

LABOUR REVIEW

Vol. 3

DECEMBER 1958

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Rank and File on the Move

A very successful conference—Why the witch-hunt?—Campaign against shop organizations—Those who do dominate millions—Leaders who will not lead—Officials help Tory offensive—Question of bureaucratic privileges—Stalinist leaders join in—The duty of Marxists—Militants and union branches—Trade union democracy—Milestone in working-class history

THE national industrial rank-and-file Conference called by the editorial board of *The Newsletter* at the Holborn Hall on November 16 was a great success. Such an assembly of militant, enthusiastic men and women, discussing the vital problems of the British working class in a way unknown among the leaders of the Labour movement, could not fail to hearten and inspire revolutionary socialists. The belief of the editorial board of *The Newsletter* that such a venture was urgently needed in present conditions found ample justification. The response was all the more remarkable in that a vicious witch-hunt against *The Newsletter* reached its climax just before the Conference met. Yet, despite the attempts by Fleet Street and by certain trade union officials to destroy the Conference, over 500 people met; and, amid the hostility, a note of real respect could be detected in the Press comments next day.

WHAT was the reason for the witch-hunt, for the 'revelations' about 'Club men', secret code names and sinister power-seekers, which brought anxious letters to the *News Chronicle* from menaced matrons in Gerrards Cross? There have been rank-and-file conferences before, some of them called by the *Daily Worker*, that have not attracted a tithe of the attention lavished on a gathering called by a small, unpretentious socialist weekly barely eighteen months old, with a circulation not yet in five figures? Clearly, the witch-hunt was due both to the nature of the Conference and to the circumstances in which it took place. Today the most important aspect of the industrial and political scene is the employers' offensive. The gravest danger for the British ruling class and its Tory government is the unleashing of the latent power of the working people of this country to meet that offensive and halt its hitherto steady progress. But the aim of the rank-and-file Conference was precisely that: to tap this power at its source, in the workshops, in the mines, on the docks, on the building sites, in transport, through the shop stewards' and other rank-and-file committees. As the offensive has gathered momentum the most vicious attacks have been reserved for such militant workshop organizations. And there is a very good reason for that. The real guardians of the concessions won in a period of full employment are the militant rank and file. They are responsible for

a balance of class forces in industry in which the workers are stronger than before the war. The shop organizations have immediate and continuous links with the men and women on the job. They are more responsive to their wishes, and therefore more dangerous to our rulers, than are 'responsible' trade union leaders. The employers' organizations and the government would dearly love to smash their power. Hence the venom and fury directed against a conference whose principal object was to strengthen and consolidate their power.

IN fact the campaign against the *Newsletter* Conference was a direct continuation of the campaign which has been directed against these committees in the past. The hair-raising stories in the *News Chronicle* called to mind the series of articles in the *Economist* last February on the activities of 'spare-time officials—call them shop stewards or what you will', declaring that they were a 'cesspool of corruption'. A conference which sought to help build a powerful rank-and-file movement, which brought together militants in various industries, which broke down their isolation and strengthened their confidence, which sought to aid the development of solidarity movements behind workers in struggle: such a conference was an inevitable target for the employers' Press.

MR ROY NASH, who had the doubtful distinction of firing the first salvo in the Press barrage, told readers of the *News Chronicle* that the nine men of the *Newsletter* editorial board were dreaming of dominating the lives of millions of working men and women. In truth it was because it was seeking to involve millions of working men and women to the fullest extent in the working out of their *own* destiny that *The Newsletter* came under attack. For it is the very opposite of 'dreaming' of dominating the lives of millions to seek all the time to bring to workers an awareness that the power to prevent a return to the hungry thirties is in their own hands. Of course Nash, had he wished, would not have had to look far to find small groups of people, in Britain today, who do not have to dream of dominating, but already do dominate, the lives of millions. The great monopolists and indus-

trialists, the leading bankers, the generals and admirals, the top Civil Servants and leading Tories—there Nash can find the handful of people who take decisions affecting the future employment and future living (and dying) conditions of millions of British people. Decisions on the H-bomb, its use and testing, on wars against the colonial peoples, on economic policy: these decisions are in their hands, and theirs alone.

SAID Fleet Street: If these *Newsletter* people have their way they will open up a period of industrial strife unprecedented in Britain. To be sure, there is every likelihood of great industrial and political battles in Britain in the not distant future. But the responsibility for these rests, not on Marxists, who seek to prepare the working class to face the attacks made on them, but on the ruling class and its government, which aim to resolve their economic problems at the workers' expense. And if the working class enters a period of long-drawn-out sacrifice, then no small measure of the blame will rest on the Right-wing leaders of the Labour movement, who refuse to mobilize the whole industrial and political might of that movement to resolve grave issues quickly and decisively. They are as much afraid of the fighting potentialities of their own troops as they are of the enemy's attacks.

WHICH brings us to the trade union leaders' attacks on the rank-and-file Conference. It was not to be expected that this event would pass without some denunciation from that direction. In general, the Right wing lives in mortal dread of unleashing the might of the working class. 'Never again,' said Mr Crump, the railwaymen's leader, after the 1926 General Strike. His words are echoed by every Right-wing leader today. As the London bus strike showed, the overriding desire of these men is to contain and limit struggles. Rather defeat than the extension of the struggle to create a force that can really challenge the domination of the capitalist class. Afraid to lead, afraid to develop a movement against the Tory attacks, they are also afraid that the reaction from the ranks will pass beyond their control. They peer nervously into an uncertain future of increasing unemployment and stormy class struggles, and they seek to isolate militant leaders before they forge too firm links with the working class. Since the employers have tightened the screws and are less willing to grant concessions in negotiation, these leaders have lost a certain freedom of manoeuvre. They seek to compensate for that by increasing their hold on the machine. It was no accident that the leaders of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers were in the van of the attempts to proscribe the rank-and-file Conference, even though this union used to be looked on as one of the more 'progressive'. For in the AUBTW there has been a steady increase of the officials' powers as against those of elected committees. The South Bank lock-out sharply exposed union leaders who talk of the Tory offensive but fail to fight it in deeds—or who actively aid it as did those leaders who so shamefully called on trade unionists to cross the South Bank picket lines.

NOT least among the reasons for the anger of Right-wing leaders is that *The Newsletter* puts forward clear demands for the removal of the material base on which the trade union bureaucracy rests. Expressed in the Charter of Workers' Demands adopted by the Conference were the simple, but vital, demands for modest wages for officials and the right of election and recall. By raising this question of bureaucratic privileges the militants at the *Newsletter* Conference served notice that the leadership they aim to build in the trade union movement is a leadership of an entirely new character, one militant in deeds as well as words, hostile to the privileges of bureaucracy, determined to destroy those privileges and the practices by which bureaucracy perpetuates itself.

AMONG those who attacked the Conference were the leaders of the Communist Party. In *World News* they assembled a choice selection of forgeries and distortions,¹ in the *Daily Worker* they engaged in some pretty miserable sniping at 'the Trotskyist circus'. What contempt J. R. Campbell must have for the readers of his paper, and how low he must rate their intelligence, when he can write an article alleging a 'strange united front' between the leaders of the AUBTW and *The Newsletter*—just after the executive of that union had expelled Brian Behan! The leaders of the Communist Party were put in a painful dilemma by the *Newsletter* Conference. They themselves cannot conduct a thorough-going fight for a militant rank-and-file programme for the trade unions. Nor can they wage a campaign for trade union democracy, for the trade union officials who are Communist Party members have their own niche in the trade union bureaucracy. Their trade union policies are conducted with the aim of winning allies at the top, and activities among the rank and file are subordinated to that aim. For them the most important criterion of a leader is how he shapes up to resolutions on east-west trade, summit talks and delegations to the Soviet Union, rather than how he acts in relation to the workers he leads. Moreover the Communist Party leaders have a bureaucratic fear of rank-and-file movements which they cannot tightly control. Their problem was how to hold back the members of their party who genuinely felt the needs of the working class in face of the employers' offensive and who were thus attracted by the *Newsletter* Conference. True to their Stalinist training, Campbell and his colleagues told their members that in reality *The Newsletter* was an agency of the employers. 'The Left wing of the Economic League' was the phrase used by one of their followers who spoke at the Conference. But attacks of this kind always boomerang these days, whatever was the case in the thirties; and serious militants in the ranks of the Communist Party are more and more disgusted with their leaders' attitude. Many now see what Marxists have always emphasized: that whatever demagoguery may appear from time to time in Communist Party propaganda, in deeds the leaders are incapable of developing a militant movement; rather do they adjust their activity to the pressure of the Right wing.

¹ See *The Newsletter Conference and the Communist Party. Two Attacks by Dennis Goodwin, with Replies by Peter Fryer.* (A Newsletter Pamphlet, 4d.).

ANOTHER accusation against *The Newsletter* has been that it 'interferes' in industrial struggles from outside. Leaving aside the fact that *The Newsletter* draws most of its support from industrial militants, what other purpose has a socialist paper than to help workers in struggle against their employers? The spear-head of the employers' offensive today is in industry. There is a crying need for a united strategy of resistance by the entire Labour movement. The Marxists who support *The Newsletter* not only had a right, but a positive duty—in view of the appalling failure of the official leaders of the Labour movement—to call a conference to discuss ways of meeting this offensive. Must Marxists wait until the workers are isolated and defeated section by section before they reveal that the trade union leaders are not leading? If there is a danger that the outcome of the ruling-class offensive will be the smashing of workers' organizations and the poverty and demoralization of working men and women, then Marxists must strive might and main to replace leaders who cannot fight by leaders who can and will organize a vigorous counter-offensive.

BUT the rank-and-file movement must spring up 'naturally' within the industries concerned, says a 'Left' critic, one Robin Emmett, who attacks *The Newsletter* in the mid-November issue of *Socialist Review*. It must be built inside the trade union movement, and not outside, he says. Certainly the rank-and-file movement must develop within the trade union movement. Where else? Certainly a rank-and-file movement must be a movement representing bodies of trade unionists. The editorial board of *The Newsletter* never declared *itself* to be a rank-and-file movement, but simply the editorial board of a socialist newspaper seeking to do all in its power to help develop a movement for which there is a burning need. What this 'Left' critic means by 'within the movement', however, is 'within the trade union branches'. 'Absolutely nothing,' he writes, 'that cannot be done within the trade union branches will ever be achieved outside.' Indeed? This critic shows a lamentable ignorance both of history and of the present needs of the working class. There is no doubt that the militants who attended the *Newsletter* Conference were some of the most active in their trade union branches. Militants always are, and correctly so. The trade union branches are of prime importance. Militants cannot neglect the general strengthening of branch organization and the fight for policy changes within the union machinery. But it was because that machinery was neither flexible enough nor responsive

enough to day-to-day needs that the shop stewards' movement developed in the first place. And it developed *unofficially*, winning its official rights through its unofficial activity.

EVERY form of organization, every leadership, must justify itself in accordance with the needs of the working class. Those needs today are for the solidarity of the whole movement with each section under attack, and for preparation not only for defence but also for a counter-offensive. Because of the nature of the trade union machinery, and because of the leaders' attempts to keep the struggles isolated, militant activity in trade union branches must be linked with activity seeking to organize the base of the movement—rank-and-file committees, which feel the full weight of the employers' offensive, through which the workers most directly express their will, and which in time go beyond the limits of a single industry. To turn the unions into organs of struggle playing their full part in the emancipation of the working class from capitalist exploitation—this is a higher law for serious trade unionists than confining their activity to the channels dug by the Right-wing leaders. Building the strength of the rank-and-file committees, binding them together in solidarity against the employers' attack—this is part of the task of making the trade unions fighting organs of the working class. In fact a powerful rank-and-file movement will also bring fresh forces and a new spirit into the trade union branches and will dispel the apathy which is the Right wing's greatest reserve. As the Charter of Workers' Demands declares, solidarity action committees and similar rank-and-file bodies can powerfully assist the restoration of trade union democracy.

THE national industrial rank-and-file Conference was a milestone in the post-war history of the working class. It would have been a success even if it had only brought a large body of militant men and women in industry together for the first time for many years, to exchange their experiences and pool their ideas. But much more than that was accomplished. The Charter of Workers' Demands presents policies around which a serious and powerful movement can be developed. On November 16 a good part of the groundwork was laid on which can be built a leadership which will organize, educate, mobilize and lead in industrial and political struggle workers who seek socialist solutions to the problems of their class.

The Irony of History in Stalinism

Isaac Deutscher

How many people, I wonder, can still remember all the sound and fury that were once aroused by Stalin's doctrine of socialism in one country? For nearly a quarter of a century, from the middle 1920s to the late 1940s, this was the sacred canon of the Soviet Communist Party and of the international communist movement. The great ideological controversy raged in the middle of the 1920s, but once it had been concluded no doubt about the canon was tolerated; and innumerable Bolsheviks and foreign communists suffered the Stalinist anathema, or paid with their lives, for the slightest deviation from it. The second quarter of this century has, indeed, entered the annals of communism as the era of socialism in one country.

Mr E. H. Carr is therefore justified in giving to the second part of his *History of Soviet Russia* the title *Socialism in One Country*. He proposes to deal with this subject in three volumes, of which the first has just appeared. The book has all the merits which one has come to expect from Mr Carr's work: acute analysis and interpretation, clarity of exposition, and a massive and severe structure of historical facts. It is a searching examination of the main circumstances and trends which found their epitome in Stalin's doctrine.

What were those circumstances? The isolation of the Russian Revolution; the frustrated Bolshevik hopes for the spread of communism in the west; Russia's inherited backwardness and poverty; the legacy of world war, revolutionary turmoil and civil war; the collapse of an old social structure; the desperate slowness with which a new structure was taking shape; the weariness and exhaustion of all social classes; and, above this convulsive chaos of a nation, the Bolshevik machines of State and party struggling to come to grips with the chaos, to order it and to mould it.

Underneath there unfolded, in Mr Carr's words, 'the tension between the opposed principles of continuity and change' which forms 'the groundwork of history' (p. 3). The October Revolution marked a deep and dramatic break in Russia's destinies:

Never had the heritage of the past been more sharply, more sweepingly or more provocatively rejected; never had the claim to universality been more uncompromisingly asserted; never in any previous revolution had the break in continuity seemed so absolute . . .

But presently tradition begins to unfold its power as the antidote to change . . . tradition is something which remains dormant in uneventful times . . . of which we become conscious mainly as of a force of resistance to change . . . Thus in the development of the revolution the elements of change and continuity fight side by side, now conflicting, now coalescing, until a new and stable synthesis is established . . . Broadly speaking the greater the distance in time from the initial impact of the revolution the more

decisively does the principle of continuity reassert itself against the principle of change (pp. 3-4).

From this angle Mr Carr surveys various aspects of post-revolutionary Russia such as family life, the position of the Greek Orthodox Church, currents in literature, legal institutions, the mechanics of government, party and class, and the economic and social background at large. Everywhere he demonstrates the force of the resistance to further revolutionary change in that particular period. Everywhere past and present, tradition and revolution, Marxism and native Slavophile and Populist ideologies, socialist ideas and Messianic Russian aspirations interpenetrate and coalesce, until they form a curious amalgam in Stalinism and socialism in one country.

Now, this tension between change and continuity or revolution and tradition undoubtedly permeates all of Russia's recent history. I do not intend to question this—I myself have devoted considerable attention to this problem in my studies of Stalinism. But what is the balance between change and continuity? This surely is the crucial issue. To which of the two sides of the equation the historian is inclined to give greater weight of emphasis depends, of course, on the standpoint from which he approaches his subject. The pseudo-revolutionary doctrinaire will treat it differently from the Marxist realist; and the Marxist realist from the conservative. Broad-minded and sympathetic to the revolution though Mr Carr's approach is, his premises are, to my mind, essentially conservative. He tends to overstate the element of continuity, just as Tocqueville or Sorel, whom he quotes frequently, overstated it in their treatment of the French Revolution.

Tocqueville and Sorel, however, dealt with a revolution which only substituted the bourgeois form of property for the feudal one; and private property, however changed in form, made for the continuity between pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary France. The Russian Revolution has uprooted private property at large, first residual feudal property, then bourgeois property, and finally peasant property as well. The impulse for social change has been accordingly deeper and stronger. Mr Carr therefore seems to me to overstate his case when he says that 'once the revolution has . . . enthroned itself in the seats of authority a halt has to be called to further revolutionary change' (p. 5). Soviet society, I suggest, underwent its most drastic upheaval, the forcible collectivization of farming, only in the years between 1929 and 1932, long after the revolution had 'enthroned itself in the seats of authority'. Nor is it necessarily a law of history that 'the greater the distance of time from the initial impact of the revolution, the more decisively does the principle of continuity reassert itself against the principle of change'. That this principle reasserted itself with extraordinary force while Soviet Russia was both isolated and underdeveloped is, of course, true. But is it still true today? Should we still assume that 'the greater the distance in

We are indebted to Isaac Deutscher and to the British Broadcasting Corporation for permission to publish this review of *Socialism in One Country 1924-1926*, vol i, by Edward Hallett Carr (Macmillan, 45s.), broadcast in the Third Programme on November 3, 1958.

time from the October Revolution' the more strongly does continuity reassert itself against change? Is the dynamic force of the Russian Revolution spending itself in the same way as that of the earlier revolutions did? I do not think so.

If the spread of communism in the last years of the Stalin era, especially its triumph in China, and the domestic Russian developments of the post-Stalin years are any pointers to the future, then the opposite seems to be true: the further we move from the October Revolution, the stronger is its impact. Far from having spent itself, the dynamic of the revolution seems to be growing; and after a period during which it was indeed overlaid by the patterns of Russian tradition it reasserts itself all the more powerfully—industrialization and mass education have shattered the very foundations of the old Russian tradition. One can hardly say of Russia today: *plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*; it is rather: *plus c'est la même chose, plus ça change*.

However, while one may argue about Mr Carr's general historical perspective, he is certainly right in underlining the predominantly conservative mood of the Russia of the middle 1920s. Continuity, a revulsion against revolutionary change, and a kind of Soviet isolationism were indeed the keynotes of that period; they all went into the making of the doctrine of socialism in one country. The Bolshevik reaction against the internationalist revolutionary aspirations of the Lenin era found its expression in Stalin's idea. 'While the Bolshevik leaders,' says Mr Carr, 'were absorbed in a vision of a progressively expanding revolution' they became 'in defiance of their intentions the wielders and defenders of Russian State power, the organizers of what was in all but name a national army, the spokesmen of a national foreign policy' (p. 7). This 'laid the psychological foundations of "socialism in one country"' (p. 7), which sought to disguise a traditionally Russian *raison d'Etat* in socialist terms. The resurgence of traditionalism and nationalism was stimulated by the weakening of the proletarian element in the Russian body politic and by a temporary, yet significant, strengthening of the peasantry. This was the heyday of the so-called bloc between Stalin and Bukharin, when the Bolshevik party was committed to a pro-*muzhik* policy and when even an ideologue like Ustryalov spoke of the peasant as becoming 'the sole and real master of the Russian land'. The peasant's horizon, Mr Carr rightly observes, 'did not extend beyond the limits of his own economy . . . "Socialism in one country" . . . was a conception which fitted in perfectly with his . . . aspirations' (p. 97).

Here, however, the Hegelian *List der Geschichte*, the sly irony of history, comes into its own. Circumstances force men to move in the most unforeseen directions and give their doctrines the most unexpected contents and significance. Men and their doctrines thus serve purposes sometimes diametrically opposed to those they had envisaged. Socialism in one country had, in opposition to Trotsky's permanent revolution, proclaimed the self-sufficiency of the Soviet Union—its self-sufficiency within a social framework of which the private and even capitalist farmer was to remain an essential element. Trotsky questioned the idea of self-sufficiency and pointed to the approaching conflict between the collectivist State and the individualistic farmer. Stalin prevailed against Trotsky: but presently he found him-

self to be carrying out, in his own way, some of the major policies expounded by his defeated enemy. Stalin had put socialism in one country on his banner because this seemed to 'fit in perfectly with the peasant's interests and aspirations' and because the essence of his policy allegedly lay in a lasting accommodation between the collectivist State and the property-loving peasantry. Yet it was under the same banner, the banner of socialism in one country, that Stalin set out to destroy the *kulak* as a class and to uproot peasant property. The revolution, so Stalin presently concluded, could not achieve self-sufficiency, nor even survive, within the social framework of the 1920s. He smashed that framework by a stroke of unparalleled violence.

In industrial policy, too, socialism in one country stood originally—in 1925-26—for resistance to change, for the cautious and moderate tempo of development, and against the 'primitive socialist accumulation' and the rapid industrialization advocated by Trotsky and Preobrazhensky. However, five years later, by 1929-30, socialism in one country had changed its content—what it had come to mean was precisely primitive accumulation and forced industrialization.

The supreme feat of history's irony, however, came only shortly before the close of the Stalin era. The party which had accepted socialism in one country as its canon played for international safety. It shunned world revolution and extolled the Soviet Union's sacred egoism. In every act of his policy and in every fibre of his being Stalin was the embodiment of that egoistical, self-sufficient and self-centred Soviet Union. Yet after the second world war Stalin, still waving the flag of socialism in one country, found himself carrying revolution into half a dozen foreign countries, carrying it on the point of his bayonets, and exporting it in the turrets of his tanks. He out-Trotskyed Trotsky, as it were, who had never thought of spreading revolution in this manner. And finally, in his last years, the author of socialism in one country viewed with incredulity, and not without misgiving, the rise of Chinese communism. The era of socialism in one country was at an end.

Looking back on this closed chapter, one may well ask again what was the meaning of Stalin's doctrine. I recollect the gravity with which thirty years ago in Moscow and in the European communist movement we argued this issue as a purely theoretical proposition: is it indeed possible to achieve socialism in a single and isolated country? No, said the old Leninists, to whom socialism meant a classless and Stateless society, an international society based on international division of labour. To those old Leninists the Soviet Union was a nation *in transition* from capitalism to socialism. They held that no matter what progress the Soviet Union might make in various fields, it would remain in that state of transition at least as long as it was isolated. The Stalinists and the Bukharinists argued that the Soviet Union would achieve fully-fledged socialism, even if it were to remain isolated for an indefinite time. They were indeed half-convinced that the Soviet Union was destined to become something like a laboratory of socialism in a single country.

Who was right? The answer which events have given is by no means clear-cut; it is certainly far more complicated than those who tried to anticipate it over thirty years ago could expect. Has socialism in one country justified itself as a theoretical proposition and a forecast

of events? Did the Soviet Union achieve socialism while it stood alone? Even in the early thirties Stalin proclaimed that it did. This is still the orthodox view in Moscow today; and we are told that Soviet society is now making its passage from socialism to communism. But what is socialism? If it were simply the wholesale nationalization of industry, then Russia would have achieved socialism as early as the first year of the October Revolution and the whole great controversy of the 1920s would have been irrelevant. The mere fact that the controversy went on indicates that its participants had a rather different conception of socialism. To all of them socialism still meant a highly developed classless society, free, at the very least, from glaring social inequalities and political coercion. By this standard Stalin's—and indeed Khrushchev's—Soviet Union can hardly be said to have achieved socialism. Soviet society is still engaged in the transition from capitalism to socialism. It is far more advanced on the road than

it was twenty or ten years ago, but it is still far from its goal; and in its social relationships it still contains strong elements of the bourgeois way of life. Moreover the Soviet Union which Stalin left behind had also ceased to be the 'single and isolated country' to which the controversy had referred. History has, as it were, refused to make of the Soviet Union the laboratory of socialism in one country; and so it has confined to Limbo the once so passionately debated doctrine.

But if socialism in one country has, as an abstract theoretical proposition, remained meaningless, it has nevertheless played an outstanding part as a modern myth and an ideology. The myth helped to reconcile the Soviet masses to the miseries of the Stalin era; and the ideology helped to discipline morally both the masses and the ruling group for the almost inhuman efforts which assured the Soviet Union's spectacular rise from backwardness and poverty to industrial power and greatness.

Race Riots: the Socialist Answer

Cliff Slaughter

THE race riots in Nottingham and London came like a bolt from the blue to most ordinary men and women in Britain, just as they did to the Press, that self-styled watchdog of the public conscience. The *Observer*, usually more far-sighted than most newspapers, spoke of the race riots as something which a few days earlier seemed a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. So long as we look only at the surface of social life, so long as we try to deal with each question separately as it arises, we shall continue to find ourselves bewildered by events like the race riots. But they are no nine days' wonder. This must be clearly understood by every worker in the country.

Every member of the working class must endorse the condemnation by the Trades Union Congress of racial discrimination and violence. But this is not enough. Only if we can trace the social roots of racial conflict shall we be able to weed them out and with them those who profit from it. The starting point for the working class must be unity and solidarity against the employers and their political representatives—in the first place the Tory Party. All the problems the working class now faces—growing unemployment, the housing shortage, rent increases, the rising cost of living, attacks on wages and working conditions, and, above all, the threat of an H-bomb war—all these can be solved only by the unity and determined action of the working class. It is no accident that the steady growth of unemployment over the last year has been accompanied by an insidiously growing campaign around the slogan 'Keep Britain White'.

The crux of the matter is that the workers are under attack from the employers. The Cohen reports have openly declared that a further dose of unemployment is necessary for economic advance, and that wage increases must be curbed. The capitalist Press has for years been

complaining that the trade unions have too much power. In London the busmen were chosen for attack and forced into a prolonged strike. When the dockers applied for a wage increase leading elements in the employing class decided that it was better to settle for a 7s. 6d. increase than to take on this determined and vital section of the working class, whose solidarity with others has assured them of wide support in any struggle they undertake. The employers' strategy is to divide the workers in order to break the pattern of full employment and regular wage increases. This is why unity must be preserved and strengthened and all attempts to split it smashed. This is why the TUC General Council must be condemned for its failure to draw other workers into struggle behind the London busmen, who were singled out by the bosses.

This need for united action means that the workers must smash fascists or anyone else who attempts to divert their attention towards coloured people as 'the cause of all the trouble'. Cultivation of race prejudice, the colour bar, persecution of West Indians, Nigerians and Pakistanis, serve the same purpose as Hitler's murder of millions of Jews. Racialism distracts the workers' attention from their real enemy, the capitalist class, and enables its agents to proceed more easily towards the real objective of breaking the workers' organizations and bringing down living conditions.

The Press is full of spurious explanations and sham solutions for the 'race problem', as though it were a problem separate and apart from the other problems of the working people. Much of this propaganda is very subtle. Under the guise of liberal, tolerant, 'fair play' attitudes it succeeds in misleading the working class, whose real need is to stand firmly on the principle that white and coloured workers have identical interests

against the boss and that the Labour movement must therefore actively defend the coloured workers from attack. Unless this principle is made the basis of immediate working-class action the air will continue to be full of moral bleatings while the police remain free to contribute their share of violence against the coloured workers.

Middle-class solutions to the problem of civil violence all have one thing in common—they grant more power to the police.

HOW RACE PREJUDICE AROSE

Concluding a leading article on September 3, the *Manchester Guardian* suggested that the Prime Minister 'can say unequivocally that each of us must uphold the dignity of other citizens in this country, regardless of colour. Still more effective, in killing the immediate germs, would be a broadcast from the Queen.'

Father Trevor Huddleston, whose good record in the South Africa struggle is well known, replied to a television interviewer on September 1 in a similar tone. He gave the impression that race hatred is natural to every man, and that only an individual 'act of faith' can preserve us from this evil.

These, and all statements like them, are based on an unscientific view of society. Although they are intended to sound noble they are worse than useless to the working class, white as well as coloured. Race hatred is not natural or inborn. It comes from the capitalist system. Race riots are not a natural disaster like an earthquake. They are the reflection of something rotten at the heart of modern capitalism. The black and brown peoples of the world will not be free until colonial rule is ended. If Britain were ruled by a foreign power, would not British workers recognize clearly the need to overthrow their foreign rulers? Would they be content with assurances that they were being 'educated towards self-government'?

Young British workers are conscripted to fight the battles of the profit system in Africa and other colonies. They are trained to treat the native peoples as 'wogs', as inferior beings. If you are going to enslave a man, torture him, burn down his home and deny him the most elementary democratic rights as well as a decent living, then you cannot permit yourself to think of him as a human being.

Imperialism is the basis of race prejudice. As it developed, imperialism fostered and nurtured the idea that non-Europeans were somehow inferior, more primitive, less than human. For the defence of profit soldiers were required who accepted ideas of this kind.

For decades British workers have been put into uniform and sent oversea to shed their blood for British capital in the name of Queen and country and white supremacy. They have returned home to civilian life and the natural round of capitalist society—a period of full employment and tolerable wages followed by slump, depression, forced idleness and poverty. Now the moralizing hypocrites of the capitalist Press fill the air with wailing about the behaviour of the Notting Hill mob. Their own system is responsible for training this mob. Their own system asks uniformed mobs to do worse things to coloured people every day in the 'Commonwealth'.

From the days of the slave trade, when tens of millions of Africans were transported across the

Atlantic in conditions so appalling that a large proportion died before reaching America and the West Indies, to the modern system of cheap labour and racial persecution, the peoples of the colonies have suffered untold misery and repression at the hands of British imperialism. This is the reality that the politicians and the Press want to hide so that British workers may be prevented from recognizing their identity of interests with their coloured brothers. Those MPs, whether Tory or Labour, who call for restrictions on immigration in the name of planning and sweet reason, are guilty of the same deceit. The fact is that people are leaving the countries of the Empire because of the consequences of British rule—starvation wages, the chaos of slum dwelling and unemployment.

THE REALITY BEHIND THE 'COMMONWEALTH'

Aneurin Bevan rightly opposes such proposals, but he too is guilty of spreading dangerous illusions. In the *News of the World* (September 7, 1958) he described the awful consequences of restricting coloured immigration. The trouble is, he suggests, that it would mean restricting the white members of the Commonwealth too. 'In all probability the ties that link the members of the Commonwealth together would be broken and the greatest constitutional experiment in the history of nations would have come to an end.'

The 'Commonwealth', however, is not an experiment. It is the substantial remains of the oldest and strongest system of imperialist exploitation of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From open military domination and plunder imperialism has been compelled to retreat in some places and to make deals with the new middle classes of colonial countries or with the new bourgeoisies of the white Dominions. But wherever there is a real threat of ending white privilege, imperialist profit or strategic bases, it continues to resort to traditional methods of oppression. War in Malaya; the hounding into concentration camps of the independence fighters in Kenya; torture, curfew and arrest without warrant in Cyprus; suspension of the Constitution in British Guiana and the dispatch of gunboats; military intervention in Suez: these are the realities behind Bevan's 'greatest constitutional experiment in the history of nations'.

The coloured peoples are the victims of generations of exploitation and repression. What about the British people? The employing class that is opening its attacks on the workers of this country today is the same class which invaded Suez and which profits from Malayan rubber. We all have the same enemy, and to talk about preservation of the 'Commonwealth', as Bevan does, only helps that enemy. Our unity with the coloured workers is class unity against British imperialism, not the constitutional unity of the 'Commonwealth'.

HOW FASCISM OPERATES

Those Tory and Labour MPs who propose to solve the problem by restricting immigration are guilty of supporting the programme of the fascists, whether they know it or not.

Fascism is a movement financed by big business which seeks support from the 'middle classes' and the most backward workers. Fascism's real aim is to provide a mass basis for the smashing of workers' organizations

by a State machine which permits no democratic rights and rules with the whip and the torture chamber.

To succeed, fascism must detach from the working class discontented elements who can be persuaded that something other than big business is their real enemy. This is why the fascists have recently returned to one of their favourite themes—racialism. Fascists were prominent in the Notting Hill riots and will cash in wherever they can on anti-coloured feeling. They will try to create a mob ready to use violence and to attack any scapegoat rather than the workers' real enemy.

Any Labour leader who does not condemn fascist ideas root and branch must be disowned by the Labour movement. Instead of discussing projects for controlled immigration, Labour leaders should be outlining an active joint strategy of struggle against the employing class. Although the TUC General Council passed a resolution against racial prejudice which everyone is prepared to endorse in general, its president viciously attacked trade unionists who fight the employers with the workers' only real weapon, the strike.

Fascism is not a strong movement in Britain, but the working class cannot afford to ignore it. There is always plenty of money from the rich for fascist movements. There are other ideas abroad besides race prejudice which will be used by the fascists. Ever since the first unemployment benefit was paid out the Conservatives have harped on the old theme that 'the workers abuse the benefits' and 'there are parasites on National Assistance'.

In a television programme, 'Does Class Matter?' on September 1, Christopher Mayhew interviewed a group of 'middle-class' spokesmen. These people were ripe for fascist propaganda. They spoke of the need for definite independent organization and action on behalf of the middle class against the working class. Their view was that the prosperous, hard-working, god-fearing and thrifty sections of the population (themselves) were being milked to support the arrogant idlers of the working class with their powerful trade unions. Asked what kind of action should be taken, one woman proposed a campaign to stop the payment of National Assistance to the wives and children of men on strike. It is no coincidence that the 'abuse of National Assistance' is one of the 'crimes' also laid at the door of the coloured immigrants.

The Labour movement must smash the incipient fascist groupings and defeat all those in our movement who do not put up a determined resistance to fascist ideas and activities. Unemployment is increasing. Even if there are no immediate large-scale racial outbreaks, as there may well be, there will be a fertile ground for racialist propaganda. Only if the Labour movement really moves into action against the Tory government on unemployment and every other issue will there be a basis for decisively defeating the racialists.

The British Transport Commission is insisting on economy cuts in all services. There will be sackings on the buses and the railways to which the unions will be asked to agree. In the absence of consistent political work for unity, racial prejudice will be utilized on these issues. The BTC was itself responsible in April 1956 for sending agents across the Atlantic to Barbados to recruit 1,000 workers. The British Hotels and Restaurants Association, unable to attract enough British workers at the low wages offered, also sent to Barbados

for 200 men and women during 1955. Recruits have been made to nursing, another poorly-paid profession, in the same way.

Now many of the employers concerned will be among the most vociferous in calling for restrictions on immigration. Capitalism exists for profit, without regard to the human consequences. When the employers could not find enough workers to keep the wheels turning they encouraged immigration. Now jobs are getting short and the agents of the ruling class heartlessly try to divert the blame on to the people who have been driven to this country by the consequences of the same system in their own countries.

Unemployment, like all the other issues facing the workers, is a matter for the working class to settle by its organized strength in struggle against the employers. And in this struggle the coloured workers are a natural ally and not an enemy.

WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE STAND?

If the workers content themselves with mere professions of tolerance, racialism can become the safety valve of capitalism. The rioting mob of Notting Hill was certainly led by fascists, but the readiness of thousands of young men to follow them is a warning signal.

Young people are brought up in a decaying capitalist society. The glamour of Hollywood, the false presentation of sex and the appeals to violence which fill the cinema and television screens and the horror comics are directed especially towards young people. Furthermore, whether they realize it or not, young people today are frustrated and confused by the contrast between the wonders of modern science and wealth, and the humdrum working-class existence to which they must reconcile themselves as they grow up. And over all hangs the sword of Damocles in the shape of the H-bomb, a permanent source of insecurity and incitement to hysteria.

Which way will young people go in a period of unemployment and struggle? This is a question the Labour movement must face. If young people do not see a clear, irresistible alternative to capitalism, if some are easily led into mob violence behind fascist slogans, the blame lies on the milk-and-water policy of the Labour Party and trade unions.

Presented with an uncompromising socialist policy, with the real initiative in the hands of the workers themselves, young people will not turn to the fascists. Before the race riots it was apparent that there was no strong anti-coloured feeling among young people. Their whole cultural life, with jazz music at its centre, belies the myth of Negro inferiority. The riot mobs were groups of young people looking for excitement, anxious to find an outlet for energy which capitalism asks them to suppress more and more as they grow up. The second night of trouble in Nottingham, for instance, involved groups of young whites and no coloured people at all. When the police intervened they were set upon by both sides. Some months ago, near Nottingham, there was an outbreak of fighting between police and so-called 'Teddy boys'. When asked what they were fighting about, these youths said: 'Nothing—we just wanted a fight.'

It is up to the Labour movement to show young people how to fight and what to fight for.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Although it is true that both white and coloured workers will finally solve their problems only by defeating imperialism, and that racialism will cease to present a serious threat to working-class unity only when the Labour movement transforms itself into an active, socialist movement of the rank and file, we must nevertheless take steps now to stem the racialist tide.

To curtail immigration or to deport coloured people is no solution. Will it cure unemployment? Alan Birch at the 1958 TUC forecast some 750,000 unemployed by next January. There are only 200,000 coloured people in the country, including women and children. Labour workers must condemn those Labour MPs who propose entry restrictions and deportations, and demand their expulsion from the party. Such measures not only provide no solution, but raising them distracts Labour from the real issues and serves the ruling class in its policy of 'divide and rule'.

Throughout the Labour movement there must be active propaganda against the lies of race hatred. In the factories and in working-class organizations any instance of racial division must be exposed and condemned. All workers' organizations should make approaches to coloured workers' groupings with proposals for joint campaigns of defence and propaganda. In every town and city the colour bar must be smashed by an open challenge of coloured and white together.

In the areas already affected by rioting, the Labour Parties and trades councils should be urged to raise funds for the compensation of those who have been attacked. This will help to build unity. Whether or not the official organizations can be made to act, local defence squads should be formed composed of white

and coloured workers.

The slogan of the Labour movement in all areas where coloured workers live must be: 'Protect the coloured people.' This must be seen not as an act of charity, but as an elementary measure of self-defence for the whole working class. Where outbreaks have not yet occurred defence committees must be prepared to move into action at the first sign of racial persecution or as soon as the fascists show their faces.

Such defence committees of white and coloured workers, representing the organized working class, are the only guarantee against violence. Those who call for extra police powers, expecting the laws of the capitalist State to operate in the interests of the working class, are guilty of spreading dangerous illusions. The powers of the police will be turned against the workers; and everything in the history of the Labour movement indicates that the police will discriminate against the coloured people and their defenders.

There must be a vigorous demand for the outlawing of the colour bar and all racialist propaganda, and the Labour movement must insist on the banning of all overt fascist organizations and publications.

But the real answer is action by the working class itself. Wherever a fascist shows his face he must be defeated by the only method the fascist understands. Anyone who attempts to spread fascist ideas in the Labour movement must be repudiated and driven out. Everywhere the working people, and especially the youth, must mobilize for the defence of the coloured people. This is the only way to defeat the racialists; it is also a step in the creation of a working-class force capable of repelling the employers' offensive and advancing to working-class power.

The Pasternak Affair

Alan MacDonald

THE most powerful State in the world has achieved another triumph. It conquered Hungary; it is on the eve of conquering space; and now it has forced Boris Pasternak to his knees. It is true that the hands which did this were those of the 800 members of the Soviet Writers' Union. But they were guided by the bureaucratic State machine with which, at times like this, their organization merges.

It is a disgusting spectacle, this public humiliation of a lonely, sensitive man. Yet a good deal of hypocrisy is intermingled with the protests that have appeared over here. The plain fact is that Pasternak would have found it difficult to make a living in any of the countries whose self-appointed guardians of freedom have been so eloquent on his behalf.

Poems do not pay the rent. Stories of the kind Pasternak used to write are printed only in magazines that cannot pay for them. And even *Dr Zhivago* would not, I believe, have reached the best-seller class on its purely literary merits. It was news. It became unfashionable not to have read it. One had to have something to

talk about over cocktails—or over coffee in the Partisan.

The book itself has none of the ingredients that usually sell well. Few readers will be able to identify themselves with its leading character. Nor does it embody what the American economist Galbraith has sarcastically called the 'conventional wisdom' of the times in which it was written. This term refers to those fallacies, propagated by the Press, television and other media, which become the unexpressed major assumptions in conventional 'thinking'.

Herman Wouk's *Caine Mutiny*, for example, is a book which extols conformity. It sold in thousands among the American business executives who fit the patterns established for them by their corporations so well that they look, talk and think as though they had been made on an assembly line. Wouk's book gave them what their imaginations needed, the feeling that conformity not only paid well but was *right*. This is conventional wisdom.

Pasternak's view of life offers little comfort of this

kind for anyone. It is confused, for one thing; and all of us, Marxists included, read novels to escape from, not to enter imaginatively into, the confusion of life. Even if we are too sophisticated to expect novel-heroes to overcome their difficulties, we want them at least to understand them. Zhivago does not. He never struggles through to a coherent view of what has gone wrong with the Revolution. He is pushed around by events.

The other essential ingredient in a best-seller is usually called sex. I prefer to call it described copulation. Nearly all successful novels have at least one strip-tease episode. The seduction of Lara, the heroine, by a middle-aged roué, which a lesser writer would have spun out to chapter-length, takes place off-stage in *Zhivago*. Pasternak does not describe the seduction: he describes Lara's agitated reactions to it, for these are important to the development of the story.

All this underlines the essential thing about Pasternak. He is an uncompromising writer who would have had a rough journey through life at the best of times; and these, in the east and west alike, are not the best of times for those who cannot compromise. Yet, in spite of his wholly admirable refusal to turn hack, Pasternak never retreated into a private ivory tower, as those now yapping at his heels in Moscow maintain. It is true that he wrote little for many years, preferring to translate Shakespeare rather than do original work of his own. But what a man does *not* write can be as much to his credit as what he does. Pasternak refused to join in the frenzied denunciations of the Bolshevik old guard who perished at Stalin's hands. It was the unspeakable Zaslavsky, who now uses gutter-oaths against Pasternak, who led the literary lynch mobs in the thirties. Pasternak's translations of Shakespeare are works of art in their own right. And even his choice of plays was an oblique comment on the insanity raging around him. As he said of *Lear* and *Macbeth*, 'there are the gatherings in the echoing palace hall, shouts, orders and afterwards curses and sobs of despair . . . the people, huddled in the tent and terrified, speak to one another in whispers . . . and so the crimes follow in quick succession—many crimes over a long time . . .' Unable to say what he felt himself, he let Shakespeare do it for him.

What of Pasternak's attitude towards the Revolution? Is it true, as has been suggested many times, that he is 'a poet's poet' (the phrase is Mayakovsky's), a kind of Russian T. S. Eliot? And has he now 'succumbed to the flattery of the siren of foreign propaganda' and shown 'open hatred for the Russian people'? *Literaturnaya Gazeta* thinks so. Perhaps Ilya Ehrenburg thinks so too. There was a time, however, when he wrote of Pasternak: 'It was he alone who laid the true foundation for contemporary Soviet literature. That is why his creative power has caused, and is causing, such embittered dispute.' It was a just appraisal. Although Pasternak did not throw himself into the Revolution like Mayakovsky it was not because he was hostile to it: it was because he felt

It's vain in days when councils great convene,
When highest passion runs in flooding tide,
To seek a place for poets on the scene.

He was quite right. In times of revolution the ability to shoot straight is of more value to the revolutionaries

than the poetic capacity to feel acutely. Pasternak, reticent and humble in the face of the gigantic social upheaval, did not feel hostile: like Zhivago, he felt helpless. His reticence and humility were revealed in much of his subsequent work. Jack Lindsay's remarks in his foreword to *Russian Poetry 1917-1955* (1957) are worth quoting in full in this connexion. They give the lie to charges that Pasternak is an arrogant, self-centred writer.

The weakness in Pasternak, which has prevented him from playing a much bigger part in Soviet culture, is to be read in his poem 'The Caucasus' (1921), where he says how good it would be to look at the challenging mountainous beauty with the eyes of 'the brigades whose task it is to grapple with the region'; then the poetic programme would have 'solid stuff' in it and would move people so fast that it would keep 'treading on the heels of my own prophecies'; and he would in fact give up writing verse; he'd live poetry instead of 'a poet's life'.

The sense of inferiority, we see, before the world of action, cuts his poetry off; he fails to see the poetic act as equal to, and part of, the triumphant ascent and the actual transformation of nature.

So much for Pasternak's background. It is not a dishonourable one. While the Revolution was still a revolution he did it no disservice, and while the Russian people were making it he expressed no contempt for them. And as bureaucracy congealed into tyranny he kept an eloquent silence. It is as a poet that he has lived and it is as a poet that he will be assessed by future generations of Russians. His politics will not matter. It is only because the literary lynchers are abroad again that it becomes necessary to assert that his political record is clean.

But what of *Dr Zhivago*? The editors of *Novy Mir* sent Pasternak a lengthy letter giving their reasons for refusing to publish the novel. It contains some fair criticism and is written in terms of sorrow rather than anger ('To those who had earlier read your poems . . . poetry which we, at any rate, thought was imbued with a different spirit, a different tenor—your novel has been a distressing experience.') Their quarrel is with 'the spirit of the novel, its general tenor'. This, they said, was one of 'non-acceptance of the socialist revolution'. The view of the author 'is that the October Revolution was a mistake, that the participation in it of sympathizers from among the intelligentsia was an irreparable disaster, and that everything which happened afterwards was evil'.

Mervyn Jones, a discerning critic who is not taken as seriously as he should be because he writes in too readable a style (an unforgivable sin to culture-skimmers, who prefer the French-studded obscurity of *New Statesman* reviews) took an entirely different view of the book when it appeared in English.¹ He pointed out for a start that Yury Zhivago is an artist's creation. 'He has a full share of human weakness, of indecision, of the feeling of guilt that, except in official Soviet literature, is the recurrent theme of the modern novel . . . At any time or place in history, this man would have had his problems . . .' But the time happens to be 1917, the place Russia; and the novel describes the decline and fall of a well-meaning, highly talented physician who was born of the old propertied classes, has vague ideas about socialism, is susceptible to

¹ Collins and Harvill Press, 21s.

Christian mysticism and whose world blows itself up in war and revolution.

The novel embodies strong views about all this. But they are the views of Yury Zhivago and entirely consistent with his character as Pasternak traces its development. True, they are inadequate views.

Zhivago, politically and in other ways, is an inadequate man. If he himself were in the dock I would not dissent from much of what the editors of *Novy Mir* wrote. Pasternak of course makes his characters voice his own feeling. What the editors of *Novy Mir* do not realize, however, is that when a writer with a really powerful imagination begins to work he divides himself and distributes the parts among *all* his characters. When Shakespeare wrote Macbeth's lines he was, for a time, Macbeth himself. Yet he was also Macbeth's executioner, Macduff. There is a good deal of Pasternak in Yury Zhivago. But there is part of him in Lara, and part also—that part of every writer which yearns to play a more active role in big events—in Antipov, the revolutionary commander.

Zhivago himself is a divided man. He wants, at the beginning of the revolution, to embrace it. He sees socialism as 'the sea of life, of life in its own right' and wants to 'be lost in other people's lives without leaving a trace'. But, like his creator, he is a poet; and his poetic sensibilities are revolted by the bloodshed, the slogans and the hatreds released by revolution (which, like the drastic surgery to which Marx compared it, is never an agreeable business). Pasternak, as always, underlines his meaning by using symbols. He makes Zhivago both a doctor and a poet to emphasize the ultimately disastrous inner division in him. He also makes him fall deeply in love with two women: his wife Tonya and Lara. What novelist would not, it might be asked. Few, of course; the difference is that Pasternak shows Zhivago deeply in love with both but with a different side of of his nature involved with each.

Dr Zhivago, fact, is a dramatization of Pasternak's

own struggle to find some thread of meaning running through the social convulsions that have torn his country since he started to write in 1912. It is not an analysis of the degeneration of the Revolution. Pasternak is not equipped for that and he knows it. It is significant that one of the poems which appear at the end is called *Hamlet*. Pasternak, denied the optimism which, as Trotsky once pointed out, 'saturates' Marxism, faces the rottenness which crept into the Revolution with the same anguished incapacity for either understanding or correcting it which makes the Prince of Denmark so tragic a figure. *Zhivago*, like *Hamlet*, is not a Ph.D. thesis on politics: it is a work of art and can only be judged as such.

With its stature as a novel I am not concerned. I certainly do not agree with those critics who have enthusiastically hailed it as another *War and Peace*. Pasternak's excessive use of coincidence is one weakness, the wholly inadequate motivation of some characters is another. Antipov, for instance, is a highly competent military commander in the civil war. He is thrown aside after it (as many were) but we are not shown why or how. It is just 'the Revolution' which destroys him. Tolstoy would never have left loose ends like that. In *War and Peace* the effects of the 1812 invasion on all his characters are carefully delineated. But *Zhivago*, for all its imperfections, is in the great tradition of Russian literature. It is not about trivial problems. It has none of the walking slogans who so often pass for characters in Soviet novels. It is the confused but impressive testament of a genius who is trying to come to terms with himself, his past life and the political tragedies that punctuated it.

The Soviet Union is on the threshold of unprecedented advances in both science and industry. The bureaucracy is strong enough to challenge the world. Yet it is not strong enough to face the challenge of one man's unfettered imagination. That is the meaning of the Pasternak affair.

Marxists in the Second World War

William Hunter

WHEN, in 1914, Lenin first heard that the German Social Democratic Party leaders had supported the Kaiser in his declaration of war he denounced the news as a forgery. Only two years before, the Basle manifesto had been adopted unanimously by a meeting of the Second International representing socialist parties all over the world.

The manifesto stated unequivocally that the interests of no nation could justify the war that capitalist rivalry was then preparing. It declared that if war broke out socialists must take advantage of the 'economic and political crisis' created by it to 'hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule'.

However, when the war foreseen in the Basle manifesto began, the socialist leaders in every major country involved—with the honourable exception of the

Russian Bolsheviks—hastened to support their own capitalist class in glaring violation of their expressed convictions.

In 1939 the leaders of the organized working class in France and Britain again supported their rulers in war. They were no more loyal to socialist principles than those whom Lenin called 'social-chauvinists' in 1914. This time, however, there was no sharp break as in 1914 with their policy statements of previous years. Their support for the declaration of war was in line with earlier policies which were based on the premise that 'democratic' capitalism and the working class could have joint interests in the fight against fascism.

It was left to the Marxists—the Trotskyists—to carry on revolutionary opposition to the last war based

on the same principles which Lenin upheld in the first world war. Lenin had hammered home the lesson that the attitude of a Marxist to a particular war must be based upon the aims of the governments fighting the war, as demonstrated by their previous policies and as determined by the class nature of the systems they represented.

THE LENINIST ATTITUDE TO WAR

From the outbreak of the second world war, the Marxists upheld the Leninist tradition. 'The immediate cause of the present war is the rivalry between the old wealthy colonial systems, Great Britain and France, and the belated imperialist plunderers, Germany and Italy,' declared *War and the World Revolution*, a manifesto of the Fourth International issued in May 1940. The manifesto dismissed with contempt the avowed aims of the fascist powers for 'living room' and 'national unification'. 'Hitler's official slogans do not warrant examination,' it said, and to the propaganda of the Allies it replied: 'The slogan of a war for democracy against fascism is a lie.' It was not a war of freedom versus dictatorships but a war of capitalist nations that had won their possessions through bloody conquest against latecomers which sought to force a new division of the world. The war is not our war, declared the Marxists. We build our future, not on the military fortunes of the participants, but on the need to transform the war into a war of the workers against the capitalists. That British and French capitalism was at war with a fascist capitalism expressing all that was most foul in capitalist decay was used to deceive the working class as to the nature of the war. Aggressive, fascist German imperialism, asserted some, was a greater menace to the British working class than its 'own' capitalist class. A victory for the fascist powers, they claimed, would worsen the oppression of the working class and result in the loss of the democratic liberties which Labour had won over previous years of struggle.¹ Therefore the working class should fight together with 'its' ruling class to secure the defeat of Hitler.

Certainly, fascism exterminated the working-class organizations. It defended capitalism by organized and systematic terror. It embraced and perfected all the methods of police repression used by other imperialisms. But there was no difference *in essence* between 'democratic' capitalist society and that in which the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie was an open one. Fascism was a measure of the degree of decay of the capitalist society which had spawned it and which it was protecting.

Moreover, by organized terror British and French

¹ In Marxist language, Harold Laski attempted to justify support for the war in a pamphlet published by the Labour Party soon after war was declared and entitled: *Is This an Imperialist War?* 'The effect on Hitlerite Germany of a victorious war,' he wrote, 'would, clearly, be to consolidate the power of a new and vigorous imperialism at the beginning of its expansion, and using methods far more oppressive than that of contemporary Britain.' Laski found a further ingenious argument for British Labour supporting the war. If it did not, then the British ruling class would be forced to take away its liberties! 'If they [the socialists] become indifferent to its [Hitler's government's] efforts to defeat this country, it is probable that a régime of coercion would replace the present parliamentary system.'

capitalists were holding down millions of colonial slaves. Under the slogan of defending democracy the French government had already, at the outbreak of the war, imposed harsh restrictions on the French working-class movement, banned the Communist Party and arrested its MPs, while French fascists were still at liberty.

Fascism suppressed the democratic liberties which had been won by the working class. But could these liberties be defended by the workers of the bourgeois-democratic countries allying themselves with their 'own' rulers against the more aggressive and more brutal bandits? Should a 'less reactionary' ruling class be supported against a 'more reactionary' one?

In essence these questions were the same as those discussed in the first world war when the leaders of the German social democrats asserted that it was necessary for them to defend the Fatherland. They said they must protect what were the greatest and most powerful organizations in the world against foreign imperialisms—and, in particular, against tsarist Russia, which was looked on as a centre of black reaction by all socialists. Similarly, on the other side of the trenches, French and British socialist leaders defended their 'freedoms' against German militarism. Lenin flayed this theory of the 'lesser evil'. He attacked the socialist leaders as opportunists and defined opportunism as placing the temporary, short-term interests of a section of the proletariat above the permanent, long-term interests of the proletariat as a whole—seeking agreement, for example, with one's 'own' bourgeoisie.

After the revolution of February 1917 when the workers won democratic rights and there were in Russia, as he put it, 'organizations i.e., soviets the like of which exist in no other country', Lenin continued his opposition to the war. The Provisional Government represented Russian capitalism and the war, therefore, continued to be a war on its part for capitalist and oppressive purposes. The opportunist wing of the Russian Labour movement called for 'revolutionary national defence', declaring that German imperialism would smash all the gains of the February revolution. On the contrary, said Lenin, there could be no defence of working-class gains by supporting the aims of capitalism, which was what support for the war meant.

This adherence to principles in the analysis of war lost none of its validity in the 1939-45 war, even though the majority of the Labour movement saw the defence against fascism of their own organizations as involved in the military struggle. The nature of the war was not determined by the wishes of the mass of the participants. In truth, the workers fought for democracy, but the rulers directed the war in their own interests. As Leon Trotsky put it: 'The workers and farmers give their blood, while the capitalists concentrate in their hands the command.'² For the workers to enter into an alliance with their own rulers to defend democracy meant they must be prepared to accept capitalist exploitation and to defend the British Empire. In an alliance with the bourgeoisie the socialist movement is not an equal partner. The policies of such an alliance are determined by the dominant class, which has

² *Letter to American Socialists*, August 13, 1940, *Fourth International* (theoretical journal of the U.S. Socialist Workers' Party), October 1940.

political power and the State at its command. In capitalist society the working class expresses its will in conflict with the bourgeoisie. To make that will dominant on major questions of war and fascism the working class must become the master class—by taking power from the bourgeoisie. And as the Trotskyists said during the war when Left Labour MPs were criticizing the government: 'If the workers are not conscious enough to take things into their own hands it is disastrous deceiving the advanced workers that Churchill or any other ruling class politicians can, in the mean time, defend their interests.'³

Support for the war on the basis that the first task was the military defeat of Hitler meant opposing all struggle which weakened the 'war effort' of the capitalist governments that were fighting German imperialism. It meant opposition to all struggles of the colonial peoples, to strikes and any independent political activity by the working class, which must result from the burdens which a class society places upon the exploited in war-time.

AFTER THE INVASION OF RUSSIA

What did the invasion of the Soviet Union mean for revolutionary policy? Did it alter the whole character of the war? For the leadership of the Communist Party these questions were, of course, resolved by the Kremlin and its international relationships.

How did the Trotskyists treat the entry of Russia into the war? They were for the defence of the Soviet Union. Indeed, they fought against a point of view which wished to drop this from their programme after the Russian invasion of Finland in 1939.⁴ But if the war on the part of the Soviet Union was a progressive and defensive war, that did not change the nature of the other combatants or the purpose for which they were fighting the war. As Andrew Scott put it, the war had not become 'just by contagion'.⁵ He was replying directly to R. Palme Dutt who, ignoring his writings of six years before, tried to deduce the whole nature of the war from the Anglo-Soviet Alliance, which, he alleged, had 'transformed the world situation'. Dutt wrote:

The second phase of the war, the reactionary war of the western imperialist powers for the redivision of the world, has passed into the third phase of the war, the just war for the liberation of the peoples against German fascism . . . In this way the participation of the Soviet Union has transformed the character of the war.⁶

³ **Socialist Appeal**, November 1941. The article went on: 'All the greater the reason to devote ourselves to a "patient" explanation as to the real situation that exists by showing the aims and aspirations of British imperialism and convince them [the workers] of the only road for the liberation of the working class.'

⁴ See **In Defence of Marxism**, by L. Trotsky (New York, 1942). Shachtman and Burnham, the main opponents of defence of the Soviet Union, finally split from the U.S. Socialist Workers' Party. They quickly developed their ideas to the point where they described Russia as a new class society—a 'bureaucratic collectivist society'. Burnham later wrote **The Managerial Revolution**—a widely-known if not widely-read book—and continued his course away from socialism until he became a propagandist for the American ruling class.

⁵ **Does Russia's Entry Alter Britain's War?** (Workers' International League, 1941).

⁶ **Labour Monthly**, August 1941.

'What has caused the change then?' Scott asked Dutt.

A change in the politics which were 'pursued for a long period before the war'? But the same class is still in control . . . The war of the Russian masses is just . . . but it does not affect in the smallest degree the unjust, oppressive war for the domination of the world which is being fought by Germany on one side and Britain and America on the other.⁸

Britain's war would be transformed into a genuine, revolutionary, just war only if the workers took military and State power into their own hands. And until this was done, what was the Soviet Union to do? Refuse aid from the imperialist governments? 'Of course not,' answered Scott. 'Nobody but a fool would suggest this. But the signing of such a pact must not mean that the working class of the country with which it is signed should give up or moderate their struggle against their ruling class.'

By sad necessity the Soviet Union was forced to make a military pact with capitalist powers fighting against Germany. But to advocate that this must mean an alliance of the working class internationally with the allies of the Soviet Union was, once again, opportunism. In Russia a workers' State was already established. Its agreements with the capitalists were between two State powers. In the capitalist countries the working class had yet to take political power.

If it was impossible to protect the democratic liberties of the working class by subordinating the class struggle to agreements with a section of the ruling class, so also was it impossible to protect the workers' State by policies of class collaboration. Before the war, with such policies the Stalinist leadership of the Communist International had been responsible for the defeat of revolutionary movements and thus helped to make possible the attack on the Soviet Union. Only for the time being did the fundamental antagonism between the Soviet Union and Allied imperialism become secondary to the defeat of Germany. And even then, it still existed, and was an important factor in the pattern of imperialist strategy.

In discussing the Marxist attitude to a war involving the Soviet Union, one can do no better than quote from a pamphlet by R. F. Andrews, published by the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1934.⁹ 'Supposing fascist Germany attacks the USSR, are you in favour of the workers supporting the British or French governments in an attack on fascist Germany?' asked Andrews. He answered his rhetorical question very definitely:

Under no circumstances! . . .

Such action would help the German capitalists to represent the war as one of self defence. It would strengthen British capitalists and weaken British workers. It would put British imperialism in the event of victory in a favourable position for attacking the USSR, it would mean suppressing the inevitable revolt in India and the Empire.

On the contrary, by supporting the workers in their struggle against exploitation, profiteering and oppression in war-time—a struggle which is inevitable in any case—and developing it into a struggle against the war itself, the British workers would undermine Hitler's own front, which

⁷ This phrase in quotation marks is from Lenin.

⁸ **Does Russia's Entry Alter Britain's War?**

⁹ **The Labour Party and the Menace of War**.

would be the most effective assistance British revolutionaries could give to the USSR in such circumstances.¹⁰

In the traditions of Marxism, the Trotskyists affirmed that the working class could aid a non-imperialist ally of its ruling class only through its own methods. A manifesto in the *Socialist Appeal* (July 1941) proclaimed: 'The Soviet Union must not be defeated.' But Churchill and the ruling class of Britain could not be entrusted with the task of defending the workers' State or with the leadership of an armed struggle against Hitler: 'If the war remains a predatory one under the control of Churchill and the capitalist class then the Soviet masses can, at best, only look forward, even in the event of a victory over Hitler, to facing the imperialist armies of the British and American war-lords.' How true that prophecy rings today! The manifesto put the alternative: 'But if the British workers take power and take control of the struggle against Hitler, then the whole situation will be transformed.' It concluded by declaring that the rank and file of the Labour Party must demand that the Labour leaders break with big business, which helped place Hitler in power, and wage a struggle for power armed with this programme: immediate aid to the Soviet Union; expropriation of land, mines, banks, factories and heavy industry and their operation under workers' control; freedom for India, Ireland and the colonies. Finally, it called for a socialist appeal to the German and European workers for the socialist struggle against Hitlerism and for the Socialist United States of Europe.

THE CLASS TRUCE

'Independently of the course of the war,' declared the Fourth International manifesto of May 1940, 'we fulfil our basic task: we explain to the workers the irreconcilability between their interests and the interests of bloodthirsty capitalism . . . We carry on constant, persistent, tireless preparation of the revolution—in the factories, in the mills, in the villages, in the barracks, at the front and in the fleet.'

Seeking to assemble and organize fighters for Marxist principles, the Trotskyists sought to develop independent working-class action and put forward working-class demands at each stage of the war. They denounced the political and industrial truce which the Labour and trade union leadership sought to maintain. The leaders of the Labour Party called on the workers to sacrifice in the fight against Hitlerism, which 'denied the validity of all the spiritual values on which civilization is built up'.¹¹ The Labour leaders hurried into a coalition government to aid capitalism in its critical period after

Dunkirk. They were concerned, they said, about the 'suppression of liberty anywhere'.¹² And so they allied with the class which oppressed the colonial peoples, which declared the people of India and Burma at war without their consent and despite the protest of their leaders.¹³ The Labour leaders sat in a government which expressly excluded India from the Atlantic Charter. It was a government which answered the August 1942 'Quit India' resolution of the Indian Congress with a hail of bullets, bombed villages from the air, flogged demonstrators for demanding freedom, seized Congress funds and sentenced nationalist leaders to long terms of imprisonment. While denouncing the atrocities inflicted upon the peoples of Europe by an imperialism at war with their own rulers, the Labour leaders helped an imperialism whose misrule led to the 1943 famine in which five million people died and men and women who rioted for bread were shot down. So abject was their collaboration that the Labour leaders failed even to get from the Tories a pledge that the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act (1927) would be repealed after the war. To secure the support of Labour's rank and file they spoke of the Emergency Powers Acts which the coalition government introduced in 1940 as meaning the end of class privileges, the beginning of 'war-time socialism'. But as Kirkwood said to Attlee in the House of Commons on May 22, 1940: 'The working class, as I understand the Lord Privy Seal, is to be tied hand and foot and private property is not.' Working men and women were bound to their jobs or compelled to move from one area of industry to another. Miners who had escaped from poverty and decay in the coalfields and found jobs elsewhere were searched out and brought back to dig coal—and often to see coalowners using labour on less productive seams, leaving the more productive for peace-time, when profits would be harder to come by.¹⁴ Workers were fined and imprisoned for

¹⁰ See also *Labour Monthly*, January 1935. There, discussing the entry of the Soviet Union into the League of Nations, Palme Dutt warned the working class 'never [his emphasis] to become entangled in the lines of imperialist policies' 'The participation of the Soviet Union in the League of Nations no more transforms the character of the League of Nations than participation of a communist in parliament transforms the character of parliament,' he wrote, and continued: 'The false comparison of the position of a working class which has conquered power and now has to manoeuvre in a capitalist world . . . is the favourite fallacy of reformism to confuse the issue and to conceal its own capitalist policies.'

¹¹ *Labour's Peace Aims* (Labour Party, Dec. 1939).

¹² The Labour Party 'is a party that stands for democracy and freedom, and therefore recognizes that the suppression of liberty anywhere in the world is a blow to freedom everywhere' (*ibid.*).

¹³ In 1940 the Burmese House of Representatives protested that Britain had included Burma in a war without the consent of the Burmese people. After the defeats in Burma in 1942 General Alexander estimated that 10 per cent. of the population had been pro-Japanese, 10 per cent. were pro-British and 80 per cent. were indifferent. In Burma the Japanese government tried to rule after its victories through a section of the native ruling class. On the argument of the 'lesser evil' the Burmese people should have allied with the Japanese against the British. Indeed, this was precisely the trap some Burmese—and Indian—nationalist leaders fell into. 'The "independence" of Burma, shadowy though it may be in western eyes, is none the less a real advance on her former status in the estimation of many of her people, and failure to reckon with this fact would be a grave mistake' (*The Times*, December 13, 1944).

¹⁴ A conference of the Lancashire and Cheshire Regional Council of Labour was told by a miners' leader in 1942: 'The miners are fed up with the chaos and inefficiency that masquerades as production. Coal production was being deliberately hindered by the employers to maintain profits and keep pits sound for after the war' (*Socialist Appeal*, April 1942).

striking, for being late or absent from work and for refusing a direction to work.¹⁵

The control of industry under 'war-time socialism' turned out to be in the hands of Controllers who had previously been high in the management of the very industries they were now set to supervise. 'The Labour leaders are criminally co-operating in all the measures for the defence of imperialism, while blindfolding the masses to their real meaning,' said *Youth for Socialism*¹⁶ in June 1940, a few weeks after these leaders had entered the coalition. 'If Labour really wishes to defend its liberties and defeat fascism then the Labour leaders must cease co-operation with Churchill.'

The situation at home was one of 'unlimited profits' coinciding with 'unlimited chaos'. Among the working class there was general mistrust in the political leadership of the ruling class. 'Meanwhile the Emergency Powers are enforced to prosecute shop stewards and worker militants who are fighting in the interests of the working class, and to introduce a regimentation aimed at stifling any working-class opposition to the existing régime.'¹⁷

Socialist Appeal appeared just as the Communist Party was making its second somersault of the war.¹⁸ The Communist Party rapidly became the most jingoistic supporter of British capitalism, an organized strike-breaking force,¹⁹ and a manufactory of lies and slanders

against revolutionary opponents of the war. It became the most ardent defender of the political truce, supporting Tory candidates with unprincipled accusations against their socialist opponents.²⁰ The former cry of 'Down with the industrial truce' was heard no more. Now the slogan was 'Everything for production'.

The National Council of Shop Stewards called a conference in the Stoll Theatre, London, on October 19, 1941, which was attended by 1,400 delegates. The purpose of the conference, said the opening speaker, a leading Communist Party engineer, was not to discuss the direction and control of production, but to consider concrete instances of 'how our co-operation with the management has increased production'.²¹ A Trotskyist girl shop steward, delegate from the west London shop stewards' area committee, pointed out there were only two methods of increasing production:

The one alternative is that of Nazi Germany, where production is organized through the complete destruction of all working-class rights. The other alternative is the establishment of workers' control, which would not only increase production but also safeguard and extend the rights we have won through years of struggle. If this conference gives a lead, and I hope that it will, for a movement in the trade unions and factories for the control of production through factory committees, it would be the first serious blow struck against fascism and in defence of the Soviet Union.²²

THE WITCH-HUNT AGAINST THE MARXISTS

The Communist Party lined up with the most reactionary forces in attacking those who remained faithful to socialist principles. In November 1941 Rothermere's *Sunday Dispatch* denounced the Trotskyists and called on the government to take action against them. Its second article²³ on 'a group that needs watching' reported that the Communist Party had prepared a

and the *Daily Worker*. A bulletin issued by the party declared: 'At every yard meeting our comrades should take part and forcefully put the case for a return to work, announce their own intention of going in and appeal to the workers to follow them.' The *Daily Worker* complained on October 15, two days after the strike had ended, that shop stewards who had remained at work were being removed from their positions. Although it was the workers who had elected them who were now voting them out, the *Daily Worker* indignantly announced they were being 'victimized' and demanded that the union district committees refuse to allow their removal (*Socialist Appeal*, November 1942). At a national conference of the Communist Party in May 1942 Pollitt honoured blacklegging. 'I salute our comrade, a docker from Hull,' he said. 'When the rest of the dockers struck work, he fought against it . . . What courage, what a sacred spirit of real class consciousness to walk on the ship's gangway and resume his job.'

²⁰ E.g., the Cardiff by-election of 1942, in which Fenner Brockway stood as Independent Labour Party candidate. The Communist Party's slogan was: 'A vote for Brockway is a vote for Hitler.' It called Brockway the 'ILP candidate who embodies all the snivelling anti-Sovietism of that organization . . . the people of Cardiff have no time for those who are playing Hitler's game by abusing Russia' (See *Commentary on Current Political Events*—published during the ban on the *Daily Worker*—April 8, 1942).

²¹ *Socialist Appeal*, November 1941.

²² *Ibid.* The speech was greeted with loud applause, to the discomfiture of the platform.

²³ November 29, 1941.

¹⁵ The February 1945 issue of *Socialist Appeal* reported: 'Since the outbreak of the war, 23,517 workers have been prosecuted under anti-Labour legislation. But not one boss has gone to prison under these same laws. The few who were found guilty received only nominal fines: while 1,807 workers have gone to prison . . . In June 1942, Ernest Bevin boasted in the House of Commons that in the previous six months "I have transferred at great loss of wages to themselves, over 36,000 men from munitions factories to the mines". These workers lost from £1 to £2 10s. a week in their wages, and their conditions of work [were] made very much harder. Bevin could do this to the workers but not to his capitalist masters. For this is the only reason why he and the other Labour leaders are kept in the Cabinet at the present time.'

¹⁶ *Youth for Socialism* was the predecessor of *Socialist Appeal*, which began publication in June 1941, first as a monthly, from March 1942 as a fortnightly.

¹⁷ *Socialist Appeal*, June 1941.

¹⁸ The Communist Party supported the war for twenty-seven days after it began. 'Nazis plunge world into war,' said a *Daily Worker* headline on September 2, 1939. Pollitt wrote a pamphlet entitled *How to Win the War*. However, on September 29, the Russian and German governments, having occupied Poland in accordance with secret agreements in the Nazi-Soviet Pact, issued a joint call for peace by negotiation. 'To talk of war to the end, which means the wholesale slaughter of the youth of Europe, would be madness,' the *Daily Worker* editorial board announced the following day.

¹⁹ One example of its general policies was its furious activity during October 1942 when 40,000 Tyneside engineers struck over a change in the method of payment of wages. Before the strike, at a special meeting of party members on Tyneside, Pollitt instructed all communists to oppose it. Len Powell, then secretary of the National Council of Shop Stewards—a body which originated as a militant movement but which, under Communist Party control, was concentrating all its activities on the development of production committees—issued a leaflet denouncing the strike. The strike committee condemned the Communist Party

manifesto attacking *Socialist Appeal*. It quoted with approval from this manifesto, which was being circulated as an internal document within the Communist Party. In its issue of December 1941 *Socialist Appeal* commented: 'Is it not worthy of note that the *Sunday Dispatch* obtained access to this document? And does it not suggest that this was provided by the CP leadership, which has not hesitated at using the gutter Press to attack genuine Leninists?'²⁴

The internal document was later issued as a leaflet by the Communist Party under the heading: 'Warning to all anti-Nazis.' 'Don't be deceived by traitors who call themselves "socialists" to cover up their activities,' it declared. 'These despicable traitors should be driven out of the Labour movement.' In bold type the leaflet concluded: 'Treat a Trotskyist as you would a Nazi.'

In *Labour Monthly* for December 1941 J. R. Campbell, now straightened out on the line he had adopted at the beginning of the war, called the Trotskyists the 'agents of the Gestapo in the Labour movement'. The Communist Party, which only five months before had been fiercely defending itself against jingoistic attacks,²⁵ now incited its members to violence against socialists who opposed the war. 'We are too tolerant with these people,' declared a document circulated to Young Communist League branches in December 1941. 'They are allowed to sell their paper *Socialist Appeal* outside meetings.' But *Socialist Appeal* sellers defended themselves vigorously against the paper-snatching and thugery which local Stalinist officials up and down the country attempted to organize outside meetings.

In August 1942 the Communist Party published *Clear Out Hitler's Agents*, by William Wainwright—fifteen pages of downright lies and forged quotations calculated to work up a pogrom against the Trotskyists. 'These people,' Wainwright wrote, 'have not the slightest right to be regarded as workers with an honest point of view.' He, too, added: 'They should be treated as you would treat a Nazi.'

Socialist Appeal counter-attacked with a leaflet entitled, 'Clear out the Bosses' Agents', exposing the strike breaking and anti-working-class policy of the Communist Party. In its issue of September 1942 the paper offered £10 reward to 'any member of the CP who can show any page of this pamphlet [*Clear Out Hitler's Agents*] which does not contain a minimum of

²⁴ Fourteen years later it appeared that certain leading circles of the Communist Party still had a strange affinity for the *Sunday Dispatch*. During the dock strike for recognition of the 'Blue Union' in 1955, leaders of the docks organization of the Communist Party called a number of Pressmen together on the evening of June 18. The following day, the *Sunday Dispatch* vilified a 'group of men' with 'diabolical cunning' who were allegedly terrorizing the dockers. 'Even veteran communists call them sinister men,' it told its readers, and asked them to be sorry for the '25,000 scared men' on London's docks. 'The ghost of Trotsky walks the docks today in the form of men who speak only English,' announced this excursion into melodrama piloted by Communist Party leaders.

²⁵ In April 1941 Palme Dutt had indignantly condemned 'the unscrupulous methods of fanning the flames of jingo prejudice against socialists in war-time who remain faithful to the class struggle'. 'Such methods,' he wrote, 'are familiar from the gutter sheets of Tory jingoism; the bottom pit of shame is reached when they are used by those who dare to call themselves "socialists"' (*Labour Monthly*, April 1941).

five lies'. Needless to say, the reward remains unclaimed to this day.

The slanders of the Communist Party leaders made little headway. The rank and file of the Labour movement were in general disgusted by their way of dealing with Trotskyism, and a great number of their own members were uneasy about their leaders' attitude. Although by no means winning wide support for its denunciation of the war as an imperialist one, *Socialist Appeal* was received with wide sympathy among workers in struggle. Its circulation grew as discontent with the way the war was being conducted, and with conditions in industry, mounted.²⁶

Working days lost by strikes, which fell to 940,000 in 1940, rose to 1,530,000 in 1942, 1,810,000 in 1943 and 3,710,000 in 1944. By the beginning of 1944 the government was faced with the prospect of a general strike throughout the coalfields. In the last months of 1943 there had been a wave of strikes, most of them in defence of young workers who had been conscripted for underground work. At the end of January 1944 a strike against a wages award—the Porter award—which meant no increase for large sections of the miners, spread rapidly through Lancashire, Cheshire, Staffordshire and South Wales. Sporadic strikes continued in the following weeks, flaring up to a strike of 100,000 Welsh miners in March.²⁷

Next month the Press launched a vilification campaign against the Trotskyists. At the same time there were police raids on the headquarters of the Revolutionary Communist Party, which had been formed in March by the fusion of two formerly separate organizations, the Revolutionary Socialist League and the Workers' International League. These attacks were part of the government's plans for dealing with the greatest strike wave for many years, a movement which had broken through the official trade union machine. In the Press scare campaign 'hidden-hand agitators' and 'subversive elements' were blamed for the strikes. Four Trotskyists—Heaton Lee, Ann Keene, Roy Tearse

²⁶ Uneasiness at the agreements which the British government concluded with Darlan, Giraud, Peyrouton and other reactionary French leaders. Uneasiness at the conflicts between Anglo-American imperialism and the Soviet Union over strategy; at the defeats in the Far East owing to the hatred which British rule had engendered among the peoples there; and at profiteering, muddle and glaring inequality of sacrifice at home. Politically these feelings showed themselves in a movement against the political truce—the election of and large votes for independent candidates and a demand inside the Labour Party that Labour break with the coalition government. A resolution supporting the continuation of the truce was carried by a majority of only 66,000 on a card vote at the Labour Party conference in May 1942.

²⁷ A significant pointer to the feeling of workers in uniform was a debate by Eighth Army men on the question: 'Should strikes be allowed in war-time?', which took place immediately after the Welsh coal strike. Under the headlines: 'Eighth Army men say to workers: "Right to strike is part of the freedom we fight for"', the *Eighth Army News* reported that 'Sgt J. Lawson failed to gain sufficient 8th Army Signals support to carry his proposal that strikes in war-time should be declared illegal'. A photograph of this issue of *Eighth Army News* appeared in *Socialist Appeal*, mid-May 1944. In the same issue there was a petition to the Home Secretary, signed by eighty-two soldiers in the Royal Engineers, protesting at the arrests of four Trotskyists.

and J. Haston—were arrested. The Press campaign continued amid protests from Labour MPs.²⁸ The government's purpose was clear. An atmosphere was being created for the introduction of more severe legislation to stem the industrial struggle and to restore the crumbling authority of the trade union leadership. The ruling class intensified its attack on the Marxists not only because they were winning support, but primarily as a means whereby it could bulldoze through Regulation Iaa introduced by Ernest Bevin.

The effect of this Regulation was to make any expression of sympathy for workers on strike punishable by five years' imprisonment or a £500 fine. Anyone who took or advocated any action which could be construed as leading to a strike in any industry, at any meeting or discussion which was not an officially convened union meeting, was also liable to five years' imprisonment. The Trades Union Congress was consulted before the Regulation was introduced. Trade union officialdom had to enlist the help of the State and its police to control its own members.²⁹

The four Trotskyists were charged under the Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act of 1927 with conspiring in furtherance of an illegal strike.³⁰ They were the first victims of an Act which the Labour movement had fiercely condemned ever since its introduction after the General Strike, an Act which the leaders of the Labour Party were pledged to repeal. However, Bevin and Morrison, Minister of Labour and Home Secretary respectively, helped to institute the prosecution. The arrests aroused a great protest in the Labour Party and in the trade unions. A committee to defend the victims of the anti-Labour laws was formed, with W. G. Cove, MP, as treasurer and James Maxton, MP, as chairman. Representatives from the Independent Labour Party, Freedom Press and the Revolutionary Communist Party, together with eight Labour MPs including Aneurin Bevan, sat on the committee. But the National Council

for Civil Liberties refused to help. The Communist Party supported the arrests.³¹

At their trial in Newcastle in June Roy Tearse and Heaton Lee were sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, Haston to six months and Ann Keene to thirteen days. Two months later the sentences were quashed at the Court of Criminal Appeal Regulation Iaa had been pushed through. The strike wave was receding, only partly because of the Regulation but mainly because the Second Front had been opened and the Allied armies were advancing into Europe. Workers began to feel the end of the war was in sight. The tide against the political truce finally broke up the coalition government. A 'caretaker government' prepared for a general election. In May 1945 the accumulated experiences of pre-war depression, war-time suffering, profiteering, muddle and corruption resulted in the great wave of working-class and middle-class opinion which swept Labour into power.

THE MARXISTS' STAND VINDICATED

The workers are for the destruction of Hitlerism and any other form of fascism, but this cannot be accomplished under the control and leadership of the capitalist class and its politicians. Even if Churchill and British imperialism were to defeat the Nazis it would not mean the destruction of fascism.

So declared a Trotskyist leaflet issued to the Labour Party conference in June 1941. (Let those who at that time believed the military defeat of Hitler would resolve the question of fascism ponder on the recent events in France, where de Gaulle—whose reputation as 'hero of the Resistance' the Communist Party leaders helped to build up—opens the door to fascism.) The victory of the Allies removed none of the basic problems which faced the working class in 1939. Indeed the failures of the communist parties and reformist leaders since 1945 have raised these problems more urgently than ever. 'Socialism or barbarism' before the war meant the choice between collective ownership, or fascism and war with 'conventional' weapons. 'Barbarism' today means not only the collapse of democratic institutions but, above all, the poisoning and malformation of a major part of the human race amid radio-active ruins.

It is true that as a result of the war imperialism and capitalism have been driven out of large areas in the Far East and in eastern Europe. But if support for the last war can be justified because of the revolutionary changes the war engendered, then the German social democrats were correct in supporting the first world war—for the victories of German imperialism helped create the Russian Revolution. India and Burma now have political independence, not as a result of the victory of 'democratic' capitalism over fascist capitalism, but because 'democratic' capitalism was weakened by war, and because the uprisings in these countries during the war and the threatened revolutions at its end forced

²⁸ 'These poor people had none of the benefits of any democratic code . . . Before they had been tried, the newspapers were permitted . . . without any action being taken against them at all, to commit contempt of court to an extent never before seen in Great Britain. They piled up public hatred . . . they slandered and abused these people at the very moment when they were committed for trial. No action was taken by this venal government to protect them in any way' (Aneurin Bevan, House of Commons, April 28, 1944).

²⁹ 'It is trade union officials who are invoking the law against their own members. Do not anyone on this side of the House think that he is defending the trade unions. He is defending the trade union official, who has arteriosclerosis, and who cannot readjust himself to his membership. He is defending the official who has become so unpopular with his own membership that the only way he can keep them in order is to threaten them with five years in jail' (*ibid.*).

³⁰ The strike referred to was the Tyneside apprentices' strike on March 28, 1944. The strike was against the 'Bevin ballot' scheme by which young apprentices were chosen by lot to work in the mines. The Tyneside Apprentices' Guild, which led the strike, opposed the conscription of young workers into the pits and put forward a demand for the nationalization of the mines and workers' control as the way to attract labour.

³¹ 'The Communist Party has repeatedly demanded that measures under existing legislation should be taken against Trotskyist propaganda in this country in the same way as against fascist propaganda. The licence given to Trotskyist propaganda has enabled it to exploit the difficulties of the present situation in a way that has at last roused public opinion' (Resolution of an enlarged meeting of the executive committee of the Communist Party, April 16, 1944, *World News and Views*, April 22, 1944).

imperialism to grant what it could not suppress. In fact the rout of British imperialism in 1942 by the Japanese armies played a major part in developing the revolutionary temper and confidence among the oppressed eastern peoples.

'If Hitler is defeated the Nazi régime will crack up and the resulting revolution will come rapidly under socialist leadership,' wrote a Labour supporter of the war in answer to the revolutionary opposition.³² But the invasion of Europe, which the Marxists declared was for the purpose of maintaining capitalist relations and the domination of Anglo-American imperialism, led to precisely that.³³

To delude the British working class that while imperialism controlled their lives and expended their blood for its own purposes the war could be fought against fascism and for social revolution in Germany—that was the way to help undermine the very proletarian internationalism needed to aid the workers oppressed by Hitler and Mussolini. It was true that the main stimulus for revolt in the fascist countries was most likely to come from abroad. But this made all the more urgent the task of rousing the working class of the 'democratic' countries to the responsibility of waging a successful struggle against their own capitalists. For the stimulus and aid to socialist revolt in Germany could come only from the *working class* elsewhere. The imperialist policy of unconditional surrender was directed against the real anti-fascist forces in Italy and Germany. Allied planes murderously bombed Milan and Turin in 1943 while Italian workers in those cities were heroically on strike against Italian fascism and the Gestapo. When the armies of 'democratic' capitalism occupied Italy the Allied Military Government used the entire existing governmental apparatus, including generals, administrators and the notorious *carabinieri*, all of whom had served Mussolini. The Allies reduced Germany to a state of famine and to conditions in which working men and women fought for an existence on the lowest level, unable to reassemble their forces

³² W. N. Warbey, *Left*, November 1939.

³³ 'Who really believes the scare stories of the coming domination of the rest of Europe by Anglo-American imperialism?' asked Harry Pollitt in September 1944, in *How to Win the Peace*. 'This People's War will be followed by a People's Peace,' he prophesied.

and activities in an organized way as a class until the economy began functioning again. And the policies of western imperialism, helped by the chauvinistic propaganda of the Stalinists and Right-wing reformists, guaranteed that the monopolies which backed Hitler dominated the resurgent economy.³⁴

The Trotskyists held aloft the banner of socialist internationalism. That alone would reflect honour on the Marxist movement. But more than that: this movement, mainly of young men and women, fought an all-round battle for great principles. There was much that was immature and unpolished in its propaganda. Looking back on these war years one sees that the central political demand, 'Labour to power', was used, in the main, as a propaganda slogan and not as a general strategic line directed at establishing links with wide layers of the working class. But this is secondary to the courageous battle that was fought for socialist principles.

Unlike the leaders of the Communist Party the Trotskyists do not need to fear a survey of the past. They do not have to rewrite history over and over again, leaving big gaps, omitting the names of various people, falsifying, lying and distorting. The experiences and struggle of the Trotskyists in war-time are part of the heritage of the Marxist movement. Those who participated, and who are seeking now to extend the power of Marxism in the British Labour movement, can be justly proud of their stand for internationalism and for socialist principles.

³⁴ When in 1944 the Trades Union Congress passed an 'all Germans are guilty' resolution Goebbels used it in propaganda on the German radio meant to exploit German fears of a peace harsher than Versailles. The hypocrisy of the trade union leaders was epitomized by Sir Walter Citrine, who declared to this Congress: 'There is far too much mushy sentimentality about this question . . . Nobody has wanted to see signs of revolt in Germany more than I have. The TUC has appealed to the German Labour movement.' This same trade union leader, eleven years before, had justified the betrayal of his German counterparts when they allowed Hitler to take power without any organized opposition. At the 1933 TUC he excused them by saying: 'A general strike after the atmosphere created by the Reichstag fire and with 6,500,000 unemployed was an act fraught with the gravest consequences, which might be described as nothing less than civil war.'

The Origins of Sectarianism

Peter Cadogan

'The error of Marx and Engels in regard to the historical dates flowed on the one hand from an underestimation of future possibilities latent in capitalism, and on the other an overestimation of the revolutionary maturity of the proletariat' (L. D. Trotsky, *The Communist Manifesto Today* (1937)).

SUICIDE by sectarianism is history's verdict on Left movements in Britain. The National Charter Associa-

tion, the Social Democratic Federation, the Independent Labour Party and the Communist Party: each has been its own executioner. All have shone brilliantly, enlightened the Labour movement—and gone out.

It would be very foolish for us to suppose that this is a historical phenomenon only, in the sense that it is a characteristic of a phase now ended. The danger remains. While we now have a better opportunity than ever before of altering this tradition through under-

standing it, we shall not be in a position to assume that the lessons have been learnt until the socialist revolution in Britain is an accomplished fact.

It is necessary to start at the beginning and distinguish between sectarianism and its antecedent, Utopianism. Sectarianism, in the sense in which that word is being used here, may only be said to exist when socialist theory and policy have become possible by virtue of the birth of scientific socialism. Sectarianism as a compound of mistaken ideas and policies presupposes the possibility of correct ideas and policies.

Scientific socialism dates from the period 1847-50. In 1847 the League of the Just was reorganized and called the Communist League. It was on behalf of the League that Marx and Engels wrote the *Communist Manifesto*, published in January 1848. The publication of an English translation took place in November 1850 in George Julian Harney's *Red Republican*. Scientific socialism was born.

Hitherto it had not been possible for men to grasp the significance of their times. They were therefore fundamentally helpless in face of the task of the transformation of society as a whole. They were not unaware of this, and sought instead to transform isolated parts of society. Thus the Utopianism of Winstanley, Owen and Fourier, whose colonies, based on property relations of a new type, anticipated part of the content of communism.

In the 1847-50 period the theoretical and political possibilities were changed by the birth of scientific socialism; Utopianism thereafter became sectarianism.

Sectarianism may be defined as ideas and practices produced through a breakdown of the scientific method and therefore not related to the real state of affairs, with the result that they increasingly prove unacceptable to the working class. These sectarian ideas may in themselves seem militant, advanced and revolutionary, but they show that communication has broken down between those who imagine themselves to be the vanguard of the working class and the working class itself. It is the working class that is historically decisive. Sectarian socialists identify themselves with the working class even when they have lost touch with it and, by so doing, presume *themselves* to be historically decisive. This illusion persists to the point of the sect's extinction.

It is important that we should see sectarianism as the characteristic of an epoch, not just as something we have known in our own lifetime, when the effects of the October Revolution and, more particularly, the later influence of Stalinism have given it a temporary and quite distinctive character. So long as there has been a working-class movement, sectarianism has been part of it. We must go back to the foundation of the movement to examine its very first manifestations. There we can find the essential clues to everything that follows.

THE FIRST WORKERS' PARTIES

In 1832 the first Reform Bill was passed, giving the vote to the middle class. The working class, so strong in support of the campaign for the Bill, got nothing. Disillusionment was intense and, as a result, the idea of an independent mass organization of the working class was conceived. In 1836 William Lovett founded the London Working Men's Association. Its member-

ship was limited to the working class; middle-class supporters were eligible for honorary membership only.

Then George Julian Harney founded the East London Democratic Association, later known simply as the Democratic Association, with a membership of 3,000 (compared with the 200 of the London Working Men's Association) and all the makings of a mass following. Whereas the London Working Men's Association was an organization of labour aristocrats who pinned their faith on influencing radical MPs, the Democratic Association thought in terms of direct working-class pressure, the general strike and insurrection if necessary.

The Charter's six points for the reform of Parliament were the agreed platform of a united front. Votes for all; secret ballot; payment of MPs etc.: these were supported by a host of local working-class radical associations rallied by the Chartist paper the *Northern Star* and the tireless activity of roving political missionaries. The forms and the tempo of the struggle changed constantly. The headquarters of the movement went from London to Birmingham, to Manchester and back to London. The National Charter Association was created in 1840 between the first and second petitions. In the struggle with the Anti-Corn Law League and the Sturgeite radicals the Chartists fought to maintain the independent working-class leadership of the movement for reform. Feargus O'Connor founded his ill-starred Land Association to turn back the clock of the industrial revolution and Harney in 1846, by means of the Fraternal Democrats, launched working-class internationalism. Socialism made its appearance and was formally adopted by the Chartists in 1850. Political ferment in Britain has never since approached the intensity of these years. Attendance at meetings was commonly numbered in thousands and tens of thousands.

The great Chartist demonstration of 1848 was fixed for April 10. It was to take place on Kennington Common, London. The demonstration was intended as a major challenge to the government and it was interpreted by the latter as nothing less than a plan for revolution. We must remember that this was the year in which revolution had swept across the whole of Europe. The Duke of Wellington, in command of the forces against the Chartists, had at his disposal 150,000 special constables, 9,000 soldiers and four batteries of field artillery. Barricaded buildings were defended by armed government servants.

Coercion won. The procession never marched on Westminster as originally planned. Two years later Harney looked back:

Every hour the strength of our adversary, and our own weakness, became more and more apparent . . . There was no longer any mistake that, if we meant to proceed with the procession, it would be a fight from the moment we left Kennington Common in the direction of the Houses of Parliament, for which the people were not prepared.¹

It is at this point that historians have traditionally

written off the Chartist movement—just when the most intensive historical study is required. A. R. Schoyen in his recent book *Chartist Challenge*² has provided

¹ Letter in *Northern Star*, February 2, 1850.

² A. R. Schoyen, *Chartist Challenge* (Heinemann, 25s.).

that study. There was no immediate decline in Chartist strength; in fact in some places Chartism now proceeded to fortify itself by association with Irish nationalism. Troops were sent to Dudley and Barnsley and the government passed a new gagging Act, the Crown and Government Security Act, that made sedition a transportable offence.

As on previous occasions, however, splits appeared among the Chartist leaders. The traditional ground of difference was between the physical force and moral force parties. This had deepened over the years into a complex series of differences between those who would associate with middle-class radicals, and even depend upon them, and those who would not. Since Chartism as a movement had no political theory of its own this was inevitable. But in 1848 a new and historically more important division appeared at the Chartist National Assembly convened on May Day. A group of delegates, described by Feargus O'Connor as 'socialists first and Chartists second', proposed the removal of O'Connor from the leadership and the reforming of the movement as a socialist confederation including Ireland. The socialists were defeated by a three to one vote.

On May 28, 1848, in Bradford, 2,000 operatives armed with clubs defeated an even larger number of police and 'specials'. For the government Grey, the Home Secretary, decided to use the new special powers. From June 4, meetings in London were broken up, street fighting took place and Chartist leaders were arrested and imprisoned. In July Jones, Vernon and others were tried in an atmosphere of political hysteria. Harney wrote of the trials: 'If men are to be indicted as Chartists and convicted as communists, they may begin to ask themselves why they should stop short at advocating political reform.'³ This was in fact what happened.

At the same time, developments in France showed that parliamentary reform was not all the Chartists had supposed it to be. Across the Channel universal suffrage had produced a Chamber of bankers, landlords, army officers and other men of property.

O'Connor stuck to his ideal of a large class of 'small and well-remunerated capitalists', while Harvey declared 'that Capital, the offspring of Labour, shall be its servant and not its master'.⁴ He saw through the radical design 'to make use of the proletarians to establish bourgeois supremacy' and added: 'From the ranks of the proletarians must come the saviours of industry.'⁵

Harney then proceeded to build the Fraternal Democrats as the socialist faction within Chartism. At a banquet in February 1849 he was joined by Bronterre O'Brien and by Owenites who had previously stood apart from politics. In June 1849 he launched his *Democratic Review*, a threepenny forty-page monthly, as a forum of socialist thought. He claimed a circulation of between 2,000 and 3,000, a significant proportion of active Chartists.

By this time the revolution in Europe was going down to defeat and English 'progressive' middle-class opinion veered round from support of the counter-revolution to enthusiasm for the cause of the revolution

itself. This was not only a question of idealism; there were some good business reasons too. The prospect of an independent, free-trade Hungary was more pleasing to Manchester than that of a protectionist Austria. But the middle-class supporters of the Hungarian cause would go no further than propose a bankers' boycott of the Austrian and Russian oppressors of Hungary. Harney attended their meetings to make a powerful case for the support of Hungary by military intervention and so once more clarified the difference between working-class and middle-class radicalism. This led to another violent struggle among Chartist leaders. Resignations early in 1850 prompted a recall of the Chartist Metropolitan Conference. The new provisional executive which this conference elected contained a five to four majority of the socialist Fraternal Democrats. One of them was Harney himself.

A national election of the Chartist leadership was planned to take place two months later, and the socialists, or 'Red Republicans', stumped the country. Harney resigned from the *Northern Star* and broke with O'Connor. The national election re-elected the provisional executive committee.

The Chartist movement had emerged as Britain's first avowedly social-democratic party—that is, a party which aimed at the achievement of social measures through political means. A 'declaration of social rights' immediately adopted by the national executive called for the nationalization of the land, mines and fisheries, the extension of State credit to all, a 'just and wise system of currency and exchange', national secular education and humane provision for the destitute.⁶

This was in the spring of 1850. In June of that year Harney published the *Red Republican* as the organ of the new Chartism; and it was this paper that printed the *Communist Manifesto* in English for the first time in November of the same year.

Ernest Jones finished his two-year prison sentence in July 1850. He emerged as a socialist revolutionary to find that the flag of Chartism had changed from green to red. The English Left wing, committed to working-class socialism, stood on the threshold of a new political epoch. It is in the story of the years 1850-52 and not in the defeat of 1848 that the real tragedy of Chartism is to be found. The years 1850-52 witness the emergence of sectarianism in England.

THE REAL TRAGEDY OF CHARTISM

Chartist leadership had survived the revolutionizing of its political character. The movement in 1850 had lost ground but was still very much in being. 'When trade is good, political agitation is a farce.' So wrote Harney in September 1848. He knew that the 'flush of prosperity' of 1849 would make mass agitation impossible. The Chartists understood the trade cycle and the tide of politics. They had weathered critical periods before. They were prepared to work and wait. What was principally wanted was a 'few determined men to make a start', and they were forthcoming.

By 1850 the three wings of the working-class movement, political, trade union and co-operative, with which we are so familiar today, had just emerged. They were still experimental. There was no generally accepted definition of their function and interrelation.

³ *Northern Star*, July 15, 1848.

⁴ *Ibid.*, February 26, 1848.

⁵ *Democratic Review*, February 1850, p. 350.

⁶ Schoyen, *op. cit.* p. 197.

It soon became apparent that among the Chartists there were two quite different and incompatible views of this tripartite character.

Harney was of the opinion that an independent working-class party should be the means of uniting the various forces of the Labour movement without asking the different parts to surrender their identity. In August 1850 Harney wrote: 'Men of the Trades! On you mainly depends whether the political serfdom and social slavery of your order is to continue.' In the *Red Republican* he devoted much space to strike news, but always with the ultimate reminder that 'trades organizations may mitigate but they cannot uproot existing evils. For the working classes, there is but one way of fighting their wrongs, that of obtaining mastery of the State.'⁷

Harney took a similar view of the co-operative movement. Ernest Jones, however, held views directly contrary to those of Harney.

Now, it being an established and admitted fact, a fact that its cleverest advocates have not been able to refute, that Trades Unions are a perfect fallacy, and that no co-operative movement can raise the working class under our present system, and since it therefore follows that the people exhaust their strength, and play into the hands of their enemies by running after such delusions, I ask, 'Is the best policy to let them do so?' No! common sense says, 'It is the duty of every right-thinking and honest man to warn the victim running blindfold to destruction.'⁸

Later in the same article, writing about the attitude of the ruling class, Jones adds:

Strikes and co-operations they can meet; because you have not the money for it—they have; but political combinations they cannot resist, because they have not the numbers for it, and you have. It will take millions upon millions to wage a social war with them—a few thousands can carry a political movement through its widest ramifications.

And again: 'We therefore say, at this, the critical time: All Trades-unions are lamentable fallacies, whether they embrace 1,000 or 1,000,000. All co-operative efforts are waste, misdirections of time, means and energy under our present governmental system . . .'⁹

Economic reasons account for the end of Chartism as a mass movement. It is commonplace to recall the Great Exhibition of 1851 as an indication of the new prosperity. But sectarianism accounts for the destruction of that Chartist nucleus which could and should have survived. This will be self-evident if we consider what happened when the two approaches, Harney's and Jones's, struggled for the leadership in 1852.

In December 1850 Harney changed the name of the *Red Republican* to *Friend of the People*. In July 1851 the paper ceased publication for the time being, partly because of the illness of its editor. Then Jones proposed to launch a new organ, the *People's Paper*, and asked for full support for it. In view of the division indicated above it is hardly surprising that the support

was not forthcoming. In February 1852 Harney published a new *Friend of the People*, and in it he wrote:

Chartists are numerous, but the Chartist body is no more . . . Surviving dribbles of the once vast stream only serve to show the extent of the drought . . . My belief is that for Chartism there is no future existence save in a new birth. Any attempt to galvanize the dry bones of a worn-out past must, as in the case of such attempts already tried, prove to be labour in vain.

The 'new birth' was to be a united front of old Chartists, radicals who supported the Six Points of the Charter, trade unionists and co-operators, a new 'National Party'.

The following month, April 1852, there took place the final break between Harney and Jones over the purchase of the *Northern Star* from its publisher, MacGowan. It was offered to Jones, who declined it; he was still working on his projected *People's Paper*. It was then offered to Harney—who took it, to Jones's intense annoyance. 'He must well know two such papers cannot at present exist together,' wrote Jones. The disagreement over the paper has hitherto been taken as the cause of the breach between the two leaders, but it will be apparent from the above that this was incidental to the deep underlying political difference.

The first number of Jones's *People's Paper* appeared on May 8, 1852. In it he asked for support for a Chartist conference that he was calling in Manchester.

The duty of that Convention is simple. It has two chief points to attend to—proselytism and organization. That it will keep the movement intact, that it will repudiate all neutralizing and dividing propositions, there can be no doubt . . .

A good, acting, working machinery, that is all now needed! And this, the Convention must set in action. The democratic mind is in the country—the plan and details of Chartist organization are perfect, the machinery is complete, and the machinery for it to work up is plentiful, it needs but the first motive impulse to secure success . . .

All this was written when the mass movement was on its last legs and the very existence of Chartism was at stake!

Then followed the inevitable authoritarian note: 'To elect an Executive, an Executive of three [!], is one of the propositions submitted by the Manchester Council, and it is one of the most important propositions issued. On the officering of an army depends its efficiency in the field.' The Manchester Conference duly took place and set up a rival Chartist executive of three—Jones, Gammage and Finlen. But only six localities were represented and the actions of the Conference were repudiated by thirteen out of sixteen West Riding localities which affirmed support of the old national executive. At this point Harney was relying on William Newton, organizer of the new and influential Amalgamated Society of Engineers. With his help, Harney saw renewed hope for the proposed Labour party.

Then in July the General Election took place. Harney mistakenly accepted the invitation of the Bradford non-electors at the last minute, arrived in Bradford just in time to go to the hustings, made no speeches—and was defeated at the show of hands.¹⁰

⁷ Quoted, *ibid.* p. 207.

⁸ *Notes to the People*, vol. ii, pp. 860-2, February 1852. This and most of the subsequent quotations are to be found in the excellent collection of documents brought together by John Saville in his *Ernest Jones, Chartist* (1952).

⁹ *Notes to the People*, vol. ii, p. 976, March 1852.

Defeat at the show of hands was a great humiliation for Harney. Four years earlier he had challenged Lord Palmerston at the Tiverton election and defeated him overwhelmingly at the show of hands! It was a very chastened Palmerston who called for a poll and won the election on the strength of the 264 people present who were actually entitled to the vote.

Times had changed. Politically the situation was bad and getting worse. At an extraordinarily difficult moment, with the movement split by sectarianism, Harney, demoralized by a crushing electoral defeat, gave up. The final scene is described by Schoyen:

After an inconclusive contest at a public meeting between the new movers' and Jones—who accused them of being part of a middle-class plot working through Newton to destroy Chartism—the meeting which Newton had called for took place in Finsbury. Harney appeared with Hunt and Le Blond and, in a coldly favourable speech, killed what he had struggled so long for. The movement to create a new National Party was premature, he said; a popular agitation was not possible for the moment. Newton had taken the initiative in the matter, and he should take the next steps. He himself, concluded Harney, would be willing to follow the young men, though he would not take a part in the movement.¹¹

Harney was now 35, but it was the end. Chartism survived as an increasingly pathetic Jonesian sect until 1858. The *People's Paper* ended its eight-year life on September 4, 1858, and the last Chartist conference took place in February of that year. A new paper started by Ernest Jones, the *Cabinet Newspaper*, lasted until 1860.

THE VIEWS OF MARX AND ENGELS

The men who must bear the final responsibility for this first manifestation of sectarianism in England were the founders of scientific socialism itself, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. There can be no doubt that they were behind Jones and against Harney.

In the correspondence of Marx and Engels we find the following opinions expressed:

Yesterday Jones gave a really splendid lecture directed against the co-operative movement, and making a frontal attack on his own public (Marx to Engels, May 5, 1851).

By the way, if you would write and sign an article for Jones. He is making very good progress with his paper, he is learning. He is not like Harney. Consequently the Notes to the People is gaining ground while the Friend of the People is collapsing (Marx to Engels, July 31, 1851).

Jones is quite right, now that O'Connor has definitely gone mad, to exert himself to the utmost. Now is his chance, and if citizen Hiphiphurra [i.e., Harney] falls away in addition, the thing is safe for him. From all I see, the Chartists are so completely disorganized and scattered, and at the same time so short of useful people, that they must either fall completely to pieces and degenerate into cliques, in which they will for practical purposes become simply the tail of the financial reformers, or they must be reconstituted on an entirely new basis

¹⁰ Before the open ballot took place it was customary to call for a show of hands. The Chartists exploited this situation to the full. Workers who had no vote would nevertheless put up a candidate, wage a great campaign in his favour and, at the show of hands, 'elect' him by a big majority. The subsequent ballot based upon property qualifications then served to expose the undemocratic character of the election.

¹¹ Schoyen, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

by a fellow who knows his business. Jones is quite on the right lines for this, and we may well say that he would never have got on the right road without our teaching, for he would never have discovered how the only basis on which the Chartist Party can be reconstituted, namely the instinctive hatred of the workers for the industrial bourgeoisie, can not only be preserved but enlarged, developed and based on enlightening propaganda, while on the other hand one must still be progressive opposing reactionary desires and prejudices among the workers (Engels to Marx, March 18, 1852).

By chance a few numbers of E. Jones's Notes to the People (1851, 1852) have come into my hands again: these, so far as the main points of the economic articles are concerned, were written under my immediate guidance and partly also with my direct co-operation (Marx to Engels, November 4, 1864).¹²

However, the primary cause of the breach between Harney and Marx and Engels was not a matter of domestic politics. It concerned international affairs. Engels first met Harney in 1843, was associated with him in the Fraternal Democrats and was a principal contributor to Harney's Press. Marx arrived in England in August 1849 and Engels returned later the same year. Revolutionary refugees were arriving in England from all over Europe. Mazzini, Kossuth, Louis Blanc, Ledru-Rollin, Germans and Poles—all in flight before the success of counter-revolution.

Harney joined with Marx and Engels in an attempt to unite all the refugee socialist leaders in a World League of Revolutionary Socialists. They were unsuccessful. Insurmountable difficulties emerged. The revolutions of 1848 were not socialist, although socialists took a leading part in them. Their general character was that of bourgeois republicanism. In defeat and in exile there was no political and ideological bond between the *émigrés*—nothing to unify them. In London they formed various rival groupings amongst themselves.

Marx and Engels saw quite clearly that the revolution would only come as the 'result of a long struggle, consummated by a new generation of men', and they regarded the internecine squabbles of the *émigrés* with contempt. Harney, however, would not give up. He insisted on maintaining contact with all shades of opinion and, editorially, gave space accordingly. Engels expressed his views very explicitly:

One realizes more and more that the emigration is an institution in which everyone must necessarily become a fool, a donkey and a scurvy knave unless he withdraws from it completely and contents himself with being an independent writer who doesn't bother his head in the least about the so-called revolutionary party.¹³

Matters came to a head over the celebration in February 1851 of the anniversary of the 1848 revolution in France. Louis Blanc and Ledru-Rollin were organizing rival banquets and Harney threw in his lot with Louis Blanc. Marx described the situation in a letter to Engels on February 23:

He [Harney] has by no means been content to take part at the meeting of these people. No. He has made their banquet of the February 24, which without him would have been a complete failure, into a London event. Already

¹² Quoted, Saville, *op. cit.* pp. 234-43.

¹³ Quoted, F. Mehring, *Karl Marx* (1948), p. 208.

a thousand tickets have been sold . . . Harney has sold the biggest part of the tickets, as Jones told me the day before yesterday. O'Connor, Reynolds and hundreds of Chartists are taking part. Harney has drummed them together. He is on his way all day carrying out the orders of Louis Blanc, as Jones told me also . . .

Jones declared to me that in view of my explanations he would probably . . . not be present at the banquet. What makes his decision uncertain is very rational. If he doesn't come he loses his popularity as, thanks to Dear [Harney] this banquet has become a Chartist matter . . . Jones disapproves of Dear's behaviour . . . He attempted to excuse it by saying that if the Chartists did not take part in either of the two banquets, they would be accused of political apathy or of antipathy against the foreign revolutionaries. I answered him, then Harney should have held a Chartist meeting in celebration of the lousy February 24 instead of making himself into a pedestal for a dwarf and half a dozen camels . . .¹⁴

However, Harney then proceeded to speak also at the Rollin banquet. At a subsequent meeting in High-bury Barn attended by thousands of *émigrés* and addressed by Blanc and Schapper, two of Marx's supporters were ejected and beaten up. Harney, it appears, made no move to stop this and Marx broke off relations with him.

It was at this point that Marx and Engels withdrew from British party politics and undertook the study of the laws of motion of capitalism in order to provide more of the theory without which the Labour movement would always be tethered to reaction.

Writing to Engels in February 1851 of their withdrawal from party politics except for slight remaining connexions with the Chartists, especially Jones, Marx said:

I am very well pleased with the genuine and public isolation in which we two are now situated. This isolation corresponds exactly to our position and our principles. The system of mutual concessions, of patience, for the sake of appearances, with shilly-shallying, the duty of publicly sharing with these donkeys the ridicule incurred by the party—all this has now ended.

The last sentence is a reference to relations with other *émigrés*, the 'little great men' as Marx called them. Thus the views of Marx and Engels on the internal crisis of Chartism in 1852 were much influenced by the pre-existing breach with Harney over an entirely different matter.

THE 'LABOUR PARLIAMENT'

In 1854 Jones called a 'Labour Parliament' with terms of reference as sectarian and as hopeless as those of the Manchester Conference of 1852. It met in the People's Institute, Manchester, from March 6 to March 18. The 'Parliament' was to set up a new organization called the Mass Movement. The constitution proposed for the Mass Movement, published in full in John Saville's book, *Ernest Jones, Chartist*, must be one of the most fantastic exercises in sectarianism ever committed to paper.

There were to be five departments set up to direct the Mass Movement:

The Secretary of Agriculture is to superintend the purchase and management of landed estates, and all connected with the same. The Secretary of Manufacture is to exercise like

functions, in reference to all the factories, workshops etc., established by the Movement. The Secretary of Distribution shall regulate the exchange and conveyance of goods to the co-operative stores and markets, with all the duties in connexion with the same. The Secretary for Regulation of the Price of Labour is to collect, arrange and publish all the details for the price of wages already specified. The Secretary of the Board of Assistance shall manage the entire department connected with strikes, lock-outs and disputes between employed and employer, and all questions of labour legislation between the same.

While all this was being written Chartism was near its last gasp. The constitution further stated: 'No strikes and lock-outs to be supported in the future, the participants of which shall not, before such strike or lock-out takes place, have joined the Mass Movement.'

On the opening day of the 'Parliament', Karl Marx, Louis Blanc and others were elected honorary delegates. Marx wrote in reply:

I regret deeply to be unable, for the moment at least, to leave London, and thus to be prevented from expressing verbally my feelings of pride and gratitude on receiving the invitation to sit as Honorary Delegate at the Labour Parliament. The mere assembling of such a Parliament marks a new epoch in the history of the world. The news of this great fact will arouse the hopes of the working classes throughout Europe and America.¹⁵

Marx wrote to Engels the same day, March 9, and mentioned the 'Labour Parliament'. There is nothing to suggest that he did not attach some significance to it. From this it is quite apparent that he was wholly out of touch with the situation, while the fact of his giving Jones support as in 1851-52 only made matters worse.

It was not that Marx had any illusions about Jones as a man. He wrote to Engels on September 2, 1852: 'Jones is a thoroughly egotistical fellow . . . Still, since his paper is the only Chartist organ, I shall not sever connexions with him, but let him pilot his ship alone for a few weeks.'

Then on February 13, 1855, Marx made this extremely interesting political characterization:

In spite of the force, endurance and energy which one is bound to admit he possesses, Jones spoils everything by his urge for publicity, his tactless fumbling after pretexts for agitation and restless desire to move faster than the times. When he can't make a real agitation, he seeks the appearance of agitation, improvises movements on top of movements (which of course leave everything where it was) and periodically deceives himself into a false exaltation. I've warned him, but in vain.

Marx maintained contact with Jones until February 1859. The full force of the tragedy of Marx-Jones sectarianism became apparent in the years that followed 1852. Both the prophet and the disciple slowly changed their attitude towards the trade unions and the co-operative movement, finally taking up positions approximating to those of Harney in 1851-52.

The change was evident in Jones as early as 1853. In September of that year a strike broke out in the Preston textile mills and the employers turned it into a lock-out. The struggle lasted for seven months and Jones in the *People's Paper* of November 5 gave it his enthusiastic support: 'Send your delegates far and near

¹⁴ Quoted, Schoyen, *op. cit.* p. 215.

¹⁵ Quoted, Saville, *op. cit.* p. 274.

—let town call upon town—trade on trade—let one cry echo and re-echo throughout the island from factory to factory and from shop to shop. Frighten them with the symptoms of your union . . .

In 1859 there was a major strike in the London building trades—again turned into a lock-out by the employers. It was out of this dispute that the London Trades Council and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners developed. Jones wrote in his *Cabinet Newspaper* on August 6:

The rich have their accumulated capital, and having once agreed to raise the price of their goods, can afford to wait till necessity forces their customers to pay that price. The poor, singly, would never be heard. They would perish in detail while others of their own class took their places. Combination is the only means for preventing this. By combination only can the evil of one set of working men cutting the ground from under the other be avoided, and therefore it is as legitimate as it is necessary that a Trades Union should be in existence . . .

Marx, in the resolution he drafted for the Congress of the International Working Men's Association held

Document

A Charter of Workers' Demands

This is the text of the Charter as amended and adopted by the National Industrial Rank-and-file Conference called by the Editorial Board of *The Newsletter* in the Holborn Hall, London, on Sunday, November 16, 1958.

WE, the delegates to the national industrial rank-and-file conference called by the Editorial Board of *The Newsletter* on November 16, 1958, submit the following Charter of workers' demands for the consideration of the members and leaders of the British working-class movement.

In our opinion, only a policy such as is here outlined can solve the problems that are now arising in industry in a way which will be in the true interests of working men and women, and which will help forward the fight for a socialist reconstruction of society.

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WE have considered the problem of *unemployment*. What sterner condemnation could there be of the capitalist system than its inability to provide work for all who need it?

Half a million are idle in this country at this moment. And many of the machines that should be enriching the lives of all of us are idle too.

at Geneva in 1866, wrote:

If the trade unions . . . are absolutely indispensable for the daily or guerilla warfare between Labour and Capital, they are . . . all the more important as organized bodies for the abolition of wage-labour and of the capitalist domination.

History has vindicated the Marx of 1866, not the Marx of 1852. It was not until 1899 that the Trades Union Congress decided to found a Labour Party and so give political embodiment to ideas canvassed and destroyed in 1852; and it was not until 1918 that that Labour Party adopted a socialist constitution.

Sectarianism is produced by the abandonment of the scientific method. It is what happens when well-meaning leaders stop looking and listening, when they prefer to consult their preconceptions rather than the facts, when they cease to have their senses attuned to the needs, feelings and aspirations of the people, when, rather than recognize the slow unfolding of necessity, they are content with illusions of correctness. Sectarianism is the enemy within ourselves. The way to deal with it is to understand it in theory and practice.

There are a million families whose bread-winner is either out of a job or on short time. Millions more are seriously worried about the danger that soon they also will be out of work.

The unemployment figure is rising by 30,000 a month—and share values are rising, too.

In our opinion the time to fight unemployment is now, while the greater part of our class is still in the factories.

We must fight unemployment before it grows any more—above all, by refusing to the employer the right to hire and fire at will.

WE DEMAND:

- 1) The sharing of all available work without loss of pay.
- 2) Solidarity action with all sections resisting sackings.
- 3) A national protest campaign led by the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party, including a one-day national stoppage against unemployment.
- 4) No discrimination against coloured workers.
- 5) Solidarity between unemployed workers and those in work to prevent the use of unemployed men as black-legs.
- 6) Protection of shop stewards: all strikes against victimization to receive the full backing of the union concerned.
- 7) A campaign for a real determined fight for the 40-hour week and less hours, without loss of pay, to reduce the growing unemployment.

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BELIEVING that even with a militant fight against unemployment this problem cannot be solved within the framework of capitalist society, we have considered the problem of *nationalization*.

The root cause of unemployment lies in the private

ownership for private profit of the means of production.

To remove an industry from the incompetent and greedy hands of profiteers is the way to ensure jobs and decent living standards for the men who work in it.

One of the biggest lessons of the South Bank dispute is that there is no need for McAlpine.

Equally, one of the biggest lessons of the BOAC dispute is that there is no need for d'Erlanger and men of his class.

The nationalization we envisage is nationalization *under workers' control*.

WE DEMAND:

1) The nationalization by the next Labour government of the engineering, shipbuilding, building and textile industries and of the land of the big landowners.

2) No compensation to the former owners of these industries.

3) No representatives of big business to have a say in the running of these industries.

4) Control of these industries to be in the hands of democratically elected workers' councils.



A **N**OTHER problem we have considered is that of *the Labour Party*. We state without hesitation that the main thing wrong with the Labour Party is that it lacks a militant socialist policy, and that this is largely because it is controlled by a junta of middle-class Fabians and full-time trade union officials.

The rank and file in the trade unions and local Labour Parties no longer have a say in determining the policy of the party.

We recall that the basic aim of the Labour Party, as laid down in its 1918 constitution, is to work for the social ownership of the means of production.

The Right-wing leaders have abandoned this aim. Only the rank and file can bring the party back to its original purpose and restore the socialist vision and energy of the pioneers of our movement.

The Tory Government can be defeated, and a Labour government pledged to socialist policies elected, only if the industrial workers in particular bring back a fighting spirit to the Labour Party, and turn local parties into organs of working-class struggle.

WE APPEAL TO INDUSTRIAL WORKERS:

1) To ensure that their trade union branches are fully represented on local and Constituency Labour Parties.

2) To fight for the adoption of militant socialist policies and for the restoration of democracy within the party.

3) To make the local parties campaign centres in the industrial struggle, that will give the utmost moral and material help to all workers in dispute in their particular locality.

4) To strive for united action on agreed policies without discrimination while freely and openly thrashing out differences where these exist.

5) To recognize that the Labour Party was created by the trade unions and is founded upon them, and that major political questions should be regularly discussed in trade union branches.

LAST but not least, we have considered the problem of *the trade unions*. For many years the control of the unions has been passing into the hands of the full-time paid officials.

In many unions these officials have in practice replaced the elected officials, and are taking decisions that are in violation of the constitutions and policies of their unions.

There is a growing division between the mass of trade union members and the leaders.

We are firmly opposed to the creation of new trade unions or of any sort of 'breakaway' organizations whatever.

We believe, on the contrary, that the rank and file have the power, and the responsibility, to restore trade union democracy, so that the unions can be better equipped to defend their members.

We believe that the employers' offensive makes more and more urgent the development of solidarity action among trade unionists, regardless of whether a struggle is labelled 'official' or 'unofficial'.

Disputes must be judged, not by the label some full-time official attaches to them, but by the demands of the workers engaged in struggle.

We believe that the creation of links between workers, in the same and in different industries, in the form of solidarity action committees and similar rank-and-file bodies, can powerfully assist the restoration of trade union democracy.

WE DEMAND:

1) No appointment of trade union officials, but their periodical election, with the right of recall.

2) Salaries, expenses and delegation fees of union officials to be determined by the average wages of the members of that union.

3) An end to the practice of squandering union funds on large motor-cars without indication on them of who owns them. Union officials to travel in cheap, economical vans, carrying loudspeaker equipment for factory-gate and other meetings, and with the name of the union prominently displayed.

4) Annual policy-making conferences of the rank and file in all unions.

5) Direct rank-and-file representation at the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party annual conference. National full-time officials not to form part of the delegations at these gatherings.

6) Fullest consultation with the membership in formulating, presenting and fighting for demands, and in the acceptance of settlements.

7) Complete opposition by the trade union movement to courts of inquiry, which are simply designed to prevent the winning of wage demands, and are now being used more and more to draw the teeth of the shop stewards' movement.

8) Prosecution of wage demands with the utmost energy, proper preparation of the membership and the broadest possible unity in action of the trade union forces against the employers.

9) A vigorous campaign for 100 per cent. trade unionism to seal up all gaps in organization.

WE recognize that working-class socialist ideas and purposes are meaningless unless based on real internationalism. World capitalism can only be defeated and peace ensured by the effective fraternal co-operation of the workers of the world.

This is the real answer to the H-bomb, to the military alliances of power politics, and to the threats of slump and unemployment.

We believe that we should build international working-class relations and understanding at rank-and-file level.



OUR demands, we are well aware, do not cover every one of the problems with which the British workers are faced today. But if the demands that we have

advanced in this Charter were won, the Labour movement would be in far better shape to meet and beat back the offensive of the employing class.

Our demands are in line with the original constitutions and aims of the trade unions and of the Labour Party.

The pioneers who built our movement did so without the help of Consul cars, knighthoods or fat salaries.

They built our movement despite imprisonment and exile to Botany Bay. They made big sacrifices.

Today we need to recapture something of the spirit of the old days.

The job of the Labour movement is to fight the employers. This job cannot be done if the movement gets too 'respectable', but only if it regains its original purpose and militancy.

Communication

Rejected by the New Statesman

The following letter was offered to the *New Statesman*, which refused to publish it. It was then offered to *Labour Review*, which is glad to publish it.

NOT the least of the virtues of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament is the fact that it offers a moral challenge to the Establishment—a term which includes the established church. Its sponsors are too respectable to incur the smear hitherto dealt out to patriotic realists of having 'Russian sympathies', and it speaks for all those Britons who do not intend to be forced to commit suicide by decadent politicians, unscrupulous newspapers or bishops who think like the Archbishop of Canterbury.

There have, of course, been predecessors to CND which suffered the usual fate of pioneers. In the dark days of the China Lobby's Korean adventure a courageous writer, the late A. E. Coppard, launched the Authors' World Peace Appeal with a simple non-political statement to which some 800 authors signed their names. Unfortunately the Authors' World Peace Appeal was quickly captured by Right-wing Labour, the founder indignantly resigned and the organization died a lingering and ignominious death. Before this happened I record, as a joke against myself, that I wasted my time writing two short books, one called 'Is Britain Doomed?', (in answer to Bertrand Russell who at that time thought it did not matter if it was), the other 'The Future of Liberalism'. Although qualified for my task by years of intensive study and, if I may say so, professional competence, I was unable to persuade my publisher to read either. Some of the larger firms, then as now, preferred to make profits out of American pornography rather than risk capital on radical dissent.

The Korean War, the origins of which were convincingly set forth by Sir John Pratt, was the signal for the outbreak in literary London of the British equivalent of McCarthyism. It was very unpleasant while it lasted, the victims being independent writers, like myself, with no party political backing. (Patriotic radicals were labelled 'fellow-travellers' even

in socialist weeklies like *Tribune*, and Shaw and H. G. Wells found no successors.) There is no recorded instance of a famous author standing up in defence of an unpopular colleague. Among a number of disagreeable incidents I was labelled by a veteran novelist, who charged me, in an Authors' World Peace Appeal Bulletin, with writing under Moscow influences. In those days no more damaging accusation could have been made. Rather than print my reply, the anonymous editor brought out the next number with the last page blank. A year or two later a publisher under contract to issue the final volume of my political autobiography, entitled 'Towards Living in Peace', returned the MS. with an angry letter and preferred to sacrifice his meagre advance rather than produce it. Finally, when Martin Secker (Richards Press) published a collection of my short stories and character sketches, in which some of the characters expressed radical opinions, the Press boycott was almost complete. The sales were under 500 copies and a literary career of half a century thus came to an abrupt full stop.

The trifling inconveniences referred to above were, of course, nothing to the persecution endured by progressive writers in the USA and elsewhere.

It is a relief to me, in the closing years of a long life, to see some of our leaders of thought, who were recently among the most belligerent of the 'bomb Russia' addicts, now converted to sanity. I only wish the Archbishop of Canterbury was among them.

If it has not come too late, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which boldly proclaims what a few of us tried to say ten years ago, may succeed in laying the foundations of a British Resistance Movement. It cheers me to think that after I die a younger generation of Englishmen may decide to hold up their heads, rid our country of foreign troops and remove the collaborators. When this happens, if it ever does, books by English writers will soon trickle back into the publishers' lists and we may even, once again, compose our own songs and sing them ourselves.

Stonar House, Deal

Douglas Goldring

Music from Afar

The Azores islands, part of Portugal, lie far out in the North Atlantic. U.S. air bases since the latter part of the second world war, these islands are perhaps even poorer than Continental Portugal and equally oppressed by the brutal régime of Salazar. The fishermen and farmers who inhabit the Azores earn an average of less than 5s. a day—but they usually have work only about ninety days during the year. This poem, translated from the Portuguese by P. McGowan, was written by a young Azores girl of 19 soon after she left her island to study on the mainland.

Do not speak, ask no questions.

I come from afar and there is inside me
the calm voice of the sea.
In those remote isles from whence I come
there is moist greenery
and an infinite weariness of life.
The days are grey.
There is hunger, solitude
and a vague desire to depart.
Rough men, silent,
ploughmen bent with the weight of the plough,
fishermen who go out by night
and sometimes return no more . . .

I come from afar and there is inside me
the immense loneliness of the cliffs.
In those lost islands from whence I come
the people are quiet and sad as lakes
and on each lip a dumb protest lies
of pain and resignation.
Strong and gloomy people
turned stony by the vast horizons
and wrapped by the sea
in a hopeless sleep . . .

Man, simple and strong,
in the hot summer afternoons
lifting your gaze afar and despairing:
I believe in you!
Rough, sunburned man
searching for your own shadow
the other side of the endless sea:
I believe in you!
Sad, silent man
watching the passage of days ever the same,
in immense uncertainty of the future:
I believe in you!

I shall sing the strength of your body
that has resisted wind and rain,
hunger, solitude and weariness.
I shall sing your callused hands
that wrest green from earth and rocks,
vibrant with tenderness and vigour.
I shall sing that silence eternal
that a distant gaze sets free,
silence that spreads at dusk over the island.
I shall sing the dreams you dreamed
and lost one day in the pebbles
when you saw the sea as it lapped your feet.

And all because you never found yourself
in the uncertain solitude of your world.
And all because no one ever told you
that the real future of your dreams
was the invincible strength of your arms
fighting against the shadows of the past.
I want to tell you what no one has told you;
I want to sing you the strength of hope;
I want to awaken in that tired gaze
the confident light of the future.

Tough, sombre man,
letting yourself be, silent and sad,
weary of the sea and solitude:
I believe in you!
Simple, strong man,
in your calm eyes the bitterness
of a dream without hope:
I believe in you!
Strong, sunburned man
who with the brutal strokes of your plough
must wrest from the earth a new world:
I believe in you!

In those grim islands from whence I come
 there are no songs or laughter;
 a heavy silence
 and music from afar,
 brought by the waves as they come.
 The wind passes and men wait.
 Wait? Even they know not for what . . .
 The waves roll, roll
 and break upon the rocks.
 One day they will surely bring
 the music that is to come,
 that murmurs low
 in the hearts of the humble.

Perhaps this is why
 I am silent and gloomy
 like an empty harbour.
 I come from afar and there is inside me
 the everlasting silence of mountains.
 In the forgotten islands whence I come
 the people are as sad as a dark night.

Do not speak, say nothing.

June 1953

Book Reviews

Useful but Shallow

The British Communist Party: A Historical Profile, by
 Henry Pelling. (A. and C. Black, 18s.)

THE first thing to be said about this book is that it is a useful contribution to the subject, which ought to be widely read in the working-class movement, and especially among Communist Party members and recent ex-members. The author brings together many important facts which have been systematically suppressed by the party leadership in their so-called 'education' of the rank and file, and refers to many accessible sources for further study. The book can have a considerable enlightening effect and set in train a fruitful process of thought and investigation. That is, of course, why Klugmann has dismissed it, in the *Daily Worker*, as a mere potboiler: a charge that comes queerly from the author of 'From Trotsky to Tito' and non-author of the so-long-overdue official history of the British Communist Party.

Particularly worth studying is Pelling's account of what he calls the 'coup d'Etat' of 1929, which substantially supplements my own version (in the 'Joseph Redman' pamphlet published by the Reasoner). Among numerous shrewd observations, the following, on the present situation of the party, seems especially worth quoting: the party is tending 'to become an "agency" for the propaganda wares of the Soviet bloc nations—a "holding company" controlling a number of organizations concerned with "peace" and "friendship" on communist terms, and also possessing a few incidental "properties" such as trade unions and professional bodies which were acquired in palmier days, but with an ever shrinking activity of its own in its original role'.



Having said this, it is necessary to point out that the book—which is, indeed, modestly subtitled 'A Historical Profile'—is far from being without serious weaknesses. There is this much to Klugmann's potboiler sneer: that after about 1932 the pace quickens and the matter grows thinner and shallower to a degree which suggests that the author may have been hurrying to get the manuscript ready for the printer. The

biggest shortcoming, though, is that the party is shown as essentially the same from the very beginning down to the present. Nothing is said about a number of opposition movements—in 1925 against the blind repudiation of 'Trotskyism'; the Balham Group in 1932; the trend centred on the Welwyn branch in 1947-48. The role of Moscow is presented in the same light throughout. (Thus, for instance, we are told that when the central committee was invited to Moscow in 1922 to discuss the reorganization of the Party, 'the recalcitrant members were overawed'. Perhaps they were convinced?)

The high standing enjoyed by the party in the British Labour movement in 1924-25 does not emerge, the widespread solidarity shown in connexion with the Campbell case, and then with the arrest of 'the Twelve', being played down. The crucial transition period of 1933-36 is skated over, without even a mention of the key decision to support sanctions. Though he records that in 1936-38 'any criticisms of Soviet policy from the standpoint of the Left were instantly labelled "Trotskyist", and, once so labelled, were regarded as beyond the need for further serious consideration', Pelling tells us nothing of what these criticisms were—or of the expulsions of members that occurred because of them. On the most recent period, there is no discussion of the significance of the party's programme adopted in 1951, 'The British Road to Socialism', nor is it linked in any way with the 1952 rules change depriving members of the right to share in formulating party policy, though both facts are baldly mentioned.

Describing the publication in 1956 of the three issues of the Reasoner, Pelling writes of no. 2:

'Perhaps without realizing it the editors had already passed from a Leninist to a liberal position, which was exemplified by their use of a quotation from Diderot: "Though a lie may serve for the moment it is inevitably injurious in the long run; the truth, on the other hand, inevitably serves in the end even if it may hurt for the moment."'

As I proposed the inclusion of that quotation in the Reasoner perhaps I may be allowed to assure all concerned that it does not seem to me to express a liberal rather than a Leninist idea. Henry Pelling identifies Leninism with Stalinism and so perhaps does not realize that Lenin and Trotsky insisted that the first duty of a revolutionary to the working class is to 'say what is'.

In discussing the disintegration of the British Communist Party after the Twentieth Congress, Poznan and Hungary, Pelling mentions the establishment of the Universities and Left Review and the New Reasoner, but says nothing about LABOUR REVIEW. This definitely does not arise from unawareness of the latter journal's existence and character. In contrast, Colm Brogan, reviewing this book in the Daily Telegraph, ended his remarks by drawing particular attention to the fact that a section of former party members have broken away not on the grounds that 'Marxism is discredited' but because the party has abandoned Marxism. LABOUR REVIEW and The Newsletter are the organs of this section, who seek to revive and carry forward the great traditions of the British Communist Party's earlier years, which show only faintly through Pelling's narrative.

BRIAN PEARCE

Workers will Fight

The Worker Views his Union, by Joel Seidman, Jack London, Bernard Karsh and Daisy L. Tagliacozzo. (Cambridge University Press for University of Chicago Press, 43s. 6d.)

THIS book, by a group of research workers from the industrial relations centre at the University of Chicago, should be read by every trade unionist. Here is impartial proof that the heart of the American trade union movement beats strong and fierce. The unions concerned in the survey are the miners, steelworkers, plumbers, telephone, knitting mill and metal workers, representing a fair cross section from the point of view of size, inner-union democracy and attitudes to struggle.

Right at the beginning of the book the authors point out that the rank-and-file trade unionist's philosophy does not embrace the conception of wresting power from the government. However, despite the lack of this essential idea, the American workers see the need for struggle and we could learn many lessons from them.

The research done in the local unions reveals a picture much on a par with our own, whereby you have a branch attendance equal to the life of the branch, the same small hard core of militants linking the economic struggle with politics, the 'trade union only' type, and the ticket holders.

In every case investigated, however, the story is the same: when the union calls for action its call is answered unswervingly and with a fierce determination, so great is the members' faith in the union to defend their economic interests. We in Britain, with our long tradition of viewing the trade unions as the industrial arm of the Labour movement, can learn a lesson. The book is timely: for there is the danger of losing sight of the fact that we originally began with the philosophy of using our strength to destroy capitalism—and after reading this book with its mass of data you are left with the thought: what the unions will do, once they begin to see the need to wage a class battle.



Such a book must be of some comfort to all those socialists who are leading the fight for working-class ideas. The state of affairs in America is favourable to them, for capitalism there, as elsewhere, is finding it daily more difficult to patch up the system, and the workers are going to have to fight the class battle or return to the days of depression.

This excellent book gives the proof that the workers will fight. At 43s. 6d. it's a bit stiff, but should be in every library. For it kills the idea that the American trade unions are corrupt and rotten; the leadership perhaps, but the rank and file are strong enough to overcome all obstacles.

JOCK STEVENS (Sidcup Branch, AUBTW)

Holding Labour back

Death on the Left, by John Connell (Pall Mall Press, 3s. 6d.)

LABOUR PARTY members are well aware of the 'deadness' in the party. Raffles are more important than policies. Jumble sales take precedence over industrial struggle. Hydrogen-bombs, unemployment, fascists, fade into insignificance beside the annual women's effort.

Parts of this book strike home to the disgruntled party worker. Labour leaders are 'timorous and cautious men who looked over their shoulders and were often scared by what they saw'. Union leaders are 'separated by a deepening divide from the men they were said to represent, as middle class in their ideology as in their manners'. Local government 'became a familiar experience for the young entry in local affairs to discover little nests of jobbery and nepotism, to encounter socialist councillors and aldermen who were as cosy, as comfort loving, as greedy of the little soul-destroying attributes of power as any capitalist reactionary'.

But what is the cause of all this? Here Connell is lost. As a Conservative, the things he admires most about the Labour Party are the cankers which are rotting it. The dominance of Fabianism, the checking of 'authoritarianism', the cordiality between Labour and Tory parliamentarians, and, above all, the fact that Labour 'has advanced approximately at the same pace that its opponents have conceded to it'—these are 'the major moral victories of the British Labour Party'.

Can we, unlike Connell, find a cure? The overthrow of capitalism is essential for the working class. The Labour Party will not live if it cannot break with the policies—and the leaders—that are holding it back. As Connell says: 'Widespread apathy is a practical as well as a symbolical rejection.'

G. GALE

Church and H-Bomb

Ethical and Political Problems of the Atomic Age, by C. F. von Weizsacker (S.C.M. Press, 2s.)

HERE is a short but valuable addition to the rapidly accumulating literature about the H-bomb and the profound difference it is making to everything and everybody. It is one of the lectures of the Burge Memorial Trust, which has as its purpose 'to further the cause of international friendship through the churches and to promote a better and wider understanding of the international obligations of Christian peoples'. I think that von Weizsacker can fairly claim to have fulfilled this trust in three respects.

First, speaking as a scientist, a Christian, and a German he argues for the practical usefulness of unilateral action by the Federal Government to renounce all atomic weapons. In fact he exposes the lethal dangers and political blind alleys that await not only Germany, but by inference this country as well, if we persist in trying to incorporate the nuclear weapon in our national armouries. In the second place von Weizsacker argues humbly and yet concisely the utter impossibility of accepting the New Testament and then being prepared to throw, or to have thrown on our behalf, a hydrogen-bomb. This needs saying, not because it is some new and strange interpretation of the words of Jesus, but because those who defend the Christian use of nuclear weapons are engaged in a pathetic masquerade—they are trying to maintain what they call a Christian ethic by the process of separating it from the plain teaching of its supreme exponent Jesus Christ Himself. Finally the author of this penetrating little essay puts his finger on one of the great hindrances to a Christian pronouncement against H-bombs. It is the tradition and spiritual condition of

the church which, being what they are, prevent the church from any 'ex cathedra' repudiation of war, even nuclear war.

For what it is worth, and as a professional member of the church, I agree with him and particularly with his closing sentence in which he advocates personal dissociation 'from all participation in whatever has to do with atomic weapons'. Such is the hope of the world and the hope of the church into the bargain.

DONALD O. SOPER

Clearing up Confusion

The Initial Triumph of the Axis, ed. Arnold Toynbee and Veronica M. Toynbee (Oxford University Press, 84s.)

THIS monolithic 742-page volume is one of the series 'Survey of International Affairs 1939-1946', by various authors, issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. It covers the period between the outbreak of the war in August 1939 and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941.

It is a mine of thought-stimulating information about events which are rapidly being forgotten. It does not itself effectively open up the underlying aims of the powers, the defence of their imperialist positions against each other and against the workers and colonial peoples. However, while it tacitly presents the war as a 'defence of democracy', it wastes few words in denouncing 'fascist aggression' or arguing whether the Allied counter-moves were just or legal, for in twentieth-century capitalism 'necessity knows no law'.

A good example is part vii, which devotes ninety-eight pages to outlining the political steps by which the economic and strategic interests of the dominant U.S. capitalists took the reluctant American people towards a shooting war under Roosevelt's leadership. The real stakes are tersely indicated: 'the imposition of German hegemony on the neighbouring European countries, east and west of her, and the acquisition of tropical dependencies for Germany at her western European victims' expense, in Africa and perhaps also in Indonesia.' How these aims impinge on U.S. interests is too obvious to need emphasis; they explain how U.S. forces come to be 'defending democracy' in every quarter of the globe.



Thus the book gives at least a start for clearing up some of the vast confusion about foreign politics which prevails on the Left. It starts by discussing real material objectives, and not merely their fantastic reflection in the heads of men —after all, it is time that the theoreticians of the Left began to explain how the war they presented as a war 'for democracy' could in a few years lead to the H-bomb race and to Germany remilitarized. It is just not good enough to portray Roosevelt and his backers as 'progressives' under the New Deal, 'reactionaries' from August 1939 to June 1941, 'progressives' from June 1941 to 1946, and 'reactionary' ever since. We need something better than proclaiming Anthony Eden as the prince of peace and collective security in 1938 and seeing him turn up in 1956 as the head of the Suez adventure.

This book at any rate considers Roosevelt's basic political problem in realistic terms: 'The problem which confronted Roosevelt was how to persuade the nation, which was still strongly isolationist, to accept the measures which were essential for the security of the United States.' This at least is a step forward from liberal phrase-mongering. The Palme Dutt and Zilliacuses are put squarely up against the question: 'Why does "defence of democracy" and all the Left-wing talk end up as defence of the security of U.S. capitalism?' The answer is: because the class struggle is forgotten or concealed.

J.A.

Stalinist Chauvinism

French Socialism in the Crisis Years, 1933-1936, by John T. Marcus (Atlantic Books, 37s. 6d.)

MARCUS sets out to explain why in the years 1933-36 the communists were able to take over from the socialists (SFIO) the leadership of the majority of the politically-minded workers of France.

He sees that the Popular Front meant the Communist Party wooing the radicals and industrialists of the Right, which explains why the Communist Party acted as a brake on the spontaneous struggles of June 1936. But he thinks that the SFIO lost its hold because it was not patriotic enough, because its Marxist-tinted phrases continued to speak of fascism, whether in Germany or in France, as a product of capitalism in crisis, while the Communist Party echoed a mass sentiment that fascism was something 'above the class struggle'.

Why then did the French people, who keenly opposed the fascist leagues at home, at no time show enthusiasm for fighting the Germans until the Resistance offered far-reaching social aims? It is simpler to conclude that the people accepted Communist Party leadership not because of but in spite of its 'anti-fascist' chauvinism.

Jacobinism, 'revolutionary defencism', did not survive the army mutiny of 1917 and the split in the SFIO of 1920, which brought to the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky the majority of the French politically-organized workers.

The SFIO was already too degenerate by the late 1920s to tackle the trade union organizing of the great new engineering works of north Paris. The crisis of 1933, which pulverized it, strengthened the Communist Party just because the latter had established its bases on a political tradition of anti-capitalist militancy in large-scale modern industry.

Demagogic exploitation of mass sentiments for peace and unity enabled the Communist Party to ride the tide of 1935-36, though the militants regarded with growing unease the party's support for the radical-socialist coalitions and for rearmament. The Moscow trials played a most important part in isolating temporarily the critical trends within communism which kept alive the Leninist conception that 'national unity' in France simply strengthened Hitler's hold on the German people.

It is not without significance that the bibliography does not mention Trotsky's 'Whither France?', and that the author admits that he has seen only two copies of the French Trotskyist paper *La Vérité*. Despite the Nazi persecution of the Trotskyists during the Occupation, the archives are not really so barren as that. In 'Whither France?' and *La Vérité* the students will find in a richly polemical form a contemporary Marxist analysis of the class struggles of the period.

ROBERT SHERWOOD

Diplomat's Diary

Quai d'Orsay, 1945-51, by Jacques Dumaine (Chapman and Hall, 30s.)

SKILFUL stage-management, a flair for flattery and a certain brash bravado have long characterized the diplomatic dealings of the French ruling class. The grande bourgeoisie forgot none of its old tricks during the bleak years (1939-44) of its political eclipse. This book throws light on how the appellation of French diplomacy, so rudely upset by the Nazis, was set in motion again after the war. If the wheels of the Fourth Republic emitted frequent creaking sounds during this period, it was certainly not through lack of oil.

The author, diplomat and son of a diplomat, was appointed Chef de Protocole after the 'Liberation'. He participated, on behalf of the French Foreign Office, in all the international

conferences, State visits and other important functions organized to maintain or promote French interests by cementing old friendships and purchasing new ones.

His posthumous diary is that of a cultured but somewhat indiscreet cynic, who does not seem to have found congenial his duties of maintaining the myth of France's pristine grandeur. He was a parasite, hobnobbing with royalty, placating the vanities of professional politicians and gliding among the great and among others who merely thought themselves such. He attended banquets and funerals, listened to operas and complaints, supped with duchesses and deputies and entertained, among others, Ho Chi-minh, the Windsors, Molotov and Adenauer, not to mention ex-Queen Amelia of Portugal. He clearly moved among 'top people'. He helped procure taxi-girls ('carefully selected and screened by the Prefecture de Police') for the nocturnal revelries of Shah-in-Shah Mohamed Pahlevi during his stay in Paris—and was later entrusted with selecting an appropriate gift for the Pope's sacerdotal anniversary. He was a man of many talents.

Dumaine saw events through the spectacles of his class. 'Private property, thrift and free enterprise,' he assures us, are the rights 'which are most worthy of respect'. Political régimes, he believed, 'should be controlled by men in their fifties who have, some twenty years previously, been the apostles of bold and controversial ideas'. He quotes approvingly Berthelot's aphorism: 'Lean heavily on principles and they will give way all the sooner.'

A liberal endowment of Gallic iconoclasm enabled him to overcome some of these shortcomings. Being nobody's fool, he could make a number of quite shrewd assessments. Of the French military he says that they 'make up for any lack of strategic genius by their ability to dress their troops, blow the bugle calls and beat the drums'. And of the French Stalinists he wrote patronizingly in December 1946: 'We are in their debt and should not forget it . . . economic recovery has been made possible by the absence of strikes and exorbitant wage claims—and by the workers' 'uncomplaining drive'.

His diary is forthright, as only the writings of the deceased can be, in its account of his acquaintances. Ramadier: 'intellectually tired . . . but still hanging on . . . a bovine man, almost a pachyderm.' Jules Moch: 'a monster of charmlessness.' Winston Churchill: 'imbued with vanity as much as with brandy.' And Bevin: 'a thick-skinned ectoplasmic mass.' The corpulent General Zhukov apparently spent much of his time at the Palais Rose, in 1949, 'gazing greedily at the sugary nudes in Baudry's reliefs'.

Dumaine had few illusions about his office. His function was to feed 'the insatiable appetites of serious men for trivialities'. He knew that all the pomp and ceremony he organized would carry little weight in deciding the fate of the world he lived in. He somehow sensed the empty seat at all the banquets he attended. And there he was undoubtedly correct. Uninvited today, real men and women would arise tomorrow to administer the world their labour created, and the shadowy creatures that now flit about in the twilight of bourgeois rule would be forgotten for all time.

Despite its limitations this book created a furore in high society and among political circles in France when it was first published in 1955. It trod on many toes. And as François Mauriac once said (about something quite different): 'When a man already has one foot in the grave he will not gladly permit the other to be trodden on!'

MARTIN GRAINGER

Culture in Russia

The Soviet Cultural Scene 1956-1957, ed. W. Z. Laqueur and G. Lichtheim (Atlantic Books, 27s. 6d.)

A RECENT correspondence in The Times spotlighted the fact that hardly any children in our schools are learning Russian,

although it is now universally acknowledged that Russian is one of the key world languages for science and literature. This means that there are very few people in Britain today who can read and study the original text of Russian books, papers and magazines. Unfortunately, of these few, some tend to be apologists for whatever the Soviet government does, while another group tends to denigrate whatever it does.

In spite of these limitations, from time to time a number of useful commentaries and translations do appear. Both Birmingham and Glasgow Universities publish quarterly journals which frequently show an admirably objective approach to Soviet affairs. The Society for Cultural Relations publishes some useful translations from original Soviet sources in its various specialized Bulletins. The 'Congress for Cultural Freedom' obviously belongs to the group which finds it difficult to see anything positive in the USSR. But making due allowance for this initial negative bias, it too has produced some useful commentaries, especially on literature and the arts, where little other material is available.

Recently, a collection of articles from its quarterly review has been assembled and published as a book. This anthology covers a particularly interesting period—the 'thaw' of early 1956 and the reaction at the end of the year and in 1957. The series of thirty articles traces the conflict between the liberalizing tendencies unleashed by the death of Stalin and the Twentieth Congress, and the old apparatus of control. They deal with literature, painting, music, history, philosophy, religion, psychology, sociology, education and finally the impact of events in eastern Europe and Asia. There are no straight translations but the articles are almost entirely based on analysis of published Soviet sources, with a good many quotations.

The book confirms beyond any shadow of doubt that critical attitudes towards dogmatic orthodoxy are very widespread amongst the Soviet intellectuals and youth. In various ways the critics are moving towards a position of toleration of conflicting trends and viewpoints in the arts and sciences as the necessary climate for creative work. Even though this movement has been temporarily checked in the USSR (and in China and east Europe) it remains a most hopeful long-term trend in these societies. This book succeeds in giving a vivid picture of certain aspects of these new tendencies.

H. STEVENS

Graphic Journalist

People Like Us. Drawings of South Africa and Rhodesia, by Paul Hogarth (Dobson, 12s. 6d.)

PAUL HOGARTH'S intention in publishing this book is obscure. It adds very little to our knowledge of Africa. It is a very thin book to capture very much of a vast and explosive situation. It is too queasy and sentimental to convert the fringes of imperialism to a benevolent paternalism. And if it was merely to publicize Hogarth's private vision before he packed up his materials and retired for sundowners to the bwana's bungalow, this is unilluminating. The 'committed' artist is frozen at a point of observation, not involvement. His Africans have the detached air of clinical specimens, lonely, silent and still, lost in meditative pessimism. The diary notes which accompany the drawings reinforce the observer's detachment: one is on the remote fringes of conflict. The African is out there in a harsh world of which one disapproves, but not so much that one can refuse the hospitality of 'a friendly, generous couple whose house was alive with African servants who were ordered about like soldiers on parade'. The only explanation must be that the Pretorian whites 'were farmers, not realists. Somehow it had all got out of line.'

But Hogarth is not a theorist but a graphic journalist. His drawings remain to give us a certain feeling of white Africa.

The Africans stand in their own despair, drab, hard and waiting, passively bearing the white man's burden. They lack depth and emotion, but some still stand out of the blur of crayon as a challenge (notably, the Natal migratory labourers). Hogarth's reporting is non-committal, superficial in its brevity; so much so that it cannot sink below the skin of a people to the level where 'the inherent dignity and nobility of the African' is mere claptrap, the excuse to weep and do nothing. The clearest perception comes where Hogarth is on known ground, the gold-mine shift boss, the whites in their Salisbury club or on the segregated beach at Port Elizabeth. Then comes a lightness of touch and economy of line that redeem the artist, catching brutality at rest. The Africans remain outside, unknown.

NIGEL HARRIS

Authentic Account

The Doors are Closing, by György Sebestyen (Angus and Robertson, 13s. 6d.)

WHEN I opened the parcel and saw yet another book with a black jacket, lurid lettering and torn red-white-and-green flags, my heart sank. Yet another eye-witness account of the Hungarian uprising. I thought, probably written up and embroidered with un-Hungarian clichés by some helpful journalist.

But this is a novel, written by a young man who was already a practised writer before he left Hungary; he was cultural editor of the paper *Magyar Nemzet* which, like all other papers, passed over to the side of the uprising and became a vehicle for its ideas. György Sebestyen's account of the events of October 1956 is authentic; he is able, by using the novel form, to bring out more varied moods, and trace more personal histories, than he could have done in a straight factual narrative, and he succeeds in conveying the bitter tang of Budapest life.

The hero, Zoltan, who has been expelled from the University, is unidealized; he is prey to a general disgust with life until he is drawn into the enthusiasm of the uprising. But to tell a love story linked with shattering historical events is a task demanding genius. One or the other will seem superfluous, a mere back-cloth, unless the very greatest penetration into human history and human character is brought to bear on them at the same time. In this case, it is the political scene which holds the attention. One of the best episodes is the journey to a distant village to arrange paper supplies for printing, and the meeting with the sturdy Calvinist peasants. Few people in this country realize that anything was going on in the villages. A novel written from the peasant's point of view, or one reflecting the real ferment of ideas in the literary world and the Universities, could be of the highest interest, and I wish that György Sebestyen had carried his story further along either of these paths.

DORA SCARLETT

Ireland's Martyr

The Crime Against Europe, Writings and Poems of Roger Casement. Collected and edited by Herbert O. Mackey. (C. J. Fallon, Ltd, Dublin, 10s. 6d.)

WHAT can one say of Casement beyond what he said himself? 'One who never hurt a human being, and whose heart was always compassionate and pitiful for the grief of others . . . I feel just as if they going to kill a boy. For I feel like a boy—and my hands so free from blood and my heart

always so compassionate and pitiful that I cannot comprehend how anyone wants to hang me . . . These artificial and unnatural wars, prompted by greed of power, are the source of all misery now destroying mankind . . . the old, old story—yet in spite of all, the truth and right lives on in the hearts of the brave and lowly . . .'

He was a chivalrous and saintly man caught in the prongs of a deadly mechanism he was too 'compassionate and pitiful' to understand. The evidence of any overt acts of treason to the British Crown—allegiance to which he had, of course, abrogated—was dubious; but even admitting a British political necessity for his execution, the despicable blackening of his character before and after death, and the departure from age-old tradition in treason cases by refusing to deliver his body to his relatives, remains as a scandalous and shameful example of sheer wanton hatred which can never be lived down. There is no possible remedy but authoritative denial of the slander and restoration of the remains, for burial in the plot in Murlough churchyard in the county of Antrim that has awaited them these forty years.

From the time of his imprisonment Casement was preparing—as he had for some time intended—to be admitted to the Sacraments of the Catholic Church, of which he was a baptized member. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster demanded of him a public apology for any scandal caused by his acts, private and public, as a condition of reconciliation. To this he at first agreed, but next morning withdrew the apology, seeing that it might be used by those engaged in slandering him. He therefore received no Sacrament until in articulo mortis. A sincere man, a pious believer—and one whom the Catholic chaplain at the prison describes as 'a noble, gentle, lonely soul'—does not refuse to confess his true sins at such a moment, nor does he cut himself off from the Sacraments for any reason of expediency. It is obvious that such a self-denial from such a man can only mean refusal to contribute in any way to falsehood, and that should be in itself enough to end the slander once and for all.

It is curious that the poems given here do not include one of which much was made some months ago—a poem on "love", which to those accustomed to Irish patriot verse is pretty clearly love of country, and on the moral dilemma, not of bodily love but of civil war. Was Mr Mackey nervous of it? He need not be. Or does he consider it of doubtful origin?

Unfortunately, this is a limited edition and not very readily obtainable in this country. It deserves a wide readership.

S.F.H.

Note

The Editors of Labour Review regret that it has been possible to produce only five issues of the magazine in 1958, instead of six issues.

We thought it important to concentrate on the production of material of immediate importance in the class struggle, particularly during the bus strike and in the preparations for the national industrial rank-and-file Conference.

Two pamphlets for mass sale were issued during the year, William Hunter's 'Hands Off the "Blue Union"?' and Brian Behan's 'Socialists and the Trade Unions'.

We are sure readers will agree that these efforts have been a valuable contribution to the development of the Marxist movement in British industry.

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