

In view of the fact that the power cannot be seized by the proletariat simultaneously in all, or even in the most important countries, and that single proletarian States come into being—compromises on the field of foreign diplomacy by the proletarian States (commercial connexions abroad, loans, policy of concessions, participation in general conferences, and other forms of agreements, including military agreements) are possible, permissible and at times even obligatory. This policy, dictated in each case by the necessity of attaining some purpose, has, however, nothing in common with pacifism as a principle. On the contrary, the Communist International recognizes in the fullest degree the right of the proletarian republics to intervene in the interests of the oppressed and exploited.

The question of defending a native country can no longer be put in so general a form as at the beginning of the war, before a proletarian State was established. In the first place, the proletariat of all countries must aid the defence of this proletarian State, and even aid in its extension as the extension of the base of international revolution.

The question of the attitude to be adopted towards war is further complicated by the perfect admissibility in principle of the formation of blocs between proletarian States and many bourgeois States, against other bourgeois States, in accordance with the particular war in question. The question must be solved with regard to concrete expediency of purpose, and the strategy of the general struggle is to be worked out by the Communist International.<sup>23</sup>

When the suggestion was put forward that what he had said meant that Soviet Russia might sacrifice the interests of the working class in certain countries for the sake of an alliance with the bourgeoisie of these countries, Bukharin wrote in reply:

What is under discussion is my statement that a proletarian government might, under certain conditions, conclude agreements with bourgeois States, and that these temporary agreements, in so far as they are directed to serving the interests of the revolution and are carried out under the supervision of the International, must, naturally, be supported by the International.

<sup>16</sup> L. Fischer, introduction to second printing (1950) of *The Soviets in World Affairs*, vol. i, p. xv.

<sup>17</sup> Degras, *CI Documents, 1919-22*, pp. 380-1.

<sup>18</sup> K. Radek, *The International Outlook*, speech of June 15, 1923 (Communist Party of Great Britain, 1923), p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> *Izvestia*, May 18, 1922; quoted in L. Kochan, *Russia and the Weimar Republic* (1954), p. 55.

<sup>20</sup> Degras, *Soviet Documents* . . . , vol. i, p. 320.

<sup>21</sup> A. Joffe, 'The Treaty of Rapallo' in *Ot Genoi do Gaagi (From Genoa to the Hague)* (Moscow, 1925), p. 32.

<sup>22</sup> Degras, *CI Documents, 1919-22*, p. 347.

<sup>23</sup> N. Bukharin, 'Draft Programme of the Comintern', *Labour Monthly*, February 1923, p. 91.

If a revolution were to break out in Germany, and Poland struck at Germany from the East, then revolutionary Russia would probably be obliged to attack Poland.

And, in these circumstances, should 'petty-bourgeois Lithuania decide to take the opportunity offered to attack Poland for her own ends, conclusion of a military-political agreement between Russia and Lithuania would be fully admissible'.

In the course of the decades through which the social revolution might have to pass, many proletarian States might be obliged to make temporary agreements with 'oppressed or semi-oppressed bourgeois States, with weaker and threatened States against stronger and threatening ones'. Each possible instance of such an agreement would have to be carefully considered.

It goes without saying that no agreement is permissible by which workers' States could be made directly or indirectly into the tools of imperialism, tools for the oppression of other peoples. Agreements of the nature mentioned must be evaluated not in the light of the superficially-interpreted and actually non-existent interests of one workers' State, but in the light of the world proletarian movement as a whole. The Communist International is the organ to carry out such international supervision.<sup>24</sup>

Bukharin's idea of a revolution in Germany being helped by Soviet Russia, if necessary by forcing the frontiers of a hostile Poland, occurs also in the fascinating fantasy published in 1922 by the well-known economist Preobrazhensky, in the form of lectures delivered in 1970 on 'how socialism had come to Europe'. He describes how Soviet Russia's industry made big advances but came up against a brake in the backwardness and stagnation of agriculture, and the country felt increasing need of economic help from the West.

If the revolution in the West had delayed too long, this situation could have led to an aggressive socialist war by Russia against the capitalist West, with the support of the European proletariat. This did not happen, however, because at that time the proletarian revolution was already, through the working of the laws of its own internal development, knocking at the door. True, as you know, the further development of events did bring war too, but this war assumed the character not of the principal means for solving an unsolved historical problem, not the role of midwife, but the role of her technical assistant in easing the birth-pangs.

Revolution in Germany led to intervention by France and Poland, followed by counter-intervention on Russia's part. From this conflict emerged a socialist federation of Europe.

The new Soviet Europe opened a fresh page in the province of economic development. Germany's industrial technique was united with Russian agriculture, and on the territory of Europe there began rapidly to develop and consolidate a new kind of economic organism, which opened up immense possibilities and gave a mighty impetus to the development of the productive forces. And therewith Soviet Russia, which had previously outstripped Europe in the political field, now modestly took its place as an economically backward country in the rear of the advanced industrial countries of the proletarian dictatorship.<sup>25</sup>

Trotsky himself took up the general question of the

international duties of the first workers' State in an original way in an article written in late 1922 for the benefit of French communists who had found 'contradictory' the entertainment by the Soviet authorities of Herriot, the leader of the French radicals, while a communist who advocated alliance between the radicals and communists in France was expelled from the party.

We might compare our negotiations with M. Herriot, a prominent representative of the country which during five years opposed us with arms and blockaded us, to the negotiations carried on by locked-out workmen with the representatives of that section of the capitalists willing to discuss terms. Such negotiations between the workers and capitalist magnates are only an episode in the class struggle, just as any strike or lock-out is.

Comparing the position of Soviet Russia in the capitalist world with that of a communist worker employed in the Renault works, Trotsky wrote that of a man in his position 'we should demand that in his dealings with the capitalists he shall not undermine the solidarity of the working class, shall not act as a strike-breaker, but on the contrary, that he combat all forms of strike-breaking. The same is required of the Soviet Government in its dealings with the bourgeois governments'. Good relations between the Soviet Government and the radical leader in no way modified the communist line in France: 'The Comintern will as heretofore expel from its ranks every renegade who attempts to preach Left-Bloc-ism to the French workers.'<sup>26</sup>

The French invasion of the Ruhr in 1923 and the revolutionary crisis in Germany to which it gave rise turned into questions of immediate practical politics what had been until then matter for speculation. A German workers' revolution would be threatened by blockade from the West and military attack from the East, from Poland. Accordingly, the Soviet authorities accumulated large stocks of grain in Petrograd and at other points along the western frontier, ready to be rushed to Germany. Diplomatic soundings were made in the Baltic States and in Poland with a view to these countries according free transit to this grain.<sup>27</sup> Soviet policy was directed towards ensuring the victory of the German workers, peacefully if possible, by other methods if necessary. Interviewed by the *Manchester Guardian* in March, Trotsky, then still Commissar for War, insisted that there was no contradiction between the interests of the Soviet State and those of the Communist International.

Soviet Russia is interested in the growth of powerful Labour organizations and in the heightening of their class consciousness . . . The national interests of Russia coincide with the interests of her ruling class, i.e., the proletariat. But the genuine interests of the working class cannot be satisfied otherwise than by international means, i.e., by means of the establishment of a world federation of republics based on Labour and its solidarity.

War would be most undesirable from the point of view of the revolution, in that it would mean that the proletariat of Europe would take over in the midst of

<sup>24</sup> N. Bukharin, 'Letter to Suvorin', *Izvestia*, January 11, 1923; partially quoted in Kochan, *op. cit.* p. 67.

<sup>25</sup> E. Preobrazhensky, *Ot NEPa k Sotsializmu (From NEP to Socialism)* (Moscow, 1922), pp. 114, 119-20, 134ff.

<sup>26</sup> Trotsky, "'Contradictions" in Soviet Policy', November 3, 1922; translated in *Communist Review*, December 1922. Cf. Theodore Rothstein's comparison, in *Pravda*, March 12, 1924, of the task of Soviet diplomacy to that of communists in bourgeois parliaments—to expose the bourgeoisie and to educate and arouse the masses.

<sup>27</sup> Degras, *Soviet Documents*, vol. i, p. 421.



## Ghana's Struggle

*The New Ghana*, by J. G. Amamoo (Pan Books, 2s. 6d.)

THIS book is an interesting account of the Gold Coast (Ghana) struggle for freedom and some of the problems that are facing that country today.

Up till 1947 there was no strong national movement that could struggle effectively against British imperialism. The native petty bourgeoisie and the chiefs were too weak to organize the people for such a struggle. But the arrival of Dr Nkrumah from England in 1947 and of the ex-servicemen who had served in the Burma war and had seen their Asian brothers fighting for freedom, changed the situation overnight.

Having been associated with the British Labour movement and knowing the power of the working class, Dr Nkrumah lost no time in mobilizing the trade unions, the poor farmers, the youth and the rest of the working community for the national struggle. It was then that the imperialists became panicky.

Bullets and jails could no longer hold back the masses whom Dr Nkrumah had mobilized. Nor could the chiefs, through whom the imperialists used to rule the colony, retard the struggle. The Burma war veterans and Dr Nkrumah had broken the traditional power of the chiefs.

A display of trigger-happiness by the imperialist police force began. The first blood had been shed for independence. When the workers, poor farmers, youth and ex-servicemen saw their comrades' blood flowing in the streets, as a result of cold-blooded massacre by the imperialists, they took up arms in self-defence. The railway workers struck. The rest of the toiling masses downed tools. Imperialist big business was paralysed by a general strike. The masses, once mobilized, are mightier than any weapon the imperialists have. Fighting was the only way left—freedom could not come by having cocktail parties with the viceroys as the chiefs and the native capitalists did.

One sad side of the story was that the Labour Government was doing the dirty work for the imperialists, by shooting and jailing freedom fighters. But the more they shot, the

more determined the fighters were. The struggle was assuming a class character. The workers started to fight the native petty bourgeoisie as well. The author does not seem to like this fact.

The imperialists grew more panicky. Their capital was now in danger. They could no longer afford to postpone the birth of a nation indefinitely. 'Changes must be made or revolution would result', says the author. To avoid losing everything the Tory imperialist Government made concessions and granted political independence to Ghana in March 1957.

The author in his concluding chapters tries to make his readers believe that it is only by inviting foreign capitalists and allowing them to exploit the Ghana working class that the country can be industrialized and become a paradise. But the imperialist powers are not interested in developing colonial, semi-colonial or backward countries. Their main interest is to keep these countries as backward as they are, to get raw materials out of them, to serve their home industries. Colonial and semi-colonial countries are markets for the imperialists where their commodities are disposed of at a high rate of profit. India, Burma, Ceylon and the Middle East countries are good examples. The turning down of the Aswan dam and the Volta River project by British and American imperialism and Canada should be a good lesson to Prime Minister Nkrumah and his CPP Government and to all those who cling to the imperialist powers for aid.

By now the author must be having second thoughts about his reference to Mr Habib Bourguiba, President of Tunisia. For the author would like to see Ghana and British imperialism have the same kind of relationship that Tunisia has with French imperialism. Today we see the disastrous effects of Bourguiba's policy of being pro-French and pro-imperialist. Poor peasants and their families are being murdered in North Africa by the bombs and bullets of French imperialism. If Ghana and Dr Nkrumah follow in the footsteps of Bourguiba, British imperialists will only be too pleased to follow in the footsteps of their French brothers should a similar situation arise in West Africa.

The author clearly shows in the book that Dr Nkrumah is not a socialist. 'Although the Government claims to be socialist, it does not in the foreseeable future contemplate any nationalization programme.' On another page he puts it

like this: 'It has no intention of nationalizing foreign concerns.'

One need not ask whether Prime Minister Nkrumah can continue the struggle against imperialist big business in Ghana and for the emancipation of Ghana's working class and poor farmers. As far as the emancipation of the working class is concerned, it is only when the working class itself, small though it may be, with the backing of the poor farmers, proves able to carry forward the fight for the final overthrow of imperialism and native capitalism that freedom will be really won.

EKIOMENESEKENIGHA

## First International

**The First International**, Minutes of the Hague Congress of 1872 with related documents. Edited and translated by Hans Gerth (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, \$6)

BY 1872 the First International was nearing the end of its effective life. Founded in 1864 and guided, from its inception, by Marx, the International had scored spectacular successes in co-ordinating international trade union support for strikes. It had a decisive influence on the early socialist parties in France, Germany, Belgium and other European countries and had ramifications, though slight ones, in Algiers and India. The debate conducted by the General Council on the relation between wages and the cost of living, the discussions at conferences and congresses of the International on the relation between socialism and national liberation movements and on the effects of machinery on the working class, were of decisive importance in the development of socialist thought. By 1872, however, the followers of Bakunin had secured control of a number of national sections, chiefly in the Latin countries, while a strong group within the English section was acting in alliance with them. It seemed only too likely that Marx would lose control of the International and that Bakunin would set his stamp on the Labour movement at a formative stage in its development. To avoid this, Marx and Engels secretly prepared a coup for the Hague Congress, at which the anarchists were still in a minority, and a decision was taken to remove the General Council to New York, where Marx's followers, headed by Sorge, could be relied on to keep it out of Bakunin's control. Though the decision killed the First International, it probably ensured that the Second, founded in 1889, was, nominally at least, Marxist in outlook.

The minutes of the decisive Hague Congress, written by Sorge, are here published for the first time, together with Sorge's report to the North American Federation of the International, and Maltman Barry's reports in the *Standard*, published as a pamphlet in 1873. Though the minutes add nothing of substance to Barry's report, which was already known, they at least confirm its accuracy, and in publishing them Hans Gerth has performed a service to Labour history.

It is unfortunate, however, that the editor does not seem to have looked at many of the English or even American sources of the history of the International. As a result there are some curious errors in biographical glossary, which detract from its value. George Odger was at no time 'general secretary' of the International (p. 304). Maltman Barry was not 'the one English delegate to vote with Marx and Engels for transferring the seat of the International to New York' (p. 298), since the report of Barry shows, five pages earlier, that George Sexton also voted for the change. There was no 'London Congress of the International in 1865' (p. 306), but a conference with no policy-making powers, a point of substance made by Marx in his subsequent controversy with Howell. Nor was Marx's famous defence of the Paris Commune, 'The Civil War in France', published 'without prior endorsement of the General Council' (p. 302), as an examination of the General Council's minutes shows. Though the

original of the minutes, in Amsterdam, may not have been available to the editor, they have been published in the valuable Russian book, 'The First International in the Days of the Paris Commune'.

These errors are the editor's own. He repeats a common fallacy when he writes that British trade unionists 'were in a hurry to withdraw from the International' after Marx's defence of the Commune appeared (Introduction, p. xii). Two trade unionists, Odger and Lucraft, resigned for special reasons—Odger because of his association with Bradlaugh's Republican campaign, Lucraft because of his recent election to the London School Board. Not a single trade union disaffiliated from the International on account of the Commune, and the powerful Amalgamated Society of Engineers had no qualms about using the machinery of the International, three months after the fall of the Commune, in support of the nine-hour strike on the north-east coast.

Because of the two documents published for the first time the book is valuable for specialists. The notes and comments, however, should be treated with reserve.

HENRY COLLINS

## Shock for Imperialists

**Germany and the Revolution in Russia, 1915-1918.** Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Ministry. Edited by Z. A. B. Zeman. (Oxford University Press, 25s.)

'THE Bolshevik movement could never have attained the scale or the influence which it has today without our continual support.' Thus wrote State Secretary Kuhlmann in a memorandum to the High Command of the Kaiser's Army on September 29, 1917.

The German imperialists had, indeed, rendered considerable services to the Bolsheviks. Not only had they arranged the return of Lenin and Zinoviev to Russia from Switzerland across German territory; they had bought up large quantities of Bolshevik publications, through their agents in Stockholm. In order to use them for propaganda at the front, they had reproduced a pamphlet of Bukharin's on rice-paper and smuggled it into Russia, and in many other ways had given a helping hand to a movement which interested them because it was fighting against Russia's participation in the imperialist war.

Reading these documents (extracted from the German Foreign Ministry archives captured in 1945) one recalls how the Stalinists have taken the use sometimes made by fascists and similar sources of Trotsky's criticisms of the Soviet State and its policies as proof that 'Trotskyists are agents of fascism and reaction'. Thus, for example, Klugmann wrote in his 'From Trotsky to Tito' (1951):

'Trotsky's writings and those of his followers were freely published in the middle and late thirties by the Hearst Press in America . . . Despite their ultra-revolutionary phrases the Trotskyites always found a welcome in the papers of the capitalist Press lords.'

The Kaiser's officials seem to have convinced themselves that the Bolsheviks really were their 'agents', and their documents show comical indignation when they started to appreciate the true character of the young Soviet Government. Their awakening began in December 1917, when the Bolsheviks tried to get peace negotiations transferred from German-occupied to neutral territory. Then the revolutionary appeals addressed to the German soldiers gave a shock to those who had fancied themselves as pulling the strings in Petrograd. By June 1918 a worried Ludendorff was calling for 'strong and ruthless treatment'!

At the end of the road embarked upon by the self-confident sorcerer's apprentices of German imperialism who in 1915 began assigning funds for the encouragement of revolution in Russia lay the German revolution of November 1918. **B.P.**

## Stalin's Fulminations

**Stalin's Correspondence with Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt and Truman, 1941-45.** Two volumes bound as one. (Lawrence and Wishart, 25s.)

AN editorial note in volume i of this book gives the text of one of Churchill's warnings to Stalin about German war preparations against Russia in the spring of 1941:

'I have sure information from a trusted agent that when the Germans thought they had got Yugoslavia in the net, that is to say after March 20, they began to move three out of five Panzer divisions from Rumania to southern Poland. The moment they heard of the Serbian revolution this movement was countermanded. Your Excellency will readily appreciate the significance of these facts' (April 19).

Stalin ignored this and other warnings, and in his zeal to demonstrate friendliness to Hitler even expelled, at the beginning of May, the Ambassador of Yugoslavia—an action which, however, he did not see fit to publish in the Soviet Press. His panic reaction when the German onslaught fell is reflected in a message to Churchill on September 13, given on page 24 of volume i:

'It seems to me that Britain could safely land 25-30 divisions at Archangel or ship them to the southern areas of the USSR via Iran for military co-operation with the Soviet troops on Soviet soil in the same way as was done during the last war in France. That would be a great help.'

This collection of diplomatic documents of the second world war confirms the impression given by previous ones that Stalin offered no objection to the Allies' policy of basing themselves politically on Vichyite and similar elements in western Europe. On December 14, 1942, he wrote to Roosevelt: 'With reference to the rumours about the Soviet attitude to the use of Darlan and people like him, I should like to tell you that as I and my colleagues see it, Eisenhower's policy towards Darlan, Boisson, Giraud and the others is absolutely sound' (ii, p. 44). His easy-going attitude regarding France and Italy contrasts with his rigidity on Polish questions.

The Soviet editors, in reproducing Stalin's fulminations regarding the Katyn 'calumny', omit to explain to their readers why the Polish authorities had good reason to suspect foul play on the Soviet side. The Soviet Army paper *Krasnaya Zvezda* had reported on September 17, 1940, that about 10,000 Polish officers were in captivity in Russia. When the release of these officers was decreed in August 1941, only 2,000 turned up—and none of them was from the big group of camps in the Katyn area. The Soviet spokesmen were never able to explain what had happened to the missing 8,000 officers. Significantly, though the massacre of the Polish officers at Katyn was included in the original indictment of the Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg, it was omitted from the preamble to the sentence on them.



The restriction of the scope of these volumes to documents actually signed by Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill or the other heads of governments limits its value as an account of what happened in a number of critical episodes, and this is nowhere more striking than in the treatment of the Warsaw uprising. Stalin wrote to Churchill on August 16, 1944, that 'Soviet headquarters have decided that they must dissociate themselves from the Warsaw adventure' (i, p. 254). Just what this meant is clear, however, only if one knows what Vyshinsky communicated, on his master's behalf, to Ambassadors Harriman and Clark-Kerr on the very same day. They had asked for shuttle-flight facilities to be granted to British and American planes bringing supplies to Warsaw from Italy, similar to the facilities accorded to such planes for bombing the Ploesti oilfield. Vyshinsky's reply ran:

'The Soviet Government cannot, of course, object to British or American aircraft dropping arms in the region of Warsaw, since this is an American and British affair. But they decidedly object to American or British aircraft, after dropping arms in the region of Warsaw, landing on Soviet territory, since the Soviet Government do not wish to associate themselves either directly or indirectly with the adventure in Warsaw' (quoted in W. S. Churchill, 'The Second World War: VI, Triumph and Tragedy' (1954), pp. 117-18).

Churchill wrote to Stalin on April 28, 1945: 'I recognize the consideration which you gave me when we had to intervene with heavy armed forces to quell the EAM-ELAS attack upon the centre of government in Athens' (i p. 342). Earlier, in January-February 1944, he had made plain his pleasure at the substitution of a new, 'national' anthem for the 'International' (i, pp. 180, 185, 199), and the Soviet betrayal of Greece was, of course, merely a rather starker revelation of what that symbolic change meant than the previous Soviet endorsements of Darlan, Badoglio etc. To Roosevelt and his advisers, Stalin at Teheran had, indeed, 'seemed to treat the cause and prospects of international revolution rather lightly, suggesting that the others need not fear it . . .' (H. Feis, 'Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin' (1957), p. 275).

Those of us who, during the war, thought that Stalin's policy, though disquieting in some respects, was justified by 'realism', may well feel more than doubtful on that point now, in the light of the last twelve years and the present world situation. In supporting a policy which was to have prevented (as we supposed) all this, were we not in fact unknowingly making certain it would come about? And is it not time to re-examine radically the foundations of our thought and conduct in 1941-45?

BRIAN PEARCE

## Valuable Signposts

**The Economics of Communist Eastern Europe**, by Nicolas Spulber. (Chapman and Hall, 100s.)

FOR anyone wishing to make an assessment of the economic development of eastern Europe since 1945 this work provides an indispensable 'point of departure', as its author describes it. It is undoubtedly the fullest factual and statistical study of the area to be found between two covers in English and a testimony to the industry, if not to the insight, of Professor Spulber. He is clearly unsympathetic both to planning and to the régimes of eastern Europe, but his personal observations are kept to a minimum and his speculations are, on the whole, extremely cautious. This makes his book one which can be of value to those socialists who wish to understand the implications of Stalinist economic policy. It is true that Spulber identifies Marxism with the parody of it current in the USSR and the 'people's democracies' and that he takes as inherent defects of planning what are merely excrescences and blunders grafted on to it in the Stalin era; and it is necessary to reinterpret much of his material before it can be of use for this purpose.

An important feature of this book is the mass of statistical material which it contains, conveniently laid out in tables and charts. The sources used are those of the governments concerned; these sources, with all their defects, can, with careful checking and analysis, yield fairly reliable evidence about the structure and development of the economies. There are, however, important gaps in the official statistics: no balance of payments figures for the years after 1948 and no breakdown of national income figures by type and amount of personal income, for example. No doubt security considerations account for the former: the latter serves to disguise the disproportionate share of national income which has found its way into the pockets of the privileged strata.

The region which this book examines—it includes Yugo-

slavia, but not east Germany and Albania—was, before 1939, with the exception of Czechoslovakia, one of the most backward in Europe. It was predominantly agricultural, had a rapid rate of population increase, little experience of industrial development and a low average income per head. It was to a large extent under the control of foreign capital; as Spulber admits: 'The foreign trade of the region as a whole was basically geared to the industrial countries of Europe' (p. 9). Not only did foreign capital control virtually the entire banking and credit system, but it was predominant in the larger enterprises in industry, mining and petroleum. While having a client status in relation to foreign interests, the ruling classes of the area were among the most arrogant, short-sighted, greedy, callous, cowardly and corrupt to be found anywhere in the world. Statesmen, journalists, officials, even monarchs were for sale to the highest bidder. Who can doubt that this area would have remained a fief of foreign capital, economically retarded and exploited as it had been for centuries, if such people had remained in control? There was a necessary cleansing process to be performed: the way it was done, the part played by the Red Army and the Stalinist parties, the holding in check of popular initiative and the installation of a tame bureaucracy, subjugated by purge and pressure of all kinds, account for the peculiar deformations of the new régimes that emerged. But the extent of the transformation, and its historical import, cannot be written down as Spulber appears to do: his relegation of the social and political context to a few lines, or a footnote here or there, makes many of the economic changes appear meaningless.

One does not have to be an apologist for the 'people's democracies' to recognize the significance of what has been happening in eastern Europe. Indeed, the point is that thanks to wrong policies, stupidities, blunders and a slavish application of Russian policies and methods the industrialization of the area—the only way in which its people could be released from their secular backwardness and semi-barbarism—has involved avoidable suffering, the pointless sacrifice of many fine people and the identification of Marxism and socialism with practices fundamentally alien to them. But this industrialization necessarily involved a social revolution to get rid of the old ruling class and could only be undertaken within the framework of a planned, nationalized economy. All this is not to be found in Spulber's book—in fact it is diametrically opposed to his own preconceptions.

What Spulber does, however, as he 'objectively' unfolds and interprets the course of development, is to provide evidence for a critique of 'Stalinist' policies—identified by him as socialism, planning or Marxism. And it is for this purpose that his book is especially valuable.

A fundamental question, raised at a number of points, which clearly shows the conscious adoption of a pattern derived from the USSR, is that of the priority allotted to the building up of heavy industry on the model of the Russian five-year plans. Now, given the conditions of eastern Europe, and the fact that little or no external aid could be expected, capital for economic development had to come from domestic resources. The greater the emphasis on heavy industry, the larger the proportion of current output which had to be devoted to investment, the less there was available for increasing (or even maintaining) levels of consumption. In the early stages of industrialization it is inescapable that the latter will be held in check: a socialist policy should aim at winning voluntary acceptance for this necessity at the same time as it shows a realistic grasp of the fact that this is conditional upon providing material inducements in the shape of a flow of consumption goods. Obviously a government with an overwhelming apparatus of coercion could, for a certain period, impose a high rate of accumulation and depress standards of consumption—but only at the price of alienating a large and growing proportion of the population. In eastern Europe when this process was

being carried forward the people had already borne years of war, occupation, economic disorganization and shortages: there were limits to the further sacrifices which they could be expected to bear. A correct policy would, therefore, have aimed at keeping sacrifices to a minimum, consistent with providing the industrial basis for a considerable improvement in living standards in the future.

The policy actually pursued was a replica of that carried out in the USSR. After the short, two or three year plans of reconstruction, five-year industrial plans were embarked upon which gave overwhelming priority to heavy industry, particularly iron and steel and engineering. Obviously these industries had to have special attention if industrialization was to proceed. But this was not all. Each country 'aimed at all-round development, each stressed the necessity of producing within the economy every type of goods, even those whose cost had previously appeared prohibitive'. The policy of providing the basis for industrialization was therefore pursued beyond all reason and within the economically irrelevant boundaries of the national States. Every set of bureaucrats had to have their 'own' steel works or heavy engineering complex, their Nowa Huta or Sztalinvaros, and the economy of each country was screwed up to the attainment of objectives which both common sense and socialist theory should have shown to be irrational.

We therefore have the spectacle of each country pursuing its own objective of building up heavy industry with scarcely any co-ordination of the national plans. The programme of 'socialism in one country' was applied to a number of small countries, most of them backward, and with resources quite unsuited for an all-round development of industry, particularly for a complete heavy industry. Thus, in Spulber's words: 'Each country set itself the task of developing a complete engineering industry, almost regardless of cost and of the duplication of efforts involved' (p. 330). This type of development 'involved abandoning international specialization and lowering the efficiency of investment' (p. 304—Spulber's emphasis). Instead of the area being conceived as a whole, in conjunction with the USSR, and in relation to the opportunities of trade with the rest of the world, each set of planners sought to work out their own salvation. Those of Rumania and Hungary were further burdened in the early post-war years by the need to pay reparations to the USSR! It is true that some division of labour was imposed by circumstances—primarily the distribution of natural resources, which made Poland an exporter of coal, Rumania of oil, Czechoslovakia of manufactured goods etc. Since 1956 more conscious, but still limited, efforts at co-ordination and co-operation have been made, because of the break-down of the old methods. But the damage had been done: one-sided development, massive misdirection of resources, unnecessary sacrifice of consumer goods production, the wasting away of popular goodwill and nightmare years of penury and purge. Far from discrediting planning, however, as seems to be in Spulber's intention, this reflects the negation of planning, the fanatical pursuit of the form while sacrificing the essence, which comprises the sum total of Stalinism in this field.

Why was such a policy adopted? By his self-denying unwillingness to consider the political implications Spulber can give no clear answer. It all seems perverse, unreal, contributing to some omniscient purpose. No doubt he is right in declaring that it was not 'simple mimicry' of the Soviet pattern. That doesn't make it any the less mimicry of a kind: but the process by which it was reached was complex and would take too long to investigate here. Certainly the thinking of the political and economic leaders must have been rigidly circumscribed by Stalinist orthodoxy in these matters; but it included a large element of sycophancy and servility as well as mere dogmatism.

In the closing pages of the book, where this problem is reverted to under the heading of 'autonomy v. integration',

Spulber puts up a fuller but still inadequate explanation. In the course of the plans each of these countries became increasingly closely linked by trade with the USSR—a trend which was, of course, reinforced by the cold war, and especially by the Battle Act restrictions on 'strategic' exports from western sources. This focused attention on the 'pre-eminence' of the USSR. Indeed, since the area as a whole did not constitute an integrated economic unit—and the policies pursued had been working in the contrary direction—each State was highly dependent on the Soviet market and on Soviet supplies of key materials, such as iron ore and some machinery. What Spulber does not make clear is that as a consequence this underlined the political dependence of each government, and its servility to Soviet policy. To a considerable degree this must have been deliberate—especially after the Yugoslav break-out. A greater degree of economic co-operation within the area—which could have done much to ease and speed the process of industrialization—would have weakened the ties which bound each ruling clique to the Soviet Union, and enabled it to play an independent role in relation both to the West and to Russian demands. This was not to the liking of the Soviet rulers. And the vigorous efforts to stamp out 'Titoism' in the trials of Rajk, Kostov and Slansky show also that the rules of economic policy as made in Moscow were not followed without qualm by responsible leaders in the satellites.

A major weakness of the east European economies was the failure of agricultural output to rise as planned, which added a serious food shortage to the general crisis and overstrain which produced the changes in 1953 known as the 'new course'. This followed soon after the death of Stalin and took place together with the Malenkov line of increased emphasis on consumers' goods. It also coincided with the admission by Khrushchev of the shortcomings of kolkhoz agriculture in the USSR itself. In eastern Europe we find in the agrarian measures the same slavish adherence to Stalinist practice as in the case of industry. No fundamental attempt was made to adapt the policy of collectivization to the nature and needs of the agrarian system in each country, which could vary from the high concentration of land ownership in Hungary to its quite wide distribution in Bulgaria.

A series of 'mistakes' was made in agricultural policy, mostly directly traceable to an inflexible adherence to the Soviet model, notably over-haste in establishing collective farms, which could not be supplied with machinery of suitable quality, and measures against 'kulaks' which drove them off the land without providing for satisfactory alternative methods of cultivation. The 'new course' represented a slowing down, or even reversal, of the policies of previous years. But the change was not prolonged; within a year or two, and accompanying the rejection of the 'Malenkov' policy in the USSR, its exponents were denounced as 'Right deviationists' as, for instance, Imre Nagy. The return to the old policies in an unadulterated form was, however, out of the question. It was generally admitted that collectivization would have to be spread over a longer period than had been at first envisaged. The alacrity with which most of the Polish kolkhozes were dissolved in October 1956 shows how they had failed to strike deep roots among the peasantry, largely owing to the ham-handedness which marked their history. Agrarian policy as a whole was a conspicuous failure, not only because of bureaucratic methods, but because of the allocation of insufficient investment to this sector, which was, of course, tied up with the general unbalance associated with the emphasis on heavy industry at any price. The equipment in the collective farms, as well as in agriculture as a whole, was inadequate in amount and frequently worn out. Productivity often lagged behind pre-war and even total outputs at the end of the five-year plans were 'for all countries except Rumania . . . below the ones scheduled for 1948-9 at the end of the reconstruction period' (p. 354—Spulber's emphasis).

The acceptance of Stalinist methods at the level of the

enterprise produced no better results. Piece-work payments, wages differentials and Stakhanovism were introduced; 'socialist emulation' was organized by the trade unions, which were, in effect, part of the State apparatus; 'one-man management'—one of Stalin's 'contributions' to socialist theory—installed the leadership principle in the factory. The continuous Press criticism of 'bureaucratism' failed to get to the heart of the matter, which was the failure to elicit the full co-operation and support of the workers. Defence expenditure still further burdened the national income. The struggle to exist assumed in many cases a desperate and savage form. There were general indifference and 'constant recrimination against increased waste of social property, widespread theft, and depletion of resources. Innumerable decrees have imposed severe sentences for such "offences", but they have continued to grow and multiply' (p. 345). Spulber's material on consumption levels is not very full and his assertion that it was curtailed during the five-year plan rests primarily upon the ratio of consumption to the national income. Considerably more information is required on this aspect, and it seems clear, from Poland and Hungary, that resentment at the privileged scale of living of the bureaucracy has been a factor as important as the low or declining absolute level of a large section of the population.

Recognition of the shortcomings of Stalinist factory policy produced the Yugoslav innovations of 'decentralized management' and elected workers' councils, which subsequently influenced developments in neighbouring countries. But such devices, when introduced from above, are merely fig-leaves to cover the naked irreconcilability of the interests of the ruling clique with those of the mass of the workers. Only when solidly based upon the active support of the workers themselves, growing out of their aspirations and needs, can they provide the way out.

All in all, the experience of the countries surveyed in Professor Spulber's study helps us very much to understand the problems of countries undergoing economic development. This experience should be analysed more fully by socialists. Approaching the material from a contrasting starting point, Spulber sets up some valuable signposts, although they may at times bear misleading inscriptions. Let us hope that we shall some day have an equally thorough job performed from a socialist standpoint.

TOM KEMP

## Enjoying Novels

*The Epic Strain in the English Novel*, by E. M. W. Tillyard.  
(Chatto and Windus, 21s.)

READING books about books is a specialized taste. Most are content to read novels for entertainment—for the age-old delight in a story, or for the newer, subtler pleasures of psychological reflection—and not to classify or correlate. Thus to most readers elaborate and lengthy works of literary criticism seem as little relevant to their own pleasure in reading as statistical breakdowns of the percentage of men under forty north of the Trent using cut-throat razors are to their own shaving habits.

There are, nevertheless, some people who like to analyse the sources and modes of their enjoyment. Moreover, clear and level-headed exposition by critics is of much benefit to writers. Dr Tillyard's engrossing book is even more valuable for its sustained note of cool calm understanding than for its interesting thesis. Even those who reject his definition of epic should agree that he keeps scrupulously within his terms of reference and refrains from reading his own opinions into the works he judges.

Astonishingly, he vividly restores one's sympathetic interest

in Scott. More remarkable still, he has made me willing to take up Conrad once more, after a lifetime of 'just can't read him'. His appraisals of 'Robinson Crusoe' and 'An Old Wives' Tale' are crisp, lucid and eminently satisfying. I have no quarrel with his contention that epic must express the 'unconscious metaphysic' of a considerable mass of people. It is an illuminating and resilient definition, and when, in working from it, he accepts 'Crusoe', 'Waverley', 'Rob Roy', 'Heart of Midlothian', 'Nostromo' and 'Old Wives' Tale', but rejects 'Tom Jones', 'Ivanhoe', 'Vanity Fair' and 'Middlemarch', he makes his case most convincingly.

Yet—like almost everyone who ventures to tangle with 'Ulysses'—he finally succumbs to confusion, and quite fails to see how his own definition applies to Joyce's misinterpreted, over-analysed, under-comprehended work. He declares against 'Ulysses' as an epic: yet the 'unconscious metaphysic' of the Irish people permeates every page. He doubts 'whether the sense of exile or failure to fit in can be the substance of an epic': yet on his own definition, an Irish epic could hardly be anything else, since that precise sense very largely is the Irish 'unconscious metaphysic'.

Admitting that Joyce pitilessly mauls a bogus kind of Irish patriotism, he cannot see that here speaks the profoundest instinct of the Irish people. Joyce's sardonic love-hate is not individual, but very highly characteristic and symptomatic of his country as a whole. Dr Tillyard ought to have studied at least something of the Irish 'unconscious metaphysic' before committing himself. He is the victim of his own unconscious supposition that the Irish are merely English-gone-funny—west Britons, in fact; but if you persist in supposing the caviar to be blackcurrant jam, you will never appreciate it.

'Ulysses' has established no grip on the minds of Irishmen at large because they have never been allowed to hear of its existence save as a remote, incomprehensible and obscene work. In any case, Dr Tillyard elsewhere does not contend that an epic must be read by the mass, but that it must express them—whether they 'like' it or not.

In short, he does not know what 'Ulysses' is all about—which is, simply enough, the entire social and moral chaos which Perpetual Coercion Acts, 'Hell is not hot enough' and the fiendish glee with which Parnell was 'downed' had produced for almost the whole of Joyce's generation in Ireland. Alas, Dr Tillyard is more at home with the mental climate of England three centuries ago than that of Ireland fifty years ago.

None the less, chapter viii apart, this is a stimulating and remarkably readable book.

S.F.H.

## Victorian Historian

**A Victorian Eminence.** The Life and Works of Henry Thomas Buckle, by Giles St Aubyn (Barrie Books, 25s.)

BUCKLE'S famous work, the 'History of Civilization in England', is read by scarcely anyone today, and there must be many people for whom the title merely recalls the dusty corner of some second-hand bookshop. But in its day—it was published 1857-61—it had an instant and resounding success. For Buckle, unreadable though he may seem today, was a great popularizer, and the ideas he interpreted and synthesized were of great interest to the general reading public of the 'High-Victorian' era.

'I hope', he wrote, 'to accomplish for the history of man something equivalent, or at all events analogous, to what has been effected by other inquirers for the different branches of natural science.'

Needless to say, his belief in the validity of a scientific approach to the history of society gave Buckle some insight into historical processes, but the crudeness of his materialism and his vulgar intellectual arrogance resulted in many naïve oversimplifications. His book naturally had an enormous

appeal for the many who in 1860 were imbued with the same enthusiasm for science and progress, for the triumph of machinery celebrated with such unrefined vigour in the Great Exhibition of 1851. Although Buckle easily reconciled all this with belief in God, his book was furiously attacked by conservative thinkers. The present biography is well written and provides not only an interesting account of Buckle's life but an excellent summary of his views and a very fair assessment of the man and his work. It is an important book for any student of Victorian England.

K. R. ANDREWS

## Limelit Decade

**The Sweet and Twenties**, by Beverley Nichols. (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 21s.)

THIS book does exactly what it sets out to do. 'This is not intended as a serious history of a decade', the author tells us, 'but rather as an album of snapshots and memories which may offer, at least to the middle-aged, some moments of nostalgic entertainment.' Few of the writers and painters who made the decade illustrious and of the politicians who served or betrayed the nation make an appearance, though, as Mr Nichols admits, 'even in so slight a compilation, seriousness "creeps in"'. He is right in saying that 'the mood of the twenties as far as war was concerned was buoyant with hope'. Most people believed fervently in the League of Nations and many of the progressive young were convinced that the Labour Party would come to power and give it full support. As the author bitterly observes, 'we were destined to be duped, every man Jack of us'. He finds the fundamental difference 'between the average intelligent young man of the twenties and his modern counterpart' as a difference of faith, 'not of religious faith but of faith in the civilized world at large and the possibility of its ever making sense'.

Sheer relief at survival, combined with confidence in the dawn of a brave new world, led to various forms of exuberance on the part of the would-be U-class young and an outburst of social activity by a section of the middle-aged and elderly. Publicity, of the kind dispensed in the gossip columns of the Sunday papers, became the drug most in demand by frustrated socialites. In this addiction many of them outdid stage folk, for whom limelight is an occupational necessity.

It is not surprising that the youthful Beverley Nichols found many imposing front doors flung open to receive him when he joined the staff of the Weekly Dispatch under the editorship of Bernard Falk. He was good-looking, clever and accomplished, with an excellent Oxford background—he had been editor of *Isis* and president of the Union—and his success was, from the first, assured. In the limelit world of café society as well as in more exalted circles, he 'knew everyone and went everywhere' and the stories he tells of his friends are always amusing and always adroitly handled. One of the best concerns an encounter between Noel Coward and Gertrude Lawrence. The latter, after her first trip to the Riviera, came back 'bronzed and delicious . . . but also rather grand. When she saw Noel there were stories of parties and yachts and a great many titles. Noel listened in silence, looking more and more Chinese. Then Gertie, with an elaborate sigh, observed: "Of course, I shall be going again in the winter. I really don't think I could stand the English winter." Noel nodded. "No, darling, I don't think you could. Not after all those years in sun-drenched Peckham."

Leading figures in Mr Nichols's portrait gallery are Edith and Sir Osbert Sitwell—'all of us are devoted to Osbert'—Emerald (Lady) Cunard, Sybil (Lady) Colefax, Maggie (Mrs Ronald) Greville, Syrie (Mrs) Maugham, Melba, Lady Diana Cooper, Elsie de Woolf (Lady Mendil) and that remarkable eccentric, Gerald (Lord) Berners. Usually he writes kindly of his friends and acquaintances but occasionally he dips his pen in acid. James Agate and Virginia Woolf, Father Conrad

Noel and the Dean of Canterbury meet with varying degrees of disapproval, while of Lord Curzon he says that he was 'of course a very common man' adding that 'if he had any of the instincts of a gentleman he was at pains to conceal them'. Of his brilliant contemporaries Ivor Novello, Noel Coward and Cecil Beaton, he talks with insight and affection and he has much that is new and interesting to tell us about such half-forgotten characters as Leslie Hore-Belisha, Elinor Glyn, Pavlova and Teddie Gerrard. In more serious mood, his account of his interview with the father of Edith Thompson who, with her lover Frederick Bywaters, was hanged for murder, is simple and moving. The fact that Mr Nichols is a hater of cruelty, a pacifist and a humanist can be deduced from these pages though it is not unduly stressed.

As a piece of writing, with its artful transitions, digressions and time-shifts, 'The Sweet and Twenties' is, as might be expected, a highly-skilled professional job.

DOUGLAS GOLDRING

## Behind the Sputnik

Soviet Education for Science and Technology, by A. G. Korol (Chapman and Hall, 68s.)

THE first Soviet sputnik came as a profound shock to the American people. For two generations they had been told incessantly that the USA stood head and shoulders above the rest of the world in scientific knowledge and technical know-how. No human activity on this planet could, they were informed, be better performed than by the Americans. Moreover the American people believed this comfortable illusion. No one was more surprised, therefore, than the American man in the street when Russia strikingly disillusioned him by sending up the first sputnik—to be followed by a series of American flopniks. The American public, however, was sufficiently educated in science to know what sputnik I meant to them. They had fought two major world wars without a single bomb falling on their cities. Now they knew for certain that in the event of a third world war Russia could accurately drop large H-bombs on any target in the USA which had been 'named' for obliteration. America jumped overnight from being a comfortable strategic base to being in the front line—and this one fact is today playing a very important role in international affairs.



How had this 'terrifying' change come about? What secret weapon had enabled the Russians to race ahead in rocketry, nuclear energy and even automated production? A number of leading American scientists, even before the sputniks, had already concerned themselves with studying the rapid advance of technology in Russia and had begun to discover their answer—Russian superiority in technical and scientific education. And in part, of course, this is the right answer. For, in spite of numerous distortions of educational methods and principles which the present bureaucratic rulers of the Kremlin have foisted on Soviet education, the Russian educational system remains one of the most powerful and progressive achievements of the October Revolution. By this means, the culturally backward Russian workers and peasants of tsarist times have been replaced by workers and peasants with relatively advanced scientific and technical training. By and large, in spite of its defects and shortcomings, the present-day Russian educational system is the most advanced in the world.

In the USSR for example the child is taught, from his earliest years, to look directly at the world in which he lives without being trammelled with reactionary, religious and idealist notions concerning natural processes. He gains an idea of the progressive, humanist role which science can play in a rational society. In addition (though this is where

Stalinist distortions play most havoc) in Russia all children are regarded as eminently educable. Funds have been made available on a lavish scale for advanced secondary technical and scientific training with the result that today there are pro rata twenty times more advanced science students in Russia than in advanced, 'liberal' Britain.

Korol has done a great service to educationists in producing this comprehensive book about Soviet educational methods and organization. Though he is sometimes ponderous he is always factual. One gathers that Korol is not a socialist and is even hostile to communism. This only serves to make his case more impressive—though it prevents him, finally, from understanding WHY the Russians take education so seriously in comparison with the 'advanced' West. Korol's survey quite properly pays more attention to higher education than to the earliest years—but he does not make the mistake of regarding the education of the seven-year-old as of no importance for technological education. This book should be read by every progressive teacher in schools and universities.

JOHN DANIELS

## In Rakosi's Jail

Seven Years Solitary, by Edith Bone (Hamish Hamilton, 18s.)

DR EDITH BONE was released, after seven years imprisonment, in the course of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. She was trained as a doctor in the Budapest school of medicine and in 1919 went to Russia as a member of a Hungarian Red Cross delegation. She held some form of Left socialist views before she left Hungary, but was a member of no party. In Russia, she drifted into a job, found for her by Victor Serge, as English editor of the newly-founded journal Communist International. For many years after this she led the life of an official of the Comintern or its sections, working for it in many countries of Europe. In the Stalinized party machine she met many such 'model Stalins' as Rakosi ('Bela Kun's office boy'). If we can believe that her memories of this period are not too highly coloured by what she later suffered at their hands (and I think we can) she was always somewhat 'unreliable', as Communist Party bureaucrats usually describe party members who have either backbone or grey matter. In 1933 she came to England and acquired British nationality by marriage. In 1939, mainly because of the Stalin-Hitler pact, she 'dropped out' of the British Communist Party, for which she had been working since her arrival in Britain. She rejoined in 1942 and became an active propagandist for the British Soviet Society. In 1949 she left for Hungary. It is important to know Dr Bone's background if we are to understand her extraordinary psychological toughness.

In 1949 she was invited to Hungary to translate English scientific textbooks into Hungarian. At the same time, J. R. Campbell, editor of the Daily Worker, gave her credentials as Daily Worker Special Correspondent in Hungary. Later a member of Campbell's staff was to deny this to the Budapest authorities—and so add to her sufferings.



What happened when she started on her journey back to England forms the main part of this book. She was arrested as an 'English spy', brainwashed (though Rakosi's detergent signally failed with her), 'interrogated', bullied, tortured and finally imprisoned in solitary confinement, often in total darkness, for seven years. The corrupt politics which were the origins of her sufferings have been better described and much more accurately analysed by others. But the detailed account of how Dr Bone was able to survive these experiences, how she battled against huge odds for life and sanity,

is one of the most important and challenging psychological documents of our time.

A summary is neither desirable nor possible. The tasks she set herself in relation to the authorities and her own activity, the thoroughness with which she organized her practical and intellectual life in the prison cell are, suddenly and strikingly, illuminated in the middle of the book when, she says that at a time when she could have little hope of ever being released she began to be annoyed at the shortness of the days. She found she needed more than twenty-four hours in a day to be able to get on satisfactorily with her work. The book is a remarkable tribute to the human spirit.

J.C.D.

## Tyranny Unnoticed

**The Kingdom of Free Men**, by G. Kitson Clark (Cambridge University Press, 18s. 6d.)

THIS book is compounded of a series of lectures given by the author to the Divinity Faculty of the University of Cambridge in 1955. That the members of the faculty and indeed the public at large should be asked to ponder on the subject of the title is something wholly to be desired. How to arrive at the Kingdom of Free Men is, after all, the basic subject-matter of twentieth century politics. But how far this book helps us on the way is quite another matter.

It would be easy enough to criticize the book in points of detail. Its picture of corrupt clergy or cowards co-operating with the State in eastern Europe and brave men opposing it is grotesquely false; on the question of Greece and many others it takes the well-known cold war positions. Yet for all that the book has really to be criticized for something much deeper. It sees (p. 5) the whole tension of the modern world in terms of a struggle between 'the liberal democracies' and 'the communist totalitarian States'; it sees this struggle wholly in terms of politics and is therefore able to ignore completely the economic tensions of the modern world and the whole struggle for common ownership.

It needs hardly to be said that the tyranny of Empire passes unnoticed. It may have passed muster with some in 1955, but in the world of Algeria and France of 1958 it all seems strangely irrelevant.

STANLEY EVANS

## Against Superstition

**On Religion**, by K. Marx and F. Engels (Lawrence and Wishart, 4s.)

THIS volume, comprising writings of Marx and Engels on various aspects of religion, is something of a 'package deal'. Some lesser-known and newly translated works are mixed with extracts from such familiar classics as *Anti-Dühring* and the *Communist Manifesto*.

Especially interesting is some early work, Young Marx's

1842 article in the *Rheinische Zeitung* is a Left-radical attack on the censorship, defending the right of the Press to discuss religious and philosophical questions. Already the first signs of the new materialist world outlook can be discerned. In the introduction to the 'Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right' (1844) this outlook can be seen emerging from its idealist shell.

Starting from the 'criticism of religion' made by the Young Hegelians, Marx goes on to show how 'the demand to give up illusions' implies 'the demand to give up the condition which needs these illusions . . . Thus the criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of earth' (p. 42). The working class is recognized as the group which can carry through this 'criticism' by revolutionizing German society.

In some later articles Engels discusses the origins of Christianity and the early history of the Church. In another essay, he examines the Book of Revelation as a revolutionary document.

The book as a whole serves to remind us of Marx's and Engels's constant struggle against all forms of superstition and unreason, a struggle to lay bare 'the truth of this world'. As Prometheus has it in the quotation Marx gives in the introduction to his doctor's thesis (1841): 'I shall never exchange my fetters for slavish servility. Better to be chained to the rock than bound to the service of Zeus.'

CYRIL SMITH

## Moscow in Wartime

**A Cockney in Moscow**, by Harold Elvin (Cresset Press, 21s.)

THESE memoirs of a night-watchman at the British Embassy in Moscow during the war are sadly disappointing. They largely consist of stories about Mr Elvin's colleague, a notable wench whose achievements seem to have given the author much vicarious pleasure, and gushing hero-worship directed towards the Ambassador and some of his staff and towards the Soviet leaders. The latter leads Mr Elvin into some embarrassing passages. Having seen Stalin he is dissatisfied with the photographs of him. 'Where do they show the sensitivity?' And he repeats a remark made by a former Kremlin guard: 'You'd be amazed, the lack of seriousness, they have fun . . . like a lot of children running in and out.'

The few points of interest that emerge include evidence of the poverty of sections of the Moscow population at the beginning of the war (this providing the background to some of the author's friend's amorous exploits), and glimpses of the political atmosphere in the Soviet capital in April-May 1941—with Russians afraid to be seen entering the British Embassy, the Yugoslav Minister bundled out on the grounds that his State had ceased to exist, and Cripps under fire from Pravda for his warning of impending Nazi attack. The British Embassy stands beside the Moskva river, opposite the Kremlin, and we learn that, on the day following Hitler's onslaught on the unprepared Soviet Union, 'the long boats filing past the Kremlin are not saluting it as was their wont'.

P. BRYAN

ruins, as had happened in Russia. 'We, from a revolutionary point of view, are vitally interested in the preservation of peace.' If, however, Poland were to attack Germany, Russia could not but be affected, for this would constitute a blow to Europe's economy and a strengthening of nationalist reaction—and both these are contrary to the interests of the revolution'.<sup>28</sup>

The leading article in *Izvestia* for September 29, 1923, reminded all concerned that 'we have never renounced our idea of furthering by all means the development of the international revolution, which will lead us to final victory. We are on the threshold of great events and we must be ready for them in time . . .'<sup>29</sup> On the following day, Trotsky, in an interview given to a Western politician, again emphasized the lack of desire on the part of the Soviets for a warlike solution.

War would harm the German revolution. Only that revolution is capable of life which succeeds by its own strength, especially when a great people is concerned. We are entirely on the side of the victims of rapacious and bloody French imperialism. We are with the German working class with all our soul in its struggle against foreign and domestic exploitation. But at the same time we are entirely for peace.<sup>30</sup>

He made the same point in his address of October 20 to the transport workers' congress: 'We are above all interested in the German working class settling its problems with its own forces, while peace prevails around Germany, so that civil war in Germany does not become transformed into imperialist war around Germany and within Germany itself.' The most important form of aid that Soviet Russia could render the German revolution was economic, and Poland was being urged to allow such aid to be rendered across her territory, in return for economic concessions by Russia which would give Polish goods free access to markets in Asia. The Russian peasants should be shown how important from their standpoint it was that the German revolution should conquer: this would mean an outlet for their grain and also, in return, cheaper and more plentiful manufactured goods.<sup>31</sup> Again, on October 21, addressing army political commissars, Trotsky stressed the need to avoid any pose of militarist aggressiveness. It was not only a matter of world opinion but primarily one of the attitude of the Russian peasants, who would not go to war except for a cause they fully understood and accepted. 'We must ensure that the link between our fundamental interests and those of the working people of Germany becomes clear and tangible to every Red Army soldier.'<sup>32</sup> (No sign of underestimation of the peasantry here!)

In fact, as is all too well known, the German revolution of 1923 did not come off. The Comintern leadership showed lack of confidence in the German workers and supported a policy of holding them back at the decisive moment, which led to a disastrous and fateful defeat. The other side of this failure of confidence was the appearance for the first time of a new note in Soviet policy, out of harmony with the traditional one, and which in subsequent years was to become the dominant

note, as the bureaucracy consolidated its power and the complex of ideas and procedures known as 'Stalinism' took shape.

When in 1920 a tendency had appeared among the German communists towards what was called 'national Bolshevism', i.e., a bloc with nationalist elements of the German bourgeoisie to fight against France, this had been formally condemned by the Soviet leaders. Lenin's remarks on the subject are well known.<sup>33</sup> The Comintern executive wrote in a letter to Germany:

War against the Entente is the alpha and omega of the policy of Laufenberg and his comrades. It may be that war with Entente capitalism will become a necessity for Soviet Germany if the workers in the Entente countries should not come quickly enough to the help of a victorious proletariat in Germany. But should this war have to be fought, the German proletariat will find it more than ever necessary to defeat the German bourgeoisie . . . Laufenberg and Wollheim are spreading the poison of the illusion that the German bourgeoisie could, out of nationalist hatred, become allies of the proletariat. If the proletariat were to be fooled by this idea they would become cannon-fodder for German capital which, under the flag of the sham Soviet republic, would use the proletariat for war against the Entente, and then discard the cloak and openly re-establish capitalist rule.<sup>34</sup>

Again, in the theses on tactics adopted at the Third Congress of the Communist International (July 1921), the German communists were warned that 'only if it proves by forceful and unrelenting struggle against the German Government that it is not trying to save bankrupt German imperialism, but to clear the ground of the ruins of German imperialism, can the German Communist Party intensify among the French proletarian masses the will to fight French imperialism . . .'<sup>35</sup> And in a manifesto on the occasion of a joint conference of the French and German communist parties in September 1922, the Comintern called on the French workers to fight their own Government, 'not in order to help German imperialism to get on its feet again, but so that the removal of the military pressure of French imperialism may liberate the forces of the German proletariat for the German revolution', and the German workers similarly to fight for a workers' government in their country, 'which will relieve the French masses of the fear of a resurgence of German militarism and help them to liberate themselves from the spell of nationalism'.<sup>36</sup>

But already in February 1923 the German communist Thalheimer was reviving the 'national-Bolshevist' conception, arguing that German nationalism was a potentially revolutionary factor; and now this found an echo in the leading circles of the Soviet Communist Party. Radek told the Comintern executive in June that 'the strong emphasis on the nation in Germany is a revolutionary act, like the emphasis on the nation in the colonies', and shortly afterwards made his notorious 'Schlageter' speech, in which, referring to the recent execution of a German fascist of this name by the French forces occupying the Ruhr, he appealed for a bloc between the communists and the fascists on a basis

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* p. 376.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Kochan, *op. cit.* p. 87.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Fischer, *op. cit.* vol. i. p. 457.

<sup>31</sup> Trotsky, *Kak vooruzhalas revolyutsia (How the Revolution Armed Itself)* (Moscow, 1923-25), vol. iii, part ii, pp. 143-4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 160-71.

<sup>33</sup> V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism', *Selected Works*, (Eng. ed.), vol. x (1938), pp. 117-18.

<sup>34</sup> Degras, *CI Documents* . . . , p. 98.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p. 255.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p. 368.

of struggle for the national freedom of Germany.<sup>37</sup>

From this time onward, the rulers of Soviet Russia were to move more and more in the direction of building their foreign policy (including the policy they promoted through the international communist movement under their control) upon the cultivation of alliances with one or another national bourgeoisie, subordinating the working-class struggle to these alliances. Down to 1927 clear-cut pursuit of this policy was hindered by the open criticism of the Left Opposition inside Russia, and continual zigzagging was made necessary even thereafter by the need to avoid giving too flagrant offence to the Soviet workers or the communist rank and file abroad—and still more by the rebuffs and betrayals of the various national bourgeoisies on whom in turn the Soviet bureaucracy chose to rely rather than on the 'inadequate' forces of the international working-class movement.

Ruth Fischer, who saw the effects of the 'Schlageter line' in Germany, asserts that Radek was not alone among the Moscow leaders at this time in his views. Associated with him were Bukharin and Varga, with Stalin in the background. In 1922-23, she writes, this group

were discovering a new role for the German bourgeoisie, which they changed from the class enemy to a victim suffering almost as much as the German workers . . . In shifting the emphasis of the class hatred from its historical object—the German bourgeoisie in all its personifications—to the Entente, the theorists perverted the Labour movement of Germany, and consequently of Europe. They aggravated the intellectual and psychological confusion that was the prime condition for the growth of totalitarian ideologies and organizations.<sup>38</sup>

From this time onward one of the themes that constantly recur in Trotsky's speeches and articles is that of the danger of losing sight of the dependence of the Soviet Union on the world revolution, and the adoption of policies that hindered rather than advanced the latter. In speeches delivered in April 1924 he warned his listeners that though some capitalist States were recognizing the Soviet Union, this did not mean they were really reconciled to its existence, and, commenting on French suggestions that the new treaty between Russia and Italy spelt danger to Turkey, he declared that although this treaty meant selling Italy Russian grain, oil and timber—'one commodity we *don't* sell, and will never sell, is the independence of the peoples of the East'.<sup>39</sup> Even more pointedly, in June, Trotsky warned against false conclusions being drawn from the fact that the growth of communism in the capitalist countries did not always and everywhere directly and immediately improve the international diplomatic position of the Soviet Union. In Germany, for example, the rise of the 'communist danger' actually worsened State relations between Russia and that country. But in the last analysis only the victory of communism throughout the world would consolidate the Soviet power completely and finally, and this should never be lost sight of.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, Trotsky

opposed adventurist measures in foreign relations, e.g., any attempt forcibly to recover Bessarabia from Rumania, independent of the rise of the revolutionary movement.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps the most vivid example of the relation between Soviet State dealings with capitalist countries and the Soviet attitude to the revolutionary movement in these countries, before 'Stalinism' became completely dominant, is provided by the story of the secret military collaboration between Russia and Germany which developed from 1921 onwards, even before the treaty of Rapallo. The German army authorities were allowed to establish armament factories in Russia and to send officers to train with the Red Army, thereby getting round the demilitarization articles of the treaty of Versailles.<sup>42</sup> Very considerable benefits came to Soviet Russia from this arrangement. In the field of aviation research and testing, 'every German technical accomplishment became a starting point for production by the Russians',<sup>43</sup> and the Soviet chemical industry, through secret German aid, underwent 'a prodigious expansion, so that in 1930 it accounted for 7 per cent. of the European production'.<sup>44</sup> On balance, Goering concluded in 1937 that this German-Soviet co-operation had done more harm than good from his standpoint: 'The dangerous policy of Rapallo had been followed in relation to Russia. As the result of this policy Germany helped Russia in military matters, armed her, sent her instructors, assisted her to build up her war industry.'<sup>45</sup>

What is relevant to our subject is that this collaboration between his own department, the War Commissariat, and the Reichswehr, was not allowed by Trotsky to affect in any way his attitude and activity in relation to the revolutionary movement inside Germany. Gustav Hilger, an official of the German Embassy in Moscow who served through this period, records that in December 1923 the German Government demanded the recall of a certain Petrov from the Soviet Embassy in Berlin. He had been discovered to be a military agent who had bought large quantities of weapons and ammunition for delivery to the German communists in the event of insurrection. Trotsky calmly admitted that he had personally attached Petrov to the Embassy, regarding it as his duty to do so, in view of the situation in Germany.<sup>46</sup> Erich Wollenberg even alleges that in Trotsky's time the Soviet authorities placed some of the 250,000 gold marks they received annually from the Reichswehr at the disposal of the German Communist Party.<sup>47</sup> It is therefore hardly surprising that Brockdorff-Rantzau, the German Ambassador in Moscow, should have urged his Government to influence the Press against publishing articles friendly to Trotsky when the conflict between him and the bureaucracy's political spokesmen began.<sup>48</sup> When a

<sup>41</sup> 'We and the East', June 10, 1924, *ibid.* p. 105.

<sup>42</sup> E. H. Carr, *German-Soviet Relations* (1952), pp. 57f., and *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. iii, p. 362; also V. N. Ipatiev, *The Life of a Chemist* (1946), pp. 381f.

<sup>43</sup> G. Freund, *The Unholy Alliance* (1957), p. 210.

<sup>44</sup> W. M. Knight-Patterson, *Germany from Defeat to Conquest* (1945), p. 400.

<sup>45</sup> Goering to Smigly-Rydz, Feb. 1937, in *Polish White Book* (1939), pp. 36-8.

<sup>46</sup> G. Hilger, *The Incompatible Allies* (1953), p. 124.

<sup>47</sup> E. Wollenberg, *The Red Army* (1940), p. 237.

<sup>48</sup> Hilger, *op. cit.* p. 213.

<sup>37</sup> E. H. Carr, *The Interregnum* (1954), pp. 159-60, 177f.

<sup>38</sup> Ruth Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (1948), p. 199.

<sup>39</sup> 'Young People, Study Politics' in *Sochinenia (Works)* (Moscow, 1925-27), vol. xxi: 'May Day in the West and in the East', in *Zapad i Vostok (West and East)* (Moscow, 1924), p. 47.

<sup>40</sup> 'Through What Stage Are We Passing?', *ibid.* p. 109.

scandal occurred in 1924 in German-Soviet diplomatic relations, as a result of a German communist's seeking refuge from arrest in a Soviet institution in Berlin and being pursued into it by the German police (the Bozenhardt incident). Trotsky assured Rantzau that this affair need have no effect on the secret military collaboration.<sup>49</sup> Rantzau fully appreciated that the converse was also true, so long as Trotsky remained powerful—the secret military collaboration would have no effect on the policy

<sup>49</sup> Freund, *op. cit.* p. 195.

of encouraging and helping the revolutionary movement in Germany!

The ousting of Trotsky from the War Commissariat, early in 1925, marked the definite opening of a new phase in Soviet foreign policy, acutely summed up by Isaac Deutscher: 'In the Leninist period diplomacy had been as it were, an auxiliary detachment of the Comintern. That relationship was to be reversed.'<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> I. Deutscher, *Stalin* (1951), p. 392.

# Freedom of the Individual

*Peter Fryer*

'We are not communists who want to destroy personal freedom and transform the world into one great barracks or one great sweat-shop. As a matter of fact there are communists who do not care for and want to suppress personal freedom, which in their opinion bars the way to harmony; but we do not want to buy equality at the expense of personal freedom' (Frederick Engels, *Kommunistische Zeitschrift*, September 1847).

## CAPITALISM AND HUMAN NATURE

To liberals no freedom is higher and more precious than the freedom of the individual. Marxists wholeheartedly agree that it is the individual human being who achieves freedom, and not humanity in general. They agree that society as a whole cannot free itself unless every individual is freed. But they take issue with the use of the watchword of individual liberty in opposition to socialism and socialist planning. For they do not think there is any contradiction between the interests of the individual and the interests of a society whose fundamental aim is the satisfaction of people's material and cultural needs and the enrichment of their lives. They take the view that only under communism will the individual human being be able to develop his potentialities and abilities to the utmost.

Under capitalism the great majority of people have neither leisure, money nor education to develop as all-round human beings. Nor are they encouraged so to foster their individuality. The capitalist system of production, the bourgeois educational system, the barrage of advertising and ready-made 'culture' to which the individual is subjected from the cradle to the grave, are not designed to fan into flame the sparks of talent and creative ability that are possessed by all but a tiny proportion of human beings. They are designed to make competent wage-slaves. Capitalist relations of production—the private ownership for private profit of the means of production—cannot bring to the individual wage-worker the freedom that comes through leading a full life, a life packed with many-sided activities and giving the fullest scope to every physical and mental aptitude. They block the way to a full life for the exploited.

Capitalism devastates human nature, dulls and extinguishes the senses, corrupts and brutalizes men as it sucks out profit from their work, rends men into

fragments, into half-men, makes labour a burden instead of a joyful and indispensable part of life. It robs men of their heritage of happiness, beauty and knowledge. It takes the warmth and colour out of human relationships and measures every emotion, every delight and every virtue by the yardstick of gold and silver and bits of printed paper and entries in account books.<sup>1</sup>

The individual is not, and cannot be, free under capitalism because he cannot leap out of the world of the market, the world where everything moral and spiritual is bought and sold for cash. It is a world of universal venality, of cynical self-interest. Human labour power; works of art; knowledge; the very conscience and honour of men; truth itself:<sup>2</sup> all become commodities, measured in terms of their market value, accessible to those with money.

To the profiteer the object he is buying or selling, its meaning and importance to human beings, are in themselves of little or no importance compared with the object's abstract expression in monetary terms. This barren outlook determines and taints every relationship, not only between man and object, but between man and man. Money becomes a fetish: the cash nexus becomes the only significant bond between people. The questions that matter about a fellow human being are not 'Is he happy?' or 'Is he hungry?' or 'Is he a good man?' but 'Is he rich?' and 'Can we do business together?' and 'What advantage can I get out of him?'

<sup>1</sup> In his *Adult Interests* (New York, 1935) Dr Edward L. Thorndike gave the cash payments which men and women would take to do certain normally repugnant things. He claimed to find that the average woman would practise cannibalism for 750,000 dollars, but the average man would do so for 50,000. The women tested would renounce hope of life after death for 10 dollars, but the men wanted 1,000. The men would become intoxicated for 25 dollars, but the women demanded 98. Other 'money equivalents' were given for blindness, temporary insanity, eating beetles and earth-worms, choking a stray cat to death, cutting a pig's throat and spitting on a crucifix and on pictures of Charles Darwin, George Washington and one's mother. Dr Thorndike has been described as 'the Nestor of American psychologists'.

<sup>2</sup> 'The best test of truth,' according to Mr Justice Holmes's epigram, 'is the power of the thought to get itself accepted in the competition of the market' (*Dissenting opinion in Abrams v. U.S.*, 250 U.S. 616 (1919)).

Those who have this outlook cannot be said to enjoy *life*: what they enjoy are deals and transactions and money-making. 'Life' in bourgeois society means 'making a living'.

Nor can the wage-worker remain wholly unaffected by this outlook. The very fact that he is forced to sell his labour power, that he must work for someone else in order to live, drains his labour of its sweetness, makes it a dreary burden instead of an essential and beneficial part of living. The life of the individual worker is chopped and divided: there is the part of his life that is not his own, but the boss's, spent in the factory, where the boss is the aristocrat; and there are the looked-forward-to oases of leisure, the time that belongs to the worker himself. 'The invariable comment when the leaving-off hooter sounds is: "That's the one I've been waiting for all day!" And in the morning when the starting-signal is given they mutter, "Roll on the second one!" They look forward every day to the end of so many hours of life.'<sup>3</sup> Only when his working day is done does the worker's own life really begin. He is robbed of a third or more of his life—half or more of his active, waking life. He is not free to live as he wishes, to taste the pleasures of creation, the thrill of work that is done, not because one has to do it in order to eat, but because one feels passionate and absorbing enthusiasm for the social task.

Work done for someone else, in which the worker belongs not to himself but to another, is, as Marx pointed out, *external* to the worker instead of being part of his nature; it is not in itself the satisfaction of a need, but only a means for satisfying other needs.<sup>4</sup> This has been grasped by certain bourgeois writers. Thus John Dewey says: 'The subordination of the enterprises to pecuniary profit reacts to make the workers "hands" only. Their hearts and brains are not engaged. They execute plans which they do not form, and of whose meaning and intent they are ignorant—beyond the fact that these plans make a profit for others and secure a wage for themselves . . . Minds are warped, frustrated, un nourished by their activities.'<sup>5</sup> Another American writer, in an essay on 'Freedom in the Factory', remarks:

The operative is fitted like a cog to another cog in wheels turning endlessly round; over his movements in the rotation he has no more control than have the hands of a clock over their movements upon its face. Save when he is hired and fired, or bawled out for such a slip as any wearing machine part might make, he is not a person with a proper name, but a hand in the shop, a numbered machine part, making movements he does not initiate, producing results he does not intend and owns no part in.<sup>6</sup>

And the professor of philosophy of education in the University of London calls for 'respect for and cultivation of the free personal life' and 'the infusion of something of this spirit into the highly organized life of modern society, so that "freedom" is not separated from

"work", not something to be attained after the reins of organization have been laid down, but something which is intrinsic to daily work itself, sweetening every part and making it human'.<sup>7</sup>

Where every object, including other human beings, has become a source of profit, all men's senses—not only the physical senses, but also the feeling for beauty, for the arts, for knowledge, for the enrichment of the human spirit—all these senses are subordinated to and largely replaced by the single, abstract desire for property, for 'possessions'. 'I have' becomes the supreme emotion. The barrenness of 'I have' find its finished, most abstract, expression in money—the supreme substitute for real human relationships.

Men are thus rendered less than truly human. Instead of living to the full, instead of squeezing from life and making part of themselves every drop of the beauty created by human hands and brains or latent in human relationships, they are fobbed off with a substitute for these concrete riches: the abstract hoarding, 'possession' and contemplation of things. They are impoverished by capitalism—all the more terribly because they are only dimly, if at all, conscious of the cynical trick capitalism is playing on them. The more the worker produces, the more he empties himself into the product, the more powerful becomes the world of things which he creates but does not 'possess', which is his own labour objectified and standing independent of and opposed to him, and the poorer becomes the worker's inner sensuous life.<sup>8</sup>

Even this does not exhaust the crippling of human nature by capitalism. Men are not merely spiritually robbed and emasculated, shut out from a whole world of sensuous, intellectual and moral delight. They are also split, turned into fragments of men, by the enforced sacrifice of all their other physical and mental faculties to the development of one single faculty. The individual, subordinated to the principle of the division of labour, becomes a mere cog in the production process, the appendage and servant of a machine, a detail worker performing one small operation over and over again. The individual is moulded by the machine he serves into something less than human. 'Taylor, of Bethlehem Steel Works fame, has declared that in order to get pig iron loaded most efficiently it is necessary to get men as near like oxen as possible. But men do not grow so; they have to be made. An important part of scientific management is this scientific degradation of men.'<sup>9</sup> The individual is stunted, warped, chained for life to one particular calling, to one particular function, often to one particular tool. In capitalist society what matters is not man as such but *particularized* man, restricted and conditioned by his special skills: the division of labour is the division of the individual labourer himself.

And this means that men are subjected to their instruments of production, that instead of the producers using and controlling the means of production, the latter use and control the producers. Nor have men control over the disposal of the products which result from their labours; these products become independent forces which overpower their makers in booms and slumps according to the 'blind' laws of the market.

<sup>7</sup> Louis Arnaud Reid, 'The Individual and Social Purpose—II', *The Fortnightly*, no. 1017 n.s., p. 623, Sept. 1951.

<sup>8</sup> Bottomore and Rubel, *op. cit.* p. 170.

<sup>9</sup> Fox, *op. cit.* p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> R. M. Fox, *The Triumphant Machine* (A Study of Machine Civilization) (1928), p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> See T. B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel, eds., *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* (1956), pp. 169-70.

<sup>5</sup> John Dewey, *Individualism Old and New* (1931), pp. 122-3.

<sup>6</sup> Horace M. Kallen, *The Liberal Spirit*, Essays on Problems of Freedom in the Modern World (Ithaca and New York, 1948), p. 193.

The means of production are utilized in such a way as to enslave men and atrophy their faculties. And the exchange of products for profit leads to the concentration of enormous wealth in the hands of a few and the impoverishment of the majority, to economic anarchy and periodical economic 'blizzards'.

Thus men are not free to determine their own destiny. It is determined for them by forces over which they have no control. In the process men's individuality is forfeited, is crushed. They lose their individuality because they are dependent on capital. 'In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality.'<sup>10</sup> 'An economic individualism of motives and aims,' echoes Dewey, 'underlies our present corporate mechanisms, and undoes the individual.'<sup>11</sup>

Defenders of and apologists for the capitalist system of society have as little right to speak of the freedom of the individual as they have to speak of any other freedom. Under capitalism human individuality 'becomes at once a commercial article and the fabric in which money operates'. Capitalism 'estranges man from nature, from himself, his own active functioning . . . It is the alienation of man from man.'<sup>12</sup> Capitalism stifles men's creative spirit, condemning the majority to a life of monotony, drudgery and ugliness—to life in a cage. It puts out the eyes of the painter and cuts out the tongue from the poet who is within each one of us. It butchers human nature on the altar of the machine and calls that progress.

### FREEDOM AND CULTURE

Certain forms of mass culture, which masquerade as popular art but in fact are imposed on ordinary people by big business, play a big part in the devastation of human nature by capitalist society. Many films, 'popular' songs, thrillers, comics, news stories, advertisements and television shows, in which artistic standards and techniques are largely abandoned, both reflect the splitting, stunting and dehumanization of people and powerfully assist that process. Spoon-fed to the common people, such culture is pitifully shoddy and tawdry. It abounds in  *clichés*, in stock situations, stock emotional responses, stock remedies for human problems. It provides a cheap, potent and hallucinatory fantasy-world. Its vulgarity heightened by daily repetition, it rings the changes on the slogan with which the advertiser, plugger, publisher, editor or film magnate wishes to condition the minds of his audience. After reading a dozen or more versions of the illustrated fable of how a worker was too tired to work properly until he drank a certain milk-food, or smelled of stale sweat until he washed with a certain soap, or had halitosis until he used a certain toothpaste, a reader has been trained—or so it is hoped—to react in a specific way to a specific stimulant. The 'popular' song reiterates a limited number of emotional phrases in trite verse, set to hackneyed and soothing harmonic progressions. The thriller and the horror comic blend violence with pornography, 're-tool for illiteracy' and prepare the reader's mind for war. The Press moulds the minds of its readers with

a daily flood of mass suggestion. Television programmes, particularly in the USA, tend to distort reality, play down to the lowest common denominator of artistic taste among audiences, and glorify acts and threats of violence, especially in children's programmes.<sup>13</sup>

All this art is fundamentally propaganda for capitalism, for it aims not merely to sell people chlorophyll tablets and detergents, but also to lull them into a complacent, passive, helpless, habit-bound acceptance of things as they are. It provides vicarious experience, excitement and enjoyment, to make content those whose lives are dreary and impoverished. As one student of advertising folklore has observed, 'to keep everybody in the helpless state engendered by prolonged mental rutting is the effect of many ads and much entertainment alike'.<sup>14</sup>

It is, of course, true that many workers have a healthy contempt for this form of art, and that their number and their contempt grow in times of social struggle. But there is no such thing as a mental vacuum. To the extent that liberating ideas, ideas which challenge capitalism's 'mind-forg'd manacles', ideas of working-class militancy and socialism, are not gripping the minds of the masses of the people, then inevitably the lives, opinions, emotions and outlook of the masses are to that extent conditioned by television jingles, Press lies and prejudices and the like. And to that extent they are unfree.

### THE DECAY OF LIBERALISM

The liberal idea of individual liberty is a good example of an idea which is progressive when first put forward, but which begins to play a reactionary role when the circumstances which gave rise to it have changed.

Preoccupation with the individual and his rights began in the seventeenth century, with the rise of the bourgeoisie, whose existence and development as a class depended on the freedom of the individual capitalist to buy, and of the individual proletarian to sell, labour power. The rebellion of the rising bourgeoisie against the economic shackles of feudalism found its political, social and ideological expression in opposition to arbitrary political power, to arbitrary restraints on personal liberty, to the violation of human dignity and to clerical obscurantism. The fight was seen as a struggle between reason and unreason. The class which fashioned liberalism as its intellectual weapon conceived of individual freedom, not as freedom from all restraint, but

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., Dallas W. Smythe, 'Reality as Presented by Television', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. xviii, no. 2, pp. 143-56, Summer 1954.

<sup>14</sup> Herbert Marshall McLuhan, *The Mechanical Bride*, Folklore of Industrial Man (New York, 1951), p. v. Discussing a motor oil advertisement with the caption 'Freedom . . . American Style', showing a middle class family on a picnic, McLuhan writes (p. 117): 'If this is "freedom . . . American style", then is it not freedom and not American to have less money and fewer possessions? . . . What proportion of Americans enjoy this style of freedom? . . . Looking at the standardized equipment of this family and their standardized pattern of living . . . how far [can they] be said to be free as human beings? . . . Does "freedom" mean the right to be and do exactly as everybody else? How much does this kind of freedom depend on obeying the "orders" of commercial suggestion? If it takes a lot of money to conform in this way, does conformity become an ideal to strive for? . . .'

<sup>10</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. i (1950), p. 46.

<sup>11</sup> Dewey, *op. cit.* p. 57.

<sup>12</sup> Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, quoted *Modern Quarterly*, vol. v, no. 1, p. 14, Winter 1949-50.

as freedom under the law,<sup>15</sup> as freedom limited by certain eternal truths and values which were thought to be embodied in a natural law or natural rights derived from human nature. Both the atoms of which matter was composed and the social atoms of which society was composed were governed by rational laws which human reason could grasp and apply. But, as Marx observed, the natural 'Rights of Man', the rights belonging to individuals by virtue of their humanity, did not eliminate man the egoist, an individual withdrawn into his private interests, separated from the community. On the contrary, bourgeois society itself appeared in them as an external frame for individuals, as a limitation of their original independence; the only ties by which individuals were held together were natural necessity, material needs, private interests and the conservation of their property.<sup>16</sup>

As developed by the bourgeois intellectuals of the early nineteenth century, the liberal idea of individual freedom remained progressive in an age when the workers were totally deprived of their leisure, when women and children worked in the pits, when there was no legal limit to the working day. These intellectuals supported the struggle for leisure for the industrial workers, as a struggle for time in which people might be free to do, think and say what they liked—provided they were not thereby endangering capitalist society.<sup>17</sup> The liberal ideal could not, and did not, transcend (but rather reflected) the splitting of a man's life into two parts: his working time, in which he was unfree, a wage-slave, and his leisure, in which he was for a few hours a day an individual shorn of responsibilities, answerable only to himself—an individual temporarily outside of society, and whose 'freedom' was enjoyed outside of society. Mill, for example, wanted every worker ultimately to have the same leisure as his employer and therefore the same partial freedom from the necessities of social organization as he.

What happened to liberal ideology when capitalism approached its monopoly phase has been well summarized by Hallowell and Laski:

So long as the bourgeoisie remained economically, socially, and politically unsatiated they championed the substantial rights of man. As . . . monopoly capitalism replaced free enterprise . . . and as the bourgeoisie acquired a dominant social and political position, they tended to espouse formal equality and formal rights of citizens rather than substantial equality and substantial rights of man.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> 'Freedom,' wrote Voltaire, 'exists in being independent of everything but law' (*Pensées sur l'administration publique*).

<sup>16</sup> See D. Rjazanov, ed., *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, part i, vol. i, I (Frankfurt, 1927), p. 595.

<sup>17</sup> 'No one pretends,' wrote John Stuart Mill, 'that actions should be as free as opinions. On the contrary, even opinions lose their immunity when the circumstances in which they are expressed are such as to constitute their expression a positive instigation to some mischievous act. An opinion that corn-dealers are starvers of the poor, or that private property is robbery, ought to be unmolested when simply circulated through the Press, but may justly incur punishment when delivered orally to an excited mob assembled before the house of a corn-dealer, or when handed about among the same mob in the form of a placard' (*On Liberty* (Everyman edition, *Utilitarianism; Liberty; Representative Government*, 1954), p. 114).

<sup>18</sup> John H. Hallowell, *The Decline of Liberalism as an Ideology With Particular Reference to German Politico-Legal Thought* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1943), p. 14.

The earlier liberals released the individual from a type of social organization which restricted his capacity for growth. But the assumption which underlay that release made it in fact valid only for men who were in a position to surmount the conditions of a fiercely competitive industrial society, that is, broadly, the owners of property. The liberty predominantly secured was their liberty; the others came in as residuary legatees of their triumph. And when the men of property had won, they conceived that the campaign was over . . . What they did not see was that the new social order their liberalism had built brought with it new problems as intense as any they had solved . . . Liberalism . . . had established a freedom in which, formally and legally, the workers were entitled to share. Actually, they could not, for the most part, share in it because its attainment was predominantly conditioned to the possession of property; and they had no property save in their labour power. When the victors were asked to extend the privileges their new freedom had brought them they were dismayed.<sup>19</sup>

In the period of monopoly capitalism it is precisely the separation of the interests of the individual from those of society, the counterposing of individual freedom to external social necessity and social responsibility, that becomes an ideological weapon for the defence of capitalism and for arousing opposition and hostility to socialism. The social discipline of social planning is held to destroy human personality, to take away the individual's liberty to 'live his own life' and to think and choose for himself. This discipline is represented as being imposed on people against their will.

The liberal who today attacks socialism on these grounds is in fact surrendering all the values that liberalism once championed. He is turning his back on the warping of human individuality and human personality by monopoly capitalism. Whether he is aware of it or not, *his* claim to 'freedom of the individual' is at bottom the claim of the privileged, leisured and rich section of the population to the maintenance of their privileges, leisure and riches, based on 'the liberty of private property as such, to be uncontrolled in its operations by aught else than the will of the individual possessing it'.<sup>20</sup> Since these privileges, leisure and riches are obtained and maintained for the bourgeoisie and for the intellectuals who serve them only by the exploitation of millions of their fellow human beings, what the modern liberal is really demanding is freedom for an *élite*.

No wonder that Dewey says of liberalism today that it is 'vaguely called forward-looking, but quite uncertain as to where to look and what to look forward to'.<sup>21</sup> The liberal idea of 'individual freedom' is hollow, bankrupt and impotent, for three reasons: because it cannot be realized for more than a tiny minority, and then only imperfectly and at the cost of the distortion of social values; because it predicates an individual abstracted from society; and because it conceives of freedom not as power for men to do things in social cooperation, but as the absence of restraint, as freedom *from* what are in reality the unavoidable necessities and obligations of living, the social ties that make men human. In other words, 'the individualism which centres in personal property . . . is a purely abstract and formal individualism which sacrifices the real freedom of the

<sup>19</sup> H. J. Laski, *The Decline of Liberalism* (1940), pp. 13-14.

<sup>20</sup> E. Belfort Bax and J. Hiam Levy, *Socialism and Individualism* (n.d. [1904]), p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Dewey, *op. cit.* p. 58.

individual to his merely nominal freedom'.<sup>22</sup>

One illustration of the hollowness, bankruptcy and impotence of the liberal ideology is the way prominent German liberals accepted—and some even acclaimed—the coming to power of the Nazis in 1933. The liberals 'had neither the standards nor the will to declare this despotism wrong'. They 'saw nothing to fight about. They had no ideas, no values, for which to fight; they had no doctrine, no way of life to defend . . . The Nazis were the legitimate heirs of a system that committed suicide'.<sup>23</sup> Another is the limited horizons of liberal thinkers when they try to grapple with the worker's loss of individuality in the capitalist factory. When Kallen, in *The Liberal Spirit*, comes to give his nostrum for 'freedom in the factory', all he can suggest is that the workers should somehow have their vision expanded 'from their own narrow task to the entire operation in which the factory as a whole is the craftsman and the worker but one of its hands' so that the individual worker can 'identify himself with the entire industry as a team-mate'; and that workers be given 'the opportunity to experiment, to take initiative, to exercise and to gratify the creative impulse under conditions of competitive co-operation'.<sup>24</sup> Similarly William Angus Sinclair, though he calls himself a socialist, cannot imagine any better society than a capitalism which somehow manages to give 'people in ordinary jobs that sense of their importance which is felt by creative minds and men in responsible positions'.<sup>25</sup>

It is the scramble for profits that tramples on human personality. Socialist planning, by enabling men to cooperate to run the world in a rational, conscious way, will integrate the needs of the individual human being with the needs of the whole of humanity. Only real socialism can emancipate the individual and pave the way to the utmost development, under communism, of all his physical and mental powers, senses and aptitudes.

### THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIALISM

The task of socialism is to lay the indispensable basis for the teeming abundance of necessities and what are today called luxuries that must be achieved before men may receive according to their needs. The social discipline of socialist planning alone can free men from the jungle of capitalism. Even with bureaucratic distortions, socialist planning is able to achieve a great deal. With these distortions eliminated socialism will harness the creative energies of millions. Real socialism does not impose economic plans on people 'from above'. The individual helps to draw up, administer and fulfil the plan: by so doing he not only helps to make everybody else's life better, but also improves his own life. The individual cannot free himself from the capitalist swamp by his own unaided efforts, but only in active co-opera-

tion with millions of others. Together they are fired with the vision of a new life and a new society. Together they work to achieve them. To accomplish the socialist reconstruction of the world is not to mould the individual to the requirements of an abstract 'society'. It is to reshape the social system to the requirements of the individuals who make it up. This implies planning. It implies discipline, endeavour, sacrifice, voluntarily undertaken. But this alone is the way to make men free from class exploitation and class oppression. 'The outcome of socialism is . . . a *human* individualism as opposed to *class* individualism'.<sup>26</sup>

It is not, perhaps, surprising that those who fail to understand that freedom from exploitation, unemployment, poverty and want has any bearing on the freedom of the individual are those who have never worked in a factory, never drawn the dole in a Labour Exchange, never been without the price of a lavish meal in their lives. To them freedom is something spiritual, and a 'free economy' is one where some are free to exploit and others to suffer. This was stated quite explicitly not long ago by Mr Howard Pyle, one of the U.S. President's assistants at the White House and a former Governor of Arizona, who 'left the comforting thought at Detroit—where unemployment in the motor industry is increasing—that "the right to suffer is one of the joys of a free economy"'.<sup>27</sup>

The view that men who are hungry, or poor, or insecure, or exploited, or unemployed, or homeless, or oppressed, are not free, that freedom from these social evils is the foundation of human liberty, is to be found well before the advent of Marxism. It was held by Shelley:

What art thou, Freedom? Oh! could slaves  
Answer from their living graves  
This demand, tyrants would flee  
Like a dream's dim imagery:

\* \* \*

For the labourer thou art bread  
And a comely table spread  
From his daily labour come  
In a neat and happy home.

Thou art clothes, and fire, and food  
For the trampled multitude:  
No—in countries that are free  
Such starvation cannot be  
As in England now we see.<sup>28</sup>

If by 'England' we mean also the British colonies in Africa and Asia, the argument summed up in these lines is wholly true today, when for hundreds of millions of Asians and Africans the problem of individual liberty is before everything else the problem of finding enough food to keep the individual alive another day. Moreover it is recognized by many of those concerned about the

<sup>22</sup> Bax and Levy, *op. cit.* p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> Hallowell, *op. cit.* pp. 108-9.

<sup>24</sup> Kallen, *op. cit.* pp. 211-12.

<sup>25</sup> William Angus Sinclair, *Socialism and the Individual* Notes on Joining the Labour Party (1955), p. 74. A classless society 'in which every man . . . receives . . . whatever he may need to lead the good life . . . seems impossible to realize,' he adds, since 'things just do not work out that way' (*ibid.* p. 121). Those who think differently from Mr Sinclair on this question he terms 'silly socialists', 'unpractical extremists', 'crackpots', 'calamitous idealists' and 'the Labour Party's lunatic fringe' (*ibid.* pp. 149-50).

<sup>26</sup> Bax and Levy, *op. cit.* p. 28.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in a dispatch from the Washington correspondent of *The Times*, May 25, 1956. 'Mr Pyle,' the dispatch went on, 'seems to have added a fifth dispensation to Roosevelt's four freedoms . . . Now and again the philosophers of the Eisenhower Administration have an uncanny knack of saying the wrong thing.'

<sup>28</sup> *The Masque of Anarchy*.

growth of revolutionary movements in what are called the 'under-developed' regions as by far the most difficult argument for imperialism to answer. An editorial in the *Manchester Guardian*, for example, came to the conclusion that the advocates of 'Western freedom' must address themselves, not to the masses of the people of Asia, but to the intellectual *élite* there, for only this enlightened minority could understand the meaning of the 'freedom in ideas and freedom of debate' that the West had to offer.

Offer a starving man liberty or a packet of sandwiches, it is said, and he will naturally choose sandwiches. But the classes to whom our appeal is addressed are not actually starving, though they may be commendably disturbed about how many of their countrymen are in this plight. The middle classes and intelligentsia of Free Asia can still be attracted by the ideals of liberty . . .<sup>29</sup>

But socialism does not make real liberty, liberty without quotation marks, stop at freedom from hunger. What it does do is expose the hypocrisy of capitalist 'freedom', which denies the fundamental freedoms to the colonial peoples, and hypocritically prates about 'freedom in ideas and freedom of debate' though it can no more permit free discussion and exchange of ideas in the colonies, when those ideas challenge imperialism, than it can adequately feed the millions it oppresses. Real socialism offers not merely material prosperity, but is also a powerful stimulus to intellectual ferment. Even with major bureaucratic distortions and defects, a workers' State has taught tens of millions in the central Asian republics to read and write, so opening for them the gates to the world of ideas and culture. And, as even Sinclair admits, 'one reason for the appeal of communism to the Asiatic and the African . . . is that it promises an industrialized culture with a higher standard of living to groups that have remained intact and continue to feel as groups; whereas at present the Western powers can only provide an industrialized culture which admittedly offers a higher standard of living, but in which a man feels an isolated and lost individual. Whatever else they give him it does not include what is essential for his happiness.'<sup>30</sup>

Cherishing and fostering individual ability, socialism will elevate the individual to a position of far greater real importance and give him far greater social responsibility than capitalism can ever do. To run society in a conscious, planned way cannot but call forth the utmost personal initiative, imagination, enterprise, zeal and creative ability from each individual. Liberty to choose where and how one can best take part in the general social activity, to discuss that activity both in its general aspects and its local details, to have one's own suggestions and criticisms discussed, means that the individual is no longer an insignificant cog in a vast, impersonal, exploiting machine, but a vital and conscious part of a great collective endeavour whose central aim is the improvement, elevation and ennoblement of human life.

Now while this is already a tremendous advance on the stifling of personal initiative and creativeness by capitalism, it does not yet solve the problem of the splitting and stunting of the individual. This problem is solved only in the course of a long transition to communist society.

<sup>29</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, January 10, 1956.

<sup>30</sup> Sinclair, *op. cit.* pp. 146-7.

The individual becomes free in the full sense of the word only when he is able to take out of society's store exactly what he needs to develop all his capacities to the full; when dull and arduous work is abolished and a new attitude to work as a joyful and indispensable part of life has grown up; when the distinctions between intellectual and manual labour no longer exist and all workers are raised to the level of engineers, technicians, scientists and artists; when the hours of socially necessary labour have been shortened to something like four hours a day or less, enabling the individual to 'work', play, study and take a full part in running society. Of all these requisites, none is more important than the shortening of the hours of labour, the 'fundamental premise', as Marx observed, for the flourishing of 'the true realm of freedom'.<sup>31</sup> The individual becomes really free, in fact, only when men have achieved complete conscious social control over their entire economic development—complete control over the utilization of their means of production and the disposal of their social product. This establishes truly human conditions of existence, in which 'the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'.<sup>32</sup>

### THE HEALING OF MEN

Communism will bring abundance, such as the world has never before known, a bountiful abundance in which all men will share. It will give everybody an all-round education, open wide the gates of culture and knowledge, make life full, absorbing, exciting and free. No longer the passive recipients of a ready-made culture, no longer conditioned to believe in their own inferiority and incapacity, the new generation of men and women born into a world cleansed of exploitation will be all-round people, masters of many different skills, crafts and arts. Their birthright will be the comprehensive development of their physical and mental abilities.

This is no Utopia, though it corresponds to the hopes for the future of humanity entertained by men of vision through the ages. Now the time has come when the realization of these hopes is within the grasp of humanity. The harnessing of atomic power, automation, the scientific discoveries that come thicker and faster with each passing year, provide the material basis for such a colossal enrichment of life as will make the whole earth a paradise for those who dwell on it. The struggle of the working class and the colonial peoples to conquer the world for the common people will ensure that these advances in technique are in fact harnessed for the good of all. Before long the centuries of class antagonism, of greed, cruelty and torment, will have passed away like an evil dream, and man, no longer stunted and crippled in body and mind, no longer shut out from the good things of life, will pass from prehistory into history, will become the master of his destiny.

The founders of scientific socialism rightly refrained from giving anything but the barest outline of the main features of the future society, and of the concomitant development and flowering of the human personality. They could not solve in advance the problems of humanity under communism, nor even foresee what many of those problems would be. Neither can we.

They did forecast, however, that labour would be-

<sup>31</sup> *Capital*, vol. iii (Calcutta, 1946), p. 652.

<sup>32</sup> Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. i, p. 51.

come 'not only a means of life, but life's prime want',<sup>33</sup> that 'productive labour, instead of being a means of subjugating men, will become a means of their emancipation, by offering each individual the opportunity to develop all his faculties, physical and mental, in all directions and exercise them to the full . . . therefore, productive labour will become a pleasure instead of being a burden'.<sup>34</sup>

Thus ends the splitting of men's lives. Where men are working, not for a boss, but for themselves and for their own society, the whole of their time is theirs.

Marx and Engels foresaw, too, the ending of the subordination of men to the division of labour, and the emergence of 'the fully developed individual, fit for a variety of labours, ready to face any change of production, and to whom the different social functions he performs, are but so many modes of giving free scope to his own natural and acquired powers'.<sup>35</sup>

Thus ends the fragmentation of men themselves.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* vol. ii (1950), p. 23.

<sup>34</sup> Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (1955), p. 408.

<sup>35</sup> *Capital*, vol. i (1954), p. 488.

Men are no longer engineers, or miners, or bricklayers, or clerks, but men—all-round men, spending part of the month or year at one particular occupation, refreshing their minds and bodies with several others the rest of the time. Where every occupation is as absorbing, exciting and spiritually rewarding as what we today call hobbies, men in love with work because they are in love with life will paint pictures, write poems, compose music, work with metal, conduct investigations in scientific laboratories, design houses and help build them—all in the same lifetime, perhaps within the same year. The distinctions between artist, designer, craftsman and labourer will vanish. All will in their work to some degree add to the store of beauty available for the enjoyment of mankind. Man will explore the depths of the ocean bed and the far reaches of space, will eliminate disease and increase twice, fourfold, tenfold, the span of human life, will reconstruct his own physiological and psychological make-up so that 'the average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge new peaks will rise'.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (1957), p. 256.

## Communications

### *Stalinism and the Defeat of the 1945-51 Labour Governments*

NOW that the storm of 1956-57 is over and a significant number of socialists have returned to the first principles of Marxism, it is possible to undertake major reassessments of the past. These are extremely important for the future.

Brian Pearce (Joseph Redman) has already done a great service in this respect in his *New Reasoner* pamphlet and in *Labour Review*. He has uncovered the process, starting from the history of the General Strike, in which the profoundly mistaken theory and policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union under Stalin was imposed upon the British Communist Party through the Communist International, and how in consequence communism in Britain persistently cut itself off from the mass movement by subserving the interests of Stalin's diplomacy rather than the interests of international socialism and the British working class.

The purpose of this article is to start the inquiry into post-war Britain from this point of view in order to throw new light on the defeat of the Labour Government in 1950-51.

The success of a Labour government will always depend upon its pursuit of a socialist policy. The possession of such a policy will depend in turn upon the success of the Labour Party in determining it. Further, in order that the policy shall be substance and not in name only, it is necessary that within the Labour Party the leadership shall come from the scientifically-minded element who, by virtue of that equipment, are able to understand the historical situation, grasp the contemporary character of capitalism and define the first steps to be taken to the conquest of real power and the use of that power to

the ends of socialism.

In the period 1944 to 1951 the scientific socialist leadership was in the Communist Party. The handful of Marxists in the Labour Party, like Laski and Brailsford, was compounded of individuals powerless to provide concerted leadership. This meant that historic responsibility rested with the Communist Party while the Left in the Labour Party tended to look towards the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* for leadership.

Thus if the Communist Party was wrong in its analysis and policy the result would necessarily be disastrous for the whole Labour movement. Capitalism would get all its own way, while the Right-wing Labour leaders would be undisturbed for the time being in their enjoyment of office for its own sake. Finally, when the day of reckoning came and the Right wing 'led' the movement to defeat, the Left wing, never having understood what was going on, would find themselves quite unable to explain the defeat and utterly incapable of knowing what to do next. This was the situation in 1951. In consequence there would have to follow a long period during which socialists wandered in the wilderness trying to find their bearings once more. We are still in this phase.

It will be apparent that, if we are to find our bearings, we must understand how we came to lose them.

In the twentieth century domestic policy is in the last analysis determined by the world situation. After the 1917 Revolution there were 'two worlds', one of international capitalism and the other of international socialism. The capitalist powers, violently antagonistic to one another, were united in their hatred and fear of the new-born Soviet Republic. International socialism rested upon the October Revolution, the Hungarian revolution, the threatened revolution in Germany, the French naval mutiny in the Black Sea and the opposition of the British working-class movement to the war of intervention. There were other elements too.

This Marxist view of the class struggle on the scale of a world made one by imperialism was abandoned by the Russian

Communist Party in 1923, after the defeat of the German workers. The reasons for this abandonment do not concern us here. They arose out of the internal situation of the Soviet Union.

### THE 'TWO CAMPS' THEORY

From 1923 the CPSU, through the Comintern, put forward a new conception of the two worlds theory using the old phraseology (and quotations from Lenin taken out of their context) to mask a reversal of policy. Henceforth the Comintern was interested only in the retention of power in the Soviet Union and the duty of international socialism was reduced to protecting that power. The success of the revolution elsewhere was irrelevant.

This twisted version of the two worlds theory was made much of after the second world war (the 'two camps') and then suddenly abandoned with the recognition of the role of India and the Bandung Powers. This of course further indicates its use as an instrument of power politics in the hands of the CPSU and not as a theory of socialism fundamental to the whole period of transition from world capitalism to world socialism.

In the name of that very internationalism which had been dropped by the CPSU, the Communist Parties of other countries accepted the policy of the Comintern as laid down by Stalin. He was thus in a position to direct the policies of Communist Parties according to what he considered to be in the diplomatic interests of the Soviet Union at any particular time.

Here is the starting point of the rot in Britain from 1945. In the nature of the world situation all policies must be built on the foundation of foreign policy. But the crude anti-socialist theory of the 'two camps' (i.e., for or against Stalin) foisted on Communist Parties throughout the world made it impossible for communists even to start the task of working out a socialist foreign policy. The barrier in the mind was insurmountable.

Since it was, always has been and still remains correct that socialists should defend the October Revolution, the position was an extremely difficult one. A vast bureaucracy has captured that revolution and perverted it, but not undone its historic achievement. The power of that bureaucracy has been maintained by the terror of the Cheka, OGPU and NKVD, not by the conviction of the workers and peasants in the policy of the party, the conviction that Lenin fought for so successfully. The correct attitude, therefore, was to defend the Soviet Union while attacking the policies and leaders who had betrayed the principles of October, and to be equally interested in solidarity with socialists elsewhere. This task proved so difficult in practice that very few succeeded in doing it, certainly no Communist Party.

The Communist Party here accepted the Comintern line. At the end of the war Anglo-Soviet relations were good. Stalin had obtained much of what he wanted at Teheran and Yalta. He and Churchill talked the same language of 'spheres of influence'. What he now wanted was time for consolidation in eastern Europe. It followed therefore that the British Government—whatever its character—should be supported to the full. The British Communist Party in such circumstances could have only one policy—support for whatever Government took office. It will be remembered that the Daily Worker even came out for some kind of coalition government and support for Churchill! But that was too much for even the most docile party membership in history and the line was changed.

Communists and socialists generally had done a tremendous job of political propaganda in the armed forces during the war years, and the Labour victory of 1945 was no accident. But the King Street switch to the Right came nevertheless and its great political capital was slowly wasted away.

When Attlee took office, the Communist Party, in the context of Soviet policy, pledged unconditional support for the Labour Government. Any criticism had to be confined to the terms of the Labour Party's own policy. Thus the 1945-48 slogan 'Implement "Let Us Face the Future"', i.e., the electoral policy of the Labour Party in 1945. The only critical note permitted

was 'Cut the Armed Forces'. This, a progressive demand, arose out of no socialist analysis or policy whatever. It too was a by-product of Soviet diplomacy.

It is very humbling for us to look back on those post-war years. We communists knew it all! We had not begun to understand how we as a party and as individuals were in the grip of historical circumstance and how our thinking was stopped by a combination of Soviet policy, the two-faced character of our leadership and our own inability to think from first principles and to speak our minds. Yet we know Lenin's dictum that 'criticism and self-criticism is the law of development of the party'.

But Pollitt did not entirely hide the truth. He always said: 'You can tell a man's politics by his attitude to the Soviet Union.' No one, however, pressed him to explain what he really meant by that extremely ambiguous statement. At the same time thousands of individuals gleaned something of the truth, but never worked it out thoroughly and collectively enough to constitute an opposition platform. There was just that endless stream of those who resigned or refused to re-register at the end of year.

### 'THE BRITISH ROAD TO SOCIALISM'

So Marxism has been unmanned in Britain for a whole generation. The British people are still led to believe, by some, that Marxism means 'The British Road to Socialism'. Marx knew that under capitalism one cannot predict the course of the socialist future. He never made the absurd mistake of trying to do so. But King Street, knowing better, have committed this, their epitaph, to paper.

After a revolution, or conceivably while in the throes of one, when the actual conditions to be faced are known, it is not only possible but essential to make predictions. These are the plans for building socialism. The Soviet party and Government have therefore quite rightly undertaken predictions—with very varying degrees of success. True to type, the communist leaders in Britain must do likewise—regardless of the wholly different pre-revolutionary situation in Great Britain.

In 1958 the subject of the British road to socialism is not on the agenda of the Labour movement—and quite rightly so. The key item today, as it was in the days of Marx, is the understanding of capitalism itself. The Labour Party's 'Industry and Society' may not have come to the correct conclusions, but at least it is about the right subject. But times have changed since 'Capital' and we must also add the need for understanding international socialism and the nature of the Soviet Union.

The rest of the agenda reads: (a) the preservation of peace; (b) the understanding of socialist ideas; (c) the conquest of State power in Britain by the Labour movement and its allies; (d) the immense task of the internal reorientation and reorganization of the Labour movement which all this requires.

When all this has been done we shall find ourselves in circumstances that it is most difficult for us at present to begin to imagine. Then and only then shall we be able to think scientifically about the British road to socialism.

This is of course no reason for not studying our social and economic systems and those of other countries, especially those of the USSR and the USA, to sharpen our wits and whet our appetites. We must of course do this. But first things first.

The Communist Party's 'British Road to Socialism' emerged in 1951. It was the culmination of that move to the Left that began in the years 1947-48 when the pathetic post-war slogans were too tattered for further use and no answer to the anti-communist witch-hunt that broke out as the domestic corollary of the Cold War.

Stalin approved of 'The British Road to Socialism' because it followed him in the abandonment of 'soviet' ideas and because, as a non-revolutionary document, it was one more weapon in the Cold War—enabling him to demonstrate to anyone who might be interested just how harmless 'communism' was, how Soviet communism was not for

export and why, therefore, Britain and NATO should call off the bloodhounds skulking round the borders of Stalin's sphere of influence.

If 'The British Road to Socialism' was the best that socialist science could do, how was it to be expected that Labour Party theorists might ever understand the defeat of 1950-51 and know what to do about it? Socialist theory and policy making were laid in the dust by those who claimed for themselves the mantle of Karl Marx.

### THE 'PEACE' CAMPAIGN

The 'peace movement' was again a move to the 'Left'. Again it was a matter of a policy that was acceptable on the surface; but it had no depth. The 'peace movement' evolving in 1958 stems from a genuine fear of war, a real concern for humanity, the beginnings of true internationalism and a realization on the part of socialists that the maintenance of peace is the responsibility of the Labour movement and a requisite for the ultimate victory of socialism.

There was something of this—not much, but something—in the British Peace Committee. That is why it neither succeeded nor failed. It was successful in the sense that it was part of the process that led to the thawing of the Cold War. It took the correct and very necessary line that the Soviet Union had no aggressive military intentions. But it failed because it was based essentially on Soviet policy and the Communist Party's servile leadership in Britain. It could not and did not ever win wide active popular support. It did not stem from the ideas and impulses of the people. It had nothing in common with socialist internationalism, properly understood.

Local 'peace committees' were 'front' organizations and the British Peace Committee (i.e., Communist Party) monopoly of 'peace' was such that the development of the movement past a certain point was actually held up. The peace movement that produced Aldermaston was made possible because the Khrushchev speech at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the events in Hungary smashed Stalinism in Britain and allowed the peace movement to grow—in a way which may or may not be in accord with Soviet policies, but which has entirely independent origins.

Looking back, we can see how utterly hidebound we were about the British Peace Committee and how fantastically distrustful of anything that was not directly under its control. The Communist Party leaders were then, as now, afraid of people, wholly without confidence in the working class they claimed to lead and suspicious even of their own members. The belief in people was quietly laid to rest in the party centre some time in the 1920s.

The Labour movement might have entered the fight for peace with great effect in the years 1947-51. Britain, in consequence, might have taken world initiative against war policies. Stalinism, and Stalinism in Britain particularly, made this impossible. We betrayed, or permitted the betrayal of, our own peace and socialist cause. We played straight into the hands of Ernest Bevin and the Truman Doctrine.

The general law that governs alterations of Communist Party policy has been put very clearly by Brian Pearce in a recent letter to me on this subject.

He writes:

'I think it is very important to see that the history of the Communist Party is not a meaningless zigzag, with equal 'value' attaching to both Right and Left switches. The basic trend of Stalinism is towards the Right: they keep moving back to class-collaborationist, anti-revolutionary positions. That is the norm for them and the Left phases are merely the interstices between Right phases. The basic Stalinist policy of rapprochement with imperialism being fallacious in its very foundations, the Stalinists are repeatedly getting rebuffed by their would-be partners; the Left phases of Communist Party policy are what they fall back into when these rebuffs occur and until they see a chance of another Right manoeuvre. It is important, I

think, to see that the Left phases are never really "returns to a real Marxist policy", as they often seem at the time to comrades who have been browned off by the preceding Rightism and are very ready to welcome uncritically any change that seems a Leftward one.'

### THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE H-BOMB

Although it concerns a later period, communist policy in relation to the H-bomb exemplifies the character of Stalinism so clearly that it is worth including an analysis of it here. With me, it is very much a question of personal experience.

During 1956, I tried for months in the South-East Midlands district committee of the Communist Party to get party policy round to the unilateral renunciation of the bomb by Great Britain. At first there was little support. Palme Dutt attended one of the meetings at which I put the case and he said that it was a correct one but that we could not adopt it for tactical reasons. Just what this meant he did not explain clearly or at any length. It was the 'we would be misrepresented' thesis—from a communist leader!

Some months later, at my instigation, the district committee did in fact pass a resolution in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament—nem. con. It was actually moved by Tom Mitchell, the present district secretary, and seconded by myself. The party centre replied to it quite curtly—to the effect that the resolution had been considered and was not accepted. And that was that. The business about tactics was apparently not considered to be worth explaining.

Now what was the real reason why Dutt turned down a policy he acknowledged to be correct? The answer is simple enough, although it may seem amazing at first sight. It is in keeping with the logic of 'international' communism since 1923. The Soviet Union wanted Britain to have the H-bomb and that is why Dutt refused to oppose it.

This is fully in accord with Stalin's last theses concerning the increasing contradictions and conflicts of the imperialist powers, and his policy of neutralizing anti-Soviet powers by encouraging their disunity. Stalin and Dutt supported Macmillan in British manufacture of the bomb, which, as we now know on Macmillan's own admission, was decided on as a power-politics gesture directed at America.

But Dutt dared not tell the truth to the members of his own party because it would not stand up to critical examination. He therefore relied on his authority and on the deeply ingrained habit of obedience in the party ranks.

### REALITY AND APPEARANCE

We can now begin to appreciate the reality behind the appearance at every stage. It is not simply a question of saying that King Street has always echoed the Kremlin. Socialism is nothing if not international. We need to grasp the whole character of Comintern policy and its contradiction of Marxism so that we may proceed with the task of putting it back on the lines that Lenin laid down.

Soviet policy since 1923 has never had any interest in revolutionary movements abroad and has consistently betrayed them, not so much because of a deliberate plan to do so, but because the utter wrongness of policy and the monumental ignorance of the CPSU under Stalin could have had no other effect so long as the leadership of the Comintern was universally accepted.

The communists of China were given to Chiang Kai-shek for execution in 1927, the communists of Germany were induced to play straight into the hands of Hitler in 1933, the communists of Spain were driven to disaster in 1936-39 and the communists of Hungary were crushed by Soviet tanks in 1956. A genuine communist abroad is, or has been, an obstacle to Soviet diplomacy. Yet things are changing, and will continue to change, in the Soviet Union.

This is not an attempt at a detailed examination of socialist policies in post-war Britain. It is rather a preliminary reconnaissance of what is still largely virgin territory, in order to identify major landmarks. The more we look below the

surface the more it becomes apparent that the bankruptcy of socialist thinking as regards theory, policy, methods and organization throughout the whole Labour movement—not just in the Communist Party—stems from the flat denial of internationalism by the Comintern.

The fact that the Comintern was dissolved only made matters worse. The authority of the CPSU in world communism was increased. After the dissolution, and the Cominform proved this, opinion could only move in one direction, from the top downwards. Thus Tito had to revolt or knuckle under. Stalin permitted no political criticism.

In consequence of all this there was in post-war Britain no systematic and scientific attempt made to grasp what peace, capitalism and socialism were about. The responsibility for this must be laid fairly and squarely at the door of the Marxists of Great Britain. It was our own fault. The fact that so many of us made our mistakes in good faith is hardly an extenuating circumstance. The greatest blame, however, did lie with those in the leadership of the Communist Parties in Britain and the Soviet Union who had their eyes open, and who thought so much more of themselves, their positions and their power than they did of their supposed principles.

It would be unscientific to ask ourselves what we should have done in 1945-51. We did what we did because nothing else was possible so long as our illusions remained. What we can do now is to understand those illusions. We are clearing the ground for the emancipation of Marxism in Britain.

PETER CADOGAN

## Science and Socialism

SCIENTIFIC successes such as the launching of artificial satellites and the development of Zeta, while not being at present of a strictly utilitarian nature except in connexion with military rocketry, have forcefully demonstrated the tremendous progress made by science and technology in recent years, in Russia, Britain and the USA.

In capitalist circles the sputniks immediately produced an atmosphere of panic. It suddenly dawned on the statesmen of the West that the Russians were even more capable of producing long-range rockets than were their own scientists. For the first time it was brought home to them that in any future world war, New York was on the Russian rocket bases' doorstep. 'We have far too few scientists', they exclaimed. Emergency measures were taken to provide more money to train scientists.

Capitalist support for scientific research and investigation is quite normally born out of fear—generally fear of competition from other capitalists. But new inventions and new techniques usually require large quantities of new capital to enable them to be put into operation, a fact which often discourages scientific research under capitalism. In capitalist society, therefore, science is on the one hand impelled forward by the competition between the individual concerns and, on the other, held back by the system's internal contradictions.

It seems likely that the tendency of capitalism to hold back the development of science will become more and more marked in the future. As a result of the capital investments required, only very big firms can introduce new scientific developments. In this way, the monopolistic features of capitalism are being further consolidated and the competitive stimulus consequently reduced.

Socialists have accordingly said that in a socialist society the flood barriers against scientific advance in capitalist society would be removed and science would surge forward, giving man greater control over nature. Socialists, recognizing that science liberates mankind by means of new labour-saving techniques, have always adopted a friendly attitude towards it, but so far they have given insufficient consideration to certain aspects of scientific advance. There is a serious lack of literature on the political aspects of science and scant attention is given to it in political programmes.

On a world scale, man has two major problems: the problems of (a) food supplies and (b) fuel supplies. The fact that there is a food problem is not at all obvious to people living in advanced Western countries. There appears to be a plethora

of food and apparently no one need go hungry—provided he has the money to buy food. However, this apparent abundance is a delusion. The people who enjoy this abundance, in fact, number well under half of the world's population. About two-thirds of mankind lack adequate supplies of food. Hundreds of millions endure malnutrition and often real starvation. This situation will certainly not improve—and in all probability will get worse as the result of the 'natural' growth of population—unless planned production is carried through to agriculture. The problem can be solved only by the application of scientific methods of farming on a very large scale and by the cultivation of areas which are at present non-productive. The stone-age implements which are still in use over large areas of the earth will have to be replaced by modern machinery, and scientific knowledge must be applied to increase the fertility of the soil and to improve seed and stock. Agriculture needs to be brought up to and beyond the stage of scientific development of modern factory production.

Many people, including many socialists, complacently assume that this is a problem which affects only the so-called backward countries. But it is in fact a problem which is on our own doorstep. At the present time Britain is unable to produce enough food to meet the requirements of her population. Indeed, it is unlikely that she could ever do so. Even under the most favourable circumstances it is unlikely that Britain could produce enough food to support more than half the present population.

In the last hundred years the world's population has more than doubled and is at present about 2,500 million. In two hundred years it will be 10,000 million. Two hundred years may seem a long time, but it is a mere six generations away: this will certainly be an issue which will occupy the minds of the children and grandchildren of our own grandchildren.

The Stalinists, as the Lysenko affair showed, have pooched population questions, labelling them as reactionary neo-Malthusian preoccupations of bourgeois ideology. Yet it would be wrong not to recognize that a growing population presents real problems. Only socialism can solve them. If socialism can be established over a large part of the world in this period, because of the food problem alone man's power requirements will be even greater. Consequently we cannot solve the food problem unless we solve the power problem.

There is a naïve tendency to regard this problem as solved by the advent of nuclear energy. Things are not quite so simple, however, for nuclear energy brings with it a whole series of new problems whose solution seems to be at least problematical. Again, nuclear energy from uranium involves drawing on the earth's energy bank in the same way as does our use of coal and oil, for there is no source by which it is replenished. Much more has to be done to utilize our energy income. The development of methods of using solar radiation, directly through the invention of equipment which directly converts solar radiation into electricity, or indirectly in the form of hydro-electric installations, must be given much more serious consideration.

In solving these two problems, tremendous industrial effort will be necessary. Machinery and equipment will have to be produced on a scale hitherto unknown. In fact the present advanced industrial countries could not solve the world problem on their own. For this reason the technical level of industrially backward countries must be raised considerably. At the same time automation would have to be introduced, not to dispense with workers to increase profits, but to make the best use of the available manpower.

What then are the tasks of socialists in relation to science? Socialism is unthinkable without science. Consequently much more consideration must be given to science and scientific problems in discussing and formulating political programmes. The possibilities of science must be realistically, not idealistically, appraised and the full extent of these possibilities brought home to the British people. Science, far from being something that requires a superficially complacent reference here and there, must become a major item in any political programme. At the same time, Marxists must educate themselves in the fundamentals of science; they must become more science-conscious. In addition, great efforts must be made to win scientists for socialism. For socialism to succeed we must have a core of scientists who are loyal to the joint cause of science and socialism.

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# **LABOUR REVIEW**

MAY-JUNE 1957

Problems and Prospects of British Capitalism, I (Tom Kemp); The Engineers' Strike and the Labour Movement (Robert Shaw).

JULY-AUGUST 1957

The New Course of the Chinese Communist Party (Michael Banda); British Communist History (Joseph Redman); The Inadequacies of Russian Trotskyism (R. W. Davies, with a comment by Leonard Hussey); 'Russian Poetry, 1917-1955,' trans. Jack Lindsay, reviewed by Anna Bostock.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1957

Socialism, the H-Bomb and War; Labour and Nationalization; Lenin as Philosopher (Peter Fryer); From 'Social-Fascism' to 'People's Front' (Joseph Redman); Marxism, Stalinism and Political Economy (Tom Kemp).

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1957

Forty Years of Soviet Russia; Radio, Science, Technique and Society (Leon Trotsky); The Case of André Marty (Joseph Redman); A Marxist Critique of Freud (John McLeish).

JANUARY- FEBRUARY 1958

Labour and Leadership; The Dockers and Trade Union Democracy (William Hunter); The Early Years of the CPGB (Joseph Redman); Empiricist Philosophy, I (John Marshall); Leonhard's 'Child of the Revolution', reviewed by 'Gracchus'.

MARCH-APRIL 1958

Wages and the Bomb: A Single Front; An Unreasonable Reasoner; Marxism and the Algerian Revolution (Michael Banda); The British Stalinists and the Moscow Trials (Joseph Redman); Pat Dooley's Letters; 'The Family Life of Old People', reviewed by Cliff Slaughter.

MAY-JUNE-JULY 1958

The Murder of Imre Nagy; The Victory of Charles de Gaulle; Strike Strategy; London Busmen in Battle (Bob Potter); The Crisis, the Budget and the Workers (Tom Mercer); Religion and Social Revolt (Cliff Slaughter); 'New Class'? (Tom Kemp); The Logic of Apartheid (Seymour Papert); 'The Crime of Galileo', reviewed by Louis Marks; 'The Labour Movement in the Sudan, 1946-1955', reviewed by Peter Worsley.