

SOCIALIST REVIEW

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW, BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

VOL. 6 No. 3

DECEMBER, 1956

THREEPENCE

This Issue includes :

The Crisis in the Communist
Party of Great Britain

Policy for Redundancy

The Tories' Housing Bill

Analysis of the U.N.

LETTER TO READERS

Dear Reader,

We bow the old year out by changing our format, our size and the range of articles offered you. Also, alas, our price. We have been encouraged to do so by the tragic events of the last month, events that have done much to shake the complacency of the British working class and recreate an interest in the views of the independent left wing of the Labour Movement. We have been helped by the generosity of our comrades in the fight for Socialism—the Independent Socialist League—in the United States. They have placed some of their facilities at our disposal. We shall be able to continue in this form only if you, readers, do the utmost to help us.

push the paper hard ;

pour contributions into our
gaping deficit ;

sell sell, sell at branches, wards
and public meetings.

P.S. One aspect of the old Socialist Review has not changed however, namely, the responsibility of our contributors for the views expressed in their signed articles. Only unsigned articles express the opinion of the editorial board of the Socialist Review.

SUEZ

The deceit of Tory imperialist Policy was clearly illustrated by the number of excuses dragged up to justify the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt.

First, it was said that the invasion was intended to protect British nationals and property threatened by the Israeli-Egyptian war.

Then its aim was to keep the Suez Canal open. (On the day Britain and France issued their ultimatum to Egypt, the Canal was working without a hitch ; since then it has been completely blocked).

When this excuse proved hollow, a new one was invented : the invasion was a " police action " directed to separate the Israeli and Egyptian troops—despite the fact that the invasion took place a hundred miles inside Egyptian territory and Israel declared that she would stop 10 miles from the Canal, and did so.

The final excuse was that the inva-

sion was a preventive measure directed to save the Middle East from Soviet aggression. One is reminded of Hitler's declaration on the invasion of Norway : that it was carried out to protect the independence of Norway from British occupation.

The true cause of the invasion is the vested interests that British and French capitalism have in the Middle East.

First the Canal itself.

The Economics of Suez

Carved through the heart of the Middle East the canal serves as the main route for the tankers plying between the oilfields of the area and Western Europe. Nearly half of all the oil used in Britain and Western Europe—some 67 million tons—finds its way through the Suez Canal. Of all the oil used in Britain 85 per cent. arrives via the canal.

The Suez Company is also important for another reason—it is very profitable. The total original investment in the building of the canal by Britain and France was less than £10 millions, but now the business has grown. Last year the Company had a gross revenue of £34 millions. Of this, £10½

millions was paid out in dividends, £5½ millions went to reserves and £9 millions went on operating costs. The Egyptian Government received only £1 million.

The imperialists oppose the nationalisation of the canal, not only because of its great value, but also because it augurs ill for other imperialist assets in Egypt.

It has been estimated that French investments in Egypt amount to some £400 million, and British investments to some £200 million. Between 40 and 50 per cent. of all Egypt's wealth, including land, is owned by foreign capitalists. If land is excluded the figure is 75-80 per cent.

The nationalisation of the Suez Company could be the first step on the path of nationalising all this foreign capital which now dominates the Egyptian economy. Large amounts of foreign capital are also invested in the oil fields all over Middle East. If Nasser gets his way in nationalising the Suez, other countries may follow suit and decide to keep the profits of the oil fields to themselves. It is this fear which dominates the thoughts of British and French capitalists and which is causing them to insist on hard measures.

As a result of imperialist rule which relied on an alliance with big native landlords, the conditions of the Egyptian people are downtrodden in the extreme.

The expectation of life is very low, being, before the war, 31 years for males, and 36 for females. In the United Kingdom the expectation of life at that time was 60 years for a male and 64 for a female. Those who live to be adults are very weak. Ninety per cent. of Egypt's population suffers from trachoma, 50 per cent. from worm diseases, 75 per cent. from bilharzia, 50 per cent. from ankylostoma.

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HUNGARIAN "FASCISTS"

This cartoon appeared in the Cominform Journal *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy!* on July 20th, 1951. It shows "Tito, the Fascist."

Today, Hungarian workers and peasants are called Fascists. Does "Fascist" in Russian mean anyone—socialist or otherwise—who opposes oppression by Moscow?



SAY PARD, HOW MUCH DID YOU GET?
Drawing by J. Novak.

HUNGARY

The initial spark to the Hungarian Revolution was a big but peaceful demonstration on October 23rd, which was joined by some 200,000 workers. The demonstrators gathered outside the Budapest radio station and requested that their programme be broadcast. The programme demanded:

(1) That the Russian forces leave Hungary ; (2) that free general elections be held ; (3) that strikes be permitted ; (4) that freedom of speech, literature and political beliefs be permitted ; (5) that factories be directed by workers and technicians ; wages, norms, etc., be revised ; (6) that peasants be given their freedom ; membership of collective farms be voluntary ; and compulsory agricultural deliveries to the State be abolished.

The State Security Police—AVH—opened fire and killed a number of unarmed men, women and children. Russian troops were called in by the Hungarian Government dominated by Erno Gerö.

This was the signal for a general strike of all workers in the railways, factories, mines, offices, etc.

The central point of all the students' and workers' demands became the withdrawal of all Russian troops from Hungary.

On October 29th, the Hungarian Communist daily *Szabad Nep* stated that the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Budapest began on Sunday evening (October 28th). "This was the first step toward their return to their bases and their final evacuation later from Hungarian territory" (*Daily Worker*, October 30).

On November 1st, the Hungarian Government "told the United Nations that it had withdrawn from the Warsaw Pact, declared its neutrality and said the Big Four Powers should guarantee this neutrality. It said it would raise the issue at the next regular session of the UN General Assembly, beginning on November 12. According to Budapest Radio, Premier Nagy protested to the Soviet Ambassador against the continued flow of Soviet tanks into the country. The Hungarian News Agency has

published the terms of a telegram from Mr. Nagy to President Voroshilov asking the Soviet Union to fix a date and place for talks on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary: "The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic wishes to start immediately negotiations on the withdrawal of Soviet forces from the entire territory of Hungary. The Hungarian Government invites the Soviet Government to appoint a Soviet delegation and propose the date and venue of the negotiations." (*Daily Worker*, November 2).

Next day Budapest radio "said that the Government, in three Notes handed yesterday to the Soviet Embassy, called for the withdrawal of Soviet troops. It said all the Government's efforts to achieve this had so far been in vain. One Note suggested the setting up of a mixed commission to start discussing the Soviet troop withdrawal." (*Daily Worker*, November 3).

All these days Russian armoured and mechanised troops were pouring into Hungary, taking full command of all strategic posts in the country.

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HUNGARY--continued

On November 3rd the Russians expressed their readiness to negotiate with the Nagy Government on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country. But when the Hungarian Minister of Defence and the Chief of Staff came to this meeting they were arrested.

That the Russian rulers were preparing for a stab in the back was shown not only by the fact that they continued to pour troops into Hungary while promising to withdraw altogether from the country, but also from the fact that the Russian press and radio did not make any mention of the demand of the Hungarian Government to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact, to get rid of Soviet occupation forces, and to declare the country's neutrality in foreign affairs.

Where the mass support lies

The small Hungarian nation could not of course stand up long against the weight of Russian armour.

If the Moscow-inspired regime were not isolated in the country, the demonstrations, strikes, etc., would quite easily have been broken. After all, look at the official support for the government: in the last elections, held in 1949, the Communist-led list of candidates got 95.6 per cent. of the total vote (*Daily Worker*, November 14). If only 4.4 per cent. opposed the Government, how could a general strike and mass people's uprising take place?

Again, the Communist organisations were very massive. In May, 1954, it was stated that in the Party alone, there were 864,607 members, in the Youth League, 577,000, and in the Union of Hungarian Democratic Women, 560,000. (For a *Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy!* May 28, 1954). These two millions by themselves constitute a fifth of the population of Hungary, and if children are excluded, nearly half! How could a mass movement succeed against their will?

And again, factory and office workers made up 59.4 per cent. of the employed population of Hungary (in January 1954) and practically all of them are members of trade unions (*Ibid*). How could a general strike be carried out against their wish?

To add to the forces of the Communist government one should mention the army and police. The 10 or 12 Hungarian army divisions were built since the war under the leadership of the Communist Party. The police was made up practically only of Communist Party officials.

Add to this the 2 Russian army divisions stationed in Hungary at the start of the Revolution, and one can clearly see that all the odds were on the side of the Communist government... if only the people really supported it.

The mass nature of the struggle, the tenacity of the workers in the general strike, and the armed uprising against overwhelming military odds, in face of hunger, cold and death, is complete proof of the bitter hatred felt for the Moscow-imposed rulers.

The *Daily Worker's* Jumps

For the first two days of the Hungarian revolt, the *Daily Worker* pretended that it did not exist. Then it decided to present it as a capitalist counter-revolution by murder gangs strongly resisted by the workers. "Hungarian Workers' Answer" was the title of its streamer heading across eight columns: "Armed Groups Defend Factories Against Wreckers" (*Daily Worker*, October 25). The leading article announced that the Hungarian workers "had rallied around its government and smashed this attempt to put the clock back." They had been able to accomplish this, it was explained, because "Soviet troops joined their Hungarian comrades-in-arms and shed their blood once more helping to save the country and people from reaction."

"Next day the *Daily Worker's* leading article stated that Soviet troops were "assisting the Hungarian people to retain their independence from Imperialism" (October 26). "What has happened in

Hungary these past days has not been a popular uprising against a dictatorial government," but "an organised and planned effort to overthrow by undemocratic and violent means a government in process of carrying through important constructive measures."

But a couple of days later the *Daily Worker* quoted approvingly the Hungarian Communist paper *Szabad Nep* which criticised a *Pravda* dispatch headed: "Collapse of the Anti-People Adventure in Hungary." It said: "What happened in Budapest was neither anti-people, nor an adventure, and it did not collapse. The slogans of Socialist democracy were the loudest, not those of the reactionaries nor of counter-revolutionaries. The revolutionary people of Pest and Buda want freedom, people's freedom, a life without despotism, terror and fear, more bread and national independence. Would this be 'anti-people adventure'? asks the paper. The first point in the Hungarian revolutionary demands of 1848 was national independence. 'Today also this is the first point.' *Szabad Nep* said that the *Pravda* article was an insult, as the insurrection could not be organised by Anglo-American imperialists, because the greater part of the Budapest population had taken part in the fighting." (*Daily Worker*, October 30).

On November 1, the *Daily Worker* stated that "the Soviet Government... declared that it had instructed its military command to withdraw Soviet units from Budapest as soon as the Hungarian Government finds it necessary." A couple of days later, the *Daily Worker* said that fascists had taken control of the mass movement, and the intervention of Soviet troops was necessary to quell the fascist uprising.

Revolution or Dollars

All the emphasis was on the famous 100 million US dollars spent on propaganda and subversion in Eastern Europe. As the total population of Eastern Europe is nearly a hundred million, the US investment comes to a little more than a dollar a head. And this is brought forward to explain a mass uprising!

The *Daily Worker* cannot even pretend that there are any Hungarian troops, or workers, peasants and students, supporting the Russian troops against the "fascist uprising." Where are the 2 million members of the Party, the Y.C.L. and Party Women's organisation? Where are the 2 million trade unionists? Where is the Hungarian Army? Are all of them fascists? Can some thousands of US spies—if there are this number—undo the education of the youth through 12 years of a "Communist" regime, and turn them into fascists?

Where else did fascists lead mass workers' strikes, control the trade unions, mass Communist Party and Young Communist League? And if one really believes that these masses preferred fascism to "Communism," after their horrible experiences of the Horthy regime, what bestial conditions they must have suffered during the last 12 years!

The high priests of King Street, who slavishly followed Stalin—Stalin who has now been exposed by Krushchev as a blood-stained monster—persist in their servility to the present masters of the Kremlin.

At the time of writing (November 15th), the general strike is not yet ended, but the armed forces of the Hungarian Revolution are, it seems, overwhelmed and crushed by the Russian bayonets. "Hungary lies at the feet of your Majesty"—so wrote the triumphant General Paskievich to the Tsar after Russian troops put down the Kossuth uprising in 1849. Similar words are probably being used by the present Russian Commander of Hungary.

But this is not the final page of history. Workers' Budapest and Hungary will for ever be celebrated as the harbinger of a new society, a revolutionary, democratic socialism. Its exterminators will forever be pilloried as brutal murderers.

THE RETREAT from MOSCOW

The Crisis in the British Communist Party

By an ex-Member

There has been a heavy post in King Street recently. Many of the envelopes contained small pink cards which only recently had been treasured by their owners. Many of them came from life-long acrobats on the Party Line—veterans of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the Cold War, even of the early upheavals which followed the 20th Congress. Why did these dedicated Communists decide that they could remain no longer in the "vanguard"? It did not happen overnight...

In the beginning there was the Khrushchev Report. The fatuous explanation of the horrors revealed pushed Party members into bitter political controversy for the first time in many years. Quickly, irresistibly, the Great Debate spread—nothing was sacred, nothing beyond challenge. Powers of reason and polemic suspected of having atrophied were discovered to be merely dormant. A flood of resolutions arose from Branches and Committees. There seemed to be new hope. Hope of a transformation which would enable the Party to burst through the straitjacket of Stalinist dogmatism and organisation and emerge strengthened and a truly British party.

But there were still those who clung steadfastly to "doublethink"—not caring where they had been or where they were going so long as the illusion of motion remained. There were still the "flat earthers" clutching grimly to the "positive achievements of Comrade Stalin" and belittling out of existence the "mistakes." There were the bright-eyed who rejoiced that the future was illumined with the repudiation of the past—all mistakes were now behind! There were also those who were firmly, cosily entrenched in their positions of prestige and authority—big fish in a little pond—for whom any change could only be for the worse.

The E.C. Counter-attacks

The big guns were brought to bear. Discussion had to be "positive"—guided and controlled. Letters were ignored. Flying-squads of trusted Party hacks rushed from branch to branch, wherever independent thought had expressed itself in a resolution or a joint letter. An appeal was made to the anti-intellectual prejudices of worker comrades. Then the "enough-discussion-back-to-work" brigade moved in. "All hands to the B.M.C. Strike—to the *Daily Worker* Bazaar—to the Rents Campaign—anything but think, anything but talk."

The most disaffected gave up or were increasingly isolated. King Street was draughty with sighs of relief. But from the struggle had come "The Reasoner," a focal point for the seeker, a weapon to prod the Party in the direction of more inner democracy, a means of overcoming an evil inherent in Democratic Centralism—the isolation of one dissident from another. And the conflict was by no means over.

The Anti-Semitism Issue

Volkstimme, a Yiddish language newspaper of the Polish Communist Party, mourned the murder of leading Soviet Jewish cultural figures. Anti-semitism in the Soviet Union? A new wave of discussion spread through the Communist Party from Glasgow to the Kent Coast. The response of King Street was characteristic. Suppression of the contents of the *Volkstimme* article. Suppression of news of its impact on brother Parties. Suppression of letters and resolutions. Suppression even of a reference to the grim admission in Howard Fast's speech.

Then came a "National Guardian" interview with Furtseva, Secretary of the C.C. C.P.S.U., in which she acknowledged the existence of the hated 'numerus clausus' (quota) system against Jews in the Soviet Union. It took several of the now familiar

"safety-valve" conferences before the pressure was lowered sufficiently for vague news of the Yiddish language being brought back from exile again could have effect. But this stage had brought forth the first public challenge by a leading Communist of international stature—the famous letter of Professor Hyman Levy.

Poland and Hungary

Then came Poznan which an addict of the "Daily Worker" could be forgiven for judging as a juvenile delinquents' prank. Then the wave of popular support which swept Gomulka from prison to power—juvenile delinquency? Obviously not. Then what about the East German "provocation" in 1953? Many an impervious Communist forehead was furrowed. Finally—Hungary. Demands put forward by angry workers for conditions which the Communist Party had claimed they had enjoyed for years.

The roar of the guns of Soviet tanks—once called "Stalin"—directed against Hungarian workers, soldiers and peasants drowned out the mutter of the catechism of the 100,000,000 American dollars. This was the turning point. Rank-and-file activist and prominent intellectuals found it impossible to remain in a Party which was discredited as no other Party has ever been before. Even the "Daily Worker" itself has been severely shaken by the defection of its leading staff, falling circulation and, most ominous, its continual failure to reach its life-or-death minimum quota of contributions. The quota for October closes at 2 p.m. today. The sum outstanding is £1,598. The date is November 12th! In an effort to stem the tide the greatest "safety-valve" conference of all, scheduled for March, has been changed to a Congress with powers of election. This was the demand put forward by many branches against which King Street had been battling furiously for months. It may well be too late. By that time it is likely that the Communist Party will consist of incorrigible Stalinists, doomed by their very nature to political impotence, and as many of the submerged stratum of passive card-holders who can be cajoled through the re-registration ceremony.

The Road Ahead

This is not a time for pleasure over the desperate straits of British Stalinism. This is a time for mourning. Many fine, dedicated people have again passed through the King Street machine to emerge disillusioned and burned out. Many ideals and hopes have degenerated into the sentiment "a plague on all your houses." A newspaper which should have been a powerful weapon is daily growing more ineffectual through its subservience to leader columns in other countries. A Party which should be spearheading the Labour Movement evokes only disgust—too discredited to appear behind its own banners in the largest and most militant demonstration this country has seen for a long time.

The only glimmer of light—and it may yet become much more than a glimmer—is in those who have left, or will leave, the Communist Party and will seek an alternative which they can mould to their needs and the needs of British conditions. The future must bring the fruits of the Great Debate in the form of a new democratic movement, a genuine Communist Party, enriching and using without fear the priceless heritage of Marxism.

The Future of the Russian Empire: REFORM or REVOLUTION?

1 A Page from History

In 1855 Tsar Alexander II succeeded to the throne of Russia on the death of his father, Nikolai I. One of his first pronouncements was a declaration of his intention to abolish serfdom, which in 1861 he duly carried out.

Two main factors impelled the tsar along this path. First, serfdom had become a serious impediment to the development of the economy, and the big landowners, especially those in the South, whose crops were beginning to enter the field of international trade and bring in handsome profits, had become more and more convinced that serf labour was inefficient and inferior to that of wage-workers.

That this actually was so became apparent after emancipation had been in force some years. At the end of the forties, a few years before emancipation, the average annual yield of four principal crops (wheat, rye, barley and oats) was some 430 million cwts; after it, in the seventies, it was 630 million cwts. The great Marxist historian M. N. Pokrovsky stated that without doubt "free labour did prove far more productive than forced labour." (*Brief History of Russia*, London, 1933, Vol. I, p. 116.)

The second main cause for the emancipation was a steady rise in the number of outbreaks of localised but violent peasant revolts.

There were 400 in the ten years 1845-55 and 400 more in the five years 1855-60. Fearful of the outcome, the tsar, at a meeting of Moscow nobility, uttered his startling and famous phrase: "It is better to abolish serfdom from above than to wait until the serfs begin to liberate themselves from below."

However, the emancipation of the serfs was carried out half-heartedly, and it did not turn them into really free wage-workers, but in fact left the peasants with less land and a heavier economic burden to bear.

Following upon the emancipation of the serfs, Alexander implemented some other reforms:

- On January 1, 1864 he granted local government to the provinces and districts of European Russia.
- On November 20, 1864 he reformed the judicial institutions: trial by jury was introduced for all criminal cases and court proceedings were made public. (And there is no doubt that freedom of expression in the court-room and the publicity given to trials helped greatly in the formation of democratic anti-tsarist public opinion.)
- April 6, 1865 saw the partial abolition of preventive censorship. (One of the results of this was the legal publication in Russian a few years later of Marx's *Capital*.)

That all these democratic reforms were very restricted was soon made quite clear. Thus, for instance, while the press was freed from preventive censorship, it was not allowed to publish accounts of any meetings of societies and clubs without special permission from the Provincial Governors; the Ministry of the Interior was empowered to inform editors of papers what subjects were "unsuitable" and were of "State significance."

The tsarist police soon showed its iron hand. Many a radical was incarcerated. Thus in July 1862 N. G. Chernichevsky was arrested and condemned to prison and eventually exiled for life to Siberia. He remained there until 1883, and was not allowed to return to his home town Saratov until 1889, where he died a few months later.

DEUTSCHER'S ANCESTORS

In the first flush of Alexander II's promises of reform, many were eager to believe in his words. Thus the two leaders of Russian radicalism, the moderate Alexander Herzen and the revolutionary democratic socialist Chernichevsky, in 1857-58 praised the tsar when he announced his intention of abolishing serfdom.

Herzen went so far as to write letters full of admiration to the tsar.

Both suffered a rude shock a few years later when the terms of the emancipation of the serfs were made known. But the political conclusions that they drew from the new situation were poles apart.

Herzen, whose following had dwindled to nothing, continued to believe in the reforming zeal of the tsar and to place his faith in the desire and ability of the "enlightened nobility" to persuade the tsar to carry his reforms further. (Was he a Deutscher?) Chernichevsky and his increasing number of followers concluded that the tsar was, in fact, the chief representative of the exploiting land-owners, and that only the overthrow of tsarism could clear the road for social and political progress.

The rude awakening led a number of radicals to issue illegal, anti-tsarist leaflets. Thus one of them entitled "To Young Russia" (May 1862) called for an "immediate revolution, a bloody and merciless revolution, which must radically change everything, all the foundations of society without exception." It ended

Published by **LABOR ACTION**
in collaboration with the
SOCIALIST REVIEW of London

with the words: "Long live the social and democratic Republic of Russia!" (Pokrovsky, page 178.)

But the tsar 'Liberator' showed himself most vicious in his attitude to the Poles.

Tsar Nikolai's brutality, his method of governing by means of the rod, had earned him the hatred of the Poles. His son, who was not a fool, realised this and started his rule wooing Polish public opinion. He mitigated the severity of Russian rule over Poland, and curtailed somewhat the powers of the tsarist viceroy in Warsaw. He even replaced him with a new "liberal" face.

But it was obvious, even in the early days of his reign, that Alexander II intended to curb his "reforming zeal" even more strenuously in Poland than in Russia. He made it quite clear when he said laconically to representatives of the Polish gentry and bourgeoisie at their first meeting in 1856: "No dreams!"

HOW REFORMS WAKEN REVOLUTION

Yet the reforms carried out by the tsar, however shadowy they were, inspired many a Pole, and their dreams of liberty grew wings. The people in the Polish towns, who had attained a far higher degree of political consciousness than in Russia, could not but hope to see in this first ray of light piercing the black clouds of tsarist oppression the approach of a new dawn.

More and more societies were founded in Poland, illegal leaflets were issued, and demonstrations took place. And immediately the Cossack's *nagaika* and gun played their usual part. Already in February and March 1861 mass demonstrations in Warsaw were shot down.

Two years later, in January 1863, a Polish national insurrection broke out. The insurrection was doomed to defeat.

The Poles did not possess a regular army and the whole of the country was garrisoned by Russian troops. But even more serious for the fate of the insurrection was the fact that only a minority of Poles supported it actively; the Polish peasants were quite indifferent to a movement led by the nobility. Out of a population of some five million persons, only ten thousand badly armed and inexperienced insurgents joined the armed struggle.

The rebels managed to hold on for eighteen months in a guerrilla war. This was partly due to the lack of enthusiasm that many of the Russian garrisons showed for their job of killing. A number of officers expressed sympathy with the Poles, and were court-martialled; others escaped to the insurgents and even assumed command over their detachments.

Again the "revolutionary contagion" spread, even if not very widely, beyond the borders of Poland. In March 1864 insurrection spread to Lithuania, and the same year saw an incipient rising in Russia, near the Volga—but this was nipped in the bud.

Alarmed, the government made some concessions. It granted the serfs in the so-called Northern Provinces—

By **TONY CLIFF**

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Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia—exclusive property rights in the land they held.

The Polish national revolution ended in defeat. But the blood of Poland did not flow in vain. Two years after the defeat of the insurrection, on April 4, 1866, the first revolutionary attempt on the life of the tsar was made, by the Russian student Karakozov. He failed and was executed, but his was the first act in a revolutionary drama that ended with the overthrow of tsarism, half a century later.

Even this brief historical outline shows quite clearly that under autocracy reforms from above necessarily tend to waken revolution from below.

One cannot cross the abyss separating autocracy from democracy in a number of small steps. (Of course the autocracy does not want to make that crossing.) Any concession from the top, instead of averting the revolution from below, kindles the flame of liberty; and in the final analysis armed autocracy has to face the armed insurgent people.

The similarity between the first years of rule of the "Tsar Liberator" Alexander II and those of the First Secretary "Democratiser" Khrushchev is indeed great. And one can learn a number of important lessons from a comparison of the two.

The analogy, however, must not be pushed too far:

- Russia of the horse age moved far more slowly than Russia of the jet age.

- Poland of the nobility was a weakling compared to the mighty Polish mass peoples' movement.

- The different oppressed nationalities, isolated from each other geographically, economically and spiritually in the past, are now bound closely to one another.

- The social content of the revolt against autocracy in the twentieth century differs enormously from that of the nineteenth century.

- The mighty working class of all the nationalities oppressed by the Russian autocracy (and above all the Russian working class) is a waking giant which is bursting asunder the chains of social and national oppression.

2 The Post-Stalin Reforms

Stalin's method of approach to each new failure or difficulty was to increase pressure and terrorism. But this rigid method became not only more and more inhuman but also more and more inefficient. Each new crack of the whip increased the stubborn, even if mute, resistance of the people.

Where serfdom under Tsar Nikolai hampered the productive forces in agriculture, rigid Stalinist oppression became a brake on all modern agricultural and industrial progress.

Two and a half decades after the inauguration of the forced collectivisation, it became clear that Russian agriculture was stagnating.

Nothing could highlight this crisis better than Khrushchev's report to the plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union delivered on September 3, 1953. He painted the situation in sombre colours.

He stated that while in 1916 there were 28.8 million cows, in 1953 there were only 24.3 million. At the time of the tsar there were six persons for every one cow; in 1953—nine!

Khrushchev went on to say that "districts which had long been famous as butter suppliers are now producing less butter than before. Siberia, for instance, produced 75,000 tons of butter in 1913, and only 65,000 tons in 1952."

Vegetable farming, another intensive branch of agriculture, shows the same trend.

Agriculture in the satellites fared no better. The cause is not to be sought in a lack of agriculture machinery or fertilisers.

Indeed, the mechanisation of agriculture and supply of fertilisers was sharply stepped up. Thus the number

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of tractors in Poland rose from 15.5 thousand in 1949 to 49.3 thousand in 1954; in Hungary from 9.2 thousand to 15.4 thousand; the other satellites showed similar rises. (UN, *Economic Survey of Europe in 1954*, Geneva, 1955, page 273.)

The amount of fertilisers supplied per hectare of land in Poland in 1948-9 was 17.7 kg. (of pure content); in 1953-4—30.8 kg.; in Czechoslovakia—31.1 kg. in 1948-9 and 51.0 kg. in 1952-3; and so on. (Ibid., page 274.)

In spite of the better supply of machines and fertilisers, grain output in every one of the Eastern European satellites has not risen, but has declined since the beginning of collectivisation.

In the 1934-8 period they produced 42.8 million tons of grain annually; in 1951-3 they produced only 37.5 million tons. (Ibid., page 120), a decline of 12.4 per cent.

Eastern Europe, which was a big exporter of grain, has become a net importer.

The very low level of productivity in Russian agriculture is clear from the following facts: it was estimated that in April 1956 not less than 56.6 per cent of the Russian population lived in the countryside (*The National Economy of USSR*, Russian, Moscow, 1956, page 17), nearly all—i.e., practically half the total population—engaged in agriculture. And this half hardly manages to produce sufficient food to feed both itself and the urban population.

As against this, in the United States only 13 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture and it supplies enough food not only for the whole of the American people, whose level of consumption is much higher than that of the Russian, but also for export. In Britain the farming population makes up only 5 per cent of the total population, but it supplies half the food consumed in the country.

CRISIS ON THE LAND

The low productivity of agriculture alarms the Kremlin for three basic reasons:

- First, it impedes the rise of productivity in industry—hungry workers cannot be expected to work well.
- Secondly, it makes it impossible to syphon off labour power from the countryside to the town. (The loss directly and indirectly of some 30-40 million lives during the Second World War makes such syphoning particularly difficult.)
- Thirdly, the low productivity combined with the state's pillaging of the kolkhozniks lowers the morale of the rural population, a corroding influence which is liable to spread throughout the land.

It was not accidental that the crisis in agriculture came to a head just after the post-war rehabilitation of the Russian economy.

During the thirties Russian agriculture was mechanised on a large scale; this made possible, if not an increase in the absolute size of agricultural output (a development sabotaged by the passive resistance of the peasantry), at least a decrease in the number of people employed in agriculture. The number of people in the countryside declined from 121 million in 1926 to 115 million in 1939. The 6 million so released, plus the natural increase in population, was syphoned off into the towns, where the peasants, and especially their sons and daughters, were turned into industrial workers.

With the annexation in 1940 of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Western Ukraine and Byelorussia, the actual population of the USSR increased by 21 million—which gave further opportunities for mechanising agriculture in the new areas and syphoning off millions of people from the countryside to the towns.

During all this period agriculture was in stagnation if not in decline. As *Pravda* of October 4, 1955 had to admit:

"A total of 5 per cent fewer grain crops were planted on the collective farms in 1953 than in 1940. This reduction was even greater for individual crops: 11 per cent for winter rye, 35 per cent for millet, and 6 per cent for corn. At the same time the proportion of grain crops for forage dropped. These crops accounted for 29.6 per cent of the total area under cultivation in 1913, for 24.1 per cent in 1940 and for only 19.0 per cent in 1954."

With agriculture stagnating, and without the annexation of new areas with a large population (not to speak of the tremendous loss of life during the war) and with the added crisis of agriculture in the satellites, where output was considerably lower than before the war, the agricultural crisis reached alarming proportions. (Perhaps the Lysenko sleight-of-hand, and the much trumpeted but now totally forgotten "Stalin Plan for the Transformation of Nature," were but opiates to calm the nerves of the Russian rulers.)

CRISIS IN THE FACTORIES

The industrial workers in Russia and her satellites do not show any greater enthusiasm for production than the peasantry. The best proof is the fact that the productivity of labour in industry lags far behind the technical level of its equipment.

Russian industry, being quite new and built in very large units, has equipment which on the whole does not fall short of the level of American industry if indeed it does not surpass it, and certainly is far more advanced than that of the countries of Western Europe. Despite this, the productivity of labour in Russian industry in 1950 was calculated to be only 40 per cent of that in United States industry, or about the same as that in Britain and Western Germany. (W. Galenson, *Labour Productivity in Soviet and American Industry*, New York, 1955, p. 263½)

To raise labour productivity in industry, great efforts have been made to improve the skill of the workers through better technical education. But the more cultured and skilled the worker, the greater is the feeling of frustration and resentment against the exploiting bureaucracy and the poverty and drabness of his life.

How oppressed must an engineer engaged on building jet planes feel when he returns from work to the one-room "apartment" in which he and his family live!

The longer the time since the industrial revolution, the longer the worker is "cooked in the factory," and the greater his skill, the more resentful, if not rebellious, does he become.

BUREAUCRATS VS. THE KREMLIN

The third largest class after the peasants and workers in the Russian empire is the bureaucracy.

One of the paradoxes of the Stalinist regime is that even the socially privileged bureaucrats are not at one with it. Of course they are glad to know that the Kremlin protects them. But alas, too often the MVD, besides arresting workers and peasants, also lays its hand on the exalted bureaucrat himself! (Thus it was estimated that in 1938-40 some 24 per cent of the technical specialists were imprisoned or physically eliminated—see N. De Witt, *Soviet Professional Manpower*, Washington 1955, p. 231.)

The less zeal the toilers show in labour, and the greater the desire of the Kremlin to push production forward, the more does the whip lash at the individual bureaucrat who has to make the former carry out the wish of the latter.

Toward the end of Russia's industrial revolution, from 1936 to 1938, the vast mass purges were carried out. Then came the war with its terrible destruction. At the end of the period of reconstruction, in 1949, the campaign against "cosmopolitanism" was launched, directed mainly against members of the ruling class; the "Titoist" show trials took place, which culminated in the "discovery" of the "Doctors' Plot"; and the stage was set for an unparalleled mass purge. Stalin was just about to crown his life's work when he died.

Many sons of the tsarist nobility rebelled against the tsar, a number of them turning to terrorism to overthrow him. Many a bureaucrat and his children must have become embittered against the later tsar, Stalin. Stalin was certainly the most hated man in his empire.

TENSION IN THE SATELLITES

In the satellites during the later years of Stalin's rule, the tensions became even more acute than in Russia herself. A number of factors contributed to this.

First, national oppression was added to social. One aspect of this is the economic exploitation of the satellites by the Russian states.

Thus, for instance, the Polish-Russian agreement dated August 16, 1945 stipulated that from 1946 onward Poland was to deliver to the USSR at a special price the following quantities of coal: 1946—8 million tons; from 1947 to 1950—13 million tons each year; and subsequently, 12 million tons annually as long as the occupation of Germany continued. This coal was to be paid for not by Russian products but by reparations taken from Germany by Russia and transferred to Poland.

According to Professor W. J. Rose, the price agreed on was said to be \$2 per ton. (*Poland, Old and New*, London, 1948, p. 290.) As far as is known, Poland did not get anything on this account.

Anyhow, 12-13 million tons of coal at \$2 a ton was extremely cheap. At the time of the signing of the Polish-Russian agreement, Denmark and Sweden were offering Poland \$12 per ton, subsequently to be raised to \$16.

The robbery of Poland through this transaction alone amounted to over \$100 million a year. (To get some idea of this amount, it is worth mentioning that British capitalists never got such a large annual profit out of their investments in India.)

In 1948 Russia cut her demands for Polish coal to 7 million tons a year; even so, this is a heavy commitment for Poland. (Y. Gluckstein, *Stalin's Satellites in Europe*, London, 1952, pp. 66-7.)

The presence of Russian garrisons in the satellite states could certainly not help to foster a love of Moscow. Moreover, some of the satellites at least had higher living standards than those existing in Russia, and therefore could not take happily to Russian rule.

In addition, whereas in Russia Stalin had to deal mainly with a backward peasantry and new raw workers at the beginning of his rule, some of the Eastern European countries—mainly Eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland—had a relatively large and not so raw working class, with its own socialist traditions.

The social and national tensions in the satellites became unbearable. A distorted expression of this was the anti-"Titoist" purges.

3

In Fear of Revolution

To meet the economic, social and national difficulties, Stalin's heirs carried out a number of reforms.

For lack of space we will not describe the reforms from above carried out in the different parts of the Russian empire. In general, it can safely be said that the reforms went further in the peripheral provinces than in its centre.

Also in the different satellites the extent of the reforms varied. In Poland and Hungary they went much further than in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Rumania.

This is probably mainly because the Communist Parties in these two countries are very weak and unpopular, having risen to power on the ruin of the considerably stronger socialist parties; under such circumstances the local Stalinist rulers had to make greater efforts to ingratiate themselves with the people.

However, the reform has its own logic.

The more concessions given, the greater becomes the

pressure of the people for new ones. The rulers who were formerly hated and feared are now not feared so much as despised. This is especially the case with the quislings leading the satellites.

Hence after the concessions are given from above, an attempt is made from below to wring more. The further the rulers go on this path the more difficult they find it to withstand the popular ire. The process is cumulative.

THE PEOPLE DEMAND MORE

A few examples from Poland will demonstrate this process.

A short while after the death of Stalin, the Polish leaders made it clear that the Plan was exceeding the country's resources, overtaxing its capacity and depressing the standard of living. The first step was a small cut in the rate of capital investment.

While in 1949 21.8 per cent of the national income was invested, the rate rose to 26.9 per cent and it was expected to reach 28.0 per cent in the last year of the Plan (1955). Actually the rate was cut in 1953 to 25.1 per cent, in 1954 to 21.2 per cent, and in 1955 to 19.8 per cent. (Bierut's Report to the Central Committee, October 29-30, 1953, *For a Lasting Peace, For a People's Democracy*, November 20, 1953.)

Whether this cut was enough to satisfy the people is another question: after all in 1938 the rate was only 12.7 per cent (Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques, *La Pologne*, Paris, 1954, p. 214).

The original Six-Year Plan imposed by Moscow had provided that of all the capital invested in industry 76 per cent should be devoted to the means-of-production industries, and only 24 per cent to the consumer-goods industries. (H. Minc, "The Six-Year Plan for Economic Expansion and for the Laying of the Foundations of Socialism in Poland," *Nowe Drogi*, July-August, 1950.) But shortly after the death of Stalin, Bronislaw Minc (brother of the vice-premier) stated: "There must not be too great a discrepancy between the manufacture of producers' goods and consumers' goods." (*Gospodarka Planowa*, March 1953.)

The Six-Year Plan provided that in 1955 producers' goods would make up 63.5 per cent of all industrial output. (H. Minc in *Nowe Drogi*, July-August 1950.) In November 1953 the Central Committee of the Unified Polish Workers' Party (the name of the Communist Party) announced that they had revised the target of the Plan so that in 1955 only 50 per cent of all capital invested in industry would go to the producers' goods sector. (*Trybuna Ludu*, November 4-5, 1953.)

On November 14, 1953 and in May 1954 two price cuts were announced on certain industrial articles and food products. Promises were made that by the end of 1955 real wages should rise by 15-20 per cent above the 1953 level. Again, on April 6, 1956 Edward Ochab, First Secretary of the party, declared that from May 1, 1955, the minimum wage would be raised from 364 zlotys per month to 500 zlotys, some 37 per cent. (*Polish Facts and Figures*, issued by the Polish Embassy in London, April 14, 1956.)

While on the one hand promises became greater and greater, on the other hand the frantic efforts to shed the responsibility for the present suffering of the people impel increasingly frank admissions that all the promises and declarations of the past meant little or nothing.

For instance, we quote two versions of what happened to the standard of living of the people:

(1) On December 23, 1955 Vice-Premier Minc stated that in the six years 1949-1955 real wages rose by 27.6 per cent. (*Trybuna Ludu*, February 23, 1956.)

(2) In July 1956, after the mass workers' strikes and demonstrations in Poznan, First Secretary Ochab admitted in a speech to the Central Committee that there had been a rise of only 13 per cent in real wages in the five years 1951 to 1955 and that an "important part of the working population is no better off than in 1949!" (*Trybuna Ludu*, July 20, 1956.)

But promises alone, or even recantations of past mistakes, are not enough. If the concessions in the economic field and the increasingly glowing promises of future reforms are to carry any weight, the rulers of the satellites must clothe the iron fist in a kid glove.

As late as April 1955 five Jehovah Witnesses were accused in court in Warsaw of "opposing conscription" and spreading "propaganda for a third world war." Three of them were condemned to 12 years imprisonment, one to 8 years, and one to 6. (*Polish Facts and Figures*, April 9, 1955.) A year later after the Poznan riots, the condemned got a maximum of 4½ years. A few weeks later a general amnesty to Poznan "rioters"—excluding those connected with murder and robbery—was announced.

With every breath of air, the lungs demand more!

NEW HEADS FOR OLD

As the pressure of the people increases so that it can no longer be contained in the channels of concessions, promises and recantations, the regime, in a last attempt to divert the stream (before resorting to armed force) changes its figurehead. "New chiefs for old" becomes the slogan of the day.

When Alexander II came to the throne, he was known as the Tsar Liberator. Following this pattern why should not Gomulka or Nagy assume the laurel wreaths of Liberators? They are ideally placed, as for many years these persons were not responsible for running the country, nor for all the exploitation, terror and suffering.

Were not they themselves among the ranks of the persecuted? Thus Gomulka, after five years of imprisonment by Stalin's gaolers, can surround himself with the aura of martyrdom.

"After all, Stalin and his agents are the enemies. Gomulka was Stalin's enemy. Hence he is our friend. The enemy of our enemy is our friend!"

While such illusions about Gomulka and his ilk exist,

they must quickly disappear under his rule. Indeed, such illusions can scarcely be spread at all, as Gomulka has a past which is not calculated to endear him to the people. And the Eastern European peoples, especially the Polish people with their centuries of struggle against Russian oppression, have good memories.

When Gomulka lost power in 1948, Poland was already a totalitarian one-party state, and Gomulka had played an important role in bringing this about.

Gomulka did not protest at, and actually benefited from, the purges of the leadership of the Communist Party of Poland carried out by Stalin. As Poland lay on the Russian border and the Polish Communist Party was illegal, the most important leaders of the party were usually in the USSR, and were thus involved in the big purges of the thirties. Many of them were executed or perished in forced-labour camps—Domski, Sofia Unschlicht, Warski-Warszawski, Kostrzewa-Koszutska, Prochniak, Huberman (brother of the violinist), Winiarski, Sochacki, Lenski, Rval, Zarski, Wandurski and Jasienski.

Apparently the purge so decimated the Polish Communist Party leadership that the Russians found it necessary officially to dissolve the party (1938), using as an excuse the "infiltration of Trotskyites and police agents into the party." It was this purge which opened the door to the rise of Gomulka (an obscure trade-union official who was also practically unknown in the party) to the Central Committee. (The killing by the Nazis of the Secretary General Merceci Nowotko and his successor Paul FINDER hastened Gomulka along the road to supreme power in the party.)

THEY REMEMBER HIS RECORD

Again, during the Warsaw uprising, one of the most magnificent chapters in the history of the Polish people, Gomulka showed himself to be a traitor and a Russian quisling.

On July 30, 1944 the Russian army under the command of Marshal Rokossovsky came to within 10 kms. of Warsaw. Next day mobile patrols of the Russian army had advanced as far as Praga, a suburb of Warsaw on the eastern bank of the Vistula. German troops began to be evacuated en masse from the city and its environs. Radio Moscow called upon the people of Warsaw to take to arms. But when the people of Warsaw, organised and led in the main by the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), rose up in arms against the German Army of Occupation, the Russian troops stopped their advance and waited on the eastern side of the Vistula until, after 63 days of struggle, Warsaw was in ruins, 240,000 of its inhabitants were killed and 630,000 deported by the Germans.

Gomulka, as First Secretary, that is, chief of the Polish Communist Party, never raised his voice against Stalin for this murder, and did not hesitate to smear the Warsaw insurgents.

Finally, it will not be easy to forget that Gomulka played a leading part in the liquidation of the Polish Peasant Party and the Socialist Party.

The people of Poland will remember Gomulka's past.

4

On the Razor's Edge

Eight years ago, in 1948, Tito broke with Moscow. In the process of defending the national independence of the country from outside, while preserving the rule of his own bureaucracy inside, he was pushed into carrying out a number of reforms.

The logic of the struggle against the domination of Moscow, which compelled the Yugoslav leaders more and more openly to expose the real character of Stalin's regime, forced them to renounce, or at least to pretend to renounce, its more obnoxious features. The struggle, by making it a question of life and death for the Yugoslav government to enlarge its mass support, forced it to "liberalise" the dictatorship. The economic difficulties connected with the isolation of Yugoslavia from the Russian bloc of countries, and even more, the very severe drought of 1950, pushed the government in the same direction.

As a counter to Stalin's "bureaucratic centralism," Tito attempted to implement "socialist democracy." The administration was decentralised, beginning with the economy. The federal ministries of Electricity and Mines were abolished by a decree of February 17, 1950, and responsibility for the management of these branches of the economy handed over to the governments of the component republics of Yugoslavia. On April 11, another six ministries of the central government were abolished—agriculture, forestry, light industries, commerce and supply, and state supplies. At the federal level the departments are headed by councils, and the decrees grant wide autonomy to the governments of the republics.

On June 26, 1950 the Yugoslav Federal Assembly passed the "Basic Law on Management of State Economic Enterprises and Higher Economic Associations by the Workers' Collectives."

The Yugoslav leaders do not try to explain how decentralisation of the administration can be compatible with the existence of a monolithic, highly centralised, one-party system, managed by the Political Bureau; nor how "workers' management" of an enterprise can be compatible with a central economic plan determined by the same nine people in the centre of political power.

What autonomy can a workers council have when it is elected from a list of candidates put forward by the trade union, which is centralistic and controlled by the party?

Again, what autonomy can it have when the economy

is planned and the vital decisions on production, such as real wages (the amount of consumers' goods to be produced and distributed nationally), are made by a central government independent of the people?

How can there be genuine local self-government in a situation where everything, from factories to papers, from people to machines, is in the hands of the centralised, bureaucratic party?

THE LIMITS OF TITOISM

To illustrate the limited rights the Yugoslav worker has in "his" factory, it need but be mentioned that not a single strike took place either before or after the law on workers' management of June 26, 1950; that the labour-book (the *karakteristika*, a sealed record of the workers' political reliability which has to be shown every time he takes on a new job) continues to exist; and that the most severe punishments are meted out to workers who break discipline or pilfer, even if they do so only to ease their hunger.

This last point shows clearly the contradiction between the outward form—"the workers own the factories"—and the real social content, and it will therefore be relevant to give an instance. The *Manchester Guardian* of August 19, 1950 gave the following report under the heading "Death Sentence in Workshop for Stealing":

"The novel procedure of trying offenders in their place of work instead of a courtroom was introduced in Belgrade a few days ago. Seventeen workers were tried in a big workshop of an engineering works for having committed numerous thefts. One man was sentenced to death and 16 to penal servitude ranging from two months to twenty years. The whole staff of the works had to attend the trial that was designed to serve as a warning.

"It is small wonder that Yugoslav workers resort to stealing and have to be warned off by spectacular methods. Rations are small and the government finds it hard to honour them. Prices on the free market are extremely high..."

One other characteristic feature of Titoism, interwoven with its nationalism, was its soft-peddling of collectivisation of agriculture.

Tito's cautious attitude toward this has been determined by economic-political considerations. He knew that in Russia "collectivisation" so isolated and weakened the state that its very existence was in the balance. He could not conduct a war on two fronts, externally against Russia and internally against the peasantry, and any attempt at large-scale and compulsory "collectivisation" would have put him at the mercy of Stalin.

As a result, while in Bulgaria in June 1953, 51.7 per cent of all arable land was in collective farms, in Czechoslovakia 40 per cent was; in Hungary (March 1953) 26 per cent was; in Rumania 12 per cent was (UN, *Economic Survey of Europe*, 1954, op. cit., p. 61), and in Yugoslavia only 9.5 per cent was. (*Satellite Agriculture in Crisis*, New York, 1954, p. 62.)

Notwithstanding the basic similarity of the Stalinist and Titoist regime, there is one big difference between the two. Stalin's regime became more and more tyrannical while becoming less and less efficient, these two aspects mutually strengthening each other. Under the policy in Yugoslavia the regime, although totalitarian, has not led to increasing convulsions. No opposition parties are allowed, and in the party no oppositional voice may be raised (see the case of Djilas and Dedić), class differences continue, and the bureaucracy rules supreme. However, there are no bloody trials, no bloody "collectivisation" and no increasingly draconic labour laws.

CAN GOMULKA DO A TITO?

There can be no doubt that Gomulka, Nagy and the other rulers of the satellites are making attempts to follow the Yugoslav model. The first steps in this process—decentralisation of the administration, "democratic management of industrial enterprises," and back-peddling on the collectivisation of agriculture—have already been taken in Poland and Hungary.

But one cannot simply presume that the satellites will be able to copy Tito and stabilise their regime as "enlightened totalitarianism." This is so for a number of reasons.

First of all, there are economic reasons which make this impossible. The "liberality" of the Titoist regime is dependent on the modesty of the industrial targets it sets out to achieve. It does not set its sights very high, thus avoiding overtaxing its capacity and exceeding its resources.

As a matter of fact the rate of growth of industry in Yugoslavia since the 1950 reforms is very low indeed. It is much lower than the rate of growth of industry in the satellites, in Russia, or even in the countries of Western Europe, as can be seen from the following table:

PERCENTAGE GROWTH OF GROSS OUTPUT OF INDUSTRY 1950-1953

Yugoslavia	6%
Russia	46
Czechoslovakia	52
Bulgaria	57
Eastern Germany	60
Poland	75
Rumania	76
United Kingdom	6
France	9
Belgium	12
Austria	17
Western Germany	39

[Sources: for Russia, *The National Economy of the USSR*, op. cit., p. 47; for all other countries, UN, *Economic Survey of Europe in 1954*, pp. 72, 199.]

The avoidance of forced mass collectivisation in

Yugoslavia is integrally bound up with its extremely slow industrial advance: without syphoning off surpluses from agriculture, the sources of capital accumulation must be quite small.

(Apologists of Stalinism in its different variants, who praise Russia and her satellites for their speedy industrial advance and Yugoslavia for its "democratic" political regime, will have to choose: either they argue for industrial advance paid for by vicious oppression, or for more "democracy" paid for by relative economic stagnation.)

A fall in the Russian rate of industrial development to the Yugoslav level would entail a drastic curtailment of the armaments drive; it would force China, now seeking aid for industrialisation, to gravitate toward the U.S. and the Western European capitalist powers; it would demand the surrender of any ideas of world supremacy.

And it must be remembered that even the modest rate of growth of Yugoslav industry was made possible by fairly lavish American economic aid to bolster her up against mighty Russia. But will U.S. imperialism grant the same support for all the satellites, especially since Russia will obviously be weakened, as the shock of their defection takes effect? Or can one expect U.S. imperialism to give economic aid on a large scale to Russia?

FROM TITOISM TO REVOLUTION

Above all, Gomulka and Nagy are not, as is Tito, masters in their own homes. Unlike the other leaders of the "People's Democracies," Tito and his friends came to power without the support of the Russian army. And while there are no Russian troops on Yugoslav soil, Poland, Hungary, Eastern Germany and Rumania are heavily garrisoned by them.

Again, while Yugoslavia is so situated geographically that it can get military aid from the West and so balance between Russia and America, no other "People's Democracy" (except Eastern Germany and Albania) is as advantageously situated.

Furthermore, unlike the case of Yugoslavia, the Communist Party leaders on coming to power had mass support only in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria; and even in these countries, where the support had not been forged through years of heroic struggle in a war of national liberation, it was much weaker than in Yugoslavia. The relative popularity of the party plays a significant role in the extent of the stability of the regime.

In the last analysis it is clear that to do a Tito, Gomulka & Co. will have to wage a revolutionary struggle against the Russian army, a struggle which can only attain a victorious conclusion if the whole people is mobilised. And what the people have achieved in bitter struggle they will not surrender to local bureaucrats, turncoat quislings.

The Gomulkas are balancing between the workers, peasants and intellectuals of their own country on the one hand, and Russian imperialism on the other. They try to use the pressure of the one in order to wring concessions from the other.

Turning to the Russians, Gomulka says in so many words: "Unless you retreat and give Poland greater freedom, the people will rise in arms against you." To the Polish people Gomulka says: "If you go too far, the Russian troops will intervene, and the Polish people will bleed to death."

Without the Russian garrisons Gomulka, Nagy & Co. will be swept aside by the popular masses. Without the mass movement, they will be the helpless slaves of Russia.

REVOLUTION IS CONTAGIOUS

But balancing on a razor's edge is a difficult trick and it can not continue indefinitely.

The outbreak of the French Revolution in 1830 and the revolt in Belgium ignited the great Polish rising of the same year. In 1848 the French and German revolutions sparked off the Hungarian revolution, in which many Polish volunteers aided the struggle against the Russian troops that had come to crush the revolution. French and Belgian, German, Polish and Hungarian blood together watered the tree of liberty.

In 1864, after the collapse of the recent Polish uprising, a socialist delegation from France came to London, and at a meeting which it called to protest against the cruel suppression of the Polish national revolution, it was decided to found the "International Workingmen's Association," the First International. In it Polish and Russian, French and British, Italian and German socialists and workers joined hands to struggle for the emancipation of humanity.

Whether the fighters of Warsaw and Budapest win their present battle or not, the international working class will remember them as the glorious harbingers of the new world, the world of revolutionary democratic socialism. Stalinism will have earned eternal loathing and contempt.

In victory or in defeat the Eastern European revolution will have blazed the trail for the new consolidation and spreading of the ideas of independent, revolutionary and democratic socialism.

Published by Labor Action, 114 West 14 Street, New York City.
Printed by Hermine Press, 188 West 14 Street, New York City.

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Western Leaders, Too, Fear Revolution in Russian Empire

By PHILIP COBEN

According to a myth spread on both sides of the Iron Curtain, the leaders and statesmen of the capitalist West should have been overjoyed by the depth and extent of the Hungarian Revolution.

It is therefore important, and politically enlightening, to detail the fact that it just wasn't so.

Precisely in proportion as the Hungarian Revolution became a social revolution and not merely nationalist, precisely to the extent that it took on a deepgoing character, there was a clear reaction of alarm in Washington, London and Paris.

We remind our readers that this phenomenon was almost as clear at the time of the East German revolt against Russian rule in June 1953. It is a regular pattern. But this time the reaction can be documented in some detail.

The Hungarian Revolution was of course directed against the Russian power, which is the enemy of capitalism as well as the enemy of socialism; but social revolution anywhere seems to make our capitalists jump with the jitters....

"U.S. Fears Rebels May Act Too Fast," was the headline over a report (Oct. 25) by the N. Y. Times' Washington bureau head, James Reston. "The hope in official quarters," he said, "is that the pace and anti-Soviet aspect of events in Budapest will not offer a pretext for such intervention."

What intervention? By the Russians. But the Russian troops and tanks were already intervening with merciless slaughter of the freedom fighters! Nagy had called them in. Explains Reston: the "official quarters" mean "massive intervention."

Naturally, if the Hungarian people pulled back on their "pace and anti-Soviet aspects," and allowed the Russians to clean up with only the troops that were already intervening, then no further "massive" intervention would be necessary! The dynamics of a revolution are that you either push forward or you are thrown back. The way to avoid "massive intervention," therefore, is to allow yourself to be defeated by non-massive forces....

The thinking behind this "hope" in Washington was not, however, made too clear by Reston. That the hope was there indeed was certified by another member of the Times bureau, Thomas J. Hamilton, who wrote on October 28 of the "Hungarian patriots" that "Their successes thus far, paradoxically enough, cause some forebodings in Washington."

All this would merely be puzzling to the mythologists unless we looked a little further into the motives for the forebodings. These are documented too.

A CLEVER PLAN

On October 25 the N. Y. Herald Tribune's Marguerite Higgins was a good deal more educational than Reston's delicate reference of the same date:

"The anxious question in Washington about the Budapest uprising—which indicated an even greater violence of anti-Soviet feeling than the Western world suspected—is whether it might prompt the Russians to turn the screws back on in the satellites.

"Specifically there is worry that the Kremlin might seize on events in Hungary as an excuse for going back on its rather grudging promise to Poland to permit it to go its own 'Titoist' road to socialism.

"It is feared in Washington that the Hungarian uprising could give ammunition to the factions in the Soviet Politburo who have been arguing that 'democratization' in the satellites has gone too far and threatens to get out of hand."

The politically informed reader will be instantly struck by the fact that this transcription of the Washington state of mind is virtually a word-for-word duplication of the notorious thesis laid down by the Stalinoid apologist Isaac Deutscher in connection with the East German "June days." They should not have made

trouble for the Russians, he explained then; "democratization" and "liberalization" and other good things are going on apace in the Kremlin; leave Stalin's heirs alone, don't scare them, and they will hand down democracy, or an installment of it, to people who behave themselves.

Now for Deutscher, of course, this thesis flows from the same political analysis which causes him to believe that the Russian system is a "socialist" and "progressive" one which all good men should support and defend, and not fight against. It is a theory which has a good deal of influence among some Bevanites in England, certain Stalinoid groups in the U.S., and so on.

But has the State Department gone "Deutscherite" too? Hardly.

We should mention now that on the same October 25 the Times' London man reported similarly on what "sources" in that capital were saying. In Poland, said the "sources," now that Gomulka is in, "it is best to 'make haste slowly.'" Cut out demonstrations, no "sharp and open deviations from Soviet policy"; otherwise the Russians may get tough and "liquidate democratic movements"; and "this, some sources fear, is what is happening in Hungary."

So once again, we are told that the way to avoid forcing the Russians to liquidate democratic movements is . . . not to have any democratic movements, but merely to stick to a little more national-Stalinism or "Titoism." This prescription for preserving democratic movements by eschewing them in the first place is so clever that it is hard to understand how the admirable Hungarian people could continue to overlook it, especially when it seems to be so thoroughly clear both to Washington "official quarters" and London "sources."

QUESTION OF PRETEXTS

Indeed, we can round this out for the Big Three. From Paris came a bit of wisdom which was not from any anonymous sources or flying sources, but from a Source with feet on the ground, Foreign Minister Christian Pineau.

Warning against any Western attempts to "exploit" the Polish and Hungarian revolts, Pineau said on Oct. 26:

"It would be dangerous to try to cut the links that countries like Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia have with the Soviet Union. This would provide the Soviet Union and some statesmen in those countries with a pretext to go back on de-Stalinization."

This almost views the hard-eyed bureaucratic despots who run Russia as if they were just sentimental, petulant children who can be jollied out of their empire in time if only you don't take away their candy too roughly and make them cry. It would be hilarious if anyone really believed that Pineau (or the Washington "official quarters" and London "sources") actually swallowed this.

If the Russian leaders are looking to seize on a "pretext" for going back on de-Stalinization, then how reliable is it to put any trust in their intentions or proclaimed promises? Isn't it true that the people have won concessions from reluctant masters only to the extent that they have fought them, and in reverse proportion to the extent that they put any trust in them? That is a fundamental lesson that was learned in the long painful education of the working class under capitalist democracy; how much more is it true when one deals with totalitarians!

But it is not necessary to come to the conclusion that the foreign offices of the Big Three have been captured by Deutscherism. We can document more hard-headed motivations for the alarm and fear that was stirred behind foreign-office shirt-fronts by the Hungarian Revolution

and the stormy development of the mass actions in Poland. They are not quite as suitable for public distribution, however.

WAR CALCULATION

One of the clearest came from Drew Middleton, N. Y. Times correspondent in London, again reporting on the views of "government opinion" and "observers" in that capital. To understand what he is saying it is useful to recall that Western bourgeois proponents of "liberation" have long discussed that underground movements or tendencies toward dissent and dissatisfaction in the Iron Curtain domain should be viewed primarily as a military ally of the Atlantic bloc. That is, in case of war with Russia, revolt behind the lines or the organization of sabotage for the Western side would be desirable. But all of that is only for wartime, when Western victory would "liberate" the satellites, and any revolutionary action by the people themselves would be strictly subordinated.

But this links the prospect of anti-Stalinist revolution only to the holocaust of war, even assuming that the Western capitalists could inspire any mass movement of the people there, which is scarcely likely. But for socialists, the forces of revolution against Stalinism offer precisely a road to prevent a war, as current events show. The socialist approach is the reverse of the capitalist-military.

Middleton wrote from London (Oct. 27): "Some observers feel that Hungarian resistance now, gallant though it may be, weakens democratic forces for any future struggle against the Soviet Union. . . . If they [Hungarian demonstrators] are slaughtered by the Soviet army, it is noted, time will be necessary to rebuild resistance."

So they should preserve themselves for the future. For when? for some time when there will be a better chance to pull off a revolution? But he does not indicate that the "observers" are setting themselves up as experts on good revolutionary situations versus poor ones. The suspicion may dawn that the future for which the "democratic forces" have to be preserved has nothing to do with their own revolution at all, in which these "observers" are hardly interested, but in the strategic plans and hopes of the Western powers in connection with war.

The next day Middleton wired from London even more clearly. "Government opinion" on Budapest is "ambivalent," he said. On the one hand, there is rejoicing at the courage, etc. but—

"In contrast there is the objective view that the Hungarian anti-Communists have exposed themselves, that events have moved beyond the capacity of the West to guide or advise." (Bold face added.)

Indeed and truly, the Hungarian Revolution was far away from any control or "guidance" from these people.

DREAM OF A DEAL

This line of thought ties up with a third formulation which crops up as the press accounts for the indubitable symptoms of alarm caused by the Hungarian Revolution in the State Department and Foreign Office. Here is a Washington dispatch in the N. Y. Times, Oct. 27:

"There was some consideration of what might confront the U.S. in case the rebels should succeed in setting up a government of their own. This could present a major dilemma.

"The U.S. would be sympathetic to a free regime in Hungary. But Washington officials do not want to offer a major provocation to the Soviet Union, through recognition of a Hungarian government unfriendly to Moscow.

"Such a provocation possibly could lead to war, it is felt here. The view prevailing among U.S. officials, it appeared, was that 'evolution' toward freedom in Eastern Europe would be better for all concerned than 'revolution,' though nobody was saying this publicly."

This report would be astounding if you

took it literally. It speaks of "evolution" versus "revolution" as if discussing a parliamentary regime where this time-honored vocabulary of reform had at least a frame of reference.

But if we overlook this twaddle, then what remains is the conception that the way to try to maintain peace is by dividing up the world with a Russian empire which is "contained" within the present Iron Curtain by an amicable deal in which Moscow is assured undisturbed sway in its domain as long as it ceases to make trouble for us capitalists in the rest of the world.

This is at least not sheer rubbish, like some of the other things we have had to quote; it is the cynical voice of imperialism looking forward to the only kind of peace it knows about, the peace that blesses the world when powerful imperialisms divide it up for exploitation in a friendly sort of way. This is the theory behind the Truman-Acheson-Kennan doctrine of "containment" which is still operative in Washington in spite of the official GOP demagoguery about "liberation." It is a dream, but it is the only dream of peace they have.

So: having revolutionary forces behind the Iron Curtain is a good thing—but only for use after war breaks out. Till then, they must be held in check under "guidance and advice" lest their revolution get in the way of the current stratagems of the capitalist world.

THE BASIC FEAR

And behind this there is something else which is all-pervading in the thinking of a ruling class:

Revolution is contagious. Once the brushfire starts, who will guarantee to keep it within the bounds of the Russian empire?

This has been put down on paper in the present situation by that dean of American pundits, Walter Lippmann, who once long ago used to be a socialist and now, as a braintruster for capitalism, is sensitive to revolution.

In a series of columns (N. Y. Herald Tribune) he firmly and clearly put forward the thesis that the interest of the West is to see the Hungarian and Polish people restrain themselves to Gomulka-type regimes satisfactory to Moscow, and not to go any further, above all not to social revolution. In his reasoning there is an echo of the "U.S. will be on the spot" motivation, and also of the motivation that reduces the action of the East European revolution to a convenience for Western military plans. But the unique service he performs is to speak frankly on a much more basic point.

Unless the Polish crisis is "stabilized" under Gomulka-Titoism, he argues—

"... then we may expect to see, I would guess, the Polish crisis become a far-reaching crisis of the European continent. For it will then spread to and involve not merely the rest of Eastern Europe and the Balkans but the two Germanys. There is no telling what would come of such a crisis. For the essential character of the crisis would be that there was no power and authority—be it Soviet, Western, or local—to organize Central Europe." (Oct. 26.)

No one to organize Central Europe, he says—except, of course, the socialist revolution. For what else is this spreading "crisis" which is beginning in Poland and which may communicate its flames not only to East Germany but to West Germany too?

In his October 30 column, he made this explicit. "Our true interest," he wrote, is limiting the East Europe turmoil to "Titoism," since this is what has meaning to prevent Russia from East Europe as a military base against the West. What are the only alternatives to this limitation? One is Russian reimposition of "Stalinism."

"The other alternative would be a spreading rebellion which went beyond Titoism and engulfed it. If such a rebellion were to spread to Eastern Germany, as it might well do, it would almost certainly mean that in some way or other Western Germany would be sucked into the conflict."

And after Western Germany—what? A portentous revolutionary perspective opens before Lippmann's eyes.

It opens for us too.

Fortunately the East European victims of Moscow will not listen to the wisdom of Lippman or the State Department strategists. They will fight because they have to fight. And when they overthrow their Stalinist rulers, the capitalist world will rock to its foundations also.

How to Fight the Tories' Housing Bill

By Owen Roberts

Duncan Sandys, Minister of Housing and Local Government, received a storm of applause at the Tory Party Conference in October when he announced that a Bill to push rents up would be introduced into the House of Commons this session. With the details of the Bill now published the newspaper mouthpieces of the landlords and the Tory Party have joined in the cheering.

The *Financial Times*, for instance, says Sandys' Bill "deserves a welcome as a second step in the direction of the complete abolition of rent restrictions." The *Economist* says "Mr. Sandys strikes a sensible and fairly bold blow at the fatuities and waste of the present system of rent restriction." The only criticism of Sandys' Bill to be voiced by the Tory press is that it does not go far enough fast enough.

This, however, is only a minor criticism. Most Tories, particularly those who have studied the Bill, recognise that it is but the first move towards the complete abolition of rent restriction. Indeed, the Bill contains provisions for further attacks to be made by the means of a simple ministerial order. A fact which the *Economist* considers "important if Mr. Sandys means business."

There is no doubt that Sandys does mean business for, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the "broad objects" of the Bill are "to provide the means for the progressive abolition of rent control" and to fix "revised rent limits." The Bill itself underscores these statements.

As soon as the Rent Bill becomes law rent control will cease to apply to some 4½ million houses which are at present owner-occupied. Which means that the owners can, if they wish, let part or all of their house to private tenants at any rent they care to fix, and with no security of tenure for the tenants.

Also removed from rent control will be houses with rateable values of over £40 in the London area (the Metropolitan Police District to be exact) and £30 elsewhere in England and Wales. This will effect some 800,000 houses at present let at controlled

rents—mainly to better-off middle class tenants who will have to pay higher rents as a "reward" for having supported the Tory Party at the last General Election.

The Next Steps

The final provision for the complete abolition of rent control at the present stage concerns any houses which at any time fall vacant. This means that once a landlord has vacant property on his hands—which was previously rent controlled—he can raise the rent sky-high for new tenants. This clause will, of course, provide an incentive to money grubbing landlords to try and clear out existing tenants so that they can push the rents up.

Having thus wiped out rent controls for certain houses, the Bill turns its attention to some 4½ million houses which will be subjected to some form of legal limit on their rents. For all of these higher rents are on the way.

In houses where the landlord is responsible for all repairs except those to the interior decoration the new annual rent limits are twice the gross annual value as shown in the 1956 valuation lists. Where the landlord is not responsible for any repairs the maximum annual rent will be 1½ times the gross value. Where the landlord is responsible for all repairs the limit will be 2½ times the gross value.

Tory Smoke-Screen

In all cases where rents are going to be raised under the new limits the landlord must give tenants three months' notice. It is not possible to predict by how much rents will rise, but general opinion sets it at around ten shillings a week. The Tory Government has, however, endeavoured to

cover up its tracks a little by inserting a clause in the Bill which says that increases must not exceed 7s. 6d. per week for the first six months of their application.

Commenting on this clause the *Financial Times* says that, amongst other things, it is probably designed to "limit the impact on the cost-of-living index." In other words, the Government hopes to make it more difficult—statistically at least—for unions to claim higher wages because of higher rents.

Like Macmillan's 1954 Rents Act, the present Bill throws out a smokescreen by tying up rent increases—on paper—with repairs carried out by landlords. If a tenant is presented with a demand for increased rent he can serve notice on his landlord specifying repairs he considers necessary and asking the landlord for an undertaking that they will be carried out.

If the landlord gives such an undertaking and then, within six months, fails to carry out the repairs, any rent increase which has come into operation must be suspended until the repairs are completed. In addition, the tenant is empowered to make deductions from the rent until the whole of the extra charge has been refunded or until the repairs are carried out.

Landlords' Advantages

All this, however, depends on agreement between tenant and landlord as to what repairs are necessary—agreements which past experiences have proved very difficult to reach. Where agreement is not possible the tenant can apply to the local authority for a certificate of disrepair.

If the certificate is issued on an application received within six months of a demand for extra rent the increase in rent is suspended until the repairs are carried out. But—and it is a big but—if within three weeks of being informed that a certificate is to be issued the landlord promises to carry out the repairs, the certificate will not be issued. Landlords may also ask the County Court to annul the certificate.

It will be seen, therefore, that when the Rent Bill becomes law, tenants and landlords all over the country will be involved in bitter argument over what constitutes "necessary" repairs. And, as usual, the advantage will be on the side of the landlords with their lawyers and technical experts to squeeze the most out of tenants while giving as little as possible in return.

Fight on Two Fronts

An immediate practical task for local Labour Parties is to redress this balance by providing tenants with the knowledge necessary to fight the landlords. If every active Party member goes out of his way to get tenants to resist rent increases on the grounds of disrepair the landlords and their Tory friends can be bogged down for months in a mass of technicalities.

Local authorities, too, must be brought into the arena. In addition to Labour Party advice centres, the local authorities must be prepared to give tenants as much assistance as possible. In particular they must be prompt in issuing certificates of disrepair.

Such activities, however, bring only temporary and partial relief to tenants. If Labour is to fight this new Rent Bill more positive action will be necessary. First the tenants must be mobilized behind the Labour Party for a POLITICAL campaign against the Tories. Mass demonstrations, public meetings, lobbying of M.P.'s and all the other tactics of mass agitation must be employed.

Tenants must be led by Labour because only in this way will it be possible to channel their immediate demands into a wider campaign against the Tory Government. Labour must lead the tenants because only in this way will it be able to advance the slogan of public ownership of all rented properties and demonstrate to the tenants that only Socialism can remove the curse of private landlordism.

With a double-barrelled campaign of exploiting technicalities to hold up rent increases and a widespread agitation against private landlordism, the Labour Party can frustrate the Tory Rent Bill.

Published by S. Newens, 16 Vicarage Lane, North Weald, Essex

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

CAN THE U.N. DO ANYTHING?

By Stan Newens

Much of the Labour Party criticism of Tory action in Egypt has been directed against Eden's complete heedlessness for the United Nations. Many socialists have focused their hopes for international peace and co-operation on the United Nations and feel that by flouting its authority, the British and French Governments have struck a blow against world peace.

This point of view is based upon the idea that war arises from ill-natured bickerings between the nations. War, however, is never an accident, but is a resort to force to protect or advance a definite interest or group of interests. Only the occasion of its outbreak is accidental.

Causes of War

In the 1914-18 war, the clash was between two armed camps of capitalist powers over the division of South East Europe and Africa between them. In the 1939-45 war, the German capitalist class in alliance with the Nazis tried to achieve what they had failed to realise in 1918. Colonies, spheres of interest, markets and opportunities to make profit were at stake. On both sides the governments cynically encouraged their peoples in the fight with slogans that they refused to put into effect where they held sway.

Today, the situation is the same: the basic cause of war is still the maintenance or promotion of interests which appear to be unattainable by other means. Anglo-French aggression against Egypt was in the interests of the capitalist groups which draw dividends from assets in the Middle East. The Russian aggression against Hungary was designed to stop the rot which threatened to remove the whole of Eastern Europe with its rich economic potential from the grasp of bureaucrats. In neither instance—as everyone realises—were the governments really concerned about their publicly declared aims—to stop war or to prevent counter-revolution respectively.

A Robbers' Club

If governments are as ready to cast a cloak of lies over their real interests in these events, who will believe their declaration in the United Nations? Their own peoples cannot trust them for they represent only the interests of the privileged and wealthy. How much less can the peoples of other lands?

Yet the United Nations is entirely composed of such governments—many of them equally and even less representative of the peoples whom they claim to govern. Take for example, the self imposed government of Formosa under Chiang Kai-shek which claims to speak for a quarter of the world's population; or the dictatorships of South America; or the puppet so called "Communist" governments of Eastern Europe.

The United Nations is much more unre-

presentative of the world's peoples than the most corrupt and distorted parliament which ever existed. We do not place our confidence in the carefully rigged constitutions of Kenya or British Guiana for we know they are a farce, designed only to maintain the privileges of the over privileged. Why should we place our faith in the hands of a set of international criminals, ranging from Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee to John Foster Dulles, Eden and Nikita Khrushchev.

"Achievements" of U.N.

Their true character is illustrated by a very cursory survey of UN achievements in the sphere of international peace making. Every government is ready to support UN save when the interests of its own ruling class are at stake.

Thus South Africa refused to accept the UN ruling on South West Africa. America dispatched troops to Korea before the United Nations discussed the question and rode rough-shod over Article 27 when the question arose. India has failed to accept UN suggestions on Kashmir. France declared that North African policy is an internal question and walked out. Britain made the same plea on the Cyprus question, and Russia has also refused to accept the UN ruling on Hungary.

The United Nations majority led by the U.S. and the minority led by the U.S.S.R. showed what the peoples of the world can expect from them when they decimated over a million people and destroyed the industrial achievements of two generations in Korea.

Clearly the governments which make up the United Nations are only paying lip ser-

vice to the idea of international co-operation and will drop the act as soon as it pays them. If we place all our hopes in the United Nations, we are living in a fools' paradise. We are like the proverbial ostrich burying our head in the sand.

The alternative is, however, not far to seek, difficult though it is to build. It is a socialist international which means more than a regular jamboree. The workers of the world have no interests or privileges to defend against other workers. Even in Western Europe, the few crumbs they get from exploitation of the Empire are more than outweighed by the price they pay in war taxes and blood. It is only the workers whom we can trust.

The Only Method

Before the 1st World War, the delegates to the Second International recognised this at Stuttgart in 1907, Copenhagen in 1910 and Basle in 1912 and declared in a resolution that it was "the duty of working classes . . . to use every effort to prevent war by all the means which seem to them most appropriate. . . ." Keir Hardie whom some people have been ready to revere in the year of his centenary but never to emulate, urged the policy of meeting the threat of war by a general strike.

Let us resolve in this momentous and appropriate year to look facts in the face. The United Nations is just a "thieves kitchen." Militant socialists should campaign for the third camp, for a socialist international which calls upon workers on both sides of the firing lines to down tools against any war in the interests of the exploiters.

POLICY FOR REDUNDANCY

By Michael Kidron

As long as an employer has the power to hire and fire workers as he pleases, so long will the struggle over the right to work be one of the most important and serious that organized workers can undertake.

That struggle is going on today. Fifteen years of full pay packets, jobs for all and of a strong trade-union bargaining position have done nothing to still this basic conflict in capitalist society. With the first signs, such as we have seen recently, of redundancy the struggle breaks out afresh: the bosses—with the generous support of their Tory government—sack where they can; the workers prevent sackings where they can. Sometimes we win, sometimes they win—it all depends on the relation of forces.

There is no argument about what constitutes the final answer to capitalist redundancy. It is "no sackings." By rallying around such a slogan, not only do we defend our jobs today but clearly question the "right" of capitalists to control production. By enforcing a policy of "no sackings" on management we substitute a measure of workers' control for capitalist control and so take an important step towards the social control of the means of production—the aim of every socialist.

But we should remember that workers' control of hiring and firing is not merely a resolution that can be carried and then forgotten about. It is aimed at the very basis of capitalist society in the West—the sanctity of the private ownership of the means of production (when they are profitable)—and will be met by ruthless opposition on the part of the capitalists and their supporters. Such opposition can be overcome only by a working class completely solid in its belief that there is no other way but to fight for its present jobs with everything it has got.

Are the strands of solidarity binding the British working class so tightly knit as to support such a struggle today? And is there the widespread feeling that a struggle for the retention of jobs is a matter of life and death now?

The Argument For...

The best that the advocates of "no sackings" as the rallying slogan for the fight against redundancy can offer is a promise of mass unemployment in the future. "The brutal fact in this situation," states the widely read pamphlet published by the Norton Motors Strike Committee, "is that the 6,000 sacked B.M.C. workers, the first list of 3,000 Standard workers... plus all the smaller redundancies, are the beginning of mass unemployment" (bold in the original). Take action now, runs the argument, to avert something that will happen in the future, to deal with problems that will then penetrate the consciousness of the masses.

Whatever may or may not happen in the future the facts at present are that in mid-September there were 247,600 registered unemployed in Britain and 361,000 unfilled vacancies at the Labour Exchanges at the end of August. The fact is that 1,375,000 workers are on overtime in manufacturing alone and probably as many working extra hours in non-manufacturing trades. The fact is that less than 400 of the 6,000 sacked B.M.C. workers were still without jobs three months ago, that the number of actual strikers at Norton's was less than the number working inside and outside the gates, that local unemployment even at Coventry is disappearing slowly but surely. Finally, it is a fact that some 41 per cent. of workers change their jobs voluntarily each year which shows that people are not very frightened of the "once out, never in again" position of pre-war days.

When we compare this present position with the inter-war period of real mass unemployment, it is not surprising that the majority of workers, especially the vast majority of those who have not experienced redundancy at first hand for as long as they can remember, discount the prophecy of mass unemployment as scare-mongering.

The Facts Against

Today less than one and one-quarter per cent. of gainfully employed people are unemployed (under a quarter of a million); between 1921 and 1938 the percentage of unemployed in a much smaller labour force fluctuated between 9.7 per cent. (in 1927) and 22.1 per cent. (in 1933). During the whole period there were seldom less than one million on the stones and often more than two and a half million (Beveridge, *Full Employment in a Free Society*, 1944, pp. 47, 111). Unemployment was a long term prospect in the 'thirties, measured in years (*ibid* p. 64 shows an average of one-quarter of all unemployment lasting 12 months or more); today, the majority of cases are measured in weeks.

Older workers who remember what these figures mean in the flesh cannot see the urgency of hanging on to jobs at all costs; younger workers who have no terrible memories going back 25 years but who have had the experience of changing work places before, possibly a number of times, cannot imagine why on earth they should cling to a particular job for dear life. Jobs can be had almost for the asking, why fight desperately for one or the other?

Such talk cannot satisfy the trade union militant. If he believes that mass unemployment is on the cards in the near future, he would be criminal if he kept silent about it. He will sound a warning as loudly as possible. But warning and propagandizing, getting support for a policy that might lead to action in the future is a different matter from formulating the slogans for direct action today.

Direct action can lead to victory only in so far as the broad masses of workers throw in their united support, in so far as they recognize the aim of the struggle as their own immediate, concrete desire. When the rank and file are on the march the job of the militant is to keep well within sight of the rest. Otherwise they will lose one another, the militant slogging way beyond the horizon and the rank and file deprived of its own leaders and a prey to the union bureaucracy.

It is no good calling for action suited to slump conditions when such conditions do not obtain and when the working class as a whole knows it. True, "no sackings" is the only answer the militant can give to capitalist redundancy. There is no other. But he must be prepared to spend time convincing the mass of the workers that it is the only answer. To call for a mass struggle for "no sackings" at once is like calling for a struggle for the forty-hour week with which it is connected—a good thought, but pious; nothing that is going to galvanize anyone into activity. Anyone who tries will soon be branded as a sectarian, abusing the energies of the working class for purposes which are unrealizable at present.

Some Opportunities Arise

There are exceptions. The workers at A.P.V. (Crawley) and at Fords gained magnificent victories precisely because they fought for "no sackings." But in both cases the issues were clear cut and well understood on the factory floor. As the Norton strikers' pamphlet states, "this agreement (to retain workers on the payroll until suitable alternative work be found) was vital to Crawley workers because Crawley is a new town, and if there is no work there it would entail over 20 miles journey to Brighton or London to find other jobs, in addition to paying the high rents of the Corporation houses." A.P.V. workers did not have to go to school to learn the importance of retaining their present jobs.

In the case of Fords, redundancies were declared at the time of the B.M.C. strike as an obvious manoeuvre in the general campaign against the motor workers. The ruse

As we go to print, the news of the "settlement" of the 30 weeks old official strike at Norton Motors, Birmingham, is still fresh. We hope it remains fresh in the minds of militant workers throughout the country: a fresh indictment of the AEU leadership which pledges support but caves in to management at the earliest opportunity; a fresh exposure of a leadership which even after backing the strike officially refused to put teeth into it, refused to call for a blacking of Norton goods and refused to support the workers at the London motor-cycle show who actually boycotted the Norton stand.

There is only one attitude that the organized workers can adopt: solidarity with the strikers. We must be united in condemning the AEU Executive's recommendation to resume work on management's terms. It was a shameful betrayal of the strikers by their leadership.

—Editor.

was sufficiently patent for Ford workers to see through it and successfully challenge the company.

It is difficult to find other examples of successful "no sackings" strikes. The stoppage of 105 electricians at Standards during September is significant. The issue was one of redundancy. 5,000 workers "blacklegged." The draughtsmen who had been on strike themselves immediately before came to a settlement with the company during the electricians' stoppage—an unthinkable procedure had the electricians' case been in anyway a popular one.

We must be flexible in the tactics of the fight against redundancy. We aim at the best we can get, taking into consideration the strength of the bosses and especially, the solidarity and militancy of our side. Where these are strong, there is no question

SUEZ--

Continued from front page

Poverty is inevitably accompanied by ignorance, which in Egypt reaches fearful dimensions. Some idea of its extent may be gained from the very succinct remark of *El Mussawar*, when it discussed the results of the 1937 census (August 28, 1942): "We have 30,000 holders of diplomas as against 14 millions who know neither how to read or to write."

Riches, pleasures and hilarity of some tens of thousands of foreign capitalists and Egyptian landlords and capitalists on the one hand, and hunger, disease and ignorance of the millions on the other—this is the picture of Egypt.

Without in any way idealizing Nasser, a military dictator, suppressor of the workers and peasants, defender of Egyptian capitalists and landlords, it is clear that it is not the business of the British Labour movement to remove Nasser. That is the job of the Egyptian workers and peasants. British and French bombs do not kill Nasser, but the common people—men, women and children. British attacks on Nasser increase his popularity at home and undermine opposition to his regime. Our enemy is not in Cairo but in 10 Downing Street.

Who Stopped the War

After murdering thousands of Egyptians, the British and French Governments have had, at the time of writing, to call a halt to the war. A number of factors have brought this about. First the unpopularity of the war in Britain and the increasing threats of industrial action cooled the Tory hotheds. Secondly, the bursting of the oil pipe line in Syria and Saudi Arabia's stoppage of oil to British refineries in Bahrain, etc., showed clearly that even a decisive triumph

as to our demand—"no sackings." But under present conditions of full employment, widespread overtime and high and easy mobility between jobs there is no doubt that such an extreme demand will rally active support in a very small minority of cases.

The majority of redundancy cases will have to be fought on another demand, one more in tune with the problems facing the mass of workers today and therefore more appropriate as a slogan for immediate action. "For substantial compensation on redundancy," "for a guaranteed annual wage." The miners have it—26 weeks on two-thirds pay—why can't the rest of us? Why can't we do even better?

As for rallying support on the factory floor, there can be no comparison. Redundancy today appears to the majority of workers as the exception, as an individual problem, somebody else's can. The unemployed worker himself does not feel that he is joining an army of unemployed (as he would have felt 20 years ago) but that he is on his own. Large compensation payments or severance pay, enough to tide himself and his family over without difficulty until he finds a job comparable to the one he has just left is what he wants. And for a highly mobile working class this is an understandable demand at present, one that will go far to satisfy the desire for economic security in a way that fits in with our experience of the immediate past.

The duty of the militant is to formulate this demand in the tactics of struggle.

P.S. There are a number of problems that have been by-passed in this article. Can we accept the reduction in standards that often accompanies a forced changeover from one job to another? If we once grant the bosses the principle of redundancy, won't they exploit it to sack the militants and weaken the factory organization? These are serious questions which should be tackled, and will be—with the editor's permission—in next month's *Socialist Review*.

over Egypt could be a Pyrrhic victory. Thirdly, the deep disgust with the war in India, Pakistan, Ceylon and other "Commonwealth" countries, made it clear that Eden's diplomacy can lead to a complete shipwreck of this "Commonwealth." Fourthly, the United States was not ready to support the adventures of Eden and Mollet militarily or even financially. Last, but not least, the threat of Russian intervention could not but be heeded by British and French imperialists.

In Britain there has developed the biggest popular movement for many years, determined to put an end to the war. The giant organised labour movement had hardly raised itself to its feet before the Tory rulers quaked with fear.

However, the anti-war demonstrations were not translated into mass industrial action, notwithstanding the many trade union resolutions supporting such a line of action.

As a result many in this country, and even more abroad, underestimate the impact of the British Labour movement on the stoppage of the war on Egypt. This has made it possible for Eisenhower to proclaim himself the peacemaker. On the other hand Bulganin and Khrushchev could hasten to wash their hands, stained with blood of the Hungarian people, in the Canal.

It was a tremendous step forward since Gaitskill's speech in the House of Commons on August 2nd, in which he proclaimed his support for a strong hand against Egypt, to the stand the Labour leadership took more recently in the campaign against the imperialist war on Egypt. But this was far from enough.

The lesson is clear: the answer to imperialist war is to be found only in mass demonstrations, industrial action and any other suitable means able to stop the war, withdraw the troops and overthrow its instigators.