WE CAN STOP THE H-BOMB

There is no afterlife beyond the use of the Hydrogen Bomb. "In present circumstances," admits Tory Minister of Defence, Sandys, "it is impossible to defend this country against an attack with Hydrogen bombs." And yet the Bomb is made, will be tested, and has become the basis for Tory policy at home and abroad.

"Two days after Sandys' pronouncements in London, Field Marshal Lord Montgomery, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of allied forces in Europe, spoke in Paris, revealing the full extent of horror envisaged. "He gave," writes the Times (April 20), "a summary of the kind of weapon that the NATO Powers could expect to possess in 10 years' time. There would be naval ships, including submarines, with nuclear power; nuclear warheads for weapons down to and including field guns; strategic missiles with nuclear warheads; quantities of guided missiles with ranges up to 500 miles, and some longer range ballistic missiles. Man-made satellites would circle the earth, and improved submarine detection systems would be available. Nuclear-powered aircraft would be in the development stage, as well as intercontinental ballistic missiles with ranges of up to 5,000 miles.

"But older weapons would still be used alongside the new... The number of piloted aircraft might be reduced, but they would still be needed. They were essential for 'police actions' and cold-war activities..."

The prospects are awful, and yet nothing is done to prevent the build-up of nuclear violence.

Labour leaders 'policy'

The Labour Party leadership decided on the manufacture of the A-Bomb; they supported the production of the H-Bomb. George Brown, Labour shadow-Minister of Defence, was brazen enough to bring that policy to its logical conclusion and broadcast his view (and that of a majority of the Labour Party leadership) in a party political broadcast. "We must," he said, "be able to show any aggressor that we have got the Bomb. The only way you can really do that is to show that you have successfully tried it out and it has worked..."

The storm raised by Brown's statement forced the leadership to tacitly accept its policy. But nothing more has come out of its commitment other than a rank-and-file opinion than a resolution to postpone the reckoning. No action on the manufacture of the Bomb; no decision to scrap the Test. Nothing but postponement. Wait, talk, clear the air tools for... the Test and nuclear annihilation.

This is no policy. But is there any other, or is the character of the threat so frightening that we dare not interfere — that the nuclear race has set up a mutual deterrence and nuclear stalemate? Are we to leave unquestioned the decision over the life or destruction of civilization and nuclear stalemate? Are we to take the initiative out of the hands of the ruling class on both sides of the Iron Curtain? What is the arbiter: the Bomb or we? The answers will decide the fate of humanity. There is no solution in the present stalemate. The slightest change in the international relations of forces — a decisive technical advantage, an economic or political coup in a key, "non-weapons" area, an American technological slump or a Russian "Hungary" — can change the Bomb from threat to reality. And the nuclear race is becoming more of mass suicide. Once used the Bomb suffers no amendment.

Act now or never

Capitalism's wars hitherto, however destructive, however barbaric, have had a beginning, a middle and an end. Four or five years is a long stretch in the history of nations. Class conscious- ness has time to grow and deepen as capitalism plunges from crisis to crisis. The flux of war, the militarization of the home front, the cant and finality of a chauvinism born of profits and fed on blood — these are the conditions that make every imperialist war a potential civil war, potentially a revolutionary liberation from a system whose very gut is violence and the violation of human feelings.

But a future war will have no middle. The beginning is the end; there is nothing in-between. If we are to survive, we must learn and act for the experience. For us, there is no afterwards.

Can we act? The Bomb is so remote, war is so remote and the decisions about them are so beyond the circumstances of everyday life that we feel there is no bridge between the two. We forget that the arms budget feeds on the economy so voraciously that every decision on "defence" is really a decision on the standards of the working class.

The Bomb and industrial struggles

The first phase of post-war rearmament scarred our free National Health Service. The drain of over £300 million in government arms since has weakened our economy, and the point of collapse, has formulated the Tory policy of higher prices to again diminish conflict with the working class. Even these initial steps on the road to destruction have brought to the crucial question — who is to pay for our nuclear coffin, workers or capitalists? In the seeing that nuclear war is so expensive, there is only one answer. The workers must pay.

Already, we are paying! Already we are learning the economic lessons that the working class learnt only after the outbreak of war on the last two occasions. It was only in 1941, two years after the beginning of World War II that unemployment disappeared in this country; today, the permanent war economy ensures — full employment and the confidence and strength that go with it. Under conditions of actual war, the most politically conscious will take, and have taken, strike action; today the picket line is becoming the front-line of the class struggle.

We are learning. We are acting. Every victory, even the most remote, bears on the question of our future. A penny on the pay, postpones the war a day.

Our allies

The Bomb is the last recort of capitalism in permanent crisis. The permanent war economy is necessary for the Bomb. But the permanent war economy nurtures its undertaking — a working class fully employed, confident and yet experiencing the burdens of war long before its possible outbreak.

The very costliness of the Bomb strengthens this working class: Every economic sinew will be strained to the utmost to produce the Bomb on the horizon; every country on both sides of the Iron Curtain will be locked for the ascent to the Bomb. As conditions become worse, they also become common. Never before have the differences submerged in class unity. The struggle to retain the conditions we have gained in the past emerges into a political struggle against war preparations — a political struggle in an international context.

Turn to back page
The long-awaited Easter Congress of the Communist Party has come and gone. The results are very much as expected. Like a second-rate Hollywood film, once one knows the title and the stars, one knows what the story is going to be—so it was at the Easter Congress.

The rebels were few. Despite the fact that they included key personali- ties like Professor Hyman Levy and the French Communist Workers' Council, McDoughlin of Briggs, less than one in fifteen voted against the Party in the main English and Irish meetings, and Peter Fryer's expulsion from the Party. And this was after Hyman Levy's impromptu attack on Pollitt and Co., in which he cried:

"I must have the truth... I am not the only member of the party that has been debased by the leadership."

"I must have the truth..." cried Levy, and yet despite the feeble excuses of J.R. Campbell, editor of the Daily Worker, it was precisely because Peter Fryer told the truth about Hungary that he was expelled.

More Tory than Tories

Even on the issue of conscription, a long-standing bone of contention, the BCW was reeled in. The way in which this is the most fantastic position of all:

The Tory party is to abolish conscription; the Labour Party is against conscription; and yet the "Vanguard of the Working Class" is still for a twelve-month conscription law.

WHAT'S ON IN LONDON?

NCLC Socialist Forum:
Saturday, May 5, Mr. F. G. Quack, author of Stalin's Support in Europe (published by Allen and Unwin, 1952) and of Communism (likely to be published by Allen and Unwin) will speak on China Today.

Socialist Review:
Saturday, June 2, an expert will speak on the medical, social and political implications of Nuclear War.

All meetings of the NCLC Socialist Forum are held at 7 p.m. at The Prince of Wales Theatre, 13 Aldwych, London WC2.

Socialist Review:
Saturday, June 2, an expert will speak on the Unification of the Left (morning) and the Permanent War Economy (afternoon) on Saturday, May 15, commencing at 10.30 a.m. Regular readers invited to participate.

Sunday School for Socialists:
every Sunday evening at 7 p.m. at Michael Kidor, 30 Hampton Terrace, London N.W.8. (Buses along Edgware Road.)

OUR BUSINESS

The need for a paper which stood out clearly for a left wing socialist party uncompromisingly opposed to the systems of the Eastern Bloc was the reason why the Socialist Review was first launched in 1937. After thirty years, we have in our view more than confirmed this need and with this in mind we brought the Review back into circulation in December—a step which was made at the cost of considerable sacrifice on the part of those who produce and sell it.

The new Socialist Review has won approval, from the British public and have increased and letters of congratula- tion have come in from both old and new subscribers. We personally will have won applause from many members and ex-members of the Commu- nist Party and non-communist groups and events in the so-called "Socialist" countries.

SPavin's atrracting the need for such a paper in certain circles of the British Labour Movement has been paralleled by the great interest shown in its publication from abroad. Completely new applications for copies have come in over the past few months from the United States, France, Nor- way, Denmark, Sweden, Canada, India, the Philippines, the Netherlands, and Lebanon. A request came from Argentina for the right to translate the Marxist Left in the British Labour Movement.

BRIGGS MONTGOMERY MEETING

Jack Mitchell, Convener of Shop stewards at Briggs Motor Bodies, speaking at a recent meeting organised by the NCLC Monthly Socialist Forum, described his concern over the delay in the publication of the findings of the Cameron Inquiry. He stated that it showed that the reasons for the Cameron Inquiry were "unjust and unbelievable" and that it was impossible to fob the workers off with yet another "independent" Cameron Inquiry.

He prophetic these words are to us now that Cameron has delivered his interim report.

The Briggs workers, however, are not likely to take this frontal attack from the employers, the government, the press and "unbiased" judges, lying down. They had to fight, and to fight hard, to achieve the state of facto- risation that they now have. Mitchell referred to the situation at Briggs before the workers organised themselves. He looked back 20 years and quoted from what is regarded amongst the workers as an "Unjust Defamation Document." This was a letter written by 12 workers to the Transport and General Workers Union and marked the beginning of a concerted attempt on the part of the Labour movement to crush the workers at Briggs Motor Bodies. We will do well to draw attention to the conditions existing there at the time as explained in the report.

"We of Briggs Body Company are the victims of low wages and long hours. The work is such that we are becoming mere appendages of the machine, the machine is our master in these works is panicky and nervous. Accidents occur by the dozen; the first aid is, by the nature of things, also working at top speed One poor fellow was crushed to death last night owing to the air-archy prevailing in methods of work. Men and women are so afraid of losing their bread and butter that they dash about blindly, the growing in any regard for the safety of themselves or any others; this is how the man was killed last night. He was killed by a head crane, the crane man has to hustle so fast that he has no time to look in time and this led to the way... The normal day's work here is from seven (morning) until seven (evening), and at that time, no overtime money is allowed, the wages average about 14 per hour. Some charities are being assisted."

Today things at Dagenham are different. Despite the blatant anti-union record of the employers the workers have an organisation that serves as an example for workers the length and breadth of Britain.

If Briggs is to continue to give a lead to the British Labour Movement, the reinstatement of McDoughlin is essential.

The Briggs workers must be heartened in their firm determination. The solid attitude of those involved at the recent "victimisation" dispute at Firth Brown and Trafalgar Tool Ltd, which ended in a complete victory for the strike.

The employers, on the other hand, probably think that they have at last found the right formula for crushing the workers and will now start considering the possibility of making an approach to "glib, quick- witted, evasive" workers in plain language, to crush them and hold themselves. How much easier it would be if the workers knew their place, as the employers do, and could keep their heads down and think, "making political cliques" got to work and spread disinformation amongst the workers.

We've not heard the last of Briggs, but let us hope that we've heard the last of Cameron Inquiry could come to an end.
FORUM
THE DECLINE OF BRITISH CAPITALISM

By Michael Kidron

Everyone, even the Times, is worried about the mess into which British capitalism has got itself. "Britain's crucial fight today," it writes editorially (April 1), "is the fight for a financial recovery. Economies sized too often." Chancellor Thorneycroft took up the theme in his Budget message, and the message was clear: one more that the general pattern of my Budget must be dictated by the need to reduce the Government's "deficit position on a really sound footing."

There certainly is something to worry about. Every two years since the war we have had a balance of payments crisis with Britain unable to pay the import bill. 1957 might prove to be no exception. Recent rises in its relations with the outside world has become a chronic disease of British capitalism.

The explanation is not difficult to find. Between 1934 and 1938 British capital invested in the sterling area which £215 million a year in profits, interest and dividends from investments abroad. At present prices this would be some £650 million. During the war and immediately afterwards and during the recovery the British assets held overseas and the accumulation of foreign debts to pay for the war amounted to some £200 million. During and after 1945 Britain has had £2 billion in 1956 (Economic Survey for 1947, Cmd. 7046, p. 11), with the result that this income is foreign currencied in the UK. In the early 50's the sum increased to over £3 billion in 1956 (Economic Survey for 1957, Cmd. 113, p. 7), or less than one-third the pre-war average.

Small reserves; big speculation

In the 1938 reserves of gold and foreign currency stood at £664 million (about 39% of the value of the £2,000 billion of British goods and services measured last December to stop the drain on British funds following the Suez War). In 1958 the reserves were almost 10 times more than the total value of imports for that year; today they are only about one-fifth the value of our annual imports.

With such small reserves, any upset in international trade—an increase in import prices, a sudden need for a greater volume of imports, losses of markets for exports, etc.—can cause havoc. We can pay for only 10 weeks' imports.

The position is made worse by the fact that the reserves do not cover the foreign trade of Britain alone but that of the fifty odd countries and administrative units in the Sterling Area which contributes 25 per cent of the world's international trade.

When solvency is so precarious, any trading or monetary difficulty encountered in our international transactions naturally is aggressively pushed by a loss of confidence on the part of the business men both here and elsewhere. This is the speculator's argument against the pound. Everybody who can exchange his sterling for dollars, euros, or Swiss francs will do so. This largely explains the intermittent balance of payments crises that have plagued British foreign trade. In turn explain the forced devaluation of sterling in 1949, the fall of the Labour

Government in 1951 and the drain of £275 million (or more than one-third of the nation's six months of living during the Suez crisis this Winter).

The position is serious. And there is only one way out, i.e., to cut imports relatively to exports and so build up the reserves. Can British Capitalism do it?

Exports, production, investment

Its record in increasing exports has not been too bad. On the contrary, Britain is at the bottom of the European export league. Between 1950 and the third quarter of 1955 the volume of exports from this country rose by 6 per cent while in Western Germany it rose by 17 per cent, in Austria 102 per cent, Finland 78 per cent and France, who has not been doing too well either, by 23 per cent. (UN Economic Survey of Europe in 1955, Appendix B, Table IV). In 1956 the volume of British exports rose by a further 6 per cent (Economic Survey 1957, Cmd. 113, Table 7), but lagged behind that of other major European exporters.

Exports do not drop out of the blue. A major increase predicated on a fundamental change in British capitalism's comparative backwardness in this field. Between 1951 and 1955 output in Britain increased by 16 per cent in volume. In Western Germany the growth was 60 per cent, in Austria 34 per cent, Finland 29 per cent and France 21 per cent (UN, op cit., pp. 57-59). Production has increased, but the volume of net output is still small compared to that of the major European powers. (Table 1.)

Production decreases, in turn, on the amount of net investment in factories, machines and other factors. Again Britain stands out as a worser table as it shows. It is not, then, to be wondered at that Britain's export performance has been such a sorry one.

The weight of armour

First, there is the heavy burden of armaments. Despite the progressive reduction in the burden of armaments over the past few years and especially after the recent Sunda's axe, Britain is still working more than double the amount on defence (as a proportion of national income) than Germany and just less than a third more than France. Last year 9 per cent of our national income went on "military defence" (calculated from Preliminary Estimates of National Income and Expenditure 1951 to 1956, Cmd. 123, pp. 5, 7), while Western Germany spent no more than 4 per cent in 1955 and France only 7 per cent in 1955 (UN, op cit., p. 9). That means that both of the industrial competitor countries had a clear handicap of 5 per cent in the case of Western Germany in the world investment race.

Strong working class

Then British capitalism is in a sticky position as regards the labour force. Between 1953 and 1955, the labour force increased by 2 million (or 3.1 per cent) (men and 4.2 per cent) (women). In Western Germany the increase (due to large immigration to the country) is 3.5 million of refugees seeking escape from the prospects of a life in the "depression of Germany" ("People's Democracy") was 5.7 per cent (men) and 11.7 per cent (women). The same procedure of unemployment figures in Britain have fluctuated between 1 and 1.2 per cent of the labour force since 1951, unemployment in Western Germany has been as high as 10.5 per cent and never below 2.5 per cent (UN, op cit., pp. 128, 148). The unemployment figures are insufficiently detailed for more than rough comparisons and should be treated circumspectly—see.

Table 1: Estimated Capital Accumulation in Some Western European Countries

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1955</th>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<td>GDR</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
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<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1952, 1953</td>
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Note: Readers might be surprised at the smallness of these figures, especially after the Budget debate when Thornycroft, Gaitskell and the other Parliamentarians based their defence of, or attack on, government policy on the figure of 16 per cent. The difference lies in the distinction between "net investment" (as above) and "gross investment." The former being the net addition to existing productive capacity and the latter including both net additions and the replacement of worn out plant and equipment. In an industrial economy, such replacements usually run at about 10 per cent of existing capital.

As for cutting imports, British capitalism has not shown singular aptitude compared with the West. In 1950 and the third quarter of 1955 the volume of imports rose by 21 per cent in the British case as well as above the volume of exports, while in Western Germany they rose by 46 per cent less, in Austria 38 per cent less, in France only 16 per cent less (UN, op cit., Appendix B, Table IV). No other country did so well. Their strong bargaining position—resulting more from the labour shortage than from anything else—has lessened the risk of exploitation in comparison and thus hampered accumulation. The results can be seen in the relatively greater rise in real wages here over the rise in the national output than elsewhere, and also in the inflation we have had for the past few years. (This is not meant to say that we should not strive for an increase in real wages here is greater than elsewhere; indeed, the following takes into account this)

National Income, Wages and Prices

(1954 figures as a percentage of 1949)

Country | Gross Money Real Export Wages and Prices
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Germany</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>142</td>
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Source: "How Much Investment?". Times (January 6, 1956).

Note: Finished manufactures only.

Dependence on imports

There is a further obstacle to increased production in which British capitalism is especially vulnerable. The necessary trade, debts and imports of industrial and agricultural raw materials. An increase in investment entailed, in the case of a number of cases, an immediate addition to the import bill which, even assuming that these imports will eventually be paid for themselves in the form of exports, puts a strain on the reserves of foreign currency in the interim. The position is aggravated by the fact that almost the only source of additional supplies of the necessary imports for investment is the dollar world. That is why, when gross fixed investment other than residential building jumped by the record total of £205 million in the investment boom of 1955, the volume of imports rose by 11 per cent and the value of dollar imports by 36 per cent (Economic Survey 1957, pp. 8, 17, 29). In other words, the fact that the value of investment has fallen back to half, the volume of imports did not rise at all and dollar imports rose by a little under 1 per cent (ibid).

In other words, the very fact that makes the British economy dependent on dollar exports so necessary—the smallness of the reserves—makes it difficult to finance the importation of the raw materials that are essential for such an increase in production and exports.

Other problems too

These are not the only difficulties that burden British capitalism. Its inability to direct resources to essential production jobs (over the past two years employment in distribution has gone up by 70,000) and in the "professional, financial and miscellaneous" categories by 64,000; its creation of surplus capacity through competition investment (for example in the motor industry); and other features are besides British capitalism in all capitalisms. But as we are interested in the comparative failure of British capitalism compared to the capitalist countries, we shall deal only with the three major obstacles to capital accumulation in Western Europe, the heavy arms budget, the relative scarcity of labour and the resulting strong bargaining position of the working class and, finally, Britain's dependence on a particularly high level of imports. These factors operate in a particularly sharp manner, more so than almost any other capitalist country. Unless the British ruling class can alleviate
their combined effect is faced with the prospect of becoming the Joe Louis of the developed capitalist world: fighting fifth-rate competitive matches against no one—paying taxes levied on their former glory.

Limitations of national State

These are the problems. What of the solution? As long as the international market is a capitalist one, unplanned, chaotic and competitive (even if the competition is between monopoly, aided by the various capitalist states) a solution must be found within the boundaries of the national state. In the case of Britain, the national state includes, in this context, the center London market and adjust conditions at home accordingly.

But the adjustment will be neither easy nor painless in a capitalist Britain. It is difficult to see how they can be made painless at all.

Two-edged sword

The arms budget is a case in point (although here I don’t want to say more than a few words as the subject matter is a full-length article). The commercial competition of other capitalist countries in an international arms market forces Britain to reduce armaments in favour of investment. But the arms industry gives an important section of itself what it pains for British capitalism to retain its freedom of action, on the one hand, to prevent further subservience to the competitors, in this case American capitalism. Caught in the cleft stick of these contradictory forces the British ruling class can neither save the economy from blockages, nor protect itself and its interests single-handed. The prestige of the tests on Christmas Island cloaks an unbreakable impasse.

 Credit squeeze

When it comes to restricting imports British capitalists land in a second other web of contradictions. A Tory government cannot use selective import duties to keep back imports at the expense of inessentialities and luxuries. It cannot allocate raw materials and investment funds which would have to be part of selective import control. To do so would mean political isolation and only way open to it so to depress the level of economic activity in the country and stockpiling for imports falls automatically.

That was the declared aim of the credit squeeze. The other economic measures adopted by the Tory government over the past two years. By removing subsidies and increasing taxes, they tried to force the health service and the like, the mass of consumers have been forced to spend a higher proportion of their incomes on home produced goods and services and cut purchases of foreign products. By tightening higher-purchase regulations and raising interest rates (the credit squeeze), the government helped to chased out the market for some goods—especially consumer durables like cars, furniture, general consumer goods, further and lower the level of production and therefore the level of imports of raw materials which were creating unemployments and unemployment in its element in aggravating the pressure on the import bill.

 Pount versus production

The result has been satisfactory from their point of view, at least in the short run. The volume of imports—down to 1955 and 1956. *Reserves fell by only £151 million in 1965, despite exports of £225 billion in the previous year. But the cost was tremendous. It amounted to another considerable position as an industrial country. According to the official Economic Survey for 1965, the figures are taken, industrial production remained stationary throughout the year and total manufacturing output—our mainstay—even fell by over 1.5% cent from the 1955 level (ibid p. 16).

 Future stagnation

British capitalism has thus shown clearly the choice before it: either stagnation at home plus stability abroad or expansion at home and erosion of her international position, of her reserves, of her production and the pound. And the credit squeeze proved that they have chosen the first. Indeed, Thorneycroft’s Budget promises to continue the same treatment. As the Economist writes in alarmed tones, “if one adds together one’s highest estimates of the possible increases in real consumption, exports and investment, and then subtracts from them the £100 to £150 million odd of apparent real saving on Government current expenditure, they would suggest an increase in demand and production this financial year of £150 to £200 million, sizeable increase. But it is still only a little more than two-thirds of the amount of increase of income that was being achieved in the two years up to mid-1955, despite the fact that the Government undertakes to expanded capacity has led many economists to suggest that the rate of expansion could no be grossly reduced.” (April 13, Emphasis added — MK).

 Preparing a showdown

Arms reduction is a law of the Soviet-type British capitalism. As we pointed out earlier, they are present working class which can never be accomplished. The impression presents—finally—factory, raw materials’ import control, raw materials and national planning—the sorry ‘solution’ of defence of the pound at the cost of stagnation in production. Can Capitalist Britain save its bacon and achieve economic unity without kidnap their workers to such a degree that production can go up without in present in wages, so that the individual capitalist will have to supplement the growing home market with an expanding one abroad.”

The road to the brink

Nevertheless there is no other way out for British capitalism. However much its difficulties might be alleviated by a series of emergency measures and problems to the other capitalist countries, that is, however much Germany, France, etc., may advance with increased armaments expenditure, with a stickier labour situation (and the rising costs of armaments in this direction) and with the need to find an increasing amount of essential raw materials from the other countries, Britain will still be the most vulnerable in the contemporary capitalist world. The only way out for British capitalism lies in undermining the strongest bargaining power of its workers.

Unable to force a showdown now, unwilling to go to extremes in a basically healthy economy, British ruling class can be expected to mix guile with aggression in a conscious attempt to corrupt and undermine British working class conditions. A perspective of ever-increasing conflict, of sharper and sharper class war—enhanced class consciousness is opening up in Britain as British Capitalism slowly seizes ground to its better-equipped foreign rivals.

“ERRORS” and LABOUR LEADERS

A criticism of ‘Socialist Review’ from Seymour Papert

On most subjects the Socialist Review is unique in Britain for its hard-headed, scientific way of writing. There is one exception: when it discusses certain aspects of the British labour movement (the Labour Party, TUC, etc.) it often allows a fuzzy, woolly way of talking which is in sharp contrast with the rest of the article. The commercial competition of other capitalist countries in an international arms market forces Britain to reduce armaments in favour of investment. But they are not saved from the economy from blockages, nor protect itself and its interests single-handed. The prestige of the tests on Christmas Island cloaks an unbreakable impasse.

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The economic level of society, the level its productive forces have reached, is the decisive factor in the organisation of its armies. As Marx said: "Our theory that the organisation of labour is conditioned by the means of production and not vice versa is amply corroborated as in the 'human slaughter industry'."

The Corporate period of capitalism the backwardness of the economy made it impossible to feed and arm large armies. Compared with the mass armies mobilized during the first and second world wars, the armies of early, rising capitalism were very small. Even during the Napoleonic Wars, France, ruler of practically the whole of Europe, did not at any time have more than half a million troops. The British armed forces at the time were less than a quarter of that figure.

All this changed with the First World War. Then France, whose population was only some ten million more people than during Napoleonic times (40 million against 30), mobilized as much as it did during the First and the other belligerent countries showed similar increases.

With the tremendous increase in the size of the armies during the last half century, there came a change in the role of the military sector in the national economy.

Frederick the Great declared of the wars of the eighteenth century: "The peaceful citizen should not even notice when he is at war; and when he is among the fighting men of the nineteenth century, the Napoleonic Wars, the Opium Wars, the Crimean Wars, etc., the life of the belligerent nations was on the whole hardly affected.

1914 — the turning point

However, during the First World War, with a significant proportion of the population mobilized and a major portion of the economy harnessed to the service of war, not only the soldiers engaged in battle, but also millions of industrial workers, peasants, etc.—in short, the whole civilian population—felt the impact.

Before the First World War, although the imperialist Powers were too short of prepared for the struggle, it was usual for the economy to be reorganized to accommodate the war effort. After World War I, the civilian population—felt the impact.

In 1913-1944 the production of munitions multiplied in Germany 5 times, in Japan 10 times, in Britain 25 times, and in the United States, 50 times. (F. Sternberg, Capitalism and Socialism on Trial, London 1951, p. 438.)

"Errors" — continued

that he understood the situation better than many socialists when he singled out as a grave cause of the lack of "harmonious" Labour relations: "Briggs the fact that the shop stewards acted in an "irresponsible" way because they were not under the control of the trade unions.

This dependence of modern capitalism on the existence of mass organisations which, because they are able to bring about certain benefits, are able to have a large degree of control over the working class is not special to Britain. All "western" capitalist countries have developed in such a way as to give Social Democracy the function of disciplining the labour force.

Once we grant that Social Democracy has a definite function in society it is easy to see how it would be "irresponsible" and "mistake" to actions which flow from this function. The article under discussion is concerned with the fact that Social Democracy isolates itself from the rank and file; but this is like complaining that the plane cannot fly.

It is in the nature of the bureaucracy to be anti-democratic and bureaucratic. — It is the job of Labour MPs to support strikes and of trade union leaders to forge working class solidarity. For Guiet and Carron to accept such a job would be like accepting the "job" of introducing socialist workers' control.

The militancy's job

When we as militant socialists join the Labour Movement we have to face the fact that it is what it is and that the relations of forces in Britain will not allow it to be very different from this time. We have to accept the consequences of being a minority working for a clearer understanding and a more militant outlook on a wider base.

We have to encourage and develop every tendency towards greater independence of action, socialist conscientiousness and democracy (e.g. by strengthening and politicising the shop stewards committees). We have to be in the forefront of the fight to expose the trickery and the self-interest of the national leaders.

3. We do not have to allow ourselves to be so absorbed into Anti-Trotskyism that we are unable to criticise arbitration—as this article does—solely on the grounds that the arbitrators are Troc. Arbitration is going to be, in principle, just as much anti-working class if the Labour Party wins the next election as it is now.

Yours fraternally, SEYMOUR PAPERT.

The criticism criticized

The editor replies: We have no quarrel with Comrade Papert. On the contrary, we fully endorse the main points of his letter. We agree completely with his analysis of the function of Social Democracy in Western capitalism.

But although we agree with the analysis, we cannot accept the criticism leveled against our editorial last month. As Comrade Papert says, we militant socialists who are part of the Labour Movement "have to face the fact that it is what it is and that the relation of forces in Britain will not allow it to be very different from this time." One of the cardinal features of the Labour Movement at the present time is precisely that the vast majority of the rank-and-file do not accept Comrade Papert's (and our) view on the leadership, that the trade unions should be fully independent of the present framework of society.

Finally, it might interest Comrade Papert to note the peroration from whom he praises for dealing "excellently" with the sorry record of the Labour Government in office is the same who wrote last month's editorial in such a "fuzzy, woolly way."
Arms, boom and slump
For more than a century capitalism has gone through a rhythmical cycle of prosperity and slump. Slumps occurred more or less regularly every ten years. But with the advent of a permanent war economy the cycle has somehow been broken. Twenty-four years have passed and since the low point in the slump of the thirties-1933. Even the unemployment boom has gone from the major western capitalist countries, some eighteen years have passed. To understand how this has come about, how a military sector of some 10 per cent or less of the national economy could prevent a general slump, we should first shortly sum up the cause of slumps under capitalism.

Cause of crises
The basic cause of capitalist crises of overproduction, as Karl Marx (1) has clearly pointed out, is the wavy purchasing power of the masses compared with the production capacity of industry in the short run. The last cause of all real crises always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces in such a way, that only the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit. (Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. III, p. 568).

In the final analysis, the cause of the capitalist crisis is that a greater and greater sector of the income of society falls into the hands of the capitalist class, and a greater and greater part of this is directed towards buying means of production, but, instead, means of production, that is, it is directed towards the accumulation of capital. But, as all means of production are potentially means of consumption—this condition, for a certain lapse of time, the value of the means of production becomes incorporated in means of consumption—the relative increase in the part of the national income directed to accumulation compared with the effect on the absolute increase of consumption, must lead to overproduction. And this is a cumulative process. The increase in accumulation is accompanied by rationalization, resulting in an increased rate of exploitation. The greater the rate of exploitation, the greater is the fund from which accumulation is drawn as compared with the wages of the workers and the revenue of the capitalist. Accumulation breeds accumulation.

Effect of arms budget
Now the armament economy has very great influence on the level of popular purchasing power, the level of capital accumulation, and the amount of goods seeking a market.

Let us assume that there are a million people seeking employment in a factory, 40 per cent of them are employed by the Government in producing arms—some of them for Their own use, their purchasing power would bring about the employment of more people elsewhere. The numerical relation between the size of the first group and the second is called by the great bourgeois economist the "Multiplier." Multiplying the term can usefully be borrowed. If the Multiplier is 2 the employment of the workers by the state is increased general employment by 200,000. If the Multiplier is 3, the increase 300,000 and so on. Hence there is no doubt that the cumulative effect of an arms budget of 10 per cent of the national income can be quite out of proportion to its size in increasing the purchasing power of the masses.

Guns and Butter
Again, when 10 percent of the national income goes to arms, the capital resources seek investment —drastically cut; in our example, 20 percent of the national income to 10 percent. And the increasing purchasing power of the people, together with the new State demand for arms, army clothing, barracks, etc., gives sharper openings for capital investment.

In addition, the war economy naturally has an effect on the total increase of the supply of non-military goods seeking civilian purchasers.

With the possibilities of investment increasing, wages may well rise. But this, paradoxically, does not deny the possibility of increasing wages. Capital is working more fully than otherwise, there is much less capital working at a loss, its turnover is greater. Thus, for instance, in the years 1937-42 total wages in United States increased by 70 per cent, profits by 400 per cent.

With the stupendous productive forces available to society at present, the increase in the armaments burden does not necessarily and always lead to a cut in civilian consumption. This would occur only clearly in the richest capitalist country in the world—the United States—during the Second World War. Although the United States spent the huge sum of 83.7 million dollars on the war, civil consumption(though not as high as pre-war time) actually higher than before the war, rising from 61.7 million dollars in 1939 to 65.7 million dollars in 1942 (as indicated in 1939 prices), i.e., an increase of 14.7 per cent. The consumption of food rose by 70 dollars per head, the population, expenditure on housing and repairs by 12 dollars, purchases of clothing by 25 dollars. Spending on other goods, with the exception of cars, also rose. So long as armaments do not consume beyond a certain limit, the increased production need not decrease an increase production of Butter.

Why arms alone
Let us see what are the basic characteristics which distinguish the armament economy as a very stabilizing factor for capitalist prosperity.

To succeed as a stabiliser the "Public Works" Undertakings undertaken by the State and the private authorities must have the following basic characteristics:
1. That they do not compete with private interests which produce in the same field. Thus, a state factory producing shoes, say, shoes and shoes produced by private shoe producers, would not decrease the danger of over-production of shoes, but it. But if the field of, say, barracks building, the State stands alone.

2. That you employ the industries which are generally most affected by slumps—capital goods industries, heavy industries, etc. Industries which in the economy is increasing and whose chiefs are predominant in the ruling class, so that whatever Public Works" are undertaken, some sections of the capitalist class will benefit, such as, for instance, the producers of building materials, these sections will be quite ready to support such a programme. Other sections which benefit less but have to foot the bill through taxation, may well oppose such undertakings. Only if the main sections of the ruling class—those in heavy industry, the monopolists, the big brewers, the big bankers—have a direct interest in the "Public Works" programed, can these programs be carried on a scale wide enough to prevent a slump.

3. That they do not add much—in preference should subtract from—the productive capacity of capitalism, and should as far as possible, slowly down the growth of some branches of the economy which case the capitalists would be quite happy to accept them. Thus, for instance, the American capitalists who had been very angry with Roosevelt for incurring an annual budget deficit of 2.4-3.6 billion dollars in 1935, 3.0, 1936, 4.3, 1937, 2.7) did not mind a deficit of 59 million in 1943.

4. That the whole country in these Public Works to an extent corresponding to their level of national output and wealth. If only a few countries were to do so, they would have less resources for capital accumulation, would suffer more from overproduction. To prevent this, would be defeated in competition on the world market. It ALL of major countries indulge in these "Public Works" to an extent corresponding to their level of national output and wealth. If only a few countries were to do so, they would have less resources for capital accumulation, would suffer more from overproduction. To prevent this, would be defeated in competition on the world market.

Only armaments fit these necessary six characteristics of prosperity-stabilising Public Works.

Arms breed difficulties
There are three kinds of basic contradictions into which the permanent war economy sinks and the technique of the "slaughter machine," the conformity is far from absolute. The burden of armaments production is far heavier than the national output, Armaments can so cut into workers' standards of living as to do the destruction of political and, even a socialist revolution. Thus they could lead not to the prosperity of capitalism, but to its overthrow.

Secondly, although armaments may cut up large parts of the capitalist surplus value seeking investment, and thus weaken the forces leading to over-production and thus aid a stabilisation of the market, they may encourage a big advance in general technique and with it increasing pressure towards a slump, the overproduction of goods, in case they were, in the child of war industry.) Under such conditions, to keep capitalism going, a large part of 10 per cent of the national income devoted to military ends, 20, 40 per cent or more may be needed. And this may create strong opposition among workers and lower middle class people, and perhaps opposition even among workers of the capitalist class who would not benefit directly from the military drives.

Competitive disarmament
Thirdly, the Powers may compete so fiercely on the world market that each, in order to strengthen its position, would start to cut armaments expenditure. We are at present witnessing Britain's being rushed to cut her "Defence Budget" through competition with Germany, and deterioration of her international balance of payments. We must not forget that in the coming world situation, up to now no country has been able to avoid the temptation to once more force her to abandon the arms race and start competing on "who cuts the arms budget first?" The United States is the greatest military budget in the world and the greatest absolute investment in industry. With the collapse of the United States, it is possible that in another 10 or 20 years, she may, even if she is to keep her relatively high level of United States industry, at least challenge the United States on the world market in certain branches—those of heavy industry. Then the United States may learn from Sandy and Macmillan. M. Kádár's article in the present perspective issue (Utop) to no country has been able to avoid the temptation to once more force her to abandon the arms race and start competing on "who cuts the arms budget first?" The United States is the greatest military budget in the world and the greatest absolute investment in industry. With the collapse of the United States, it is possible that in another 10 or 20 years, she may, even if she is to keep her relatively high level of United States industry, at least challenge the United States on the world market in certain branches—those of heavy industry. Then the United States may learn from Sandy and Macmillan.

In another article in a future issue of Socialist Review, T. Cliff will deal with the social and political perspectives of the permanent war economy and deal above all, with the life and death question of the possibility of avoiding a Third World War and the annihilation of civilization.

* Of course, certain capitalist countries may face economic upheavals and hardships in the post-war period—or even more severe hardships than before the war, but this would be due to the class contradictions caused by the general, military-induced, world depression, which are not at all affected gravely by the national upsurge of the war economy. Such countries would be the exception rather than the rule, as the United States (with some half world of industrial output) continues to be the most powerful country, and thereby throws to the European junior partners of United States imperialism. Britain, France and Germany may well become more and more dependent on the United States. But as long as Uncle Sam is prosperous, he will not stop discussing the possibility of a Third World War and the annihilation of civilization.
**Many Labour Councillors are elected this month, let them remember Lansbury**

By Raymond Challinor

On July 29th, 1921, a strange procession wended its way from Poplar, through Whitechapel, and on to the City of London. Led by the corporation mace-bearer, the procession consisted of the worthy Mayor, aldermen and councillors, all proceeding to Poplar. Confident but determined, they marched to the accompaniment of a band, singing, "We Shall not Be Moved"...on a huge banner bearing the inscription, "POPLAR BOROUGH COUNCIL marching to their High Court and possibly to prison."

The elected representatives of Poplar had been summoned to appear before the High Court because, as it was claimed, they had not carried out their statutory commitments. They had failed to pay the "precepts," that is, a levy made out of the rates for services rendered to the Township. Poplar's main debt was to the then Tory-dominated London County Council of about £6,000.

The decision not to pay the "precepts" had been made on March 22nd, 1921. A short, jovial, old-style trade union meeting was held at Stepney, and Charlie Key, a schoolmaster, seconded the resolution not to pay on the grounds that the London County Council was already overcharged. The council had to pay relief to the large number of unemployed, and the whole administration of unemployment benefit was done on a local, not national, basis.

If Poplar Council had paid the "precepts" it would have involved cutting out the poor relief granted to the unemployed, and making an even greater increase in the burden of rates. As both unemployment and Poor Law payments are by chargeable rates, the residents in each case would be taxed more. The council decided they should get "poplarian reforms," Lansbury bluntly replied.

But while this statement was no doubt true, it did not satisfy the judges. Through all the week the whole county was in a state of siege—an example of the class war in operation on a large scale.

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Meanwhile, Lansbury and his comrades were unrepentant. Each night large crowds would congregate outside Brixton prison to hear Lansbury denounce the Government through the grating of his cell-window. "Where's your e'garp?" they would sometimes shout. Lansbury would reply, "Only your own in Poplar."

It was a fight on the broad principle that the workers should not be made to foot the bill for unemployment and that the unemployed community were in a far better position to do so, that George Lansbury & Co. stand by. Despite threats despite the taunts of right-wing Labour leaders such as J. H. Thomas, and despite persecution.

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**German scientists go on strike**

By Gordon Haskell

A major political upsurge has been caused in West Germany by a state-wide general strike by eight thousand nuclear physicists to the effect that they will not co-operate in any non-defensive use of atomic weapons. This statement, coming on the heels of the British announcement of their intention to shift the bulk of its military expenditures to guided missiles and jet engines, enters into the running of the West German campaign for the elections this autumn.

The eighteen eminent scientists stressed the fact that their special re-sponsibility in the realm of nuclear physics makes it necessary for them to take a stand on the nuclear issue.

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**People kept in the dark**

They insisted that the German people had not been sufficiently informed of the destructive power of modern atom and hydrogen weapons, and of the fact that there are no technical means known now to defend large concentrations of people against the effects of such weapons. In the face of these circumstances, they said that in their opinion a small country like West Germany could best defend itself and world peace if it expressly and unhesitatingly renounced any kind of atomic weapons.

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his government immediately issued an appeal in all directions in an attempt to minimize the political effect of the physicists' statement.

In reply to this, spokesmen for the physicists stated that Adenauer was misleading the German people by describing the new weapons as a modern development of artillery. And to try and introduce the assertion that the new armament was a political matter for which he, as head of the government, was solely responsible, the physicists said that they had a duty, as citizens, to take a stand and warn the people of dangers of atomic weapons.

One reason the scientists' statement has aroused such attention is that, with this week's news of the Gatling machine gun of the Russian White Paper, the Adenauer administration quietly decided, some time ago, to scrap original plans for the creation of twelve conventional motorized and tank divisions as part of NATO.
Notes on the Labour Movement

By David Breen

MR. JONES, Labour MP for Rotherham has been doing quite a lot of talking recently. It is a pity he does not talk about the right things. He had an opportunity. He harangued the House of Commons for a long time during the Budget Debate. He could have attacked a Budget that insulted the workers of this country by being the most flagrantly Tory Budget since the war; he could have dealt with the position of the Old Age Pensioners; he could have attacked the concessions made to surtax payers. Oh yes, there was an opportunity for Mr. J. Jones to speak about.

But no. He thought otherwise. For him, the whole point was an opportunity to stage the most vicious attack on striking workers that we have had from either side of the House for a long time.

"I do not like the word "strike," he said. He liked the act even less. When forced to make concessions to the workers of the Lancashire Steel Corporation, for whom he works as an "official," he says, "an organization of that type, with a goal of Class War at the top of it, gets a kick in the teeth, and Britain suffers."

It is true that he admits that "there are bad elements still, too many. But—and this is what really hurts Mr. Jones, our "old trade unionist and still a Socialist at heart"—"there are still millions of thousands of bond lazy owners of trade union cards who are not trade unionists or good men. They do not try to fight."

And so our Mr. Jones, imbued with an implacable spirit to see justice done (or rather, done to the workers) tendered an "apology" to a worker for a hatred for the workers (who sent him to Parliament) and says: "I do not accept the responsibility for the resolution to pull out that great and fine industry should be thoroughly ashamed of itself... I would never forgive him. I personally never will."

"You, Mr. Jones, I do not object to Mr. Jones holding strong views. That is his business. But if Mr. Jones has any quarrel with a section of the organized workers whom he is supposed to represent, let him raise the matter with them. He may object to the call for a strike, may think it premature, un- able to succeed under certain circumstances. These may be legitimate criticisms. But these must be threshed out with the workers concerned, not with the employers through the channels of the Northern Union beyond the reach of that he is attacking instead of supporting."

No. 4, "Labour MP, E. A. EIU did put to him how far his support of Mr. Jones and demand from him, through the unions, taxation, to -- whatever statement." The only pity is that our "representatives cannot be forced to reason."

At any rate those that censured him, have food for thought now: there can be no democracy unless the representatives of the people have the right to criticise their representatives at any time. Cease without control means very little.

MR. HARRY DOUGLASS is the General Secretary of the Iron and Steel Confederation, a union of 103,540 members strong. He is "one of the most significant members of the General Council (of the TUC)" according to the TUC Report (April). And he doubtlessly shared by many of the members of other body. That they are "protected" by ninety-two- hundred capitalists as well. The (one per cent, would prefer to use machine- made printing card-board."

Mr. Douglass considers that "sound investment should be the concern of trade unionists equally well." The duty of trade unions, he continues his eminence exponent of co- existence and co-prosperity in industry, "to have concern for their respective industries, and the first essential for to- morrow’s prosperity is union invest- ment today. This should be our con- cern equally with today’s wages, for the wages of tomorrow will not rise or even remain at their present value in the absence of sound and plentiful investment today."

I wonder what the motor-car workers in this country make out of this investment?—They have seen plenty of that over the past few years: investment in plant, in new machinery and even in automation.

German scientists contd.

made at the political, governmental, level. To exercise any effective political influence, they have to have a small special group; society, scientists are finding that, like other citizens, they must link their special interests with the main interests of large masses of people.

Thus, the eighteenth German nuclear physicists have done what they could, as physicists, to enlighten West German public opinion on certain aspects of the implications of the deci- sions of the government for the development of what is called an "atomic army." By stating that they will take no part in implementing this decision, they have indicated the views and the gravity with which they regard the issue. From here on, how- ever, the decision of the government is in the hands of the West German people, and that decision can at the moment only be exercised by the existing political parties in the next election.

But they have also seen that the in- vestment, "sound" as it was in capi- talism, has led to a combination of earnings, to unemployment and short- comings.

Douglas Mr. Douglass is doing it a good job in expressing these views. But for whom? I wonder. He is right in saying that investment is a pre-quisite for increasing living standards; but a second, equally important pre-requisite is the control of the unions and what it goes into.

But of course the Douglasses of this world advance ideas for their ideas. After all, once the workers control investment and production they will be able to control trade-union bureaucrats like himself out of existence.

NOT ALL IS BONE-HEADEDNESS amongst union leaders however. J. Campbell, General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen has been campaigning in the columns of the National Union Review, in a campaign for a radical reorganization of the British trade union structure in line with new conditions.

What he suggests is one single union as the basic unit for the workers. Such a union would be able to bargain more effectively for higher wages and better conditions than a multitude of unions in the same industry. Can it be denied "asks Campbell, "that there is greater bargaining power in combined strength?"

It is no accident that the hounded of a radical reorganization is taking such an active in pressing for industrial unionism. After the nationalization of the railways, the workers of the industry found themselves facing a single employer with three mutually jealous unions representing them. The need for unity was more apparent under such conditions than elsewhere. (It is a pity Campbell missed the best opportunity since the war by breaking NUR-ASLEF solidarity during the footplate dispute three years ago.)

Campbell answers the critics of indus- trial unionism who fear that the problems peculiar to the different crafts within the industry would be solved, or that the majority craft would solve its problems at the expense of the smaller ones. He recognizes craft groupings within the new union structure, and believes that there is no need to fear that these problems because of general interest and cease to be of concern to one group only."

Dealing with the future railwaymen’s union, as he sees it, Campbell thinks that “there would be four Group Executives elected in each tax group, the membership in these groups to be accorded and adequate it representation."

That would be the basis of organization and could be interpreted in this fashion right down to Branch level.

Every trade-unionist should take note of these ideas. They do not apply only to railways.

The challenge of ambition is for one, but it is the question of the future, the question of the next generation. It is the question of the British society, the question of the British nation.

It is the question of the Commonwealth, the question of the world. It is the question of the future, the question of the next generation.

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