

Allen T. ✓

Behind the Rail 'Settlement'

EDITORS: BRIAN PEARCE, CLIFF SLAUGHTER LITERARY EDITOR: ALASDAIR MACINTYRE

LABOUR REVIEW

NEW PARK PUBLICATIONS LTD., 186 CLAPHAM HIGH STREET, LONDON S.W. 4

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A Statement	3	the Editors
Politics of Prosperity and Depression	10	Tom Kemp
Lessons of the Dining Car Strike	15	Brian Arundel
Freedom and Revolution	19	Alasdair MacIntyre
Building the Bolshevik Party	25	Brian Pearce

book reviews

B.P.	32	The Shop Stewards' Movement and Workers' Control, 1910-1922
Bill Parry	32	1931 Political Crisis
Bill Parry	33	Communism and British Intellectuals
Tom Kemp	34	Over-centralisation in Economic Administration
Tom Kemp	35	Gangrene
Ade Olu	35	Dawn in Nyasaland
Henry Pelling	35	Hadrian the Seventh
B.P.	36	Soviet Prose
B.P.	36	Police

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Editorial

Behind the Rail 'Settlement'

THERE has been nothing like it since 1926. For almost two weeks the main topic of conversation was the threatened rail strike. The unanimous decision of the Executive Committee of the National Union of Railwaymen to call their members out on strike on Monday, February 15, was the first time in 41 years that this union had decided to take such action on its own initiative. This fact alone emphasizes once again the deep rumblings of class conflict, which are now very much in evidence in British political life.

In their usual hypocritical way the Tories protested loudly about the NUR decision. 'After all', they say, 'we had decided to give the railwaymen something.' True enough. But what the Tories fail to make clear is that they wanted to postpone payment until the Guillebaud report finally made its appearance, and then only grant as small an increase as possible. The railwaymen, however, decided to put an end to this long-drawn out, indefinite procedure and by a threat of class action they secured an almost immediate response.

What the Tories are really protesting about is this threat of class action. The leaders of the government are painfully aware of their own weaknesses. As a class they cannot rule without the support of the right-wing leaders of the Trades Union Congress. The alternative to this is to challenge the working class in a head-on collision. Right now they are unable to make this decision. Such a conflict with the railwaymen could well have set in motion forces which would have rapidly exposed the class collaboration between the TUC and the Tory government.

The Tories had no illusions about Mr. Sidney Greene, general secretary of the NUR. Countless articles were written describing how his mild-mannered, gentlemanly appearance personified all that was best about trade unionism. Somehow or other something went wrong with this calculation over the last three months. This something was the dining car strike during November. A powerful rank-and-file movement linking London and Manchester came into existence and forced the Executive Council of the NUR to put procedure to one side and negotiate directly with its

leaders. The powerful pressure emanating from the ranks on the question of wages forced the mild Mr. Greene to embark upon a serious struggle. If Mr. Greene had not taken this road it is entirely possible that he would no longer be general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen.

The threat of class action on the railways impelled the Tories to make some rapid readjustments in relation to other industries whose unions were negotiating for a reduction of hours and increases in wages. The most notable of these was, of course, the claim of the Confederation of Engineering and Shipbuilding Unions. A few days before the NUR decision to strike, Mr. Carron, the president of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (nicknamed by its members, Cardinal Carron of Peckham), walked out of the employers' offices declaring that he would not accept the 42-hour week and that he wanted a substantial increase in wages. This same Mr. Carron on Thursday, February 11, one day before the rail settlement, attended a meeting of the unions concerned in York and decided to accept the 42-hour week with no increase in wages. The reason for this change of face is not difficult to see. Behind the scenes the TUC chiefs were in almost constant collusion with the Minister of Labour and government departments. These gentlemen had decided to help the Tories over a difficult period. They deplored the action of the railwaymen, just as much as the Tories. In the House of Commons Mr. Robens, right-wing Labour Shadow Cabinet spokesman, denounced the threatened railway strike as 'catastrophic'. When they found that it was impossible to persuade the NUR to withdraw its strike notice, they went to work to find a solution that would assist the employers to weather the storm. The formula was contained in the 'about-face' decision of Mr. Carron to sell the engineers for a miserable two hours reduction each week (from 44 hours to 42) and to drop his demand for more wages.

The victory of the railwaymen, therefore, must be considered alongside the betrayal of the engineers. In its editorial of February 15 *The Times* notes that—

'An important point in the current round of union claims for higher wages and shorter hours has been passed. This was not the intermediate agreement reached on the railways, but the settlement in the engineering and building industries, the two largest negotiating unions, whose decisions affect more than three million and more than one million workers respectively. Since the engineering unions agreed to accept a reduced working week and the builders settled for a wage increase of just under four per cent., it cannot be said that any pattern emerges.'

In other words, the Tories are well satisfied that the railway wage increase will not set the pattern for a general wage struggle because the important unions who may be involved in such a struggle have now accepted paltry awards.

Thus the Conservative government has been extricated from a difficult position by the right-wing of the TUC at a time when the working class could have won substantial concessions. They have been betrayed by the old-line leaders who are still in the saddle as in 1926.

Powerful working-class pressure has forced the Tories to make certain adjustments. However, since they represent the capitalist class and are conscious of the reasons for these decisions, they are much better able to do this than the working class, who are leaderless in the fight. It would be a mistake, therefore, to talk about the strength of the working class and leave it at that. The crisis of leadership remains the greatest single problem before the British Labour movement. The setting-up of powerful rank-and-file committees would have been on the order of the day

had the railway strike broken out. These would have provided the beginnings of an alternative leadership. Under conditions where the Tories rely so much on the right-wing of the TUC this leadership may well have become the most powerful force in Britain. This is the Achilles heel of Tory policy. Macmillan and company can get away with this type of horse-trading between themselves and their friends on the General Council of the Trades Union Congress only so long as no other leadership takes the field to oppose the latter.

The moment the trade union rank and file begin to develop this type of leadership then we will have entered a pre-revolutionary situation in Britain. That time is not yet, but it is not a long way off. The holding of local Assemblies of Labour throughout the country will afford trade unionists and all active members of the Labour movement an opportunity to discuss how to prepare a strategy for defeating the Tories, for a renewal of the struggle for the 40-hour week and for improved wages to meet the increased cost of living.

Alongside this must go constant theoretical preparation of the most militant of the working class. At first this cannot be on a spectacular scale, but that fact is not decisive. The main question today is for all those who appreciate the problem of leadership within the working class to resolve to build a powerful Marxist movement for the days that lie ahead. That is the only answer to the betrayal which we have just experienced.

Statement by the Editors

PETER Cadogan, Peter Fryer and others have recently broken with the Socialist Labour League. In some cases they have resigned, in others their actions have forced the League to take disciplinary measures against them. Such a breach between individuals and the revolutionary movement is naturally regrettable and it would have been better for both sides had these people seen their way to working within and learning from the Socialist Labour League. But the breach must be explained and the League must make its position clear.

Some (not all) of those who have left are fairly recent ex-members of the Communist Party. Along with many others, they left the Communist Party after 1956 as a result of conflict with the Party over the political and organizational features of Stalinism which began to become clear after Khrushchev's 'secret' speech and the risings in Hungary and Poland. The majority of these who left the Party did not take up revolutionary politics; they either faded out completely or took up positions between the Communist Party and Social Democracy. The most sophisticated expression of this latter tendency crystallised around the *The New Reasoner* and the *Universities and Left Review*

The Newsletter, Labour Review, and eventually the foundation of the Socialist Labour League represented a different trend, the result of a fusion between the left opposition in the Communist Party and the Marxist grouping which had fought around the journal *Socialist Outlook*. This fusion had a firm political basis:

(i) We wanted forms of work which broke from the dogmatic theories and methods of Stalinism, and saw this as inseparable from participation in the class struggle in Britain, learning from it, and building an organisation which welded together the working-class movement and the science of Marxism.

(ii) We saw Stalinism as a perversion of Lenin's and Marx's theories on the State, on the revolutionary party, and the international character of the revolutionary movement. This revision

was accompanied by gross inhumanity and brutality. A return to humanism in Socialist policies meant for us a return to the principled foundations of Bolshevism. We found in the writings and the actions of Trotsky and his followers the theoretical approach we were looking for. We parted from those who, either in the beginning or later, identified the crimes of Stalinism with the essence of Bolshevism.

(iii) Consequently, we insist on organisational forms which correspond to the revolutionary aims of Marxism. Democratic Centralism as practised by the Bolshevik party is a necessity for revolutionaries who learn from the experience of the working class, and act in a disciplined, co-ordinated way. Over 50 years ago began Lenin's clarification of these organisational consequences of taking up a position of political independence of action for the working class.

The formation of the Socialist Labour League was the clearest expression of the transition between two phases in the work which ex-Communist Party members undertook, together with the group who had for many years worked as Marxists, and whom they had always been taught to regard as 'Trotskyite wreckers', 'agents of the capitalists and fascists'. For a long time many continued the fight inside the Communist Party with the aim of theoretically convincing Communist Party members of the disastrous revision of Marxism which Stalinism entailed. This involved steady and thorough political explanation of the character of the USSR, the history of the international Communist movement and its betrayals of the working class, and the distortions of democracy in the Communist Parties of Russia and other countries. But as the crisis caused in the Communist Party by the Hungarian rising faded temporarily, more and more stress had to be laid on our political tasks here in Britain. If we were serious about Stalinism as well as Social Democracy being a *misleadership* of the working class, and if we thought that the tradition carried on by Trotsky was the revolutionary one, then we were duty-bound, even with small beginnings, to make a determined effort to forge the link

between this tradition and the developing struggles of the British working class.

NEW STRUGGLES IN INDUSTRY

It so happened that the break with the Communist Party coincided with the close of a relatively peaceful phase of the class struggle in Britain, when the work of a Marxist group was primarily of a propaganda type, explaining the significance of international affairs in the Labour Party and fighting for a Left Line on the policy decisions of Party conference. But from the autumn of 1957 onwards it became clear that the struggle in industry, set alight by the offensive of the employers, was going to force new issues on to the political scene in Britain. Only an organisation able to take part in these struggles and give them political expression in the Labour movement would serve the working class. It was still important to combat Stalinist ideas and to fill in the great gap in theoretical work left by the bankruptcy of Stalinism and Social Democracy. But this was doomed to sterility unless the *core* of our work was the class struggle here in Britain. It was for this reason, brought home sharply by the determination of the employers to attack working-class organisation and standards in order to compete on an increasingly difficult international market, that the Socialist Labour League was founded. The election result, the developing struggle on wages and employment in mining, railways, and engineering, and the more and more openly traitorous character of the existing leadership in the trade unions, show that this step was certainly not, as some of our opponents argued at the time, 'premature'.

Fryer and the others have left the League when this side of our work has begun to develop, when an open conflict with the government, as well as with the Labour and Communist leadership, is clearly on the agenda. But Fryer presents *no* political criticism of the Socialist Labour League whatsoever. He even says in his 'document' (*An Open Letter to Members of the Socialist Labour League and Other Marxists*), that whilst he now disagrees with the method of forming the League, he accepts the need for its formation and supports its policy. Cadogan *did* develop a political line against the League's policy. It was a line which the rest of the League had ample opportunity to study and discuss. Cadogan moved fourteen amendments at the founding conference. He published in the internal discussion bulletin of the League (July, 1959) a full statement of his position on the H-bomb, NATO and the American-European relationship. This was

available to all members at 3d. and it included his name, address and an invitation to those interested to write to him with a view to joining a faction. No more was heard of this faction after the Socialist Labour League school, where Cadogan's position was discussed fully without finding any support. At this school, the main course on Marxist method was interrupted and curtailed in order to let Cadogan have a full day's discussion of his document, which everyone read and studied. The comrades argued on the issue from the economic, political and methodological viewpoint and dissected it very scrupulously. Cadogan's first reply to the discussion, of which he took not a single note, was that it was a waste of time; nobody would discuss the basic issues. He took up none of the basic arguments, saying that he was an experienced teacher, and knew that it took time for resistance to new ideas to be broken down. When at the end of the school comrade Healy spoke on the political position of the League on international questions, on a line completely opposed to that of Cadogan, the latter went so far as to say that we had just heard 'the most significant political statement since the death of Trotsky'!

The arrogance and inconsistency of this man in then circulating a document advocating a supra-class alliance against the H-bomb can only be described as exasperating. But to send this, along with slanders against the League's leadership, to enemies of the League in other groupings, could only lead to expulsion. Cadogan used all the facilities at his disposal in the League and took advantage of the tolerance and patience of its members only to spit in their faces at the first opportunity. Such conduct is alien to all socialist values, and shows an utter disregard for the comrades who carry the programme of the League into the Labour movement every day. It was impossible for our organisation to keep such a man.

Fryer gives no indication of agreeing politically with Cadogan, indeed he has expressed no explicit political difference with the League. But, he says, the expulsion of Cadogan convinced him that it was impossible to make the Socialist Labour League a democratic organisation. The Open Letter to Peter Fryer in *The Newsletter* (27.11.59) points out that, despite the barbarous political record of the Communist Parties, a world-historical betrayal of the working class, Fryer and others rightly aimed for some time to fight within it, hoping to transform it and remedy its organisational weaknesses, or at least to bring a number of Communist Party members to a Bolshevik position. But now, in an organisation which presumably he still agrees

represents the essence of a revolutionary struggle of the working class, Fryer cannot stay around because of the expulsion of Peter Cadogan! (Of course, since Cadogan improves on 'the most significant political statement since the death of Trotsky', any organisation which refuses to have him can hardly be serious.)

POLITICS AND ORGANISATION

This example serves to pinpoint the political essence of the recent desertions. Fryer left his post at *The Newsletter*, failed to fulfil *any* of his speaking engagements or national committee responsibilities, without sending a word of apology to anyone. Others had to deputise or share out the work at a moment's notice. They did this and made no move against Fryer because they believed him on his own word to be very ill. The political aspects of these actions are apparently not considered by Fryer, who gave not a single thought to the hundreds who sell the paper he edited and fight for the policy he advocated. When he felt sufficiently tired of the whole difficult business of building a revolutionary party he opted out on the excuse of Cadogan's expulsion. If he was really sincere about the change from Stalinism to revolutionary Marxism, could he possibly excuse his own conduct, leaving the revolutionary organisation because of factors about which he had not even the courage to open his mouth until he was safely out of the country? A revolutionary movement cannot be built with people who sacrifice the energies and resources of the working class and members of the movement to their fly-by-night feelings and actions. Revolutionary theory and practice demand a struggle against subjectivism and for complete identification of self-interest with the interests of the movement. These deserters are fond of saying how they vowed on leaving the Communist Party that they would never again acquiesce in practices with which they disagreed. But now they tell us they sat tight and said nothing about all kinds of alleged practices which they now use as an excuse to desert. The transformation of *The Newsletter* grouping into an open fighting organisation in a period of class struggle brings inevitable problems of constructing a team of revolutionaries. Fryer solves these problems by withdrawal. We would have preferred to have him alongside us, strengthened at each phase of the fight, and putting his great talents to good use, but if that is impossible then we can only say that we shall manage without him. He proved to be incapable of surviving the first shots of battle.

In the documents produced by Fryer (*Open Letter to Members of the Socialist Labour League and Other Marxists*), and by Cadogan (*The 1959 Situation in the Socialist Labour League*), certain points are made on organisation and abuses of leadership. The content of these arguments betrays a political weakness which is in line with their whole conduct since the summer of 1959. Fryer writes in his document about "working-class democracy", but not about "democratic centralism". Cadogan explicitly proposes that the term 'democratic centralism' should be buried; this proposal is backed by a quotation from Emile Burns. Whether Cadogan and Fryer like it or not, deviations from the organisational fundamentals of Bolshevism have always been a reflection of deep political differences. Democratic centralism is not just 'a good set of rules' but the method of work of a party devoted wholly to the interests of the working-class and its struggle for political power. Lenin's insistence on questions of rule in the early 1900's was in order to forge a Socialist Party that would be a working-class party, and not a group of publicists, agitators and sympathisers. The difference with the Mensheviks on organisation was part and parcel of Lenin's insistence that the working class accept no leadership from the spokesmen of other classes, that the working class be recognised as the only class capable of overthrowing the State. The Mensheviks' slogan of 'freedom of discussion' and failure to include 'personal participation in one of the party organisations' as a condition of membership, reflected their basic conclusion that it was not yet time for the working class to fight for political power. This meant in practice subordination to the bourgeoisie. Within a few years, the enormous political significance of Lenin's fight on organisation became clear with the collapse of the Second International and its tragic consequences for the working class.

When Fryer talks about 'working-class democracy' rather than 'democratic centralism' he opens the door to similar political weaknesses. His own method in raising his differences is itself a political act. The comrade who lays greatest stress on the 'humane' treatment of members leaves them with no information about his well being or his opinions for two months, and then announces his resignation in the columns of *The Guardian*. What consideration of the members is to be found here? Cadogan similarly showed himself to have little regard for the membership. It is simply not true that these differences on organisational methods have no political roots and it is not just a question of certain individuals finding it difficult to subordinate themselves to the revolutionary movement. Rather it is a failure.

of some individuals to grasp the full depths of the meaning of the struggle of the revolutionary party to lead the working class to power. Cadogan argues from the supreme destructive power of the H-bomb to the 'logical' need for a peace alliance which cuts across class barriers. But this is precisely what differentiates the Socialist Labour League from all other Left tendencies, from the Communist Party to the religious pacifists. It is not a question of what is 'logical' but of the class power behind the bomb. All talk of 'neutralism' and international agreement is nonsense and deception so long as the capitalist class remains in power. In no other way can any meaning be attached to the basic revolutionary principle: that in the present crucial phase of development of the forces of production, only the rule of the working class can save humanity and lay the basis for Socialism.

BUREAUCRACY

The natural accompaniment of this theme on peace is the failure to make a clear-cut division between the revolutionary movement and the established bureaucratic leadership of the Labour movement. The Socialist Labour League is the only group in this country to have laid down a clear class line on Summit talks, the H-bomb, and the relations between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. But also it has been alone in stressing the basic need for political independence of the working class; no confidence in either the Trade Union, Social-Democratic or Stalinist bureaucracies to conduct working-class struggle against monopoly capitalism. At the same time there is required the maximum flexibility in campaigning among the rank and file of all these organisations. But for Cadogan to write about the Labour Party as 'the United Front' is far removed from any such policy. United Front policies are made by established revolutionary groupings or parties to the masses who still follow the reformist leadership. They are policies which are presented to the leaders of these organisations, but presented in such a way that they go over the heads of the leaders to the masses, with the aim of unifying the whole working class and exposing the false leadership in the course of struggle. It is nothing to do with Marxism to give the Labour Party the name 'United Front' because of the composition of its membership.

In his criticism of the Secretary of the Socialist Labour League, Peter Fryer says he detects an attitude of 'We are not worried about the final aim, but about the problems of the movement itself'. Fryer comments that this is re-

visionism of the original variety, as expressed in Bernstein's phrase 'The movement is everything, the aim nothing'. Now this is a real howler. Fryer should know that the context of these two statements, even assuming the first to be accurately reported, is quite different. Bernstein was the apostle of reformism in Germany: he advocated concentration on the winning of reforms in the day-to-day movement of the Social-Democratic Party and the Trade Unions; changes in capitalism had made this possible, and revolution had become outdated, he thought. Clearly, it is quite unprincipled to equate this with the secretary's supposed attitude of 'the revolutionary movement is our first consideration, rather than speculating about socialism in the future'. Such an attitude has its faults, but they are hardly the faults of Bernstein. The fact that this is the only directly political point made by Fryer is a sad commentary on the whole document.

Once the connection between socialist conviction and the revolutionary organisation is lost, the way is clear for all the vulgarised criticisms of democratic centralism with which opponents of Marxism have filled their journals for the last 50 years. When Fryer invents the statement 'I am the Party' supposed to have been made by the League's secretary, he is on a slippery path. Two days before Fryer wrote this (September 19th), a friend of his, John Daniels, wrote in a letter (to one of the Editors) that over-centralisation of leadership produced the *kind* of situation where people said things like "I am the party" and "The movement is everything, the aim nothing" (à la Bernstein). Within a couple of days of hothouse growth these had become definite statements made by particular people! It should be mentioned that Roberto Michels in 1915 produced a criticism of political parties which said the same things *word for word*. And this is no coincidence. Michels and the bourgeois "political sociologists" have criticised Socialism and the revolutionary movement in the same basic terms as Fryer. They see in all parties "oligarchical tendencies", i.e., tendencies towards the dictatorship of an élite. These theories fit in very well with the line of those socialists who say that there is something wrong with democratic centralism as such, that it began with Lenin and not Stalin, that we must get back to 'real' democracy (or Fryer's 'working-class democracy'?) What all these people fail to do is analyse the historical class reasons why bureaucratic rule strangled the Communist Parties. How was it that democratic centralism did not prevent the success of the Bolsheviks (as against the Mensheviks) in 1917? What were the social foundations of the domination of the party by a bureaucratic clique led by

Stalin in the 1920's? If you neglect the precise social reasons why the working class and its party were defeated by a bureaucracy poised between them and the petit-bourgeoisie, then you can only seek the reasons for bureaucratic degeneration in the mythology of power, theories of the élite, the 'iron law of oligarchy', and all the other trappings of those whose approach is 'anti-totalitarian' and who usually end up as 'State-Department Socialists'.

In the Socialist Labour League, if there were a system of dictatorship from the top, a system where members' rights and opinions were trampled on, the Marxist would (a) show this to be the result of some alien class pressure in the movement, a set of material interests opposed to those of the working-class movement, and (b) expect such domination to hold back and cut across the working-class orientation of the League. Indeed Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet bureaucracy's conquest of the Bolshevik party, via the faction of Stalin, proceeds along precisely such lines. But the critics of the S.L.L. do not suggest anything beyond personal characteristics as the source of such 'degeneration', and when Fryer says he agrees wholeheartedly with the policy and programme of the League, he suggests that somehow bureaucratic dictatorship has managed to achieve a correct political line! We would not take Fryer's word for it, of course, but we believe the facts do show that in the last year the League has successfully turned towards working-class struggle in a way that no other organisation in this country has done.

Peter Cadogan's political criticism only confirms this conclusion. He takes us to task for not realising that the main struggle is against American imperialism, along with all sorts of allies for 'independence' and 'peace'. He calls the Labour Party a 'United Front'. He calls our activity of last summer, which resulted in the gains reflected in the National Assembly of Labour, 'sectarian' and 'inward-turning', confirming this by noting the absence of any S.L.L. adverts in *Tribune*! All of these are attempts to find slogans and methods stripped of militant class content, and listing heavily towards the reformists and the Stalinists. It is Cadogan, not the S.L.L., who is drifting away from a working-class line. This would not be so if the League was dominated by a dictatorial clique, as Fryer and Cadogan suggest.

The deserters have found friends in the various discussion groups (*Fourth International*, *New Left Review*, *Socialist Review*, etc.) which infest the backwaters of the Labour movement. Strange that at a time when the growing intensity of the industrial struggle and the treachery of the Right-

wing exposes more and more clearly the political inadequacy of these prolific writers, Daniels, Coates, Cadogan and others are drawn towards them, so that S.L.L. members are confronted with rumours in the hands of people whose only common platform is hatred of the Socialist Labour League and refusal to build anything in the working class. (Incidentally, Fryer's document makes great play of who is supposed to have said what nasty things about whom. We hate to think what a rummage through the quotation book would unearth as between some of these newly-weds!)

POLITICAL BACKGROUND OF THE DEFECTIONS

Politically, this is not as difficult to explain as it looks. As the Right Wing exposes itself more and more, all sorts of people begin to talk Left. Their political sense, developed in the ripe British atmosphere of Parliament, club, negotiating room, Lord Mayor's dinner and *New Statesman* reception, tells them that the band-wagon of the Left may be more profitable in the coming years than that of Jay and Gaitskell. And so the *New Statesman* and *Tribune* find the bright young men of the *New Left Review* suddenly very congenial. They will sit on 'Brains Trusts' together and write articles for one another and drink coffee together. Together they will suggest a new 'public image' for the Labour Party. The New Lefters, not wanting to miss their chance, unite (!) in the *New Left Review*, a unity which is neither 'from the bottom' nor 'from the top' but is possible because neither group has any policy and therefore can find no point of contradiction with the other!

In this mess, characteristic of the aftermath of political defeats for the traditional leadership in periods of struggle, where is there room for revolutionaries? Naturally we want to work with all those who are moving towards an independent policy and organisation. Cadogan and others refuse to work from these basic class foundations. Thus Cadogan says we are 'inward-turning' and sectarian because we didn't have an advertisement in *Tribune* throughout the summer! He says (and probably knows) nothing about the work done among miners, dockers and engineers in London, the northern towns and Scotland during the summer and the basic character of the delegations brought from Glasgow and other industrial centres to the National Assembly of Labour. What these people mean by 'sectarian' is 'giving a bad impression' in certain middle-class circles. What we mean by sectarian is clinging to policies and

methods which separate you from the working class, and on this count we know that we do not compare unfavourably with our critics!

This development of the industrial struggle and the coming together, under the impact of the accelerated decay of the Labour Right wing, of all sorts of people who claim to be spokesmen of the 'united' Left, brings to the surface the political weakness of those who came in a Left direction from the Communist Party but who had not fully accepted the consequences of that move. Confronted with the enormous practical tasks of building the League, and with the need for adopting an uncompromising position against Fabians and neo-Fabians among the intellectuals—who of course never cease their barrage against us, for they consider us at least as bad as the Stalinists ('Lenin started it all')—these people desert.

This shows in our opinion that although they were capable of trenchantly criticising Stalinism in a period when that was a popular pursuit, and of going beyond that to the need to learn from Trotsky, they could not face the hard road of struggle that this eventually implied. British imperialism is a formidable enemy; it covers every class issue with the formulae of compromise worked out over generations, it offers a thousand partial solutions to individuals and to sections of the working class and the middle classes. This makes the ideological struggle a very difficult one in which to keep Marxist bearings. Only by devoted revolutionary practice can Marxist intellectuals develop in this atmosphere. Only by closeness to the movement can they set their course, a movement devoted to the mobilisation and heightened consciousness of the working class through struggle.

Fryer, Cadogan and their friends have failed to do this. Under the pressure of the new situation, they conduct political struggle against the League in alliance with its sworn enemies, without a common political platform, without agreement even on the necessity to be in the League. They carry internal questions to the capitalist press despite the facilities given by the movement. They abuse the discipline, tolerance and trust of the membership.

We therefore consider that they represent a middle-class tendency in the movement and will tend to move further in that direction, just as the *New Reasoner* and the *Universities and Left Review* have done. We say this not about their class origins or social position, but about their politics, which have led them, at this particular stage of development of the relationship between industrial struggle and political campaigning, to desertion.

It is not beyond explanation that people who

held to their rights to fight inside the Communist Party in 1956-7, despite Hungary and the exposure of Stalinism, should now quit the Marxist movement on issues like the expulsion of Cadogan, and behave in the irresponsible and destructive way that the 'Stamford' faction has done. Stalinism relied on the accomplished facts of Russia, China and mass Communist Parties all over the world to anchor its members in the absence of a firm revolutionary policy. This is why education and theory are so stultified in the Communist Party. The Marxist movement offers much less cover to the superficial observer. It takes a full and developed confidence in the historical role of the working class, independent of all other social strata and of the bureaucracies that have encrusted upon it, to achieve true loyalty to the Marxist movement.

As the memory of Hungary fades, as Khrushchev woos the West in a way that Stalin never did, and 'public opinion' (even as far up as Eisenhower) relaxes towards the Soviet bureaucracy, the exposure of the role of the CP becomes much less 'popular' than it was, it becomes much more difficult, in petit-bourgeois intellectual and journalistic circles, to take a principled stand. As the contradictions intensify in the underlying economic situation, bringing sharper struggles in industry, all those political forces which fear a regeneration of the working class movement, the American imperialists and the Soviet bureaucracy above all, come together temporarily. The sudden wooings of the Communist Parties, the conviction of many who two or three years ago were Cold War Socialists that here in Khrushchev is a man with whom we can deal reasonably, the growing popularity of 'disengagement', 'disarmament' and 'co-existence' talk, all this *looks* like the leftward tendency, the basis of unity, that has been missing for so long. In all this 'only' one factor is left out, the working class and its needs in the struggle. It is in periods like this that Marxists are criticised bitterly for their 'sectarianism' and 'rigidity' while the class-collaborationist policies of 'allies' to the Right are tactfully ignored. In the name of flexibility and 'diplomacy', principles are blurred.

The 'Fourth International' group of Pablo's followers in Britain have asserted that these defections will definitely mean the departure of all those who entered the League from the Communist Party. This unprincipled attempt to play on what they hope are the weak sides of the ex-CP members makes nonsense of the 'revolutionary' claims of this group, but makes sense of the spread of sympathy for Fryer and Cadogan, from Pablo to the *New Reasoner*. There will be no such split.

Our intention is to build and strengthen the SLL in all aspects of its work, theoretical, industrial and political. In this work we shall defend the ideas and the organisation of Marxism, for this is the only way for the working-class. The miners are cut down by the government, the engineering employers prepare to defeat the engineers, and the dockers and railwaymen and aircraft workers face large scale redundancy as a result of mechanisation. The leaders of the Unions concentrate their attention on preparing the ground for Tory legislation against 'unofficial'

strikes and shop stewards. The political wing of the movement stands paralysed by its piddling parliamentarism. We believe that only the ideas of Marxism, as continued by Lenin and Trotsky, can find a road to working-class unity in action in Britain today. We believe that the SLL is the means to put these ideas into practice, and that its members will use all the resources of democracy, as well as the sinews of action provided by our press and our organisation, to carry the struggle through to the end.

P.S. As we go to press, the atmosphere of the 'left' circles we have been discussing suddenly becomes feverishly excited. Little men run from one to another with heavy manuscripts under their arms, as though in a Kafka novel: they are incensed, nay, outraged! Great crimes have been committed against the working class, and new tyrants, worse than Stalin, have appeared on the historical scene; they must be immediately exposed. Open letters, bitter condemnation, the weapon of ridicule, all must be utilised, for they are dealing with a vicious and formidable enemy. Cadogan and Fryer are taken up by Kendall in the *Socialist Leader* (sic), by the Pablo group in their highly exotic 'internal bulletin', by Coates in the *Socialist Review*, and by the *New Reasoner*. Clearly a new revolutionary unity is emerging. But wait! There are yet more recruits who wish to smoke out this scourge of the working-class movement. And they are all agreed on the enemy; it is the Socialist Labour League, and especially its General Secretary. The *News Chronicle* de-

lightedly quotes Fryer to the effect that Healy is a dictator, which after all is only what it had said itself at the time of the General Election, *John Bull* is anxious (now) to write a feature article on the Socialist Labour League, and IRIS, the employers' propaganda organisation, joins this most popular of all popular fronts, giving its readers an up-to-minute service on Fryer's movements and future prospects.

It is interesting that the small groupings on the left—ILP, Pablo's International, and *Socialist Review*—concentrate all their fire and energy on writing articles (mainly for each others' consumption) condemning the only revolutionary organisation in the British Labour Movement. Fryer and Cadogan should take a very close look at those who take up their documents. Cadogan writes and speaks at length about broad alliances, but his words are bearing fruit not in the struggle for peace or for socialism but in a united campaign of hate against the Socialist Labour League.

The Politics of Prosperity and Depression

Tom Kemp

THE decade of the '50s will stand out as one of paradox and contradiction in the history of British capitalism. Like the other advanced countries, it experienced an upsurge of unprecedented prosperity after something like a quarter of a century of relative stagnation, depression and total war. Apparently, therefore, it has shown great resilience in the face of these trials, and a superficial glance might lead one to conclude that it is now stronger than before. In fact, however, not only has the prosperity of world capitalism been built upon a combination of specially favourable factors, some of which have worked themselves out and been replaced by others—a happy situation which the upholders of the system would do well not to count upon indefinitely—but part of that prosperity has depended upon the serious world crisis arising from the confrontation of two incompatible world systems. The British economy is now tied more closely than ever before to the world market; it can no longer count upon massive investment income from overseas, it has, more than before the war, to export or die. The rapid recovery of the capitalist world market from the dislocation of depression and war has been a major factor in sustaining prosperity in Britain. If that market ceases to expand, and even more if it should contract, intensified international competition would thrust a considerable strain on British capitalism because of the comparative rigidity of some of the structures which it has inherited from the past. At the same time, there stands the crucial sustaining role in the capitalist economies today of armaments expenditure and the continual outflow of dollars from the United States which is directly dependent upon the Cold War.

To conclude that capitalism, either in Britain or on a world scale, is stronger now than before the war simply because the level of unemployment is now much smaller or because there is general prosperity would be seriously to misread the picture. In particular it leaves out the impact of what has been happening to capitalism—and what can be expected to happen in the

coming period—upon the working class and, for that matter, important segments of the middle class. The dynamics of social change and political action are not geared precisely to the ups and downs of the business cycle as is sometimes thought. We do not have to wait for a slump before we move into action. Rather there is a complex interaction of forces, not least among which are those which intersect in the consciousness of the human participants, and which, in turn, lead to certain courses of action being taken which react upon the material situation. For example, unemployment or a threatening slump can dull consciousness, disintegrate organisations and lead to a relative weakening of the working class. Such a situation, typical of the 1930s, provided a breeding ground for fascism and prepared setbacks for the working class.

It should be pointed out here that non-Marxist economists tend to conceive of society as a mass of consumers, differentiated only by their purchasing power. If the general level of purchasing power has been going up they assume that the system is in good health and see the future in terms of onward and upward. For Marxists, however, society is made up of classes standing in specific relationship to the means of production and to each other. Where one class owns the means of production and concentrates immense social power in its hands, so, all the more, does it stand over those who have nothing to sell but their labour power as an antagonistic, alien force utilising them as objects in the interests of a small clique. Nothing which has happened in the field of consumption, employment, social services and the like can cancel out this over-riding fact. At the point of production interests clash and the class struggle provides a continuous front which runs throughout the economic apparatus. At any particular time that front may, for most of its tortuous length, appear quiet; but the transformation of human energy, sweat and muscle into the means for the wealth and social power of the ruling class in capitalistic society goes on without respite. In fact workers know that this tussle

for dignity as well as a share in the results of production goes on uninterrupted, even when they do not reason it out and consciously take their stand on socialist policies. They may, for example, quite happily repeat the shibboleths of the daily press and vote Tory until the day when a tightening up in workshop procedures or a deliberately dragged-out wage negotiation sends them out to be 'wildcats' along with the others.

The class struggle is a vital factor in the assessment of the prospects for capitalism; it is integral to it and inseparable from it. The relative strength of the contending classes and the support in society which they win from other classes are decisive.

Of course, all sections of workers do not react in the same way and at the same time. Past experience, the nature and organisation of each industry, its rate of development, whether it is expanding or declining—all these play a part and result in great inequalities and unevenness between workers in different industries, and, because of geographical specialisation, in different parts of the country. Moreover, some industries have greater strategic significance than others in the economic life of the country—docks, transport, mines, for example—and what goes on in them is thus of more weight than the actual numbers involved would lead one to believe. In any case, Marxists do not base their prognosis upon the spontaneous reaction of the various sections of the class. Objective conditions prepare the ground; it is organisation which brings action, and which plays the linking role between one section and another. It is always necessary to be *part* of the movement of the class, not to sit back, observe and predict on the basis of some kind of 'research' undertaken from outside. Nor can tactics and policy be imposed from outside; they must take full account of the understanding and experience of the participants.

THE DEPRESSION OF THE '30s

Instead of a post-war crisis and slump, repeating the '30s on a more grandiose scale and marking the end of capitalism, there has been renewed prosperity and expansion. It was difficult for friend and foe alike to discern, in the '30s, any new expansive force likely to lift the system into a renewed prosperity for more than a short period. On the other hand, once such a force, or a combination of forces, could be found, the historical experience of capitalism had been that for periods extending over several shorter trade cycles it had been able to move on an ascending curve. Such a period had, in-

deed, preceded the First World War and had only come to an end in 1920. From that time, at any rate in Britain, the general curve had been downwards, and the world depression which came at the end of a sharp American boom in 1929 was thus superimposed upon an already stagnant economy.

The depression of the 30s had a number of special features which made it unlike anything which we can expect to issue from the present situation of the British economy. The depth and duration of the depression were exceptional; they arose out of special circumstances which cannot be examined in detail here. It is generally recognised, however, that a slump of much smaller dimensions would have even more profound social consequences today, at the end of a period of considerable prosperity. Even the comparatively small recession of 1958 revealed signs of something like a crisis of confidence among the defenders of capitalism. In the summer of that year the business press gave expression to many forebodings and, surprisingly enough, after 20 years of Keynesianism, many economists seemed to be at a loss to know what could be done if the downward spiral should continue in the United States. The first point which can be made, therefore, is that there is no need for the next depression to be as severe as that of the '30s to shake the system to its foundations.

The incidence of the depression of the '30s was very uneven as between industries and regions. The main burden of excess capacity and unemployment fell upon the industries concerned with investment and the export trade. The situation in these fields reflected the adverse change in Britain's world position which had come about after the First World War and which marked an inability of the industrial structure to adapt itself to the new conditions. On the other hand, technological change did not come to a standstill, and re-adjustment was taking place. Notable signs of this could be seen in the continued expansion of such industries as motors, radio and electricity, some branches of engineering and, in general, those which were directed to the internal consumer market. For large numbers of workers, therefore, the '30s were not necessarily years of slump and unemployment. It is true that the insecurity was there, but an improvement did take place in the standard of living.

This relative immunity to slump of sections of British industry was closely tied to another factor—the fall in the prices of primary products and the favourable shift in Britain's terms of trade. By cheapening commodities entering into capital outlays and wages this kept up the profit rate and, at the same time, enabled workers to main-

tain or improve their consumption levels, at the same time as the pattern of consumption was changing. The slowness of the adoption of new techniques and new industries in the earlier part of the 20th century meant, in fact, that there was room for new investment and expansion in such fields in Britain during the '30s. The growth of these modern sectors of industry was an important sustaining influence in British capitalism in the 1930s; it prevented a slump from being more devastating; it enabled a fairly rapid if partial recovery to be made; it tended to divide one section of workers from another.

Partly, of course, this favourable side was an aspect of Britain's imperialist position: the ability to draw vast tribute from overseas debtors, to profit from the misfortunes of primary producers and even to draw on capital invested overseas. Here Britain is undoubtedly much weaker than before the war. On the other hand, the necessity now to sustain and expand exports gears up industry to a much higher level all round than was attainable then. The high level of exports makes a powerful contribution to the continued possibility of extracting and realising surplus value on an extended scale which is the key to post-war prosperity, though, of course, it is not the only factor. In this sense the changed relationship of the British economy to that of the rest of the capitalist world market—which means greater vulnerability to shocks transmitted to it from outside—has the short-term effect of contributing to a high level of activity at home. But the cushioning effect of overseas investment and a strong imperialist position has partly disappeared today: and in the long run that is perhaps of greater importance.

What did working-class action amount to against this background? Here again only a summary of the main points can be offered. But the answer surely was that this was a decade of betrayal, defeat and to some extent demoralisation. The betrayals came industrially in 1926, politically in 1931. Both these dates marked setbacks to the working class associated with the ruling class's problem of stabilising and shoring up the worm-eaten framework of British capitalism. It is true that there was a lot of activity of one kind and another, including a leftward flurry in university and intellectual circles: but in practical effect it amounted to very little. If the crisis had been as serious here as in Germany, given the state of leadership of the working-class organisations at that time, there seems little reason to doubt that they would have been broken just as easily.

Like any other capitalist crisis, that of the 1930s was historically unique. This brief re-

capitulation of some of its main features in Britain shows that the forthcoming economic problems—those likely to arise after a period of sustained prosperity in a changed world situation—will be different in essential particulars. It is important here to note that the Marxist analysis of crisis derives, as it were, from a 'chemically pure' capitalism. But the inner laws of development which drive the system from prosperity into its opposite have concrete historical results which help to determine the ways in which the laws will operate and the consequences which they will have. To think in terms of the 1930's as a 'classic slump' is in a way misleading. Of course it did confirm the Marxist prognosis in a striking way, but the many Marxists who could discern no way out for capitalism and who concluded that breakdown was at hand certainly allowed themselves to be too strongly affected by the prevailing trends, to the exclusion of other possibilities. Likewise, in the post-war years, when Marxists were scanning the horizon for the 'inevitable' slump, the same error was made. Such subjectivism was, in essence, rooted in a mechanical adherence to certain aspects of Marxist analysis which seemed to fit the case so perfectly that others could be left out without loss.

As a matter of fact a number of Marxist writers who were prominent in the '30s have subsequently defected and become adherents of some version of Keynesian orthodoxy. Their reasoning seems to have followed roughly the lines that if capitalism could find a way out through State-sponsored measures acting on investment and consumption, then the whole of Marxist economics was defective and capitalism could and would avert another depression. Under pressure from a new, more fashionable doctrine they were derailed, largely because their own erstwhile 'Marxism' was mechanical and incomplete; in the final analysis it left the overthrow of capitalism to irresistible and impersonal forces which were going to tie the economic system in insoluble contradictions. It left out the decisive factor—the need for a movement and a leadership anchored in the class whose historical task it is to excise capitalism from history. In other words, in short, such 'Marxists' had no confidence in the working class: it was not surprising that some of them, as Parliamentarians, sought to substitute themselves for the class and steer the system painlessly into what they thought of as 'socialism'. What in fact happened, in Britain, was that a synthesis of Fabianism and Keynesianism contrived to salvage the system and prepare it for the renewal of energy which it secured in the 50s.

Another variety of formalism, less dangerous, but nonetheless to be guarded against, is to be-

gin reciting—at the first signs of recession—the whole supposedly Marxist litany through to deep slump and even complete breakdown. It is no good having rigorous respect for the book and trying to fit existing trends into the revealed word. That, indeed, is not Marxism, and discredits Marxism among all those who are ready to pounce at the first sign of dogmatism. However, it is sometimes difficult to avoid giving this impression, especially when trying to estimate the immediately forthcoming situation for the direction of political work. To exaggerate the prospects of a capitalist decline is a lesser error than to adopt reformist illusions which disarm the working class politically; but it is an error, and like all errors of this kind, can do harm.

THE PROBLEMS OF PROSPERITY

There is every reason to believe that the phase of expansion through which capitalism has been passing has been storing up a number of problems familiar to Marxists. There is the question, for example, of finding continually expanding markets for the increased capacity which is being built up during the boom. There are the disproportions which appear between different sections of the economy. There are the problems of redundancy arising from automation and rationalisation, which have been concealed so far by the buoyant demand for labour in the economy as a whole. There is a string of international problems caused by the narrowed field for extensive capitalist development arising from the colonial revolution and the economic growth in the Russo-Chinese bloc. It is not difficult to add to this list of actual or potential strains which could give prosperity the death-blow at some time in the future. But there is no means of determining the time-span within which such crisis-points are likely to mature. Nor is it certain that even if they do they will not be counteracted by other forces within the system. Probably, in any case, the major condition for a large-scale slump is that there should be a recession in the United States reaching further into the basis of the economy—and especially into consumption levels—than the recession of 1958. From such a recession it is doubtful whether the other capitalist countries could insulate themselves; and the direct impact on some of the primary producing countries would be greater than on the advanced countries. Thus, although the stronghold of the world capitalist system might initiate a downward movement, the pressure would be strongest on the weakest links. This is one of the reasons why so many anxious eyes in the United States and Western Europe are turned towards the 'underdeveloped countries'!

Although such world-sweeping perspectives should be in the framework of our thought about the economic future, our main immediate concern is with the most likely course of events in Britain itself. Even if these international factors do not bring crisis within the near future, the '60s are unlikely to see a steady upward progress. The recession of 1958 already offered some pointers and some lessons. In the first place this recession established clearly that British capitalism was not immune from cyclical downturn. Moreover, the measures to deal with it were late, slow in getting to the root of the trouble and would have been impotent but for the temporarily favourable international situation which emerged for Britain. The major weapon—which is still a main support of the prevailing prosperity—was the opening up of wider possibilities of realising surplus value through the expansion of credit (notably personal and hire-purchase credit) to sustain consumption. But this method has its limitations. In so far as it reaches back into the investment industries and initiates an autonomous expansion, or enables the old momentum to be resumed, it can exercise this effect for some time. Again, rising consumption, even on the never-never, may for a time add weight to the 'you've never had it so good' slogan and thus take the edge off the militancy of some workers, who, at the same time, are weighed down with heavy H.P. repayments. On the other hand, if other gashes appear in the fabric of prosperity, for example, owing to loss of overseas markets or an American recession, it is difficult to see how even easier credit can be resorted to. Indeed, under those circumstances the volume of hire-purchase and other debt would be a depressive factor, weakening the viability of the system.

Here again, a cumulative spiral into deep depression would not necessarily follow. The 1958 recession also shows—just as did the depression of the '30s—that depressed sectors can co-exist with others which remain prosperous and continue to expand. Nor is this surprising if a few possibilities are considered. If armament spending remains at its present level, industries dependent upon it will remain prosperous. If there is intensified trade competition, there may be direct effects on some industries through a loss of orders, but the pressure on employers to modernise and mechanise to meet this competition will mean orders and employment in the firms producing capital goods. That means, essentially, the most advanced sections of industry in engineering, electronics and chemicals. On the other hand, while continued technological advance may favourably affect these groups, it would

intensify the already obvious problems of the older industries such as coal and cotton.

Even in a review of this kind we might remember that the continued expansion of some of the growing-points in the economy, such as motor cars and consumer durables, cannot be taken for granted. A wave of optimism seems to have surged through these branches of industry, which are now counting more firmly than before on a number of years of expansion. But the fulfilment of these hopes depends upon the market at home and overseas into which many factors necessarily enter. At any rate, despite the important role which these industries have played in prosperity, the curve of growth may more or less rapidly flatten out once the effects of the credit expansion are exhausted. In that case the reaction upon other sectors may be quite severe.

In the meantime, then, we can anticipate that some industries will continue to expand under conditions of modernisation and prosperity. With full order books, optimistic prospects and booming profits employers may put up an ostensible front of reasonableness and willingness to make concessions. While they economise on labour power by increasing production with no addition to their labour force, and perhaps some reduction, they can pay more for each unit. In fact they could pay a good deal more than they will be willing to offer. The conflict of interest at the point of production is, as has been said, inherent in capitalist economy; exploitation at £30 a week can be as real as exploitation at £5. It is on this basis that workers in the prosperous industries find themselves in struggle on the same terms as their less fortunate brethren.

SLUMP AND MILITANCY

The general conclusion is that the Marxist does not wait for some inevitable day of reckoning when capitalism will topple through its own weaknesses. On the contrary, he recognises that the effect of slump can be to disarm and demoralise the working class, as happened to a considerable degree in the '30s. The present mood of the working class is sometimes hastily described as one of apathy or complacency. Certainly this describes the attitude towards the traditional organisations, both the Trade Unions and the Labour Party, and it would be truly remarkable, after a long period of prosperity—with many young workers who have never known anything else—if there were not some complacency. This is not the place to analyse the relations between workers of the rank and file and their leaders, or indeed to examine the influences which flow

around and into the working class from the capitalist environment. Marxists have never assumed that the workers were homogeneous as a class or would attain to a consciousness of their position in society and role in social change by a spontaneous process. Neither do they equate apathy towards the bureaucratic leadership of the mass organisations with indifference to the class struggle. That struggle, as has been seen, is for most of the time a silent and unspectacular process: but when it bursts out into open conflict there is certainly no lack of fighting spirit or solidarity. The relations of capitalism in which the worker is enmeshed, whatever the material level which his wages permit him to 'enjoy', are a standing invitation to resistance on his part, since they make him the object of another's purpose and deprive him of any real say in how his working life should be spent. Employers know this well enough and the 'enlightened' ones spend quite lavish sums to try to 'integrate' the worker into the enterprise—which largely means to dull his consciousness of his own exploitation. In fact they have not succeeded in this task; even the apparently most docile sections can turn over suddenly to strike action. While the demand for labour power has been running high in the period of full employment, the working class as a whole has built up not only a higher material standard than before the war, but also a determination to preserve and improve upon that standard. Any attack by the employers or the State consequently invites resistance: a resistance which is all the more tenacious because even in prosperity workers have not become reconciled to capitalism, even if they do not express this clearly and directly.

Apathy towards leaders who are reconciled to the system can only be regarded as a healthy disrespect for humbug. Opposition to mechanisation and new processes is really a spontaneous defence of men against the demands of dehumanising Capital. Fundamentally the only difference between the present-day worker in production and the worker whose situation Marx delineated with such care and prescience is that the former carries home more spending power at the end of the week. He still knows, however, that it is a condition for existence that he stands ready to furnish his labour power to the employer when the next working week begins. No matter whether the social force, Capital, is personified by an individual capitalist, a limited company or a nationalised board, the worker is still exploited.

It is on this basis that Marxists devise their tactics and strategy in the present-day struggle for socialism. They set to work in the here and now, with things as they are, confident in the ability of the working class, when it rises to the level of

consciousness which the situation demands, to take charge of its own destiny in society. In doing so they do not pin their faith on irresistible processes, nor do they assume that only slump and depression can move workers to take stock of their position in society and move to do something about it. When assessing the changes which capitalism constantly undergoes, they take care to distinguish the form from the essence; the changes which have been hailed to constitute a 'mutation', in fact alter the *form* in which capitalist relations express themselves while leaving the fundamentals unchanged. They take warning from history that periods of apparently unlimited upsurge have occurred before in the history of capitalism—bringing with them a train of 'revisionist' thinking in the socialist movement—and have ended in war and depression or stagnation. When defining capitalism as a regime of crisis they do no more than sum up in a phrase the undisputedly stormy history of capitalism in our epoch, with its record of wars, colonial oppression, insecurity and now the ever-present threat of complete destruction or a return to barbarism after a nuclear holocaust. A few years of increasing production of TV. sets, washing machines

and motor roads cannot cancel out this debit balance of inhumanity. Nor can we forget that this very prosperity has been accompanied by, in fact to no small extent has rested upon, an unprecedented peace-time expenditure on armaments and active preparations for a new war.

The very progress of prosperity, too, has seen the accumulation of a knot of economic problems which cannot be analysed here. It has been inseparably connected, for a large part of the time, with inflation and chronic international imbalance. It has fallen short in rate of growth of that attained in the Soviet Union and China. It has been unable to stem the growth of the colonial revolution or to grapple with the problem of the under-developed countries. Within the orbit of capitalism as a world system even the standard of living has probably declined in the past quarter of a century: to have our eyes fixed on the situation in a few privileged areas is to ignore what on the world historical scale can be condemning the system to destruction. All these and related questions need fundamental examination in the light of Marxism and it will be our task to undertake this in the coming year.

Lessons of the Dining Car Strike

Brian Arundel

THE strike of Dining Car workers during October, 1959, demonstrated to all trade unionists the power and scope of rank-and-file action and leadership. It also showed the necessity for an overall and unified strategy for railway workers in struggle. In one week this strike spread from region to region on the railways, uniting Dining Car workers from as far apart as Edinburgh and Bournemouth behind a demand that had the support not only of great numbers of railwaymen but of other workers up and down the country.

A brief history of the developments which led up to this strike exposes the role of trade union leaders who in negotiations with the bosses accept agreements and conditions which are directly opposed to the wishes of their members.

At the Annual General Meeting of the National Union of Railwaymen held in Blackpool during

July, 1959, a resolution, No. 96d, was carried unanimously by the 77 delegates representing over 355,000 railway workers. The resolution stated that:

'This A.G.M. expresses concern at reports that under the Modernization Plan a number of trains will be replaced by trains with Pullman Service and staffed by Pullman car staff. We demand from the B.T.C. that any new Pullman trains operating on British Railways shall be operated by the B.T.C. and manned by B.T.C. staff, and further we instruct the Executive Committee to work for the abolition of Pullman Car Services operating on British Railways and their assimilation into the Hotels and Catering Services of British Transport.'

Three months later, on Friday, October 16, the N.U.R. National Executive Committee decided that it would 'amend' this policy in view of the fact that certain of its demands had been conceded by the Pullman Car Company.

This change of line was a slap in the face to members of the N.U.R., particularly those who had campaigned for the policy accepted at the Annual General Meeting. A concession on a secondary point in the demands of the Union became an excuse to 'amend' the policy as a whole. But instead of merely condemning the N.E.C. in angry resolutions as so often happened in the past, 2,000 workers came out on strike and were roused to a display of militancy not seen on the railways for 30 years.

THE PULLMAN COMPANY THREAT

The British Railways modernization plan included the introduction of luxury Pullman Car trains, notably between Manchester Central and London St. Pancras in the London Midland region. These trains, which would carry only first-class passengers, were to be manned by Pullman Car workers whose rates of pay and conditions were considerably worse than those of British Railways dining car staff. For example, a cook working for the Pullman Car Company had a basic wage which was 30s. a week less than his opposite number on British Railways. In addition he also worked a 52-hour week and did not enjoy the same privileges as men employed by British Railways. The Pullman Car Company is in essence a private company. The equity capital is held by the British Transport Commission, but fixed charges and interest on Preference Shares are paid to private individuals before any profit is made. The Pullman Car Company is also separately constituted within the B.T.C.

As early as March last year, opposition to the introduction of the Manchester-London Pullman express had been expressed by the N.U.R. Manchester and District Council. They warned that they would 'make a determined stand against catering on a new Manchester-London express being done by an outside firm'. However, Dining Car workers made their position quite clear. They were not opposed to the introduction of luxury trains as such, but they were against the employment of workers whose conditions were worse than their own and who were sacked for being active members of a trade union, as were members of the Clapham Junction Branch of the N.U.R. Oliver Bates, secretary of the Manchester dining car strike committee, in an interview with *The Newsletter* on October 31, stated: 'We have no fight with the Pullman car lads and we say, if the B.T.C. want to introduce luxury trains then we will work them alongside the Pullman lads who should, in our opinion, be working for the B.T.C.' Moreover, the introduction of one Pull-

man train was seen as a prelude to further encroachment and a threat to the jobs and conditions of B.R. dining car workers.

This threat was obvious when certain facts in relation to the workings of the Pullman Car Co. became known. In the Southern Region, for example, where the Pullman Car Co. were operating with only single cars on a train, they had lost over £55,000 in 1958. On the other hand trains such as the 'Golden Arrow' and the 'Belles', with exclusive Pullman catering, yielded a high profit. It was upon this type of train that they intended to base their operations for the future. As for the others, it can be assumed that they had no opposition to the B.T.C. taking them over—to operate, of course, at a loss. In reward for such generosity the B.T.C. would build five luxury trains at a cost of £1½ million to be operated by the Pullman Car Co. The only obstacle to this move lay in resolution No. 96d carried at the N.U.R. Annual General Meeting. Once this was removed, then the way lay open for the Pullman Car Co. to establish a firm foothold in the B.T.C. train catering services.

Consequently an agreement was reached between the N.U.R. and the Pullman Car Co., in which a parity of rates and conditions was to be established between B.T.C. dining car staff and those of the Pullman Car Co. These concessions, which would cost the Pullman Car Co. £25,000 a year, were made on the understanding that all opposition to the further extension of Pullman services was to be dropped by the N.U.R. Thus the policy of 355,000 railway workers was 'amended' and Sidney Greene reported back to his members his confidence 'that they would be well satisfied with the outcome of these negotiations'. Five days later Dining Car workers in Manchester and London came out on strike to express *their* satisfaction.

THE COURSE OF THE STRIKE

It was immediately obvious that this was no ordinary strike. In it the pent-up feelings of thousands of railway workers were expressed, and the fact that Sidney Greene came in for the biggest onslaught was most significant. At Manchester strike pickets chatted amiably with local officials of the Management and co-operated in seeing that perishable foods were taken off the trains. This attitude demonstrated that the strikers didn't have, at this stage, any difference with the B.T.C. The real enemy was in Unity House, headquarters of the N.U.R.

With their experience of sell-outs over pay claims, the most recent being the 3 per cent. in

May, 1958, and the lack of any decisive leadership in their current pay claim, railway workers were unanimous in their condemnation of the N.U.R. leadership. More important, it was clear to most that this wasn't a strike against 'the Management' but against the Union leadership and against years of retreat and class-collaboration.

The ground for the strike had been carefully prepared. Staff Councils, which are joint negotiating bodies consisting of representatives elected by their fellow workers, became the organizing bodies for the strike and formed the strike committees once the strike was on. Members of the Councils led a campaign in the depots and on the Dining Cars, meetings were held and the call for strike action endorsed. Typical of these preparations was the appeal made by Ken Wiggett, Chairman of the Manchester Dining Car Strike Committee, at a meeting of rank-and-file shopmen and carriage and wagon workers in Manchester, who were responsible for maintenance of the Dining Cars. After he had put forward the views of the Dining Car workers, the delegates carried a resolution to 'black' all Dining Cars for the duration of the strike, in order to ensure that no 'scab' cars would run.

This was typical of the support that was to come. By the second day the strike had spread to all the Southern and Scottish regions, and a Central Strike Committee was set up in London. On this Committee were rank-and-file representatives of all the areas out on strike. In the first week the main work was to consolidate the strike, but by the end of the week it was obvious that for any large-scale offensive to be waged against Greene and the N.E.C. the stoppage would have to be spread to other railwaymen. No efforts had been made at Unity House by Evans, the N.U.R. President, or Greene to convene a meeting of the N.E.C. to discuss the matter. In fact on Friday, October 31, the entire N.E.C. went home for the week-end. When this news was given to the men on strike there were scenes reminiscent of the lynch-mobs in American Westerns! Things were said about Bros. Greene and Evans that were hardly fit to be written down even in a policeman's note book. On the same day a meeting was arranged to take place in London at the St. Pancras Town Hall at which a call would be made by the Central Strike Committee for support from other grades. Along with this a demonstration was staged outside Unity House; at the head of this demonstration went a coffin on which was written the words 'Dining Car Workers—Sold out by Sid!'

At last, when every B.T.C. Dining Car had stopped, the N.U.R. National Executive instructed Greene to ask the strikers' representa-

tives to meet the N.U.R. Negotiating Committee. The two bodies met on Wednesday, November 4, and a settlement was reached. An interpretation was given as to what was meant by 'amended' policy, agreed as follows:

- (1) That the three additional Pullman Car trains should be manned by B.T.C. Hotels and Catering Services staff, and that there shall not be any further extension of Pullman Car Services without agreement with this union.
- (2) Full parity of conditions of service in all respects, including machinery of negotiation.
- (3) Complete assimilation of the Pullman and B.T.C. staff and services.
- (4) That the existing Pullman Car Services be absorbed within the framework of the B.T.C. Hotels and Catering Services for all managerial and administrative purposes.

WHAT WAS GAINED

What lessons are to be learnt by railway workers from this strike?

Firstly, the conditions under which the strike took place are of great importance. Learning from the railwaymen's failure in the past to take action against the leadership's constant retreat, the leaders of the strike agreed that this was not just a question of the extension of Pullman cars. The prospects of larger struggles, against redundancy and for better wages, were at stake here. Over the years a succession of general secretaries and N.E.C.s had retreated from a strong position in wage demands. They had always managed to secure a compromise and pass it off as a victory. As a result, strike threats were withdrawn and workers who were preparing for a struggle were let down.

The acceptance of the notorious 3 per cent. pay increase which left the London busmen high and dry only added fuel to an already healthy fire under Sidney Greene. Since then an application for a pay increase had been lost somewhere in the cogs and wheels of the negotiating machinery and an 'independent' pay inquiry had been going for so long that its existence was almost forgotten. On top of this the threat of redundancy on the railway was at the back of everyone's mind. The prospects, then, of having to stage a fight in the future were imminent.

The Dining Car strike was above all part of

the preparation for this struggle. Victory cannot be counted only in terms of what was actually gained. The fact is that by their action these workers succeeded in achieving what others had failed to do in the past, that is, to halt a leadership in retreat. The comments of workers who were on strike bear this out. Hardly anyone was completely satisfied with the actual concessions from Unity House, but great satisfaction was achieved from the fact that a tremendous dent had been made in the armour of Greene and the Right-wing.

In some important ways, therefore, this strike provides a blueprint for further struggles. The only weakness was the failure to bring other grades out into the open and involve them in the struggle.

The value of a rank-and-file leadership which has no fear of losing positions and is in constant touch with the broad mass of feeling has proved to be immense. At all times the strikers drew strength from the fact that *they* could decide the outcome of the struggle and could make direct appeals to other workers for their support. The conviction that the future of all railway workers was involved cut through all the confusion about who owned the Pullman Car Co. and whether it was right to strike against your own leaders.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S ROLE

The most powerful grouping of militants in the N.U.R. consists of members of the Communist Party and its sympathizers. They hold many positions and control numerous branches. This is to their credit, and those who used their positions to give more than moral support to the meetings in Manchester of the district council of strikers acted in the most commendable way. However, we must judge not by superficial appearances but by actions. The fact that the N.U.R. and the mass meeting at the St. Pancras Town Hall did not succeed in extending the strike was not the result of lack of rank-and-file support.

In Manchester in March the Manchester district council had stated that they would make a 'determined' stand. Could a resolution calling on Greene to convene a special general meeting be termed as a determined stand? A call from the Manchester district council would have stopped the railways in Manchester within 12 hours, such was the support. Instead nothing more than a pious resolution was passed. We need make no secret of the fact that on the Manchester district council there are a large number of members of the Communist Party and an even

larger number of people who will continually pass 'militant' resolutions; yet in spite of this no call was made for an extension. No doubt Sidney Greene breathed more easily after that.

In London, centre of Communist Party strength on the railways, a mass meeting of over 400 railway workers endorsed a recommendation of the central strike committee to 'black all Restaurant Car services including Pullmans'. The meeting also called for the 'full support of all members of the N.U.R.' This left open the interpretation of 'full support'. The *Daily Worker* of November 3 carried the headline 'Black all Diners' and in the same article reported the calling of a meeting by the Manchester Strike Committee, stating that the purpose of the meeting was to 'win branches for the resolution passed on Sunday by the union's M.D.C. The fact was that the meeting had been called to ask branches for open support by coming out on strike. This is not merely a discrepancy in *Daily Worker* reporting but reflects the attitude of the Communist Party to a whole number of recent strikes. It shows their lack of confidence in the working class, characteristic of the policy of the Communist Party in all sorts of spheres, from 'peaceful co-existence' to the concentration on winning positions in trade unions.

Those workers who join the Communist Party because they see it as a means of fighting capitalism soon find their energies being used up in activities which are decided on, not by themselves, but by the Party higher-ups. For those in the railway unions this activity takes the form of capturing positions. The usefulness of these positions of course depends entirely upon the part played by the men who occupy them.

THE LESSON FOR THE FUTURE

We have begun by placing the Dining Car strike in its background. Let us now look at the possibilities which existed in the strike for raising the level of class-consciousness of railway workers. The argument is often put forward that railway workers are apathetic, divided and weak. No matter how true this is, the fact remains that if a fight is to be waged then the tasks confronting those who at this particular stage are the most advanced is always to prepare and educate others in the need for struggle. Many workers who criticize the policies of the Labour Party leadership fail to see any way to organize opposition to change their policy. In the same way, thousands of railway workers see the failure of Greene, Hallsworth and Webber to organize a fight against the threat to their jobs and condi-

tions, and know it is a betrayal, but do not organize and prepare for rank-and-file action.

The Dining Car strike provided the background for both advanced elements and the broad mass of railway workers to draw lessons and enrich their experiences. A tremendous step forward against the Right-wing and the Tories could have been taken. Even a small group of politically-conscious workers could have taken advantage of this situation. But the Communist Party failed completely to measure up to the tasks; there was no campaign for solidarity action in the branches. Members of the Communist Party on the N.E.C. could have come out in the open and led such action and demonstrated their value as leaders to the workers who had elected them. Such actions would not have put them at the mercy of the Right-wing as is argued but instead increased their support amongst the rank and file. The fact that they resort to such arguments really means that they have no faith in the working class, and so the Right-wing can buy them off.

A Marxist view of the strike begins from very different considerations. Railways workers are an important part of the class that will smash capitalism and unless they are made to see their real strength they will take beatings in the future which will not only set back railway workers but will damage the development of the whole working class.

The fact that concessions were won in relation

to the N.U.R.'s policy on Pullman Cars is important, but the fact also that the strike was led by rank-and-file leaders who were in a position all through it to draw in wider sections, is of more lasting significance. Compare this to the role of official leaders, who always carefully avoid spreading strikes. The London busmen and the printing workers are victims of such leadership.

The role of the rank-and-file leadership in the Dining Car strike must pose a real question to members of the Communist Party and others who represent workers. Will they continue to put all their hopes in getting majorities in the leading committees of trade unions, or will they work rather for the power of a conscious working class linked together at rank-and-file level, able to go into the struggle fully prepared and with the knowledge that they possess the power to win?

Lastly, the fact that the Manchester leaders of the Dining Car strike associated themselves with the National Assembly of Labour, organized by the Socialist Labour League, shows that this section of workers is open to Marxist ideas and is not in any way put off by anti-red witch-hunts and talk of keeping politics out of trade union affairs. At the National Assembly of Labour, convened by the Socialist Labour League, there was a convergence of different streams of political and industrial militants, all with a contribution to make. The fact that the Dining Car strike was represented highlighted its relationship to the development of the working class as a whole.

Freedom and Revolution

Alasdair MacIntyre

THE danger to the non-Marxist left is that lack of theory leaves its discussions blind and formless; the danger to the Marxist left is that it tends to treat theory as something finished and final, and so the inherited formulas can become a substitute for thought. To guard against this we ought every so often to reopen old discussions in new ways. The particular old discussion which I want to take up is that about freedom. No word has been more cheapened by misuse. No word has experienced more of the tortuous re-

definitions of politicians. So it may be of use to go back to the bare essentials of the Marxist concept of freedom and in so doing lay one or two ghosts. What ghosts do I particularly hope to exorcise?

First and most immediately the view that socialism and democracy can be separated—if by democracy we mean something more and other than the forms of parliamentary democracy. In Left Labour Party circles one sometimes hears it argued that 'the West' has democracy, but not

socialism, while 'the East' has socialism, but not democracy and what we need is a (blessed word!) synthesis. Secondly I want to expose the view that the problem of freedom can be stated in terms of 'the individual' and 'the collective'. This, so I shall argue, is not a pure mistake, like the first view, but it contains the germ of dangerous confusion. Thirdly, we need to guard against the view that the threat to freedom arises out of certain specific forms of organization and in particular from democratic-centralist forms. These views have haunted the Labour movement for many years now. One reason for their prevalence is the habit of separating the discussion of freedom in relation to the nature of society from the discussions of freedom in relation to the forms or organization appropriate to a Marxist party.

FREEDOM AND HUMANITY

Hegel spoke of freedom as 'the essence of man'. What did he mean? It is a distinctive feature of human as against merely animal or natural life that men act upon their environment and do not just react to it. Every other species has fared well or ill as the environment allowed; men have transformed the natural and social environment. This specifically human initiative cannot be understood except in terms of the concepts which belong to what Marx called 'practical consciousness', such concepts as those of desire, intention and choice. To say that men are free is to say that they are able to make their desires, intentions and choices effective. But this by itself is far too abstract.

It is too abstract in two different ways. For on the one hand this initial definition might suggest that the free man is the man who gets what he wants, and this is obviously wrong. For one can be free and dissatisfied; indeed in our society the more the ferment of freedom is at work in a man the more dissatisfied he will be. And one can be satisfied and unfree. At least, one can be satisfied in the short run and be unfree. The drug addict gets what he wants; but he is a slave to his short-term craving. So we have to distinguish between two senses of 'getting what one wants'. There is the sense in which to get what one wants is to follow and satisfy one's immediate and short-term impulses; but there is also the sense in which to get what one wants is to attain what will in the long run and at every level in fact satisfy. Often to get what one wants in the first sense can stand in the way of getting what one wants in the second sense. Moreover, to know what will really satisfy one, one has to rely on the decisions that other men have made

throughout history. And the discovery of the kind of life that will satisfy is the discovery of the kind of life in which fundamental desires, intentions and choices are made most effective, in which man is most agent and least victim. Hence the relevance of all this to the topic of freedom.

What kind of life would this be? To answer the question properly would be to write from one point of view the history of class society. Every new class that comes to power brings to light new possibilities for human nature; each new form of exploitation that accompanies such a rise to power brings new frustrations of human possibility. Progress, as Marx and Engels always saw, bears two faces: it remains progress. But in our society the development of capitalist economy has brought us to the threshold of something new. The rise of the working class to power will not be the sign of a new class society and consequently a new form of exploitation; it will be the sign of an end to class society and an end to exploitation. Human possibility will no longer be frustrated in the ways in which it has been throughout all previous history.

I have in the last three paragraphs presented an argument that could do with three books. But I have done so in order to draw an outline, parts of which can now be filled in in more detail. Before doing this, however, two central points can be made. The first is that if this argument can be vindicated the achievement of freedom and the achievement of the classless society are inseparably united. The second is that in our era, to free oneself from the pressures and limitations on one's actions is to move towards that society, and only he who begins to move towards it with some degree of consciousness can begin to feel that his life is his own, what he has made it and not what society has made it. This second point is important because it brings out the relevance to freedom of both the final goal and of the movement towards it. Whether a man himself moves into the classless society is not within the individual's power to decide; whether a man moves towards it is within his power. Hence the great tragic moments of our history are those in which the individual fails in one way or another, even though indissolubly united to the working-class movement. One can think here of the death of Trotsky at the hand of another, or of the death of Joffe by his own hand.

The free man, then, in every age is the man who to the extent that it is possible makes his life his own. What happens to him, whether good or evil, wisdom or stupidity, happens to him as far as possible by his own choice and is not the outcome of the blind workings of nature or of the will of others. And this use of the term 'free'

appears in some measure in all the various versions of the concept which different phases of class society have bred. In all of them, too, there remains something of the notion which Hegel makes so prominent, that unless you are free you are not an authentic specimen of humanity, not really a man. This emerges clearly in slave society; in the early Greek society pictured by Homer, to be a slave is for one's life to be wholly another's and not at all one's own. Consequently one is not really a person, but a thing and a chattel at that.

CAPITALISM AND HISTORY

The paradox of bourgeois society is that it at one and the same time contains both the promise of greatly enlarged freedom and the denial of that freedom. In two directions capitalism enlarges freedom by destroying bonds and limitations. It transforms nature and ensures an effective human domination of nature. More than that, it makes men assume that they are not bound down by nature. In pre-capitalist societies one finds a sense of inevitability and fatality about natural catastrophes such as floods and famine. In capitalist societies men learn that there is no inevitability here. Where they come to feel inevitability and fatality is not in nature, but in society. Yet even here there is a first promise of freedom. The 'Marseillaise' and 'John Brown's Body' are bourgeois hymns. The feudal ties of the serf and the ownership of the slave are destroyed by capitalism and in their place there stands the free labourer, free to sell his labour, if there is a buyer, or starve.

It is important to pick out the different ways in which freedom is specifically denied by capitalism. All class society involves the rule of some class at the expense of others; that is to say, the making of the desires, intentions and choices of a minority effective at the expense of those of the majority. But the ways in which this happens differs from society to society. Under capitalism we can distinguish three different ways in which freedom is denied. The most obvious of these is perhaps the direct oppression of the worker in time of unemployment, the coercion by poverty or by force of colonial workers all the time, of all some of the time. But this coercion and oppression, it will be said, is surely absent in times of prosperity.

Those who believe that welfare capitalism has brought permanent prosperity will argue that economic oppression has been abolished, because they identify it with this first form of unfreedom. But even if we were to concede (which I do not)

their claims about prosperity, there remains even for the prosperous worker a second form of unfreedom. For even the prosperous worker is prosperous by reason of the decisions of others; his life is as much made for him and imposed on him as is that of the unemployed worker. The capitalist decides upon investment; the capitalist sites his factory here or there; the capitalist looks for markets in this or that direction. In this sense the capitalist determines what jobs are open to the worker, what wages can be offered to him and so on. The capitalist disposes of his own life and of the life of others in a way in which the worker never can. By accumulating surplus value he wields the power of capital, the power of what Marx called 'dead labour', over living labour. He does this equally whether the worker prospers or suffers.

Surely, someone might argue (the ghost of Arthur Deakin perhaps), this ignores the role of trade unions. Surely through them the worker can negotiate (some have even said dictate) his own terms with the employer and so make his life his own, something he has helped to determine for himself. The short answer to this is of course that the official trade union structure in our society very often presents itself to the individual worker as part of the alien power that dominates and shapes his life. The officials are as much 'they' as the employers. They move within the limits of capitalism as the employers do. And over many of them (for whatever reason) the rank and file exercise no effective control at all.

The limits set by capitalism mark the third type of unfreedom. For there is an important sense in which both capitalists and workers are victims of capitalism. The laws of the system bind both; both are carried along by semi-automatic processes, at best half understood and half controlled. Economic laws appear as laws of nature, the power of the market appears as an inscrutable chance, and every feature of life assumes the aspect of a commodity. Here money reigns and triumphs over capitalist and worker alike. The capitalist is both better and worse off than the worker. Better in the obvious and crucial sense that he escapes poverty and insecurity. Worse in the sense that he has no reason to become dissatisfied and frame the questions which might reveal to him the less-than-human quality of his life.

INDIVIDUAL versus THE COLLECTIVE ?

It is typical of class society that social life appears as something given outside our control, in

which we can only play a pre-arranged part. This makes conformity to the established order appear as, not just a virtue, but almost a necessity. Life in a period of relative stability becomes therefore heavily coloured by conformism and many who do not feel the weight of economic tyranny directly as proletarians feel it indirectly through the pressure of social convention. The revolt against this under capitalism takes a variety of forms. We ought to remember that the contemptuous ring which the word 'bourgeois' has in our mouths was given to it by Flaubert as well as by Marx. It is significant that we have to mention a novelist here. For a number of reasons the type of the free individual in a bourgeois culture, who is free just because he rejects the social conventions, is the artist. In a bourgeois society the artist has the choice of being either a solid fellow who sells poems by the line or canvas by the yard as a grocer sells tea by the pound, or else an eccentric in a garret for whom art exists solely for its own sake.

This sense of 'free' in which to be free is to reject the conventions has left its mark upon phrases as various as 'free love' and 'free verse'. But this freedom is too negative and destructive to be much worth prizing. It is the freedom of the bohemian and the beatnik. As such it is too much like a mere inversion of bourgeois values. Instead of the cog playing its part in the machine, the cog runs free or grinds destructively against other cogs. Instead of contracting in, contracting out. Instead of the public world of the stock exchange and the labour exchange, the private world of fantasy. In this world, too, one is a victim and a product of a system not understood.

It is this conception of freedom in a somewhat more sophisticated version which underlies the posing of the problem in terms of a tension between 'the individual' and 'the collective'. This type of thinking is often found in Liberal Party publications. We can use these terms without danger in some contexts; but in general they suggest the antithesis of two false abstractions. For we have to remember *both* that the individual has no effective human existence outside the sum total of his social relations *and* that the collective has no existence apart from the concrete individuals which compose it. Moreover the terms 'individual' and 'collective' are so general and abstract and can be used to cover such a wide variety of historical situations, that their use in this connection makes the problem of freedom appear as a timeless problem needing to be solved in all sorts of organizations, rather than as a problem whose resolution depends on the emergence in history in the future of certain specific social forms. Used by a careful writer in a careful way (as Trotsky

for example uses them in discussing the nature of tragedy) these terms can aid thought. As they are normally used they are the kind of rhetoric which only clouds our thinking. Because the individual exists in his social relations and because the collective is a society of individuals, the problem of freedom is not the problem of the individual against society but the problem of what sort of society we want and what sort of individuals we want to be. Then unfreedom consists in everything which stands in the way of this.

To see the mistake here, to see that 'the individual' and 'the collective' are false abstractions, is not something that will keep us from this error once and for all. All of us will pass through phases in which both rightly and wrongly we sharpen the line between ourselves and others. This self-imposed isolation is a feature of every normal adolescence. It is also a normal experience in political organizations in which the first experience of membership and friendship may give way dialectically to a consciousness of distance between oneself and others. Some conclude at this point that there is something wrong with them (and of some individuals this is in fact the truth). Others conclude that there is something wrong with the organization (and of some political organizations this is in fact the truth). But to objectify this as a struggle between 'the individual' and 'the collective' is to treat an experience which is a part of normal political growth in a highly misleading way. To assert oneself at the expense of the organization in order to be free is to miss the fact that only within *some* organizational form can human freedom be embodied.

FREEDOM IS REVOLUTION

The individual then cannot win his freedom by asserting himself against society; and he cannot win it through capitalist society. To be free is only possible in some new form of society which makes a radical break with the various oppressions of capitalism. Thus the topic of freedom is also the topic of revolution. But we still need to be clearer than we are as to what we have to revolt against if we are to be free. I have already described some features of capitalist society in general. It is perhaps worthwhile to fasten on some features of Britain in 1960 which exemplify capitalist unfreedom. I can bring out what I mean here by describing our society as one of grooves, ladders and espresso bars.

Grooves—because so much of life is pre-ordained. To be born in a particular family in a particular place means for most people a par-

ticular type of home, schooling and job. Choice is hideously limited, often in fact non-existent. Where there ought to be choice, there can only be more or less grudging acceptance. To marry, to build a home takes place under the same constricting conditions. Hence the dream of a win on the pools is not just the dream of material advantage, it is, in very inadequate form no doubt, also a dream of escape from limitation, a dream of freedom. But where there is money, high wages or good luck, there is still the groove. Capitalist production pushes you along the groove of work; capitalist consumption holds you in the advertisers' groove. The stick of work and the carrot of television, these mark out how so-called consumer capitalism has additional techniques for limiting and holding the worker down. Old age puts you back in the final groove of pensioned need.

So much for grooves. Ladders—because the only escapes from the grooves that are offered are competitive ones. The prizes are all financial and there are a few—very few—large ones. You compete at eleven plus for the grammar stream. On that ladder you compete for higher rewards. In the commercial world you compete in offering your skill or your savings in the service of capitalist enterprise. At least in the grooves you were *with* your fellows, on the ladders you are against them. So we go from working-class grooves on to middle-class ladders, from middle-class grooves on to still other ladders and so on.

Grooves, ladders *and* espresso bars. There are those not yet captured for grooves and ladders, adolescents clutching Modern Jazz Quartet L.P.'s, coffee bar bohemians who sense the phoney everywhere (and rightly) except in themselves (wrongly).

These three represent the types of capitalist unfreedom which I described earlier. The grooves along which working-class people are hurried by bourgeois decision-makers, the ladders up which the system hurries and harries the decision-makers themselves, the suffocatingly negative response of those who merely contract out. And over them all the shadow of the Bomb, symbol of man's power over nature more than a symbol of how that power has become the instrument of a status quo that will destroy us if we do not destroy it.

What all this makes clear is that the liberation of ourselves from this society can only be by a revolution of a certain kind. We cannot hope for a liberation by means of the formal democracy of representative institutions. For first of all in fact all representative institutions are biased in favour of the status quo. No decision of importance is even discussed before the electors: where and when were our electors asked about

the 'mixed' economy or N.A.T.O. or oppression in Africa? They were offered Tweedledum who was for them and Tweedledee who was for them, too. No choice was here, so no question of a free choice, let alone of a choice leading to freedom, could arise. But this has been often said. What has been less often discussed is that in a society ridden with grooves and ladders what representative institutions will represent will be the world of grooves and ladders. The road to freedom is the road out of what we are; so to represent what we are will not help us. The rise to parliamentary fame is made up one particular social ladder; the controllers of the parties who monopolise electoral discussion move along the same grooves. To break with this society, and to realise their potentialities men will have to break with parliament, too.

FREEDOM AND REVOLUTIONARY DISCIPLINE

But how? We cannot achieve freedom by merely wishing it. And to see what is wrong with capitalism and what is right with socialism is still not to see how to pass from one to the other. About this I want to make simply two last points. The first is that because our society is unfree in specific ways, the working-class will not and cannot find the road to freedom spontaneously. And since the participation of every worker in the decision-making which governs his life is a condition of freedom as I have discussed it, it follows that until the working class find this way no one else can find it for them. So the free society cannot be a goal for the politically conscious individual, except by way of moving with the working class into conscious political action. Thus the path to freedom must be by means of some organization which is dedicated not to building freedom but to moving the working class to build it. The necessity for this is the necessity for a vanguard party.

Moreover such a party will have to find some form of existence which will enable its members to withstand all the pressures of other classes and to act effectively against the ruling class. To escape these pressures two things will be necessary. It will have to keep alive in its members a continual awareness of the kind of society in which they live and of the need to change it and of the way to change it. It will have to be a party of continuous education. And in being this it will have to vindicate freedom in yet another way. Bourgeois democrats and Stalinists have often argued as to whether art and science ought to be controlled by State authority or not.

The point which this discussion misses is that such control is impossible, logically impossible. You can stop people creating works of art, or elaborating and testing scientific theories; you can force them instead to do propaganda for the State. But you cannot make them do art as you bid them or science as you bid them; for art and science move by their own laws of development. They cannot be themselves and be unfree. To rescue and maintain genuinely free enquiry is in a class society itself a partisan activity. But a revolutionary party has nothing to lose by the truth, everything to gain from intellectual freedom.

Secondly, one can only preserve oneself from alien class pressures in a vanguard party by maintaining discipline. Those who do not act closely together, who have no overall strategy for changing society, will have neither need for nor understanding of discipline. Party discipline is essentially not something negative, but something positive. It frees party members for activity by ensuring that they have specific tasks, duties and rights. This is why all the constitutional apparatus is necessary. Nonetheless there are many socialists who feel that any form of party discipline is an alien and constraining force which they ought to resist in the name of freedom. The error here arises from the illusion that one can as an isolated individual escape from the moulding and the subtle enslavements of the status quo. Behind this there lies the illusion that one can be an isolated individual. Whether we like it or not every one of us inescapably plays a social role, and a social role which is determined for us by the workings of bourgeois society. Or rather this is inescapable so long as we remain unaware of what is happening to us. As our awareness and understanding increase we become able to change the part we play. But here yet another trap awaits us. The saying that freedom is the knowledge of necessity does not mean that a merely passive and theoretical knowledge can liberate us. The knowledge which liberates is that which enables us to change our social re-

lations. And this knowledge, knowledge which Marxism puts at our disposal, is not a private possession, something which the individual can get out of books and then keep for himself; it is rather a continually growing consciousness, which can only be the work of a group bound together by a common political and educational discipline. So the individual who tries most to live as an individual, to have a mind entirely of his own, will in fact make himself more and more likely to become in his thinking a passive reflection of the socially dominant ideas; while the individual who recognizes his dependence on others has taken a path which can lead to an authentic independence of mind. (In neither direction is there anything automatic or inevitable about the process.)

Someone will object here that what I have posed as the two necessities for a party of revolutionary freedom are incompatible. How can intellectual freedom and party discipline be combined? The answer to this is not just the obvious one that a certain stock of shared intellectual conviction is necessary for a man to be in a Marxist party at all. But more than this that where there is sharp disagreement it is necessary that discipline provides for this by allowing minority views to have their say *inside* the party on all appropriate occasions. If this is provided for then disagreements can remain on the level of intellectual principle without on the one hand hindering action or on the other hand degenerating into mock battles between 'the individual' and 'the collective'.

After all this I hope that some ghosts no longer walk. The thread of the arguments leads on to the conclusion that not only are socialism and substantial democracy inseparable, but that the road to socialism and democratic centralism are equally inseparable. Those among socialists who have written most about freedom have tended most often to reject democratic centralism. But if I am right on the main points of this argument, this rejection must necessarily injure our understanding of freedom itself.

Building the Bolshevik Party: Some Organizational Aspects

Brian Pearce

IN discussions about the best form of organization for a Marxist workers' party reference is often made, in one spirit or another, to the experience of Russia. Sometimes such reference is made confusedly. Three distinct entities are mixed up; the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party of 1903-1911, within which various factions strove for ascendancy; the Bolshevik faction in that 'Party'; and the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) formed in 1912. Often misunderstood, also, are the two fundamental presuppositions made by Bolsheviks in their approach to organizational problems.

The first of these was that the working class would have to undertake a struggle for power in which both legal and illegal activity would be involved, a struggle in which all kinds of persecution by the ruling class would have to be faced, a struggle which must culminate in the forcible seizure of power and the forcible defence of the power thus seized against counter-attack. In a word, the Bolsheviks saw before them, and before the workers of every country the prospect of *revolution*, and therefore the need for a party capable of preparing the carrying through of a revolution. The *special* features of Tsarist Russia in the early twentieth century were not decisive in relation to *this* point; in any case, these features fluctuated and changed, and the Bolsheviks' concrete ideas about party organization in Russia were modified accordingly, but without the fundamental principle being affected.

The second presupposition was that the working class everywhere needs not less but *much more* 'party organization' in order to conquer power than was needed by the bourgeoisie in its great revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries. Trotsky (who arrived late at an understanding of this point but thereafter defended the Bolshevik position most staunchly) put it thus in his *Lessons of October* (1924): 'the part played in bourgeois revolutions by the economic power of the bourgeoisie, by its education, by its municipalities and universities, is a part which can be filled in a proletarian revolution only by the party

of the proletariat'. That is to say, the bourgeoisie while still an oppressed class acquires wealth, and important footholds in the institutions of the old régime, but the working class lacks these advantages and has to compensate by intense organization of those forces which it does possess. In Lenin's words, 'in its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organization'.

When the Russian Marxists were still operating through the rudimentary forms of study-circles living separate lives in the principal cities, and just beginning to apply themselves to study of the detailed problems of their actual setting and to intervention through leaflets in the current struggles of the Russian workers, Lenin raised (in 1894) the question of working towards the formation of a 'socialist workers' party'. The first coming together of representatives of local 'Leagues of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class', at Minsk in 1898, the so-called First Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, achieved nothing in the organizational sphere and was followed by arrests and police repressions of a devastating character. Preparations for another, similar gathering, led to further arrests, and drew from Lenin in 1900 the observation that 'congresses inside autocratic Russia are a luxury we can't afford'. Instead, he and his associates got down to the publication outside Russia of a newspaper, *Iskra*, to be smuggled into the country and serve as the means to prepare for another congress. Around the work for this paper, cadres of revolutionaries organized themselves in an all-Russia network, and through this paper a clarifying discussion was carried on for two years about the political tasks and functions of the party to be created.

Already before the Second Congress met, Lenin had outlined, particularly in *Letter to a Comrade on Our Organizational Tasks* (1902), as well as in the more famous *What Is To Be Done?* his conception of what a revolutionary party must be like. Its dominant characteristic should be *centralism*, the concentration in the hands of a stable, continuing leadership of all the resources

of the Marxist movement, so that the most rational and expedient use might be made of these resources. Party membership must be strictly defined so that the leadership knew exactly who was who and what forces they possessed at any given moment. In the *then* existing conditions there could be little *democracy* in the party, desirable as this was, without over-simplifying the task of the police. The local 'committees' of the party would have to be appointed from above and consist entirely of professional revolutionaries, and each of the party organizations in the factories and elsewhere ('every factory must be our fortress') would operate under the instructions of the local committee, conveyed through one of the committee members who would be the organization's only contact, for security reasons.

When at last the Second Congress met, in 1903 (at first in Brussels, later moving to London), and got down to settling organizational as well as political problems, the political differences among the Russian Marxists arising from their different estimates of the course of development and relationship of class forces¹ at once found reflexion in the sphere of organization, though not in a clear-cut way, there being at this stage much cross-voting. Lenin and Martov confronted each other with their opposing formulae for Rule One, defining what constituted Party membership. Lenin wanted a tight definition obliging members not merely to acceptance of the Party programme and the giving of financial support, but also to 'personal participation in one of the Party's organizations', whereas the Congress agreed with Martov that the rendering of 'personal assistance under the direction of one of the Party's organs' was sufficient. In Lenin's difference with Martov on this point was expressed Lenin's conviction that 'the party, as the vanguard of the class, should be as *organized* as possible, should admit to its ranks only such elements as lend themselves to at least a minimum of organization', because, 'the stronger the party organs consisting of real Social-Democrats are, the less instability there is within the party, the greater will be its influence on the masses around it'. Connected with the divergence of views about what should constitute Party membership was a more fundamental difference—which was to emerge more and more clearly in subsequent years—about the character of the party structure. Lenin's conception was one of 'building the party from the top downwards, starting from the party congress and the bodies set up by it', which should be possessed of full

powers, with 'subordination of lower party bodies to higher party bodies'. Martov revealed already at this stage a conception of each party organization as being 'autonomous'. On the internal political life of the party Lenin's view was that 'a struggle of *shades* is inevitable and essential as long as it does not lead to anarchy and splits, as long as it is confined *within bounds* approved by the common consent of all party members' (*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, 1904.)

In spite of the defeat on Rule One, Lenin and his associates carried the majority with them in the voting on the main *political questions* (as a result of which they thereafter enjoyed the advantage in the party of the nickname of *Bolsheviks* majority-ites), but the deep divergences which had revealed themselves were reflected in the Congress decisions on the central party bodies. A sort of dual power was set up, equal authority being accorded to the editorial board of the party paper *Iskra*, residing abroad, and to the Central Committee, operating 'underground' inside Russia. A Party Council, empowered to arbitrate in any disputes that might arise between these two centres of authority, was to consist of two members representing the editorial board, two from the Central Committee, and one elected directly by the party congress. At first the Bolsheviks appeared to dominate both editorial board and Central Committee, but very soon after the Second Congress a shift of allegiance by a few of the leaders of what was then a very small group of people enabled the *Mensheviks* ('minority-ites') to turn the tables. The Bolsheviks mustered their forces into a faction, set up a 'Bureau of the Committees of the Majority' to lead it, produced a faction paper, *Vperyod*, and conducted a campaign within the party for the convening of a fresh, Third Congress. By early 1905 they had the majority of the local Committees on record in favour of such a congress, and according to the party rules adopted in 1903 the Party Council should thereupon have convened the congress, but the Mensheviks in control of that body found pretexts not to do so. Accordingly the 'Bureau of the Committees of the Majority' went ahead and convened the Third Congress on its own initiative.

This purely Bolshevik gathering decided to abolish the 'bi-centrism' established in 1903. The editorial board of the party paper had proved to be unstable, while the party organizations inside Russia had grown and become strong. A central committee with full, exclusive powers, including the power to appoint the editorial board, was elected. All party organizations were instructed henceforth to submit fortnightly reports to the central committee: 'later on it will be seen

¹ These political differences, which are outside the scope of this article, were largely concerned with relations with the bourgeois liberals.

how enormously important it is to acquire the habit of regular organizational communication'. As regards the Mensheviks, their right and that of all minorities to publish their own literature within the party was recognized, but they must submit to the discipline of the Congress and the Central Committee elected by it. A special resolution charged all party members to 'wage an energetic ideological struggle' against Menshevism, while at the same time acknowledging that the latter's adherents could 'participate in party organizations provided they recognize party congresses and the party rules and submit to party discipline'. Party organizations where Mensheviks were predominant were to be expelled *only* if they were 'unwilling to submit to party discipline'.

The Mensheviks refused to recognize the authenticity of the Third Congress and held a parallel congress of their own, which set up a rival leading body called the Organizational Committee. To this they accorded only vague and limited powers, and they introduced some ultra-democratic provisions into party life, such as that every member of a local organization was to be asked to express an opinion on every decision of the appropriate local committee before this could be put into force.

With the revolutionary events of 1905 the situation in and around the party changed very rapidly. Great numbers of workers joined its ranks, the opportunities for party work became greater and more diverse, and *de facto* civil liberty expanded, enabling the party to show itself more openly. Lenin led the way in carrying through a reorganization of the party on more democratic lines, so as to meet and profit by the new situation. Larger and looser party organizations were to be created, and the elective principle introduced in place of the old tutelage by committees of professionals. Such changes were possible, Lenin stressed, only because of the work done in the preceding phase. 'The working class is instinctively, spontaneously, social-democratic,¹ and the more than ten years of work put in by the social-democrats has done a great deal to transform this spontaneity into class consciousness.' (The latter part of this sentence from Lenin's article on *The Reorganization of the Party*, November 1905, is sometimes omitted when it is quoted by unscrupulous anti-Leninists.) There need be no fear that the mass of new members would dilute the party, *because* they would find themselves under the influence of the 'steadfast, solid core' of party members forged in those previous ten years. At the same

time, there could be no question of liquidating the secret apparatus the party prepared for illegality; and in general, Lenin warned, it was necessary to 'reckon with the possibility of new attempts on the part of the expiring autocracy to withdraw the promised liberties, to attack the revolutionary workers and especially their leaders'. It was to the important but carefully-considered changes made at this time that Lenin was mainly referring when he wrote in 1913 (*How Vera Zasulich Slays Liquidationism*) that, organizationally, the party, 'while retaining its fundamental character, has known how to adapt its *form* to changing conditions, to change this *form* in accordance with the demands of the moment'.

The newly-recruited worker-members showed themselves somewhat more resistant to the guiding influence of the old cadres than Lenin had hoped, and, unable to grasp what all the 'fuss' was about between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, brought strong pressure to bear for immediate reunification of the party. The very successes achieved by the revolution, with such comparative ease, caused many workers to see the Bolsheviks as gloomy, peculiar folk obsessed with non-existent problems. Zinoviev recalls in his lectures on party history how there was a period in those days when Bolshevik speakers found it hard to get a hearing in the Petersburg factory district called 'the Vyborg side' of the River Neva)—which was to become a Bolshevik stronghold in 1917. It proved impossible not to yield to the pressure from below for 'unity', in spite of prophetic misgivings. A joint central committee was set up, composed of both Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, and proceeded to convene a new party congress.

This congress—the Fourth, or 'Unity' congress, held at Stockholm—was elected more democratically than its predecessors, full advantage being taken of the easier conditions for open activity. Thirty-six thousand members took part in the election of the delegates, and one delegate was elected for every 250-300 members—really elected, by the rank and file, not, as on previous occasions, chosen by the local committees of professionals. As a result, the Mensheviks found themselves with a majority on the most important political questions—though they were obliged to accept Lenin's formulation of the rule regarding party membership which they had successfully voted down in 1903! A central committee consisting of six Mensheviks and three Bolsheviks was elected.

Following the Congress, those delegates 'who belonged to the late "Bolshevik" faction', issued (May 1906), an appeal to the party membership in which they declared: 'We must and shall fight ideologically against those decisions of the Con-

¹ Until 1918 the name 'social-democrat' was common to Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

gress which we regard as erroneous. But at the same time we declare that we are opposed to a split of any kind'. To work for another congress with a Bolshevik majority, Lenin and his associates formed a secret factional centre—what Zinoviev called 'an organization which was doubly illegal: in relation to the Tsarist regime and in relation to the Mensheviks'. Those local party committees which had Bolshevik majorities sponsored a paper called *Proletary*, and the editorial board of this paper functioned as the leadership of the Bolshevik 'double underground'.

This was an extremely difficult period for the Bolsheviks in the party, but they were saved from it by the development of events in Russia in general and among the Mensheviks in particular in ways which they had foreseen. Evidence accumulated that political progress was not after all going to proceed as smoothly as the Mensheviks had claimed, while at the same time some of the Menshevik leaders came out more and more openly as people who were ready to destroy the independence of the party and even the party itself for the sake of a coalition with bourgeois liberals. Already before 1906 was out proposals began to be canvassed in Menshevik circles for dissolving the RSDLP in a 'broad Labour congress' modelled on the British Labour Party of that time—a loose, comprehensive body which would embrace the trade unions, the co-operatives, petty-bourgeois radical groups, etc. In Petersburg the local Mensheviks defied the views of their Bolshevik comrades in the 'united' party organizations and linked up electorally with the liberals. Lenin's reply to this was to publish a pamphlet attacking the Mensheviks for treason to the common cause. Summoned before a party court on a charge of violating discipline, he showed himself quite unrepentant and aggressive. There was no real unity in the party, he said, and a *de facto* split had taken place. 'What is impermissible among members of a united party is permissible and obligatory for the parts of a party that has been split.' The Mensheviks of the party court had better think carefully before coming to a decision to expel him: 'Your judgement will determine whether the shaken unity of the RSDLP will be weakened or strengthened'. Lenin was not expelled.

The balance of support within the party was now moving slowly but steadily towards the Bolsheviks again, as fair-weather members dropped away and the more stable of the new members learnt from experience, observed the conduct of the Menshevik leaders and absorbed the influence of the old cadres. The Fifth (London) Congress, held in 1907, and elected no less democratically than the Fourth, proved to have a small pro-Bol-

shevik majority. It was at this congress that the party adopted as Rule Two of its organizational statute: 'All party organizations are built on the principles of democratic centralism'. A number of decisions in the direction of further democratization were taken; a congress was to be held every year, with one delegate for every thousand members, and an all-Russia conference every three months, with one delegate for every 5,000 members.

No congress could in fact be held thereafter until 1917, owing to the onset of reaction. Only two days after the close of the Fifth Congress came the Tsarist coup d'état of June 3, 1907, and a more severe reign of terror than ever began. The central committee elected by the Congress, though predominantly pro-Bolshevik, was very mixed, and the Bolshevik faction decided to keep its secret leading centre in being.

In the second half of 1907 Lenin prepared for publication a collection of his writings to be entitled *Twelve Years*. Only one and a half of the three projected volumes were actually published, and these were seized by the police. (A few copies circulated illegally, but not until 1918 did *Twelve Years* appear again, in full and openly.) The preface which Lenin wrote for this collection, in September 1907, is often referred to by opponents of Leninism as proof that at this time (the opening of the period of blackest reaction!) Lenin repudiated the ideas on party organization which he had expounded in 1902 in *What Is To Be Done?* and elsewhere. To show the mendacity of this allegation and to present Lenin's own estimation of the balance sheet of the 'twelve years' from the organizational standpoint, here is a lengthy quotation from the preface in question:

'The basic mistake which is made by people who nowadays polemicize against *What Is To Be Done?* consists in their completely detaching this work from its connexion with a definite historical situation—a definite, and now already long-past period in the development of our party. This mistake was strikingly committed by Parvus, for example (not to mention innumerable Mensheviks), when he wrote, many years after the appearance of this pamphlet, about its incorrect or exaggerated ideas regarding the organization of professional revolutionaries.

'At the present time such statements make a frankly comical impression. It is as though people want to brush aside a whole phase in the development of our party, to brush aside those conquests which in their day cost a struggle to achieve but which now have long since become consolidated and done their work. To argue today about *Iskra's* exaggerations (*in 1901 and 1902!*) of the idea of an organization of professional revolution-

aries is the same as though, *after* the Russo-Japanese War, one were to reproach the Japanese for having exaggerated the strength of Russia's armed forces, for having been exaggeratedly anxious before the war about the struggle against these forces. The Japanese had to summon up all their strength against the maximum possible power of Russia, so as to ensure victory. Unfortunately, many people judge our party from outside, without knowing what they are talking about, without seeing that *now* the idea of an organization of professional revolutionaries has *already* won complete victory. But this victory would have been impossible unless this idea had been put *in the forefront* in its day, so as 'exaggeratedly' to make those people grasp this idea who were hindering its realization.

'*What Is To Be Done?*' is a *summary* of the *Iskra* group's tactics and organizational policy in 1901 and 1902. Just a summary, no more and no less. Whoever will take the trouble to familiarize himself with the *Iskra* of 1901 and 1902 will undoubtedly convince himself of that. And whoever judges this summary without knowledge of *Iskra's* fight against the then *predominant* economism¹ and without an understanding of this struggle is merely talking through his hat. *Iskra* fought for the creation of an organization of professional revolutionaries, fighting especially energetically in 1901 and 1902; overcame the economism which then predominated; *created* the organization at last in 1903; upheld this organization, in spite of the subsequent split in the *Iskra* group, in spite of all the troubles of this period of storm and stress, upheld it during the whole of the Russian revolution, upheld and preserved it from 1901-02 through to 1907.

'And behold, now, when the fight for this organization has long since been concluded, when the ground has been sown, when the grain has ripened and the harvest has been reaped, people appear and announce that there has been: "an exaggeration of the idea of an organization of professional revolutionaries"! Isn't it laughable?

'Take the entire pre-revolutionary period and the first two-and-a-half years of the revolution (1905-07) as a whole. Compare for this period our Social-Democratic Party with the other parties, from the standpoint of cohesion, organized character, continuity of purpose. You will have to acknowledge that from *this* standpoint the superiority of our party over *all* the others—the Cadets, the SRs and the rest—has been *indubitable*. The Social-Democratic Party worked out before the revolution a programme which was formally ac-

cepted by all members and, while making amendments to it, never broke away from this programme. The Social-Democratic Party (in spite of the split from 1903 to 1907 (formally from 1905 to 1906), made public the fullest information about its internal situation, in the minutes of the Second (general) congress, the Third (Bolshevik) congress, and the Fourth or Stockholm (general) congress. The Social-Democratic Party, in spite of the split, utilized the momentary gleam of freedom earlier than any of the other parties to introduce an ideal democratic structure for its open organization, with an elective system and representation at congresses according to the number of organized members of the party: Neither the SRs nor the Cadets have done this yet—these almost-legal, very well organized bourgeois parties which possess incomparably greater financial resources, scope in use of the press and possibility of functioning openly, than ourselves. And did not the elections to the Second Duma, in which all parties took part, show graphically that the organizational cohesion of our party and our Duma group is higher than that of any other?

The question arises—who achieved, who realized this greater cohesion, stability and staunchness of our party? This was done by the organization of professional revolutionaries created above all with the participation of *Iskra*. Whoever knows the history of our party well, whoever has himself lived through the building of our party, needs only to take a simple glance at the composition of the delegation of any faction, let us say, at the London congress, to be convinced, to note at once the old basic nucleus which, more diligently than anybody else, cherished and reared the party. The basic condition for this success was, of course, the fact that the working class, the flower of which created the Social-Democratic Party, is distinguished, owing to objective economic causes, from all other classes in capitalist society by its greater capacity for organization. Without this condition the organization of professional revolutionaries would have been a toy, an adventure, a meaningless signboard, and the pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* stresses repeatedly that only in connexion with a "really revolutionary class which spontaneously rises in struggle" does the organization which this pamphlet defends make sense. But the objectively very great capacity of the proletariat to be organized is carried out by living people, is carried out not otherwise than in definite forms of organization. And no other organization than that put forward by *Iskra could*, in our historical circumstances, in the Russia of 1900-05, have created such a Social-Democratic Workers' Party as has now been created. The professional revolutionary has done

¹ I.e., the view that the activity of the party should be limited to 'strike-making' on immediate economic issues.

his job in the history of Russian proletarian socialism. And no power will now disrupt the work which has long since outgrown the narrow limits of the "circles"; no belated complaints about exaggerations of the fighting tasks by those who in their day could only by struggle ensure a correct approach to the fulfilment of these tasks will shake the significance of the conquests which have already been achieved.'

With the advance of reaction and dissipation of the rosy illusions of 1905 the Bolshevik *proportion* in the ranks of the party continued to grow. At the Party Conference held in November 1907, the Bolsheviks were able to secure the passing of resolutions which subordinated the Social-Democratic group in the Duma to the Central Committee and forbade Party members to contribute articles to the bourgeois press on inner-party questions. At the Party Conference held in December 1908, in view of the now intense police terror in Russia, the elective principle in organization was sharply modified and the party regime of before 1905 was in the main restored. This conference also passed a resolution condemning 'liquidationism' (advocacy of dissolving the party in a broad Labour Congress), a political disease now spreading very rapidly in the upper circles of the Menshevik faction.

While extreme right-wing tendencies grew among Mensheviks, an ultra-left tendency appeared in the ranks of the Bolsheviks under these conditions of reaction. This took the form of 'Otzovism' ('recall-ism'), a system of ideas justifying withdrawal from all attempts to work in the Duma and other legal organizations and concentration of activity exclusively on underground work. At a meeting of the editorial board of *Proletary* (the secret Bolshevik factional leadership) in the summer of 1909 'Otzovism' was condemned as having nothing in common with Bolshevism, and members of the faction were called upon to fight against it. So far as the leading 'Otzovist', Bogdanov, was concerned, it was resolved that the fraction took no further responsibility for his doings (he had set up a 'Party school' at which he preached his doctrines); but it is not correct to say that the 'Otzovists' were expelled from the Bolshevik faction. On the contrary, the factional leadership stated that it aimed at avoiding an *organizational* split with the 'Otzovists' and would strive to win them back to Bolshevism. (They themselves broke away, trying to form a faction of their own around a paper they called *Vperyod*, after the Bolshevik factional paper of 1904; but this did not win much influence, and most of the 'Otzovists' found their way back to Bolshevism in due course.)

At this same meeting a decision was taken

against agitation for a separate Bolshevik congress to be convened at once, as advocated by some comrades indignant with the degeneration of Menshevism into 'liquidationism'. The latter development had aroused misgivings among many of the Menshevik rank and file who, though they disagreed with the Bolsheviks on some important political points, shared with them the conviction that the workers must retain an independent party of their own, organized for illegal as well as legal activity. If the Bolsheviks played their cards properly they could win over a substantial section of this Menshevik rank and file; at this stage it would be wrong to take the initiative in splitting the party, though a split was inevitable in the not too distant future. A fight must be waged under the slogan of 'preservation and consolidation of the RSDLP'.

One of the most influential Menshevik leaders, the veteran propagandist of Marxism, Plekhanov, came out against 'liquidationism' and gathered around him those Mensheviks who regarded the continued existence of the party as a *sine qua non*. With these 'pro-Party Mensheviks' Lenin formed an alliance for the specific purpose of fighting the 'liquidators'. Plekhanov had played a negative role in 1904-1908 and was to return to that role later, but, in Zinoviev's words, 'during the difficult years 1909, 1910 and 1911 Plekhanov rendered invaluable services to the party'. Through his alliance with Plekhanov Lenin was able to make contact with wide sections of the Menshevik workers whom otherwise he could not have approached so easily.

The Bolsheviks' striving to isolate and eliminate the liquidators was for a time complicated by the appearance in their own ranks of a 'conciliationist' tendency which, demoralized by the shrinking in the size and influence of the RSDLP under the blows of reaction, and by the sneers of outsiders, including the spokesmen of the Second International, at the 'faction-ridden' state of the Russian workers' movement, wearily urged the dissolution of all factions, 'mutual amnesty' and general brotherhood at the expense of all differences of principle. At a meeting of the Central Committee in January 1910, these 'conciliationists' carried a resolution obliging everybody to dissolve their factions and close down their factional papers. The Bolsheviks fulfilled their obligations under this resolution, but the liquidators failed to do so. This open flouting of the party finally exposed the liquidators in the eyes of numerous Mensheviks, and Lenin and Plekhanov made the most of the situation. At the end of 1910 the Bolsheviks announced that they regarded themselves as released from the undertaking they had given in January, and launched

a weekly paper, *Zvezda*, which was edited jointly with the 'pro-party Mensheviks'.

Zvezda functioned in the years 1910-12, as *Iskra* had functioned in 1900-03, as the organizer of a regrouping of political forces on a basis which it helped to clarify. The task, said Lenin, was not to 'reconcile certain given persons and groups, irrespective of their work and attitude' but to organize people around 'a definite party line'. 'Unity is inseparable from its ideological foundation.' The Bolsheviks were aided in their work now by the revival of the working-class movement which was beginning, favoured by the boom which had started in 1909. With less danger of unemployment—and with the paralysing shock of the reaction of 1907 somewhat worn off—the workers began to recover their militant spirit. Strikes increased; and in 1912 the shooting down of some strikers in the Lena goldfields was to enable the Bolsheviks to infuse political consciousness into this militancy on a large scale. Pressed between the increasingly restive working class on the one hand and the grim wall of Tsarism on the other, the liquidators were obliged to move ever faster and show their full intentions without dallying any longer. In June 1911, Martov and Dan, leading liquidators, resigned from the editorial board of the official organ of the RSDLP and declared the latter to be no longer existent so far as they were concerned.

The moment had come to carry out the reconstitution of the party on new lines. In December 1911 Lenin was in a position to record that the Bolsheviks and 'pro-party Mensheviks' had formed an Organization Committee to prepare for a special party conference; that in the course of joint work these two factions had practically fused

in such key centres as Baku and Kiev; and that, 'for the first time after four years of ruin and disintegration', a Social-Democratic leading centre had met inside Russia, issued a leaflet to the party, and begun the work of re-establishing the underground organizations which had broken up under the combined action of police terror and liquidationist propaganda.

When the special party conference met in Prague in 1912 it was found to be the most representative party gathering since the Second Congress. Every faction in the RSDLP had been invited, but only Bolsheviks and 'pro-party Mensheviks' attended; the underground organizations on which the conference was based were now practically entirely in the hands of these two factions. The conference took to itself all the rights and functions of a party congress, and formally expelled the liquidators from the RSDLP. A new central committee was elected to replace the one elected in 1907, which had collapsed after the fiasco of 1910; this central committee was entirely Bolshevik in composition except for one 'pro-party Menshevik'. The faction of 'pro-party Mensheviks' disappeared soon afterwards; while Plekhanov and a few other leaders broke with the Bolsheviks, the bulk of the rank and file came over completely to the Bolshevik position, as Lenin had foreseen. Henceforth, until it changed its name to 'Communist Party' in 1918, the party was the 'RSDLP (Bolsheviks)', with the Petersburg daily *Pravda* as its central organ. The Bolshevik *faction* had at last completed its development into the Bolshevik *party*—the party which, after fusing in 1917 with Trotsky's *Mezhrayontsi* ('inter-ward group'), led the great October proletarian revolution.

Book Reviews

Workers' Control

The Shop Stewards' Movement and Workers' Control, 1910-1922. By Branko Pribicevic. Basil Blackwell, 25s.

Advertised on the back of this book is another one from the same publisher, **The Employers' Challenge**, by H. A. Clegg and Rex Adams. That study of the national shipbuilding and engineering disputes of 1957 showed, it will be remembered, how Government labour policy during the second world war and after was dominated by concern to avoid a repetition of 'last time'. What they were afraid of was a second, and possibly improved, edition of the great movement of militant shop stewards described in the present work by Mr. Pribicevic, a young Yugoslav scholar who worked under Cole at Nuffield College.

Separate from the shop stewards' movement but merging with it to some extent at one stage was the movement, or rather perhaps the sentiment, for 'workers' control'. This arose in the mining and railway industries in the years of unrest on the eve of the first world war. Those were industries which were involved in big strikes and lockouts in which the government showed its hand plainly as the workers' enemy. They were industries in relation to which there was much talk of nationalization. And they were industries relatively free (particularly as compared with engineering) from craft divisions. It was amongst the miners and the railwaymen that the idea of the workers 'taking over' their own industry and in some way running it themselves first took root, already before 1914. In engineering the wartime interference by the State in the settlement of problems of in-

roducing new machines, use of different grades of labour, etc., provoked interest in the idea of 'workers' control' among sections which had hitherto been uninterested.

This was an explosive development because the institution of the shop steward had developed further among engineers than among any other workers. The dynamic character of the engineering industry, with the continuous introduction of new machines with processes, necessitates frequent informal negotiation at workshop level. With the virtual abdication of the trade union leaders during the war the whole burden of fighting for the workers' interests fell upon the workshop leaders, who rapidly grew in stature and significance.

Mr. Pribicevic shows how the wonderful opportunities for the movement which existed during and immediately after the war were missed owing to the 'non-political' outlook of the industrial leaders, together with the indifference of the Marxist and would-be Marxist political groups towards the movement. The growth of mass unemployment, and the employers' counter-offensive on the engineering workers in 1922, launched against the background of this unemployment, effectively killed the movement. Who was it who said 'the shop stewards of the war period became the unemployed leaders of the post-war period'? That certainly happened in many cases.

Of especial value is Mr. Pribicevic's discussion of the differences in the movement on the question of attitude to the trade unions—the conflict between the so-called 'industrial unionists' who sought to set up a completely new set of unions (they controlled the Clyde Workers' Committee after the deportations of 1916) and those who aimed at transforming the existing unions. Another important

theme is the gradual realization by the advocates of workers' control that they could not ignore the question of State power—that the idea of 'encroaching control', step by step taking over managerial functions from the employers till the factories fully belonged to the workers, left a vital factor out of account. 'The struggle would remain confined to the industrial sphere, which the shop stewards considered to be the decisive one. The State and other political institutions were a 'superstructure' which would disappear after the fundamental change. This analysis was naive as well as crude, and the movement gradually came to realize it.'

It seems clear—and characteristic of the limitations of the movement—that practically no attention was given in those days to problems of the administration of industry at national level, planning or finance; though this weakness began to be remedied as information became available about the experience of workers' power in Soviet Russia and as the Communist Party developed its educational work.

B. P.

MacDonald and Others

1931 Political Crisis. By R. Bassett. Macmillan, 42s.

The 'centre' of the Labour Movement usually avoids the lesson of 1931. It might seem strange that a good deal more 'realism' can be attributed to MacDonald and his supporters than to some of his critics.

R. Bassett's **1931 Political Crisis** explains and justifies MacDonald's desertion from the Labour Movement. He does so, by showing that the critics of the National Government (the T.U.C. and Labour Party

included) who suggested as an alternative a system of graduated taxation, were not prepared to face realities.

The lesson which emerges for Marxists is that there were only two alternatives and that the middle-of-the-road led straight to the middle of the clouds. If capitalism was to be stabilised, MacDonald was correct in assuming that foreign credit would only be attracted by economising on the working-class. The Socialist alternative implied full-scale nationalization and equal trade agreements with former colonies.

Bassett's vision is assiduously restricted to parliamentary, cabinet and committee meetings. He gives detailed accounts of conversations and correspondence between George V, Party leaders and financiers. We get graphic close-ups of the role of the Monarchy in capitalist democracy.

On several occasions, MacDonald was ready to throw in his hand, but each time the King would play his part; only a little flattery was needed. MacDonald would regain his confidence and step forward, once more, as Man of Destiny and Saviour of the Nation.

Naturally enough, an account of 1931 which justifies the National Government needs must leave the working-class out of the picture. We enter a world of financial crisis, where the British Labour Government looks forward to a £170 million deficit in the following year. Economies are sought to the extent of £78 million. This is rather too much for the Labour Government; £56 million is all they can stomach, £20 million of which is to come from cuts in unemployment benefits.

Should the remainder be made up, partially by a 10 per cent. cut in unemployment benefits, would credits be forthcoming? The question is put to the banks. New York and Paris would respond should the government's proposals be backed by favourable public opinion. A minority of the Labour Cabinet cannot go through with it—the Cabinet is split.

Then follows the Party get-togethers, conversations with the King, the formation of the National Government, further financial crisis, the election, and the return of the National Government.

MacDonald quite consciously burnt all boats as far as the Labour Movement was concerned. What he did,

he did for capitalism. How else can we interpret the quotation from *The Times* (August 26th, 1931):

'It is said that when the Prime Minister met the Junior Ministers in the late (Labour) Government on Monday afternoon, he intimated that he would not expect any of the younger members, merely out of loyalty to himself, to follow him in the course he had taken. It was obvious that such action might prejudice their future careers in the Labour Party, and he would not ask for such sacrifices.'

Bassett underscores this point: 'The greater the number of moderates associated with him in the National Government, the more influential would the Left Wing become in the main body of the Labour Party and the greater would be the danger that the Party might be drawn into anti-Parliamentary courses and his whole lifework ruined.'

For his personal sacrifices to capitalism, MacDonald received his due from the Labour Movement. Not a few of the Labour Cabinet, however, managed to avoid the Movement's ostracism. Some of MacDonald's severest critics belonged to the Labour Cabinet which had accepted nine-tenths of the economies imposed by the National Government.



The way many of the 'moderates' turned-coat on their former policies, once they saw the way these policies were being received by the ranks, is sickeningly typical of a whole stratum of policy-makers, classically personified in the Webbs.

Beatrice Webb's Dairy, August 22: 'The General Council are pigs', S.W. (Sidney Webb) said, 'they won't agree to any "cuts" of unemployment insurance benefits or salaries or wages.' Two days later, she is glad to see the back of those who consistently pressed for 'cuts'. Three days after this, she enters into her Diary an abridged version of a letter from MacDonald to her husband. She deliberately omits the first sentence so as to suggest that MacDonald had 'plotted' the National Government.

An interesting feature of the Webbs is thereby revealed. It is all the easier to understand their white-washing the Soviet Government in the '30s.

BILL PARRY

Left Bookmen

Communism and British Intellectuals.
By Neal Wood. Gollancz, 21s.

The feigned modesty of authors in their prefatory remarks is commonplace enough. Dr. Neal Wood suggests that the limitations of his book, **Communism and British Intellectuals**, are the limitations of Social Science, which views man not as: 'a concrete individual of flesh and blood, who feels, thinks and acts', but as 'an artifice that "behaves"'. The acknowledgment of his book's weaknesses is anything but disarming, especially since he attributes the same weaknesses to Marxism.

To judge by his comments in Part II, Marx's Theses on Feuerbach might as well not have been formulated; 'The danger of the Freudian and Marxist approaches to politics is that politics with all its unique features and problems disappears. Political theory is transformed by their skill into ideologies, a rationalisation of childhood maladjustment or economic interest'.

What is the explanation of the mass defection of intellectuals from the Communist Party and its periphery? The last part of the book, on bureaucracy, which purports to show how, in the words of the cover blurb, the intellectual's fundamental allegiance 'to truth and beauty, has to be compromised, and how he must achieve an uneasy equilibrium of conflicting values', provides no satisfactory answer.

Apart from the occasional references to the relationship between Moscow and King Street, there is a tendency for Dr. Wood to regard the bureaucracy as a purely organisational phenomenon. Thus almost one third of the book is devoted to the organisations in and around the Communist Party—the Political Bureau, Friendship Societies, Defence Committees, etc. Consequently one has to be satisfied with the sterile tautology that bureaucracy creates bureaucracy, as an explanation of the degeneration of the Communist Party.

The Communist Party was shaped to absorb the shocks of frequent changes of line and reflects the common denominator of all its manifold policies held since the early '20s; Moscow is right because the job has been done there.

The Communist Party needed from the start a stable and sizeable group of intellectuals to offset the pressures of empiricism, which has traditionally plagued the British working-class movement. However, the flirtation between the intellectuals and the Party in the '30s was fraught with discord from the outset, precisely because Moscow was **not** always right.

This book provides a wealth of material on the galaxy of brilliant scientists and artists associated with the Communist Party, few of whom remain there. Both its thesis-style and the frequent identification of Communism and Stalinism betray, however, the author's academic approach to a subject which is of paramount importance to the Marxist movement in this country.

The Seventh World Congress is bypassed and consequently the important questions are not even posed: 'to what extent was the waste-land created by unemployment and Fascism the driving force behind the Left? To what extent was neo-Liberalism and Popu'lar-Frontism the main attraction?

Undoubtedly it was a combination of both. The striking similarity between 1931 and 1959 makes these questions so important. The existence of a confident and strongly organised working-class is the vital difference between these periods. Consequently there is every hope that the fusion between intellectuals and the working-class will be realised in the Marxist Movement.

BILL PARRY

Stalinist Planning

Over-centralisation in Economic Administration. A Critical Analysis based on experience in Hungarian Light Industry. By Janos Kornai. Translated from the Hungarian by John Knapp. OUP, 32s. 6d.

The forbidding title of this work should not prevent socialists from looking closely at what it has to offer. It is one item in a vast body of literature which has appeared in Russia and Eastern Europe dealing with technical problems of economic planning, very little of which has been made available to English readers. While much of it is of doubtful value—often consisting, before about 1953, of little

more than a distorted theory padded out with liberal quotations from Stalin—there has always been a modicum of worthwhile work among it. For all their faults, these countries' experience must be studied and understood by socialists: and one way of beginning is with the theoretical work which accompanied these clumsy laboratory experiments in planned economy.

This study differs from most of the others in being highly critical, indeed in some ways negative, in content and this, together with the quality of the research work which went into its composition, no doubt prompted the decision to bring out an English translation. It reminds us that all problems do not end when the industries of a country have been nationalised and planning authorities established. It gives an inside picture of the baneful consequences of the imposition upon Hungarian light industry of a planning model of the Stalinist type—but it does not escape from the categories of thought of the Stalin system



According to Kornai, for example, the economic problems of pre-1956 Hungary arose from specific, removable faults, especially the excessive importance of instructions from the centre to which the industrial enterprises were obliged to conform, lack of realism on the part of the authorities and too frequent changes in policy. But though he recognises that behind these heavy-handed policies was the fact that 'arbitrary methods of leadership had become widespread . . . in many fields persuasion was replaced by bullying', his remedies seem very inadequate.

In fairness, of course, it must be remembered that to go much further than this would have been to commit himself to support for the revolution of 1956—and then, no doubt, this book would never have been published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences!

What Kornai does show is, however, valuable. Under the planning system taken over from the USSR the whole rhythm of production at the plant level was greatly affected by the premiums to top management, which in turn hinged upon the fulfilment of quarterly plans fixed in

money values. Plan-fulfilment became a fetish to which the material interests of smart administrators were geared. To puff out the index more expensive articles might be produced. Towards the quarter's end there would be a terrific spurt to top the 100 per cent. fixed by the plan, then to lapse back to a routine tempo. This system hardly made either for industrial efficiency or for the production of the right kinds of goods for consumers.

Such a result is by no means an inevitable concomitant of planning. But the answer to the question of the right balance between centralisation and plant initiative cannot be solved by an abstract formula. Under Hungarian conditions centralisation was imposed—but although it bred bureaucratism and bullying it was not the centralisation which was essentially at fault, but the fact that power was concentrated in the hands of bullies to begin with. It was not merely the excessive use of instructions, but the social basis of the people who issued the instructions which were determinant.

Formally, Kornai makes good points. We can agree with him that 'a socialist society must be based on the activity and initiative of the workers'. Of course, the Hungarian workers showed in 1956 that, as he puts it, they had had enough of bureaucracy and 'demanded a change for the better in our methods of economic administration'.

But with Kadar and the same 'top management' in control Kornai's recommendations, even if acceptable to the masters of present-day Hungary, would make no substantial difference. He suggests, for example, (i) a more complex and comprehensive system of material incentives for economic administrators; (ii) fewer changes in 'top management'; (iii) stimulation of workers' interest by 'profit-sharing schemes'. It reads very much like the recipe of some writer on business administration in a capitalist country! He sets great store by 'material incentives' to the men at the top (i.e., give them bigger salaries). He wants to see bigger wage and salary differentials. He is honest enough to face the basic dilemma: the workers 'have not been able to feel that they really own the enterprises'. But he can offer no basic solution; his criticism remains on the safe side, and he out of gaol. It is

one thing to speak piously of 'the need for an early introduction of factory democracy'—but factory democracy is the job of workers, and what the workers did about it in Hungary is already heroic, but tragic, history; but not the last chapter. Certainly it will not be handed out on a plate by the 'top managements' of corporate business or nationalised enterprises. The most they can offer is the kind of tepid reform which is the mouse brought forth by Kornai's labours.

TOM KEMP.

Central Africa

Dawn in Nyasaland. By Guy Clutton-Brock (Hodder Pocket Books, 3s. 6d.).

The dawn breaking in Africa is very romantic. But not in Nyasaland, where the African's communal life is being broken up by the change 'from communal land-holding to a complete system of individual tenure . . . to a peasant farming structure operating in a market economy'. Through federation his land plot is reduced. Infertility sets in.

The federationists are transferring Europe wholesale to Nyasaland. The African is deprived of his traditional social security. In Europe such degeneration of a full social life is replaced by the welfare state. In Africa it is planned for him to go to the industrial city to provide cheap labour. Western capitalists are encouraged to invest profitably. The profit is that of the money-owners and the highly-paid, semi-skilled European immigrants.

Guy Clutton-Brock's book not only analyses the basis of the Central African plan and disturbances but contains facts and figures that must be known by anyone interested in the colonies. One discovers sanguine truths like the utilizing of profits from beer parlours for municipal development. The laws are over-coded in the name of the rule of law. Partnership means the enterprising African joining in a society where the measure of personality is the possession of wealth and property. Land values inflate. He loses all wealth and personality. There are instances of Welensky out-doing Verwoerd, like the proscription of the South African National Congress in Rhodesia.

The Nyasalanders know these facts. They also know they lose economically from federation. They lose their human dignity, by the carrying of passes on their persons.

One might disagree with Clutton-Brock on occasion, as when he shows how Christianity was betrayed in Africa. From the early history of colonialism Christianity was meant to deceive the people. But one cannot help respecting the manner in which he sums up the issue at stake in colonial Africa. It has been appropriately summed up by Sir Roy Welensky himself: 'It is time we took a stand on the issue of whether civilization is to remain here. That is whether you and I, as Europeans, are to remain, and whether on that basis this federation is to go forward. . . .'

From Mr. Clutton-Brock we learn what that civilization is—capitalist exploitation and denial of a full social life.

ADE OLU.

Torture, Ltd?

Gangrene. With an introduction by Peter Benenson. Calder Books, 7s. 6d.

A recent news report that French army officers were attending training courses in 'torture' was hardly surprising in these times, although they, like their counterparts in other armies and police forces, have always seemed to get on remarkably well without formal instruction. This book documents some brilliant—or should it be clumsy?—examples of the handiwork of some French and British practitioners: a comparatively small sample, it must be said. Here are the accounts of their torture, in Paris itself, by Algerian student suspects, which formed the book 'La Gangrene' which was pursued by the de Gaulle government last summer. A real study in the refinements of the modern Inquisition. There is an account of the Hola Camp massacres and, in between, the remarkable experience of an English officer whose human instincts (he rose from the ranks) put him on the wrong side of the brutalised agents of colonialism in Kenya and earned him five fantastic months in prison without trial.

These valuable documents are preceded by a lengthy disquisition on

torture by Mr. Benenson which is, shall we say, tortured. If I have understood him aright, torture is wrong because it does not achieve its purpose—'the greater the pain, the less of the truth', he says. When threatened with torture suspects give wrong and misleading information to save their skins, thus preventing the true facts from being brought to light. Khrushchev gets the truth quicker than Stalin ever did, &c. Harken, ye interrogators and gaolers the world over, a little kindness goes a long way! If Mr. Benenson's advice is followed, the army and police will attend courses in extracting information without pain or discomfort to the victim. And, to save democracy, Ministers will resign when tortures and atrocities perpetrated by their underlings are brought to light.

I did have the feeling, which became a certainty when reading this book, that the title had a significance which had escaped its editor. The regimes which use torture exude brutality as a gangrenous wound exudes pus—and the remedy is a surgical operation, not a soothing balm.

TOM KEMP.

Baron Corvo & Labour

Hadrian the Seventh, by Fr. Rolfe ('Baron Corvo'). Chatto & Windus, 15s.

The republication of **Hadrian the Seventh**, which was first published in 1904, cannot be without interest to the student of labour history. Baron Corvo's unusual work has long been accepted by literary critics to be of a largely autobiographical character, although it embodies his aspirations as well as his achievements. But it has not been recognised that in this story of the priest who becomes the first English Pope of Rome since Hadrian VI, there is to be found an interesting appreciation of the Labour Party in its early years, and an account of several Socialist and Labour leaders who were known personally to the author. A. J. A. Symons in his **Quest for Corvo** which was an attempt to tell the story of Corvo's life, failed entirely to follow up the evidence of his hero's Socialist and labour associations, although he discovered that

in 1893 Corvo had come into contact with H. H. Champion at Aberdeen.

Champion differed from Keir Hardie and Ramsay MacDonald and others who were to become leaders of the Labour Party in his strong antipathy to Liberalism. At the beginning of the 1890's, however, both he and Hardie had the object of founding an 'Independent Labour Party', and when it was founded in 1893 Champion contested Hardie's control of the new organization. Having stood as Independent Labour candidate for Aberdeen in 1892, where he unsuccessfully opposed James Bryce, Champion retained his link with the city with which he had family connections. He was running a small weekly paper called the *Aberdeen Standard*, and he added Corvo to its journalistic staff. An article by Corvo on 'The Architecture of Aberdeen' (not listed in Mr. Cecil Woolf's recent Corvo bibliography) appeared in the issue of November 30. Early in 1894, however, the association ended when Champion, having been driven out of the I.L.P. by Hardie and his colleagues, and being in poor health, decided to emigrate to Australia, where he remained until his death.

In *Hadrian the Seventh*, published a decade later, Champion and others appear under recognisable pseudonyms, and it is clear that Corvo sympathises with Champion's criticisms of the Liberal tendencies of the founders of the Labour Representation Committee. Indeed, the L.R.C. appears in the novel as the 'Liblab Federation'—an interesting description at a time when Ramsay MacDonald was just concluding his secret agreements for electoral purposes with the Liberal Chief Whip. Corvo lists its newspaper organs as the *Salpinx* and *Reynards's*, in which we may readily perceive the *Clarion* and *Reynolds's*. The editor of the former, Robert Blatchford, is thinly disguised as 'Comrade Matchwood'; and Champion himself appears under the pseudonym of 'Dymoke'—a name which is understood when it is remembered that Dymoke is the family name of the holders of the hereditary title of 'King's Champion and Standard-Bearer of England'. It is significant that in the novel the hero 'Rose' (i.e., Corvo himself) is attacked by various labour leaders

as an associate of 'Dymoke', and 'Dymoke' himself is flatteringly described as—

The only capable fighting man ever possessed by socialism . . . spunged upon for 15 years by socialistic cadgers, sucked dry, ruined, and cast out, a victim of socialistic jealousy and treachery. In the plans laid for a Social Revolution, towards the end of the 19th century, that man had been named commander-in-chief.

This reminds us of Champion's part in the Social-Democratic Federation in the 1880's, when he was regarded as the potential military leader of the expected insurrection. In the novel, a Scottish labour leader boasts:

Don't someone remember I was the one that stopped the traitor's letters, and gave information of his treachery? If it hadna been for me he would have bought the bally show with his Tory gold.

Here is a reference to the struggle between Hardie and Champion inside the I.L.P. in 1893, when Champion was under heavy suspicion of working for the Conservative Party, and when letters of his were intercepted and used as evidence against him in the final process of his elimination from the movement. The labour leader cannot be identified, however, as Keir Hardie himself, but seems to be an amalgam of several Scottish leaders of the time, including one who had a temporary job on the *Aberdeen Standard*, which incidentally appears under the pseudonym of *Social Standard*.

A good many more identifications could be made, but enough has been said to show that one side of Corvo's career has been completely neglected by the biographers and by the literary critics, whose minds appear capable of comprehending only a part of their legitimate subject matter.

HENRY PELLING.

Modern Russian

Soviet Prose. A Reader, edited by Ronald Hingley. Allen and Unwin, 12s. 6d.

Ronald Hingley, the man behind the BBC's course of Russian lessons, has rendered a service to students by compiling and annotating this

series of extracts from Soviet Russian writers. As he says in the introduction, many who have learnt to find their way through the 19th-century classics find themselves baffled when they attempt post-revolutionary prose, owing to 'the extraordinarily wide vocabulary used by Soviet authors' and 'the frequency with which they employ popular, vulgar, slang and dialect forms or constructions'.

Writers whose work is represented and commented include Babel, Pilynyak, Sholokhov and Leonov. Two extracts, the content of which is particularly interesting, are those from Galina Nikolayeva ('The Death of Stalin') and Vladimir Dudintsev ('An Inventor in Trouble').

B.P.

Not So Clever Dick

Police. By John Coatman, C.I.E., Oxford University Press, 7s. 6d.

In 1934 the president of the students' union at the London School of Economics was expelled from the college and, being an American citizen, forthwith deported from this country. The offence of this Communist student was that he had sold to others an issue of a certain journal which mentioned that colonial students were spied on and their political views reported, this job being looked after at L.S.E. by 'a retired Indian policeman'. The director, that great Liberal Beveridge, had decided that this must refer to his Professor of Imperial Economic Relations, and banned the journal from the college precincts.

Professor Coatman has now written a little book about police work. It does no credit to the distinguished press which has published it. Reviewers elsewhere have drawn attention to the inaccuracies and the glossing over of controversial aspects. Characteristic of the author's attitude are such passages as these: 'The truth is that a certain asperity, or even mild aggressiveness on the part of the police is actually salutary at times, as the slapping of a hysterical person's face, or a douche of cold water may be'. 'Anything which weakens police morale is a national danger, and its prevention should be a primary consideration.'

B.P.

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