WHO'S TO FOOT THE TORIES' WAR BILL?

By STAN NEWENS

Bitter as the effects of the Tories' Egyptian adventure are on British living standards to date, they are but a foretaste of what is to come. Petrol rationing, higher fares, increased road freight charges and reduced transport services are hard to relish but the long term results of this ill-conceived imperialist bullying will be much more serious.

They will be felt over a long period in the immense set-back to capitalist Britain's economic position in the world at large. It is true that the pound has been saved for the time being from devaluation by American help in obtaining credit from the International Monetary Fund and a release from a debt of loan interest. However, the immense fall in the gold reserves by 279 million dollars in November, largely as the result of speculation against the pound reveals only too clearly how little confidence foreign and native capitalists have in Britain at the present time.

This is after a lengthy period of Tory cheddar-giving in an effort to strengthen the British economy—after we have been subjected to a credit squeeze, higher interest rates (which have crippled the housing programme), reduced subsidies and increased purchase tax. How much weaker still will capitalist Britain be as the result of the closure of Suez?

First and foremost, of course, the problem of selling enough to obtain the dollars required for American goods has been greatly increased. Three-quarters of Britain's oil supplies are normally obtained via Suez and the Iraq Petroleum Company's pipeline in Syria both of which have been blocked. To make good even part of the deficiency in oil supplies, therefore, will run up an immense new dollar bill.

Insofar as the deficit is not made good, the economy will be crippled for lack of a commodity second in importance only to coal. Already the blow which has been inflicted on private motoring has hit the car industry which is traditionally in some way connected. Road transport is also gravely affected. These troubles have been made worse by the heavy increase in the cost of petrol. All industries which are directly or indirectly dependent on the use of oil fuel lie under the same threat.

Industry is also affected by the shortage of other raw materials from the Far East. The quantity of already oil seeds, fibres, rubber and ores apart from oil normally come to Britain via the Suez, and in import of these commodities will not help the British economy, despite the play that has been made over the favourable November balance of payments figures which largely resulted from it. The truth is that the British import bill has been cut partly by the reduction of vital supplies. Exports will inevitably drop as well when the full effects of these reductions are felt.

1957

This year promises to be a good one for the British Labour Movement. The Tories' Suez War and its consequences have shown that the ugly face of Western capitalism is not merely a cartoon but a reality; the brutal oppression in Hungary has shown that the other side of the Iron Curtain is equally frightful a reality. The Labour Movement is on the high road to learning, through it's own experience, the way to Third Camp, International Socialism for which this journal is a standard bearer.

We hope that 1957 will be a good year for us, too. Make our paper sell, readers!

This Issue includes:

Discussion Forum: Nationalised Coal and Socialised Industry.

Eye-Witness in Budapest.

Fathers and Sons in the Trade Unions.

Ex-The Unknown

Cassia's Calumny, etc. etc.

The Voice of International Socialism rings through the Iron Curtain--By Owen Roberts

Last month Milovan Djilas, former vice-president of Yugoslavia, was hauled before a court in Belgrade and sentenced to three years' hard labour. His "crime" was that he spoke up for democracy, or, in the language of Titoism, "hostile propaganda against the state." But, in bringing Djilas to trial, Tito exposed quite clearly the similarity of his regime with that of the "Stalinism" he professes to despise. And he also showed how afraid are the rulers of the so-called People's Democracies of the growth of real independent Socialist thought.

Djilas first began to slip from favour in December, 1953, when—at a special congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party—other Titoist leaders attacked him because he had suggested that Yugoslavia's revolution was decaying. Djilas's attitude at this time was not alarming heretical; he had merely said that ugly vices were becoming apparent in the Yugoslav Communist Party.

Local party officials, he said, were taking bribes and showing favours. The wives of leading party members were getting ahead of themselves—forming social cliques and rushing to drape themselves in the latest Paris fashion. But even these mild criticisms were sufficient to put the skids under Djilas. Very soon he was stripped of his positions and expelled from the party. His fall from grace was accompanied by that of Dedijer—another leading opponent of Djilas. The official biography of Tito, Dedijer's "crime" was that he dared to speak up for Djilas.

Later, in 1955, Djilas got into even hotter water with the Titoist rulers of Yugoslavia. Denied means to state his views in his own country, Djilas gave an interview to an American newspaper in which he outlined a series of proposals which he thought would take Yugoslavia along the road to a Socialist Democracy. Again the heavy hand of the police descended and Djilas was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment. An outcry by world Socialists, however, caused Tito to have second thoughts and the sentence on Djilas was suspended although he was kept under continuous police surveillance.

The recent "hostile propaganda" for which Djilas is now serving his three years' sentence was contained in an article published in the American News Leader and subsequently re-published by Tribune in Britain. In this article Djilas denounced Soviet intervention in Hungary, spotlighted the rôle of the Titoist propaganda that had created for Communist governments in the East the image of a party presenting a new identity of interest between Moscow and Belgrade notwithstanding their occasional squabbles.

Basically, said Djilas, the Russian and Yugoslav regimes are the same. [continued on next page]
He was in Budapest

By Gerry Howard

At a time when everyone interested in politics is eagerly attempting to probe behind the Iron Curtain and behind official statements and interpretations of the events in Hungary, any eyewitness account of what actually took place would be incredibly interesting. Peter Fryer's book, Hungarian Tragedy (Dennis Dobson), is freely given since it is also the work of one who is at this moment an extremely controversial figure in the British Labour Movement.

Anyone who reads this book hardly fail to be impressed by the passion and energy with which he writes. The bodies of the eighty unarmed demonstrators shot down by the police were not meted blood on their clothing; the lynching of the wounded Lieutenant Stofock, responsibility for which is being handed over on a stretcher; the noise and bumble of the delegates to the National Committee with their rifles slung over their shoulders—all these things must move anyone with a heart stouter than stone.

A Workers' Revolution

But apart from the stirring stories of heroism and the terrible scenes of sheer horror—reading like a sequel to John Reed's classic account of the Russian Revolution—"Ten Days that Shook the World," the reader who really wishes to know what is going on in Hungary will wish to find the answer to his questions about the character of the uprising. Was it directly or indirectly a workers' revolution—were the revolutionaries, was there a real chance that capitalism would be restored, or was it a workers' revolution? Fryer leaves us in no doubt about the answer to this question. Speaking of the Budapest State, he says:

"They were at once organs of insurrection—the coming together of the dockers, the workers in the factories, the students, the universities, mines and any units and organs of popular self-government... it is no exaggeration to say that..."

Iron Curtain

They are both systems of exploitation and control by a new ruling class. The break between Yugoslavia and Russia was merely the resistance of the Yugoslav Communist leaders to Moscow domination, and came about because in Yugoslavia—unlike the other Eastern European countries—the so-called People's Democracy had not depended upon the Soviet army for its establishment, derived from amongst workers.

The Hungarian revolution, continued Djilas, placed Stalinist- or Titoist regimes on the spot because—had it succeeded in establishing political democracy and the social ownership of production—it would have demonstrated that totalitarianism practiced in those countries was bound to be a step backwards for the workers. The Hungarian Revolution threatened to reveal the Soviet internal system as the totalitarian domination of a new exploiting class—the Party bureaucracy," said Djilas.

He concluded by saying that the Hungarian revolution had blazed a path which, sooner or later, other communist countries must follow. He marked, he said, the beginning of the end of "Communism" generally. In the revolt, a revolution which Djilas not only earned himself a three-year spell in one of Tito's jails, he also demonstrated how a Socialist country—such as he still considers the Yugoslavia, USSR and China to be—could be possibly the bent of so many ideas and practices, so utterly different from its constitutional nationalism. Does not that suggest—as it has often been argued in these columns—the Yugoslav system has a different character from that of Stalin's empire than the regime that perpetuates similar crimes in Kenya and South Africa?

Whatever the conclusions, however—whether the state is the Manichean symbol for a complete revolution or the final stage of democracy—the point is essential reading for anyone in Britain who wishes to understand the great wave of events which swept over the past few months in Hungary.

A Letter from Paris Shows WHO MADE THE HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The distortions of the capitalist press have veiled the fact that the Hungarian revolution was essentially a proletarian revolution, led by a working class conscious of its goal—Socialism. Quite understandably, the bourgeois and capitalist newspapers and magazines have depicted the struggle as a civil war and the Workers' Party as a prolongation of the old royalist parties. Quite understandably it suggests that all the Hungarian workers wanted was the supreme well-being enjoyed by the workers in Western capitalist countries.

The Communist Party press, equally understandably, does not emphasize the socialist nature of the revolution. Andre Stel, a leader of the French Communist Party and editor of its daily, L'Huma, asserts that the Hungarian insurrection was led by Catholic reactionaries. He has also admitted that the Moskow and Voroshilov workers were in the forefront of the struggle and that it was the peasants who remained relatively passive to the régime. (L'Huma, December 18, 1956), and we know that it is precisely the working class and the youth who are always the spearhead of the struggle for Socialism.

Workers take the lead

It is clear that a class conscious proletariat took the lead in Hungary. Again and again, what happened was that the workers and youth of the district—mainly in the coal and uranium mines of the Baranya district, the coal mines, steel works and power stations of the Borodoi district; the town Miskolc, the centre of the electrical industry; Gyöngyö, a heavy industry centre; Szeged, a university city and the third largest in Hungary; Szolnok, a centre of the iron industry; Győr, an industrial centre. This list shows that the base of the Revolution was in the centre, in the capital and in the industrial areas.

The role of the trade councils

The workers spontaneously organized a system of trade councils—workers' councils or Soviets—which became the nucleus of the whole struggle. These trade councils which sprang up in different parts of the country immediately faced the task of federating. The workers were grouping towards the establishment of a Soviet Republic. As an example of the trades councils' activities, take one in Miskolc, elected the most important trade union on October 24 by all the workers in the town. It organized itself as a government of the district; formed a workers' militia; declared and organized a strike in all industries except the power stations, public transport and the hospitals; and sent a delegation to Budapest to maintain contact with the revolutionary workers in the capital. In a broadcast on October 27, the Council of Miskolc declared that it had taken power in the whole region of Borodoi.

It put forward the following demands: Withdrawal of Russian troops, formation of a new government, a general amnesty for all revolutionaries and the right to strike. In a broadcast on October 25, the Council demanded, "a government containing democratic elements, the control of the workers and the principle of proletarian internationalism." Another workers' council, of Szekesfehervar, demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops, and workers' control of factories.

On October 26 the Hungarian trade unions demanded, amongst other things, the formation of a national council of the workers and youth; the formation of councils in all industries; the abolition of norms of production; an increase in wages; a decrease in wage disputes; and the establishment of a maximum wage.

Workers and peasants

These demands are profoundly Socialist. What has confused the clear Socialist outline of the Revolution has been the fact that the peasantry and the petty-bourgeoisie, although united with the workers in the struggle for Socialism, have yet posed demands with an emphasis different from that of the working class. The Hungarian government acceded to it. These demands that received the greatest prominence in the capitalist press.

But there is no doubt that the workers' councils later and controlled the Revolution. Did not Kadar admit as much, in deep contradiction with the official press, and with them, later when he had to dissolve the Central Workers' Councils of Budapest in order to break the back of the Revolution? Even the peasantry, while politically more confused than the workers, showed as much by their unity with them (as in the days of the Russian Revolution) and by the fact that when the puppet Kadar government was trying to starve the workers of Budapest by reducing the distribution of food to the workers. DONA PAPERT.

P.S.—Most of the facts cited were taken from a pamphlet published by the French journal, Socialisme ou Barbarie entitled "Insurrection Hongroise."
Discussion of the Socialist
Program:

NA T I O N A L I S E D COAL AND
SOCIALISED INDUSTRY

It is impossible, in the space of a few thousand words to discuss most of the major issues in a few pages of a weekly paper, an important and interesting industry as coal mining. The following article therefore does not claim to be exhaustive and is intended merely as a contribution to discussion.

PRIVATE OWNERS' MISMANAGEMENT

The coal industry, before 1939, presented a sad picture of stagnation and decay. Continued depression of the main power-using industries and competition from continental producers and power stations such as gas and electricity all contributed to this situation.

Short time working was common and the leisure situation in the coalfields revealed nothing so much as a primitive struggle for subsistence between man and man as well as between men and management. Vicious and degrading systems of labour sub-contracting were responsible for these antagonisms between the miners themselves. They were probably used by the management in attempts for this very reason.

The industry was composed of numerous, often quite small, units arranged in an unco-ordinated pattern of ownership. It lacked completely the capital or inclination to adapt itself to changed economic circumstances. As a result, the capitalist class, as a whole, intervened with various government schemes of "nationalisation" or, rather, cartellisation.

The "remedy" actually aggravated the situation. Instead of having the small holder leave the mining business, the various schemes were aimed at keeping all concerns, even the hypocritical, in the operation. Most of the working units were already below optimum size. Now they were all to work at below optimum capacity in the bargain. This represented a tremendous waste of resources.

But state interference led even more crazy occurrences. In South Wales, large coal, for which too high a price had been fixed was broken up into small. In Liverpool, ships were loaded with coal for fire, taken out of the Mersey and then brought back to the other side of the harbour. There they were unloaded to take advantage of the higher price. No export or import coal, fixed by the government, was ever more marked during the 1939-45 war, little money was spent on the mines and the process of decay continued.

PROBLEMS INHERITED BY N.C.B.

After the war, the situation on the "demand side" was to be entirely different. Previously, the most important task which the capitalists had set themselves had been to reduce output. The National Coal Board was to become faced with the problem of how to produce enough coal.

Two tremendous obstacles faced the Board when it first took over: First, coal extraction inevitably shows a historical tendency to increasing costs. When mines are started, the easiest seams are usually worked first. After these are tackled the deeper, thinnier, less accessible, more contorted and faulted ones.

This involves a progressive historical increase in costs unless the organisation and techniques employed improve. Efficiency at an equal rate, measured in terms of cost. More money has to be spent on shafts, pricey excavations, lighting, transport, ventilation, etc., all of which are reflected in a rising overall cost of coal.

The second obstacle, coupled with the first, was that of making up for the many years of neglect and loss of capital up with all the arrears in capital investment.

According to the report of the Reid Committee (1945), the industry was in a very sorry technical state indeed, accounting for the cost of coal.

Units were much too small for efficient operation and ought to be amalgamated. Roads should be driven independently of seams, instead of following them, thus cutting out sharp curves, gradients and circuitous routes.

These measures would enable modern methods of transporting coal and men to be employed. Electricity ought to be introduced extensively. There ought to be centralised works of facilities. There was a shortage of skilled planners, engineers and managers. Possibly the best comment on this is that, between the wars, a whole generation of skilled shaft-boomers was allowed to drift away from the industry. After nationalisation, the NCB actually had to import the necessary skilled personnel from Germany!

WHAT THE N.C.B. DID

How did the Board tackle these problems? In 1950 a document was issued, "Plan for Coal", which aimed at a fifteen year plan of development. During that time, production increased by 50% and exports by 20 million tons per annum. 20 large new collieries would be established, most of the sinkings being scheduled for the "conceded" areas on the Eastern edge of the Yorks-Notts-Derby field.

Obviously, the benefits from this type of investment will not be felt for a long time yet—the sinking of a single shaft might take as long as ten years. Thus, one can see how stupid it is to complain about current deficits when possible, as in 1954, investments total more than double the deficit.

The Board has not been content with the mere expansion of production. Great emphasis has been placed on lighting, ventilation and dust suppression in attempts to cut down health risks to the workers. Much money is being spent on these subjects at the Central Research Establishment. Under private ownership, none of the little concerns could afford such research or introduce such luxuries. Anyway, where were the profits from such expenditure?

Much money has also been spent on the provision of pithead baths, houses, welfare facilities, canteens, clubs and even football pitches. Much of this is, of course, aimed at making the industry more attractive to new entrants—and it can and is never attempted before, on any sizeable scale.

THE CONSUMER GAINS

Yes, but what about the consumer? He doesn't seem to be doing too well out of all this.

Actually, the consumer is doing alright. The pithead price of coal has been kept down, proportionately, than the average wholesale prices of other consumer goods. There are good historical

BY PETER W. REED

sided by the ordinary consumer in this way? In most cases, it would appear that the NCB is bound by contracts which it took over from the private owners (i). But it is difficult to make detailed comment here because the figures are not available. The NUM which does appear to possess such information is unequivocal in its condemnation of the practice. Full publication of such agreements would be a good amiable solution.

Another unfair burden placed on the Board is that of bearing the loss on imported foreign coal. In accordance with government policy, the NCB is obliged to export as much coal as possible. But, in addition to this "public duty", it has also the responsibility of maintaining adequate home supplies.

If home production sage of if domestic demand experiences a seasonal increase, foreign coal has to be imported at the same time as home coal is being exported.

Not only has the coal to be brought all the way from America, sometimes, but, to inadequate unloading facilities, the coal is then charged over and over having been imported before—it has to be transferred to smaller vessels at Amsterdam and brought back across the North Sea to England. With this extra breakage of bulk added to the burden, the cost of imported coal makes such a loss on imported coal.

THE IDEA OF WORKERS' MANAGEMENT

Nowadays there is much controversy over the structure of the National Coal Board, but few of the critics seem to realise that the miners obtained exactly what they wanted. Indeed, it is instructive to note the way the miners, themselves, have changed their minds about the organisation of their industry.

For example, in a document entitled "The Mines for the Nation" published in 1920, Henry H. Slesor gives details of a Bill proposed by the Miners' Federation of Great Britain in which a mining council, consisting of eleven members appointed by the government and ten by the miners, would run the nationalised industry. The administration of the individual collieries was to be vested in a Pit Council of which half the members would be miners.

Readers, we have set aside these centre pages for serious discussion and for contributions to Socialist theory. We believe that we are unique in this country in being able to offer a forum for serious socialists who are committed to neither Washington nor Moscow but to International Socialism. We believe that such people will not be frightened by the "harshness" of the material in this section—our forum.
NATIONALISATION
continued

This point has particular weight in the coal industry where the managerial organisation is, to a large degree, determined by the area level. The Area General Manager is in charge of specialist departments of production, such as mining, engineering and coal. The manager must possess considerable knowledge of colliery engineering, mining and practical geology. A committee of ordinary workers from the industry, whatever their personal qualifications, will not be able to cope with such a situation.

QUESTIONS OF PROMOTION

What one should look for inside the industry is whether there is an "open ladder" of promotion. It is there in the form of the Ladder Plan by which the Board is attempting to train its own personnel to fill the highest positions of trust and responsibility. It is doubtful whether the rank and file workers of any industry can have ever had such opportunities to rise to the top positions.

Remarkable incentives are given to younger workers to attend sandwich courses, dayrelease and evening courses. The Board even sends its more promising young men to University.

IMPERFECTIONS OF COAL BOARD

Does all this mean that the Coal Board is perfect? Far from it! Many of the labour unions can be blamed on the part played by the Board. Delays in dealing with wage disputes often put industry in the black. Little has been done to eradicate the archaic, uncivilised, pre-historic, wage structure which was inherited from the previous owners. Many glaring workman anomalies which are a frequent cause of friction. The miners suspect, often with reason, that officials are trying to sabotage nationalisation. They think that officials who are appointed to positions of great importance ought to have to pass a loyalty test on the principles of public ownership.

WORKERS' NOT INTERESTED IN CONTROL

But these are not grievances directed against the basic form of nationalisation. They are structural modifications within the present framework. These are the issues with which miners are concerned. Certainly they do not have the slightest interest in workers' control or management.

What machinery of consultation do the present unions represent? The main source of interest on the part of the men is that they have a say in their lives. Their gripes against the centralising societies particularly for bearing grievances of the several parties represented is that they are bodied up to making final decisions on policy and organisation. It is for this reason that, in spite of propaganda and ideology, no nationalised industry has direct representatives of the labour it employs on its governing boards."

At present, the men exhibit a tough, but ephemeral, militancy over local issues. But, significantly, the Board is very sensitive to these local demands. At one colliery in Yorkshire, a few years ago, the miners went on strike to get rid of their manager. They succeeded!

And it would be difficult to imagine a closer union-management relationship than that between the NCB and NUM. It is very sensitive to these local demands. When the union cards are no longer issued, the colliery clerks deducting union dues from wages will be forced to pay union dues if fired by the colliery.

Lastly, we have to deal with the inévitable nationalisation of the coal industry, which will greet the views stated above. A frequent, if not well-founded argument, is that nationalisation is not as important as democracy. Even if the workers do not want what is described as "industrial democracy", it should be foisted on them. The answer to this should be quite obvious.

IMPROTANCE OF EFFICIENCY

As far as the view that efficiency is relatively unimportant, this is quite at variance with one of the fundamental ideas of Marxism: the emphasis on the expansion of the forces of production. Indeed, in the classical Marxist dialectical materialism, the forces of production is the key to the millennium.

Many socialists have tended uncritically to accept certain vague formulas concerning workers' management or control. At the same time they have failed to answer the charges made about the nationalisation of the forces of production. By this article I raise any controversy regarding these issues, its author will consider that the writing of it has been well worthwhile.

Notes to article:

(i) See TUC 76th, Annual Conference Report, pp. 400, para. Form of Public Ownership, No. 8.


For the American Political Scene Read

LABOR ACTION
Obtainable from us
We are very happy to publish Comrade Reed’s article on Nationalised Coal and Socialist Industry. In a contribution to the discussion on this subject which is of such vital importance to the Labour Movement, he finds it extremely informative and lucid. However, we believe it is necessary for a basic deficiency quite commonly found in our movement in that it fails to deal with the social aspect, the class content, of the nationalised mining industry.

For lack of space, we shall have to confine our comments to the major points of difference between us and Comrade Reed. (We refer only to such questions, important as they are, of compensation payments to the owners who ruined the lives of generations of miners.)

**COAL — PART OF CAPITALIST ECONOMY**

Comrade Reed considers the mining industry in isolation from the capitalist system. It will be realized that it is simply the essence of socialism and formalism to say that “the British nationalised industries, in themselves, are neither capitalist nor socialistic” and to stop there. We have only to look at the basic decisions on wages, prices and investment policies and how they are taken to see how meaningless the statement is.

The demand for coal depends on conditions in the private capitalist economy. If there were general over-production with too many cars, too much steel, too many machines in the market; in other words, if we were faced with a slump as in the “bitter winter” with two or three million unemployed, the demand for coal would drop considerably and the prices employed spread to the pits. If, as is usual under such conditions, wages were under pressure generally, there is no question that miners’ wages would be a target for the offensive as well.

Finally, the ceiling on coal prices is determined directly or indirectly by international capitalist competition. Car exports, machinery exports, shipbuilding and the rest are under pressure to keep their costs low. That pressure is a basic determinant of the price of coal.

In other words, where the nationalised sector of the economy forms only a small part of the whole and where general economic planning does not exist the running of a nationalised industry is determined by just those elements which determine the running of any individual capitalist enterpris, namely the anarchy of international competition.

**WHICH POWER TO HIRE AND FIRE**

Comrade Reed fails to appreciate the class significance of the organisational functions of National Coal Board.

It is true, as he suggests, that in every advanced economy, whether capitalist or socialist, technicians are necessary for production. Who would deny it? But the relations between technicians or managers and workers today are certainly not derived from technical considerations alone, or even basically from such considerations. On the contrary, they reflect rather fundamental social relations.

In a private firm the manager appoints his deputies. These appoint sections managers who, appoint foremen etc. Instructions come from the top downwards. Hiring and firing decisions also travel downwards. And the same applies to the nationalised mining industry where the miner is subject to the discipline and direction of a whole host of officials from the deputy immediately above him, through the overman, the deputy manager, the manager, and so on up to the board itself. And the NCB itself does not decide on its directives arbitrarily. It is, as we have already seen, subject to the pressures generated in the anarchic competitive capitalist economy of which the mines are a part.

Two forms of organisation, two kinds of discipline, two kinds of promotion in one economy for any length of time. There is no half man, half slave.

**OPEN LADDER**

And what of the “open ladder of promotion” about which Comrade Reed speaks? We might well ask him who are the criteria of promotion? Will the militant miner active in the defence of his comrades be the one to climb up the ladder of promotion? Or will a deputy from the ranks be less obnoxious to workers than someone else? Experience has proved otherwise. The fact that Ford started at the bottom rung has not endeared him to his workers despite the American myth.

**OWNERSHIP, CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT**

In dealing with the question of workers’ control Comrade Reed falls into the common error of not distinguishing between three different functions: ownership, control and management.

At the dawn of capitalism, when the individual factory was usually quite small, it was normal for the capital to fill all three: he owned it, controlled it (in the sense of making all the operational decisions on the policy of the firm) and personally managed it. Today, in all the big corporations, ownership by shareholders is usually divorced from control by the big financial or industrial families and board and far removed from management which is exercised by (highly paid) salaried employees.

We can expect that after the overthrow of capitalism and during the first years of socialism, ownership will be in the hands of the state which, in turn, will be “owned” by the working class collectively. There is no question of Guild Socialism here: each factory will be owned by its own workers, nor will there be the question of competition and conflicts between various factories arise. Management will continue to be the job of technicians, but control over them will be in the hands of the workers. Of course, the exact mechanism of this control and the delimitation of the areas of control of the various bodies representing the working class is a question of great importance, but it is one that cannot be entered into here.

**LENNIN OUT OF CONTEXT**

When referring to Lenin, Comrade Reed forgets the context of Lenin’s remarks. Lenin started from the basic assumption that the means of production were owned by the workers’ state, that is by the workers’ collective organisation. Secondly, he assumed the existence of a planned economy. Under such conditions, every growth in production would be in the workers’ interest and, yet, even in these conditions one-man management was very much subject to the control of the workers. Thus the Bolshevik Party made it clear in its programme (adopted at the 8th Party Congress, March 18th to 25th, 1919) that:

> the trade unions must in the fullest possible measure induce the workers to participate directly in the work of economic administration. The participation of the trade unions in the conduct of economic life, and the involvement by them of the broad masses of the people in this work, would appear at the same time to be our chief aid in the campaign against the bureaucratisation of the economic apparatus of the Soviet Personel. This will facilitate the establishment of an effective popular control over the results of production.

The Party cells participated in the running of industry together with the workers’ plant committees. Together with these, and under their control, worked the technical manager; the combination of these three formed the basic unit of workers control in Revolutionary Russia, the first to be axed by the bureaucratic reaction.

(By the way, Comrade Reed to the necessary, Lenin did not say that with the nationalisation of the unions but the unionisation of the state as a way of bringing unions and states together. This is certainly unlike the present, "ideal" relations between the NCB and the NUM.)

**THE APATHY ARGUMENT**

Finally, Comrade Reed bolsters up his argument by saying that the miners “do not have the slightest interest in workers’ control or management.” Why on earth, then, is it a basic plank in every revolutionary socialist platform?

A similar argument has often been used to defend bureaucratic rule in the trade unions. The Bevinites and the Dookins and the contemporary followers in their footsteps trot out the fact that only 4 or 5 per cent. of union members attend branch meetings and pretend that it means a silent vote of confidence.

**WHY THIS APATHY**

It is a fact, a sad fact, that the overwhelming majority of miners, as well as workers in other industries, are not interested in workers’ control. But we should understand why.

First, there is the existence of bureaucracy which has, in state, union and party, accustomed the worker to let decisions go by default. Second, every worker knows that the economy of the country runs according to certain rules of a capitalist game which would require more than the effort of one man or even a group of workers to change. Third, like every other enterprise, the nationalised mining industry keeps its books tightly shut. As Comrade Reed states, even the price of coal is not publicly known. How can one expect any interest in control where the resources with which to change are known only to a group of privileged bureaucrats?

Finally, and this is the most important of all, it must be realised that under capitalism, the money nexus rules supreme. When coal is in great demand and miners hard to come by, wages will be good at the pits. Why worry about control while the sun shines, is quite a normal reaction in such circumstances.

Of course, by the same token, conditions of insecurity and unemployment will change the miners’ attitude quite quickly. After all, the majority of workers do not attend trade union meetings—until there is a strike. Apathy towards the question of control is as fleeting as the stability of capitalism.
PLEKHANOV : THE FATHER OF RUSSIAN MARXISM

By Tony Cliff

A hundred years ago, on December 11, 1856, George Valentinovich Plekhanov was born. As the father of Russian Marxism and precursor of the Russian workers’ movement, his name has been very prominent in the pages of Socialist Review.

The greatness of his historical contribution can be gauged only when set against the background of the anti-Tsarist liberal movement as it existed prior to his work.

THE POPULISTS

For decades already the heroic acts of individual terrorism directed against the Tsarist regime by the Populists (Narodniki) had captured the imagination of the Socialists. Herzen, one of the fore-runners of Populism, stated the belief of these fighters: “The future is in Russian hands, just as in France it is the workers.” (A. Herzen, Collected Works, Russian Petrograd, 1919-25, Vol. 6, pp. 245-246.) The peasants, argued the Populists, could pass straight into the new messianic stage of capitalism, by basing themselves on the mir—the Russian village commune. Under the system the land of the village, except for that on which the peasants themselves grew their housegardens and the small plot which surrounded them, was the property of the whole village. Part was used as common property and the rest was divided into strips, a certain number of which were allotted to each family according to its size. From time to time the land was redivided among the peasants. In the mir the Populists visualised the peasants as the standard-bearers of the future.

PLEKANOV DISCOVERS THE RUSSIAN WORKING CLASS

However, history mapped its path out differently. Before Plekhanov’s time, Russian socialism was developing in Russia, that new class of wage-workers was coming into being, and that the mir was disintegrating.

As early as the end of 1879 and the beginning of 1879, large scale workers’ strikes and disturbances broke out in the centres of Russian industry, and Plekhanov, at the time a Populist, was forced to recognise that the working class, born of this developing capitalism, would play a part in the coming Russian revolution. In a leading article in a Narodnik paper, Lenina Volo, on 20th February 1879, he candidly wrote: “The agitation of the factory workers which has continuously grown since the disturbances broke out in the centres of Russian industrial life, occupies everybody’s attention, compels us to deal earlier than we had thought with the role which the workers should play in this organisation of the revolution.”

The working man, he candidly wrote, “The workers’ consciousness is not limited to the immediate, but occupies everybody’s attention, compels us to deal earlier than we had thought with the role which the workers should play in this organisation of the revolution.”

PLEKANOV BECOMES A MARXIST

In Socialism and the Political Struggle (1883) he exposed the main faults of the Populists and counterposed to their ideas the principles of Marxism. The importance of his ideas prompted Lenin to compare this pamphlet with the Communist Manifesto for its effect on the Russian working class movement. The next year, in reply to the attacks of the Populists, Plekhanov published another outstanding pamphlet, Our Differences, which Engels called a turning point in the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia.

In these works and others that followed, Plekhanov applied the method of analysis of Russian reality. Although he was not the only socialist who argued that materialism or historical materialism and had not actually enriched them with new discoveries, he nevertheless carried out the important task of introducing them into Russian life, so as to provide a method of brilliant works. With great strength of expression, precision and beauty, inside of economy and production of the “mir”? he had been working on a permanent and promising one place among the Socialists.

Socialism in a Backward Country

Considering the youthfulness and small size of the Russian working class, and the backwardness of the country’s productive forces, Plekhanov time and again worried that the Russian proletariat would lose a large part of its power. To prevent this, he endeavoured to help them by initiating the working class movement in the towns and agitating in the villages. He was now just a step forward in the development of the Russian working class movement.

The overthrow of Tsarist absolutism would be effected neither by the peasants nor the cowardly bourgeoisie, but by the working class. Plekhanov had long been aware of this.

How well history has confirmed this prophesy of Plekhanov.

PLEKANOV: A FORERUNNER

The course of history did not contradict Plekhanov’s formulation of the alternatives facing a revolutionary socialist government and the Tsarist Russian revolution, isolated by the defeat of the German Social Democrats, the general weakness and lack of coordination which led to the rise of a new totalitarian, an authoritarian, exploitative bureaucracy, the Russian liberal bourgeoisie, a new division of society into an exploitating and an exploited class.

PLEKANOV: A GOOD SOCIALIST

In his last days, Plekhanov was not among the best Socialists. But a small group of Socialists, led by the new generation of Socialists, has shown that Plekhanov’s ideas were not in vain. In the last year of his life, he showed that the working class can move from one sphere to another, and in the last year of his life, he showed the necessity of the socialist revolution.

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FATHERS and SONS in the TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

By TOM HERBERT

Last year some 613,000 boys and girls left school, the majority being younger than those of adults, they began drawing reasonable wages packets compared to those received by pre-war school-leavers.

Now, however, there are signs that their time is nearing an end. They are the first of the younger leavers. On the one hand the economic consequences of the war in Egypt and the credit squeeze will make it harder to find jobs—particularly in areas containing a large proportion of industries now feeling the pinch. Coupled with this the number of school leavers in the coming years is going to rise rapidly. In five years the number of youngsters leaving the age of 15 will be 930,000—almost half as many again as last year. This will undoubtedly mean more competition for available employment among younger workers.

Double-talk in Officialise

The recent report of the National Youth Employment Council, when looking at this situation, endeavours to allay the fears of employers and their parents. It first makes the assumption that there will be no change in the industrial position, and then says that the extra flow of school leavers into the labour market will soon be replaced by younger women and that there should be no increase in unemployment among young workers.

Having made this sweeping assertion the Council then proceeds to demonstrate that unemployment will be higher for younger workers in the future.

"It may, however, take longer for young persons to be absorbed into employment on leaving school and there may be some lengthening of the average period of unemployment in changing jobs. In addition, it may prove more difficult to find openings for disabled and other handicapped persons than in recent years when the demand for young workers has persistently exceeded the supply."

"Stripped of Civil Service jargon, this quote from the Council's report is a warning to future young workers that the brief honeymoon is over. It means that things are going to get progressively harder and, as is usual in a capitalist economy, it means that those who need help most—the young and handicapped—are going to be among the early sufferers."

The dead-end job

One of the consequences of this situation is that young persons starting work will not be able to look around for the job which best suits their abilities and preferences. They will be forced to jump into the first job that comes along, or else join the lengthening queue of young people at the labour exchanges. The old evil of blindfolding will once again make its appearance.

A second consequence of the situation is that there will be a greater number of wage rates for young people. Prior to the war young workers generally received very low wages—even by standards in a capitalist country—and very often performed an adult job. Since the beginning of the war the position has changed considerably and wages for young workers have risen more than adult rates.

With thousands more young persons looking for scarce jobs the employers will try to revert to pre-war practices. Juvenile wage rates will be lowered and young workers will be more and more expected to take on jobs better suited to more adult workers.

Unions' attitudes

This clearly points out a big job which the trade union movement must undertake. It must place more emphasis on organising young workers and must set up special machinery for dealing with their problems.

Some unions already do this. The AEU, for instance, goes out of its way to interest young engineering workers and holds a special youth conference each year. But, by and large, the trade union movement is apathetic and very, very, often, outright antagonistic, to the need for giving special consideration to young workers.

"Elders" fear youth

An indication of the prevailing mood among many leading the unions can be gathered from the fate of a resolution moved by the Clerical and Legal Workers' Union at last year's Trades Union Congress. The resolution, which asked the TUC to set up a National Youth Advisory Committee to hold an annual youth conference, was defeated on a show of hands after leading trade unions had given the impression that they will be willing allies in the struggle for Socialism.

EX THE UNKNOWN

By M. PAUL

Where will the ExCPer go in this wintertime of disillusion? "Will they disappear from the political scene—to form a new ideological stratum on the mound of disintegrated imperialism?" is a question that haunts the product of Stalinism? Doublesim some will but the great majority will remain politically active. For they are, by their very nature, political—without the warmth of the collective, the selfless dedication, the never-ending activity, they would surely succumb to the trivia of aimless existence, and atrophy. What will be the future of those whose inspiration is no longer the fervor of the Daily Rákosi material but the antidote of Marxist thought and study free from Stalinist taboos?

The trends have emerged among them—the formation of a new organisation (political party or Marxist student body?)—which, while they try to enter into the Labour Party, the latter being generally regarded as the very last refuge, it is well known that the convening of an elec-

tive CP Congress at Easter has not only halted the flow of resignations by postwar elements who returned to the CP and the crisis but has also slowed the development of those already resigned. For, if the composition of the party is undergoing changes, many of them will certainly reconsider membership.

Is it a victory of the opposition a possibility?

The cards are certainly stacked against them. They are handicapped by the loss of many of their best leaders, the lack of cohesion and means of expression, and a naive estimation of their opponents. The Stalinists have the advantage of the Party machine and press, decades of experience in political and organisational intrigue, and mastery of the black art of the meaningless con- cession, the false retreat, the isolation of oppositional figures, but not, as in other countries, the backing of the Soviet Army.

If, as seems likely, the Congress will reveal the omnipotence of the Pollitts, the Trefmans and the Collans at every turn, the "ExC" now existing its awaiting outcome will be joined by at least several more indexes of the practical consideration of alternatives to the discredited Com- munist Party will be given fresh impetus.

A pointer to the future has been the formation of the Nottingham Marxism Group, twelve of the members of whom forming four sub-groups (including four CP members, three CP Branch Secretaries and two YCL District Conveners) have issued a pamphlet in which they trace the stages which led to their resignation from the CP and the formation of the Group. This pamphlet ("Why we left the Communist Party," price 3d.) is now a considerable success, widely read for the accurate insight it gives, despite its brevity, into the genesis of the "ExC."

The impression which emerges is that the present CP crisis differs not in depth or extent from previous crises but in kind. All previous upheavals have left unchallenged the basic fabric of the CP—the "socialism" of the Soviet Union, the "greatness" of Stalin, the "indispensability" of the Communist Party, the "integrity" of the leadership. This upheaval has seen the faith discredited, questioned piece by piece—and found wanting. Whatever the future of the "ExC" the lessons learned in these months will probably prove decisive in the struggles to come. The "ExC" is now a cadre in at least one sense—he knows how NOT to build a mass democratic party. But does he know HOW?

We believe that Comrade Paul (who represents the Nottingham Marxism Group) is wrong in insisting that there is a need to build a mass democratic party. We believe that the task facing the left-wing in the Labour Movement is not so much the building of a party but the strengthening of the democratic elements within the mass party that already exists, the Labour Party. In this connection, we should like to point out that the members of the Nottingham Marxist Group men- tioned by Mr. Paul are now members of the Labour Party—Editor.

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COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS all over the world have been digging deep into their pockets, in an effort to find reasons which justify the use of Soviet troops against Hungary. The story, like a well-dug quilt as deep as Ajay Ghosh, the general secretary of the Indian Communist, and close comrade of Rajiv Palme Dutt, vice-chairman of the British Communist Party, writing in the Indian CP journal New Age, Ghosh produced an original apologia for the Stalinist crime in Hungary. After trotting out the stock excuses—that Russian aggression was in the interest of world peace, Socialism in its present form is necessary, and generally both arrive at this conclusion? Or perhaps Palme Dutt has too many worries in Britain at the moment.

The British Productivity Council devotes its time to telling British workers and, less frequently, their bosses, to adopt certain methods of work. It is supported by both employer's organisations and the trade union and no less than three government boards. The TUC General Council take part in its activities.

Recently the deputy director of the BPC issued nationwide press publicise for himself when he said:

"indispensable for mental and physical agility to avoid doing a fair day's work that it does to do. You can also have a rest of your head, the grapevine in operation, and an ear to the bash telegraph. I have seen a few times during the end of an eight-hour day by the exertion of avoiding work,"

"Last Monts Mr. Harold Watkinson, Tory Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, closed ranks with the same old guardsman, Hugh Gaitskell. "As long as Mr. Gaitskell remains leader of the opposition," he said, "it will never be possible to return to bipartisanship between the main parties on foreign affairs."

"Less than a week after this outburst Sir Hartley Shawcross, Labour MP for St. Helens and former Labour Attorney General, had something to say on foreign affairs. "No matter who is in office, Tory or Labour," he said, "in matters of foreign policy there is only room for a British policy."

THE SOCIALIST Review stands for international socialist democracy. It opposes all forms of economic assistance to the people of the underdeveloped countries. It opposes all forms of racial discrimination. Equal rights and trade union protection to all workers without regard to their country of origin. Freedom of migration for all workers to and from Britain.

Published by A, S. Newman, 16 Vicarage Lane, North Weald, Essex

Printed by H. Palmer (Harlow), Ltd. (T.U.), Sower Street, Harlow.