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# Congo Conspiracy

# LABOUR REVIEW

VOLUME 6  
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Spring

EDITORS: BRIAN PEARCE, CLIFF SLAUGHTER. NEW PARK PUBLICATIONS LTD., 186 CLAPHAM HIGH STREET, LONDON S.W.4 PHONE: MAC 7029

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# Congo Conspiracy

ON June 30, 1960, Patrice Lumumba and his democratically elected government assumed power in the Congo. In an atmosphere tense with excitement Parliament heard King Baudoin of Belgium concede independence. The Times reports that during the King's speech at least six Roman Catholic arch-bishops, amongst high dignitaries in the audience, were moved to tears.

The opening words of Prime Minister Lumumba's speech left no doubts in the minds of the Belgian imperialists where he stood in relation to their rule.

'We have', he said, 'experienced contempt, insults and blows endured morning and night; we knew law was never the same for the whites and the blacks. The fate of political prisoners was "really worse than death".'

'Who could forget the hangings and shootings in which perished so many of our brethren?'

His speech was a challenge not only to Belgian imperialism but to imperialism all over the African continent. It sparked off the conspiracy which finally led to his brutal murder some time during January 1961.

Patrice Lumumba was not a Marxist, but a young, militant African nationalist inspired by the spread of the colonial revolution from Asia to the heart of Africa. Now, and in years to come his memory will be a symbol for the freedom-loving colonial peoples everywhere. The events which led up to his tragic end are therefore a matter of great importance for the international Labour movement.

Twentieth-century imperialism visualizes 'freedom of the colonial peoples' as an act which will enable them to maintain their imperialist possessions under the rule of native puppets. Nehru of India, Nkrumah of Ghana and their like are, despite all their shouting, nothing more than puppets of British imperialism. Therefore when the accusation is made that the Belgian imperialists had not prepared the Congolese people for independence, what is really meant is that the government in Brussels had not taken sufficient care in the education of its puppet leaders. Consequently the granting of independence released such a flood of nationalist feeling that it

could not be contained as it had been in Ghana and India.

Lumumba wanted unity of the Congo under its central elected government. The Belgian imperialists and their provincial agents desired a federal government which would enable them through their control of the banks and mineral resources of the country to continue to safeguard their possessions, firstly by keeping the Congo provinces divided from one another and secondly by bribery and corruption of the members of parliament.

Tshombe of Katanga province and Albert Kalonji of South Kasai were and are the trusted representatives of the Belgians. Their provinces contain the largest mineral deposits. 80 per cent of the world's industrial diamond output is mined in South Kasai. These mines are securely controlled by the Belgian Société Minière du Bécéka. The Belgians desired to use these agents as the backbone of their policy for a federal parliament. The success of Lumumba's demand for a central government upset this major plank of imperialist policy.

Almost immediately after he took power, Right-wing Whites and Congolese set out to create tribal disturbances which led to mutinies in the army. Thus began the intervention of outside forces. Nkrumah of Ghana, supported by Khrushchev, strongly advised Lumumba to call in the United Nations. On July 11, he called in the United Nations and from then on treachery of the most open kind showed its hand in the Congo.

Since it set foot in the Congo the United Nations has behaved as the most efficient instrument of imperialist rule. Long ago Lenin called its forerunner, the infamous League of Nations, 'a den of thieves'. If Lenin were alive today he would have emphasized this over and over again in relation to the conduct of U.N.O. in the Congo. The Soviet bureaucracy and the native imperialist puppets all joined hands in forcing Lumumba to 'invite' these agents of imperialism into his country. This guilt must be shared by Cuba and Yugoslavia who also supported U.N.O. intervention.

It is nonsense for British Stalinist leaders such as Palme Dutt to wail about the conduct of U.N.O. in

the Congo. Must not the Soviet Union take its responsibility for U N O being in the Congo? Does not this responsibility spring from the class-collaborationist idea that U N O is impartial?

No sooner did the United Nations appear on the scene than its military staff got to work on the Congolese army. General Kettani, chief of staff of the Moroccan army, and Lieutenant Short, a British officer attached to the Ghanaian army, began to reorganize the Congolese army by seeking out support from Colonel Joseph Mobutu.

U N O's man-on-the-spot who plotted behind the scenes for the ultimate arrest of Lumumba was undoubtedly General Kettani. Without him Mobutu was nothing but a rather obscure officer. Under the patronage of Kettani he became the tool of U N O's imperialist policy.

From Mobutu the plot spread to include President Kasavubu, a member of the Bakongo tribe, who was only granted a seat in Lumumba's government at Lumumba's own request.

The first stage of the U N O plot to isolate Lumumba was carried out in preparation for the meeting of the Congo parliament on September 7. It is no secret that bribes of all sorts were made behind the scenes to Congolese deputies in order to persuade them to reject Lumumba. Then President Kasavubu under an article of the constitution deposed Lumumba and appointed a successor as premier.

Whereas Kasavubu, who by now with Mobutu was a stooge of the United Nations, presented a fait accompli to the Congo Parliament, Lumumba continued to insist that Parliament must decide. Due to his considerable support and influence he routed Kasavubu and his gang at the session of Parliament on September 7.

From then on his fate was sealed. Kasavubu and his United Nations backers ignored the lawful Parliament and ordered Lumumba's arrest. Ghanaian troops under Lieutenant Short prevented Lumumba from speaking on the radio. The elected leader of a lawfully elected government became a prisoner of the United Nations in his own country. The same Ghanaian troops under the excuse that they were protecting him made him virtually a prisoner in his own house. In the long weeks of this 'protective custody', Kasavubu and Mobutu endeavoured to put pressure on Lumumba to agree to a federal government. Time after time he rejected their proposals with the request that Parliament be recalled. Then came his attempt to escape and his brutal arrest by the Mobutu troops.

When Lumumba was arrested, the United Nations donated £1½ million to the Kasavubu clique. After General Kettani had successfully

briefed Mobutu, the Belgian Société Générale liberally financed him so that he could control his troops. Thus U N O and the Belgians plotted hand-in-glove to maintain the Congo for imperialism.

Whilst these mercenaries were living in luxury supplied by U N O and the Belgians, the plight of the native population grew steadily worse. Kasavubu and Bomboko made approaches to Kalonji and Tshombe for economic assistance. Their price for such assistance was Lumumba. Traitor Kasavubu then signed the decree that Lumumba should be transferred to Katanga. The United Nations which controlled the airfields organized the plane journey. Thus the curtain closed on the last act of the suffering of the tortured Lumumba.

Following his murder, Soviet officials at U N O have launched a big propaganda campaign against the United Nations and its secretary-general Dag Hammarskjöld. Can there be any doubt about the role of U N O and its secretary-general? It united with the Belgian imperialists to trap Lumumba and later to murder him, but the Soviet Union must share the responsibility for this state of affairs.

The Soviet propaganda campaign is of a one-sided character. Whilst it rages against Hammarskjöld, it remains silent about Kasavubu. The policy of U N O in the Congo is to form a federal government under the leadership of Kasavubu. The Soviet Union is silent about him, although they know full well that it was his hand which signed the decree which sealed Lumumba's fate.

Thus the Soviet propaganda campaign against U N O is a Left smoke screen designed to obscure the real treachery of the Soviet leadership in the Congo and, for that matter, in Africa as a whole. Moscow policy is to support the native puppets of imperialism in an effort to win them away from imperialism. They don't want to attack Kasavubu because in reality they will support his government as a means of compromise with American imperialism.

The Soviet bureaucracy fears revolutions in the vast African colonies. Lumumba was an unknown quantity. What he lacked in experience in relation to the slick diplomacy of the so-called international statesmen, he more than compensated for in his devotion to the Congolese people. Over and over again he declared that he would be loyal only to them and he was—right to the end. This was his greatness.

The Left of the Labour Party, the Communist Party, the Soviet bureaucracy, Nkrumah and Nehru must all bear their share of responsibility for his murder. They supported the United Nations. The United Nations acted in a manner in which it could only be expected to act, that is in the interests of its imperialist masters.

# A Socialist Foreign Policy

Cliff Slaughter

IN a widely-circulated leaflet following the unilateralist decision of the Labour Party conference in October, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament welcomes this 'first great victory'. At the same time, the leaflet notes that CND can expect vigorous opposition from the capitalist press—'solidly opposed to us, and no longer regarding us as amiable idealists without political importance'.<sup>1</sup>

There is a very good reason for the current day-by-day propaganda campaign throughout the press, radio and television against unilateral British renunciation of the H-bomb. For the capitalist class, the Scarborough decision is not so much a victory for CND's ideas as a direct threat to the security of the Parliamentary and class-collaboration politics which preserve capitalism in Britain. Macmillan's comment on Scarborough was that it appeared to challenge the basic and traditional assumption of 'bipartisanship' in foreign affairs. In other words, there is a threat that the British Labour movement, and therefore any future Labour government, will cut loose from the interests of British capital, and act instead in the interests of the working class. No one would want to deny the contribution of CND's propaganda and activity in bringing the H-bomb issue before the eyes of the Labour movement, but it is necessary above all to recognize that the *content* of the struggle against the bomb is now much clearer. The capitalist class had attempted a conspiracy of silence against CND from its inception, but once its policy infected the only alternative government, with all its implications for the removal of the subservient Gaitskell clique, then the 'organs of public opinion' really turned on the heat. No Labour leader has ever had the support given to Gaitskell over the past six months. Not only in the enemy camp but within CND itself, there has been a steadily growing realization that opposition to the bomb meant opposition to capitalist politics. Thus, the 1960 CND conference incorporated opposition to NATO into its policy; and as Scarborough approached, many members of CND began to realize that a turn to the working-class movement

was a necessity, and not the sectarian demand of a minority of Trotskyists in the Campaign.

## THE H-BOMB—A POLITICAL QUESTION

The Scarborough decision, together with Gaitskell's impudent rejection of it, inevitably sharpens the theoretical and political issues involved in the struggle against the bomb. Certainly outraged human feelings and moral sentiment were and are an important component of the struggle against nuclear war, but the very day-to-day tasks of the Campaign and of the Left in the Labour Party and trade unions show the need for a clear political line, and for a political struggle on a wider front than that of the bomb alone. Gaitskell's defiance of the Scarborough decision poses the problem: how can the Labour movement enforce its will against the agents of the enemy within its midst. The pro-Gaitskell majority in the Parliamentary Labour Party poses the problem: in an age when the Polaris submarine and other rapid changes in technique require a live and active political leadership, can we be satisfied with the domination of a Parliamentary rump, bureaucratically selected at a stage of development of the Labour movement when the issues were very different, and the relationship between Transport House and the rank and file the opposite of what they are now. The whole question of Labour's road to power, the nature of the Parliamentary system, the character of socialist leadership; these and many other questions must be faced if the decisions of Scarborough are to be implemented.

Having rejected the nuclear strategy of the Right wing, the working-class movement must find an alternative and realistic policy. Gaitskell has been able to retain a certain initiative, both at Scarborough and since, because this realistic policy has not yet been worked out and accepted. It is important therefore to examine the ideas on defence and foreign policy abroad in the Left of the movement. The Left must recognize just as clearly as Gaitskell does that between unilateralism on the one hand, and outright collaboration with British and

<sup>1</sup> 'The Big Breakthrough'. Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

United States imperialism on the other, there is an unbridgeable gulf; all those who talk of compromise in the name of unity have the objective effect of preventing the Left from drawing the necessary conclusions from the split, while Gaitskell goes ruthlessly about his business. That business is to tie the British working class to the US-NATO war alliance.

If then we begin from the needs of the two opposed classes, workers and capitalists, we shall have the best strategic guide to the meaning and significance of the various trends in the Labour movement. For the purposes of this article, we take for granted that Gaitskell and his clique are completely sold on the American alliance; the problem is one of the political aims of the Left. What is the political alternative to Gaitskell? Is it, as he and Strachey suggest, 'surrender to Communist domination', or is there a Socialist foreign policy which will be independent of the Kremlin's diplomacy? Must we rely on 'Summit talks' in which the Western participants argue from positions of nuclear strength capable of destroying the world 50 times over, or can the people themselves intervene to abolish war? How realistic is the notion of 'positive neutrality', and on what assumptions is it based? Does the admission of newly independent states to the United Nations make that body the hope of the future in settling international disputes? It is our opinion that in CND and the Labour Left generally the answers to these questions have so far been attempted without seriously challenging the basic assumptions of the Right wing and their supporters in the capitalist class.

### THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Such an assertion needs to be backed by examples. The CND pamphlet 'Let Britain Lead' may be taken as representative of the general opinion in higher Left Labour, Tribune and New Left circles, since it is 'presented' by twelve prominent MPs, trade union leaders and journalists.<sup>2</sup> Although this pamphlet presents very clearly the enormous threat of world destruction flowing from United States imperialism, it nevertheless seems to think that a solution can be found without a campaign specifically against American imperialism, which would of course have to be an international movement, including the American working class. Instead of

<sup>2</sup>'Let Britain Lead: the case for Labour's New Defence Policy' presented by Frank Beswick, Fenner Brockway, Tom Driberg, Michael Foot, Anthony Greenwood, Judith Hart, Ted Hill, John Horner, Kingsley Martin, Ian Mikardo, Stephen Swingler, Bob Willis. CND.

starting from the growth of those forces capable of overthrowing capitalism, i.e., the colonial revolution and the working-class movement in the capitalist countries, the pamphlet says: 'Nor is it the deterrent that has so far prevented the Congo from being the scene of another Korean war. It is *the authority of the United Nations, whose growth is the most hopeful fact of recent years.*' On this basis, the authors feel justified in criticising Gaitskell and his supporters on the grounds that at Scarborough they failed to stress that part of the old 'official' defence policy which says: 'The United Nations must be made the keystone of British foreign policy'.

It is on such grounds, presumably, that Crossman, Wilson, Barbara Castle and others announce their conviction that a 'compromise' can be found between Left and Right. The very fact that this same 'United Nations' slogan can be used so glibly by all sides should make us wary. But abstract argument should no longer be necessary; since 'Let Britain Lead' was written the United Nations' role in the Congo has surely exposed for good and all the false notion that the international working class can rely on such bodies to 'be on our side'. Since UN intervention, Kasavubu's government has received the blessing of the United Nations; under this cover, Tshombe operates freely as a stooge for the bloodstained Belgian imperialists, who have been creeping back into Katanga and the rest of the Congo. Colonel Mobutu's middle-class officer strong-arm dictatorship has imprisoned Lumumba, the only leader so far expressing in any way the national and democratic aspirations of the Congolese people as a whole, and has expelled all Soviet and Eastern European advisers and experts from the Congo. This is how the United Nations ensures that the Congo does not become an arena for the Cold War! No matter what the contradictions and conflicts within the UN administration and the General Assembly, the presence of the United Nations force has not prevented the temporary victory of pro-imperialist forces in the Congo, strongly linked to Belgian and American capital. By placing reliance on the UN, instead of a principled campaign of independent working-class action against imperialist intervention, Socialists of many varieties have been guilty of a very grave error. Only by achieving a theoretical grasp of the real forces in the world today can we go beyond such policies, which are in fact only a tailing behind the capitalist class.

### THE 'NEW LEFT'

It is not only in the 'Old Left' that illusions of this sort prevail. In the New Left pamphlet

'Britain Without The Bomb', John Rex seems to follow the same line. For example: 'The question Britain has to ask herself today is whether in a world in which it is no longer possible to fight a major war, she would not do better whole-heartedly to accept the authority of the United Nations, and, indeed, to take the lead in building up its authority.'<sup>3</sup> So long as socialist thought remains trapped in these categories of 'national interest' and of an independent authority standing above all the class forces in the world, then the movement cannot take a single step beyond the Scarborough vote. Rex tries to argue that this appeal for support to the United Nations is in fact nothing but solidarity with the newly independent nations of Africa and Asia ('More and more it has come to reflect the views and interests of the poorer, less developed and uncommitted smaller nations'). Castro has already said to the UN General Assembly that there can be no question of faith in the UN as an international police force if this means only the suppression of colonial independence movements, and recent experiences in the Congo, not to mention the control over the Security Council by the imperialist powers, which would effectively prevent any intervention against *their* colonialism, are surely sufficient to dismiss Rex's argument. Can any socialist really believe that the imperialist powers would continue to work within the UN if it came to have a majority of anti-imperialist representatives?

John Rex makes some interesting remarks on the history of the UN which on close examination expose the flaws in his own argument.

'General MacArthur contemplated using the bomb against the Chinese in Korea, but eventually the war was brought to an end by Indian mediators. Mr. Dulles and M. Bidault thought of using it at Dien Bien Phu, but were dragged to the conference table by Anthony Eden. Finally Anthony Eden himself had to decide whether he could risk the outbreak of a nuclear war with Russia by continuing his Suez expedition, and was forced to submit himself to the authority of the United Nations.

'The case of Suez, however, illustrates even more the comparative value of a resort to force and the acceptance of UN mediation.'<sup>4</sup>

It is extremely misleading to suggest, as Rex does, that the major factors involved on these occasions were considerations of calculated aggression versus 'the rule of Law'. In each case it would be necessary to consider the strategy of US imperialism and of America's 'partners', the military strength and policy direction of the USSR, China and the workers' states, and the opposition to war or lack of

it within the capitalist countries concerned. For example, opposition of the French working class to the war in Indo-China was restricted by the 'peaceful co-existence' policy of the French Communist Party, hoping that the French bourgeoisie would split from US military plans in Europe. André Marty argued that working-class action on this issue along the lines of the campaign against France's part in the wars of intervention in the early days of the Soviet Republic would have altered the situation considerably. What is suggested here is that a unified international strategy of class struggle against colonial war would not only have deprived the French bourgeoisie of the bargain they got at Dien Bien Phu but would have finally defeated them in South East Asia. Thus, only the subordination of the working-class movement to diplomatic requirements left the imperialists with the room to manoeuvre in which Eden appeared as a 'peacemaker'. As for Suez, the UN appeared as a factor opposed to Anglo-French aggression because US imperialism did not consider the risk worth taking; no doubt Bulganin's threat of retaliation with rockets influenced their decision, and it certainly influenced opinion in the Labour movement in Britain against the adventure. As for the Korean war being brought to an end by Indian mediators, a little consideration of the difference between form and content would not be out of place. The 'United Nations' did fight the war after all; and they fought it on behalf of the government of Syngman Rhee, a brutal dictator, whom even the Americans have now acknowledged as such. In relation to the Korean war, too, the correct line for the colonial people and for the workers of the world was support for the Korean people against American aggression in UN disguise.

In the present situation and in the future, we must expect the US government to use the UN for the same purposes, despite liberal pretensions. One final point on the treatment of the Congo problem shows this very clearly. Immediately after the report of a UN Commission condemning Mobutu and castigating the Belgians for the continued strife, the US threw its satellite votes wholeheartedly behind the stooge Kasavubu delegation. The United Nations correspondent of the Christian Science Monitor commented: 'One way of viewing the 53-to-24 vote by which the Assembly accepted Mr. Kasavubu's credentials' November 22 is that the US has demonstrated its power for the benefit of Ghana and Guinea.' Certainly, therefore, the new independent nations make the manoeuvres of imperialism through the UN more tortuous, but these manoeuvres have more chance of success so long as some socialists continue to put their faith in the United Nations.

<sup>3</sup> 'Britain Without the Bomb', John Rex. New Left Pamphlet, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

## NATION AND CLASS IN FOREIGN POLICY

This popularity of the United Nations idea among socialists is akin to the faith in summit talks which the Labour Review attacked editorially in Autumn of last year. At every stage of development of capitalism, the great issue before the working class is to achieve consciousness of its historic role and to express this in independent class politics. In the epoch of imperialism this means the rejection of 'national' defence by the workers of the advanced countries, and the building of movements in the underdeveloped countries which fight for a programme going beyond political independence to a connection with the international socialist revolution. This is far removed from the idea common to Left Social-Democrats and to 'Communists' of the Khrushchev school, that there will be a gradual tipping of the scales against capitalism. John Gollan, secretary of the British Communist Party, said in Leeds in October of last year that the importance of the Scarborough decision on unilateralism was in its international implications. So far, so good: but Gollan went on to explain that if this Scarborough vote could be carried through to victory, Britain could join that group in the councils of the nations which is committed to settling disputes by negotiations. In this way the traditional leaderships strive to 'cut down to size' the great potential for independent class politics expressed in Japan and Britain in 1960.

Unfortunately the Left in British Labour has a long way to go to pass beyond this point. Again John Rex's pamphlet may be taken as an example of the Left's limited horizon. He writes 'thus the aim of foreign policy today should be, in order of priority:

'1. The avoidance of British involvement in a nuclear war since, due to her size and her front-line position, she would almost certainly be destroyed.

'2. The prevention of nuclear war between America and Russia, since if such a war occurred, even if Britain were neutral, there is a strong likelihood of her becoming a target for nuclear attack.

'3. The defence of vital British interests.'<sup>5</sup>

Quite clearly, the issues are posed here from the limited viewpoint of 'national interests'. The first two points correctly point out that a war involving the US would almost inevitably mean Britain's destruction, and of course 'everyone' wants to avoid that. But the problem can only be tackled from the point of view of the economic and political forces driving to war, and the force that can turn them back. If the problem were posed in this way as a class struggle against imperialism, it would be crystal clear that 'the defence of vital

British interests' is at best a shibboleth and at worst a cruel deception, for there are no common interests between British employers and British workers. This is quite apart from the question of whether the British capitalists *think* that their preservation and that of the workers makes their interests identical. Scientific socialism left that particular problem behind long ago. The preservation of capitalism, the employers' basic historic interest, demands the war alliance. So long as imperialism exists all talk of disarmament is a sham and a delusion; the only people disarmed by such talk are the workers, in the political sense. Rex's conclusion—'Thus the main aim of foreign policy today should be to achieve a state of universal and total disarmament, even before outstanding international issues have been resolved'—is only another version of Gaitskell's plea at Scarborough that 'collective security' is our real aim. It is in this way that such talk leaves the Right wing with the initiative, despite defeat at the conference. The end product of the process begun at Scarborough must be a struggle for power by the British working class, from which position it will appeal over the heads of their rulers to the workers of other countries to disarm their exploiters. Such a Labour government in Britain would negotiate treaties with other powers, and particularly with the workers' states, but it would use the negotiations for such treaties to encourage the struggle of the working class all over the world. It would regard solidarity with the working-class movement in every country as its major guarantee of security from attack, rather than the word of any government representative.

### 'POSITIVE NEUTRALITY'

Now such a perspective is clearly very different from the 'positive neutrality' about which we have begun to hear so much recently. In point of fact 'positive neutrality' accepts the very conditions of stalemate which the imperialists (temporarily) and the Soviet bureaucracy wish to preserve. The greatest threat to both these forces is the revival of the international working-class movement as an ally of the great colonial revolution of the last fifteen years. As this force emerges it will shatter the illusion that 'the two camps' ('Western democracy' and 'Russian Communism') are the main forces in the modern world. 'Positive neutrality' on the other hand supposes that a growing number of independent states, balancing between the two great powers and playing upon the fact that their support is canvassed by both sides, will gradually bring the rule of reason into the world.

Such a view fails entirely to recognize the significance of the fact that the possibility of a break-

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 12.



through in Japan and Britain is a qualitatively different matter from the growth of the colonial revolution. These are advanced countries; social advance inside them means enormous economic blows against world capitalism, the removal of great foundation stones from the military strategy of imperialism, and most important, the encouragement of new movements in the colonial and underdeveloped countries and in the Soviet bloc. The prospect of large-scale economic assistance and the expropriation of the great capital-exporting monopolies by a British socialist government would inevitably give a powerful objective basis for the establishment of workers' governments in the ex-colonial territories; the political influence of the revived revolutionary socialist movement in the advanced countries would at the same time universally hasten the emergence of similar parties in the underdeveloped countries. In the USSR, China and Eastern Europe, the two greatest barriers to a political revolution to restore Soviet democracy are the fear of imperialist intervention to overthrow the nationalized economy and the absence of an international revolutionary outlook in the socialist movement. Here again, the breakthrough in one or more capitalist countries will be a decisive factor. The existence of powerful workers' movements capable of *action* against imperialist intervention, the tearing of whole sectors from the imperialist military framework, and the revival of Leninist international socialist strategy—these are the preconditions of the political overthrow of the bureaucracy in the workers' states. Once again we find ourselves entirely in disagreement with those who see 'the easing of the Cold War' as the necessary condition for a policy of socialist initiative in these countries. It is not an *understanding* with the imperialists, but *solid blows against them* that will transform the prospects for socialists in the advanced countries, in the ex-colonial territories, and within the Soviet bloc.

If we pursue some of these ideas a little further, we can pronounce a verdict on the 'positive neutrality' idea. Let us assume that we are right in predicting a Leftward swing in the 'backward' countries as a result of forming a socialist government in Britain and perhaps in other countries. This will immediately explode the myth that these underdeveloped countries have a national unity, above classes, which somehow balances between the 'two camps'. In reality, it is the stalemate produced by the Social-Democratic and Stalinist leadership in the world proletarian movement that delays the growth of national colonial revolts into socialist revolutions. The imperialists now recognise that their only hope in the colonies is to grant political independence under the control of reliable elements of the native middle class. In this way their investments will be protected. The position of the national bourgeoisie

in these countries, though weak economically, is strong politically so long as this stalemate lasts. They occupy the positions of strength in government and administration, profiting from the bargaining for their support by both the US and Western imperialists and the Soviet bureaucracy, as well as the weakening of the mass movement below them, subordinated as it is to the diplomatic requirements of the Soviet bureaucracy rather than pursuing the class interests of the workers and peasants. Clearly then, there is a vital interconnection between the socialist movement in Britain and the capitalist countries, the restoration of Soviet democracy, and the transition from Bonapartist rule to workers' power in the colonial countries. A socialist victory in Britain would therefore not be a purely quantitative addition to the 'progressive forces', but the source of a qualitative leap forward in those countries which now comprise the 'uncommitted powers'. The class basis of this 'uncommitted' status would be severely undermined as soon as the precarious balance between imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy on the one hand, and between foreign capital and the native working class and peasantry on the other, was shaken by the growth of the British revolution. Such elementary mistakes as to suppose that Britain would somehow just be 'added' to the list of neutral powers would have been avoided if the analysis had begun with the class basis of such a balance of forces, instead of a superficial survey of the powers that be. But this only emphasizes once more the principal failing of the British Left, its inability to base itself on independent working-class politics.

### WORKING-CLASS POLITICS OR NEUTRALITY?

Our 'New Left' and other critics will answer that we are simply arguing from a utopian revolutionary viewpoint. After all, they will say, there is no question of a revolutionary government in England. We will reply at this point by asking the 'positive neutralists' just what sort of a government is going to adopt the policy they propose; obviously not Mr. Macmillan's, and obviously not Mr. Gaitskell's. The only alternative is a Labour government on a Socialist programme, with Gaitskell defeated and thrown out, together with all he represents. Can this sort of struggle in the Labour Party be carried through so long as the Left is dominated by ideas of compromise and 'unity', so long as it does not get away from the idea of purely Parliamentary roads to power, so long as the working-class movement does not insist on the *class* character of the Party? In order to make the Scarborough victory effective, the Left must clarify the basic difference

between a 'collective security' approach, which puts conditions on bourgeois governments, and a policy of unilateral action by the working class to disarm and dispossess its own capitalist class. Gaitskell may rant about 'fellow travellers' but he knows that the Communist Party position in many points coincides with his own. From 1945-47 for instance, the British Communist Party supported Attlee and Bevin's government in every way, on the grounds that we could 'win the peace' by a democratic alliance of all classes, on the basis of the 'Summit talks' at the end of war. In Italy, Togliatti pledged Communist Party support to the Italian Christian Democratic government at home if they would follow the Soviet line in international diplomacy (speech at the 7th Congress of the Italian Communist Party in Milan, April, 1951). Any 'third force' is a temporary and vacillating phenomenon in this period of crisis for world imperialism, whose irresistible urge to expansion conflicts more and more with the growth of the world revolution. Positive neutralism is no less of a delusion than Gaitskell's 'collective security', except that the latter is a deliberate disguise for direct subordination to the U S militarists.

The positive neutralists must answer clearly. Is 'positive neutrality' a policy for the system as it exists at the moment, i.e., a capitalist system? (This seemed to be the point of view of John Saville in 1958, when he argued that we must show positive neutrality to be a possibility within the existing system.<sup>6</sup>) Or is it the policy of a future Socialist government? Most of the supporters of this idea never make clear what the class character of such a 'positive neutralist' government would be. We have argued:

(a) that there can be no repetition in an advanced capitalist country like Britain, with her position in the N A T O alliance, of the specific external and internal conditions of such regimes in the underdeveloped countries;

(b) that to call for capitalist governments to undertake such policies amounts to peddling illusions in the Labour movement, leaves the initiative in the hands of the Right wing, and fails utterly to advance the independent political action of the working class. Not surprisingly, 'positive neutrality' appears alongside an increasing tendency in the New Left to deny categorically the primary role of the working class in the struggle against capitalism;

(c) that if a socialist government comes to power, the whole structure of class relations within which contemporary 'neutralism' operates will be undermined, and in fact such a government in Britain will be obliged to support working-class opposition to

these very 'neutralist' regimes, as well as to those in the N A T O alliance.

## STRATEGY OF IMPERIALISM

If many Left-wingers have illusions about the possibility of a 'third force' acting to break the grip of imperialism and war, the same is certainly not true of the bourgeoisie itself. They recognise clearly that the very existence of imperialism is threatened in this epoch; the fact that they see the expansion of the U S S R and China as the main threat in this direction only reflects their success in buying off the Labour leadership in the imperialist countries and in achieving workable compromises with national bourgeois elements in the ex-colonial territories. Within the bourgeois camp there are different views and continual tactical changes of approach to the question of defence and handling of foreign affairs. These should not be confused with qualitative advances by the movement *against* imperialism. For example, the move towards Summit talks in late 1959 and early 1960 was construed by Stalinists and many others on the Left as a victory for the pressure of public opinion, influenced by the continuous attempts to subordinate the peace movement to demands for such talks. But in fact 'the spirit of Camp David' was a necessary tactical move for the American imperialists, as Eisenhower directly admitted ('... in the later months of 1958 we began to feel that the methods that we were pursuing had to be reinforced by something a little different. . . . And so when it came into the beginning of July, this decision was made. . . .'). Now today many spokesmen of 'anti-Communism' and 'defence of the free world' are moving to a position which can look very like that adopted by the Left, so long as the Left remains within the assumptions we have been examining.

Two years ago, the demand for unilateral renunciation of the bomb by Britain could command the support of many (like, say, Commander Stephen King-Hall) who argued only that the British deterrent was ineffective and wasteful, no defence at all. Gaitskell and Co. opposed this with the condemnation of any subordination to the American bomb. Crossman, Shinwell and others began to oppose Gaitskell and the government only in the spring of last year, not on the grounds that Britain was part of the U S military alliance, but because an independent deterrent was military and economic nonsense, i.e., not a rational defence for 'the free world'. Are these 'fellow-travellers' of the unilateralist movement going in the same direction at all? Is John Strachey becoming a unilateralist when he argues against the independent deterrent at the meeting of

<sup>6</sup> John Saville. 'Can We Have a Neutral Britain?' *New Reasoner*, Spring, 1958.

NATO parliamentary representatives? Of course not; he is proposing a more efficient military strategy for the imperialists. Gaitskell's earlier abhorrence of reliance on American H-bombs has not of course prevented him from continuing to serve NATO faithfully, even after the scrapping of Blue Streak and the insistence by the Americans that they alone will decide when the bomb is to be used. For him, the issue from the very first was not whether Britain had an independent deterrent but whether the Anglo-American alliance was to be preserved. The Scarborough decision has clarified the class essence of the debate on unilateralism; it is a question of defeating the class-collaborationists in the British Labour movement in order to cut the working class free from the service of capital. This means recognizing Gaitskell's policy on domestic issues (rejection of Clause 4, independence for the Parliamentary group) as an essential part, together with support for NATO, of his responsibility to the current strategic needs of imperialism. Once again, then, the world's problems of war and peace, of social advance and economic security, are resolved into the crisis of working-class leadership.

Unless this is recognized, we shall once again find the Left committed to a policy which is no more than the Left arm of the bourgeoisie. Very rapidly varieties of the idea of neutralism and international responsibility of the United Nations are becoming the stock-in-trade of the more enlightened wing of the bourgeoisie. They recognize full well the importance of these ideas in preserving the status quo until more favourable opportunities arise for defeating world socialism. *The Observer's* Diplomatic Correspondent, writing on December 11, 1960, anticipates a state of affairs in which only America and Russia retain nuclear striking power, with Europe subjected to 'total disarmament', even US troops and bases being withdrawn. *The Times* leader on the following day, December 12, regrets the thwarted hopes of a 'stable neutralist government in Laos'. It goes on to condemn the 'fear of communism' which 'has once again led to the very policies which build a broader base for communism in the future'. The lessons of China and Korea are being learned. The same *Times* leader says, 'American suspicion and hesitation are largely to blame'.<sup>7</sup>

It is to be hoped that our advocates of 'neutralism' on the Left do not see such trends as growing support for the Socialist cause, any more than Mr. Strachey's recognition of the impossibility of the independent deterrent, or Macmillan's acknowledgment of the 'wind of change', or de Gaulle's wish

to ditch the Algerian *colons*. The important thing is to grasp the initiative for the working class when the bourgeoisie is faced with these strategic and tactical crises. It is not a question of falling in behind the most 'progressive' trends in the upper circles of 'public opinion' but of politically arming the working class to drive home the advantage by its independent action. Fidel Castro's speech to the United Nations General Assembly was an object lesson in this respect. It was the presence of capitalist monopolies which caused conflict and led to war, said Castro, and the road to peace was the road of revolution and the expropriation of these monopolies. This should of course be ABC to Socialists, but it is precisely this ABC that the traditional leaderships, who have capitulated to the strength of these same great monopolies and of the imperialist state power, want to forget. Castro pointed out that in the underdeveloped countries the peoples had begun to take this road, with Cuba as a prime example. He expressed the hope that perhaps the people of the advanced countries would follow their example. The hint should be taken. An important basis for the foreign policy of a socialist government in Britain will be the nationalization of the armaments industry, entailing the destruction of the giant monopolies in steel, engineering and chemicals.

## A SOCIALIST POLICY

The policy of a Socialist government in Britain will be to destroy on behalf of the people all relations of this country with existing military pacts and to end all relations of inequality and exploitation and oppression in colonial territories. In Africa this will mean the freeing of all political prisoners, the expropriation of British and other foreign capitalist enterprises by the peoples of the countries concerned, with the support of British troops where that is necessary, either against foreign intervention or against the settler and officer caste. British representatives at the United Nations will use that body as a tribune to expose the imperialist powers and to appeal to the people of those powers against their governments' deceptions on disarmament, aid to underdeveloped countries and intervention in the affairs of other nations. Such a British government will regard as its greatest power for defence the movement of the working class in every country in the world. It will use all its power, as the central organ of the British Labour movement, to encourage revolutionary movements in those countries, and it will negotiate trading and cultural agreements with the governments of those countries only insofar as these do not inhibit in any way this primary task.

<sup>7</sup> Since this article was written, the positions taken up by the British and French governments have confirmed our analysis.

At the same time such a government will be ready to organize the defence of socialism in Britain by arming the people. An armed people in Britain, in concert with its revolutionary allies throughout the world, will fight against any army of intervention or occupation with all the force and modern technique that it can command. In the modern world there is no 'Socialism in One Country', and the possibility of Britain, with or without an H-bomb, holding out alone would only be a very limited one under highly exceptional conditions. But we have indicated above the political repercussions that could be expected in every other part of the world of the process leading to the formation of such a government in Britain. The British people will have their place in the front ranks against imperialist war, and it will be our responsibility, while actively encouraging the revolution within the remaining capitalist countries, to prevent or repel any imperialist attempt at regaining lost ground. It is certain that at that point, no more than at this, the military initiative in H-bombs or any other weapons could not be surrendered.

Socialists today cannot equate the Soviet with the American possession of the H-bomb, for the U S S R rests on the nationalized property foundations of the Revolution of 1917. Only those who talk about unilateralism as an empty and abstract moral demand ('giving a moral lead to the world', etc.) can feel floored by the 'moral dilemma' of accepting Russian and opposing Western possession of the bomb. When we oppose the Western bomb we oppose the possession of the bomb by a class whose economic nature drives it to expansion and at definite points to war. Despite the character of the Soviet bureaucracy, despite its zig-zags into irresponsibility and dangerous adventures at its fringes, the consequences of the same bureaucracy, as in Hungary, we do not see the Soviet ruling clique as pressed necessarily towards war. Its own basis of existence is the nationalized economy, despite its distortion of that economy, and the advancement and defence of that economy require peace, not war. Our quarrel with the Soviet bureaucracy is that it defends the gains of October *by methods of its own*, and that these methods, the manipulation and bureaucratic domination of the working class in the interests of diplomatic manoeuvres, actually strengthen imperialism and increase the dangers of war. But we aim at a relationship with the Soviet workers striving for their own political revolution, and not at the 'liberation' of the U S S R by the 'free world'. In this sense, the defence of the Soviet Union is an unconditional demand in the Marxist Left. Every socialist, when confronted with the 'moral' arguments about the Soviet Union giving up the bomb, usually associated with the idea that the Soviet Union is 'state capitalist' and therefore no better than Britain and

the U S A, should start from the primary material consideration: the possibility of a reconquest of Russia and China by imperialism would put back for decades if not centuries the prospect of Socialism. Imperialism would find a great new source of exploitation and expansion, not to speak of the disastrous political setback to the working-class movement. Those who argue for Russian 'unilateral renunciation of the bomb' are using 'internationalism', the idea that only the international working class can solve humanity's problems, to excuse the crassest irresponsibility. They will deservedly be left on the sidelines by the development of the revolution in Britain.

The immediate policy of the Left in Britain must be a set of demands which prepares the forces for a Socialist government.

1. Withdrawal of Labour support for imperialist 'defence' agreements and a campaign for the withdrawal of British troops from foreign countries.
2. A campaign by Labour for working-class action to stop work on nuclear weapons and on all military bases in this country. No work on the Polaris bases.
3. A Labour campaign for the freeing of all political prisoners in colonial territories and the withdrawal of British troops from all colonial territories.
4. An approach by British Labour to the working-class parties and trade unions of other countries to plan a united campaign against the imperialist war alliances.

These steps will begin to make a reality of Labour's 1953 Margate conference resolution 'against the danger of supporting anti-working-class forces in international affairs'.

For these steps to become possible and effective, other steps are necessary.

5. The removal of Gaitskell and his clique by an uncompromising campaign to implement the Scarborough decisions.
6. The definite subordination of the Parliamentary Labour Party to the Labour Party conference.
7. A campaign in the factories, the unions and the industrial towns for the nationalization of the arms industries.

Only in this way, by seeing our current campaigns as part of the whole process by which we achieve a Labour government with a *socialist* foreign policy, not a neutralist foreign policy, can we present the questions in a way that advance the independent politics of the working class. For this is the crying need of our time.

# *Pasternak and the Calendar of the Revolution*

ISAAC DEUTSCHER

The sensation created by *Doctor Zhivago* has died down, and Boris Pasternak himself died in May 1960. But interest in the case, and controversy over the book, continues—particularly on the cold-war cultural front. Laudatory evaluations, accompanied by the usual political overtones, have been legion in the West. Stalinist criticism has, at best, been mealy-mouthed, as could but be expected under the Khrushchev 'enlightenment'. Isaac Deutscher's review of *Doctor Zhivago* stands out in this welter of literary output for its Marxist clarity, for the historical perspective it establishes, and for its scrupulous objectivity. Although it first appeared in English in Spring 1959 (in the American *Partisan Review*) it is therefore well worth reproducing for British readers who have had no acquaintance with this point of view. For the distortion of the Pasternak issue has served political ends here as well as in the U.S.A.

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## I

THE most striking characteristic of Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* is its archaism, the archaism of the idea and of the artistic style alike. The book has been received, in the West, as part of the recent Russian revulsion against Stalinism and as its most consummate literary expression. Yet, *Doctor Zhivago* is nothing less than that—it is utterly unrelated to the Russia of the 1950s and to the experiences, troubles, and heart-searchings of the present Soviet generation. It is a parable about a vanished generation. Pasternak, now approaching his seventieth year—his formative period fell in the last decade before the October revolution—might have written this book in 1921 or 1922. It is as if his mind had stopped at that time, after the traumatic shock of the revolution; and as if nearly all that his country has since gone through had remained a blank. His sensitivity has remained unaffected, almost untouched, by the great and grim, yet not unhopeful drama of Russia's last three decades. The actual story of *Doctor Zhivago* ends in 1922. Pasternak brings it artificially 'up to

date' in two brief and hurried postscripts, 'Conclusion' and 'Epilogue', the first covering thinly the years from 1922 to 1929, till Zhivago's death, and the second jumping straight into the 1950s. The postscripts have almost none of the better qualities of the work but show all its weaknesses and incongruities absurdly magnified.

Much of the climate and the local colour of *Doctor Zhivago* and many of its ideas can indeed be found in the poems and prose of Andrey Belyi, Zinaida Gippius, Evgenii Zamyatin, Marietta Shaginian, and other writers of the 1920's, who were once polemically described as 'internal émigrés'. They were so called because they lived, worked (and published their works) under the Soviet regime, but in some measure shared the ideas and moods of the actual anti-Bolshevik émigrés. Some, like Gippius and Zamyatin, eventually went abroad and there voiced their opposition to the revolution without inhibition. Others adjusted themselves, assumed the postures of 'fellow-travellers', and eventually became

Stalin's court poets—Shaginian, for instance, was a Stalin Prize Winner. It is with the voice of that original, authentic 'internal émigré' that Pasternak has now spoken, equally unshaken in his hostility towards Bolshevism and his deep, physical and poetic, attachment to Russia. It is as if, in the course of nearly four decades, he had managed to preserve this his identity intact. His perception, his emotions, and his imagination have remained as if

closed to the many deep changes that have transformed his country beyond recognition and to some of the storms that have raged over it in the meantime. This testifies to the organic strength of his character but also to an extraordinary rigidity and limitation of his sensitivity. *Doctor Zhivago* is indeed an act of resurrection. But risen from the dead, Pasternak speaks the language of the dead, not of the living.

## II

*Doctor Zhivago* is a political novel *par excellence*; and so its appraisal must start with the analysis of its political message. The author puts the message into the mouth of his chief character, who is largely his own projection, and into the mouths of the other figures who all talk at great length about their attitude towards the revolution. They dwell on the revolution's failure, on its inability to solve any problems, on the violence it has done to the human personality, and on the disillusionment it has brought in its wake. The plot is designed to bear out this critique. Nearly all the characters are driven to misery, despair and death; and love and humanity are defeated and destroyed by the 'politics of revolution'. In the background there is Russia, shown as senselessly convulsed and tormented to no purpose, unless in mystical expiation of sin. Christianity remains the hope and refuge, a Christianity which need not be clearly defined but is recognizable in its humanitarian outlook, its humility, its acceptance of history, and its refusal to try and remake man's earthly destiny. It is from this quasi-fatalistic Christianity that finally springs Pasternak's ethereal note of reconciliation even with the revolution, the unexpectedly optimistic note on which the novel ends. It may be, the author suggests, that the great expiation has been accomplished and the deluge is over: its few survivors can already sense a 'presage of freedom in the air' and a 'silent music of happiness'; and they 'feel a peaceful joy for this holy city' of Moscow.

A message of this kind is a matter of faith and hardly lends itself to rational discussion. Nor is it likely to be fruitful artistically. With nothing but these beliefs and convictions, Pasternak's characters are from the beginning outsiders to the revolution, lacking all point of contact with it, and psychologically static. The author evidently feels this and seeks to animate them, to take them 'inside' the revolution, and invest them with something like dilemmas. He presents Doctor Zhivago as almost a revolutionary at first, or, at any rate, a man sympathetic to the revolution, who suffers disillusionment and disinte-

grates in despair. In the same way he tries to complicate other characters like Strelnikov, the Red commander, and Lara, Strelnikov's wife and Zhivago's mistress. In every case, however, he fails. He tried to square a circle. From Christian rejection of the October revolution it might be possible for a Russian writer to produce perhaps a new version of Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*, but not a true, coherent, and convincing image of the revolution and of the human beings who have made it or experienced it.

How does Pasternak arrive at the rejection? Is his (and Zhivago's) profession of sympathy with the origins of the revolution mere pretence? Certainly not. He is the victim of a genuine and in a sense tragic confusion. He himself reveals this when he describes Zhivago's, that is his own, state of mind shortly before October, 1917: 'Here too were his loyalty to the revolution and his admiration for it, the revolution in the sense in which it was accepted by the middle classes and in which it had been understood by the students, followers of Blok, in 1905.' The revolution accepted by the middle classes in 1905, it should be recalled, had as its ideals either a Tsardom reformed into a constitutional monarchy or, as an extreme, a Liberal-Radical bourgeois republic. That abortive bourgeois revolution was implicitly opposed to the proletarian revolution of 1917. Pasternak-Zhivago is unaware that his 'admiration and loyalty' to the former must necessarily bring him in conflict with the latter.

The confusion goes even deeper: the Zhivago of 1917 is as if unaware that even this his 'loyalty to the ideas of 1905' is by now only a fading memory. 'This familiar circle', Pasternak goes on, 'also contained the foretaste of new things. In it were those omens and promises which before the war, between 1912 and 1914, had appeared in Russian thought, art, and life, in the destiny of Russia as a whole and in his own, Zhivago's.' The allusive reminiscence would convey to a Russian, if he could read it, far more than it can possibly convey to a Western reader. 'Between 1912 and 1914' Russia's

middle classes, the bourgeoisie, had definitely turned their backs on their own radicalism of 1905, had taken their distance from the revolutionary underground movement, and were seeking salvation exclusively in a liberalized Tsardom. The mildly socialistic and radical intelligentsia, encouraged by a slight softening of the autocracy, spoke of the 'liquidation of the illusions and methods of 1905'; and the Bolsheviks were already virtually alone in upholding the tradition of revolutionary action—outside their ranks only Plekhanov and Trotsky, and their very few followers, did the same. This then is the climate of opinion which Pasternak-Zhivago recalls in 1917, reflecting that 'it would be good to go back to that climate once the war was over, to see its renewal and continuation, just as it was good to be going home'. Thus, even at this stage, on the eve of the October insurrection and well before his disillusionment had begun, Zhivago's 'loyalty and admiration for the revolution' is nothing but a transfigured and glorified nostalgia for pre-revolutionary Russia.

Latent and unconscious at the beginning, this nostalgia comes into its own and bursts to the surface later. 'I can still remember a time when we all accepted the peaceful outlook of the last century', says Lara to Zhivago. 'It was taken for granted that you listened to reason, that it was right

and natural to do what your conscience told you. . . . she adds (as if Russia had not lived in serfdom for most of that golden age, 'the last century', and in semi-serfdom for the rest of it!). 'And then there was the jump from this calm, innocent, measured way of living to blood and tears, to mass insanity. . . . You must remember better than I do the beginning of disintegration, how everything began to break down all at once—trains and food supplies in towns, and the foundations of home life and conscious moral standards.'

'Go on', Zhivago interjects. 'I know what you will say next. What good sense you make of it all! It's a joy to listen to you.'

Pasternak's recital of the broken pledges of October is thus based on a false premise: The October revolution had never promised to satisfy his nostalgia and to 'go back to the climate' of 1912-14, let alone to that of the nineteenth century. He rests his case on the fact that the October revolution was not a bourgeois revolution or rather that it did not content itself with a mildly reformed version of the *ancien régime*. Of all the charges that have ever been levelled against Bolshevism, this is surely the most archaic one. When it was voiced around 1921 it was still the echo of a fresh controversy. In 1958 it comes to us like a voice from the grave.

### III

'Comme La Guerre et La Paix, le Docteur Zhivago', writes Francois Mauriac, '*ne restitue pas seulement des destinées particulières, mais l'histoire politique qui naît d'elles et qui, à son tour, les infléchit et leur donne une signification.*'

Mauriac naturally finds himself in the warmest sympathy with Pasternak's Christianity. But has he also based his opinion on a consideration of *Doctor Zhivago's* merits as a novel? Even though Pasternak himself, through various imitative details of composition and style, evokes *War and Peace*, it is difficult to see how any novelist can make the comparison seriously. Tolstoy's huge canvas is alive and crowded with a magnificently full blooded, richly individualized yet organically integrated, social milieu. In *Doctor Zhivago* a mere fragment of a milieu comes only partly alive, and this only in the opening chapters—the milieu of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, Platonically faithful to 'the ideas of 1905' but well adjusted in fact to the *ancien régime* and leading a smug existence on the fringes of the upper and middle bourgeoisie and of the Tsarist bureaucracy. After 1917 this milieu disintegrates and disperses, as it was bound to do;

and—as nothing takes its place—its *membra disjecta*, as individuals, are whirled furiously into a social vacuum, from which they hark back to their lost felicity. No *histoire politique* emerges therefore from their private destinies, certainly not any *histoire politique* of the Bolshevik epoch.

Tolstoy takes the characters of *War and Peace* straight into the centre of the great events of their time. He throws them right into the stream of history, which carries them until they are overwhelmed or come on top. Pasternak places his characters in the backwoods and backwaters. They do not participate in any single important event; nor do they even witness any such event. Yet, what would *War and Peace* have been without Austerlitz and Borodino, without the fire of Moscow, without the Tsar's Court and Kutuzov's headquarters, and without the retreat of the Grande Armée, all reproduced by Tolstoy's epic genius? What significance would have had the *destinées particulières* of Pierre Bezukhov and André Bolkonsky without their deep and active involvement in these events? The drama of 1917-21 was at least as great as that of 1812; and it is far more momentous in its conse-

quences. Yet Pasternak never manages to give us a single glimpse of its main theme, of its central occurrences, and of its significant actors. It is not only that he lacks the gift of epic narration and has no eye for the historic scene. He runs away from history, just as all the time his chief characters flee from the scourge of revolution.

We barely hear in *Doctor Zhivago* a grotesquely remote echo of the stormy prelude of 1905. Then, during the World War until September 1917, Zhivago serves as an army doctor in a God-forsaken Carpathian village and a Galician townlet on the Hungarian frontier, hundreds and hundreds of miles away from the centres of the revolutionary upheaval. He returns to Moscow almost on the eve of the October insurrection and stays there during the insurrection. What he sees, experiences, and has to say about it consists of a few flat and meaningless sentences which do not add up to half a page. Throughout the rising, which in Moscow lasted much longer and was much bloodier than in Petrograd, he stays in his rooms. His child has a cold, his friends come, talk about the fighting outside, get stuck at the Zhivagos' for three days, after which they go home at last. 'Yuri had been glad of their presence during Sasha's illness and Tonya forgave them for adding to the general disorder. But they had felt obliged to repay the kindness of their hosts by entertaining them with ceaseless chatter; Yuri felt exhausted by it and was glad to see then go.' This is all we hear or learn of the upheaval: not a single person appears that participates in it. On the next page we are told abruptly that Zhivago was 'shaken and overwhelmed by the greatness of the moment and the thought of its significance for centuries to come'. We must believe the author upon his word; we have seen no one 'shaken and overwhelmed'. Zhivago did not even look at the event, so full of 'significance for centuries to come' through the window of his flat or even through the chinks of his shutters. The revolution had only added to the 'general disorder' in his household and exposed him to the 'ceaseless chatter' of his friends. What curious lack of artistic sense the author shows here, and what intellectual infantilism!

There follow a few thin and incoherent pages in which we are shown how the revolution adds further to the 'general disorder' in the household. Then, Moscow succumbs to starvation, epidemics, cold; Zhivago himself falls ill with typhus and recovers. By now the author and his hero have begun to brood over the breakdown of civilized life and the calamitous deterioration of human nature. 'In the meantime the Zhivagos were tried to the limits of endurance. They had nothing and they were starving. Yuri went to see the party member he had once

saved, the one who had been the victim of a robbery. This man helped him as far as he could, but the civil war was beginning and he was hardly ever in Moscow; besides he regarded the privations people were suffering in those days as only natural, and himself went hungry, though he concealed it.' And so the Zhivagos pack up and leave for the Urals, hoping to recoup there and to enjoy some quiet well-being on what used to be their family estate.

Thus we have left behind the famished, tense, and severe Moscow of the early months of civil war, without getting even as much as a hint of the issues agitating it: war and peace, Brest Litovsk, the German threat to Petrograd, the move of Lenin's government from Petrograd to Moscow, the attempts of the counter-revolution to rally, the hopes for the spread of revolution in Europe, the uprising of the Left Social Revolutionaries, the final dissolution of the old army, the emergence of the new one, not to speak of the distribution of land among the peasants, workers' control over industry, the beginnings of socialization, the attempt on Lenin's life, the first outbreaks of the Red terror, etc., all occurring during the months of Zhivago's stay in Moscow. We get no inkling of the severe pathos of these months, of the mass enthusiasms and the soaring hopes, without which the shocks to the hopes remain meaningless. We are hardly able to guess that Moscow is already being cut off by the Whites from food and fuel bases in the south: and so famine and chaos appear as the results of an apocalyptic breakdown of moral standards.

By coincidence I have read simultaneously with *Doctor Zhivago* the manuscript of memoirs written by an old worker who, himself an anarchist, took part in the Bolshevik uprising in Moscow. Without literary pretensions, very plainly, he describes the same period with which Pasternak deals; and he too is now bitterly disillusioned with the outcome of the revolution. But what a difference between the two pictures of the same city (even the same streets!) seen at the same time. Both writers describe the famine and the sufferings. But the old anarchist draws also unforgettable scenes of streets which, as far as he could see from a crossroads, were filled with Red workers, hastily arming themselves, and even with war cripples begging for arms; and then—the same streets changed into a battlefield; and he brings alive the inspired and tense heroism of Moscow's working class, an atmosphere of which Pasternak conveys not even a whiff. Again, it is as if Tolstoy had brought Pierre Bezukhov to burning Moscow only to let him bemoan the hunger and the ruins, without letting him (and us) feel how the great and tragic conflagration illumines Russia's past and present. To Tolstoy the fire of Moscow and the



cruel deeds and sufferings of 1812 are no mere atrocities—if they had been, Tolstoy would not be himself, and *War and Peace* would not be what it is. To Pasternak the revolution is primarily an atrocity.

Zhivago's resentment swells in him during his long and weary journey to the Urals. He travels in an overcrowded goods train, packed with human misery. Here are some of Pasternak's best descriptive pages. The scenes and episodes are true to life—the literature of the 1920's is full of similar descriptions. Zhivago's chief preoccupation is still with his and his family's well-being, although he tries to 'defend the revolution' in a brief and rather lifeless dialogue with a deported anti-Bolshevik politician. He is finally overcome by disgust with the new regime, and with his time at large, in the Urals, when his expectation of satiety and quietude on the old family estate is disappointed, when he is torn between loyalty to his wife and love for Lara; and when eventually the Red partisans trap him on a highway, abduct him to their forest camp, and force him to serve them as doctor.

The picture of the Forest Brotherhood is forcefully drawn. There is in it a sense of space, Siberian space, of the cruelty and mercy of nature and man, and of the primordial savagery of the fight. Still, we touch here only a remote periphery of the civil war, a forlorn and icy corner of Mother Russia. (Pasternak himself spent those years in the Urals, though not in any Forest Brotherhood.) The types or rather situations he depicts here are convincing, and at times (for instance the doings of the witch in the Forest Brotherhood) even fascinating; but they are only marginal. They represent the anarchic fringe of the Red Army which by now fights its battles against Kolchak, Denikin, Yudenich, and Wrangel—elsewhere, mostly far to the West, in European Russia. There the human element, the problems, and the situations were different from those encountered in this Forest Brotherhood, although the civil war was savage and cruel everywhere. The Forest Brotherhood, at any rate, forms, even in fiction, too slender a basis for any *histoire politique* of this period.

It is there, in the partisans' camp, that Zhivago's final 'break' with the revolution occurs. Abducted from the highway, he explodes in anger over the violation of his rights as an individual, the insult to his human dignity, and the breakdown of all moral standards. After eighteen months in captivity, during which at moments he feels almost closer to the Whites than to the Reds, he manages to escape. If this were all, one could say that the story has its psychological and artistic logic and that the author has 'taken it from life'. But Pasternak does not content himself with this. Not relying on objective

narrative and portrayal, he incessantly idealizes his hero, his own projection, and leaves us in no doubt that he shares Zhivago's thoughts and emotions and all his indignation. (Nearly all his characters do the same, because the author does not manage to set up any real contrast or counter-balance to Zhivago!) Politically and artistically Pasternak thus involves himself in a self-revealing inconsistency. Zhivago, we know, had, as doctor, spent several years in the Tsarist army; and all those years he behaved extremely meekly, never making any fuss over his sacred rights as individual and his offended dignity. Implicitly, he thus acknowledges the right of the *ancien régime* to press him into service—he denies that right only to the Red partisans. Yet they do exactly what the old army had done: they make the doctor look after the wounded. Unlike the Tsarist army, they had not sent him call-up papers by mail but had kidnapped him—they had not yet had the time to build up a military machine which would mobilize doctors and others in a 'civilized' manner. Surely from the angle of Pasternak-Zhivago's morality this should have been an irrelevant detail: at any rate, it should not have made so great a moral difference to the idealistic and humanitarian doctor whose wounded soldiers he cured, those of the Tsar, of the Whites or the Reds. Why then does he only now feel so deeply insulted in his human dignity?

The juxtaposition of these two situations in Zhivago's life is significant in other respects as well. Near the Carpathian front, that cemetery of the Tsarist army, Zhivago had seen blood, suffering, death, and countless atrocities. Pasternak sparingly describes a few of these but he does not dwell on that side of Zhivago's early experience. He presents as an almost uninterrupted atrocity only that part of the story which begins with the revolution. Nostalgia for the *ancien régime* here too colours his entire vision, determines for him his horizon, and dictates even the composition of the novel.

Unintentionally, Pasternak portrays his hero, the sensitive poet and moralist, as the epitome of callousness and egotism—unintentionally, because otherwise he could hardly have so insistently identified himself with Zhivago and lavished on him all the lachrymose love with which the novel overflows. The egotism is physical as well as intellectual, Zhivago is the descendant not of Pierre Bezukhov but of Oblomov, Goncharov's character who, though not worthless, had spent all his life in bed, as symbol of the indolence and immobility of old Russia. Here is Oblomov in revolt against the inhumanity of a revolution that has dragged him out of bed. Goncharov, however, conceived Oblomov as a grand satirical figure; Pasternak makes of him a martyr and the object of an apotheosis.

Willy-nilly one thinks of a fierce and ruthless, yet historically just passage in Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution*, written in 1923, which appears to anticipate Zhivago. In truth, however, Trotsky did not anticipate him; he merely summed up a certain type that belonged to that time:

'When a certain Constitutional Democratic aesthete, having made a long journey in a stove-heated goods wagon, tells you, muttering between his teeth, how he, a most refined European, with a set of superb false teeth, the best in the world, and with a minute knowledge of Egyptian ballet techniques, was reduced by this boorish revolution to travelling with despicable lice-ridden bagmen,<sup>1</sup> then you feel rising up in your throat a physical nausea with his dentures, ballet techniques, and generally with all his "culture" pilfered from Europe's

<sup>1</sup> Meshochniki, those who travelled with their bags in search of food or trading food.

#### IV

With the archaism of the idea goes the archaism of the artistic style. *Doctor Zhivago* is extremely old-fashioned by any standards of the contemporary novel; and the standards by which, being what it is, it has to be judged are those of the old-fashioned realistic novel. The texture of its prose is pre-Proust, nay, pre-Maupassant. It has nothing in it of the experimental modernity of Pilniak, Babel and other Russian writers of the 1920's. Obsolescence of style is not a fault in itself. The point is that Pasternak chooses deliberately his mode of expression which is the mode proper to the *laudator temporis acti*.

In his diary Pasternak-Zhivago thus expresses his artistic programme: 'Progress in science follows the laws of repulsion—every step forward is made by reaction against the delusions and false theories prevailing at the time. . . Forward steps in art are made by attraction, through the artist's admiration and desire to follow the example of the predecessors he admires most.' Nothing is further from the truth. In art as well as in science progress is achieved by a combination of 'repulsion' and 'attraction' and the tension between these two forces. Every step forward, as Hegel knew, is a continuation of tradition and at the same time a reaction against tradition. The innovator transcends the heritage of the past by rejecting some of its elements and developing others. However, Zhivago's reflections have some relevance to Pasternak's literary conservatism.

market stalls; and the conviction grows upon you that the very last louse of the most uncouth of our bagmen is more important in the mechanics of history and more, so to speak, necessary than this thoroughly "cultured" and in every respect sterile egotist.'

We recognize at once the 'Constitutional Democratic aesthete'—it was to him that the 'omens and promises of 1912-14' had been the most congenial—and we have some idea even of his long journey in a goods wagon, with despicable lice-ridden bagmen. True, his specialty now is not Egyptian ballet techniques but the Old Slavonic Prayer Book; and his culture comes from native stores as well as from Europe's market stalls. Perhaps so many years after the revolution our throats at his sight are less susceptible than Trotsky's was to violent physical nausea. All the same we cannot help identify the same sterile egotist in Zhivago the moralist and humanitarian.

This is Pasternak's first novel, written at the age of about 65, after he had been a poet all his life. His main formative influences had been the Russian Symbolist school, which flourished early in the century, then for a short time the pre-revolutionary Futurism, and finally, the 'Formalism' of the early 1920's. These schools enriched the idiom and refined the techniques of Russian poetry, but often they also weakened its élan and narrowed its imaginative range. Within the Symbolist and the Formalist traditions Pasternak has achieved almost perfection. His virtuosity of form has made of him Russia's most eminent translator of Shakespeare and Goethe. As far as I can judge from his poems, of which some are not easily accessible and others have remained unpublished, virtuosity rather than vigorous, inventive, and creative mastery distinguishes Pasternak. Yet as a poet too he is curiously antiquated compared with Mayakovsky and Yessenin, his contemporaries.

What prompted him to write his first novel at so advanced an age was the feeling that his poetry, or poetry at large, could not express adequately the experience of his generation. There is a touch of greatness in this admission and in the poet's effort to transcend his limitations. However, for any writer whose gifts had, for nearly half a century, been attuned exclusively to lyrical poetry, it would, in any case, have been risky to try his hand at a realistic and political novel. Pasternak's poetic tradition has proved an insuperable obstacle to his literary metamorphosis. He has not been able to

## Book Reviews

### Big Leap

**The Chinese Communes**, by Richard Hughes. The Bodley Head, 10s. 6d.

The significance of the 'People's Communes' in China cannot be ignored by Marxists; the bourgeoisie, both imperialist and colonial, is paying them a lot of attention, though for different reasons.

This compact book purports to give neither an all 'black' or all 'white' picture of the Communes. The book is written in the style of a professional journalist (which its author is) rather than the method of a political economist. But the information contained in the book's 90 pages is very useful. It includes, as an appendix, a translation, from the Peking **Ta Kung Pao**, of an article written in 1959 that analyses in detail a specific Commune in Honan Province.

Hughes sees the Communes as the major point of contention between Moscow and Peking, because China is claiming the leadership of the Asian countries by its 'down-to-earth-and-blood appeal of the agrarian revolution'. The Communes, he asserts, are 'designed to meet the conditions and problems of a nation which has a gross excess of population and a gross shortage of capital'.

The Communes are a product of the extreme unevenness and backwardness of the economy inherited from the past. The economic blockade by US imperialism imposes upon the economy severe strains and a certain lopsidedness. The demands of the 5-year plans for capital industry (55.8 per cent of investments in 1955; only 7.6 per cent for agriculture, forestry and water conservancy!) meant the peasantry had to be satis-

fied with only a relative increase in living standards. The inflation crisis of 1956 led to big investment cuts and the 'rectification' campaign of 1957. The peasantry was showing signs of restlessness (co-operatives declining, etc.).

At first, concessions were made in favour of more individual ownership; but the regime took off into the 'big leap forward' in industry. The first **experiments** in Honan of merging the co-operatives into larger units, in mid-1958, showed the regime the benefits of this type of organization.

The Communes are widely different in nature all over China. The initiative came from the top; whether the peasants welcomed it or not is another matter. All agricultural co-operatives were merged into Communes. The work force was divided into production brigades, and subdivided into production teams. All children were cared for in communal kindergartens; all food was cooked and served in communal dining rooms; all available labour and energy was utilized—nothing was wasted.

No sooner had the Communes begun than at the Wuchang Central Committee meeting, in December 1958, the pace was slackened, after a factional fight in the leadership, on which Hughes provides some interesting theories as to who was on what side.

In the early stages, peasants were paid money wages and given 'free' services, with the balance in favour of the 'free' services, (food, shelter, welfare, etc.). Later, though, it was found better to pay more money wages than to give 'free' services. Hughes makes some comments upon the alleged drive of the party to destroy the family in a manner which

is surprising for one who has spent so much time in China. The patriarchal family was the foundation of dynastic absolutism and more recently the reservoir of reaction. The destruction of this type of social organization is absolutely necessary and justified. The liberation of women, literacy, etc., could not take place otherwise. Press tales of women deprived of their children and separated from their husbands are reactionary fantasies, and hypocritical to the core. Only a dozen years ago, the 'defenders' of family life ideologically supported a system of child slavery, concubinage, prostitution and the degradation of women.

Another important aspect of the Communes is the militia, which now totals 250 million men and women in the 26,000 Communes. While this entire fantastic number of people is **trained** in the use of weapons, Hughes points out that only the 'politically reliable' have actual weapons—in Hopei a Commune with 10,000 in the militia has only 2,000 equipped with rifles.

But two things will remain even if the Communes are dissolved (which does not seem likely in the near future). The mass literacy and emancipation of women and youth (this will tend to raise the political consciousness of the masses) and the mass military training of millions of peasants.

There are undoubtedly divergent views in the party leadership on the Communes policy. The Chinese press for the past 12 months has been attacking 'bourgeois-rightists' in the Communes and the party. Mao Tse-tung himself has stepped down from the chairmanship and Liu Shao-chi has taken over. Peng Teh-huai was replaced as Defence

minister by Lin Piao, the veteran of the Long March, the conquest of Manchuria in 1945-46 and the Korean war. Lin Piao, himself supreme commander of the People's Liberation Army, has had a new post created over him, which is occupied by the head of the security police!

The differences really reflect the big problem of the revolution. Mao and company, under the banner of 'uninterrupted revolution', proclaim the Communes as China's road to communism, or socialism in one country—China. For them the Communes are here for all time.

The others, the 'rightists', who appear to be a very widespread grouping, see the Communes as a temporary expedient to increase production in the countryside and raise the living standards of the peasants. They are fearful that if the 'emulation' is pushed too hard then the peasants will resist.

Marxists approach the Communes from the standpoint of our attitude to the political line of the Chinese leaders. The fantastic strivings of the peasantry are wasted as long as the Mao regime has a Stalinist foreign policy and not an internationalist one. The peasantry will give up its today, said Trotsky, for the tomorrow **only up to a point**. The fate of the Chinese revolution does not lie in the State Statistical Bureau but in the world struggle against imperialism. To raise living standards is necessary, so as to strengthen the worker-peasant alliance, until the workers in the metropolitan countries (Japan, Britain, America, etc.) make successful revolutions that can bring material assistance to the Chinese masses. Meanwhile the Chinese Republic must pursue a foreign policy of assistance to colonial workers and others striving against imperialism. In this respect the Chinese Stalinists are a barrier to the 'uninterrupted revolution'.

G.K.

## *Those Generals*

**The Price of Victory**, by R. W. Thompson. Constable, 25s.

The Second World War deserves study as the most critical manifestation of the capitalist crisis. That

would probably help to combat Strachey-type dogma.

Thompson might have provided useful facts and insights. He promises, 'This is not a "war" book: it is a book about the world we live in'. According to the blurb, he shows that 'for Britain, the price of victory was the loss of accumulated wealth and her reduction to a second-class power'.

Unfortunately, the author's lack of conceptual clarity makes the book confused and confusing. What we are given is little more than military history.

It seems that the Americans were divided on the conduct of the war. Roosevelt and others stressed the smashing of Germany while another group wished to concentrate on the Pacific zone. Apparently the latter's effort adversely affected British interests and contributed to this country's exhaustion. Another consequence was that the USA had to be given clear recognition as the senior partner before Europe could become the major objective.

There are hints that if Germany had been conquered before Britain's resources ran out so far, then 'the shape of Europe' today would have been different. Just how we are not told and there is not overmuch evidence adduced for that thesis.

In political matters, there is nothing new in the book. No secrets are revealed or fresh analysis offered. Had there been a revolutionary force, capable of exploiting the crises and uncompromised by class collaboration, the confusion which this book reflects might have been exacerbated and mortal blows dealt to capitalism in Western Europe. But the voice of reason was too small and histories continue to be written in Thompson's way. Capitalism muddled through because the alternative could not be presented strongly enough. If the working class are successfully urged to side with one capitalist faction against another the same thing will happen again and again.

This book is very badly written and the only real gain to be got from it is a great deal of confirmation for the view that military commanders, high and low, are incompetent. Of course, in that respect, each side had enough officers to nullify the other's blunders; and victory, such as it was, went simply to predominance of men and

materials. The US War Cemetery in Normandy bears witness to wilful ignorance and stupid prejudice in high places.

R.F.T.

## *Clause Four*

**Nationalized Industry and Public Ownership**, by William A. Robson. George Allen and Unwin, 50s.

It has been a feature of political discussion during the last ten years that those socialists who have been most insistent on the need for more nationalization have also been the most conscious of the shortcomings of the existing nationalized industries. The paradox is, of course, only an apparent one but it underlines the urgency, if the strongest possible case is to be made against revisionism, for a systematic appraisal of the post-1945 nationalized industries.

Professor Robson has made a substantial contribution to the task in the 500 pages of this book. Beginning with a survey of the background of the undertakings concerned and the motives involved, he shows that both in the selection of industries for public ownership and of the form which that ownership should take (the public corporation) the Third Labour Government were working within a basically capitalist frame of reference. 'The elimination of private ownership was a surgical operation which had become necessary to save the life of the patient. But the removal of a diseased organ is not, by itself, necessarily sufficient to restore a sick patient to health.'

There follows an examination of the organization and management of the existing public corporations, their labour relations, their finance policies, their research and development programmes, and the political influences to which they are subject. Much of this diagnosis covers familiar ground but the author has systematized the material available and an occasional new development is pinpointed, as in the NCB's current practice of carrying out research on mining machinery to the prototype stage and then handing over to private manufacturing firms for production.

In a final chapter Professor Robson is concerned both to evaluate and to trace the origin of the revisionist

attempt to abandon nationalization in favour of equity shareholding. His culprit is clearly Gaitskell, who 'as long ago as 1953, writing in *Political Quarterly* . . . sought to disengage the Labour Party from its long-established commitment to nationalization', and Robson's rejection of the Crosland-Jay-Gaitskell proposals (which he equates with Italian state capitalism) is the more telling in that he is prepared to meet them on their own ground and to show that the proposals are consonant 'neither with socialist philosophy nor even with a sound Welfare State policy'.

Although Robson criticises both the revisionists and the existing nationalised industries from the narrow bridgehead of left-Fabianism and sees the possibility of the achievement of industrial democracy within the framework of the public corporation, his book with its half-dozen footnotes per page and select bibliography of 400 titles, is nevertheless a relevant point of departure for any future analysis within this area.

J.P.

## **Welfare State**

**Economic and Financial Aspects of Social Security**, J. Henry Richardson. George Allen & Unwin, 30s.

As a book of reference of the different social insurance schemes existing in different countries, this book is invaluable. As a work dealing with the principles underlying the need for social insurance and how it should be administered, it provides an interesting sidelight on the thoughts of the philosophers and social scientists of the Establishment.

'Social security' under capitalism is a contradiction in terms. The one cannot co-exist with the other, if only because the periodic recessions, bouts of inflation and so forth inseparable from a capitalist form of economy tend to wipe out the value of the benefits received. Richardson himself admits that the 'decline in purchasing power in a depression is much greater than the increases in social insurance and assistance payments to the unemployed'.

But apart from this basic contradiction the big question which we should ask—who pays? Richardson

is not at all convincing when he argues for the flat rate contribution system. He states that 'high taxation . . . reduces the ability of people to save and to provide resources for capital investment'. This sort of specious argument is used by the government in justifying the new pension plan, to come into operation this year, which seeks to provide a supplementary pension but one which will be substantially paid for by the worker by a flat rate contribution. No subsidy from direct taxation is provided for, so that, because of the declining value of money, the benefits he receives are less than the contributions paid by the worker. Richardson agrees that such benefits are only deferred wages.

He is against what he calls an early retirement age and argues for paying standard pensions at a 'rather high age' and paying, if necessary, at an earlier period lower pensions at subsistence level which could be supplemented by public assistance with a means test. In fairness to him he considers that early retirement can cause great unhappiness. But this evolves from his outlook on property relations. Work is for workers; leisure is for those who can afford to indulge in it.

It is good to see that this book is not hypocritical in its attitude to 'social security'. There is no nonsense about the humanitarian aspects involved. Richardson states that social security is necessary because it has the effect of increasing productive efficiency. By the same token he is for unemployment insurance being linked with an efficient employment exchange system so that the 'payment of benefits must be conditional on unemployed workers accepting suitable jobs offered to them'. Mobility of labour is a pre-requisite to an efficient capitalist system.

Still, there are some very interesting statistics in this book. Britain has the reputation of being the home of the Welfare State. Yet the people of West Germany now spend more on social security than any other country, with Britain now only twelfth in the table. But the effect of bigger arms spending by West Germany may alter their position. Richardson, however, believes that it is valid to obtain funds from the

community by taxation or social insurance but spend the money on current consumption, for example, on military defence.

Social security, in other words, has a place in the scheme of things, but 'defence' takes priority.

J.G.

## **Hard Luck on Dimple**

**Herbert Morrison; an Autobiography**, Lord Morrison of Lambeth. Odhams Press, Ltd., 30s.

In the Marxist Movement one sometimes has to do unpleasant or even monotonous tasks, the only reward for which is a feeling of satisfaction on completion. Reviewing Herbert Morrison's biography was an exception. It was unpleasant, monotonous—but completely unrewarding. Apart from a very funny picture showing Morrison walking through a park with a top-hatted and bow-legged Lord, the book is unrelieved drabness from beginning to end.

The 'tradition of The House' ('Ramsay MacDonald's great hindrance was his inability to revel in the atmosphere of Westminster'); Churchill ('his descriptions of the military situation were always a delight') with his arm round Morrison; Ernest Bevin with his arm round Molotov humming 'The More we are Together'; more space given to a speech on Proportional Representation than to the General Strike. Half a Century of History but dimly heard through the thick walls of 'The House' and the musty, closed windows of Council Chambers.

It must be almost impossible for a man who has participated in the early days of the Labour Party, two World Wars, the 1926 General Strike, the 1931 crisis, the 1945 election victory, and the struggles in the Labour Party right up 1959, to make the story of his life seem flat and uninteresting. But Morrison manages it. After wading through these 332 pages one is left with a sense of wonder that a man of such transparent mediocrity should have reached such high positions in Party and State.

The author dedicated this book to his second wife, Dimple. One wonders what she did to deserve it.

G.G.

## Sign post to the Future

**Comprehensive School: the story of Woodberry Down, H. R. Chetwynd.** Routledge & Kegan Paul, 18s.

My first teaching job was in a secondary modern school in a Yorkshire mining town. The only thing modern about it was the name. A dilapidated building, peeling green and brown paint, tattered and out-of-date text books, and a weary staff struggling with bored and rebellious adolescents. No wonder the ambition of pupil and teacher alike was to get away from the place as soon as possible.

Some years later, I taught in a comprehensive school, such as Miss Chetwynd describes in this book. Gymnasias, laboratories, workrooms, sound-proof music rooms, well-lit classrooms, theatres, libraries, display cabinets, record players, sports equipment—nothing was missing.

The two schools belong to different worlds, not only in appearance and equipment, but in the ideas associated with them. The 'Sec. Mod.' is the place for those who are destined to become miners, dockers, building workers, etc.—that is, the 'less able' children (the phrase has all the patronising overtones of 'the deserving poor' and 'the labouring classes').

The 'brighter' children go to grammar schools and enter 'the professions', get white-collar jobs, etc. Incidentally, the child of a professional man has a far greater chance of getting into a grammar school than a working-class child.

The 'theoretical justification' for this sorting-out process is that human beings are born with something known as an 'Intelligence Quotient'. Nobody knows what this undefined 'I.Q.' is supposed to be, but we are told that it is permanent and unchanging. You are born either very bright, bright, average or dull—and there's nothing can be done about it.

The eleven-plus sorts the upper levels out and gives them an 'academic' education. The remainder are supposed to be more suited to a 'practical' education (whatever that is) and are consigned to the 'Sec. Mod.'

The comprehensive school is a challenge to this utterly reactionary, unscientific and conservative view.

Miss Chetwynd says her aims are: to ensure that children will not be labelled according to the eleven-plus exam; to safeguard the right of transfer to slower or faster teaching groups as the need arises; to provide a sound, basic education in as many subjects as possible across the whole ability range; to give every child the opportunity of discovering skill in craft, technical ability and creative or artistic talents; and, over all, 'to demonstrate that education is a continuative process preparing our pupils not only to earn a living but to live'.

This is a signpost to the future. But it is not attainable in the here and now.

Thus, Miss Chetwynd notes with regret the youngsters only a few years over school-leaving age, who wander aimlessly about the streets near billiard saloons and pin-table arcades. And she wonders what she can do when youth's 'natural and desirable thirst for adventure is partly satisfied by the acquisition of a flick-knife or some knuckle-dusters. Or when, if an unlucky fight breaks out, 'a fundamentally decent boy finds himself in the courts, in prison, or on the scaffold itself'.

There is nothing she can do—*qua* headmistress. You can't stop that by building comprehensive schools.

Capitalist society hems in, frustrates and tortures its youth—and then imprisons and hangs to keep them in line. A system based on profit and maintained by violence, it creates 'delinquent youth' at the one extreme and narrow-minded, self-satisfied Philistines at the other. But capitalism has also created the working class. And the revolutionary movement is now growing which will lead that class to smash capitalism and all the evils associated with it.

Then we can really build schools. And the work of the schools will be fruitful. We will be able to educate our children to live.

G.G.

## First Half

**New Cambridge Modern History, Vol. 12. 'The Era of Violence'.** Cambridge University Press 1960, 37s. 6d.

This is a history book dealing with

the first half of this century. Each of its twenty chapters, written by an expert historian, is full of facts, figures and dates. Some of the chapters cover large quantities of material in twenty or thirty pages, and the effect is of a catalogue of separate 'facts'. For apart from some tentative generalizations in the initial and final surveys by the editor, David Thomson, the different subjects dealt with remain unconnected.

The events described in this book involve upheaval, catastrophe and bloodshed. 'Indeed', says the editor, 'crisis is the most over-used yet unavoidable term in all historical studies of the period.' But the scholar must preserve that deadpan acceptance of everything that happens which is the essence of academic objectivity.

Take for example the international gangsterism of the period preceding the First World War. 'On 14th December 1900 a secret agreement followed, whereby France promised Italy a free hand in Tripoli in return for recognition of France's interests in Morocco.' And the following year: 'By the terms of the treaty, which was to last for five years, Japan appeared to gain more than England. By the first article each power recognized the other's special interests in China, but England also recognized those of Japan in Korea, whereas the Japanese had refused to extend their obligations to cover India, Siam and the Straits Settlements.' Not a hint of distaste, not a trace of irony disturbs the academic countenance as the diplomats and generals prepare the way for global slaughter.

Isaac Deutscher's excellent account of the Russian revolution is the outstandingly exceptional chapter. Unlike the other authors, Deutscher sees the events he deals with not just as things that happened at particular times and places, but as part of world history. Taking many ideas from Trotsky's 'History of the Russian Revolution', he shows how the war 'accelerated a process which had for decades been sapping the old order'. Based on an economy of agricultural poverty and industrial backwardness, Tsarism was pulled into the world war.

It was smashed by a mass movement of tremendous power which initially took even the revolutionaries

by surprise. From the start, the industrial working class was the core of this movement of workers, peasants and soldiers. Deutscher describes the events of February-October 1917, which show the interrelation between the spontaneous energy of the masses and the scientifically prepared actions of the Bolshevik leadership.

The Bolsheviks 'were the only party which in 1917 knew what they wanted and were capable of acting. They had a masterly understanding of all the factors of the upheaval and they represented a profound historic urge of the Russian people'. At the end of his essay, Deutscher assesses the extent to which the Bolsheviks could not know the results of their actions. Here he provides for Marxists some interestingly controversial ideas. Was the assumption of Lenin and Trotsky that proletarian revolution in the West would be sparked off by the Russian revolution merely a semi-illusion? Was Stalin's theory of 'Socialism in One Country', with all its consequences, a piece of 'realism'?

Or, despite all their errors of tempo were Lenin and Trotsky not correct in seeing the Russian revolution as the beginning of the coming to power of the working class internationally? Were they not right in seeing this historical process as the only way in which the era of imperialist violence would be ended, and in recognizing the need to prepare the political instrument which would complete this process—the World Bolshevik Party? In any case, Deutscher's final sentence will not be opposed by Marxists: 'The day of 25 October/7 November 1917 stands like a huge and indestructible landmark in the annals of mankind; and although by no means all the implications of the upheaval then initiated have come to light by the middle of the century, the October Revolution can already be seen to have initiated Russia's extraordinary ascendancy as a world power and also to have found a gigantic sequel in the Chinese revolution.'

This volume is a useful source of information, but as a historical analysis of this 'era of violence', it is inevitably unsuccessful. For this epoch can only be understood when viewed, not from the professorial chair, but from the standpoint of working-class struggle.

C.S.

## Depth Image

**The Hidden Persuaders**, by Vance Packard. Penguin, 2s. 6d.

When US Capitalists in 1955 pay out some \$9,000 million on a project there certainly is a real need for it, and advertizing is not just to let the public know what products are on the market.

Packard's study of the 'depth' method of advertizing is frightening, especially in the chapters on methods of 'putting over' what are called 'images'. He shows how the same methods of 'selling' are used for soaps and Senators alike in an effort to replace rational thought and critical comparison with public 'images'.

American capitalism, faced with a crisis of over-production, had to seek ways of boosting the market for consumer goods. The 'old' methods of advertizing were not effective enough and so the psychologists were called in to find the public's subconscious weaknesses and find methods of playing to these.

Snob values, sex, recollection of happy childhood days and all perversions were played up to by the new type of ad-men who were poured out of the Universities armed with psychology degrees and all dedicated to the 'God of the Markets'. These products of man's progress help those able to pay the price to put over the 'image' of a product, a politician or a 'personality'. They regard the public as 'Just so many slobs' who take no heed of quality and just buy or vote according to what satisfies their oral, anal or other complexes after contact with constant advertizing.

This is a book with no opinions expressed that challenge the class roots of this new evil that grows out of an unplanned economy, but it does show yet another example of the vast accumulated knowledge of mankind being used not for the benefit of people who need help but for the profits of the more wealthy monopolies.

P.P.

## Their Willy

**My Road to Berlin**, by Willy Brandt. Peter Davies, 25s.

Willy Brandt, the subject of this autobiography, came from a working-class background and spent his early days in conditions of dire poverty. Hugh Gaitskell, leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party, came from an entirely different environment. Yet today, these two leaders of the largest social-democratic parties in the world have a great deal in common. They both bathe in the adulation of the class enemy; though neither is averse to using the word 'socialism' in perorations, they have both striven with might and main to ensure that their countries are bound hand and foot to the foreign policy and the war strategy of the most powerful capitalist power in the world. Like Ebert, the first social-democratic president of the German Republic, they 'hate the revolution like sin'.

It is for his services to American capitalism and the 'western way of life', that Wall Street gave Brandt a ticker-tape reception when he visited the United States in February 1959. Appropriately, he starts his life story with this visit. It places him firmly on the side of imperialism in its struggle with the non-capitalist world.

He was, at one time, a great admirer of August Bebel, leader of German Socialism at the beginning of the century. One wonders if he ever calls to mind these words of Bebel: 'When the class enemy praise me then I ask myself "where have I gone wrong", when they curse me and attack me then I know that I am on the right road, that I am serving my class well.' Gaitskell, too, may well ponder these words.

And yet, Brandt's evolution into a right-wing social democrat was not an inevitable process. In the 1930s, when the Nazi menace was growing in Germany, he belonged to the Left of the Socialist youth. He grew impatient and irritated at the impotence of the social-democratic leadership and their unwillingness to organize a real fight against the fascists. Almost as an echo of the current struggle inside the British Labour Party, we read of the differences between the Socialist youth and the social democratic leaders, as typified by

Jules Leber, on the question of militarism.

... We had grown up in the anti-militaristic tradition of the German labour movement, we had been taught to distrust the "reigning class"; whereas Leber knew that in order to gain power the Social Democrats had either to win the sympathy and allegiance of the army or to remain without influence.'

As the crisis in Germany became more intense, more and more voices within the Socialist Youth were raised against the leadership of the party.

If the Communist Party had known how to apply the Leninist tactic of the United Front in this situation, it would have rallied millions to its banner. But the dead hand of the Stalinist leadership in Moscow prevented this. Once Stalin had defined Social-Democracy as the 'twin' of Fascism and the Social-Democratic leadership as 'Social-Fascist', all talk of a united front became so much hot air.

Disillusioned with Social-Democracy, disgusted with the tactics of the Stalinists, especially after the 'Brown-Red Referendum' in Prussia, Brandt and his fellow Leftists left the Social-Democratic Party and joined the Socialist Workers' Party, a sort of German I.L.P. Later, his experiences of Stalinism in the Spanish civil war and his years of exile in the calm backwaters of Scandinavia reconciled him to Social-Democracy.

Today, basking in the reflected sunlight of American capitalism, Brandt has forgotten the militancy of his youth and the original causes of his disillusionment with Social-Democracy. The social reforms which he rejected as 'sedatives' in the 1930s, have now become the ultimate objectives of the party which he leads.

C.V.G.

## Merchant of Death

**The Fall and Rise of Alfried Krupp,**  
by Gordon Young. Cassell, 21s.

Mr. Young's book is more than just a biography of Alfried Krupp; it is an important account of the record of the Krupp firm in the arming of Germany in both wars, and the secret rearmament in the years between. The declared aim of the author is

merely to present the facts of the case, and apart from occasional undertones, he does so without comment. This may be just as well, for in instances such as this where the facts clearly speak for themselves, a purely documentary account is likely to receive more attention.

The author goes into the Krupp family history at some length, giving a detailed account of the firm's growth during the last century under Alfried Krupp, the 'Cannon King', who took over the foundry in 1826, which then employed only seven men, and by 1887 was employing over 20,000 men and had sold a total of 25,567 big guns to 21 countries. After his death the firm was strong and prosperous enough to stand the ensuing period of uncertain management until 1906 when Gustav von Bohlen und Halbach, father of the present Alfried Krupp, married the grand-daughter and became owner. It was he more than anyone else who was personally responsible for the firm's material support of the Kaiser, and later Hitler. The extent to which he was involved is demonstrated by the fact that in 1914 one of his own directors publicly alleged that six months before the outbreak of war, Gustav had received confidential information from Berlin that war was impending, and had been able to reorganize his works for war production. Gustav denied this charge, but nearly thirty years later during the Second World War he stated openly that he had secretly commenced arms production in the 'twenties, and deceived the Allied Investigation Commissions. Tanks were being manufactured by Krupps as early as 1926, experimental work was carried on by Krupp engineers through the Swedish firm of Bofors, and even the 'Big Bertha' gun was hidden inside a dummy factory chimney.

Together with the other industrialists, Gustav supported Hitler in his rise to power, and later became an ardent Nazi himself. At Nuremberg the indictment of having taken part in the planning and waging of the war was drawn up against him, but by that time he was dying and unfit to plead, and his son Alfried stood trial in his place. Alfried Krupp had taken over the firm in 1943, and although the first charge against him

—of involvement in the Nazi war plans—failed, he was finally sentenced to twelve years for employing slave labour and plundering occupied countries.

Since then the cynical story has repeated itself, except for the important detail that this time it was the Western governments, urgently seeking to rebuild capitalism in Germany, who resurrected the war criminal and lifted virtually all the restrictions from him. Now he is once again the powerful and respected industrial giant, richest man in Europe, and therefore a pillar of democratic free enterprise. According to capitalist ethics, there is really nothing that can be said against him; he may have employed 70,000 slave workers in his factories, but then that was all a long time ago, and in any case, has he not since paid monetary compensation to the survivors?

S.W.

## Background to Franco

**The Spanish Labyrinth,** by Gerald Brenan. C.U.P., 13s. 6d.

This book, now republished as a paperback, is a valuable contribution to the study of that very complicated conflict of classes in Spain which came to a head in the 'thirties. It is valuable because it goes right back to the historical roots of this crisis and also because it deals in detail with the agrarian problems. A liberal revolution has never been carried through successfully in Spain, the bourgeoisie lost both the battle against the Church and over the land; and the situation at the beginning of the Republic was of a declining feudalism. Mutual obligations had degenerated into absentee landlordism. This backwardness produced two important political groups—the Carlists or feudal socialists, similar to our own Young England group created by Disraeli, and the Anarcho-syndicalists depending on the landless agricultural proletariat of Andalusia.

The Republic described by Brenan is not the utopia worshipped by British Liberals (including Frank Byers, director of the Rio Tinto mines, which financed Franco's rebellion). No, he shows how both the 'Left' and Right governments



enforced their rule by brutality, legislation against trade unions (i.e., compulsory arbitration in all industries) and a severe censorship. Against this repression was thrown the working class, mainly expressed, with all its backwardness and all its heroic tenacity, in anarcho-syndicalism.

Eventually, after the victory of the Popular Front, this struggle became polarised around two parties, the Falangists (fascists) and the Communist Party. The Falange posed convincingly as a socialist organization, demanding the reform of the church, colonial independence, the nationalization of the banks and stronger measures against the landlords. But this early 'progressive torism' had little appeal for the workers, who were swinging rapidly to a revolutionary consciousness, except those in whom syndicalism had instilled an idealism which was attracted by 'socialism without class war' extolled by the founder of the Falange, Jose Antonio. Later these policies aided in the demoralization of the working class who felt they were more Left wing than those of their own party—the Communist Party.

Yet in 1936 it was under pressure from confident trade unions that Caballero himself (he was formerly a member of Azana's vicious government) demanded a workers' government and the arming of the trade unions. This fervour led militants in their thousands to the Communist Party, where they were diverted from their goal into the Popular Front, the role of which, Stalin wrote to Caballero, was to attract the lower and middle bourgeoisie. The confidence of these classes was to be won only by Stalinism showing its willingness to smash the forces of the working class. The reason Brenan gives for the victory of Fascism in Left wing centres such as Seville is the criminal way the CP split the working class; and in Barcelona it became the party of businessmen, shopkeepers and gendarmes standing clearly in opposition to the trade unions. As the war dragged on the Party demanded the suppression not only of the 'Trotskyists', but of the trade unions and the Workers' Militia.

Despite the invocations of 'the Spanish temperament', the syllogisms

and the clumsy attacks on Marxism, this book shows the problems met by socialism in an under-developed country, and the allied crisis of Stalinism.

Ch.S.

## *Congress Debunked*

**Recent Trends in Indian Nationalism**, by A. R. Desai. Popular Book Depot, Bombay, Rs. 8.75.

This is a concise but telling analysis of the role of the national bourgeoisie in India during and since World War II. Desai shows how, in 1942, the Congress leadership made no serious attempt to call for and lead a mass struggle against the British but went calmly to prison, knowing that this would ensure their being regarded as heroes. At this very time, of course, the bourgeoisie were piling up massive profits while the people experienced conditions of severe hardship. When Congress came to power in 1947 it did everything to conserve established property relations and to prevent the effective intrusion of the masses into political life. The inability of India's ruling class to solve the agrarian problem decisively restricts the possibilities of economic growth; its unwillingness to spend more than a fraction of the budget on education shows its deep fear of a popular awakening; the increased emphasis on Hindu religion, amounting to revivalism, reflects the dread of a secularization of social life which comes from lack of confidence about its social position and its future.

Desai rightly pours scorn on the Congress claim that India today is socialist or even 'democratic'. 'What is democratic', he asks, 'about an economic system under which a few oligarchic families control the life and destiny of the entire nation while the vast portion of the people live in a state of abject poverty?' The bourgeoisie has so mishandled the educational problem in order to protect its privileges that standards have fallen, there is universal overcrowding and 'corruption and bribery regarding admission or success at examinations are rife'. He firmly insists that the present Indian government, for all talk of neutrality and

'peaceful co-existence', has chosen the side of the capitalist states. He underlines the irony of a poor country, professing high principles, even non-violence, which devotes more than half its budget to the military establishment.

One could wish that some points were developed further, especially regarding the opposition forces and the symptoms of decay visible in the ruling class itself with its 'hybrid culture which is decadently luxurious, which is modern in form but conservative and status preserving in essence'. Perhaps Desai, who is a sociologist, will one day give us such a study, and will not forget to include in it those of his academic colleagues who, in a sycophantic way, take over, and try to apply to India, the sophisticated economic and social theories develop under Western capitalism. It is to be hoped that he will add flesh and blood to some of his political conclusions. His profession of Marxism would be strengthened if he paid less deference to the methodology and phraseology of Laski and Wright Mills and made fuller use of the Marxist classics themselves.

However, this book effectively shows just how weak is one of the weakest links in the chain of world capitalism today and answers those who believe that India is in some sense a socialist country.

T.K.

## *Conditioning for Slavery*

**Education For Barbarism in South Africa**, by I. B. Tabata. Pall Mall Press Ltd., 8s. 6d.

The author of this book has for many years been involved in the national liberatory struggle in South Africa. His analysis of 'Bantu Education' is viewed in its relationship to the entire system of oppression organized by the frenzied upholders of white supremacy.

He graphically details the barbarous schemes, providing documented evidence of ruling class intentions—which are to condition the Africans to accept their position as labourers, cut off from all contemporary amenities. Hence even doctors and

nurses must receive a different and inferior training. The book is enlivened by some accounts of the more bizarre aspects of the white man's thinking, especially in relation to his own destiny.

The significance of this work lies in its emphasis on the people's rejection of this education for slavery; and in its exposure of the anachronistic nature of the plans. For while the ever-growing complexity of industrial society demands a skilled labour force, the *Herrenvolk* at the helm are concocting plans for a tribal education. This in microcosm is the dilemma of the ruling class.

B.T.

## Old Thinkers

**The Essential Left.** George Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.

From the Kremlin to Transport House via the Partisan Coffee Bar, people will tell you that the world has changed since Marx's time, that Engels is dead and Lenin embalmed. But amid the rising flood of paperbacks engulfing our bookshops today, the writings re-issued in this volume have a greater significance for the 1960s than a hundred productions of the newest of new thinkers.

This excellently produced book contains four of the basic texts of Socialism: 'The Communist Manifesto', 'Value, Price and Profit', 'Socialism, Utopian and Scientific', and 'The State and Revolution'. The analyses of class society, of how capitalist exploitation works, of the socialist solution to man's problems, of the nature of the state before and after workers' revolution—these are the ideas with which to grasp the events of today. Gripping the minds of millions, these principles will shake the world.

Every young comrade should buy

this book. It will serve him well in the stormy days ahead.

C.S.

## Red Cavalry

Penguin, 3s. 6d.

**Collected Stories,** by Isaac Babel.

Short stories, often short short stories, by a post-revolutionary Russian author.

All written in the first person and largely autobiographical, they deal mainly with Babel's childhood in the Odessa ghetto and his experiences in the revolutionary wars.

About half this book consists of the collection of stories 'Red Cavalry' first published in 1926, which deals with the exploits of the Cossacks in the Polish campaign of 1920.

No revolutionary romanticism here. Instead realism, brilliant journalism, sharply-etched vignettes showing the savagery and brutality of war.

Babel's stories remind me of cinema stills. Each is self-contained but static. Hence it is difficult to relate them to the main theme—the Revolution, all its upheaval and the possibilities for mankind which it opened up. (Compare with that other piece of brilliant journalism, Reed's 'Ten Days . . .')

The liberal and pacifist will therefore see his belief justified. Reds and Whites were tarred with the same brush, all was merely violence and atrocities.

However the Revolution does break through on occasion. See the story 'Salt'. A group of soldiers kill a woman black-marketeer and send a resolution to their army newspaper pledging 'that we will deal mercilessly with all such traitors who are dragging us to the dogs'.

Here are no docile masses being driven blindly to the slaughter. Here instead are a group of men, not

intellectuals, not leading Bolsheviks, but humble peasants and soldiers, inspired by revolutionary zeal.

'First Love', one of Babel's 'childhood stories', describing an Odessa pogrom in 1905, brings home the horror of racial and religious persecution better than anything else I have ever read.

'O.1.' set in the period of the first Five-Year plan, shows us the rising bureaucracy, the factory manager with his 'excellent connexions', the fantastic production targets set by the bureaucrats.

Babel could not bring himself to become a bureaucratic lickspittle. He described himself in the 'thirties as 'master of the genre of silence'.

This did not save him. Past associations with Trotsky, and no doubt also fear of his observant eye and sharp pen, led to his arrest in 1937 and death in a concentration camp in 1939 or 1940.

A.S.

## World Facts

**Political Handbook of the World.** Edited by Walter H. Mallory and published in Britain for the Council on Foreign Relations by Oxford University Press, 44s.

This extremely useful reference book contains concentrated political information on every country in the world: the composition of governments, the programmes of the main political parties and their leaders, the political affiliation, editors and circulation of the leading newspapers and periodicals. The book also contains a résumé of recent political events in many countries.

Invaluable for serious students of politics who want to get a quick grasp of the background facts to quick-moving political developments.

G.G.

jump the gulf between lyrical symbolism and prose narrative.

This accounts for the incongruity between the various elements that make up *Doctor Zhivago*: on the one side lyrical passages, noble, richly imaginative, refined, and fastidiously polished; and on the other the core of the novel itself, flat, clumsy, laboured, and embarrassingly crude. It is as if the book had been written by two hands: the virtuoso-poet of 65 and a beginning novelist of 16.

Scattered like jewels over the pages of *Doctor Zhivago* are Pasternak's exquisite descriptions of nature or rather of mood in nature which serve him as keys to the moods and destinies of his hero. The method, with a long tradition behind it, is familiar; but Pasternak excels at it. There is richness and delicacy in his images of forest, field, river, country road, sunrise and sunset, and of the season of the year. The realistically painted landscape is shot through with a mystical symbolism, which selects a bush torn by a storm or a frozen tree as omen or token. The writing on the wall is the writing on the face of nature itself. Even in these passages, which would by themselves make an impressive anthology of Pasternak's poetry in prose, his range is limited—he rarely succeeds, for instance, in the drawing of an urban scene; and not infrequently there is a note of affection and preciousness in his manner of pressing on the reader the symbolical meanings 'hidden' in landscape or mood. All the same, Pasternak the image-maker and word-polisher shows himself at his best.

Unfortunately, a novel aspiring to the large and realistic scale cannot be built around such lyrical fragments. The author's evident attempt to do so has only shown up the perplexing contrast between his sophisticated word-mastery and his ineptitude as a novelist. His plot is, from beginning to end, a jumble of absurd and assiduously concocted coincidences, such as would have discredited a novelist even in Stendhal's days. The *deus ex machina* jumps incessantly before our eyes. Without his help the author simply does not manage to establish any connection between the characters, to bring them together, to separate them, and to evolve and resolve their conflicts. He fails in this because he does not manage to develop and bring alive the characters themselves. Even Zhivago is little more than a blurred shadow. The psychological motivation of his behaviour is incoherent. The author substitutes for it exalted lyrical and symbolic allusions; and he speaks for Zhivago and on his behalf instead of letting the personality speak for itself. 'Everything in Yuri's mind was mixed up together and misplaced and everything was sharply his own—his views, his habits, and his inclinations. He was unusually impressionable and the freshness

and novelty of his vision were remarkable.' 'The vigour and the originality of his poems made Yuri forgive himself what he regarded as the sin of their conception for he believed that originality and vigour alone could give reality to a work of art. . . .' 'Shyness and lack of simplicity [were] entirely alien to his nature.' The superlatives which the author heaps on his hero and the subtle poetic aura by which he surrounds him cannot give reality or depth to the figure. Zhivago's attitudes towards his wife and mistress, and towards his many children born of three women, are strained or never assume verisimilitude: not for a single moment does the father come alive in him (and none of his children has any individuality). Not only the author sings his hero's praises—nearly all the characters do the same. Nearly all are in love with Yuri, adore him, approve his ideas, echo his deep reflections, and nod their heads at whatever he says.

The other characters are altogether puppet-like or *papier mâché*, much though the author exerts himself to make them move of their own accord, or to make them look 'unusual', enigmatic, or romantic. Even more than in the case of Zhivago, lyrical patches, naive and stilted dialogues, and affected superlatives have to stand for the portrayal of character and of actual relationships. This, for instance, is how the intimate concord between Lara and Zhivago is described:

'Their low-voiced talk, however unimportant, was as full of meanings as the Dialogue of Plato.

'Even more than by what they had in common, they were united by what separated them from the rest of the world. . . .

'They loved each other greatly. Most people experience love, without noticing that there is anything remarkable about it. To them—and this made them unusual—the moments when passion visited their doomed human existence like a breath of timelessness were moments of revelation, or of even greater understanding of life and of themselves.'

In this *histoire politique* of the epoch the author makes no attempt to draw a single Bolshevik figure—the makers of the revolution are an alien and inaccessible world to him. He underlines that his revolutionaries are not party men. They are primitively picaresque types or wholly incredible eccentrics, like Klintsov-Pogorevshikh, the deaf-mute instigator of rebellions in the Tsarist army, Liberius, the chieftain of the Forest Brotherhood, and the most important of them, Strelnikov, Lara's husband. Of Strelnikov we learn that he 'had an unusual power [how Pasternak loves this adjective!] of clear and logical reasoning, and he was endowed with great moral purity and sense of justice; he was ardent and honourable'. From disappointment in family life—apparently his only motive—he plunges into revolu-

tion, becomes a legendary Red commander, the scourge of the Whites and of the people at large; but eventually falls foul of the Bolsheviks—we do not know why and how but presumably because of his 'moral purity and sense of justice'; and he commits suicide. A few workers appear fleetingly in pale episodes, and are either half-wits or servile post-seekers. We do not see the Whites at all, apart from

one remote and evanescent apparition. One could not even guess from this grand cross-section of the epoch who were the men who made the revolution, who were those who fought the civil war on either side, and why and how they lost or won. Artistically as well as politically the epoch-making upheaval remains a vacuum.

▼

Yet despite this void, and the unctuous moralizing and all the falsettos, there is in *Doctor Zhivago* a note of genuine conviction. The suggestive indictment of the revolution must make its impression on the reader who is unfamiliar with the background of the years 1917-22 but is vaguely aware of the horrors of the Stalin era. Confusing the calendar of the revolution, Pasternak projects those horrors back into the early and earliest phases of the Bolshevik rule. The anachronism runs through the entire novel. In the years 1918-21 Zhivago and Lara are already revolted by the tyranny of the monolithic regime which in fact was not formed until a decade later:

'They were both equally repelled by what was tragically typical of modern man, his shrill text-book admirations, his forced enthusiasms, and the deadly dullness conscientiously preached and practised by countless workers in the fields of art and science in order that genius should remain extremely rare.

'It was then that falsehood came into our Russian land [Zhivago and Lara agree]. The great misfortune, the root of all the evil to come was the loss of faith in the value of personal opinions. People imagined that it was out of date to follow their own moral sense, that they must sing the same tune in chorus, and live by other people's notions, the notions which are being crammed down everybody's throat.

'I do not know [says Zhivago] of any teaching more self-centred and farther from the facts than Marxism. Ordinarily, people are anxious to test their theories, to learn from experience, but those who wield power are so anxious to establish the myth of their own infallibility that they turn their back on truth as squarely as they can. Politics mean nothing to me. I do not like people who are indifferent to the truth.'

Zhivago-Pasternak goes on in this vein without any substantial contradiction from any other character. Yet, the 'forced enthusiasms', the deadly uniformity in art and science, the 'singing of the same tune in chorus', and the degradation of Marxism to an infallible Church—all this fits the fully-fledged Stalin era but not the years in which these words are

spoken. Those were years of *Sturm und Drang*, of bold intellectual and artistic experimentation in Russia, and of almost permanent public controversy within the Bolshevik camp. Does Pasternak-Zhivago confuse the calendar of the revolution or is he confused by it? Whatever the truth, only this confusion enables him to make his case. He could not have actually argued in 1921 the way he does. Yet readers familiar only with the atmosphere of the latter-day Stalinism are all too likely to believe that he could. It may be objected that the author need not concern himself with historical chronology, and that he has the right to compress or 'telescope' various periods and so reveal the evil embedded in the thing itself. Where then are the limits of the compression? And does not historical and artistic truth come out mangled? Pasternak, at any rate, establishes most carefully, almost pedantically, the chronology of the events which form the background to Zhivago's fortunes; and so he should be expected to demonstrate the 'spirit of the time', on which he dwells so much, in accordance with the time.

To be sure, the deadly uniformity in art and science, the disregard and contempt of personal opinion, the infallibility of the ruler, and so many other features of the Stalin era evolved from germs which had been present in the early phase of the revolution; but they evolved in continuous and inexorable conflict with that phase. No great artist could possibly have missed, as Pasternak has, the colossal tragedy inherent in this chain of cause and effect and in the tension between the early and the late phases of the revolution and of Bolshevism. What Pasternak does is not merely to blur the contours of the time—he pulverizes all the real aspects of the revolution and dissolves them into a bloody and repulsive fog. Art and history alike, however, will re-establish the contours and make their distinction between the revolution's creative and its irrationally destructive acts, no matter how entangled these may have been, just as, in the case of the French Revolution, posterity, with the exception of extreme reactionaries, has drawn its distinction between the storming of the Bastille, the proclamation of the

Rights of Man, and the rise of the new and modern, be it only bourgeois, France, on the one hand, and the nightmares of revolution and the gods that were athirst, on the other.

Pasternak hardly ever alludes (even in his 'Conclusion' and 'Epilogue') to the great purges of the 1930s. Yet he constantly uses their black hue for his picture of the earlier period—this indeed is the only respect in which he draws for his writing on any significant social experience of the last three decades. His silence about the great holocaust of the 1930s is not accidental. This was tragedy *within* the revolution; and as such it does not concern the outsider, let alone the internal émigré. What is striking here is the contrast between Pasternak and writers like Kaverin, Galina Nikolaeva, Zorin and others, whose post-Stalinist novels and plays (unknown in the West and some of them virtually suppressed in the Soviet Union) have centred precisely on the tragedy within the revolution, the tragedy which they also see from within. In Pasternak's pages the transposed horrors of the Stalin era exist mainly as the source of his own moral self-confidence, the self-confidence he needs for his critique of the revolution at large. We have said that he might have written *Doctor Zhivago* in the early 1920s; but he could not have written it then with his present self-confidence. At that time, with

the 'heroic' phase of the revolution still fresh, the internal émigré laboured under the sense of his moral defeat. After all the experiences of the Stalin era, he now feels that he has morally recovered; and he flaunts his self-righteousness. This is a spurious recovery, however; and it is helped along by a *suggestio falsi*.

Pasternak traces back Zhivago's ideas and his Christianity to Alexander Blok. In Blok's *Twelve*, Christ walked at the head of armed workmen, tramps, and prostitutes, leading them, in the blood-red dawn of October, towards a greater future. There was a certain artistic and even historic authenticity in this daring symbol. In it were merged the primitive Christianity and the elemental revolutionary élan of the Russia of the muzhiks who, chanting Prayer Book psalms, burned the mansions of the aristocracy. The Christ who blessed that Russia was also the Christ of primitive Christianity, the hope of the enslaved and the oppressed, St. Matthew's Son of Man, who would sooner let the camel go through the eye of a needle than the rich man enter into the Kingdom of God. Pasternak's Christ turns his back on the rough mob he had led in October and parts company with them. He is the pre-revolutionary self-sufficient Russian intellectual, 'refined', futile, and full of grudge and resentment at the abomination of a proletarian revolution.

## VI

Pasternak has been hailed in the West for his moral courage; and much is written about his poetry as a 'challenge to tyranny' and his stubbornly non-conformist attitude throughout the Stalin era. Let us try and disentangle facts from fiction. It is true that Pasternak has never been among Stalin's versifying sycophants. He has never bowed to the official cult and observance; and he has never surrendered his literary integrity to powerful taskmasters. This alone would have been enough to earn him respect and to make of his writing a startling phenomenon. His poetry stands out sharply against the grey background of the official literature of the last thirty years. Against that lifeless and unendurably monotonous background even the old-fashioned quality of his lyricism could appear and has appeared as a thrilling innovation. One may therefore speak of him as of a great and even heroic poet in that semi-ironical sense in which the Bible speaks of Noah as a just man 'in his generation', a generation of vice. Pasternak stands indeed head and shoulders above the poetasters of the Stalin era.

However, his courage has been of a peculiar kind—the courage of passive resistance. His poetry has

been his flight from tyranny, not his challenge to it. To this he has owed his survival, in a generation in which the greatest poets, Mayakovsky and Yessenin, committed suicide, and most of the best writers and artists, Babel, Pilniak, Mandelstam, Kluyev, Voronsky, Meyerhold, and Eisenstein, to mention only these, were deported, imprisoned and driven to death. Stalin did not allow many of Pasternak's poems to be published; but he spared their author and, by the despot's benevolent whim, even surrounded him with care, protecting his safety and well-being. The poet did nothing to gain these favours; but Stalin knew that he had little to fear from his poetry. He sensed a threat to himself not in the archaic message of the man who harked back to pre-revolutionary times, but in the work of those writers and artists who, each in his own way, expressed the ethos, the *Sturm und Drang*, and the non-conformity of the early years of the revolution—there Stalin sensed the genuine challenge to his infallibility. With those writers and their message Pasternak has been in implicit conflict; and it would be unjust to their memory to hail him as the most heroic and authentic spokesman of his generation.



# Lenin and Trotsky on Pacifism and Defeatism

*Brian Pearce*

**'Only very slight injury can be done to the machinery of war of the ruling class by pacifism. This is best proved by the courageous but rather futile efforts of Russell himself during the war. The whole affair ended in a few thousand young people being thrown into prison on account of their "conscientious objections".**

**'In the old Tsarist army the sectarians, and especially the Tolstoyans, were often exposed to persecution because of their passive resistance to militarism; it was not they, however, who solved the problem of the overthrow of Tsarism.'**

L. D. Trotsky, 'On Pacifism and Revolution' (1926: written in reply to a review by Bertrand Russell of Trotsky's book 'Where Is Britain Going?')

**'Bourgeois pacifism and patriotism are shot through with deceit. In the pacifism and even the patriotism of the oppressed there are elements which reflect on the one hand a hatred of destructive war and on the other a clinging to what they believe to be their own good—elements which we must know how to seize upon in order to draw the requisite conclusions.**

**'Using these considerations as its point of departure the Fourth International supports every, even if insufficient, demand, if it can draw the masses to a certain extent into active politics, awaken their criticism and strengthen their control over the machinations of the bourgeoisie.'**

L. D. Trotsky, Transitional Programme of the Fourth International, 1938

The historic decision of the Scarborough conference of the Labour Party has brought to the forefront once again the great question of the attitude of the working-class movement towards imperialist war—how to prevent it, and how to stop it should it break out in spite of all efforts to prevent it. A major discussion on socialism in relation to war and peace is under way in the Labour Party; and this discussion has obvious points of contact with the discussion about peaceful co-existence and the foreign policy of workers' states which has been stirred up in the Communist Party through the disagreements exhibited by the Soviet and Chinese leaderships.

This article aims to assist the progress of these discussions by recalling the main phases and the main controversies in the development of Marxist theory and practice concerning imperialist war during the period of the First World War. The most important benefit to be obtained from such a study is, of course, not the discovering of 'analogies' but the clarification of *principle* and *method*.

The operative resolution of the Socialist International with regard to war which was in force in 1914 at the time of the outbreak of the First World War was that which had been adopted at the Stuttgart congress in 1907 and which was reaffirmed at Copenhagen in 1910 and at Basle in 1912. After outlining the responsibility of socialists to work to prevent the outbreak of war, this resolution went on to add: 'Should war none the less break out, their duty is to intervene and bring it to an end, and with all their energies to use the political and economic crisis created by the war to rouse the masses of the people and to hasten the fall of capitalist domination.'

To pass such a resolution is one thing, to carry it out in face of martial law and mass patriotic hysteria is quite another. Raymond Postgate commented thus on the loyalty of the various parties composing the International to this resolution, in his book *The International During The War* (published by *The Herald* in 1918): 'The Russian section has carried out this programme to the letter. No other section seems to have taken it seriously. Socialists in most other countries have supported their governments, or, if they have not, have been forced to confine themselves to agitation.'

In order to understand how it was possible for open betrayal on the part of some socialist leaders and hopeless confusion on the part of the others to take place in July-August 1914 in spite of the decisions of the international congresses, it must be appreciated that these decisions, then still comparatively recent, marked a break with the previous Marxist approach to international wars, and also that in 1914 the motivation of this break, and its implications, had not yet been fully worked out. It was not difficult, for instance, for German Social-

Democrats to hark back to Marx in 1870, or Engels in 1891, for justification of the support they gave to their own government in its war with Tsarist Russia and her allies; with a little sophistry, this could even be 'reconciled' with the 1907-1912 resolutions. Nobody at that stage had got around to analyzing whether the new line on war meant that Marx and Engels had been wrong in their practice of 'choosing sides' in the inter-state conflicts of their time, or, if not, what exactly were the changes in the world situation which dictated a change of line by socialists on this vital question. Even less attention had been given to working out the precise practical conclusions to be drawn from the general phrases of the 1907-1912 decisions.

### CHANGES SINCE ENGELS

Over two years after the outbreak of the First World War it was still necessary for Lenin to explain to the experienced Bolshevik activist Inessa Armand what crucial changes had taken place at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. Engels, Lenin insisted, was quite right to advocate in 1891 national defence by Germany in face of the Franco-Russian alliance. 'In 1891 there was no imperialism at all (I have tried to show in my pamphlet<sup>1</sup> that it arose in 1898-1900, not before) and there was not, nor could there have been, an imperialist war on the part of Germany. (Incidentally, there was no revolutionary Russia either; this is very important.)' There was a most significant difference between the situation in 1891 and in 1914—when, not only was imperialism dominant, but 'Tsarism had been undermined by 1905' (Lenin, Letters to Inessa Armand, 25 December 1916 and 19 January 1917). Marx and Engels had had to determine their line in circumstances in which there was no modern imperialism and no mature objective conditions for socialism, so that there could be no other question for the workers than the question as to which bourgeoisie's success was to be preferred. There were no mass socialist parties in all the belligerent countries—indeed, the building of such parties was the central task to which Marx and Engels devoted themselves. In particular, Russia stood in isolation as a fortress of feudal-absolutist reaction, unshaken by internal revolt and presenting a very real threat to every democratic striving in other countries, both in Europe and in Asia.

In a number of writings of his in 1915-1917, Lenin stressed the *two* changes which he saw as underlying and justifying the new line on war first

<sup>1</sup> Presumably a reference to 'Imperialism', published in the spring of 1916.

adopted by the international socialist movement in 1907. Besides the passing of the advanced capitalist countries into the phase of monopoly capitalism, imperialism, with its implications of 'reaction all along the line', there was the 1905 revolution in Russia. In a sense, 1905 rather than '1898-1900' was the real turning-point. Lenin appears never to have repudiated the attitude he took up at the time of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, an attitude in accordance with the Marx-Engels tradition. At that time he did not merely oppose the war aims of Tsarism, he explicitly approved those of Japan. In his article on 'The Fall of Port Arthur' (January 14, 1905) he wrote about how 'progressive, advanced Asia has struck an irreparable blow against reactionary and backward Europe'. 'The war of a progressive country with a backward one has this time, as more than once in the past, played a great revolutionary role . . .' And he poured scorn on those Russian commentators who said that a socialist could be only for a workers' Japan but not for a bourgeois Japan. Looking back on that episode in 1908 (in 'Inflammable Material in World Politics'), Lenin still saw fit to characterize the victories of Japan in 1905 as 'victories which ensured her independent national development'.<sup>2</sup>

The overwhelmingly important result of Tsarist Russia's defeat in 1905, however, was to put an end to the 'special question' of Russia as a question to be solved on the international plane. Whereas Marx and Engels had had to decide in all international conflicts which outcome would be most disadvantageous to Russia, and work for that, and even to incite war against Russia, from 1905 onward the liquidation of Tsarism could be safely left to the Russian working class, which had now stepped into world history.

### DEFEATISM

Or could it? At any rate, did this mean that after 1905 the Russian workers could have no different or additional consideration of principle to guide them in war, as compared with the workers of, say, Germany? This question was to give rise to controversy among Russian Marxists when the war came. The opportunist leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party justified their support for the Kaiser's war by references to the special character of Tsarism and the need for blows from outside Russia to bring it down, in the interests of the workers of Russia as well as of Germany. To this

<sup>2</sup> Lenin may not have regarded the Japan of 1904-1905 as **already** an imperialist power. In 'Imperialism' (1916) he wrote: 'new imperialist powers are emerging (e.g., Japan)'.



the central committee of the Bolsheviks replied, in their manifesto of October 1914, 'The War and Russian Social-Democracy', drawn up by Lenin: 'During the past few years, the revolutionary movement against Tsarism in our country has again assumed tremendous proportions [i.e., after the lull of 1908-1910] . . . The Russian proletariat has not shrunk from any sacrifice to free humanity from the shame of the Tsarist monarchy. But we must say that if anything can, under certain conditions, delay the destruction of Tsarism, if anything can help Tsarism in its struggle against the whole of Russian democracy, it is the present war . . . And if anything can hinder the revolutionary struggle of the Russian working class against Tsarism, it is the behaviour of the leaders of German and Austrian Social-Democracy, which the chauvinist press of Russia is continually holding up to us as an example.' At the same time, the manifesto affirmed that '*from the standpoint of the working class and of the labouring masses of all the peoples of Russia* [my emphasis, B.P.], the lesser evil would be the defeat of the Tsarist monarchy'. Some of Lenin's associates questioned whether there was not room for 'a misinterpretation of this passage: that the Russian Social-Democrats wish for the victory of the Germans . . .' (Karpinsky, letter to Lenin, September 27, 1914), but Lenin at this stage refused to budge. 'Tsarism is a hundred times worse than Kaiserism', he wrote to Shlyapnikov, October 17, 1914. Lenin's 'defeatism' is here advanced, it will be observed, as something special for Russia, not as an international line.

Lenin soon clashed with Trotsky over 'defeatism', and also over what was called at the time 'the peace slogan'. As regards the latter, Lenin was desperately anxious to prevent the revolutionary socialists from being taken in tow by various pacifist trends. Only by fighting to overthrow capitalism, to mobilize the workers to carry out a socialist revolution, by 'turning the imperialist war into civil war', could the war be ended in a fashion advantageous to the masses. Any other line would lead merely to the victory of one imperialist coalition or the other or to a compromise at the expense of the peoples which would prove merely an armistice followed by renewal of conflict. Lenin knew the heavy pressure on his comrades, if not to join the 'patriots' then to drop their revolutionary work in favour of abstract peace propaganda of a kind which would find echoes even in some capitalist circles. In reply to Alexandra Kollontai, he wrote at the very end of 1914: 'You emphasize that "we must bring forward a slogan which will *unite us all*". I tell you frankly that at present what I am afraid of is just this indiscriminate uniting, which in my opinion is most dangerous and most harmful to the proletariat'. He never ceased,

throughout the war, to combat the illusions of pacifism. The two major fallacies in the pacifist approach he saw as these. First, the idea that it is possible to abolish war without abolishing capitalism: 'only after we have overthrown, finally vanquished, and expropriated the bourgeoisie of the whole world, and not only of one country, will wars become impossible' ('The War Programme of the Proletarian Revolution', September 1916). Second, avoidance of the hard fact that the process of extirpating the causes of war must itself include a series of wars of various kinds: 'civil wars of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie for socialism are inevitable. Wars are possible between a country in which socialism has been victorious and bourgeois or reactionary countries' ('The "Disarmament." Slogan', Autumn 1916). Far from turning their backs on weapons and military knowledge, the workers must strive to obtain both, since only with their aid would the capitalist class, the source of war, be overthrown and put down, nationally and internationally. 'We must not let ourselves get mixed up with the sentimental liberals. A bayonet period has begun! And that is a fact which means that we must fight *with the same kind of weapon*.' (Letter to Shlyapnikov, November 14, 1914).

#### PEACE BY REVOLUTION

So profoundly concerned was Lenin to draw a sharp distinction between the revolutionaries and those who were vaguely 'for peace' that he at first viewed with extreme suspicion all attempts to put forward 'peace programmes'. 'Not "peace without annexations" but peace to the cottages, war on the palaces; peace to the proletariat and the toiling masses, war on the bourgeoisie!' (Lenin, "Peace Without Annexations", February 29, 1916). On this issue Lenin found himself at odds with Trotsky, who considered from the start that the slogan of peace, linked with a programme for a democratic peace settlement, provided 'the surest way by which Social-Democracy can isolate militarist reaction in Europe' ('The War and the International', 1914).<sup>3</sup> In the opening phases of the war, Lenin and Trotsky thus placed the emphasis differently—Lenin upon the need to prevent any illusions arising about the possibility of peace without revolution, Trotsky upon the need to find transitional demands which would enable the revolutionaries to link themselves with the broad movement of opposition to the war.

<sup>3</sup> An English version of this was published in 1918 under the misleading title **The Bolsheviks and World Peace**. Trotsky was not, of course, a Bolshevik when he wrote this work. (He joined the Bolsheviks informally in May 1917, formally in July.)

It must be appreciated that Lenin did not, of course, ignore in the sectarian manner the broad anti-war movement or fail to see that the revolutionaries had to make contact with it. Already in May 1915 ('Bourgeois Philanthropists and Revolutionary Social Democracy') he noted that alongside all sorts of intrigues and diversions there were also the 'peace sympathies' of 'the unenlightened masses', expressing a 'growing protest against the war', and that the revolutionaries must take these into account. And in the pamphlet 'Socialism and War' (Summer 1915), Lenin and Zinoviev pointed to the popular sentiment for peace and observed: 'It is the duty of all Social-Democrats to take advantage of this sentiment. They will take the most ardent part in every demonstration made on this basis, but they will not deceive the people by assuming that in the absence of a revolutionary movement it is possible to have peace without annexations. . . .' 'Socialists of a pacifist shade . . . can be our fellow travellers'; we have 'to get closer to them' in order to fight the social-patriots. But in doing so, the revolutionaries must never forget the limitations of the political position of these elements, and must certainly never confine themselves 'to what is acceptable to them'.

Parallel with Lenin's differences with Trotsky on the 'peace slogan' and 'peace programmes', and also to some extent on 'defeatism', were differences on organizational questions. Trotsky clung much longer to the hope that it would not be necessary to make a clean break with the various centrist trends in the Russian and internationalist movements. In the end, of course, Trotsky came over to Lenin's view on this matter, as on that of the type of internal organization of the party. On organizational questions Lenin convinced Trotsky: it is by no means clear, however, that Lenin did not come round eventually, on questions of the tactics and slogans of the fight against war, as on the 'permanent revolution' approach to Russia's politics, to something closer to Trotsky's position.

### TROTSKY VERSUS LENIN

Trotsky protested sharply against the slogan of 'Russia's defeat the lesser evil'. In his 1914 (Zurich) pamphlet on 'The War and the International' he declared: 'We must not for a moment entertain the idea of purchasing the doubtful liberation of Russia by the certain destruction of the liberty of Belgium and France, and—what is more important still—thereby inoculating the German and Austrian proletariat with the virus of imperialism.' Was it not 'possible that the defeat of Tsarism might actually aid the cause of the Revolution? As to such a possibility, there is nothing to be said against it'.

That had happened, indeed, in 1905; but one ought not to forget that 'while the Russo-Japanese war weakened Tsarism, it strengthened Japanese militarism. The same considerations apply in a still higher degree to the present German-Russian war'. Moreover, a revolution in Russia which was brought on by defeat would find the German bayonets at its chest at the moment of birth, and that would not help it. No, 'the Social Democrats could not and cannot now combine their aims with any of the historical responsibilities of this war, that is, with either the victory of the Triple Alliance or the victory of the Entente'. Trotsky's Paris paper *Nashe Slovo* ridiculed Lenin's defeatism as 'defencism turned inside out' and 'social-patriotism standing on its head'. In an open letter to the editorial board of *Kommunist*, June 1915, Trotsky explained his disagreements with Lenin on both the peace slogan and defeatism. 'I cannot reconcile myself', he wrote, 'with the vagueness and evasiveness of your position on the question of mobilizing the proletariat under the slogan of *struggle for peace*, the slogan under which, as a matter of fact, the labouring masses are now recovering their political senses and the revolutionary elements of socialism are being united in all countries; the slogan under which an attempt is being made now to restore the international contacts among the socialist proletariat. Furthermore, under no condition can I agree with your opinion, which is emphasized by a resolution, that Russia's defeat would be a "lesser evil". This opinion represents a fundamental connivance with the political methodology of social patriotism, a connivance for which there is no reason or justification, and which substitutes an orientation (extremely arbitrary under present conditions) along the line of a "lesser evil" for the revolutionary struggle against war and the conditions which generate this war'.<sup>4</sup>

The resolution referred to by Trotsky was that adopted by the foreign (i.e., outside Russia) sections of the Bolshevik party at their conference in Berne in March 1915. In this document two things were said

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Rosmer, who took part in the internationalist struggles and polemics of this period, wrote in the first volume (1936) of his *Le Mouvement ouvrier pendant la guerre mondiale*; 'The consequences of our activity are of interest to us only in relation to our purpose, revolution, and not in relation to "victory", which is the business of the imperialist bourgeoisie. Does "revolutionary defeatism" add anything to this? I do not think so. On the contrary, I see clearly the dangers which it involves. . . . "Defeatism", even followed by the adjective "revolutionary", puts the emphasis on defeat, whereas we should put it on revolution.' Trotsky admired Rosmer's book very much, and in his review of it in *New International*, June 1936, went so far as to declare that 'the rule should be established: nobody in our ranks who has not studied Rosmer's work ought to be allowed to speak publicly on the question of war.'

about the question of defeat. First, that 'in every country, the struggle against a home government conducting an imperialist war must not be stopped by the prospect of the country being defeated as a result of revolutionary agitation'. It will be noticed that Trotsky raised no objection to this idea. But, second, it went on to assert that defeat actually facilitates revolution, that 'this proposition is particularly true as regards Russia', and, finally, that 'the defeat of Russia is, under all conditions, the lesser evil'.

The text of this resolution itself represented a certain retreat from a position Lenin had taken up a little earlier. In his article 'Under A Stolen Flag' (February 1915) Lenin replied to the Russian defencist Potresov, who tried to shelter behind the Marx-Engels approach to wars, that in the present war 'both sides are worst', and that for this reason the socialist workers must desire 'the defeat of every imperialist bourgeoisie'. In this article the special characteristics of Russia were relegated to the past: 'Potresov cannot fail to know that in our epoch not one of the backward state formations is or can be "the central evil"'. This was done, however, in order to apply to every country the slogan originally devised for Russia alone. A group of Bolsheviks which included Bukharin (the 'Baugy group') objected to this 'wish-defeat' formulation as an *international* slogan, and their objections were reflected in the final terms of the Berne resolution. (As can be seen, this resolution actually goes back to the idea that Tsarist Russia is in some way specially noxious, and it even specifies that 'the victory of Russia would bring with it a strengthening of world reaction'; which was just what the German social-patriots claimed.)

In the summer of 1915, doubtless as a result of the clash with Trotsky over the Berne resolution, Lenin and Zinoviev, in their pamphlet 'Socialism and War', reverted to the formulation to which Bukharin had objected, and declared that 'the Socialists of *all* the belligerent countries should express their wish that *all* "their" governments be defeated'. Lenin went even further in his article (August 1915) on 'Defeat of One's Own Government in the Imperialist War'. 'Revolutionary action against one's own government undoubtedly and incontrovertibly means not only desiring its defeat but really facilitating defeat.' He added however: '(For the "penetrating reader": this does not mean "blowing up bridges", organizing unsuccessful military strikes, and in general helping the government to inflict defeat upon revolutionaries.)' Just what it did mean, in what sense it meant anything more than carrying on the class struggle *without* regard to the effects this might have on the fortunes of war, was not really made clear. The only special, novel kind of activity specified as needed in wartime was the promoting of fraterniza-

tion between the rank and file soldiers at the front; and this was not in dispute.<sup>5</sup>

## ZIMMERWALD AND AFTER

The Zimmerwald conference in September 1915 brought together for the first time since the outbreak of war representatives of the socialist groups in the different belligerent countries who wished to renew international contacts and to summon the working class to 'begin the struggle for peace', as the conference manifesto put it. This manifesto, drafted by Trotsky, advanced the slogan of a peace without annexations or war indemnities and based on self-determination for *all* peoples. It was essentially a compromise document and though 'the sacred aims of socialism' were mentioned, the precise connexion between a democratic peace and social revolution was left unstated. Lenin voted for the Zimmerwald manifesto because, in spite of its shortcomings, it constituted 'a step towards an ideological and practical rupture with opportunism and social-

<sup>5</sup> After the October revolution, Trotsky's wartime articles in *Nashe Slovo*, 'What Is A Peace Programme?' were published by the Soviet Government (1918), and his 1914 pamphlet 'The War and the International' went through several editions, 'serving as a textbook for the study of the Marxist attitude towards the war' (Trotsky, *My Life*) until it was banned in 1924. The year 1924 saw an outburst of articles and republications of documents in the Soviet and international Communist press which revived the story of the wartime differences between Lenin and Trotsky about the peace slogan and defeatism (on which neither of these leaders had commented after 1917); and it became an article of faith in the bureaucratized Bolshevik Party to believe that Lenin was *always* right against Trotsky.

Trotsky never analysed the differences between himself and Lenin on the war question, but always wrote about the struggle against imperialist war in a way which sought to unite Lenin's form with Trotsky's content, e.g., in 'Learn To Think' (1938): 'Revolutionary defeatism signifies only that in its class struggle the proletarian party does not stop at any "patriotic" considerations, since defeat of its own imperialist government, brought about, or hastened, by the revolutionary movement of the masses, is an incomparably *lesser evil* than victory gained at the price of national unity, that is, the political prostration of the proletariat.' Again, in 'A Step Towards Social Patriotism' (1939): 'The idea of defeatism signifies in reality the following: conducting an irreconcilable revolutionary struggle against one's own bourgeoisie as the main enemy, without being deterred by the fact that this struggle may result in the defeat of one's own government: *given a revolutionary movement*, the defeat of one's own government is a *lesser evil*.' And in the book *Stalin* (written in 1940) Trotsky asserts that 'the essence' of 'what has been called Lenin's theory of "defeatism"' is that one must not be held back by the possibility that one's revolutionary agitation may facilitate the defeat of one's own government. Nothing is said about *wishing for* defeat, *trying to facilitate* defeat, etc.

chauvinism' and he considered it would have been sectarian to stand aside. But he reserved full freedom to criticize the weaknesses of the manifesto, and his own group issued a declaration regretting the absence of either a pronouncement on the opportunism in the socialist movement which was not only the chief cause of the collapse of the international but also strove to perpetuate that collapse, or of a 'clear pronouncement as to the methods of fighting against the war'.

After Zimmerwald, Lenin continued for just over a year to plug away at his 'defeatism' thesis, which he continued to present as valid for all countries participating in the war, and not merely for Russia. Thus, in February 1916, replying to a German social-patriot who had asserted that the anti-war fight of Karl Liebknecht helped the Allies, Lenin observed: 'Kolb is right when he says that the tactics of the Left . . . mean the "military weakening" of Germany, i.e., desiring and aiding its defeat, defeatism. Kolb is wrong only—only!—in that he refuses to see the international character of these tactics of the Left' ('Wilhelm Kolb and George Plekhanov'). In other words, if Liebknecht was helping the Allies, Lenin was no less helping the German-led group of powers. When the internationalist socialists held a second gathering at Kienthal in April 1916, Lenin submitted proposals which explicitly affirmed that it was not sufficient to say that 'the workers in their revolutionary struggle must not take into account the military situation of their country'—one must go further and show that defeat was a good thing, for 'every defeat of the government in a reactionary war facilitates revolution, which alone is capable of bringing about a lasting and democratic peace'. Replying to Rosa Luxemburg's 'Junius Pamphlet', in August 1916, Lenin posed rhetorically the question whether it was not true that 'defeats help the cause of the revolutionary class'. In 'The War Programme of the Proletarian Revolution' (autumn 1916), he reaffirmed that 'the proletariat must not only oppose' all wars waged by the imperialist great powers, 'but it must also wish for the defeat of "its" government in such wars'.

That appears to be the *last* statement of the 'defeatism' thesis by Lenin in its 'internationalised' form. And the *last* statement of it in its original narrower form as special to Russia appears to have occurred in the article 'On Separate Peace', written in November 1916—in a form which implies that, in spite of 1905, Tsarism remained after all a reactionary power *sui generis*, not merely one imperialist power among several. Whatever the outcome of the war, he wrote, 'it will prove that the Russian Social-Democrats who said that the defeat of tsarism, the complete military defeat of tsarism, is "at any rate"

a lesser evil were right'. Even if the workers of Europe should prove unable to advance to socialism during the war, at least 'Eastern Europe and Asia can march with seven-league strides towards democracy only if tsarism meets with utter military defeat'.

## TOWARDS UNITY

The disappearance of 'defeatism' from Lenin's writings seems to constitute one aspect of a change in his outlook about this time the other aspect of which is an increasing readiness to link the revolutionary struggle with a programme of definite demands in relation to peace. Thus, in 'The "Peace Programme"' (March 1916), while warning as vigorously as ever against the danger that talk of a democratic peace can be used to divert the workers from the real struggle, he now approaches the question rather from the standpoint of *clarifying* and *sharpening* the 'peace programme': 'our "peace programme" demands that the principal democratic point on this question—the repudiation of annexations—should be applied in practice and not in words, that it should serve to promote the propaganda of internationalism, not of national hypocrisy', etc.

With the passage of time, experience<sup>6</sup> seems to have brought home to Lenin the reality of the danger of a sterile nihilistic conclusion being drawn from his presentation of the way to fight against the war—the existence of that ditch on the *other* side of the road which Trotsky had had clearly in view since

<sup>6</sup> Already long before the war, Lenin had encountered and rejected the negative, flippant semi-anarchist views of Hervé (who, when the war came, made a right-about turn into the extremest French chauvinism). 'That the "proletarians have no fatherland" is actually stated in the Communist Manifesto; that the [social-patriotic] position of Vollmar, Noske and company is a "flagrant violation" of this fundamental proposition of international socialism is equally true. But it does not follow from this that Hervé and the Hervéists are right when they assert that it is immaterial to the proletariat in which fatherland it lives: whether it lives in monarchist Germany, republican France or despotic Turkey. The fatherland, i.e., the given political, cultural and social environment, is the most powerful factor in the class struggle of the proletariat, and if Vollmar is wrong in establishing a kind of "truly German" attitude of the proletariat towards the "fatherland", Hervé is not less wrong in treating such an important factor of the proletarian struggle for emancipation in an unpardonably uncritical fashion. The proletariat cannot treat the political, social and cultural conditions of its struggle with indifference or equanimity, consequently it cannot remain indifferent to the destiny of its country. But it is interested in the destiny of its country only in so far as it affects its class struggle, and not by virtue of some bourgeois "patriotism" which sounds altogether indecent on the lips of a Social Democrat' ('Militant Militarism and the Anti-Militarist Tactics of Social Democracy', 1908).

the beginning of the war. Very early on, in January 1915 ('Reply to Basok'), Lenin had had to rebuff the hopeful overtures of a Ukrainian nationalist working for Russia's defeat who thought Lenin could only mean the same as himself, and sought a working agreement. 'We are not travelling the same road' was Lenin's laconic reply. Regarding the Bundists, the Jewish socialists in Russia, who advocated the defeat of Russia by Germany during the war, Lenin had also early indicated that there was no basis for solidarity on the part of the Bolsheviks. 'The Bundists . . . are generally Germanophiles and rejoice at the thought of Russia's defeat, but how are they any better than Plekhanov?' (Plekhanov, the Russian social-patriot, claimed that it would be good for Germany to be defeated by Russia.)<sup>7</sup> Confusion on the implications of 'defeatism', as on the 'peace slogan', developed during 1916 among a section of the Bolsheviks, and Lenin found it necessary to wage a polemic against their spokesman 'Kievsky' (Pyatakov) in the autumn of 1916 which may well have served to clarify his own thinking as well as theirs. In 'A Caricature of Marxism', Lenin denounced the views of those who, from the rejection of abstract peace propaganda, deduced that 'we are not in favour of a democratic peace'. Merely negative, 'down-with' slogans were no good. 'Social Democracy does not and cannot advance a single "negative" slogan that would merely merely serve "to sharpen the consciousness of the proletariat against imperialism" [a phrase of Pyatakov's] without at the same time giving a positive answer to the question as to *how* Social Democracy would solve the same problem if it were in power. A "negative" slogan that is not connected with a definite positive position does not "sharpen" the mind but blunts it. . . .' And in 'The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up' he finally flings away the special defeat-worthy characteristics of Tsarist Russia: 'Tsarism has obviously and incontrovertibly ceased to be the chief mainstay of reaction, firstly because it is supported by international finance capital, particularly French; secondly, because of 1905'. Lenin's investigation of the nature of imperialism had evidently led him to a realization of the *subordination* of Tsarist absolutism

<sup>7</sup>Trotsky wrote to the French socialist-turned-chauvinist Jules Guesde, October 11, 1916, replying to the charge that he and other opponents of war from the Marxist standpoint were so many agents of the German General Staff: 'I believe I have the right to assert that we revolutionary internationalists are far more dangerous enemies of German reaction than all the governments of the Allies put together. Their hostility to Germany is, at bottom, nothing but the mere rivalry of the competitor, whereas our revolutionary hatred of its ruling class is indestructible. Imperialist competition may again unite the enemy brethren of today.'

to 'international finance capital', its dependent relationship to the latter, which was one of the starting points of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

The article 'On Separate Peace', mentioned above, dealt with rumoured moves for a peace between Russia and Germany, directed against Britain. This theme recurs in Lenin's writings thereafter, at the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917, e.g., in 'A Turn in World Politics' (January 31, 1917). There was a definite turn on the part of certain ruling-class circles, Lenin perceived, from imperialist war to imperialist peace, partly in order to avoid the danger of revolution. Such a peace would, of course, be merely an armistice before another bout of imperialist war with different alignments. Implicit in moves of this kind was the possibility of some countries being sacrificed for the benefit of others, the possibility of a sort of *reactionary* defeatism, and the danger that some tired and confused people would say that, 'after all, an imperialist peace is better than imperialist war'. Another factor in Lenin's thinking in the weeks immediately preceding the February (March) revolution in Russia was the direct contact he was now able to make with ordinary Russian rank-and-file soldiers, so that he could ascertain at first hand their moods and their ways of thinking. In his letter of January 30, 1917 to Inessa Armand he describes a talk he had had with some escaped Russian prisoners of war. He learnt with interest how these men, though bitterly hostile to the Tsar, had resisted with indignation attempts by their German captors to win them over for defeatist purposes, and how, though they wanted the war to stop, they could not agree to a purely pacifist position: 'If the Germans press hard, how is it possible not to defend oneself?' Rosmer suggests that the difference between Lenin and Trotsky on anti-war tactics was derived to a large extent from the differences in their location during the war—Lenin being in neutral Switzerland while Trotsky was in France, in closest touch with the masses of a belligerent country. Trotsky may sometimes have yielded unduly to the influence of the moods of these masses; it was certainly impossible for him to ignore them. With the irruption of those escaped prisoners of war into Switzerland Lenin was already, before his actual return to Russia, in direct touch with the Russian workers and peasants.

### NEITHER DEFENCIST NOR DEFEATIST

The overthrow of the Tsarist monarchy created a fresh situation in Russia. That which had made it possible to think of Russia as in some special sense

a stronghold of reaction had been swept away.<sup>8</sup> On the contrary, Russia was now 'the freest country on earth', and the scene of a unique political phenomenon, the *dual power* of the workers', soldiers' and peasants' soviets and the bourgeois Provisional Government. The Russian revolution had begun, but the main battle still lay ahead. Russia was not yet workers' and peasants' Russia, though it could become that as soon as the workers and peasants decided to make it so, ending the 'dual power' in their own favour. How to bring that about?

There could be no question of going over to 'defencism', i.e., political support of the war, which remained an imperialist war so long as the bourgeoisie remained in power. Lenin struck sharply at Stalin and Kamenev, who at first advocated a line of 'pressure on the Government to open peace negotiations' (see Stalin's article in his *Works*, Volume III, English edition, page 8). In his historic 'April Theses' Lenin insisted on 'exposure as a policy instead of the inadmissible and illusion-sowing "demand" that this government, a government of capitalists, should cease to be imperialist'. At the same time, one could not continue in the old way. 'The slogan "Down With The War" is correct, to be sure, but it does not take into account the peculiarity of the tasks of the moment, the necessity to approach the masses in a different way. It reminds me of another slogan, "Down With The Tsar", with which an inexperienced agitator of the "good old days" went directly and simply to the villages to be beaten up'. One had to undertake careful, patient, tactful work of explanation among the masses who were honest defencists, in order to show them *how* the war could be ended in a way to the people's advantage: 'It cannot be ended by "sticking the bayonet into the ground", to use the expression of a loyal defencist' ('The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution').

Again, at the April conference, of the Bolshevik Party: 'Many of us, myself included, have had occasion to address the people, particularly the soldiers, and it seems to me that even when everything is explained to them from the point of view of class interests there is still one thing in our position that they cannot fully grasp, namely, in what way we intend to finish the war, in what way we think it possible to bring the war to an end'. Clearly, 'the war cannot be ended by a simple refusal of the soldiers of one side only to continue the war', and the Bolsheviks had to work in a

situation in which 'the idea of thus concluding the war had been attributed to us over and over again by persons who wish to win an easy victory over their opponents by distorting the latter's views'. Addressing the Petrograd city conference of the party Lenin reminded them that 'here the power is in the hands of the soldiers, who incline towards defencism'. He drew the attention of the Bolshevik fraction in the Congress of Soviets to the need to take account of the defencist feeling of the masses, which was based on the fact that 'nowhere else is there the degree of freedom we have'. 'The masses approach this question not from a theoretical but from a practical viewpoint. Our mistake lies in our theoretical approach'. One had to appreciate what the defencist worker *meant* by his 'defencism', and try to find a bridge to him.<sup>9</sup>

Looking back on that period a year later, after the October Revolution, Lenin had occasion to define in a clear-cut way the change of line which the Bolsheviks had made. This occurred at the Congress of the Soviets which was discussing whether or not to ratify the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk. In his concluding speech in this debate made on March 15, 1918, Lenin replied to some remarks by Kamkov, a Left Socialist-Revolutionary. 'I will quote you yet another passage from Kamkov's speech, in order to show how any representative of the working people and the exploited masses will react to this speech. "When Comrade Lenin declared here yesterday that Comrades Tsereteli and Chernov and others [leaders of the Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties in 1917] disrupted the army, can we not find the courage to say that Lenin and ourselves also disrupted the army?" Kamkov missed his mark. Having heard that we were defeatists, he remembered this fact at a time when we have ceased to be defeatists. He did not remember it at the right time. They have memorised this tag, it serves as a revolutionary rattle for them to make a noise with, but they can't think out what it means, as they should. I declare that out of a thousand village assemblies where Soviet power has been consolidated, in more than nine hundred of such assemblies there are people who will tell the Left S-R party

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. I, pp 276-277: 'Deserting, extraordinarily frequent on the eve of the revolution, was very infrequent in the first weeks after. The army was waiting. In the hope that the revolution would give peace, the soldier did not refuse to put a shoulder under the front: otherwise, he thought, the new government won't be able to conclude a peace. . . . "We mustn't stick our bayonets in the ground!" Under the influence of obscure and contradictory moods the soldiers in those days frequently refused even to listen to the Bolsheviks. They thought perhaps, impressed by certain unskilful speeches, that the Bolsheviks were not concerned with the defence of the revolution. . . .'

<sup>8</sup> In their introduction to the 1918 re-issue of their 1915 pamphlet 'Socialism and War', Lenin and Zinoviev make a point of reminding the reader of when it was written: 'It is particularly necessary to remember this in connexion with the passages dealing with Russia. Russia then was still Tsarist, Romanov Russia.'

that it deserves no confidence whatever. They say, just think: we disrupted the army and now we ought to remember that fact. But how did we disrupt the army? *We were defeatists under the Tsar, but under Tsereteli and Chernov we were not defeatists.* [My emphasis, B.P.] We published in *Pravda* the appeal which Krylenko, who was then still on the run, addressed to the army: "Why I Am Going To Petrograd". He said: "We don't call on you to make riots". This was not disintegrating the army. Those who declared this great war were the ones who disintegrated the army. . . . And I affirm that, beginning with this appeal of Krylenko's, which was not the first and which I recall to you because it has particularly stuck in my memory, we did not disrupt the army but said: hold the front—the sooner you take power the easier you will be able to maintain it. . . .'

Krylenko's appeal, to which Lenin here referred, had been issued by him when, though wanted by the police, this Bolshevik junior officer had been elected as the delegate of part of the army at the front to the Congress of Soviets in Petrograd. 'Beware of provocateurs who, posing as Bolsheviks, will attempt to lure you into disorders and riots . . . The real Bolsheviks appeal to you not to make riots, but to carry on a class-conscious revolutionary struggle'. Lenin had himself quoted it in *Pravda* of June 16, 1917, in an article entitled: 'Bolshevism and the "Disintegration" of the Army', in which he wrote, in reply to slanderers and persecutors: 'where Bolshevism has a chance to appear in the open, there we find no disorganization. Where there are no Bolsheviks, or where they are not permitted to talk, there we find excesses, disintegration and pseudo-Bolsheviks. And this is just what our enemies need. They need a pretext for saying that "the Bolsheviks are disorganizing the army", in order later to shut the mouths of the Bolsheviks'.

### ON THE ROAD TO OCTOBER

A few further quotations may help to clarify the position of the Bolsheviks on the war during the period between the two revolutions of 1917. 'The programme [of our party] says: stimulate fraternization (but do not permit the Germans to deceive the Russians) . . .' (Lenin, 'A Virtual Truce', in *Pravda* of May 22). On his open letter to the delegates to the All-Russia soviet of peasants' deputies, May 24, Lenin urged the peasants to take over the land at once and get on with the spring sowing: 'The cultivation of the fields is absolutely essential. . . . This is necessary in order to improve the provisioning of the soldiers at the front.' In the same letter: 'This terrible war must be ended as soon as possible—not by a separate peace with Germany, but by a general peace, not by a peace concluded by the

capitalists, but by one forced on the capitalists by the working masses. There is only one way to do this, that of transferring the whole power of the state into the hands of the soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies, in Russia and other countries.' At the Congress of Soviets, on June 22, Lenin retorted to accusations of defeatism: 'We are reminded here of the German front, concerning which not one of us has suggested any change, except the free distribution of our proclamations, which have the Russian text printed on one side and the German on the other. . . .'

The weeks between August and October saw reactionary defeatism come out into the open more than ever before, and imposed a highly complicated task upon the Bolsheviks, especially those in the army at the front. This was when the generals deliberately surrendered the city of Riga to the Germans and left the approaches to Petrograd unguarded. A report by the Rumanian ambassador, published after the October Revolution, revealed that the commander-in-chief, Kornilov, calculated 'that the impression which the capture of Riga will produce on public opinion will permit the immediate restoration of discipline in the Russian army' (*Pravda*, December 1, 1917). How did the soldiers, more influenced by Bolshevism on this sector of the front than anywhere else, behave in this crisis? Trotsky quotes official accounts: 'The spirit of the soldiers was astonishing. According to the testimony of . . . officers, their staunchness was something never before seen.' 'In the centre of the point of attack was a Lettish brigade consisting almost exclusively of Bolsheviks. . . . Receiving orders to advance the brigade went forward with red banners and bands playing and fought with extraordinary courage.' He notes that official reports also testify that the sailors who took part in the defence of the Moonsund archipelago, in the Gulf of Riga (where treachery by the Russian command was intensified by the sinister attitude of the British naval authorities), showed unusual bravery, and comments: 'A part was played in determining the mood of the servicemen, especially the Lettish riflemen and the Baltic sailors, by the fact that this time it was a question of the direct defence of two centres of the revolution Riga and Petrograd. The more advanced of the soldiers and sailors had already got hold of the Bolshevik idea that "to stick your bayonet in the ground does not settle the question of the war", that the struggle for peace was inseparable from the struggle for power for a new revolution' (*History of the Russian Revolution*, volume II, pages 193-194).

In this new situation, not only Trotsky (in 'What Next?', September 1917) could *accuse* certain Russian generals of working for the defeat of Russia (in order to facilitate not revolution but counter-

revolution), but Lenin himself as well. In his 'Draft Resolution on the Political Situation' Lenin wrote that the landlords and bourgeoisie 'are now ready to commit, and are committing, the most outlandish crimes, such as giving up Riga (and afterwards Petrograd) to the Germans, laying the front open . . .' In 'The Tasks of the Revolution' he declared that 'the Kornilovist generals and officers remaining in power will undoubtedly *open the front to the Germans on purpose*, as they have done in Galicia and near Riga. This can be prevented only by the formation of a new government on a new basis. . . .' The pamphlet 'The Impending Catastrophe and How To Combat It' set forth a programme of demands—nationalization of the banks, a democratically controlled rationing system, etc.—which was frankly inspired by the example of the Jacobins in 1793: 'The example of France shows one thing and one thing only, namely, that in order to render Russia capable of self-defence, in order to obtain in Russia too "miracles" of mass heroism, all the old ways must be swept away with "Jacobin" ruthlessness and Russia rejuvenated and regenerated *economically*.' This idea was reiterated in 'Will The Bolsheviks Maintain Power?'—'The defensive power of the country, after ridding itself of the yoke of capitalism and after giving the land to the peasants and placing the banks under workers' control, would be many times stronger than the defensive power of a capitalist country.'

## APPENDIX

### Learn to Think: A Friendly Suggestion to Certain Ultra-Leftists

The following short article was first published in English in the (American) *New International* of July 1938 and the (British) *Workers' International News* of August 1938 at the time when German Fascism was strengthening its hold in Central Europe, with the occupation of Austria and threats to Czechoslovakia. It was then still unclear whether the British and French imperialists would form an alliance with the Soviet Union or would continue to try to deflect Nazi aggression against that country.

Certain professional ultra-left phrasemongers are attempting at all cost to 'correct' the thesis of the Secretariat of the Fourth International on war in accordance with their own ossified prejudices. They especially attack that part of the thesis which states that in all imperialist countries the revolutionary party, while remaining in irreconcilable opposition to its own government in time of war, should, nevertheless, mould its practical politics in each country to the internal situation and to the international groupings, sharply differentiating a workers' state from a bourgeois state, a colonial country from an imperialist country.

The proletariat of a capitalist country which finds

Almost on the very eve of the October insurrection in his urgent 'Letter to Comrades' inciting the Central Committee to go into action at once, Lenin pointed to the *danger* of a collapse of the front, with possible collusion between the Russian bourgeoisie and the Kaiser, based on mass desertion by the weary and disillusioned soldiers. The Bolsheviks seized power in time to prevent the surrender of Petrograd, to deprive the capitalists of the opportunity to send 'send the workers to school under Ludendorff', as Trotsky expressed it.

**Note on sources:** The following works were utilized in the above article, in addition to the writings of Lenin and Trotsky themselves and Rosmer's book mentioned in the text: *Marxism, Nationality and War*, by Dona Torr, and *The Bolsheviks and the World War*, by Olga Gankin and H. H. Fisher, both published in 1940; and Hal Draper's articles on Lenin in *The New International* in 1953-1954.

**Further reading:** For the foreign policy of the Bolsheviks after their capture of power, see "Export of Revolution", 1917-1924', by Brian Pearce in *Labour Review* for August-September 1958; and for the application of the lessons of 1914-1917 by the Trotskyists in 1939-1945, see "Marxists in the Second World War", by B. Farnborough [Brian Pearce] in *Labour Review* for April-May 1959.

itself in an alliance with the USSR<sup>1</sup> [states the thesis] must retain fully and completely its irreconcilable *hostility to the imperialist government of its own country*. In this sense its policy will not differ

<sup>1</sup> We can leave aside here the question of the class character of the USSR. We are interested in the question of policy in relation to a workers' state in general or to a colonial country fighting for its independence. So far as the class nature of the USSR is concerned we can incidentally recommend to the ultra-leftists that they gaze upon themselves in the mirror of A. Ciliga's book 'In the Country of the Big Lie'. This ultra-left author, completely lacking any Marxist schooling, pursues his idea to the very end, that is, to liberal-anarchic abstraction.



from that of the proletariat in a country fighting against the USSR. But in the nature of practical actions considerable differences may arise depending on the concrete war situation ('War and the Fourth International', page 21, para. 44).

The ultra-leftists consider this postulate, the correctness of which has been confirmed by the entire course of development, as the starting point of . . . social-patriotism.<sup>2</sup> Since the attitude towards imperialist governments should be 'the same' in all countries, these strategists ban any distinctions beyond the boundaries of their own imperialist country. Theoretically their mistake arises from an attempt to construct fundamentally different bases for war-time and peace-time policies. Let us assume that rebellion breaks out tomorrow in the French colony of Algeria under the banner of national independence and that the Italian government, motivated by its own imperialist interests, prepares to send weapons to the rebels. What should the attitude of the Italian workers be in this case? I have purposely taken an example of rebellion against a *democratic* imperialism with intervention on the side of the rebels from a *fascist* imperialism. Should the Italian workers prevent the shipping of arms to the Algerians? Let any ultra-leftist dare answer this question in the affirmative. Every revolutionist, together with the Italian workers and the rebellious Algerians, would spurn such an answer with indignation. Even if a general maritime strike broke out in fascist Italy at the same time, even in this case the strikers should make an exception in favour of those ships carrying aid to the colonial slaves in revolt; otherwise they would be no more than wretched trade unionists—not proletarian revolutionists.

At the same time, the French maritime workers, even though not faced with any strike whatsoever, would be compelled to exert every effort to block the shipment of ammunition intended for use against the rebels. Only such a policy on the part of the Italian and French workers constitutes the policy of revolutionary internationalism.

Does this not signify, however, that the Italian workers moderate their struggle in this case against the fascist regime? Not in the slightest. Fascism renders 'aid' to the Algerians only in order to weaken its enemy, France, and to lay its rapacious hand on her colonies. The revolutionary Italian workers do not forget this for a single moment. They call upon the Algerians not to trust their treacherous 'ally' and at the same time continue their own irreconcilable struggle against fascism, 'the main enemy in their own country'. Only in

this way can they gain the confidence of the rebels, help the rebellion and strengthen their own revolutionary position.

If the above is correct in peace-time, why does it become false in war-time? Everyone knows the postulate of the famous German military theoretician, Clausewitz, that war is the continuation of politics by other means. This profound thought leads naturally to the conclusion that the struggle against war is but the continuation of the general proletarian struggle during peace-time. Does the proletariat in peace-time reject and sabotage all the acts and measures of the bourgeois government? Even during a strike which embraces an entire city, the workers take measures to ensure the delivery of food to their own districts, make sure that they have water, that the hospitals do not suffer, etc. Such measures are dictated not by opportunism in relation to the bourgeoisie but by concern for the interests of the strike itself, by concern for the sympathy of the submerged city masses, etc. These elementary rules of proletarian strategy in peace-time retain full force in time of war as well.

An irreconcilable attitude against bourgeois militarism does not signify at all that the proletariat *in all cases* enters into a struggle against its own 'national' army. At least the workers would not interfere with soldiers who are extinguishing a fire or rescuing drowning people during a flood; on the contrary, they would help side by side with the soldiers and fraternize with them. And the question is not exhausted merely by cases of elemental calamities. If the French fascists should make an attempt today at a coup d'état and the Daladier government found itself forced to move troops against the fascists, the revolutionary workers, while maintaining their complete political independence, would fight against the fascists alongside of these troops. Thus in a number of cases the workers are forced not only to permit and tolerate, but actively to support the practical measures of the bourgeois government.

In ninety cases out of a hundred the workers actually place a minus sign where the bourgeoisie places a plus sign. In ten cases, however, they are forced to fix the same sign as the bourgeoisie but with their own seal, in which is expressed their mistrust of the bourgeoisie. The policy of the proletariat is not at all automatically derived from the policy of the bourgeoisie, bearing only the opposite sign—this would make every sectarian a master strategist; no, the revolutionary party must each time orient itself *independently* in the internal as well as the external situation, arriving at those decisions which correspond best to the interests of the proletariat. This rule applies just as much to the war period as to the period of peace.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Simone Weil even writes that our position is the same as Plekhanov's in 1914-18. Simone Weil, of course, has a right to understand nothing. Yet it is not necessary to abuse this right.

Let us imagine that in the next European war the Belgian proletariat conquers power sooner than the proletariat of France. Undoubtedly Hitler will try to crush proletarian Belgium. In order to cover up its own flank, the French bourgeois government might find itself compelled to help the Belgian workers' government with arms. The Belgian soviets of course reach for these arms with both hands. But, actuated by the principle of defeatism, perhaps the French workers ought to block their bourgeoisie from shipping arms to proletarian Belgium? Only direct traitors or out-and-out idiots can reason thus.

The French bourgeoisie could send arms to proletarian Belgium only out of fear of the greatest military danger and only in expectation of later crushing the proletarian revolution with their own weapons. To the French workers, on the contrary, proletarian Belgium is the greatest support in the struggle against their own bourgeoisie. The outcome of the struggle would be decided, in the final analysis, by the relationship of forces, into which correct policies enter as a very important factor. The revolutionary party's first task is to utilise the contradiction between two imperialist countries, France and Germany, in order to save proletarian Belgium.

Ultra-left scholastics think not in concrete terms but in empty abstractions. They have transformed the idea of defeatism into a vacuum. They can see vividly neither the process of war nor the process of revolution. They seek a hermetically sealed formula which excludes fresh air. But a formula of this kind can offer no orientation for the proletarian vanguard.

To carry the class struggle to its highest form—civil war—this is the task of defeatism. But this task can be solved only through the revolutionary mobilization of the masses, that is, by widening, deepening, and sharpening those revolutionary methods which constitute the content of class struggle in 'peace'-time. The proletarian party does not resort to artificial methods, such as burning warehouses, setting off bombs, wrecking trains, etc., in order to bring about the defeat of its own government. Even if it were successful on this road, the military defeat would not at all lead to revolutionary success, a success which can be assured only by the independent movement of the proletariat. Revolutionary defeatism signifies only that in its class struggle the proletarian party does not stop at any 'patriotic' considerations, since defeat of its own imperialist government, brought about, or hastened, by the revolutionary movement of the masses is an incomparably *lesser evil* than victory gained at the price of national unity, that is, the political prostration of the proletariat. Therein lies the complete meaning of defeatism and this meaning

is entirely sufficient.

The methods of struggle change, of course, when the struggle enters the openly revolutionary phase. Civil war is a war, and in this aspect has its particular laws. In civil war, bombing of warehouses, wrecking of trains and all other forms of military 'sabotage' are inevitable. Their appropriateness is decided by purely military considerations—civil war continues revolutionary politics but by other, precisely, military means.

However, during an imperialist war there may be cases where a revolutionary party will be forced to resort to military-technical means, though they do not as yet follow directly from the revolutionary movement in their *own* country. Thus, if it is a question of sending arms or troops against a workers' government or a rebellious colony, not only such methods as boycott and strike, but direct military sabotage may become entirely practical and obligatory. Resorting or not resorting to such measures will be a matter of practical possibilities. If the Belgian workers, conquering power in war-time, have their own military agents on German soil, it would be the duty of these agents not to hesitate at any technical means in order to stop Hitler's troops. It is absolutely clear that the revolutionary German workers also are duty-bound (if they are able) to perform this task in the interests of the Belgian revolution, irrespective of the general course of the revolutionary movement in Germany itself.

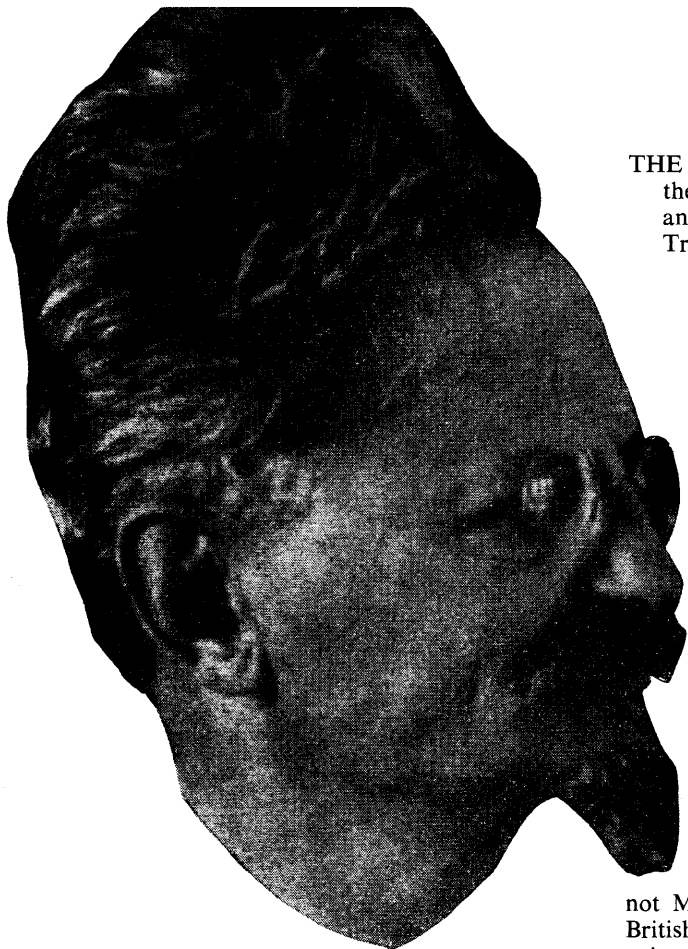
Defeatist policy, that is, the policy of irreconcilable class struggle in war-time cannot consequently be 'the same' in all countries, just as the policy of the proletariat cannot be the same in peace-time. Only the Comintern of the epigones has established a regime in which the parties of all countries break into march simultaneously with the left foot. In struggle against this bureaucratic cretinism we have attempted more than once to prove that the general principles and tasks must be realized in each country in accordance with its internal and external conditions. This principle retains its complete force for war-time as well.

Those ultra-leftists who do not want to think as Marxists, that is, concretely, will be caught unawares by war. Their policy in time of war will be a fatal crowning of their policy in peace-time. The first artillery shots will either blow the ultra-leftists into political non-existence, or else drive them into the camp of social-patriotism, exactly like the Spanish anarchists, who, absolute 'deniers' of the state, found themselves from the same causes bourgeois ministers when war came. In order to carry on a correct policy in war-time one must learn to think correctly in time of peace.

LEON TROTSKY

Coyoacan, D.F., May 22, 1938.

# LEON TROTSKY writes on the British labour movement



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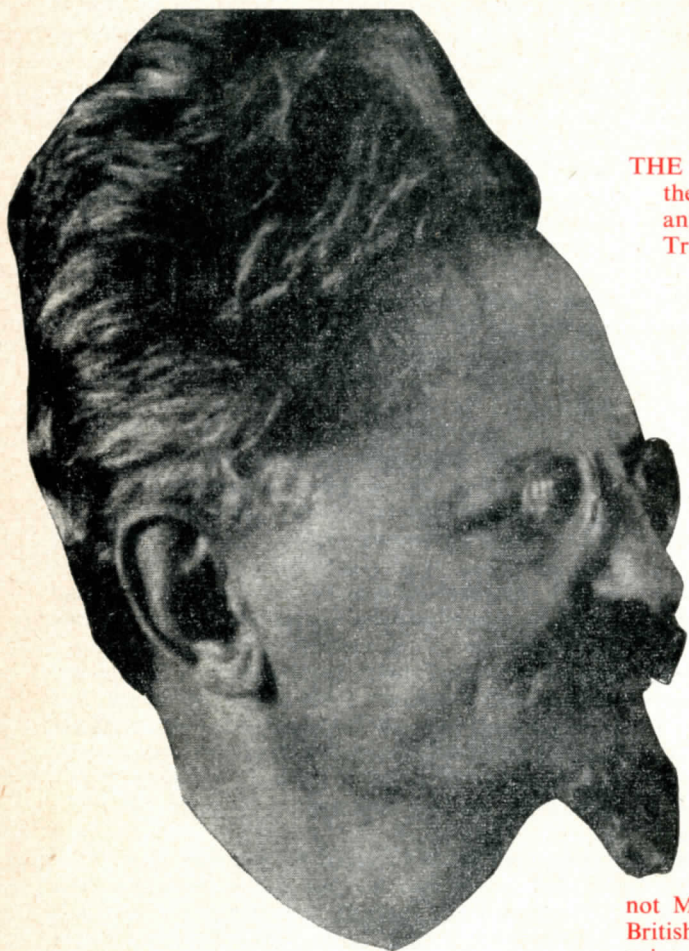
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