

LABOUR REVIEW

Vol. 3

MAY-JUNE-JULY 1958

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THE MURDER OF IMRE NAGY

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LABOUR REVIEW

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The Murder of Imre Nagy

A sordid and shameful affair—Steadfast to the end—A new stage opens—Where are the prophets of ‘liberalization’?—Imperialism’s crocodile tears—‘Violation of socialist legality’?—Neither ‘full’ nor ‘evidence’—The Marxist answer—A rejuvenated Marxist movement.

THE world Labour movement is horrified by the brutal murder of Imre Nagy, Pál Maléter, Miklós Gimes and József Szilágyi. There is not one redeeming aspect of this sordid and shameful affair. First Nagy is tricked into Russian custody by means of a specious promise of safe conduct, and Maléter arrested while he is negotiating with the Soviet Command. For months public opinion is lulled by Kádár and his spokesmen into supposing that Nagy’s life is not in danger. Then come trial, sentence and execution, secret and sudden, so that the news hits like a physical blow. The crime is accomplished and the criminals are washing the blood off their hands before anyone has been given the opportunity to protest or appeal for clemency. Nor is this all. No one of sensitive imagination can contemplate without profound emotion and distress the fate of Géza Losonczy, whose health had already been shattered in Rákosi’s foul prisons, and who is referred to in these laconic terms: ‘Penal proceedings against Géza Losonczy were stopped by the Chief Attorney because in the meanwhile, as a result of illness, the accused had died.’ This statement was issued by the ‘Ministry of Justice’. Nor yet is this all. Nagy and his companions are killed, but Rákosi and his friends go scot-free, guzzling in some Black Sea villa while the suffering and sorrow they brought to Hungary goes on without respite. Not a hair of Farkas’s head is touched—Farkas the loathsome torturer who castrated his victims and urinated in their faces. But Nagy the communist is killed; Maléter, the heroic leader of a desperate guerilla, who proudly wore to the end his red five-pointed star, who answered by clapping his hand to his pistol holster when Basil Davidson asked him what his attitude would be if there were any attempt to restore capitalism—Maléter is killed; Gimes, who loved the truth above all else, whose pen dripped acid when he wrote about the torturers and hangmen who had disgraced the name of communism—Gimes is killed. None of these men was great in himself. But they were buoyed up and swept forward on the tide of great events; and they did not sully the

Hungarian Revolution by temporizing with their tormentors, or by confessing to crimes they had not committed. They were steadfast to the end. They will not soon be forgotten.

SO opens a new, grim and bloody stage of the Stalinist dictatorship. Where now are the prophets who talked glibly about the ‘liberalization’ of the Stalinist bureaucracy, that ‘irreversible process’ born in the dry-as-dust brains of pedants who substitute ready-made schemes and formulas for the living, contradictory movement of history? Speak up, all you who hailed the famous ‘Thaw’ as the beginning of some golden post-Stalinist age. Speak up, you who poured out articles about the ‘historical necessity’ of the purges, ‘but now, you see, all will be different’. Speak up, you who waved last September’s issue of *LABOUR REVIEW* on public platforms and quoted, with ineffable scorn at our ‘dogmatism’ and ‘rigidity’, these sentences:

It would be idle to suppose that the degenerate excrement which is the bureaucracy can be removed without a surgical operation. Those who write in terms of a self-liberalization of the bureaucracy, of the possibility of this caste or part of it beginning to act in the interests of the Russian workers, coming to terms with them, fulfilling their demands, are not merely the victims of illusions; they are guilty of vulgar and superficial thinking and of a crude revision of the Marxist conception of bureaucracy.

It is not enough to *protest*. We must also *understand*.

OF course our protest and our analysis have nothing in common with the hypocritical comments of Dulles, Eisenhower and the British Foreign Office. It ill becomes those who five years ago framed and murdered Ethel and Julius Rosenberg to shed crocodile tears over the deaths of four Hungarian communists. It ill becomes those who butcher Cypriots and Kikuyus to speak about Imre Nagy. The true feelings of imperialism

The Victory of Charles de Gaulle

A turning-point—Two reasons for de Gaulle's victory—Working-class parties discredited—Social-democratic betrayal—Gaitskell is Britain's Mollet—'Peaceful co-existence' means class collaboration—Stalinism disarmed the workers—The lesson of Germany—How to defend democracy?—Khrushchev's message—Lessons for British Labour

DE GAULLE'S advent to power is the most significant turning-point in European politics since the end of the second world war. It is a defeat for the French working class and a victory for American imperialism. A third world war is brought a stage nearer. Fascism is now raising its head in a manner reminiscent in some respects of Hitler's rise to power. All the forces of reaction are heartened and strengthened at the expense of the working class, particularly in the metropolitan countries. The important question with which the Marxists of the world must get to grips is this: why and how did de Gaulle achieve such a major victory so painlessly?

ONE immediate reason for de Gaulle's victory is, of course, the worsening economic crisis. France is bankrupt as a result of the Algerian war. Foreign loans have been exhausted, and the only way forward for the French bourgeoisie is to reduce drastically the standard of living of the working class. Up to now it has been impossible to do this on the scale needed, because of militant resistance. A new offensive against French Labour stands high on dictator de Gaulle's agenda. Another and equally important reason would seem to be the contradiction between the political passivity of the working class and the gravity of the military and economic issues that confront them. Right up to de Gaulle's accession a series of important strikes was in progress among bank employees, civil servants and office workers. But when it came to a strike on the political issue of preventing his taking power, apart from Nantes and St Nazaire—always centres of working-class militancy—the response was poor.

IT would be a superficial reading of events to assume that the struggle in France is at an end, that the defeat is decisive. It would be no less wrong to fail to draw the necessary conclusions—and they are bound to be harsh ones—from the actions of the Communist Party and Socialist Party of France. They are the main political parties of the French workers. But their policies have led to their being politically discredited as never before.

MARXISTS long ago reached quite clear and definite conclusions about French social democracy, as about social democracy in general. Since the beginning of the first world war the parties of the Second International have presided over one defeat after another, have been guilty of one betrayal after another, in country after country. The policies of social democracy are policies of class collaboration, and in the end they lead the workers, not to socialism, but to the slaughter-house of fascism. Take any social-democratic party and you will find fundamentally the same type of leader—little men grovelling after parliamentary honours, and aping the political leaders of the bourgeoisie. They preach peace between the classes. They are the most violent opponents of revolutionary change. They will support the vilest forms of capitalist reaction against the working class, provided they are found jobs in some department of the administration. They have no scruples about torturing and butchering the colonial peoples or breaking strikes, provided the powers that be can spare them a few crumbs. The main quarrel of Right-wing social democracy with reactionary régimes is not about their brutality (what Mollet condoned in Algeria is known to all) but rather because these régimes see no further use for the social democrats and eventually get rid of them.

GUY MOLLET is a twentieth-century Right-wing social democrat. He has pursued the policies of collaboration to their logical conclusion. Standing four-square against the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist State, he realistically defends it to the last ditch under de Gaulle. Now Hugh Gaitskell will in the last resort act no differently from Mollet. When Gaitskell complains about the difficulties of British Labour in judging 'our French comrades', he is merely serving notice that when he is faced with the choice of military dictatorship in Britain or the establishment of workers' power, he will, come what may, support the Army High Command—provided he and his colleagues get due recognition for services rendered. No Marxist should have cause for surprise about the part played by French—or

for that matter British—Right-wing social democracy. Naturally we separate these leaders completely from the sincere militants in their parties, in the ranks as well as the leadership, who have fought gallantly against the policies of the Mollets and the Gaitskells.

FOR Marxists the supreme lesson of France is once more the lesson of Stalinism: the way it rots and chokes and stifles the working-class movement. The policy of the French Communist Party, like that of its British counterpart, is the policy of so-called 'peaceful co-existence' between the Soviet Union and the imperialist powers. In practice this means class collaboration, because if you want to exist peacefully with imperialism you cannot at the same time stand for its overthrow. Since the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union in the early twenties, this has been the foundation-stone of Soviet policy and, along with social democracy, it has led to one defeat after another for the international working class: the defeat of the German revolution in 1923, the defeat of the 1926 General Strike in Britain, the defeat of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, Hitler's victory in Germany, Franco's victory in Spain. The Soviet bureaucracy pursues what are in essence reformist policies, similar to those of social democracy in their accommodations to imperialism. The result for the working class is always defeat, and France to-day is only one more vivid and instructive example.

FRANCE'S Communist Party emerged from the second world war with the largest membership of any Communist Party outside the Soviet zone. It controlled the CGT (General Confederation of Labour), which at that time had a membership of six million. The party had the backing of a powerful Resistance movement. A great number of its militants had died courageously in the struggle against Nazi occupation, and this fact alone gave it tremendous prestige. Facing it was a discredited bourgeoisie, who had either fled to North Africa, supported Pétain or collaborated with the Nazis. When General de Gaulle became head of the Free French provisional government in Britain it was immediately recognized by the Soviet Union and supported by the British and French Communist Parties. This provisional government had as its main aim the reconstruction of the capitalist State in France under the jurisdiction of the allied powers, and it enjoyed the full support of Thorez and Duclos, the principal leaders of the French Communist Party. With the defeat of the Nazis the French working class, arms in hand, had power within its grasp. But at that very moment the Communist Party saw to it that the Resistance move-

ment was disarmed and power handed over to de Gaulle's provisional government. France must have 'one State, one army and one police force', declared Thorez not long after his return from Moscow at the end of 1944. True to the Soviet policy of 'peaceful co-existence', the French Communist Party disarmed the workers and consolidated the capitalist State. Step by step since then it has continued supporting that policy, right down to voting for Pflimlin's special powers, which were promptly handed over to de Gaulle when he took charge. This class collaboration, by Thorez no less than by Mollet, made an enormous contribution to de Gaulle's victory. This can be seen when one studies the evolution of the French Communist Party since the end of the war. From six million the membership of the CGT has dwindled to scarcely more than one million. From one million the numerical strength of the Communist Party has declined to some 400,000. Its Paris evening paper *Ce Soir* long ago went out of existence, and the circulation of *Humanité* and its regional Press has dropped from year to year.

STALINISM'S liberal apologists and blind followers, who conveniently forget even the most recent history, noisily remind us that French communists voted against de Gaulle inside the National Assembly and called upon the workers to demonstrate against him outside. Just so. A similar thing happened in Germany before Hitler took power. For five years the German Communist Party denounced the social democrats as 'social-fascists', thus splitting the Labour movement from top to bottom. It was this split which brought Hitler to power. But a short time before fascism triumphed the line was changed. Hasty proposals for a united front were made. By then it was too late. This, of course, did not prevent the apologists for Stalinism from making the false claim that theirs was the 'policy of the united front' in that fatal period.

MARXISM is the science that prepares the working class for power. For this it is necessary to win the confidence of the working class by consistently demonstrating to the workers in the course of their struggle the correctness of Marxist policies. It is just this which the French Communist Party, like the German Communist Party twenty-five years ago, has failed to do. Instead, it turned its back on power and collaborated with the capitalist State.

BUT, our liberals and fellow-travellers may ask, was it not necessary to defend French democracy? And did not the French Communist Party have this at

heart when it voted for Pflimlin's decrees? Here is an old source of confusion, with which before the war the Stalinists justified the class collaboration of the Popular Front government. To the working class democracy means the right to organize, demonstrate, express their political opinions and struggle. To maintain these democratic rights means a constant struggle against the capitalist State. So long as it is possible to defend their power and privileges through a parliament elected via the ballot box, the capitalists maintain their 'democratic' façade. But the moment this is no longer possible they quickly prepare their State for more authoritarian measures. The fate of the working class of France is not bound up with the capitalist 'democratic' state of Pflimlin or Mollet, but with its ability as a class to defend the democratic rights won through struggle. This defence is inseparable from the fight to overthrow the capitalist State and replace it with a workers' State based upon the organizations of the working class. By tying the French working class to Pflimlin and his State machine, the French Communist Party in effect voted for de Gaulle. The decrees which Pflimlin demanded gave support to General Salan, and General Salan in turn brought de Gaulle to power.

THE anti-Marxist policies of the French Communist Party should be studied and assessed in the light of the appalling revelations at the Twentieth Con-

gress. No serious student of Marxism can understand what happened in France without a detailed, serious and objective examination of the history of Stalinism. It is not possible to appreciate Khrushchev's private message to de Gaulle without appreciating the Stalinist policies pursued over the decades by the bureaucracy in the USSR. When thousands of members of the German Communist Party were rotting in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany Molotov could assure Ribbentrop that 'fascism was a matter of taste'.

LIKE the French Communist Party, the British Communist Party paves the way for working-class defeat in Britain because it remains a Stalinist party, with Stalinist methods and a Stalinist programme: *The British Road to Socialism*. (If ever a document deserved the appellation 'revisionist', that is the one.) But militant workers are less and less deceived by Stalinism. That is why the Communist Party came such a cropper at Wigan. Workers feel in their bones that what happened in France could happen here. For British Marxists, who face the task of forging a new and vigorous leadership of the British Labour movement, the lessons of France are of paramount importance. Events are moving swiftly. The opportunities that confront us are immense. We shall pay a heavy price if we fail to grasp them.

An Independent Socialist Weekly

THE NEWSLETTER

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Strike Strategy

ELSEWHERE in this issue Bob Potter, a London bus conductor and a member of the Battersea strike committee during the recent dispute, discusses that dispute, its background and its lessons. The London busmen, portworkers and Smithfield market men have each won a partial victory. That is to say, they have held their positions against the offensive of the employing class. There has been no breach in the front. They have demonstrated a degree of combativeness and awareness of what was at stake that has greatly surprised, not to say alarmed, both the employers' Press and the trade union leaders. The first round is over. The need now is for the whole working class to absorb and assimilate, as deeply as possible, the lessons of these struggles, so that they enter the second round in fighting trim. And the second round may not be long delayed: the *Economist* is already calling openly for what it describes as a 'blacklegs' charter'.

THERE are four outstanding lessons of the recent dispute. First, vigorous rank-and-file activity and a powerful rank-and-file movement are urgently needed. One of the glaring weaknesses of the bus strike was the failure of the official leadership to harness the latent energy and creative initiative of the ordinary members. What is needed is a national network of rank-and-file bodies, with efficient liaison and a central organ, so that information can be pooled, experiences shared and generalized, and the sense of participating in a common class battle fostered. Secondly, the incapacity of the trade union leaders has been abundantly demonstrated. The General Council of the Trades Union Congress has rightly earned the contempt and hostility of great numbers of workers by its active hindering of any extension of the bus strike. Frank Cousins, too, though it is true he led his members into a fight, displayed all the weaknesses that led to the Covent Garden sell-out last year. He advocated a return to work on terms tantamount to surrender and was decisively rebuffed by his members. He failed to extend the struggle, even within his own membership. Yet an extension to tanker-men would have been the speediest and most effective way of forcing the Government to give in or get out. This brings us to the third lesson. The main difference between the industrial disputes of 1945-57 and those of this new period is that an industrial challenge to the employers now implies, from the outset, a political challenge to their government. This is so however little it may be understood by any particular section at any particular stage. And this aspect is going to become increasingly important as the struggle opens out, and as section after section, in its resistance to the capitalist class offensive, finds itself facing not merely its own employers but the whole force of the capitalist State. The fourth lesson, the most fundamental of all, follows from the other three: there is a burning need for a comprehensive strike strategy which the working class may counterpose to the strategy of its enemies.

GONE are the days when the workers could afford to fight each partial and limited struggle as if it were an isolated incident, separated by a Chinese

wall from what was going on in other industries. The pattern of sackings, victimizations and wage refusals is now utterly clear. There is an unmistakable central plan, which peeps out occasionally in the dailies and weeklies written for ruling-class consumption; it is a broad strategic plan to throw back the workers section by section. This is called 'disciplining' them. The need to isolate each section under attack is openly spoken of. The great tragedy of the recent struggle was the way the railwaymen's leaders fell in with the Government's strategy and accepted a 3 per cent. increase offered with the aim of preventing a united struggle of busmen and railwaymen. The need to forestall such divisions in the future has got to be burned into the consciousness of the workers. Every propagandist, agitator and steward, every writer of leaflets, every militant, every branch official, must hammer home to those he leads and influences, again and again, the fact that the only way to resist employers who stick together against the workers is for the workers to stick together in their turn, to see their common interest as a class, to sink the sectional differences, inter-union rivalries and craft prejudices that stand in the way of solidarity action. In this respect the example of the Trolley Street dockers is a very fine one. True to their traditions, these men stubbornly refused to be bullied or cajoled by union officials into handling meat that a strike of fellow-workers had rendered 'black'. This is the spirit that needs to be infused into every industry, so that every attack can be met with solid, united and determined resistance. We have no wish to glorify or flatter the dockers: but it is a plain fact that at this moment, thanks to a combination of circumstances, including a stormy history rich in experiences of struggle, these workers are in the vanguard of their class. They have much to teach, and it is important that their principles—this 'quixotry' that so galls and irritates the *Manchester Guardian*—should be universally recognized as the guiding rules of working-class conduct and working-class morality.

WE propose to return to this question of strike strategy in subsequent issues. We believe that the future of the British working class for decades to come may well be shaped in these next two or three years. We would add that the course of the recent struggles has once again shown beyond a shadow of doubt that neither the Fabian nor the Stalinist trade union leaders have any strategy whatever for defeating the Tory offensive. Once again the Marxists are vindicated. This is because Marxists understand the real significance of the class struggle, base their analyses and their activity on it, and raise the question, not merely of partial victories within the framework of the capitalist system, but of the overthrow of that system altogether. Only on the basis of Marxism, which understands the workers' needs, interests, role and tasks as a class, which sees the conquest of working-class power as the fundamental aim of the class struggle, can a successful strategy for the day-to-day struggle of the workers against the employers and their Government be worked out and applied.

London Busmen in Battle

Bob Potter

THE busman's is a job with as many shifts as there are buses on the road. Ours is a job where you are called upon to work hardest when everybody else is resting. If the bus strike has achieved anything, it has brought the working conditions and rates of pay to public notice. This article is designed to give the background to the strike, to draw the lessons, and to put proposals for the future.

DETERIORATION OF THE JOB

There is not a job in the country that has deteriorated so much in pay and conditions as has the bus industry. The last time we were on official strike was in 1937—twenty-one years ago. The strike lasted four weeks 'for the right to live a little longer', and was fought mainly on the issue of reducing the working day.

Over the years we established 7 hours 20 minutes as the maximum spell of duty. In 1956 a new agreement came into effect, which gave busmen a maximum day of 8 hours 15 minutes—the longest for twenty-five years. The quality of uniforms issued has gone from bad to worse, as the London Transport Executive 'economizes' on material. Many of the staff find rashes developing on their legs, and women are obliged to wear stockings under their trousers for protection. It is a brave man who gets his uniform cleaned—it generally falls to pieces as a result, and he is obliged to wear his own trousers until the next uniform issue.

Compare general working conditions with those of thirty years ago. The average takings of a conductor were about £3 a day, the bus carried thirty-four passengers, average speed was 10 miles per hour, the weekly wage £3 10s. Today the average takings are between £13 and £20, the bus has fifty-six seats, and will soon have sixty-five, travelling speed is 30 m.p.h. by law, but is often 40 m.p.h., and the weekly wage, including the 8s. 6d. award, is £9 18s. The busman works eleven days a fortnight, and is paid time and a half on Sunday, and approximately time and a quarter for Saturday afternoon and evening.

From the second best trade union rate before the second world war, the London busman's rate has gone down to about fifty-sixth on the list.

SPEED UP

The last few years have seen a great speed up and intensification of work. For example, look at my own route 31. We travel from Chelsea to Camden Town, a distance of eight miles. There are forty-three stops on the route, twenty-six of which are compulsory, and the maximum running time in the peak period is forty-four minutes. That is just one minute from one stop to the next, load and unload. On the same route there are twenty sets of traffic lights—catch half of them, and there are ten minutes to be made up somehow.

To help the conductor work harder, the Gibson ticket machine has recently been introduced: it weighs 3½lb. Many medical experts fear it will have an adverse effect on the health of the wearers—particularly the women.

This apart from the fact that it is often impossible for a conductor to get inside the bus, between stops, wearing this 'infernal machine' if he has standing passengers.

ACCIDENTS

Naturally this speed up means danger on the roads. Accidents are more frequent than the public realize. I have the figures for Battersea garage for April and May of last year.

With eighty buses, there were no fewer than 66 accidents—which means that, on an average, every bus is expected to be involved in an accident every three months. The time spent on repair of these buses was 382 hours. Battersea has two types of bus, one six inches wider than the other. It is significant that exactly twice as many accidents occur with the wider bus. The new Routemaster will be of the wider type, so we must expect the figure to increase. Battersea garage is a small shed—what must the figures be like on a fleet level?

Every new schedule means more buses are taken off the road. That means longer queues, with more abuse for the conductor when he does arrive, harder work, more speeding, more danger.

Even the Court of Inquiry under Sir John Forster stated that cutting buses does not help the LTE financially, as more passengers walk because they are tired of waiting, and takings therefore drop.

Last April saw a 4 per cent. cut in services. While the strike was in progress, an announcement about a further 10 per cent. cut was placed in the garages. On these grounds the LTE is failing to provide an adequate service as required by the Transport Act. Were London Transport a private concern, Elliot and his stooges would be sacked for inefficiency.

LOSS OF STAFF

This speed up and deterioration have led to a fantastic staff turnover. Taking the six months ending June 1957, and comparing them with the same period five years previously, the total road staffs employed have declined as follows:

| | Decrease | Percentage |
|------------------------------|----------|------------|
| Drivers and conductors | 6,416 | 13.6 |
| Shop grades | 1,524 | 23.3 |
| Inside staffs | 2,271 | 21.3 |
| Total staffs | 10,211 | 16.2 |
| Vehicles | 850 | 8.3 |

It is interesting to note that at the same time as the 'earning' staff has decreased, the number of supervisors has increased. In the period under review the number of supervisors has increased by 298 (9.6 per cent.), meaning that there is slightly more than one supervisor to each three vehicles.

MONEY

Most people realized that the busmen were justified in asking for more money, but believed, due to government-sponsored propaganda, that London Transport and

the British Transport Commission being 'in the red', it was not possible to grant the increases demanded.

Just glance at the money paid out by the Transport Commission in 1956:

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| To former shareholders | £36,000,000 |
| To interest on loans | £13,000,000 |
| Fuel oil tax | £4,500,000 |
| Total £53,500,000 | |

Is it surprising that the Commission can announce only a 'marginal profit'?

The ex-shareholder has never been better off. Original £1 investments were bought for six £1 guaranteed 3 per cent. British Transport stock certificates. The ex-shareholder has either sold out and reinvested, or enjoys his regular interest payments, with no risks attached—payments that are to continue well into the next century.

Had the recent budget reduced fuel tax by half, to 1s. 3d. per gallon, the money saved would have easily met the 10s. 6d. wage claim.

INCREASED TAKINGS

Apart from the millions of pounds paid away, the increased takings of the LTE would more than meet the £2 million wage claim. The fares revenue figures of the LTE for the first forty-four weeks of 1957, compared with the same period of 1956, show a net revenue gain of £4,315,000. Calculate these figures over fifty-two weeks, and the gain would be at least £5 million. Increased takings could have met the 25s. originally demanded, without fare increases or 'economies'.

PAY RISES FOR SOME

The money is soon found when it is for the Executive. Sir John Elliot, chairman of London Transport, had a pay increase of £500, back-dated to July 1, 1957. His deputy-chairman did even better—his pay went up by £2,000. Even the three part-timers—Lord Williams, C. J. Geddes and S. H. Leake—received an extra £500 apiece. They vote a 50 per cent. increase for themselves, but resent the idea of giving the busmen an extra 5 per cent.

WHY THE JOB HAS DETERIORATED

Much of the responsibility for the worsening conditions must be placed on bad trade union leadership. Under Deakin the busmen led the wage-freeze movement. Other sections of the working class increased their wages, while the busmen stayed put. Deakin was more interested in hunting communists than in fighting for his membership.

The election of Frank Cousins as general secretary was therefore hailed by many as a real step forward. His Left-sounding speeches impressed the more militant of the membership. No one will deny that Cousins is an improvement on his predecessors, for he does keep some sort of liaison with the rank and file, and all major decisions are referred back. But the bus strike has shown that he is incapable of leading the Transport and General Workers' Union in resistance to the present Tory attack against the nationalized industries.

THE TORY OFFENSIVE

The refusal of the LTE to budge an inch must be seen as part of a general attack, directed by the Tory Government, against the working class. The Tories are

determined to drive down living standards, and to do this they need to smash the organized Labour movement. The struggles of the London busmen, dockers and market men are all part of one fight. It is highly unfortunate that these various sections were not brought closer together. Not only would it have made the issue clearer, but the dockers' rank-and-file militancy could have been infused into the ranks of the busmen.

MONEY NOT THE REAL ISSUE

Early in negotiations Frank Cousins asked the LTE if they would be prepared to discuss a 6s. 6d. increase all round. Sir John Elliot had already agreed to pay 8s. 6d. to central London busmen, and the proposal, had it been acceptable to both sides, would not have cost London Transport one penny more than they had agreed to pay. But Sir John said 'No'. This showed that money was not the real issue. In an attempt to split one section from another, the Forster report had recommended 8s. 6d. for central London busmen, and nothing for inside staffs and country services; London Transport was carrying on the same policy.

The day the strike began the political correspondent of *The Times* wrote: 'It is important to the Government that the bus strike should remain isolated from the dispute over railway pay.'¹ The Government realized that a united front of workers could have forced a change in Westminster. So Sidney Greene was playing the Tories' game when he sold out the members of the National Union of Railwaymen for 3 per cent. It was a stab in the back for the busmen. But for the bus dispute the railwaymen would have got nothing.

TRADE UNION AND LABOUR PARTY LEADERS UNPREPARED

There was no lack of capacity or willingness on the part of the busmen and other sections of the TGWU to carry the fight to a finish. The trade union leadership, including Cousins, was not prepared to meet an all-out offensive by the employers with an all-out counter-offensive by Labour. To have extended the dispute would have meant not only a victory for the busmen as a section, but quite possibly the overthrow of the Tory Government and its replacement by a Labour government.

This Labour Government would have been returned through the power of the working class, rejecting any wage freeze or reformist policies designed to bolster up capitalism. The Trades Union Congress and Cousins faced great dangers in the course of the bus dispute: a mass movement of this character would have swept away all hopes of a mixed economy and placed important social advances on the order of the day.

The TUC and the Labour leaders are committed to the maintenance of capitalism. They fear any movement that can show the working class its power and ability to overthrow a government by class action. So the stage was set for the containment and destruction of the London bus dispute.

THE LESSONS

Above all we must recognize that the struggle of the working class is a struggle against capitalism as a whole. The principle of solidarity action, with all sections helping each other, is the only one that can win our immed-

¹ *The Times*, May 5, 1958.

iate, limited demands. A rank-and-file movement and a rank-and-file leadership must be built, with the aim of ending capitalism. This is not a far-fetched idea, for the immediate questions of wages and conditions are so closely linked with the fundamental anomalies of our society that you cannot solve the immediate problems without struggling for long-term solutions.

This rank-and-file movement will also have to turn its attention to the transformation of the Labour Party. The vast majority of the busmen are solid Labour supporters, yet neither on the immediate question of their dispute nor on that of Labour's future policy towards the BTC have the Labour leaders proposed any working-class solutions. The same reformist outlook of the Right-wing trade union leaders is reflected in the political leadership of Gaitskell and Brown.

The battle against the Right-wing leaders of the TUC is part of the struggle against the Tories. These men must be exposed and removed from office. They are the fifth column of the Tory Party.

THE FUTURE

The busmen have been fighting with two handicaps:

- 1) Inadequate leadership.
- 2) The busmen's lack of experience.

It must be remembered that this is the first large-scale dispute for two decades. Unlike other sections—dockers, meat-market men and road haulage men—the busmen have not had the experience of Right-wing betrayals.

They have not got a powerful rank-and-file movement down below, which can only be built against such a background.

An example of this is the instructive contrast between the Smithfield market men and the busmen. The Smithfield men's stoppage is completely unofficial. They have been on strike for eight weeks, yet are as powerful and determined as ever. The lesson is obvious. The Smithfield men and the dockers, out of their experience, have built up a powerful rank-and-file-movement that is

capable of rejecting the official leadership and maintaining the confidence of the workers during a prolonged and difficult dispute.

The busmen will undoubtedly take the same path. Reformism has no future. Capitalism will push until it achieves its main aim of cutting wages and living conditions. The problems of wage increases and the protection of workers' conditions will soon become much more acute. Only a rank-and-file movement of the kind I have mentioned will be able to solve these problems.

Marxists will have a most important part to play in this movement, for only those committed to the use of working-class strength to solve both industrial and political problems can give any effective leadership. The winning of tens of thousands of militant industrial workers for Marxist ideas in the course of the struggle is the only effective way to smash reformism and end capitalism.

THE STRIKE BULLETIN

Published as a supplement to *The Newsletter*, the first issue of the *Strike Bulletin* appeared three days before the strike began. Written entirely by rank-and-file workers, it won immediate support in the garages, on building sites and in the docks. Within a month weekly sales exceeded 20,000 copies. It was the only publication to give active guidance to the strikers and it served as a basis for bringing together dockers and busmen, market men and railwaymen, all involved in a common battle with the employing class and its Government. The *Strike Bulletin* laid the basis for a rank-and-file movement by attempting to link the different industrial struggles and by pointing out their political implications.

This is creative Marxism: not to impose our ideas on the workers, but to encourage them to develop their own ideas, from which we can learn a very great deal. The continuation of a regular publication of this kind, with the widest possible sale and the widest possible participation of militants in its production, is essential if the rank-and-file movement is to grow and go forward.

The Crisis, the Budget and the Workers

Tom Mercer

THE present American economic crisis was foreseen by many people, including people close to the Administration of the USA itself, but nothing was done to try to avert it. Nothing was done, not because Treasury officials like Robert B. Anderson or big business tycoons like Henry Ford Jr, who foresaw the crisis, are evil and stupid. Nothing was done because nothing could be done without precipitating the very crisis they wanted to avoid.

The causes of crises are inherent in the capitalist economic system. This present crisis has its origins not in the events of last autumn, but thirteen years ago at the beginning of the post-war boom in 1945.

OVER-PRODUCTION OF PRIMARY COMMODITIES

At the end of the war there was a shortage of every type of commodity: food, industrial raw materials, metals and so on. As a result, the primary producing countries (mainly colonial and semi-colonial countries) stepped up production to the maximum. Capital poured into countries like South Africa, the Belgian Congo, Rhodesia, Australia, Malaya, India, Pakistan, the Arab countries of the middle East, Canada, Venezuela, Chile and Bolivia.

Investment in copper, tin, lead, zinc, oil, aluminium, nickel, tungsten, jute, wool and cotton vastly increased.

The post-war boom pushed up prices in spite of the ever increasing production of these commodities. One complicating factor was that the USA, itself the world's greatest industrial country, is also one of the biggest producers of some of the primary products. For example oil, cotton, copper, lead, zinc and wheat are produced there in abundance. There was, in the end, too great an abundance from all sources for the capitalist world to absorb.

By the spring of 1957 most primary products were being over-produced. Prices began to fall. The USA protected its own primary producers by cutting back production, paying compensation for loss of production (e.g., paying farmers doles for leaving good land uncultivated) and offering guaranteed prices to farmers and others. American granaries are bulging with grain. There are surpluses of wheat, butter, rice and cotton. The USA tried to give away the food but Canada objected on the grounds that this form of charity was ruining Canadian trade.

But the other primary producers, i.e., the colonial and semi-colonial countries, could not afford to deal with their surpluses in this manner. Unlike the USA they lived in the main from the sale of such products; guaranteed prices and governmental buying up of the surpluses were impossible.

By May 1957 world prices of many primary products were falling, though the price movements were not even. Some products, copper for example, were in over-supply long before others. Naturally these prices fell first, but generally speaking it was in the late spring of 1957 that the fall in prices of primary products became serious.

Let us consider, as an important example, copper. In the early spring of 1955 a ton of copper fetched over £430, a year later £350, in May 1957 £240 and today £174. Again, in May 1956, lead was £110 per ton. By May 1957 it was still £104, but today it is down to £72. Some prices have fallen further than others. Some have been maintained by cuts in production. But whether production is cut and prices maintained or whether prices are cut and production maintained or both are cut together, the incomes of the producer countries have fallen. Consequently markets in the primary producing countries for manufactured goods from Europe and the USA have contracted. It is 'difficult' to sell motor-cars to paupers.

THE INDUSTRIAL CRISIS IN THE USA

At the end of the war, there were shortages of many commodities in the USA, particularly of industrially produced consumer goods. There was also an enormous pent-up demand with high incomes and high 'saved' incomes to back it up. That was the background of the post-war boom. Many of the shortages in the USA, Europe, and indeed throughout the whole capitalist world, were such that only American industry could satisfy them. Of course American industry did its utmost to satisfy demand. Huge investments were made in industry. New labour-saving machinery was introduced. New industrial processes were developed. New materials, such as plastics and the whole range of 'petrochemicals', were brought out. New sources of power such as atomic energy have been, and are, in process of rapid development. All this required large investments of capital. Industry expanded into the agrarian southern

states of the USA and productivity and production increased both in the new and the old industrial centres. The result was an unprecedented boom.

There were only two brief setbacks, in 1949-50 and in 1953-54. Both were largely due to changes in production. In 1949-50 there was the switch to rearmament at the beginning of the Korean war. In 1953 there was a new switch, after the Korean armistice, from war production to more normal peacetime production—though there remained huge government expenditure on armaments. These changes led to a running-down of stocks and necessitated adjustments in the emphasis placed on the type of product turned out. As a result, there was in these years a measure of unemployment, but no serious fall in investment.

THE END OF THE BOOM

In the last quarter of 1957, however, the boom came to an end. Investment levelled off. In manufacturing industries development actually fell, with the expectation of a further fall in 1958, a decline which is now happening. This fall of investment has all the features of a classical capital-goods crisis. By the end of 1957 it was clear that the USA was at the beginning of an economic crisis of over-production—a type of crisis which has regularly afflicted capitalist society since the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Production of steel fell. Steel production is universally regarded as the most sensitive barometer of general industrial activity. In January and February 1958 total steel production was 12,489,000 tons, compared with 21,047,000 tons in the same period of 1957. This is a fall of more than 40 per cent.

Steel production in the USA this week is estimated by the American Iron and Steel Institute as 1,283,000 tons as compared with 1,308,000 tons last week and 2,313,000 tons in the corresponding week of last year. The output in the past week was 48.53 per cent. of 1958 capacity.¹

Last week, U.S. Steel Mills operated below 50 per cent. of capacity for the third successive week. Production was 1,285,000 tons . . . Scheduled production this week totals 1,265,000 tons.²

By the last week in April production had fallen to 46.9 per cent. of 1958 rated capacity. The same trend can be seen in the automobile industry: 'U.S. first quarter car sales down by 25 per cent.'³

The *Financial Times* of April 26, 1958, wrote under the headline 'Output less than one half of 1957 rate': 'Car output in the USA for the week ending tomorrow will decline to an estimated 59,814 units.'⁴ 'Kennecott cuts production again; copper rate 67 per cent. of 1957 production.'⁵ The Kennecott Copper Co. is the largest copper producer in the world.

We can also use the more general measuring-rods of economic activity to illustrate this same decline. The gross national product in the USA for January, February and March 1958 was 8,600 million dollars below the annual rate for the first three months of 1957 and 16,000 million dollars under the 440,000 million dollars record in the third quarter of 1957.

¹ *Financial Times*, April 16, 1958.

² *Ibid.* April 24, 1958.

³ *Ibid.* April 16, 1958.

⁴ *Ibid.* April 26, 1958.

⁵ *Ibid.* April 18, 1958.

Unemployment figures naturally reflect this decline. The number of registered unemployed in the USA has been increasing month by month since the autumn of 1957 and in March the total was 5,189,000, the highest for nearly seventeen years.

The number of unemployed actually increased even in March, a month during which unemployment in the USA normally falls substantially, usually by between 100,000 and 200,000, as better weather brings people back to work in agriculture, building, road making and other seasonal jobs. Although employment in agriculture alone rose in March by 250,000, there was an increase of 25,000 in the number of registered unemployed. 'Manufacturing employment fell by 200,000 with the sharpest lay-offs in the motor industry, machinery industries and primary and fabricated metals.'⁶

Jules J. Bogan, Professor of Finance in New York University, has written:

The economy is experiencing a full-blooded depression instead of another inventory dip like that of 1948-49 and 1953-54. Such a depression would mean a durable goods-buying lull that could go on for two or three years with Government intervention ameliorating the ill effects.

It is true that if the Government determined to use credit and fiscal measures without restraint to halt the slide, it could do so. But there is a strong conviction in both political parties, that is also strongly held by the President, that the consequence would only be another short-lived inflationary boom . . . with an even more severe collapse following.⁷

In short Professor Bogan is saying that economic instability, with all its consequences, is inevitable under capitalism. The people in the U.S. Government who have to make decisions ignore the economic theorists—on the grounds that to take their advice would, in the end, make things 'worse'—worse, that is, for the capitalist monopolists whom the present U.S. Government represents.

RECENT TRENDS IN BRITAIN'S ECONOMY

Since the autumn of 1955 the Tory Government and the City of London (i.e., the political and financial wings of big business) have been operating a policy of economic restriction. The cost of financing industrial expansion, both for old and new industries, has steadily risen. This rise resulted from deliberate policy and was achieved partly by putting up interest rates. Bank Rate was raised from 3½ per cent. to 4 per cent. near the time of the Butler autumn budget of 1955. Then, in February 1956, it was raised to 5½ per cent. In February 1957 it fell to 5 per cent., but was raised to 7 per cent. on September 19 of the same year. On March 20, 1958, it was reduced to 6 per cent, on May 22 to 5½ per cent. and on June 19 to 5 per cent.

Supplementing the increase in general interest rates which followed these Bank Rate changes was the credit squeeze. On the Government's instructions, the banks assessed the amount of credit advanced to commercial and industrial enterprises and to individuals. Again acting on Treasury instructions, the Capital Issues Committee of the Stock Exchange refused permission to raise capital on the Stock Exchange if it did not approve of its purpose. Local authorities and the nationalized industries were compelled to cut their investments. In spite of all these measures there have been balance of payment

crises each year over the past three years and there might well be another crisis this year.

THE CRISIS IS WORLD WIDE

It is not only the under-developed countries and Britain and America that are experiencing economic difficulties. The crisis has spread to all other countries, though naturally affecting them in different ways.

The present recession is world wide: it shows up in Russian surpluses of tin and aluminium or in Mr Khrushchev cutting the working week as well as in New Zealand's problem of the butter price, Rhodesia's loss of income from copper or in Detroit's unemployment . . . So far the U.K. has been fortunate to escape more than the slightest brush with the recession . . . Yet production as a whole has declined somewhat and can be expected to decline still more.⁸

In this way the organ of the City of London recognizes that the crisis of over-production is world-wide. Its leader writer could have added Germany, Japan, France, Scandinavia, Australia, South Africa, Latin America and others to the countries affected. He could also have stressed more urgently the effects of the crisis on the economy of this country. But to do so would have brought him and his paper into conflict with the Tory Government and particularly with Amory's Budget. The City of London is naturally not in conflict with the Government. On the contrary, it is in complete agreement with Amory.

THE BUDGET AND THE CREDIT SQUEEZE

The credit squeeze is still operating, and according to Amory is going to continue to operate. He said in his Budget speech: 'At home, our first priority must continue to be to finish the battle against inflation.'

This statement caused much surprise and was made in the face of a contradictory admission which he had made earlier in the same speech: 'The level of industrial production has tended to decline slightly in the last few months and unemployment has been rising. These trends may well go rather further during the rest of the year, but I do not think that a sudden sharp recession in this country in the coming months is likely.'⁹

The optimism about no 'sudden sharp recession' is just normal Treasury ballyhoo. But it is absolutely clear that the inflationary phase in world economy is already at an end, and statesmen who deny this fact must have some ulterior motive for doing so. British industrial investment is falling, just as it did in the USA, but this fall is being aggravated in Britain by the credit squeeze. Investment in the last quarter of 1957 was down in comparison with the same quarter of 1956. In Britain, further falls in production and a growth of unemployment are therefore inevitable. The trend all over the world is towards inflation's opposite, deflation—i.e., to a fall in the demand for goods. Wholesale prices of commodities are now beginning to fall. Retail prices will follow behind wholesale prices. The present price of butter indicates what is likely to happen to other consumption goods.

Yet Mr. Amory added: 'It is still necessary for the banks to hold down the level of advances and for the hire-purchase restrictions to be kept on. The Capital Issues Committee will continue for the present to main-

⁶ *Ibid.* April 9, 1958.

⁷ *Ibid.* March 20, 1958.

⁸ *Ibid.* April 24, 1958.

⁹ *The Times*, April 16, 1958.

tain their critical scrutiny.' In fact Amory accepts the whole policy of his predecessor, Peter Thorneycroft—a Bank Rate of 6 per cent. and one of 7 per cent. are both penal Bank Rates, deliberately calculated to reduce investment—especially that devoted to the expansion of production. Here indeed is the main function of this high Bank Rate, for after all it also costs the Treasury extra hundred of millions of pounds a year in financing the National Debt, and sterling held abroad.

On the important front of oversea markets, Britain's share of world trade has been steadily falling. The figures tell their own story.

SHARE OF WORLD TRADE IN MANUFACTURED GOODS (percentages)

| | 1950 | 1951 | 1952 | 1953 | 1954 | 1955 | 1956 | 1957 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| U.S.A. | 27.3 | 26.5 | 26.2 | 26.0 | 25.0 | 24.5 | 25.2 | 25.8 |
| Britain | 25.7 | 22.0 | 21.4 | 21.2 | 20.4 | 18.7 | 19.0 | 18.2 |
| Germany | 7.3 | 10.0 | 12.0 | 13.2 | 14.8 | 15.5 | 16.4 | 17.1 |

In the last six months Germany has overtaken Britain to become the second largest exporter of manufactured goods in the capitalist world.

THE REAL AIMS OF TORY ECONOMIC POLICY

The Tory Government and big business are using the crisis to fulfil their own aims. They are deliberately accentuating the effects of the crisis by their present policies, in order to beat down the standard of living of the working class.

They know that British manufacturers have been losing the battle for world trade to more powerful competitors in the USA and Germany.

It is also clear that with their falling incomes, due to the falling prices for their products and to cuts in production, the primary producing countries will not be able to buy as much from Europe and the USA as they did in the past.

The greatly extended productive capacity of manufactured goods of all the exporting countries is today coming into conflict with an ever-shrinking market. In this struggle Britain is particularly vulnerable. Her best customers last year were the USA, Australia, Canada, India, South Africa and New Zealand in that order. But these countries all find themselves in economic difficulty and must be expected to cut their imports during 1958.

In the USA the Tariff Commission is already recommending increased tariffs and quotas in the lead and zinc industries, to protect home producers. Tariff 'protection' will almost certainly be extended to other industries as the situation worsens.

The other countries mentioned have all suffered a serious reduction in their incomes and, in consequence, will be compelled to cut their imports. All this means that British exports, which are already falling, are likely to suffer further decline. (There were sunshine smiles after the New York motor show. But now they are 'grinning and bearing it'.)

This decline will mean reduced demand for British products and so less employment for British workers in the export trades. In turn, this unemployment will result in a fall in the demand for goods produced to be sold in the home market, followed necessarily by a further increase in unemployment.

Once under way, these spiral declines have always

proved very difficult, if not impossible, to halt—particularly since first one country then another will attempt to 'protect' its home industries, as the U.S. Tariff Commission is already doing.

But the British Government's economic policy since September 1957 (as continued by Amory's Budget) has had a curious air of unreality about it. To any outside observer, faced with the arrival of an economic crisis of over-production, the British Government has carried out a vigorous policy which appears to be aimed at accentuating, rather than delaying or mitigating, the effects of the crisis. Do the Tories really want to deepen

the economic crisis? Naturally not. But it so happens that at this period their principal political aim does coincide with a policy of aggravating economic crisis.

Ever since the war, in opposition and in office, the Tories have steadily, with clear purpose, sought by control of the economy to create a state of affairs where they could cut the standards of living of the British workers. They want to introduce enough controlled unemployment and to produce enough instability ('flexibility') into industry to restore what their quack industrial psychologists, their joint consultative councils, their tame trade union leaders and all the 'class-peace' paraphernalia of the Welfare State have been unable to restore—the same degree of economic and political subjection of the working class to its bosses (they call it 'discipline') which they used to impose.

It will indeed be a terrible time for the people of Britain if the Tory Government is not prevented from carrying through its reactionary policies to fruition. Only the working class stands in its path.

THE LABOUR MOVEMENT AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

The Labour movement can end for ever these constantly recurring economic crises. It will do so when it ends capitalist social relationships and creates a socialist order of society. Economic crisis is as much a part of capitalism as wage-slavery, profits, cut-throat competition and war. Capitalist crisis is one expression of the anarchy, i.e., the unplanned nature, of capitalist production of commodities. So long as industry is motivated by the drive for profit rather than the satisfaction of men's needs, so long will it endure the evil effects of unplanned production—instability, inefficiency and 'over-production'. The only final answer to economic 'blizzards' is socialism.

However, there is unfortunately a far cry between socialism and the policy put forward by Harold Wilson in Parliament after Amory's Budget, or the policies adopted by the Labour Party at Brighton in the document *Industry and Society*.

Economic instability is caused by the anarchy of capitalist production, by the arbitrary cutting down of investment at certain periods by capitalists when they cannot see a profit arising out of an investment. Con-

sequently, even though nationalization of industry while there is still a capitalist State does not mean that socialism has been achieved, the extension of nationalization at the present time (as the Scottish Trades Union Congress has demanded) would be one more important measure to combat the deepening of the crisis in Britain. For to put a stop to crises, the Government must first of all be in a position to plan production and investment with the aim of ensuring a continuous and proportional expansion of industry.

Consequently the campaign to commit the next Labour Government to an expansion of nationalization and to the conscious planning of production and investment in the nationalized industries to offset the effects of a world capitalist crisis is a campaign to help to defeat the crisis and to weaken the political and economic power of big business.

But even more important in the immediate future, it is necessary for the Labour movement to mobilize all its forces to defeat the present Tory offensive against

the standards of living of the working class. For at this moment to restrict the income of the working class would precipitate here in Britain the crisis of 'over-production' now spreading across the capitalist world. Wage cuts would, today, produce mass unemployment, depressed areas, hunger marches and all the nightmares of the 1930s.

No doubt, in the near future, trade unionists will receive plenty of 'sound practical advice' from all sorts of 'responsible' quarters, from editorial desks and professorial rostrums, from pulpits and plinths, from television 'experts' and the Moral Rearmament priests, on how to save Britain by 'sacrifices'. The call will go out on the need for Britain to compete with 'cheap foreign labour'. All this advice will consist of lies and distortions. The workers can defeat the coming crisis only by defending and extending their earnings, by overthrowing the Tory Government, by returning a Labour government and by preparing themselves to take power into their own hands and create a crisis-free socialist society.

Religion and Social Revolt

Cliff Slaughter

FOR the understanding of some of the great problems of human history, the study of religion is a necessity. What is the relationship between the social divisions among men and their beliefs about the nature of things? How do ruling classes ensure long periods of acceptance of their rule by those they oppress? Why were the 'Utopians' wrong in thinking that it was sufficient only to work out a reasonable arrangement of social relations in order to proceed to its construction? It was out of the examination of questions like this in the German school of criticism of religion that Marx emerged to present for the first time a scientific view of society. 'The criticism of religion is the beginning of all criticism.'

Marx not only advanced beyond the biblical criticism of men like David Strauss and Bruno Bauer in Germany, the Rationalists in France, and the great Tom Paine, to the theory of historical materialism and the stress on the economic basis of society. He laid at the same time the foundation of a new approach to the study of religion. The Old Testament theory of creation was really turned on its head, and the first principle for understanding religion is that 'man made God in his own image'. Feuerbach and others had realized that men projected on to a divine being all the virtues and powers of 'the human essence'. But Feuerbach conceived of man as an abstract, universal Man, so that he gave no key to the understanding of *changes* in religion in different historical periods, or the precise forms of religious practice and belief, or the conditions under which religion would disappear. The same fault recurs with modern writers who try to explain religious belief and experience psychologically rather than from their social foundations.

It is of course no longer possible for serious scholars to write about religion as though it were unconnected with social reality. The two books¹ which it is the main function of this article to discuss could not have been written 150 years ago. Although Cohn is concerned with the Europe of the Middle Ages, and Worsley with those Pacific islands known as Melanesia in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their subject matter is very similar. Each book is a description and an analysis of the Utopian religious cults produced by underprivileged and rebellious classes at an early stage of their development.

Like the religious systems of all class societies, Christianity is a set of beliefs whose meaning can be turned in different and sometimes opposite social directions. Since it is not a rational or scientific theory of the world its parts may be rearranged and selected according to the needs and inclinations of the faithful. For the revolutionary workers under modern capitalism religion is, without any qualification, part of the armoury of reaction. But in previous epochs, before the objective conditions existed for an oppressed class fully to comprehend social reality and achieve its own liberation, the framework of all social doctrine, reactionary and progressive, remained religious. The two-sidedness of Christian development (on the one hand, it served to defend feudal and then capitalist reaction, on the other it served as an ideological cover and inspiration for revolt) is rooted in the very nature of universal religions. In Marx's words, 'Religious misery is at the

¹ Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound*. A study of Cargo Cults in Melanesia (MacGibbon and Kee, 1957). Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (Secker and Warburg, 1957).

same time the *expression* of real misery and the *protest* against that real misery'.²

THE MEDIEVAL SECTS

During the Middle Ages there was always a strong, living tradition of heresy in Christendom. Even St Augustine of the fifth century, founder of the basic Catholic social teaching which justified feudal oppression, was in his early days a supporter of the Manichean heresy, with its principles of freedom, equality and community of goods.³ His teaching was later directed against the very powerful sects which attempted to draw communistic conclusions from the New Testament. Right through to the Reformation in the sixteenth century these rebellious sects, which insisted on the literal application of Christ's more radical injunctions, fought hard and often with great force against the established Church and the feudal ruling class of which the higher Catholic clergy were part. They opposed the dogma of the official theologians which, as Sean O'Casey once said, amounted to something like: 'Keep quiet, and you can hear the angels singing!' An idea which continually inspired these groups was the conviction that in a short time there would begin the kingdom of God on earth, the millennium, the earthly paradise. Cohn's book is the first detailed and complete study of the role of this idea, which was a survival from near-Eastern mysticism expressed most clearly in the Book of Revelation.

The heretical sects not only preached a form of communism, but also bitterly criticized the existing social order, with its privilege and oppression, as the negation of Christian ideals. Not least, the prelates and dignitaries of the Roman Church itself were an object of their attacks. From the nepotism and luxury of the Papal court to the everyday exploitation of serf labour on the estates of every national section of the Church (the Church was the largest landowner in every European country), the Holy Roman Church came to be seen as the very personification of evil—Antichrist. Criticism of the Church varied in intensity from one end of the social scale in the 'Third Estate' to the other. While the rich merchants, burghers and princes tended soon to make compromises, the peasants and the urban proletariat were the revolutionary core of the heretical movements. For example, it has been shown that the political and religious struggles in medieval Florence

ran a course determined by the needs of particular classes.⁴ First the big bourgeoisie opposed the Church as a restriction on its freedom, and incited an emotionally charged opposition among the lower strata, but once having achieved a modus vivendi it dropped its revolutionary ideas and tried to modify the highly emotional character of the religious life that had begun to grow among the people. It co-operated with the established power to arrest the progress of the small craftsmen and workers. Thus these religious struggles of the Middle Ages were not purely religious, but largely a reflection in religious ideas and religious organization of the social conflicts of feudalism in its latter phases.

Of course, the social elements opposed to Roman Catholic domination in each rising nation comprised a very unstable unity—from prosperous princes and merchants to starving peasants and unemployed vagrants. In every case these internal conflicts were quick to show through, both in the realm of ideas and in actual armed conflict. Two clear examples of this social conflict are the early fifteenth century Bohemian national movement, first great forerunner of the Protestant Reformation, and the Lutheran national revolt a hundred years later. In both cases the wealthier classes, having achieved an initial victory, turned with sword in one hand and Bible in the other to massacre the common people who wanted to advance from religious and limited political reform to social changes in the sphere of property and work. In broad summary, the ideas traced in such fascinating detail by Cohn, the ideas of the millennium and the Free Spirit, are the ideological expression of the extreme wing of this movement, reflecting the aspirations of the most oppressed and downtrodden social classes.

Particularly interesting to English readers, and to socialists, is an appendix to Cohn's book dealing with a hitherto little-known sect, the Ranters, who flourished in England at the time of the Puritan revolution. The ideas of this sect, here presented in their own words for the first time since their dispersal by Cromwell's government, are quite certainly in direct descent from the continental groups of centuries before. They also bear out the view summarized above, that millenarian ideas have their roots essentially in the lower strata of society, so that they become anathema to the victorious upper-middle classes. It was as necessary for Cromwell to crush the Ranters as to liquidate Lilburne's Levellers and Winstanley's Diggers. A few selections from their tracts will show their lack of appeal to a class so enamoured of compromise (with its 'betters', of course) as the British bourgeoisie. Coppe, their finest spokesman, addresses the propertied classes thus:

'Mighty men! . . . Those that have admired, adored, idolized, magnified, set you up, fought for you, ventured goods, and good name, limb and life for you, shall cease from you.' 'For this Honour, Nobility, Gentility, Propriety, Superfluity, &c. hath (without contradiction) been the Father of hellish horrid pride, arrogance, haughtiness, loftiness, murder, malice, of all manner of wickedness and impiety; yea the cause of all the blood that ever hath been shed, from the blood of the righteous Abell, to the blood of the last Levellers that were shot to death.' No wonder that Fox, the Quaker, found the Ranters, 'were very rude, and stirred up the rude people against us.'

² Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Introduction (1844). Quoted in Christopher Caudwell, *Further Studies in a Dying Culture* (1949), p. 75, and in K. Marx and F. Engels, *On Religion* (1957), p. 42.

³ Manicheism, widely accepted from the third to the fifth centuries, replaced Mithraism. It was founded by Mani, a Persian who lived in the third century, and was composed of elements of Christianity, of other religions and of pagan beliefs. The essential feature of the system is its dualism, whose principal elements are light and darkness, God and Satan, the soul and the body. Satan was represented as co-eternal with God, and man as created by Satan in his image, but containing particles of light. A conflict is in progress for the possession of mankind between the demons and the angels of light. When all the particles of captive light and the souls of the just have been set free the end of the world will come in a general conflagration. Manicheism spread eastward to China and westward to Europe, where it was especially strong in Bulgaria and southern France.

⁴ For a very fine summary of these class struggles see F. Antal, *Florentine Painting and its Social Background* (1947).

'Hear one word more (whom it hitteth it hitteth) give over thy base nasty, stinking, formall grace before meat, and after meat . . . give over thy stinking family duties, and thy Gospell Ordinances as thou callest them; for under them all lies snapping, snarling, biting, besides covetousnesse, horrid hypocrisie, envy, malice, evil surmising.'

'Kings, Princes, Lords, great ones, must bow to the poorest Peasants; rich men must stoop to poor rogues, or else they'll rue for it . . .

'Howl, howl, ye nobles, howl honourable, howl ye rich men for the miseries that are coming upon you.

'For our parts, we that hear the **Apostle** preach, will also have all things common; neither will we call anything that we have our own.

'Do you (if you please) till the plague of God rot and consume what you have.

'We will not, wee'll eat our bread together in singleness of heart, wee'll break bread from house to house.'⁵

MELANESIAN HERESIES

The movements described by Worsley arise in a context which is at first sight very different. In the twentieth century capitalism is a world system which is already in the grip of deadly contradictions. How can one draw a parallel with social phenomena rooted in the first stirrings of capitalism in feudal Europe? This objection is not without foundation. In Europe, the heresies were directed against the dominant power of the epoch. They reflected the most powerful forces of change within the social system, and persisted and developed over hundreds of years—until the victory of national States and the break-up of European feudalism. The Cargo cults, and other Utopian religious revolts of colonial areas in this century, represent a more transitory phenomenon, whose significance, course of development and historical fate have been very different. The essential economic and political framework of the Melanesian peoples today is the decline of imperialism and the world socialist revolution, despite the fact that a hundred years ago the South Seas were whole millennia behind this stage of world historical development. It is in this context that the short-lived and ephemeral character of the Cargo cults is to be understood. The medieval Christian heresies, on the other hand, reflected a slowly crumbling feudalism and the classes within it searching for an ideal expression for their misery and protest. The slowly maturing process of national unification, of the break-up of feudal property relations with the growth of trade, of the growth of capitalism within the feudal system: all this had its expression in the development of the anti-Catholic heresies. As has been indicated, the inner social conflicts of this process were reflected in religious belief.

But Worsley's Melanesians make their heresies in a new world, a world full of contradictory and uneven social phenomena, the result of the indiscriminate and plundering expansion of a dynamic and then quickly decadent economic system, modern capitalism. Over a hundred years ago the consequences of the expansion of capitalism were described by Marx and Engels.

Conservation of the old modes of production was . . . the first condition of existencē for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their

train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify.⁶

The dispossessed medieval peasant and worker experienced only the first rumblings of this transformation. In the period of imperialism, with capitalist relations rapidly and unevenly imposed in the most primitive social conditions, the consequent social disintegration is swift and thorough. New wants are introduced, new forms of exploitation are introduced, people's destinies become subject to the vagaries, no longer only of nature, but of the world market in raw materials and manufactured goods, and the struggle for world domination by the imperialist powers.

In many colonial or semi-colonial areas which were technologically backward and characterized by small-scale subsistence economies based on primitive cultivation, the fate of the 'Christianity' brought by the missionaries has been the same as that of the Roman Church in medieval Europe. People disorientated by economic and political disasters which had the force of natural calamities and yet were not of their own making at all, found in the Book of Revelation and the declamations of the Old Testament prophets a message which is at the same time a consolation for earthly misery and a unifying idea for a movement of protest against the oppressor. Worsley reminds us in this connexion of 'the Jesuit who was strongly opposed to making the Bible directly available to Chinese peasants because of the conclusions they drew from reading it: "from any point of the exegetical compass, a Chinaman can find his way up to the great rice problem."⁷ Worsley brings together all the published data on revolt in the Melanesian area, where the social structure was very different in scale from the medieval towns or the nascent nationalities. Any village of more than 200 inhabitants was exceptionally large, and would occur only in very fertile conditions. Yet from among these peoples was thrown up a succession of prophets and agitators who brought from the colonialists accusations almost identical with those used against the medieval heretics. For example, Apolosi, a Fijian prophet, was accused by a Government spokesman of 'intrigue, sedition, and lechery and debauchery on a heroic scale, ranging from drunken orgies to rape and incest'.⁸

Two essential factors explain the similarity between the millenarian movements of Melanesia and of medieval Europe. In the first place, there were background circumstances of masses of people being thrown into social insecurity through the dissolution of social bonds by the 'external' forces of the market, even though this was at two very different levels of economic development. Secondly, the search for ideological expressions of the frustrations and aspirations growing out of this social dislocation could work only through the 'thought-material' ready to hand. This relative autonomy and continuity of systems of thought always qualifies the reflection of social reality in men's minds. As Engels long ago pointed out,⁹ the expressions of social thought inevitably took religious form in the period between the Roman Empire and the rise of modern industry, because of the complete domination

⁶ Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1955 edition), p. 58.

⁷ Worsley, *op. cit.* p. 246.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 29.

⁹ Engels, *The Peasant War in Germany* (1956), p. 55.

⁵ Cohn, *op. cit.* pp. 360 ff.

of intellectual life by the Church, and the latter's role in maintaining a semblance of political organization in Europe after the collapse of Rome. Similarly in Melanesia the only semblance of education brought by the Europeans was mission education, Christian dogma, the ideology of reaction and not of the progressive tendencies in capitalist society, i.e., those of natural science and scientific socialism. The discovery of their true interests was thus a tortuous path for these victims of imperialism; they had to go through the experience of the 'thick end' of imperialism in its most decadent phase, and in addition their path to interpreting this experience had first to go through the distorted and backward ideology which was brought by the whites, an ideology long out of date.

THE COMING OF THE 'CARGO'

Thus in the early phase of their revolt the Melanesians threw up millenarian prophets, who called on the local people to prepare for the anticipated inauguration of God's rule on earth, or the coming of the 'Cargo'. Many of their activities and beliefs appear on a superficial view to be irrational. They destroyed crops and stopped working. At various times they built piers or air-strips to receive the 'Cargo' from the ancestors. But once we understand the indigenous religion, the impact of European rule and the confinement of education to the missions, then such behaviour is seen to have a perfectly sound logic of its own.

Into the self-sufficient and comparatively static island economy there is projected a group of whites who live much better than any native and yet never do a scrap of work. They simply wait for the Cargo to arrive by sea or air at regular intervals. These whites draw the natives into commercial relations which often threaten economic insecurity for the latter, yet the whites remain rich, able to manipulate the situation, and still without working. Already the Melanesians possessed religions which concentrated on material rewards and exchanges, and they often used magical techniques to supplement the efficiency of their real techniques. In face of the idle prosperity of the whites, what else could they conclude but that some superior spiritual or magical power was in the hands of the Europeans? One could not expect an isolated and uneducated people to appreciate the historical process which *in fact* brought manufactured goods and new foods to the European settlers, traders and administrators!

A very common conclusion from this situation was that the education given by the missionaries was deliberately incomplete, that there were certain books of the Bible which the whites kept to themselves so that with this exclusive magic they could monopolize the good things of life. The building of air-bases and the tremendous material paraphernalia brought by Australian and United States forces during the second world war encouraged this type of belief. During the war and just after it many elaborate Cargo cults were born. The crises of world imperialism were refracted through relatively isolated and primitive societies, and specific features of western capitalism were grafted on to particular types of primitive economy. These peculiar combinations of social systems were reflected in the realm of ideas, leading to distorted and exotic religious notions.

Yet while the Cargo cults lived in a world very

different from medieval Europe, they experienced a particular phase of imperialist decline which produced remarkable similarities to the religious phenomena of medieval European revolt. Very quickly the larger scale processes sweep aside temporary, isolated, accidental relationships and ideas, and consciousness broadens to embrace the wider reality. As in medieval Europe, the Utopian religious cults are not the only form of social revolt. Worsley shows how they gradually lose ground to strikes and political actions of a very 'modern' kind (including petitions to the United Nations!)¹⁰ Recent news of the sugar workers' strike in Fiji, supported by sections of the Australian working class, expresses the change of scope and significance of class struggles in this part of the world.

In Europe, the movements of revolt which included at various times the idea of the millennium were not to be emancipated from their religious trappings, despite the splendid dimensions reached by the Bohemian rising of the Taborites (who resisted the armed might of European feudalism for decades), by Wat Tyler's Peasant Revolt, and by the German Peasant War of the sixteenth century, led by a genius of agitation and organization, Thomas Münzer. In every national war political victories were won by the upper classes against the Roman Church, for it was the bourgeoisie, and not the peasantry or the urban poor, which at this stage of history was destined to succeed the feudal form of production and government. Until the development of modern industry, with conditions which make it possible for the first time in history for an oppressed class to achieve its own liberation, the lower classes of Europe were to meet this type of experience. The completion of the bourgeois revolution in France and in England saw the new ruling class turn on the common people who had supported its victories over absolutism. In Germany the bourgeoisie preferred the Kaiser and the Junkers to the dangers inherent in the extension of democracy to the working class. Fascism was the eventual outcome. In the conditions of crushing defeats for the first independent movements of peasants and workers in medieval times, the heretical cults turned to quietist mystical doctrines, and the pursuit of the millennium became removed to the spiritual sphere.

Worsley describes a very speedy transition in Melanesia from religious revolt to political opposition, with rational ends and means. The actual succession of phases in each particular area is different, according to the possibilities of open struggle, or the flux of defeat and partial advance; but the general tendency is always present. With the emergence of effective political opposition what remains of the mystical cults is no longer of political significance, and they soon constitute only an isolated and esoteric system of consolatory rites and dogma. Such was the fate of millenarian ideas in Europe too, but the future historian is likely to see the parallel as a very limited one. He will see the colonial peoples of our day drawn into a world social revolution in the space of decades. He will see, in the workers and peasants of this century, including those of the 'backward' countries, the force behind the next great stride forward in human history. The native bourgeoisie which emerges in areas like Melanesia does so in a very different context from the bourgeoisie which conquered in Europe. It is compromised by its ties with foreign

¹⁰ Worsley, *op. cit.* p. 197n.

capital, by the fact that it is rooted in the outer rings of Western imperialism rather than in the basic processes of its own society. It is destined to play only a very brief political and economic role. If a class is to take the reins of history on behalf of the nation it must be careful to be born at just the right time.

The most consistent support for the millenarian sects from the eleventh century onwards came from the lowest-paid and most insecure workers and vagrants of the early industrial centres and towns. In Melanesia a people whose traditional economy was precarious but adequate were decimated, exploited and dragged into the economic and political maelstrom of modern imperialism, experiencing all its irrationalisms, from rapid price fluctuations to 'total war'. In both situations men found in the apocalyptic teachings a form for their frustrations and aspirations. In each case the biblical material was re-worked into a form determined by the particular cultural level and material circumstances of the people concerned, so that where the Melanesians had Cargo cults the depressed Europeans looked to a 'Land of Cockayne'. But the essential content of all the millenarian cults is the same, despite the cultural differences. They are the actions and beliefs of a class which is confronted with tasks beyond its scope either to conceive scientifically or to solve practically. Thus the bourgeoisie, and not the peasantry or the urban poor, was to overthrow feudalism; in Melanesia, not the local community, but only the new links between local communities forged by new economic forces, could produce the necessary unity for the anti-imperialist struggle in its first stages.

MARXISM AS A METHOD OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH

It will be clear that these books provide a mass of new and very important material. At the same time, Cohn and Worsley differ in the interpretation of their subject-matter. Worsley writes as an avowed Marxist, and he shows the indispensability of Marxist method in the analysis of changing social phenomena. Only the relation of a people to its material environment through the economic system can begin to explain religious beliefs. Only the understanding of the developing contradictions in that economic structure can illuminate the real roots of the spread and decline of fantastic ideas apparently removed from reality. In this sense, Worsley has produced a model of Marxist work in the social sciences. For the active socialist this book is very important from this very point of view, the point of view of *method*. It is necessary to grasp not only the limited and fundamentally reactionary role of religion in social history, but also to tackle the question of relations between ideas and social movements, for this is almost universally oversimplified or taken for granted by socialists.

Cohn goes out of his way to disavow any sympathy with Marxism. In fact he ventures the opinion that Marxism itself is the modern manifestation of the mystical pursuit of the millennium. His basic theoretical quarrel seems to be that Marxism neglects the psychological dimension in social behaviour, and that in phenomena like religion this leads to a failure to understand the fundamental patterns.

Certainly Cohn makes some very interesting suggestions about 'paranoid' patterns in the imagery of the

heresies, but he never shows in what way these interesting parallels are *explanations* of the movements under discussion. In fact his own material points clearly to the correctness of a Marxist, social-historical explanation. It stands out from every chapter of his book that the millenarian idea springs up always from the same type of social milieu, that it is historically limited, and that it meets eventually with a fate determined by its social and political roots rather than by its psychological attributes. To say that the pattern of the beliefs is paranoid is to explain nothing; that there is an analogy with the imagery and obsession of paranoia may be true, but what is this supposed to show? The historian's task is to demonstrate the origin and course of development of such forms in specific social strata and to explain why those strata embraced those forms at one stage, rejecting them at another. In such a task the elaboration of formal analogies in the pattern of emotions is of little use.

Cohn's own description of the basic conditions for chiliasm (belief in the millennium) could not be bettered. For example:

Journeyman and unskilled workers, peasants without land or with too little land to support them, beggars and vagabonds, the unemployed and those threatened with unemployment, the many who for one reason or another could find no assured and recognized place—such people, living in a state of chronic frustration and anxiety, formed the most impulsive and unstable elements in medieval society . . . And the way they attempted to deal with their common plight was to form a salvationist group under the leadership of some man whom they regarded as extraordinarily holy.

Moreover the mission which most attracted these masses from the neediest strata of the population was—naturally enough—a mission which was intended to culminate in a total transformation of society. In the eschatological¹¹ fantasies which they had inherited from the distant past, the forgotten world of early Christianity, these people found a social myth most perfectly adapted to their creeds . . .

This was the process which, after its first occurrence in the area between the Somme and the Rhine, was to recur in later centuries in southern and central Germany and, still later, in Holland and Westphalia. In each case it occurred under similar circumstances—when population was increasing, industrialization was getting under way, traditional social bonds were being weakened or shattered and the gap between rich and poor was becoming a chasm.¹²

The first crusades appealed to many of the poor as a semi-practical, semi-holy solution of this kind. A popular epic describes the crusading army of the poor under 'King Tafur', who spurs on his troops to the attack with the words: 'Where are the poor folk who want property? Let them come with me! . . . For today with God's help I shall win enough to load many a mule.'

In chapter iv Cohn explicitly states the relationship between the class hatred born of the development of inequality in wealth and the search for millenarian solutions.¹³ Some of the twelfth-century proverbs of the poor leave no doubt as to the strength of class feeling: 'I would like to strangle the nobles and the clergy, every one of them . . . Good working men make the wheaten bread but they will never chew it; no, all they get is the

¹¹ Eschatology is the doctrine of death, judgment, heaven and hell.

¹² Cohn. *op. cit.* pp. 29-30.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 87.

siftings from the corn, and from good wine they get nothing but dregs and from good cloth nothing but the chaff.'

Again, Cohn asks why the focus of the millenarian cults shifts suddenly from France to Germany, and has to give social and economic reasons. No matter what 'paranoid patterns' may be discerned, it is surely not without interest that they become the characteristic *social* expression of people placed in specific circumstances. The emergence of a strong central authority to unify France, together with her decline in population and in the importance of her cloth industry in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, saw the end of such movements there and their powerful upsurge in Germany, with its political fragmentation, a decline of the imperial power, and the expansion of population and of the cloth industry!¹⁴

The Flagellant movement, for all its appeal to the psycho-analyst, shows similar variations according to the social and economic background. In Italy it remained predominantly respectable and orthodox, but it cut through Germany like a searing flame, taking on almost revolutionary proportions. Always the cloth areas, commercial centres and industrial communities like those of the miners were the centres of the cult of the millennium and the Free Spirit (e.g., Thuringia, Bohemia and Champagne).

So much for the origins of the movement; but on the question of its historical destiny Cohn is such a good historian that despite his prejudices against Marxism he lays bare the fundamental factors. Even though his concern is to trace the course of a *system of ideas* through the medieval period, he shows the necessity of appreciating the class interests behind the growth, differentiation, development and decline of the millenarian cults in the period when they were thrown into the more general process of the rise of the bourgeoisie, a class whose first step to power was of necessity to curb the might of the Roman Church and establish national order and unity. The Protestant Reformation and the European religious wars were the climax of this stage of history. In these 'religious' struggles the millenarian was the ideological expression of the worker and peasant allies of the bourgeoisie and the princes. As Cohn says of the Hussite national revolution of the fifteenth century: 'It was this harassed proletariat that formed the extreme, revolutionary wing of the Taborite movement.'¹⁵ The feeling of the ruling classes towards this Bohemian revolution is typical of the hatred of all rulers for the oppressed; all established classes can visualize no social order but their own, and rebels or reformers are seen as the forces of chaos and anarchy. One chronicler said of the Taborites:

The Bohemians now became so strong and mighty, and so arrogant, that they were feared on all sides and all honest folk were terrified lest the roguery and disorder should spread to other peoples and turn against all who were decent and law-abiding, and against the rich. For it was the very thing for the poor who did not want to work, yet were insolent and pleasure-loving . . . So the Bohemians had many secret supporters amongst the rough folk . . . They used to argue with the priests, saying that everyone should share his property with everyone else. This would have

pleased many worthless fellows and could very well have come to pass.¹⁶

Such rebels were of course soon rejected by the leadership of the national revolutions. Luther, having gained the support of the knights and the peasants to overthrow the Church in Germany, very soon changed his tune when Münzer's peasants began to exert their own armed power against the established authority. Seven years after inciting the nation to revolt, Luther had this to say to the nobility 'against the murderous and plundering peasant hordes' . . .¹⁷

They must be **knocked to pieces, strangled and stabbed, covertly and overtly**, by everyone who can, just as one must kill a **mad dog!** Therefore, dear sirs, help here, save there, stab, knock, strangle them everyone who can, and should you lose your life, bless you, no better death can you ever attain.

The wise man says: *cibum, onus et virgam asino* (food, pack and lash for the ass). The peasants must have nothing but chaff. They do not hearken to the Word, and are foolish, so they must hearken to the rod and the gun, and that serves them right. We must pray for them that they obey. Where they do not there should not be mercy. **Let the guns roar among them**, or else they will make things a thousand times worse.¹⁸

By now the peasants had become really dangerous, despite Cohn's insistence that Münzer was a mystic rather than a revolutionary; he himself says:

The peasants who everywhere took the initiative in the insurrection, so far from being driven on by sheer misery and desperation, belonged to a rising and self-confident class . . . impatient of the obstacles which stood in the way of advance. It is therefore not surprising that in their efforts to remove these obstacles the peasants showed themselves not at all chiliastically minded but, on the contrary, politically minded in the sense that they thought in terms of real situations and realizable possibilities.¹⁹

Münzer's ideological campaigning on mystical lines nevertheless helped to steel and strengthen the peasants. Take his letter to the Count of Mansfeld: 'Say, you wretched, shabby bag of worms, who made you a prince over the people whom God has purchased with his precious blood?'²⁰

* * *

Norman Cohn and Peter Worsley have produced books which are invaluable not only to specialists but to all those who need a clear and objective view of the reality of social development in order to take part in today's class struggles.

When Cohn suggests that modern revolutionary socialism is in the same line of development as the Utopian cults of medieval Christendom he has a small grain of the truth. Looking for formal resemblances and analogies often proves informative, giving clues to deeper connexions. But the history of ideas has a dynamic and a form not determined in the realm of ideas alone. The affinity between medieval mystic

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 235.

¹⁷ This was the title of a pamphlet against the peasant movement published by Luther in May 1525, at the height of the Peasant War.

¹⁸ Engels, *op. cit.* p. 66.

¹⁹ Cohn, *op. cit.* p. 264. What could be closer to the process from cult to politics among Worsley's Melanesians?

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 269.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 98, 111.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 222.

Utopianism and Marxist theory is not of the type suggested by Cohn. It holds true only in the sense that both types of idea represent the consciousness of an oppressed class faced with the need to struggle. Naturally enough, continuity of this struggle over centuries has meant the retention of certain formal resemblances and images among the people. But in essentials the pursuit of the millennium, the search for an illusory paradise, is the opposite of Marxism. The former represents 'the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world'.²¹ In the circumstances of its birth and development, it was bound to fail, to lose its connexion with social reality and become the object of mystical, socially isolated cults. By the twentieth century the conditions for the overthrow of private property and class oppression had matured in the

²¹ Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Introduction. Quoted Caudwell, *op. cit.* p. 75, Marx and Engels, *On Religion*, p. 42.

growth of technology and science, and in the creation, by capitalism itself, of a working class capable of organization and the recognition of its real interests. Marxism is the scientific expression of the interests of the working class in the period of its assault on capitalism and its victory over property. Christian Utopianism was the hopeless expression of a class doomed to be used by others in the destruction of one system, only to fall victim to a new type of exploitation. But here is 'the negation of the negation'. The bourgeoisie of Europe came to power on the backs of workers and peasants who were often inspired by the Christian millennium. Once entrenched, the bourgeoisie turned against the people who made its victory possible. But its own interests have driven the bourgeoisie to create an industrial system with a new type of working class, the first in history to be able to achieve scientific understanding of its interests and aims, and, on the basis of this understanding, to advance to socialism on the foundations laid by its exploiters.

'New Class'?

Tom Kemp

FOR those who have broken, or are breaking, with the view of Russian and east European society presented by its propagandists, and for other socialists as well, a book which purports, with the benefit of inside experience, to tear away the veil and set up a new and more truthful picture necessarily demands full consideration. Djilas's book¹ is the longest and most pretentious of the analyses made in recent years, and the one which has created the most stir. This, it must be said, arose as much from the fact that it confirmed what many people wanted to hear as from the fate which its

¹*The New Class* (Thames and Hudson, 21s.). Milovan Djilas was a member of the supreme headquarters of the National Liberation Army of Yugoslavia during the partisan war. Later he became president of the Federal National Assembly, was a Minister without portfolio and secretary of the Yugoslav Communist Party. At the time of the break with the USSR he was one of the leading writers and theoreticians and his articles in *Borba* and other journals were circulated through the Yugoslav Telegraph Agency and gave him an international reputation. His theories then received official endorsement and Tito himself declared that the Soviet Union had abandoned socialism in favour of 'State capitalism run by a bureaucratic caste' whose imperialist policy was 'a primary factor contributing to the present tension in the world'. From about 1954 Djilas began to run into trouble with articles which averred that a 'caste system' had grown up among party functionaries and members of the government. He called for the dissolution of the League of Communists, arguing that the degree of socialist consciousness reached by the Yugoslav people made it unnecessary. The rapprochement between Belgrade and Moscow cooked his goose. His denunciation of Soviet intervention in Hungary in articles in the foreign Press had already led to a sentence of three years' imprisonment and for *The New Class* he received a further seven years.

author has suffered. It is, as the dust-cover claims, 'the documentary record of a political soul in the agonies of intellectual liberation'. But that does not automatically excuse it from the normal processes of criticism, rebuttal and polemic, however unjustly the author may have been treated by his former cronies of the Tito régime.

The value of this book as a political document arises from the circumstances of its creation. It bears witness to the fissures arising within a political régime and the wounds inflicted even on those who were once its unqualified adherents. But a political document does not of itself constitute a contribution to political science: for that learning and hard thinking, experience, a sense of direction and a gift for systematic exposition are necessary qualifications. It is not disparagement of Djilas's integrity to report that he falls short in these respects. When its current interest is exhausted it will undoubtedly be forgotten. In the meantime it provides a point of departure for examining some of the problems and principles involved in the analysis of the States described by Djilas as 'communist'. He is aware of the anomaly of this usage, which has no scientific value, its only justification being that they are ruled by self-styled 'communist' parties. Certainly Djilas does not discredit communism, but the set of procedures, ideologies and policies which are better described as 'Stalinism': a profound gulf lies between the two.

The central feature of Djilas's book is the contention that in Russia and the east European countries a new ruling class has come on the scene as the pinnacle of a new social formation, historically distinct from all others. In saying so he follows in the footsteps of numerous theorists of whom he appears to be unaware. Indeed there is little in the essential argument which has not already been stated many times and anyone expecting that, from his personal experience, Djilas contributes 'revelations' or new material for forming a judgment will be disappointed. The argument is on the theoretical lines, but the theory is a hodge-podge of half-remembered echoes from half a dozen philosophies; holy relics from his Stalin days jostle with the com-

monplaces of American college textbooks. Ideas and phrases are unwarrantedly attributed to Marx, Lenin and—inevitably—Trotsky, without a shadow of justification. If his editors ever considered checking such references it is evident that they very soon discovered that it was an impossible task. It is as well to warn the unwary reader that Djilas throughout plays fast and loose with the ideas which he wishes to discredit, by associating them with the monstrosities of Stalinism (or Titoism).

Already, after the break between Tito and Stalin in 1948, Djilas, as a leading theorist of the Yugoslav Communist Party, was given, or took on, the task of proving that the social system of the USSR was not 'socialist' but 'State capitalist'. He only needed to realize the bitter truth that basically there was little to choose between the régime of Stalin and his heirs and that of Tito, to make possible a further extension of that theory to Yugoslavia.

The basis for an understanding of the nature of the social structure in any country is its history in relation to the history of other countries. This involves detailed examination of the actual course of events, the relation of these events in the historical process and a grasp of the determining forces in history. Merely contemplating a social structure and commenting upon it can result only in a subjective evaluation of it, with an exaggeration and distortion of some of its aspects, while others are underestimated or ignored. Even if we do not agree with the interpretation behind such a historical treatment we are placed in possession of the evidence upon which it rests: we are then free to reinterpret it, to claim that this or that part of the evidence was over-weighted or under-weighted or that the dossier is incomplete because such and such facts have not been included. Applying this principle to the study of Russian and east European society means that any designation of its nature must rest upon a full consideration of its development in relation to world history. For Marxists it further involves the use of the materialist method to trace the working out of the forces of development in their interaction with the 'superstructure' of ideas, institutions, laws and so on.

When examined from this standpoint the deficiencies of Djilas's book are readily apparent. It is disconnected and contradictory, and often superficial. It isolates some causes as being main ones with no valid reason. It contains a multitude of statements which, in themselves, are probably true and sometimes are incisively made. They are not built into a solid structure of reasoning but lodged here and there in a mush of wordy and pompous confusion.

The crux of the matter, however, is whether there is a new ruling class in these countries. Now for non-Marxists this is not a very crucial point since almost any social group may be loosely described as a 'class'. In Marxist terminology, however, class has a precise significance; without the concept of class Marxist sociology would lose its compass. Important as it is, a concept can always be refined. No doubt the Marxist concept of class stands in need of refinement, and there is plenty of room for discussion among Marxists, and between them and others, about the matter. At the same time Marxists are not merely sociologists, but people seriously engaged in political action. Any sliding on the question of class, and more especially on the

ruling class, will have wide ramifications for thought and action. If there is a new ruling class in the USSR etc. then there must be, as Djilas and others assert, a new social formation. If that is so then this ruling class receives a historical justification and this new type of society occupies the stage as the régime for our epoch, at least in the countries concerned so far, and perhaps as an inevitable stage after capitalism. Since the working-class movement has no interest in promoting the cause of a new class of exploiters it can detach itself wholly from the USSR, which deserves no more regard than, say, the USA in the determination of policy. On the more pessimistic assumption that a new era of domination by such a ruling class is likely, the very need for a working-class movement could be called into question. If, on the other hand, as seems to lie nearest to Djilas's view, revolutions carried through in the name of the working class inevitably degenerate in this way, the best hope lies in some refurbished capitalist democracy which will save us from totalitarianism.

For Djilas the new class took its origin in the professional revolutionaries who led the Communist Parties before the taking of power and later hardened into a bureaucratic ruling group of exploiters. The revolution took place in backward countries which were in desperate need of industrialization. Disputes within the party were resolved and 'the group that emerges victorious is the one that is the most consistent and determined supporter of industrialization along communist principles, i.e., on the basis of total party monopoly, particularly of State organs in control of production'.² Historically this is a travesty, at least as far as the USSR is concerned. The earliest and most consistent advocates of industrialization were hounded from the party in the 1920s. This is presumably covered by the statement that 'revolutionaries who accepted the ideas and slogans of the revolution literally, naïvely believing in their materialization, are usually liquidated'. A half-truth at most. Not only would it apply, in the USSR, to the largest proportion of the 'professional revolutionaries', who found themselves in prison camps or before the firing squad instead of in the ranks of 'the new class', thus destroying Djilas's own explanation of its origin, but there is no description of the domestic and international context in which this liquidation was carried on. Without some examination of the social forces at work the whole process becomes fortuitous, or a confirmation of the essentially Stalinist argument that the iron fist was absolutely indispensable in the accomplishment of industrialization. In any case Djilas's conclusion that 'the communist revolution is the first to be carried out to the advantage of the revolutionaries' stands condemned. Many of the leading administrators, diplomats, jurists and party officials in the Stalin era had been lukewarm in 1917, or had even fought against the Revolution (Martynov, Vyshinsky, Maisky etc.).

While this disproves Djilas's assertions about the origins of the 'new class' it leaves untouched his designation of it as a class. For Marxists a given class occupies a specific place in relation to the means of production: but it also includes all those strata which are tied together by common material interests and ideological outlook without necessarily occupying a

²The New Class, p. 28. All quotations are from this work, unless otherwise stated.

place in production relations. The core of a class is determined by relationships of production: by ownership or non-ownership, dependence or independence; but around the central core are grouped others whose place is determined in relation to it, rather than in their direct relationship to the production system. Thus officials, bureaucrats, do not constitute a distinct class but serve, and are intermingled with, the ruling class as determined by the production relations. Of course there are overlappings and mergings of one class into another, but usually there will be certain dominant relations of production, and the classes appertaining to them, which thereby define the nature of the society in question. Thus in capitalist society it is the relationship between the owners of capital and those who have nothing to sell but their labour power which is the dominant one. But there will be intermediate strata—peasant, artisans, shopkeepers, some of the professionals and white-collar workers—as well as residua from preceding social forms, e.g., landed nobility. In such a society the owners of capital will be the ruling class.

What Djilas is saying, then, is that the bureaucrats in the USSR have become the ruling class as a result of their common ownership and their special relations to other classes. Thus he says: 'As defined by Roman law, property constitutes the use, enjoyment, and disposition of material goods. The communist political bureaucracy uses, enjoys, and disposes of nationalized property'.³ Roman law, of course, was developed essentially in connexion with the growth of private property, and its principles became in part illusory in capitalist society, where titles to things increasingly took the place of the ownership of tangible assets. The real determining force was the nature of economic relations.⁴ However, Roman law, and all those systems of law in capitalist society developed from it, were designed to protect the property owners. In the Russian and east European States the bureaucracy, while it exists as a distinct group, does not have a juridical existence. It does obtain a disproportionate share of the good things of life, it does have immense privileges, it does control the reins of power, it does act as though it were a ruling class; but legally it has no existence. Djilas, of course, knows this but he tries to get round it.⁵ Thus he says that 'the so-called socialist ownership is a disguise for the real ownership by the political bureaucracy'.⁶ But is it *real* ownership, even on his own definition? He has already said: 'The ownership privileges of the new class are the privileges of *administration*'.⁷ That is to say, as he later explains in more detail, the monopoly of *political* power. Here is a ruling class which dare not give legal sanction to its

supposed monopoly of ownership. How then can Djilas say: 'To divest communists [he means the bureaucracy —T.K.] of their ownership rights would be to abolish them as a class'? For legally speaking they have no rights of which they can be divested. All that can be taken from them is their 'privileges of administration': their existence as a bureaucratic ruling stratum can be brought to an end without any changes in the law or in the distribution of property in the means of production. But no ruling *class* could be unseated this way before. This 'new class' is no class at all in Marxist terms. Those groups which have had 'special privileges and economic preferences because of the administrative monopoly' they have held have not been classes.

We will pass over the trouble which Djilas has in determining the frontier of the 'new class'. Even if we call it something else and interpret its role differently this is clearly an important problem, but for present purposes it can be left aside.

Djilas at some points gives the impression that 'the new class' possesses unprecedented power. He says: 'This is a class whose power over men is the most complete known to history'.⁸ In itself this is a wild generalization. That those who constitute the inner circle exercise immense power is not to be gainsaid. As Trotsky pointed out in his analysis of the same phenomenon: 'In no other régime has a bureaucracy ever achieved such a degree of independence from the dominant class'.⁹ He compares its position to that of the fascist bureaucracy, and though for many that may at one time have seemed fantastic, a reading of the Khrushchev report readily shows what basis it had. Also, in Trotsky's analysis by 'the very fact of its appropriation of political power in a country where the principal means of production are in the hands of the State, [it] creates a new and hitherto unknown relationship between the bureaucracy and the riches of the nation'.¹⁰ But while Trotsky left the future possibilities, as it were, open-ended, to be decided 'by a struggle of living forces', he was confident that 'the proletariat has not yet said its last word'.¹¹ The events of the last few years confirm this point of view, against Djilas and all the theorists of a new, finished social formation in the USSR.

Indeed in Djilas's book we can see some evidence of the real balance of social forces which hardly confirms his own conclusions. Not only can no member of the inner circle be assured of security of tenure, or even of life, with no right of appeal outside it, but the position of the bureaucracy as a whole is by no means assured. For one thing it 'always acts as the champion of the working class' and 'it cannot ever lose its connexion with the proletariat';¹² 'it must take into account the mood and movement of the masses'.¹³ This reflects, in other words, the fact that the working class remains the leading social force: the bureaucracy has to defend the social conquests of the Revolution—and the working class gives its support, or acquiesces, in so far as it sees no alternative but the restoration of the old system or economic collapse. There is daily confirmation of how its pressures, in diverse and often indirect ways, are making themselves felt. When it does see an alter-

³p. 44.

⁴There are some illuminating passages in part i of *The German Ideology* by Marx and Engels, where some of their basic thinking on class is to be found.

⁵Though he admits that 'The discrepancy between legal and actual conditions continually results in obscure and abnormal social and economic relationships' (p. 65).

⁶p. 47.

⁷p. 46 (Emphasis in the original). Elsewhere he says: 'Ownership is nothing other than the right of profit and control. If one defines class benefits by this right, the communist States have seen, in the final analysis, the origin of a new form of ownership or of a new ruling and exploiting class' (p. 35).

⁸p. 69.

⁹L. Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1957), p. 248.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 249.

¹¹*Ibid.*, pp. 255, 249.

¹²p. 41. ¹³p. 64.

native why should it not heave the bureaucracy off its back?

We find plenty of other limitations of its power, which taken together suggest that despite its 'totalitarian' rule it is indeed much less firmly seated than other 'legitimate' ruling classes. For instance it has not become the only power in the land;¹⁴ it 'cannot justify itself';¹⁵ it suffers from 'delusions';¹⁶ 'they are [not] able to subordinate society completely'¹⁷ and 'it [the bureaucracy] is not able to make its ownership lawful'.¹⁸ The last phrase is preceded by the words 'in spite of its historical origin'. This follows only if one accepts Djilas's garbled account of the origins of the bureaucracy. More accurately we should have to say *because of* its historical origins it was not able to make its political domination lawful.

No administrative group in any society can exist otherwise than by appropriating part of the surplus value. This does not necessarily make it a class, much less a ruling class. The Soviet and east European ruling groups certainly appropriate an important share of surplus value as a result of their political control of nationalized property. But the possibility of increasing this share—which is carefully disguised in the statistics—is restrained by the passive or active resentment of the population. Even to maintain it a complex system of persuasion, propaganda and oppression is needed; to increase their absolute income and preserve their dominance they are forced to build up nationalized property via capital accumulation. In that sense they act, albeit in a contradictory and far from satisfactory manner, as the agents of the class which established this form of property and whose interests are bound up with it.

What Djilas also fails to examine is how the bureaucracy, under the special internal and international conditions of the epoch, was able to filch away the political rights of the working class and secure a disproportionate share in national output. There is no shred of proof in his book that the bureaucracy was made necessary by the conditions of technological change, or that it played an indispensable role in industrialization. It was a product of specific historical circumstances: with the passing of these objective conditions it finds it all the more difficult to retain its hold. The old methods, with their heavy emphasis on 'security' measures, had become self-defeating. Hence the upheavals which have taken place since the death of Stalin. The rule of the bureaucracy stands out as a transitory

¹⁴p. 63. ¹⁵p. 54. ¹⁶p. 60. ¹⁷p. 87. ¹⁸p. 68.

phenomenon, with the current of change running strongly against it. But when it is eventually superseded there will be no need to institute a new form of property, with new legal forms, as happens when one ruling class is replaced by another.

It is part of the perversity of Djilas's position that although many of his own statements can be taken to support such an interpretation he persists in the dogmatic assertion that the bureaucracy is a class ruling a new social formation. Part of the secret lies in the fact that Djilas is 'a soul in torment' obsessed by his tormentors. He has lost confidence in the ability of the working class to change conditions and clutches blindly at some semi-mystical tendency in the world 'toward greater unity, progress and freedom'.¹⁹

Djilas lacks any real capacity for relating and adequately explaining the facts he cites—where they *are* facts—which is not surprising, because he only brings in part of the facts and because his method is defective. A good example is to be found in the pages, clearly for once reflecting personal experience, in which he tells how 'devoted, enthusiastic and clever fighters', aspiring 'toward a beautiful ideal society' become transformed into 'characterless wretches and stupid defenders of arid formulas'.²⁰ But one looks in vain for some convincing explanation of this degeneration—or even how or why he began to discern and resist it himself. Surely this was not due to a purely moral crisis, working itself out in a vacuum? Does he want us to believe the formula of ultimate pessimism, of which he has perhaps never heard, put forward by the historian Lord Acton: 'All power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely'? For a Marxist this tragedy was not the result of inherent moral weaknesses, though they obviously played a role, nor of the inevitable corruption of power, but of the objective pressures of particular historical circumstances which gave rise to what can be not inaccurately described as 'Stalinism'. It was this which destroyed these fine people either physically, where they resisted, or morally, where they accepted it as an historical necessity. For those who wish to understand the nature of society in the States with which it deals Djilas's book alone can only be misleading and confusing. His major thesis remains unsubstantiated and much of his material argues against it. As a document in the dossier it has a place: significant for its failure, rather than for its achievement.

¹⁹p. 214. ²⁰pp. 151f.

The Logic of Apartheid

Seymour Papert

I. SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS AND LIBERAL CRITICISM

EVERY reader of the Sunday Press has a vivid enough picture of the horrors of South African *apartheid*. Liberals like Father Huddleston (*Naught for Your Comfort*) have done an excellent job of exposure; but as long as the critique of *apartheid* remains on this level

of moral indignation it remains sterile as social criticism. In fact it is widely read and enjoyed in some quarters as a kind of political self-indulgence which provides the thrill of condemning wrongs at a distance while smoke-screening those nearer home.

But South Africa is not in so different a world from Britain as the Liberals like to think. On the most

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elementary levels the countries are interconnected. *Apartheid* is financed by British capital; the British protectorates in South Africa are run as reservoirs of semi-slave labour for the Johannesburg mines; the Seretse Khama affair is just one example of how the British Government bolsters *apartheid* ideologically; British trade unions (particularly the Amalgamated Engineering Union) have segregated branches in South Africa, and so on. But if one digs a little deeper there are yet other, more general, connexions. The Union of South Africa is a capitalist country whose basic features are the same as those of Britain. A true insight into South Africa is an insight into capitalism itself, and its scientific critique a critique of world capitalism.

The real mischief of liberal thinking is that it balks at penetrating the causes of historical phenomena. For example, we are told that the cause of oppression in South Africa is a kind of 'racist madness' which has taken hold of the whites. Where does this madness come from? Here the voices differ: the 'mentality' of the Boers; the theology of the South African Church; 'ignorance', 'stupidity', 'avarice'. None of these of course explains anything; nor does the pseudo-Marxist answer, 'super-profits'. All capitalists would like to make super-profits; why is it that in South Africa their quest leads in the direction it does?

The liberals accuse South African capitalism of irrationalism. South Africa is a country with a rapidly growing industrial economy and a chronic shortage of labour. Steel production in 1948 was 600,000 tons, in 1956, 1,500,000 tons. Electricity production in 1948 was 770 million kilowatt hours, in 1956, 1,500 million kilowatt hours. Yet more than half the industrial and mining labour force consists of unskilled migrant labourers who come for nine months of a time, then return to primitive conditions in the countryside. What could be more inefficient, irrational and anachronistic? But what the liberals fail to see is that the capitalist and his State machine adopt 'irrational' methods not out of stupidity, but because they are themselves entangled in contradictions from which they cannot escape. The irrationalism of South Africa is only a particularly flagrant example of a universal feature of capitalism. Because the capitalist has interests above production, the way he organizes production is necessarily both irrational and coercive.

The most paternalist factory management in the most liberal democracy is forced to adopt methods of production which enable it to check up on, control and dominate the workers. It is well-known that this means an enormous wastage and the use of techniques which are quite irrational when considered, for instance, in the light of how production will be organized in a socialist society. But to invite the capitalist to be more rational in this respect is to invite him to resign his position in society.

II. THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF APARTHEID

The Union of South Africa was created in 1910 by the amalgamation of four British colonies: the Cape of Good Hope, the Transvaal, the Orange River Colony (renamed Orange Free State) and Natal. The Cape colony differed from the others in having a more liberal political structure. Non-whites had the same qualified franchise as whites and were not segregated in public

places. In the other three provinces, including Natal, which was predominantly English in population and tradition, they were subject to an almost total segregation and had no political rights whatever. The explanation of these differences and of why the Cape tradition was essentially jettisoned in the new Union has very little to do with the special characters of Boer and Briton. It is, quite simply, that the Cape Province is two centuries older than the others and its institutions took form in a period when the problem of organizing the blacks into a labour force had not yet arisen.

The main turning-point in the history of South Africa was the discovery of gold and diamonds in the middle of the nineteenth century. Up to then the problem presented by the black man was that he owned land and cattle which the whites wanted. From the moment the mines opened, it was the black man himself the rulers were after. The Cape 'liberals' themselves began to work out a machinery to mobilize African labour—a machine which would eventually turn the black man into a Helot, a slave, and dictate his exclusion from the body politic. To this day there are relics of the old liberalism in the Cape where, for example, a black man may use the public library or listen to the municipal orchestra, neither of which is possible in Johannesburg. They are, however, only relics. In all essential matters, the Cape has adapted itself.

In 1894 John Cecil Rhodes introduced a Bill in the Cape Parliament which laid the foundation stone for the pattern of labour exploitation in the mines. He proposed the creation of 'Native reserves' in which Africans would have plots of land and grazing rights not quite adequate to meet the needs of both subsistence and the taxes they had to pay. The able-bodied men would therefore be forced to go out in search of money-wages; consequently the Native reserves would become reservoirs of labour which need not be paid even a subsistence wage—the half-starved family on the reserve would subsidize the mining magnate in Johannesburg and London! Today the villages of the reserves—and the British 'protectorates' Basutoland and Bechuanaland—have a characteristically eerie appearance. One sees a predominance of children, of women and old men. At any particular moment more than half the total male population will be away. Where are they?

About 600,000 of them are in compounds attached to the mines and to some industrial plants. They live there under semi-prison conditions for periods of nine months at a time without seeing their families and often without being allowed off the premises. They sleep on concrete beds, eat a monotonous ration and receive when in service less than £1 a week. These are the men who mine the shiny gold which bolsters sterling and adorns delicate hands.

III. THE PASS LAWS

The most dramatic expression of the contradiction in the South African economy is seen if we leave the compound of a Johannesburg mine and walk a few hundred yards to a place called a 'location'. Here we find quite a different life—African workers living with their families. They work in secondary industries, commerce, transport, domestic service, and very often have little or no connexion with the reserves. Their existence is the direct result of the creation of the mines, for the

mining camps immediately began to attract traders, bankers, policeman, prostitutes, professors—in short, the whole fabric of urban society. Industries grew up, at first to serve the needs of the mines—dynamite, rope and, later on, heavy engineering goods. Later there appeared industries to satisfy the needs of the growing urban population. The Witwatersrand changed in the span of one lifetime from a string of miners' shacks to a conurbation of 1,500,000 people.

Now from the beginning the growth of towns created problems, since the towns competed with the mines for the available supply of labour power. As early as 1895 the Chamber of Mines writes in its annual report: 'Owing to the existing inadequate . . . regulations for the control of Native labour, it is impossible to secure such combination on the part of employers as would enable Native wages to be reduced to a reasonable level.' And as time went on the situation became more acute. The growing industry could offer at least a subsistence wage and an urban life. The mine wages only eked out, to a subsistence level, the miserable produce of the plot on the reserve. The mines *have* to use this system because of their low yield. Although these mines are the greatest producers of gold in the world, their yield per ton of ore has always been low. As the best and most accessible ore was exhausted, shafts were sent down two miles under the earth to bring up ore which it would not be profitable to dig out, for instance, in Canada or Australia.

The continuation of gold mining is a good example of the domination of production by dead labour. Abstractly there are today many more profitable things to produce than gold. They are not produced because the capitalist is not interested in *production* but in *his* production. If he could reclaim all the investment he has put in the mines he would, at least in many cases, find it more profitable to use it otherwise. But there are those big holes going down two miles into the bowels of the earth representing the surplus value extracted from the labour of thousands of men, and he will keep them going as long as he can sell the gold no matter how 'irrational' and *socially* uneconomical this may be.

The 'solution' of this problem was attempted along the lines suggested by the quotation from the Chamber of Mines. The regulations for the control of Africans were therefore tightened and tightened again in an attempt to keep rigidly separated the two labour forces: the migratory labourers of the mines (and, incidentally, the farm workers) on the one side, and the urbanized industrial workers on the other.

The kingpin of the labour control system is the 'pass'—an internal passport which every African must have with him twenty-four hours a day. Through these documents he can be prevented from moving from one area to another, prevented from seeking certain categories of work and terrorized and humiliated, for every policeman has the right to stop him in the street and arrest him for the slightest irregularity in his papers. The system is so complicated that everyone is almost bound, sooner or later, to have an irregularity. The control of labour is not absolutely effective, and in fact a steady stream of illegal 'immigrants' find their way into the towns—but it makes movement difficult enough for the system to be kept working. On the other hand the tension between the different groups competing for labour power becomes steadily more acute as the economy

develops and, as it does so, the screw on the African is tightened. This is the basic reason why every South African government has, in its turn, produced a new spate of oppressive measures and has been regarded, quite correctly, as the worst to date.

IV. INDUSTRY, MINES AND FARMS

The economy can be divided into three parts: mining, factory production and agriculture. Although, as we have seen, the mines provided the impetus for the development of modern South Africa and continue to exert a dominating influence, the factory sector is expanding at least twice as fast. This has led many liberals to hold out hopes of the industrialists' supporting a policy of reform that will do away with the system of labour control and the whole oppressive apparatus that goes with it.

At least three reasons can be given why no such tendency is visible.

The first is that the idea of a contradiction between mining and industrial capital is an abstraction. These are admittedly opposites in that they compete for labour power and have conflicting interests. But concretely they are very often identical in that individual capitalists have holdings in both sectors.

The second reason involves the interests of the white farmers, who benefit from the system of labour control in various ways, of which the most important is that the pass laws tie some three million Africans to the farms under semi-feudal bondage. Thus the largely (but decreasingly) 'English' mines and the largely 'Afrikaner-Boer' farmers are united by a common interest which transcends all the noisy disputes between the two linguistic sections of the white population.

The third reason is ideological. Once given a set of social relations the ruling class will always try to evolve a philosophy which justifies these relations. In South Africa nationalist intellectuals have created a systematic and elaborate doctrine of *apartheid* which seeks to bring every aspect of life into line. One result of this is the enactment of a whole series of *apartheid* laws which are, in isolation, absurd from every point of view and which derive their sense only from this universal human urge to integrate, unify and rationalize. Another result is that the system is made more and more rigid and unchangeable as eternally valid principles are invented to prop up temporarily convenient economic arrangements.

V. THE WHITE WORKERS

A factor which differentiates South Africa from a typical colonial country is the number and social structure of the white population. They make up about a fifth of the total and include a working class which plays a critical role in the country. The great majority of skilled workers is, in fact, white. Important categories of employment (skilled engineering, engine drivers and firemen, electricians) are legally reserved for whites only and many other occupations (e.g., heavy transport, printing) are virtually monopolized by them. They have a number of guarantees against unemployment. For example, in the mines a European must be employed for every so many Africans even if, as actually is the case, many of the white workers are absolutely redundant.

The history of these privileges throws some light on

the way a ruling class 'organizes' society. Objectively, they are a bribe given to a section of the working class which consequently becomes a bulwark against the majority of the workers—the blacks. Yet the capitalists did not plan this in a conscious way. It is not in the nature of capitalists to have done so: they are far too dominated by the making of immediate profits. On the contrary it was only after bitter struggles on the part of the white workers that the capitalists gave up trying to break down the white workers' privileges. As early as 1907 there was a large-scale strike against the attempt to decrease the ratio of white mineworkers. In 1911 martial law had to be declared to deal with a strike of white railwaymen. In 1922 a general strike lasting 22 days was directed mainly against the attempt to introduce black workers into skilled jobs. In the course of this strike the white workers actually took control of suburbs of Johannesburg and were dislodged only after fierce fighting and with the help of aircraft and artillery. As a direct result of the strike, the Smuts government fell and Herzog came to power to carry out a policy of 'civilized labour' which established the main lines of the present industrial colour bar. Thus the white workers fought their way into the *Herrenvolk* and capitalism was strengthened by being forced to accept an ally which it had done its best to break.

It is common for even the most politically conscious Africans to refer to the white workers as a kind of parasite, paid high wages for doing nothing, while the black man does the real work. This is not always true, and this type of error can lead to serious misunderstandings of the entire political situation in the country. The rift between white and black workers is not important simply because there are so many scabs who can break strikes or act as special policemen. The fundamentally important aspect is that just because the whites actually do monopolize the skilled work they split the factory and deprive the African worker of that self-confidence which comes from a sense of mastery at the point of production. In this way the white worker impedes the development of a proletarian class consciousness among the blacks.

This point is illustrated by the course of the recent bus strike in Alexandra township. 'Alex' is an African township twelve miles from the centre of Johannesburg. Toward the end of 1955 the bus fare into the city was raised by a penny. There followed a protracted boycott of the buses during which the majority of the people, mainly workers, walked to and from the city every day. This was kept up with great militancy despite police provocation and appeals from those formally in the leadership, who urged the people to accept various compromises; but throughout the whole affair there was no significant tendency to take the struggle into the factories. The reason for this lies in the nature of the relations of production inside the factory. The African worker still feels less secure and self-confident in the workshop, where he is among white workers, than in the township among 'his own' people. His solidarity, in other words, is still a national solidarity rather than a class solidarity.

VI. THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE AFRICAN

The white invasion found the Africans living in tribal units in a state of military conflict with each other. In

fact the conquest was largely achieved by playing one tribe against the other through the willing services of missionaries who had gained influence over the chiefs. This technique of 'divide and rule' was carried on after the conquest. Right up to the present enormous efforts are made to maintain antagonisms between tribes and between the Africans proper, the 'Coloureds' (people of mixed descent numbering over a million) and the small but important Indian section. But in this the Government fights a losing battle that demands ever more drastic and desperate measures, and so swells the ever lengthening list of *apartheid* legislation. To maintain *apartheid* between white and black it is necessary to create a fanatically complex structure of minor *apartheids* within the non-white section.

The conditions of industrial life necessarily erode tribal thinking and there has consequently been a steady growth of African nationalist consciousness. The rapid maturing of this consciousness is shown by the change in the language of the political organizations. Right up to the thirties they talked of themselves as 'mouthpieces of the people appealing to the Government to listen to their legitimate grievances'. Today even the African National Congress, dominated as it is by the small but influential non-white bourgeoisie,¹ has formally adopted a programme demanding full equality.

But despite enormous strides in the political maturing of the people the emergence of a proletarian tendency in the national movement has been less clear. The All-African Convention, which was the vanguard of the post-war political awakening, was able to obtain the support of militant 'peasants' in the reserves² and radical teachers, but only to a very limited extent that of industrial workers. There have been several mushroom African trade union movements (illegal of course), but they have not taken root. That there are theoretical reasons why this should be so has already been indicated. On the other hand changes are taking place rapidly which must lead to the development of a more coherent proletariat. Until recently most Africans had connexions with the countryside; today a generation is growing up which knows no other life but that of the city worker. Until recently most Africans were confined to unskilled manual work under close supervision; today they are doing more skilled and responsible work, not only because technological development imposes qualitative changes on the factory which raise the level

¹ The non-white shopkeeper or landlord is affected by apartheid in contradictory ways. On the one side he feels its humiliation, is cramped economically by it and has a constant sense of insecurity. On the other side he often benefits from a system which gives him a virtual monopoly of trade in 'black areas'. This combines with the normal timidity of any bourgeoisie to make its political role vacillating and treacherous. It is interesting to note that the Communist Party (which has never been very strong) supports the zig-zags of the black bourgeoisie in the most unprincipled manner. South African readers would profit from a study of the role of the Communist Party in Algeria: the very close analogy with the behaviour of their own Communist Party would show them that the tactics of the latter are by no means determined by special features in South Africa.

² The reserve dwellers have at one and the same time certain attributes of a peasantry (in that they work plots of land on their own account) and others of a working class (in that they sell labour power to the mineowners).

of industrial culture of all the workers. To these and other internal factors must be added the new influences from outside: the growth of a militant proletariat on the copperbelt, the new upsurge of the socialist move-

ment in Europe, the fact that in the greater part of Asia and Africa the struggle has passed out of the phase of anti-colonialism. South Africa is not isolated from the world.

Communications

Pat Dooley: A Tribute

Dear Friends,

I was extremely moved by 'Pat Dooley's Letters' published in your March-April number. I knew Pat well. In the years just before the last war he worked in Holborn, where I then lived. We often held meetings together at Lincoln's Inn Fields, during the lunch hour. His humour and wonderful sense of the dramatic made him a superb outdoor speaker, so that even political enemies enjoyed listening to him.

The day after war broke out the platform for the meeting did not arrive, by a mishap, but Pat did, and he used the steps of the drinking-fountain as a platform. He was arrested, dragged off to the police station, fined a fiver. But within days we had the meetings going again, and collected the fiver to pay the fine. I think perhaps Pat was one of the great kerbstone political educationalists. I recall his advice to would-be speakers: 'Prepare well what you are going to say, do not depend on the Holy Ghost descending to help you out—he'll always let you down.'

Often before the war I supported his nomination to higher committees of the Communist Party, and I questioned leading comrades as to why Pat was, for example, not included on the London district committee of the party. The reasons given were usually vague, deprecatory, suggestive in the 'don't ask too many questions' disgusting Stalinist manner. Even then, it seems, they sensed the genuine revolutionist in Pat, the understanding that this man would not fit into the 'party machine'.

I regret not having contacted Pat during the years following his withdrawal from the party—merely to express my feelings of solidarity with him as another human being. But, after my two years in Poland, I shall endeavour to take the lead from my old fellow-propagandist. In his letter he wrote: 'I . . . could write a book—which I ought to have done, because only when the British workers **know** these things can they understand Poland and Hungary (and the long-suffering Russian people) and also prevent our bureaucratic little Stalins here from exercising similar excesses.'

To the best of my ability I hope in book form, and in other ways, to do what Pat (rightly, in my opinion) reproached himself for not having done. Long live the memory of a fine socialist, and a lovable human being.

London, N.3.

Gordon Cruickshank

May 1, 1958 (and what better day to write such a letter!)

Labour Leaders and Socialism

WE think that the main point about the social function of the Labour bureaucracy today is that the Labour leaders who occasionally preach socialism to the workers do not themselves

believe in it. For example they do not agree with 'the nationalization of the means of production under workers' control', nor with 'production for use and not for profit', nor with the simultaneous use of industrial and political action to establish 'socialism, as distinguished from mere dreams about it'. Otherwise they would not support capitalism and the arms race and the nuclear bomb. Then why do they sometimes preach socialist ideas to the working people? The answer is that given by Lenin: as a method of preserving the dictatorship of the Labour bureaucracy over the working class.

The Labour Party in its original form as a federation of trade unions, Co-operatives and socialist societies had the makings of a great socialist party. Its development into a socialist party has been retarded (1) by the attitude of many trade union leaders who, having secured snug jobs for life, have risen from the working class into the middle class and hold a middle-class outlook (J. H. Thomas, Bevin, Deakin, Cousins etc.); (2) by the opening up of the party to individual members who are neither trade unionists nor socialists but professional politicians only (Attlee, Gaitskell, Shawcross, Wyatt).

These two groups together form the Right-wing leadership of the Labour movement (the Labour 'leaders') who oppose socialism in the Labour movement and in the world at large. The course of events provides an acid test—e.g., over the present peace struggle—which exposes the real attitude of these leaders, and either forces them forward by a kick in the pants from the rank and file, or forces them out of the party altogether.

J. H. Thomas was forced out of the Labour Party—but not before he had done incalculable damage to the working-class movement. And now Sir Hartley Shawcross (a man for whom most socialists have got a healthy contempt) has been forced out. Mr (not yet Sir) Hugh Gaitskell has been forced with obvious reluctance to put himself at the head of an anti-H-bomb campaign. He could not retain the leadership unless he did. It is the job of the militant party rank and file to make the campaign for the unilateral abolition of the bomb so hot that the Right-wing leaders cannot control it.

However, it seems to us worth while making the point that because the division between the reformists and the socialists exists not only inside the Labour movement but also in society at large, therefore one has to regard the reformists inside the Labour movement as in fact the Left wing of capitalism, as its agents inside the Labour movement (we don't suppose every comrade would put it in those words, but the point could be made in milder language!).

It is clear therefore that there is no chance of transforming the present Labour Party into a mass revolutionary socialist party by simply changing the leaders. As Trotsky put it:

'Even if we were to allow that the next parliamentary elections will give the Labour Party an absolute majority, which is not assured in any case; if we were further to allow that the party would actually take the road of socialist transformation—which is scarcely probable—it would immediately meet with such fierce resistance from the House

of Lords, the King, the banks, the stock-market, the bureaucracy and the Press that a split in its ranks would become inevitable and the Left, more radical, wing would become a parliamentary minority.'

This is still, fundamentally, true today. Moreover, Rochdale means the Tories' name is mud. So does Kelvingrove. So does Torrington. But the Labour Party has not picked up the votes the Tories lost, because the Labour leaders are afraid to lead. They give the workers nothing to vote for. It was the same at the last General Election. We heard a life-long Labour man say then that he had not voted as it was 'a damned waste of time'.

The only way to win more workers for socialism is to go into the workers' day-to-day struggle and support them against the capitalists every time. Never mind if they are not militant Labour men and revolutionary socialists. They will become so increasingly when they see that the militant Labour men and the revolutionary socialists are with them in the fight, while the Gaitskells and Bevans always let them down.

Therefore the main thing is direct action by the rank and file. It cannot be left to the Labour leaders. The leaders are thinking of their own petty careers and the chances of their wives and daughters being presented at Court.

That is why rank-and-file committees of trade unionists, whether official or unofficial, will become increasingly important.

David Prynn
James D. Young

Freudian Blinkers

JOHN McLEISH'S otherwise excellent article in your issue of Nov.-Dec. 1957 suffers, I think, from one main shortcoming. For a 'Marxist' critique it does not dwell at sufficient length upon Freud's periodic excursions into the field of politics, nor does it bring to your readers' attention a number of his more explicitly reactionary pronouncements. These have obvious roots in Freud's system itself. May I here counterpose to Freud's psycho-analysis of politics some comments upon the politics of psycho-analysis?

Freudism bases itself on the assumption that man's actions may be interpreted in terms of certain universal, primitive and unchanging instincts, constantly seeking gratification. This reservoir of instinctual energies Freud calls 'the id'. Its driving forces are modified, according to Freud, by various mechanisms, to make them conform to the requirements of the external world, to the norms of conduct prevailing in 'civilized' society, to what Freud calls 'reality'. This is done by 'the ego', which is 'that part (of the mind) which is concerned with the perception of outer reality and our adjustment to it'.¹ The ideals or moral standards a man seeks to live up to constitute the 'super-ego'. Freudian theory seeks to explain all human activity—and history itself—in terms of the conflict between instincts, ideals and 'reality'. The ego, mysteriously personalized, is made the arbiter between the contending forces. Successfully sublimated (i.e., diverted) instinctual drives find expression in artistic and other forms of creative endeavour. Neurosis results when the ego proves unequal to the onerous task of arbitration imposed upon it.

What solutions for suffering humanity did Freud derive from this schema? He was not averse to generalizing the problems of the individual, and Professor Flügel, one of his disciples, tells us that he 'ultimately came to realize that he had the whole of mankind for his patient'.² Starting from Freud's own premises (the validity of which is questionable) it will be seen that the Freudian system holds out three possible solutions to the problems confronting man in a modern society. It is extremely revealing (for the politically minded) to see which of these the psycho-analytic school came to advocate.

On the one hand the individual could give free rein to the id, ignoring the social uses and customs of his time, when

these in any way thwarted his self-expression. Freud rejected this 'free-living' solution completely. 'The child,' he tells us 'has to learn to control its instincts. To grant it complete freedom is impossible . . . It would do serious damage to the children themselves'.³ For, he claims elsewhere, 'the stubborn conflict . . . between sensual and ascetic tendencies . . . is not resolved by helping one side to win a victory over the other . . . 'If we were to make victory possible for the sensual side . . . the disregarded forces repressing sexuality would have to indemnify themselves in symptoms'. Freud thus became the supreme advocate of compromise. For any other solution, you see, produces psychiatric symptoms. For the analyst, a clear case of heads I win, tails you lose.

What of the other possible solutions? If the granting of a free rein to the instincts is not possible in contemporary society, perhaps society might be changed, made more rational, thus giving greater scope to the id and to man's inherent potentialities? Freud would have none of this. Society must not be changed. 'Psycho-analytic education will be assuming an unwarranted responsibility,' he tells us 'if it sets out to make its pupils into revolutionaries . . . I should go so far as to say that revolutionary children are not desirable from any point of view'.⁴

Now if an educational system does not consciously and deliberately reject the current values and institutions of a society, it must of necessity give them tacit support. Human thinking, like other phenomena, is subject to a certain inertia. Freud did not equivocate on this issue. 'The function of education,' he tells us, 'is to inhibit, forbid and suppress and it has at all time carried out this function to admiration'.⁵ He was fully aware of the social implications of these opinions, for in another passage he tells us that 'every education is partisan; it aims at making the child adapt itself to whatever social system is the established one, without consideration of how valuable or how stable that system might be'.⁶

Was Freud perhaps more enlightened when it came to politics and the class struggle? He tells us that 'it is not the business of the analyst to choose between parties'.⁷ This would be 'partisan' (!). His mantle of neutrality wears, however, a little thin in places. Like so many 'impartial' experts Freud had very definite views on such questions as Marxism and Bolshevism. 'Marxism,' he tells us, although it has 'remorselessly swept away all idealistic systems and illusions, has nevertheless developed illusions itself, which are no less dubious and unverifiable than their predecessors. It hopes, in the course of a few generations, so to alter men that they will be able to live together in the new order of society almost without friction, and that they will do their work voluntarily. In the meantime it moves elsewhere the instinctual barriers which are essential in any society, it directs outwards the aggressive tendencies which threaten every human community, and finds its support in the hostility of the poor against the rich, and of the hitherto powerless against the former holders of power. But such an alteration in human nature is very improbable'.⁸

From this concept of 'the intractable nature of man' it is but a simple step to Freud's contention that Bolshevism was a religion which was 'obliged to compensate its believers for the sufferings and deprivations of the present life by promising them a better life hereafter, in which there will be no unsatisfied needs'.⁹ It mattered little to Freud whether what was promised was 'pie-in-the-sky' or the earthly fruits of a rationally planned economy.

Freud considered that in the USSR what he called 'Bolshev-

¹ J. S. Flügel, in *An Outline of Modern Knowledge* (1931), p. 385.

² *Ibid.* p. 356.

³ S. Freud, *New Introductory Lectures* (1933), p. 191.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 194. ⁵ *Ibid.* p. 191. ⁶ *Ibid.* p. 193. ⁷ *Ibid.* p. 194.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 230. ⁹ *Ibid.* p. 231.

ism' was failing from within. He saw the early stranglehold of the bureaucracy and the beginnings of the terror. The régime was punishing those who doubted the validity of the official doctrine 'as vindictively . . . as heresy [had once been punished] by the Catholic Church'. A little psycho-analytic sleight of hand, a little unscrupulous equating of Bolshevism and Stalinism and hey presto, the trick was done: man must invariably assert his anti-social tendencies and his needs for inspired belief, whatever the social frameworks he may devise. We see here how the 'materialistic' and 'scientific' Freud joins hands with the worst obscurantists of Roman Catholicism in echoing the oldest anti-socialist cry of them all: the immutability of human nature!

What then is the solution advocated by the Freudian school? 'Education,' Freud tells us 'has to steer its way between the Scylla of giving the instincts free play and the Charybdis of frustrating them . . . It is a matter of finding out how much one may forbid, at which times and by what methods!'¹⁰ And the objective of psycho-analysis? It is quite simply to 'strengthen the ego', so that it can cope with the conflicting demands of the instinctual life, of the super-ego and of the environment. The latter, as has been shown, are none other than the dictates of the prevailing social order.

The product of this psychiatric recipe would be a species of

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 192.

Document

Rejected by the New Reasoner

The following is an abridged version of a communication sent to the *New Reasoner* and rejected by the editors of that journal.

IN his article, Thompson set out to explain from the standpoint of one who wishes to be a Marxist and a communist what happened to him and thousands of others when they saw the real repulsive visage of Stalinism exposed. Despite the sharp emotional shocks he had experienced, he restrained the impulse to throw overboard the whole structure of Marxism on which Stalinism has for so long falsely claimed to rest. This does him all the greater credit, in that a spectacular 'conversion' from Marxism is, nowadays, a paying proposition.

Hanson, on the other hand, has completely rejected Marxism. His full-scale attack follows lines familiar since the 1890s, but Hanson has aimed shrewdly at weak points in Thompson's case. He does not always miss the mark, for at several points Thompson has left himself quite unnecessarily exposed.

It is odd to see how Hanson, vibrating with moral revulsion from Stalinism, still bases his case not on facts but on Stalinist assertions. He accepts as true the claim that the 'negative features' of the Stalinist 'élite' were the inevitable results of the work of people inspired by Marxist ideas.

Hanson argues that Thompson has no right to criticize, on moral grounds, the atrocities committed by Stalinism as long as he professes and wishes to adhere to Marxism. Further, Hanson argues that Thompson is in effect condoning these atrocities, when he accepts the argument that 'anyway, good came out of it'. Hanson even appears to believe that this is

well-conditioned tight-rope walker! For capitalist society with its poverty amid plenty, its chronic insecurity and its stench of war is irrational and a potent source of neurosis, which Freudian therapy seeks to 'cure', not by changing the social environment (nor of course by changing man's allegedly immutable instincts) but by changing man's attitude to his difficulties. The Freudian 'solution' is the prescribing of an efficient pair of blinkers. (Don't let these problems worry you, brother! They are here to stay! Learn to recognize them and live with them!). Thus does Freudian theory envisage the problem, hiding from mankind the ultimate source of its unhappiness and frustrations and preventing it from seeking salvation along radical lines.

One might legitimately conclude on a somewhat cynical note. The alienation and insecurity of capitalist society confront men and women with problems which are insoluble within the present social framework. Under such circumstances 'strengthening the ego' is likely to be an ever interesting proposition (for the psycho-analyst). For the experiences of everyday life will ensure an abundance of 'neurotics' to be 'treated' and will moreover ensure that any benefits derived from therapy will be short-lived. The whole arrangement recalls to mind the devices of Penelope, the wife of Ulysses, who every night undid the weaving she had completed the previous day.

Martin Grainger

a Marxist argument.

If Hanson's major premise, taken over uncritically from Stalinism, is accepted, then his conclusions follow naturally. He is quite entitled to stress, as he does, that Thompson has conceded the premise, and with it much of the argument. However, it is really quite unnecessary to Thompson's argument to make Hanson the concession that the horrors of Stalinism can be justified on Marxist grounds, or that they were inevitable, or that they had a 'progressive aspect'.

But before lecturing Thompson about morality, Hanson ought to tell us a lot more about his morality. The first paragraph of Hanson's 'Open Letter' shows, as he intended, that he dissociates himself from Marxism—but it shows something else which surely he did not intend to show. He says: 'Since I left the Communist Party I have tended to devote . . . energies . . . to immediate issues where I found my conviction of moral and political rightness required no specific ideological support.'

This could mean several things. It could mean, for instance, that for the last few years Hanson has been doing just whatever came into his head, without his being aware of what he was doing. It could also mean that he has not systematized his own motives, that he has an ideology all right, but simply does not know what it is or how to state it. There is nothing unusual here. M. Jourdain spoke prose all his life. The great majority of 'educated' middle-class people in Anglo-Saxon countries are unaware of the ideology which underlies and informs their activities. Hanson boasts that, like the tortoise in the Greek proverb ('happy inside his shell') he is undisturbed by approaching danger because he cannot see it. In Marxist philosophy this method is called 'impressionist'. In ordinary language it is called smug self-satisfaction, a normal characteristic of the British Fabian and Right-wing trade union leaders.

Let us press Hanson to tell us where he thinks Stalinism came from. Was this brand of reactionary revisionism a product of 'original sin'?

But after all, Hanson may say, Thompson does admit that Stalin and the Stalinists 'did the job'. Hanson makes the most of this concession. Yet Thompson need never have made it, for this opinion is simply a hangover of the old Stalinist mythology. The historical record, however, is clear enough. The people who carried through the unprecedented expansion

of the forces of production in the Soviet Union were the Soviet masses, acting through the nationalized industries and economic planning they achieved when they made the October Revolution. The job could have been done with far greater fruit and far less suffering, if it had been done, as the Bolsheviks pressed for it to be done, with the active participation and control of the workers and poor peasants and in alliance with the developing socialist revolution in the advanced countries.

The Stalinist party 'élite' was not necessary to the industrial and scientific progress of the workers' State. Rather it was the symptom of a certain degeneration. Stalinism was a cancer upon Soviet society and a handicap to it. Soviet economy grew, the Nazis were defeated, in spite of Stalin and the privileged minority whose interests he represented.

Hanson seizes upon Thompson's argument that a party élite, was 'necessary' to carry through Soviet development. We are asked to picture this élite, armed with Marxism, unendowed with socialist humanism, falling into error in doing a necessary but difficult task. Why did Thompson make such a damaging admission, one which undermines his whole case? For no one who has studied the history of the Bolshevik Party before Stalinism temporarily defeated it in the middle 1920s can doubt that the Bolsheviks organized a body of people, united on the basis of conviction and motivated by the highest moral principles, to help the masses to achieve their aims. Nor could it have been otherwise. Lenin possessed no all-powerful police apparatus, no day-spring of wisdom from on high. The Stalinist régime was established on the defeat of Bolshevism. Accordingly it was only to be expected that those who profited from Stalin's crimes would want us to accept that crimes were 'necessary' and 'inevitable'.



This is not a case of Marxists being wise after the event. The future of Stalinism was forecast and charted in the middle of the 1920s. Anyone today can read 'The New Course', 'The Real Situation in Russia' and the later 'The Revolution Betrayed'. The stock exchanges of the world also understood Stalinism, for they reacted favourably to the news of the suppression of the Left Opposition. The bourgeoisie preferred Stalin to Trotsky. Churchill several times expressed this clearly.

Like Hanson I too am deeply concerned about the damage which Stalinism has inflicted on the British Labour movement, especially by misdirecting and exhausting the energies of many thousands of able and devoted people. But here again Hanson starts by taking as good coin what the Stalinist leaders say about themselves. He says that the party line was two-faced, which was often true. But what an example he chooses! He gives us as a sample of Marxist morality in the service of the revolution the following: 'They will adopt a policy of revolutionary defeatism and present it to the public as one of negotiated peace.' Here is indeed a cry from the heart.

For Hanson refers here to the period between October 1939 and June 22, 1941, when the Communist Party in Britain

opposed British participation in the war. But it really is time that he got his facts right about that period. For the real policy of the Communist Party was a negotiated peace with Hitler. That was Stalin's line. Stalin's line was never Bolshevik revolutionary defeatism. In order to conceal objective capitulation to Hitler the party had to dress it with the sauce of Leninist propaganda phrases. Hanson was deceived then. He is still deceived.

His position is all the more deplorable because, even at the time, documents were available to prove what the Comintern policy really meant. But, alas, they were 'banned'. The magazine *Left* published documents of the German Communist Party, which reproduced passages cut out in the translations issued through the British communist Press. These passages called on the German communists to hand over to the Nazis opponents of the Nazi war effort. Later, facts came to light of the direct co-operation of the Communist Parties of France and Norway with the Nazis—who allowed them, in return, to publish legally their papers for a brief period. The bravery of rank-and-file communists in the anti-Nazi underground should not obscure the treachery to socialism in 1940-41 of the Communist Party leaders.

Throughout the whole of the war, from the beginning to the end, the Stalinists kept in the background any internationalist appeal to the working class of Germany to overthrow Nazism by international revolutionary action. In June 1941 Stalin's men simply changed sides, switching their alliance from Hitler to Churchill. Naturally they dropped their 'revolutionary' verbiage and extolled the virtues of 'democracy'; from support of one imperialist camp they passed over to support of the other.

Yet Hanson still regards Stalinist policies as revolutionary and seeks to father them on Marxism. Truly, like Napoleon, he should say, 'La recherche de la paternité est interdite'.

It is all too obvious to any observer that Stalinist policies have not built, but decimated the world's revolutionary working-class movement. Ever since the middle of the 1920s Stalinism has converted the struggle of the workers and peasants into the small change of diplomatic bargaining between the Soviet bureaucracy and imperialism. This is why capitalism still exists and why the Soviet Union is still in such grave danger of imperialist attack.

One more point on Hanson's 'morality'. Despite his 'convictions of rightness', we find him in the company of people who accept his Fabian politics but have different moral convictions from his. Among the Fabian and trade union leaders there co-exist peacefully vegetarians and gluttons, teetotallers and alcoholics, the morally rearmed and television stars, puritans and profligates, united in complacent confidence in the future of capitalism and in contempt for the working class. Here is a fair proposition for Hanson. Let him first preach his 'convictions of moral and political rightness' to the people who make money out of attacking the trade unions on television. Let him join in waging a campaign against his political co-thinkers who plunder their trade union treasuries and enjoy bloated expense accounts. He will then find Marxists right alongside him.

Book Reviews

He 'Confessed'

The Crime of Galileo, by Giorgio de Santillana
(Heinemann, 30s.)

'BUT still it moves'—these words whispered by the 70-year-old Galileo with bowed head after he had been forced by the Inquisition to abjure his belief in the motion of the world round the sun, signify for everyone the clash between human reason and Roman obscurantism which heralded the birth of modern science in the early seventeenth century. The new discovery, first made by Copernicus and then proved by Galileo, shattered traditional Ptolemaic-Aristotelian cosmology which had been long blessed by the Catholic Church, and brought into doubt the literal veracity of Holy Scripture. In the Catholic view science must cede to theology; to hold the contrary was heresy. The aged Galileo, the greatest scientist of his age, was summoned to Rome, tried by the Holy Inquisition and obliged to confess his error. The Copernican theory was outlawed and the broken old man condemned to house imprisonment for the rest of his days. For generations scientific thought in Italy perished. Galileo's theories could only be taken up and developed out of reach of the Inquisition.

Apart from the fact that the famous words 'Eppur si muove' are most probably apocryphal and that even if they were spoken the Inquisitor most probably did his best not to hear them, the picture which emerges from *'The Crime of Galileo'*, an erudite reconstruction of the events which led to his trial, does not conflict with the popular view. But inevitably as we approach closer to the actual people who took part in these events the perspective alters.

Personal ambitions, the animosities of rival factions, the intricate inner politics of the Roman Court—all these were of far more immediate importance in deciding the fate of Galileo than any 'clash of principles' between opposing schools of thought. To a very large extent Galileo's actual scientific exposition was ignored by his prosecutors, who were much more concerned with his significance as a potential source of danger to 'authority'. As Giorgio de Santillana points out, this has been a feature of 'inquisitions' in other places and times. It applies equally to the Oppenheimer case in the USA and to the condemnation of Morgan-Mendelists in the Soviet Union.

The book does, however, challenge one traditional view of the Galileo case—the view which sees the scientist as the innovator, the 'revolutionary', and the Church as the conservative, reactionary, anti-scientific force. There were not lacking in Galileo's writings many revolutionary concepts. His view of the unity of nature, of laws of motion which applied equally to heavenly as well as earthly bodies, challenged the Aristotelian distinction between earth and heaven. The attempt to impose any laws on nature implied a limitation of God's powers. Certain phenomena, the Church held, might appear to occur according to a definite scheme but God in his unlimited power could easily have them otherwise. It was no use bringing forward experiments and observations in support of a law, as these counted for nothing if they contradicted Holy Writ.

But Galileo was no fool. He knew how far he could go without offending against Rome. His main desire was to retain freedom for himself and his work. Moreover, as a devout Catholic he had no desire to raise his theories to the level of absolute truth in opposition to established dogma. But in the scientific field in which he worked there was no dogma. The Pope had never expressed himself *ex cathedra* on matters of cosmology, and from the Renaissance onwards the Church

had done nothing to discourage scientific speculation. When Galileo was working at his telescopes Copernicus was being freely discussed in Italy, not least among the Jesuits, the new watchdogs of the Church. Galileo saw himself as working in a tradition of free speculation stemming from the Renaissance, and when he first became a victim of persecution it was to the Jesuits he looked for the most enlightened support. So convinced was Galileo of the Church's tolerance towards science that he submitted his book *'The Dialogue on the Great World Systems'* for approval before having it printed. Not only that, but the book received the Papal imprimatur—a grant which caused considerable embarrassment in Rome when the forces which wanted to break Galileo seized on this work as the proof of his heresy.

Mr de Santillana shows conclusively that when Galileo spoke of a conspiracy of 'hatred, impiety, fraud and deceit' he was expressing the literal truth. The case against Galileo as a heretic was a fabrication from start to finish and the work of an unscrupulous faction working in the upper echelons of the Church. He was what would be termed today a 'fall guy'. The trial itself was a sordid affair in which no matters of great principle were raised by the judges. When he was found guilty it was very largely on the basis of a simple forgery against which Galileo was powerless to defend himself.

'The Crime of Galileo' is a scholarly work which makes exciting and stirring reading. Much of its argument depends on the meticulous analysis of textual evidence; the reader may find some of this heavy going. But in the light it sheds on the nobility of character of the great scientist it serves a valuable purpose and should be widely studied.

LOUIS MARKS

Spotlight on a Science

Modern Science and the Nature of Life, by William S. Beck
(Macmillan, 15s.)

IT is refreshing to find an intelligent book on a scientific subject which is also both intelligible and interesting. Dr Beck propounds his views on the unity of science and culture, discusses the methods of science, outlines some major trends in the history of biology and raises questions on future developments in the science, all with clarity and wit. On the way he describes the great controversy over 'spontaneous generation', some questions concerning the theory of evolution, and the investigations into the origin and nature of life.

Throughout, the author strives to maintain a consistent materialist outlook, without falling into the traps which mechanical thinkers cannot escape. In a science where irrational, mystical and superstitious views abound, Dr Beck turns a sceptical spotlight on these remnants of magic.

C.S.

Crime in Croydon

The Criminal Area, by Terence Morris (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 25s.)

REACTION often puts the responsibility for post-war crime on to the Welfare State. Full employment and other social reforms, it is argued, have lessened the feeling of social res-

ponsibility.

To answer this kind of argument it is necessary to understand what is the kind of environment in which crime is most prevalent. Little time and money are spent in this country on research into the cause of crime. Much energy is put into the detection of crime, but its prevention is ignored. As with the health service, treatment gets all the attention that is denied to prevention.

Terence Morris has made a painstaking study of criminal statistics in Croydon for the year 1952 and seen how they relate to environment. He concludes that criminals mainly live in the areas with the largest tracts of property in decline, and where the worst housing is situated. He considers that the social consequences of inadequate housing have been largely ignored and points out that housing legislation has been primarily concerned with public health. In considering class, Morris finds that delinquency occurs most frequently amongst the families of unskilled workers.

Unfortunately Morris's book is written in language not easy for the non-specialist to read. The most readable part of the book is the twelve pages of case histories. For those able to wade through technical language there are many valuable facts in this book that will help to give an understanding of the detailed relationship of crime to the environment of the criminal.

DONALD VEALL

Young Hungarian

Child of Communism, by Ede Pfeiffer (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 18s.)

THIS book, as its author declares, is an account of personal experience, in childhood and adolescence, of life in a 'people's democracy'. Pfeiffer was nine years old when the Soviet army entered Budapest in 1945. During the next eleven years he was a witness and, on occasion, an unwilling victim of Stalinism in action. His account, like many of a similar nature, possesses all the attractions of graphic portrayal.

Pfeiffer writes in realistic terms of the 'political education' carried out by the Stalinist youth movement, of the organized processions and demonstrations, of the deportations and imprisonment of those suspected of hostility towards the régime. He also gives us, apparently with some authority—though not always without an indignation which is perhaps just a little too self-righteous—a disproportionately lengthy account of what might be termed 'sex life on the communist campus'.

Pfeiffer's account of the events of October 1956 is intensely personal. He took part in the now-famous destruction of the Stalin statue and in the attack on the offices of Szabad Nép, he knocked out a Soviet tank with a Molotov cocktail and he raided the offices of the Budapest party secretary, absconding with thick files of secret documents. Set against such a background the book cannot fail to be interesting.

Interest, however, is not all. There have been other accounts of the events of the Hungarian October not less gripping, other descriptions of life in the Soviet belt not less revealing in their content. Pfeiffer adds little that is new.

Politically, the approach is either naïve or irresponsible. The Hungarian revolution appears to have been conjured up out of thin air without either preparation or programme. Once it took place, Pfeiffer took part in it. He knew what he was fighting against. Did he know what he was fighting for? He gives a bare mention to the revolutionary student programme. Why does he omit an account of its contents? He mentions the workers' councils. Why is he silent about the ideas of those who set them up? He tells us that he trusted Maléter and Nagy. Was it only because they resisted the Russians? On this basis, he could have trusted Cardinal Mindszenty as well!

Pfeiffer's omissions are largely the result of his individualis-

tic approach. His determination, at one point, to commit suicide, his exclusion from university in turning against the régime, possibly even his final choice of flight to the West, are all revealing in this respect. Pfeiffer's ideal lies not in the future but in what he calls 'the earlier and better world' of the past, a rather quaint description of Horthyite Hungary. There is no speculation about tomorrow. For the backward-looking Ede Pfeiffers of this world, tomorrow never comes.

TREVOR PARK

Labour on the Nile

The Labour Movement in the Sudan, 1946-1955, by Saad ed din Fawzi, Royal Institute of International Affairs (Oxford University Press, 25s.)

IT is a commonplace that Africa is undergoing an industrial revolution. This revolution, however, is sadly one-sided and localized: it has special features which are part of the general colonial legacy. By this I do not merely mean that industry in colonial Africa has largely developed in directions determined by the needs of the imperialist countries for raw materials and for markets for their goods etc. This has obviously been the force which has led to the development of extractive industries (mining etc.) food processing, transport and service industries, to the virtual exclusion of all other industrial development.

I refer to 'imperialist' countries, because it is fashionable to say that the social tensions generated in Africa (and the USSR, too) are merely the product of industrialization, and are problems which will necessarily occur whenever industrialization takes place, whether the political superstructure be capitalist democracy, Soviet 'communism', or a colonial régime. That there are general problems of industrialization is obvious enough; how they are solved, however, and the specific forms they take largely depend upon the historically-given circumstances of each country. For Africa, the colonial legacy has had very special effects on the process of industrialization, particularly of course in holding it back greatly, or even in wiping out flourishing indigenous industries and breeding a 'secondary primitivism'. The whole system of migrant labour, for example, has in many areas deliberately been built up in an effort to prevent the emergence of a stable, conscious and organized urban proletariat; and political power has been used to implement this policy. But, contradictorily, a lop-sided and delayed industrialization, combined with a degenerating situation in the rural areas caused by the penetration of capitalism into the countryside, constantly pushes to the towns more Africans than industry, commerce and Government can absorb. The amount of concealed as well as open unemployment is tremendous, the waste of labour prodigious (in the Sudan, as elsewhere, one-tenth of railway workers are unskilled domestic servants), and the wretchedness of urban living recalls the Industrial Revolution of our own country. In spite of attempts to halt this process, the towns are rapidly expanding into enormous, sprawling 'urban agglomerations'. But, despite the squalor, these towns are bursting with new life, with a vitality only captured by a few writers, notably by Anthony Sampson in his book 'Drum'.

Furthermore, each territory has its special history, though these histories are at present inadequately studied, and hidden behind wide generalizations about 'the colonies' or 'Africa'. Yet the differences are at least as great as those between, say, French, American and British capitalism. In independent South Africa, for example, the growth of secondary industry, the organized, deliberate penetration of Afrikaner capital into industry during this present period of expansion, and the development of a large urban African proletariat, are all striking

post-second world war features. In Kenya, again, the wiping-out of African political organizations during the Mau Mau 'Emergency' has thrust leadership, perhaps temporarily, into the hands of the Labour movement.

The Sudanese social structure, analysed very efficiently by Professor Fawzi in this book, has its own peculiar features. Considerations of imperial strategy, rather than the direct search for profit, led the British there, determined the construction of a large railway network, and held back industrial development.

Half the population are subsistence farmers; the rest of the rural population are mainly sharecroppers (e.g., the 28,000 peasants on the famous Gezira scheme), but sharecroppers who are often Government tenants and who employ tens of thousands of seasonal workers, mostly from abroad. The latter are naturally difficult to organize. Only 2 per cent. of the total population are wage-earners: this is backward even for colonial Africa.

Of the wage-earners, the bulk are Government employees, more than half of them on the railways. And 80 per cent. are unskilled or semi-skilled first generation workers, many of them still moving in and out of agriculture. But the trend is clear: even when unemployed, 65 per cent. now stay in the towns.

This mere 2 per cent. of the population is the key force. Fawzi's absorbing account shows that from the formation of the first trade union in 1946 to the achievement of political independence—in which the trade union movement played a major role—took a mere nine years.



Fawzi shows well how the growth of the Sudanese Labour movement can be understood only when it is viewed in its context of the economic, political and other forces causing its emergence. At the end of the second world war the constitutional position was being revised; there was a large successful strike on the Gezira scheme; enormous price-rises, accentuated by derationing, with wages still at 1935 levels, produced widespread distress. And the war propaganda of the Government about democratic aims had borne fruit.

The Government planned to introduce works committees, purely advisory bodies with no rights to discuss pay or conditions of employment. The railway workers thought otherwise. They were faced, as Hodgkin's 'Nationalism in Colonial Africa' so well shows, with the need to create an organization which could cope with the many-sided wants of workers who were faced, not merely with the problem of hopelessly inadequate wages, but with the problem of learning to live town lives, of becoming different men, and all the while under a foreign government. The programme the Workers' Affairs Association worked out, therefore, was very wide, embracing trade union, mutual aid and cultural objectives—all in terms very much ahead of what the Government was prepared to allow.

In this formulation of aims, skilled, technically-trained workers took the lead. It is also interesting to note that fundamental work in drawing up aims and constitution, and in negotiating with Government, was done by journalists and politicians. So much for theories of the 'spontaneous' emergence of political consciousness from the lowest, materially and culturally most depressed strata!

The aims were initially moderate and non-political. Government, as usual, changed this by its stupidly inflexible policies. First, it refused recognition. The union was 'illegal' since there were no trade union laws under which it could be granted legal recognition. A mass movement of protest at non-recognition led to an appeal to the Governor-General by the union. The cold shoulder, the arrest and trial of the union secretary, an orderly and effective strike, the release of the secretary and the granting of recognition followed.

The peculiar structure of the Sudanese economy now becomes significant. Government (especially the State railways) was the major employer: trade union action against the Government inevitably became centralized and large-scale, and the economic struggle stimulated nationalist feeling.

A large strike campaign for higher wages in 1948 brought a tribunal award which was nearly what the union had asked for. In 1950 trade union legislation was passed and the WAA became the Sudan Railways Workers' Union. One hundred and twenty-three other unions were formed in five years, though many were very small, weak, badly-organized and highly localized. In 1950, the Sudan Workers' Trade Union Federation was formed.

At each stage strikes, or the threat of strikes, were needed; the unions consequently developed a highly militant tradition. On political issues, however, they did not command such support, and there were strike failures. Although it is far from clear in this book, it appears that this is because of the submergence as 'an integral part of the nationalist movement' of the SWTUF in the 'United Front' which was born after December 1951, largely under the advice of the World Federation of Trade Unions and Moscow.

Now I am no Trotskyist (I gave up religion a long time ago) but I think there is much to be learnt from the works of Trotsky. One thing he stressed was the Soviet proclivity to vacillate between adventurist putschism (as in the Canton Commune, Telengana, Greece and Malaya at certain stages), and a liquidationist submerging of working-class organizations in broad 'fronts' (as in pre-1927 China). The latter process is visible in the Sudan during this period and has recently been carried to the farthest limits of perfidy and betrayal in Syria. The SWTUF regarded itself, clearly, as a labour pressure group on the existing bourgeois parties. They did not move to set up working-class parties. The British have been quite ready, under pressure, to hand over power here, in Ghana and elsewhere, to bourgeois parties, which offer no threat to their holdings (despite Nkrumah's and Nehru's lip-service to 'socialism'). In India the working class has, God help it, produced the Indian Communist Party. In the newly-independent State of Ghana, as in the Sudan, the working class has no independent party to represent its interests—and who is to say when the Sudanese bourgeoisie may emulate Nasser and turn on the Sudanese Labour movement?

Though it played a key role in the achievement of independence the Labour movement got nothing out of it in terms of political power, but put the bourgeoisie in. And without a party of labour the prospects of advancing to socialism, and turning the present limited form of independence into something stronger, are remote. The issue of socialism, according to Fawzi, has not yet even been raised. 'Peace' and 'independence' have been the key planks. But only a powerful Labour movement with a socialist objective—in the long run, only socialism itself—can ensure the maintenance of 'peace' and 'independence'.



The only major defect in the book is the failure to show clearly the relationship between the Labour movement and the bourgeois parties. We are not shown just how the trade union movement fitted into the general nationalist movement, nor can we estimate how important labour pressure was from this book. In wider view, we have no picture of the strength, composition etc. of the bourgeoisie in general, nor of its parties. This is partly due to a mechanical isolation of the 'Labour movement' as a subject of study, a fault which Fawzi does not commit at other points.

Prof. Fawzi is no revolutionary. He believes the SWTUF (the Sudanese equivalent of the Trades Union Congress) should not call strikes as this would be 'blackmailing the State' by merely 'sectional interests'. But there are big lessons for colonial socialists in this book. It is the first good study of a Labour movement in colonial Africa. One can hardly carp if the style is a little Ph.D.-ish for such an exciting subject. In view of the poor literary sources, this is a fine achievement. The achievement is all the more welcome from a citizen of the Sudanese Republic.

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