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Vol. 2

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The End of an Ice Age

WHAT IS STALINISM? How did it come about that the October Revolution which began as the noblest episode in the history of mankind degenerated into the brutal bureaucracy which is today physically destroying the Hungarian Revolution? The key to this problem is to be found in the writings of Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army who, side by side with Lenin, led the Bolsheviks to victory in 1917.

New Park Publications have already brought out two important works by Trotsky — Volume II of *The First Five Years of the Comintern* and *The New Course*. Their list of projected publications include *The Revolution Betrayed* — a brilliant Marxist analysis of the class nature of the Soviet Union and the role of the ruling bureaucracy. These books are indispensable for all who want to understand what is happening in Russia and the satellite countries today.

The advent of Stalinism resulted in an ice-age in creative Marxist literature. With Stalin as the fount of all wisdom, the writings of other Communist Party leaders only dared to re-phrase what the "Master" wrote. Constructive thought was both dangerous and contagious. Now that the ice is beginning to crack, many young thinkers will be using Marxism for the first time as a creative weapon. New Park wants to encourage this development and places its resources at the disposal of those who think they can contribute to the theoretical wealth of the Labour Movement.

New Park Publications has also brought out *Negroes on the March* by Daniel Guerin, which throws a Marxist searchlight on the Negro problem in the United States and, early in the New Year it will publish an authenticated *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, and *Note Book of an Agitator* by James P. Cannon, leading American Trotskyist.

Publication today is an expensive business. New Park Publications is not primarily a profit-making organisation. It aims to serve the Labour Movement by the publication of books which will help forward the cause of socialism. Its ambitions are limited only by the cash available. If YOU believe that what New Park aims to do is worth-while doing, then you can help to realise its programme of publications by giving it your financial support.

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Editorial

Introducing 'Labour Review'

THE LAUNCHING of a new magazine is always a major venture. When that magazine sets out to become a theoretical forum for the labour movement in this country, it is an event of some significance indeed. This, in brief, is the aim of *Labour Review*.

There is little need to argue the need for a new theoretical magazine of the labour movement. The Labour Party is on the eve of another period of office. Now is the time to discuss the problems which will confront the next Labour Government. Will it take decisive steps in a socialist direction? Or will it once again be bogged down in the frustrations of "Welfare State" theories? These are of course questions which only time can answer—yet the degree of political awareness of the rank-and-file of the Party will play a decisive role in determining how they will be answered.

The Communist Party is decaying before our very eyes. For two decades the members have been cushioned from political realities by the doctrine of the infallibility of the "leader". Now that this myth has been finally destroyed, the membership finds itself confused, bewildered, lost. Rank-and-file members are demanding greater freedom of discussion but the leaders while appearing to give way partially to this demand, are fearful of its consequences—for a too-penetrating research into the past will reveal their own acquiescence in and culpability for the mistakes and crimes which are now conveniently attributed to the dead Stalin and Beria.

For too long the Communist Party has claimed the heritage of Marxism-Leninism as its own private property, and for too long it has been able to get away with this false claim. The consequence of looking upon Stalin as the sole fount of new contributions to Marxist theory, has been that little of value has come out of official Communist Party sources. On the contrary, it is among those who have consistently opposed Stalinism for the past twenty years or more to whom we must now look for new and worth-while contributions to socialist thought.

Unfortunately, much of this literature has hitherto been available only to a small section of the movement. One of the aims of *Labour Review* will be to bring the writings of these "banned" Marxist thinkers to the at-

ention of a wider circle of readers and thus help further to develop the theoretical foundations of our movement.

Lack of theory and failure to appreciate the need of theory as a guide to action has always been a characteristic of the British labour movement. This is our movement's greatest weakness. Without a sound theoretical basis, it is not possible to know where it is going and how it is going to get there. Instead of taking planned steps in a previously determined direction, we have tended to improvise policies from day to day. Nothing demonstrates this improvisation more clearly than the achievements and failures of the Labour Government during its six years in office.

In 1945 the Labour Party received an overwhelming mandate from the electorate to proceed full-speed ahead towards socialism. All the pre-requisites for a rapid transformation of the social order were there; the great majority of the workers and large sections of the middle class were in a mood for radical measures. Memories of the grim days of the depression and of the devastating war which followed it, were fresh. These events had impressed upon their minds the true nature of capitalism. They wanted to have done with it once and for all.

We know now that the leaders of the Labour Movement were not adequate to the task which history and the people demanded of them. The victory in the ballot box took them by surprise. It even dismayed them. Their dearest wish was to continue the war-time coalition with the Tories, at least until the post-war reconstruction period was well under way. When office was thus thrust upon them, they did not know what to do with it. The people were demanding socialism! But what was socialism? They could see no further than the 1945 election programme of the Labour Party—nationalisation of a few of the basic industries (with full compensation, of course) and then taking a breather before the next plunge.

When Labour went to the electorate again in 1950 and 1951, it had nothing fresh to say. "Consolidation" became the central election theme. The leadership wilted before the combined onslaught of the capitalist press and a re-invigorated Tory Party. Instead of pressing forward to enacting more socialist measures,

the only policy which could "consolidate" the gains of the previous six years, they went on the defensive. Apologetics for what had been done replaced constructive thinking for what still remained to be done.

All this flowed inexorably, inevitably, from the basic lack of a theoretical grasp of the problems which confront modern capitalist society. We believe that only Marxism provides an adequate theory. It is as Marxists therefore that we enter and participate in the Labour Movement. Marxists cannot be arm-chair philosophers. They must be active workers in the Labour Movement. Nor do Marxists concoct their theories out of thin air or fashion them to fit in with a set of pre-conceived notions. The theoretical conclusions of Marxism are drawn out of the living experiences of the movement itself. Only through a knowledge of what has happened and why events took the course they have can we hope to understand what is and what will be. Each generation of workers builds on the foundations laid by previous generations. Each generation bases itself on the experiences of the past and so determines the steps to be taken in the future.

This is the essence of the Marxist method. Failure to apply this method leads to **opportunism** on the one hand and **sectarianism** on the other. These two apparently contradictory phenomena are, in reality, two opposite sides of the same coin. They both spring from an eclectic approach to our problems which is the inevitable outcome of a contempt for theory.

Contempt for socialist theory is characteristic of both the labour bureaucracies in this country—the big one with its axis between Transport House and Great Russell Street, and the little one revolving round King Street. What makes the theoretical sterility of the Communist Party worse is the fact that it came into existence precisely to combat this theoretical weakness in our movement and, for the first few years of its existence, did make some valuable contributions to Marxist thought. But, with the advent of Stalinism, independent thought became the most dangerous asset a Communist could possess. All inspiration had to come from Moscow, everything else was suspect.

The Marxist theorists of the early days of the British Communist Party were transformed into the docile hacks of Stalinism, fit only to interpret the "Master". Even the shake-up of the Khrushchev revelations has not been sufficient to return them to the path of creative thinking. A study of the official "explanations" of the Communist leaders of recent events in Poland and Hungary makes it clear that, for them, Moscow is still always right.

To the present leaders of the Communist Party, as of the Labour Party, we look in vain for the theoretical guidance so essential for the future activities of the British labour movement.

It is for these reasons that we shall devote several important articles in our early issues to dialectical materialism, the philosophical basis of Marxism. All the enemies of socialism, all the bureaucrats, all their "left" sectarian shadows, all those whose courage is failing and who seek easy adjustments with capitalism, all these call into question in one way or another the fundamental principles of scientific socialism. Yet experience all goes to show that it is only these principles which can guide us effectively in the search for the an-

swers to the problems of the British socialist movement.

We shall accordingly engage in polemics against both the opportunists and the sectarians, because we are for the participation of Marxists in the mass labour movement. But because we believe in the value of polemical writing to help us answer questions of the labour movement, it follows that we have no strict editorial censorship of what ideas shall or shall not be expressed. All those who honestly wish to develop Marxism will find room in *Labour Review*. It follows too that, as Marxists, we believe that, by translating established principles into a programme, we can help forward the whole labour movement in its practical, everyday struggles.

Further, it is our belief that the "collective memory" of the socialist movement has to be re-stocked so that the historical record of the last thirty years can be cleansed of the lies which have encrusted it for so long. We are now at the end of the great Ice Age which set in with the defeat of the General Strike in 1926. The modern *Tribune* has shown that the old Fabian leadership can no longer curb the leftward movement of workers and intellectuals. Moreover, Khrushchev, with consequences that have echoed round the world, has now shattered the authority of the "infallible" chieftain who for so long instructed everyone on the "left" what to believe. We have suffered from this Papal Socialism ever since the Stalin faction destroyed the democracies of the Communist Parties in 1927. What fragments of authority the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. left to the leaders of the Communist Party, the Soviet tanks in Hungary have now demolished.

From now on, the normal development of Marxist ideas is no longer held up, artificially, by bureaucratic dykes. Millions of workers and intellectuals, in every country, from Russia to the U.S.A., are stepping forward into struggle. They demand to know, because they need to know, the past history of their movement. These young people want to think, to learn, to use their political initiative. Bureaucratic "bans" and "cults" repel them. Our duty is to help them find the answers. *Labour Review* therefore takes issue both with the open Fabian enemies of Marxism and with the Stalinist hacks who have so grievously soiled its reputation.

It will amongst other things be necessary to discuss the Fabian dreams about capitalism enjoying a new lease of life, thanks to Keynes, or to partial nationalisation, or to "new" colonial constitutions, or to the bounty of U.S. imperialism.

Parallel with the discussion of Fabianism we shall deal with the Stalinist variety of "peaceful co-existence" with capitalism and its feeble though repulsive offspring—the British Communist Party's programme, *The British Road to Socialism*. Where did Stalinism come from, and why? Was its rise inevitable? Does the dictatorship of the proletariat really mean an odious and murderous tyranny? Does Democratic Centralism really mean the autocracy of a clique of full-time officials? These are some of the questions we shall try to answer in the coming months.

When we discuss the futility of the Fabian policies, we shall also need to examine the reasons for Hitler's defeat of the German working class, to examine

the causes of failure of the French and Spanish Popular Front Governments. We shall try to show the connections between the slogan "Socialism in a Single Country" and these disasters for the international working class movement and also how it led on to the Moscow Trials, the Stalin-Hitler Pact, the Yalta carve-up of Europe and finally to the mass slaughter of workers and peasants in the satellite countries of Eastern Europe. We shall rescue from the obscurity with which Stalin surrounded the writings of Lenin on the character and future prospects of the Russian Revolution and shall publish some of the works of Trotsky, Lenin's comrade in arms in the Russian Revolution, which have direct relevance to problems of today.

Labour Review accordingly invites the collaboration of all serious students of the socialist movement. We shall open our pages widely to them. We count especially on establishing close fraternal relations with the developing Socialist movements of Asia and Africa. *Labour Review* however will be no mere discussion forum. It will be fashioned as a weapon in the struggle against capitalist ideas wherever they find expression in the Labour movement. It will be objective and yet partisan; it will defend the great principles of genuine Communism, as expounded by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, from both the Fabians and the Stalinists who have consistently misrepresented them.

In his address to the Russian Young Communist League in 1920, Lenin said:

"Marx took his stand on the firm foundation of human knowledge which had been gained under capitalism. After studying the laws of development of human society, Marx realised that the development of capitalism was inevitably leading to Communism. And the principal thing is that he proved this only on the basis of the most exact, most detailed, most profound study of this capitalist society, with the aid of preceding knowledge, which he had thoroughly assimilated."

Such great journals of the past as *Neue Zeit*, *International Socialist Review* and *Communist Review* encouraged a large number of brilliant intellectuals to take their place in the class-struggle on the workers' side and to put their talents to the cause of Socialism. Today, in the social sciences alone, there exists a vast mass of information accumulated by scientific investigation during the last four decades. Revolutionary developments in the natural sciences are crying out for interpretation and unification, yet it all lies around untidily in a number of unrelated heaps. Small wonder that there is a "crisis of methodology" in all the social sciences. In all of them the material awaits competent handling with the tools of materialist dialectics.

Some branches of Ancient History have been seriously studied during the past two decades from the

Marxist point of view by intellectuals of the Communist Party. The movement now requires that scholarship of the same serious kind be devoted to the events of the last thirty years. The meaning of the appearance of the *Reasoner*, shows that the intellectuals previously associated with the Stalinists are now in need of a journal to help them to work out that theoretical clarity they feel to be essential to socialist practice. It will be the special task of *Labour Review* to try to establish confidence in genuine Marxism among those who are turning away in disgust from Stalinism.

People who start discussing Marxism after many years in the Stalinist school have the greatest difficulty in finding out what Marxism really is. Yet they have to be told that there is no other way for them to get over the stifling experiences of Stalinism and to save themselves for the socialist cause, except through a serious study of recent history and of its most important documents.

When the *Labour Monthly* was started, in July, 1921, its introductory notes said:

"The situation of labour in any country has become part of a general international situation and is only comprehensible in relation to it. . . . The present time of trial is putting the organisation of labour in every country to the severest test it has experienced since the beginning of the war. In every country it is being found that the organisation of labour is inadequate to the tasks that now confront it. Lack of co-ordination, cumbrous machinery, sectional division and absence of forethought and strategic policy are again and again leading to disastrous results. The re-organisation of the whole Labour Movement on a scale adequate to the problems before it, has now become the first practical question in every country."

These are indeed wise words. Yet unfortunately, over the last twenty years, the *Labour Monthly* has dismally failed to fulfil its own declared purpose. After years of shameful apologies for Stalin's every crime, of systematic lying in the service of the Soviet bureaucracy, R. Palme Dutt now witnesses the wholesale desertion of his former followers. He reaps what he has sown.

The socialist movement, more than ever before, needs a magazine of Marxist theory and activity which will live up to the high aims set by the old *Labour Monthly* in its first issue. The working class and its allies among the intellectuals urgently need to work out afresh the strategy and tactics of revolutionary struggle for socialism in Britain. *Labour Review* is a magazine which will, at all times, be dedicated, wholeheartedly and single-mindedly, to this end.

The Lessons of Hungary

C. van Gelderen

NO EVENT since the Russian Revolution of 1917 has aroused such intense emotions in the world labour movement as the rising of the Hungarian people against their Stalinist overlords and the brutal attempt at crushing the revolution by means of Russian armed might. Overnight the "new deal" promised to the satellite states after the Khrushchev speech at the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. was exposed as the hollowest of shams. No ruling bureaucracy, any more than a ruling class, voluntarily liquidates itself and gives up its privileges.

The Hungarian rising was the first armed *political* revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy since it first usurped power in the Soviet Union in the nineteen-twenties. The revolution was *political* and not *social* because its aim was not the overturn in property relations but for the establishment of a genuine workers' democracy at all levels in the State, in the Workers' Party, and in the national economy.

This political nature of the revolution was demonstrated quite clearly by the demands put forward by the workers' and students' councils which were set up spontaneously as the revolution developed. Thus, the Communist Ferenc Mery, leader of the Budapest Students' Revolutionary Committee, explained to Charlie Coutts that they were fighting for "a really independent democratic Hungary building Socialism" (Daily Worker, Nov. 26). Among the early demands put forward were those calling for the immediate convening of a congress of the Hungarian Workers' Party, free elections to local and national state organs, open democratic discussion of past mistakes and practices, and the preparation of a new, constructive national programme.

All over Hungary, revolutionary councils of workers, students and soldiers came into being, once again, demonstrating, as in Russia in 1905 and 1917 and in Hungary in 1919, that these councils or "soviets" are the traditional and "natural" organs of struggle of the working class. The movement to set up these councils was completely spontaneous, i.e. no central body first called for their formation. It was through these democratic forms that the mass uprising of the people against years of national and economic exploitation took place. This spontaneity was at once the strength and the weakness of the movement; strength—because such a movement could not be easily crushed, not even by the mobile artillery, tanks and armoured cars of the Red Army; weakness—because the movement lacked the direction, understanding and purpose which only a revolutionary party with its roots deep in the working class could give.

FRATERNISATION

Whilst the demand for the withdrawal of Soviet forces was raised quite early in the struggle, in the first days there were no signs of anti-Russian chauvinism. There are many reports of Hungarian "freedom

fighters" fraternising with Red Army troops and these actions seem to have been reciprocated. There can be no doubt that the average Red Army soldier wanted nothing better than to pack up and go home. This fraternisation spelt danger, not only for the out and out "native" Stalinists led by Rakosi and Gero but also for the Soviet bureaucracy back home in Russia. Right from the start, the Kremlin saw in Hungarian events a mirror image of their own future.

It was only when Russian tanks and artillery fired on the unarmed demonstrators in Budapest on October 24, that the fury of the revolution was turned on the Russians as such. Coutts now claims that, hauling down the Red Star from the headquarters of the trade unions showed that the "anti-communists were now coming into the open." This shows how little he understands the significance of the historic events of which he was an eye-witness.

The political revolution against the bureaucracy as it took place in Hungary, and as it will take place in other Eastern European countries, will never present us with a neat picture of struggle for "pure" proletarian democracy. Only idealistic pipe-dreamers could expect this. The revolution will develop against the background of a complex pattern of complicating factors.

A MILITARY-BUREAUCRATIC REVOLUTION

Stalinism, when it over-ran Hungary and the other Eastern European countries, immediately began to integrate them into the Soviet orbit. It did this, not by putting forward a political and social programme which the people could support but on the basis of Red Army occupation, by military-bureaucratic means. The Communist (Workers') Parties were placed in power by the Russian Army and ruled by the grace of the Red Army and the Soviet bureaucracy. These governments, therefore, represented not the interests of the workers but the interests of the ruling oligarchy in the Kremlin. When Coutts writes that the leaders of the Hungarian Workers' Party "bound themselves hand and foot by dogma, struggle for prestige and a belief that a gilt-edged copy of Soviet society was all that Hungary needed even if that contradicted every national sentiment and tradition" (Daily Worker, Nov. 29), he is either dishonest or he genuinely does not realise that they had no other choice. Every ruling Communist Party in Eastern Europe was deliberately cast in the mould of the Stalinized Soviet Communist Party. The one Communist Party which tried to take a different line—Yugoslavia—soon found itself outside the official Communist orbit—the object of abuse and slander in every Communist journal throughout the world.

The Hungarian Communist leaders were, of course, in quite a different position to Tito. In Yugoslavia the masses achieved a genuine political and social revolution during the war and in this revolution the Yugoslav Communist Party had firmly established its **leadership**, not only over the working class but also over the na-

tional movement. In Hungary, as in the other People's Democracies", the power of the Communist Party rested entirely on the fact that it was staffed by the Kremlin's nominees.

Small wonder, therefore, that the Hungarian revolutionaries looked upon the Red Star not as the symbol of victorious socialism but as a Russian emblem, and when their fury turned against their Russian overlords, this emblem was pulled down together with Stalin's statue.

SUPER-EXPLOITATION

Soviet domination of the satellites is not only political. The entire economy of these countries was remoulded to fit in with and supplement the Soviet Five-Year plan. All the worst features of the super exploitation of Stakhanovism were transferred to the satellite countries. Even Coutts cannot disguise the vicious speed-up carried out in the Hungarian factories under the rule of "People's Democracy". "What really caused discontent," he writes, "was the unjust application of the norms system. In many factories and other industrial establishments it worked out like this.

"When you increased production, the norm was raised and so, finally, you were producing more, but for roughly the same wages as before. It may seem incredible, but it actually happened." (Daily Worker, Dec. 4).

Of course, it only seems incredible to those who, like Coutts, have naively swallowed all the fairy tales about "victorious socialism" these last ten years and who used words like "People's Democracy" without attaching any real meaning to them.

Similarly, the workers were critical of State planning, or rather the bureaucratic manner in which the planning was done. "They wanted to be in on it somewhere along the line and to do more than just criticise and alter the national plan as it affected their factory."

Consequently, in a situation where the economic exploitation of the workers and peasants is carried out by a corrupt bureaucracy in the interests of a foreign power, it is only natural that a struggle for national independence will develop alongside the more mature political struggle of the working class. The Stalinist method of rule has made it inevitable that all the political revolutions in Eastern Europe will begin as a struggle for national independence.

SATELLITE'S ECONOMY SUBORDINATED TO SOVIET'S

Under this system of Stalin's "People's Democracies" the economics of the various "People's Democracies" were never integrated amongst themselves or within themselves but each national plan is separately geared to the Soviet plan. Each one of the Eastern European satellites contributes either raw materials or industrial goods of prime importance to Soviet economy. The nationalisation of the means of production has resulted in a rapid increase in the rate of production but this has not resulted in an equivalent gain for the workers and peasants of these countries. The only people who have benefited from this increased production at home are the local bureaucrats who, with their secret police and the most hideous, barbaric terrorism were trying to drive the people to still greater produc-

tion efforts on behalf of their Kremlin overlords.

The struggle for national independence in the satellite states is therefore a progressive one. Only after they have achieved this independence will the peoples of Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Yugoslavia and perhaps others be able to create that voluntary economic federation which would create the basis of a rapid advance towards socialism in this part of the world.

ROLE OF REACTION

Of course, in the unsettled conditions engendered by fierce revolutionary struggle, it is only to be expected that reactionary forces will come on to the stage to play their part. World imperialism has never written off this loss of one-fifth of the world market. They have always hoped to regain a foothold in the non-capitalist sector of the world economy and they have planned accordingly. Only the naive and the idiotic would assert that there were no counter-revolutionary elements in the ranks of the "freedom fighters."

Quite apart, too, from the attempts of outside imperialist elements to intervene in the Hungarian events, it is necessary to realise that the class struggle in Hungary was not resolved in 1945 simply by the Red Army placing the local Stalinists in power. On the contrary, for two years or more, the Stalinists actually protected certain sections of the bourgeoisie and would probably have gone on doing so if the pressure of imperialism (the "cold war") had not made this position untenable. Consequently, in the present struggle for national liberation, these people would establish a united front with the working class against the foreign oppressor. Only when the national question is resolved will the social forces come to the fore and reveal the sharp class antagonisms.

In "People's Democratic" Hungary, the old ruling class lacked a property base and for this reason they had to look to the peasantry for mass support. There is little indication however that such support was forthcoming. On the contrary, the peasants organised the supply of food to the striking workers of Csepel, Dunapentele and other industrial centres. Nowhere did the peasants put forward a demand for a return of confiscated land back to the large estates and semi-feudal landlords of the Horthy era. To pose the agrarian issues of the Hungarian events in this way is to see it laughed out of court.

AGAINST ENFORCED COLLECTIVISM

It is true however that the peasants seized the first opportunity to abandon the collective farms as fast as they could. Following the Stalin model, the Rakosi regime had forced collectivisation on the Hungarian peasantry with brutal ferocity and this collectivisation brought no real benefits to the peasants. Collectivisation is much more than a political slogan; it can be successfully accomplished only if there are sufficient tractors and other mechanical agricultural machinery to make collective farming economically superior. The peasant will agree to collectivisation only if it can be demonstrated to him that it will result in more food, better clothing and more civilised living conditions for him and his family. The "urbanisation" of rural life is one of the essential tasks of the social revolution. In Hungary, as in the satellite countries generally, collectivisa-

tion only made it easier for the bureaucracy to plunder the peasants. No wonder they voted against it "with their feet".

By far the most effective force in the Hungarian revolution was the working class, resolutely backed by the students. It is well known that these students, ten years after the overthrow of capitalism in Hungary, came mostly from working class families. It was the workers of Csepel who began the armed struggle and who were the last to lay down their arms. Even after the fighting stopped, the workers continued, by means of the general strike, to bring tremendous pressure to bear on the Kadar Government.

Now, even as we are writing these lines (Dec. 10), it is becoming clear that there is still, to a certain extent, a system of "dual power" in Hungary—that "dual power" characteristic of a certain stage of all revolutions. But the main opposing forces are not the old capitalist landlord ruling classes on the one side and the "Government of People's Democracy" on the other, as the apologists for latter day Stalinism would have us believe. On the contrary, the main antagonists in the struggle in Hungary, which is even at the moment once again breaking out into the open, are the Workers' Councils and the Stalinist bureaucracy plus the Russian army. If we want to understand what is happening in Hungary today, Marxists will find it necessary to determine the class nature of the Hungarian State. As we have already pointed out above, the "People's Democratic Republic" did not arise as the result of mass struggles of the workers and peasants of Hungary but was set up in 1945 as an extension of the Soviet State. The private ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange was abolished; the big landed estates were broken up and the land given to the peasants. Later, following the Soviet model, collectivisation was forced on to large numbers of peasants. We can say, therefore, that the state form of Hungary is roughly the same as that in the U.S.S.R.—a Workers' State, but a Workers' State which, from the moment of its inception was a bureaucratised, degenerated caricature of a Workers' State.

ROLE OF BUREAUCRACY

The ruling bureaucracy first imposed itself on the Soviet Union in the years following 1924 and then, with the help of the Red Army, it fastened itself, with the help of the "native" Stalinists, on the satellite states. This bureaucracy has a double function. Firstly, since its power rests on the socialised property relations, it has to defend the economic base of the workers' state against imperialist intervention and against internal counter-revolution. Secondly, however, it must defend its own privileges against the growing demands of the workers for a larger share of the products of labour and for the restoration of proletarian democracy—a restoration which can only be accomplished by reviving the soviets and by ensuring workers' active participation in every stage of national planning. These demands of the workers spell death to the bureaucracy.

The bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union and of the satellite states is not permanent but a transitional phase of the revolution. It came about as the result of certain peculiar historical conditions — the isolation of the first workers' state in Russia—economically and culturally a backward country. As Russia

overcomes its economic backwardness and with the spread of revolution to other countries (China, Eastern Europe), the conditions which gave rise to and have hitherto maintained the bureaucracy in power are now disappearing. But just as capitalism does not peacefully disappear from the scene even though it has long outlived its usefulness, so the Soviet bureaucracy clings desperately to its power and privileges.

In every country today where a Stalinist bureaucracy is in power, this bureaucracy is heading towards a head-on collision with the working class. In Hungary this head-on collision has led to the struggle coming out into the open as a violent clash of armed conflict. In Bulgaria and Rumania, in Czechoslovakia and Poland—and even in the Soviet Union itself, these same driving forces of history continue inexorably to do their work. The **need** of these countries for workers' democracy is now matured and all the tanks, all the forces of terrorism which the bureaucracy has at its command cannot prevent the final victory of workers.

Was the Hungarian upsurge a popular mass movement or an attempted counter-revolutionary **coup d'état**? This is the question which R. Palme Dutt asks himself in the December *Labour Monthly*. Dutt writes: "The question presents a false alternative. Both elements were present . . . there is no reason to believe that the majority desired the destruction of their socialist achievements or the return of the big landlords and capitalists." But then he goes on to try and prove that despite the fact that the majority wanted only to defend their socialist heritage, the forces of counter-revolution were so well organised that they were able to "exploit the confusion" of the workers.

WHO CONFUSED THE WORKERS?

If the workers of Hungary are a little confused as to who is a counter-revolutionary and a fascist, the Stalinists are not a little to blame for this. They have seen Tito denounced as a Fascist; they have witnessed the execution of Rajk and the imprisonment of Nagy and Kadar as "counter-revolutionary fascists." Those who are old enough to remember the Moscow Trials of the nineteen-thirties will call to mind that almost all those who served with Lenin on the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks during the Revolution of 1917 were executed as "Fascist mad dogs"—and Palme Dutt and the British Communist Party leaders did not hesitate to join in the chorus of foul-mouthed denunciation. Is it remarkable then that the workers and peasants of Hungary and of the rest of the world are more than somewhat suspicious of the current Russian and King Street charges of "counter-revolutionary fascists" hurled at the Hungarian revolutionaries?

It is now possible to answer the question as to whether there was any justification for the Russian armed forces to intervene in Hungary in support of the Kadar Government. In passing, it is interesting to note that those who now like Dutt applaud this intervention of the Russian Army were among those who accused Trotsky—during the struggle with Stalin over the issue of "Socialism in One Country"—of wanting to export the revolution on the bayonets of the Red Army. But we have all lost count of their self-contradictions.

Giving evidence before the **Dewey Commission** which carried out an enquiry into the Moscow Trials,

Trotsky was asked the question: "Did you ever believe that the Soviet Union should send the Red Army into other countries for the purpose of overthrowing the rule of the capitalist classes?"

Trotsky answered: "In such an abstract form it is difficult to answer. It is possible to imagine a situation where civil war is developing in one country. The proletariat creates one government, and the fascists another government. Then the government of the proletariat appeals to the Soviet Government for help. Naturally, I will not refuse if I can. . . . It would be the elementary duty—as during a strike it is the duty of the trade unionists in every country to help the strike, the same duty it is to help by military force if it is not imposed on them and if they themselves ask for aid." In reply to a further question, Trotsky added: "To try to impose revolution on other people by the Red Army would be adventurism."

"Ah," say the Campbells, Gollans and Dutts, eagerly grabbing at any straw, "but isn't this exactly what happened? Did not the Kadar Government ask for help?" But first we must ask—who does the Kadar Government represent? Who elected it to power? By what right does it appeal in the name of the Hungarian working class?

The unpalatable truth is that it is clear that the Kadar regime represents only the Soviet and Hungarian bureaucrats. On the whole it is the capitalist and landlord opponents of the regime who have fled across the borders into the safe haven of the "West", whilst the workers have remained behind to *carry on the fight*. The Revolutionary Workers' Councils are today the **centre** of resistance to Stalinism in Hungary. How on earth can workers' councils, democratically elected by the workers be counter-revolutionary fascist organisations since everyone is agreed that anyone who foists

a programme of reaction on the councils would receive short shift from the revolutionary workers.

ALL POWER TO THE WORKERS' COUNCILS !

The Workers' Revolutionary Councils are popular organs of the people, similar to the Soviets which sprang up in Russia in 1917. All sorts of currents prevail within these councils, just as they did in Russia. When the Bolsheviks put forward the call "All power to the Soviets" they were in a minority in the Soviets. But Lenin raised this slogan precisely because he recognised the Soviets as the elemental forms of the rule of the working class. The Bolsheviks had confidence in the workers even though the majority did not yet support them . . . and it was this fact which finally won for them the majority.

In like manner, "All power to the Workers' Councils" is becoming the central slogan of the revolution in Hungary today. It is a demand which international solidarity requires the working class of every country to support. The events in Hungary will prove to be the flame of that political revolution which will set on fire every land east of the Oder. Revolution will eventually spread to all the countries of the Soviet bloc and to the Soviet Union itself. In place of the rotten Stalinist states will rise, not capitalist-landlord states, as the capitalist press hopes or as the *Daily Worker* says to frighten its readers, but genuine workers' democracies in which socialist ideas will flourish and which will act as a signal for the end of capitalism throughout the world.

Thus, precisely because the resurgence of workers' democracy means also the end of the Stalinist bureaucracy, the workers of Hungary are now being crushed with the might of the Russian Army assisted by the re-institution of all those terrorist measures so long associated with the name Stalin. The workers of the world must not and will not stand idly by while this happens.

A Letter to a Member of the Communist Party

DEAR FRANK,

Your letter, after these six years, was an unexpected pleasure. I say unexpected—yet the truth is that in these last eight months I have received, "unexpectedly", over twenty letters from comrades whom I have not been able to see for some years. All of them ask one question—"What do you think about the present crisis through which the Party is passing?"

In writing you this letter, I thought first of trying to bring you up to date with the news of what is actually going on inside the Party. The most powerful weapon in the hands of those leaders who have brought the Party to this sorry state, has always been their tight hold on the channels of communication between one branch and another, between one area or district and another. As a result, for years every area has been lab-

ouring under the delusion that everywhere the Party is **healthy—except in their own area**. There flourished the "theory" of "District Exceptionalism." "Our problems here in Blankshire are altogether different from yours." I suppose, however, that you are now aware of what is going on inside the Party, the factional groupings that have sprung up here and there—each groping forward but lacking any centralised co-ordinating body. I now consider these factions to be healthy signs.

So I came to the conclusion that it would be better to write you about some general features of the Party crisis as I see them, to state some of the broader questions which the crisis poses and perhaps to point to those directions where I think the solutions may be found. However it is obvious that every question raised in our inner Party discussions today needs not a letter but a **book** to encompass an adequate reply. There are,

I think, two key questions.

1. The question of discovering the true history of the Soviet Union and of making a Marxist analysis of the causes of its degeneration.

2. The question of the complete revision of the Party's programme "The British Road to Socialism", and of preparing a new programme based upon the fundamental principles of Marxist internationalism, that is, upon Revolutionary Socialism.

TURN-OVER IN MEMBERSHIP

I can, however, well understand your deep anxiety at the present crisis. In our twenty-odd years of membership of the Communist Party, we have experienced "crises" before. Remember the huge losses in membership we had in 1939 when the E.C. switched the line on the character of the war. These losses increased as the events in Finland unfolded themselves and by 1940 we were, once more, reduced to a tiny, isolated sect. The entry of the Soviet Union into the war in 1941 initiated a period of numerical growth, a growth more rapid than at any time in the Party's existence. At one point the membership figures topped the 60,000 mark. It is significant to note that, though the periods of growth and decline of the British Communist Party have partially been correlated with the growth and subsidence of working-class struggles in Britain, they have been much more directly correlated with the twists and turns of Russian foreign policy. This fact, incidentally, explains why, at so many Party meetings over these last 30 years, this sort of opening to the main speech has become so hackneyed. "Never have the times been more favourable for the building of our Party—the fault for the slow growth of the Party is in our failure to go out and recruit." Yet we did recruit members to the party. We explained how workers power and Socialism would bring an end to exploitation, unemployment, poverty, national oppression and war. **But we failed to hold these members.** The turn-over of members in the British Communist Party, as you know, has been enormous. If we are to understand the present crisis, it is important to discover the reasons for this turn-over of members.

There are some comrades who believe that the Party is going through yet another of those temporary set-backs we have had before—a sort of major "Ame-thyst" incident. They believe that if only the "staunch, loyal comrades" "hold on", and "stick together until the difficult patch is over", the Communist Party will once more regain and surpass the influence which it had, say, in 1945. I am certain, however, that the present crisis is different **in kind** from all previous periods of "strain". This is not to say that the British Communist Party will just collapse and fold up in a matter of weeks or months—or even that the leadership will try to liquidate it. I think it may very well go on for years and even enjoy short periods of relative stability. What I mean is that the Party will degenerate even further **theoretically** and become more and more isolated, politically, unless in the next few months the healthy trends prosper and capture the leadership. The most important thing now is to discover how the best elements of the Party can be brought to Marxism—how to prevent them dropping out of politics altogether, disillusioned, lonely and bitter. Of course, some ex-party members are bound to experience a kind of sadistic satisfaction when they

see the pathetic helplessness at the present time of those local party bosses who once seemed so cocksure and omnipotent and who used to behave like little tin gods in their District Offices, treating ordinary party members like pawns or serfs. In the same way, the ruling class and its newspapers are chuckling with glee at the **debacle** of Stalin's Communists. But they are also allowing their enthusiasm to spill over and have written, in recent weeks, a hundred epitaphs not only to Stalin's Communist Party but also to Marxism and revolutionary socialism in Britain. I believe these epitaphs are, as Mark Twain said about reports of his death, "greatly exaggerated". Personally, I do not know of a single individual who has resigned from the Communist Party who has declared his opposition to Marxism. On the contrary, both the "opposition" groups inside the party and those who have left it, are convinced that what they are doing is **rescuing** Marxism from the hands of a gang of leaders who have betrayed it. It is for these and other reasons that I believe we are entering a period which will see, not the death, but a great revival of Marxism and Socialist thinking. I see the crisis of the Communist Parties of the world as a sign of a rebirth of Marxism—the future looks brighter than ever before.

DANGER OF LIQUIDATIONISM

On the other hand the "new" Kruschev line of "Peaceful Co-existence" and its counterpart in Britain "The British Road to Socialism" led to the emergence inside the leadership of strong tendencies towards winding-up the party, and to sinking the revolutionary movement inside the Labour Party. This liquidationist tendency was particularly strong amongst the full-time Trade Union officials who were members of the party. The "new twist" of Soviet foreign policy made necessary by, and also exemplified by, the Red Army's offensive against Hungary makes the continued existence of Communist Parties in Western countries an essential part of Soviet foreign policy. That is why I think the Gollans, Campbells and Dutts will hang on to this party for dear life. They are "Stalin processed men" who can only change their disguise but not their aims and methods.

This new turn in Soviet foreign policy left high and dry those who stood for the break-up of the party. You have read in the press how, as a result of the Hungarian events, many full-time Trade Union officials have resigned from the party. It will be interesting to watch the political development of these people. Some of them are no doubt sincere socialists, but others, I think, will show themselves to be merely careerists. You will remember how much energy and money the Party spent carrying out election propaganda to "capture" these official positions and how we tended to estimate the strength of the Party by the number of full-time Trade Union officials we succeeded in getting elected. Alas, this was only one of the many illusions we have had to shed. I think that the defection from the Party of some of these full-time T.U. officials is quite a different thing to the resignations of rank and file members.

THE DEBASEMENT OF MARXISM

Let me also say here and now that I am not writing this letter to try to persuade you to leave the Communist Party. Far from it. There are reasons why I

think that you should stay inside the Party and put up a principled, political fight against this leadership. Firstly (and I regard this as the most important reason) in fighting for a new Marxist, Socialist policy inside the Communist Party, you will come up against all those distorted ideas which for so long imprisoned us all and reduced the party to an isolated sect. It is necessary for all of us to learn in the struggle against the legacy of Stalinism which still dominates the British Communist Party, the full measure of the ideological debasement of Marxism which Stalinism represents. There could be no greater error than to believe that Stalinism is just the "cult of the individual" plus a number of "mistakes" and a few "breaches of socialist legality", and that once the Party has renounced the methods of the frame-up trials and the godlike adulation of the leader, Stalinism has been eliminated. In fact the frame-up trials, the mass deportations to Siberia and the sickening "cult of the individual" were only the horrible, but still superficial, features of the deep-rooted practical and theoretical degeneration of the great socialist revolution of 1917.

In struggling against the subservience of the leadership of the British Communist Party to the Kremlin, we shall all have to shed a good many illusions fostered during these 30 years. In other words, staying inside the Communist Party to fight inside for Marxism will teach us a lot about Marxism and about its distortions.

The second reason why I think it best to remain inside the Party concerns those who, on resigning, you would leave behind in the hands of the old leadership. The Communist Party consists of various strata, each with their distinctive features. Each strata reacts to the present crisis in different ways and at different speeds. As things have transpired, those who are remaining inside the Party are, mostly, working-class men and women. Now, I know you would agree that, ultimately, it is especially important to win the worker-militants now inside the Party away from the present party leadership, away from the policy of "accommodation" to capitalism. It is essential to develop them politically into revolutionary socialists, into mass leaders of the working people. But for various reasons, these worker-militants are developing more slowly and rather differently than are the intellectuals.

INSTABILITY OF THE INTELLECTUALS

It is not an accident that the intellectuals have reacted to the present party crisis in the sharpest and speediest and often (let's face it) wildest fashion. In this, they are only showing the characteristic features of the petit-bourgeois who has come to Marxism, and especially of those who have come via the Communist Party—a certain instability, a tendency to see things in black and white or in terms of static labels, a tendency to reject dialectical for metaphysical methods of thinking. The intellectual lacks the characteristic steadiness and thoroughness of the working-class militant. He meets each new phase of the crisis with a search for new definitions, with a re-fixing of labels, with a fresh set of formulae. For example, in the first phase of the unmasking of Stalinism, many intellectuals immediately laid the blame on "centralist features of party organisation" and turned to Rosa Luxembourg for spiritual guidance. Then, in the next phase they felt the

need for a new label to describe the Russian social system, whose grosser features they had just begun to grasp. "Naturally", ignoring dialectics, they began to flirt with the theory of "State Capitalism" as an explanation of Russian development. The intellectual tends to imagine that armed with "new" definitions, the logic of his case will, of its own momentum, "change the world." But of course, as Marx shows with all the thoroughness of the profound scientist, life is much too complex to be contained within the confines of any one definition or any one formulae.

"Grey is every theory;

Green is the living tree of life". (Goethe)

This characterisation of the "natural" reactions of petit-bourgeois intellectuals to the present crisis of Communism should in no way be construed as an attack upon them, or as a denigration of their importance to the socialist movement. We must recognise that, on the contrary, it is the Communist Party leaders who have always tried to divide working-class members of the party from the intellectuals and to inculcate a spirit of "anti-intellectualism" in the worker members. The attitude to the intellectuals which filtered down from King Street was: "Welcome, comrade intellectuals, to our ranks—our party must be doing well if such backward elements as you are coming to us". The unfortunate truth is that, in spite of the fact that, as Lenin showed, the intellectuals have an important creative role to play in the socialist movement, particularly in helping the working class to become conscious of its **real** aims in the class struggle, the intellectuals in the Communist Party permitted the empiricists of King Street, first, to argue **out** of them and later to browbeat **out** of them the fundamentals of Marxist theory. I suppose you remember the passage in Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* where it is shown that it is the special role of the bourgeois intellectuals to **bring** socialism to the working class **from outside**. The leaders of the Communist Party have never come to grips with the implications of this remark. If you think about a minute it is obvious why. This failure to see the creative role of the intellectuals has meant that the great gifts which many of our Party intellectuals undoubtedly possess, have been harnessed to doing a good deal of trivial dirty work for Stalin. How many of our capable historians were reduced to the sorry role of embellishing the lies of the *Short History of the CPSU*? I am pleased to see that in these days many of these same historians are playing an important part in helping to re-assess the recent past.

REVOLT OF THE INTELLECTUALS

In the present crisis the leadership have found it easy to exploit to their own advantage, antagonism between the intellectuals and workers in the party. It is obviously true that, at least in some respects, the intellectuals have moved further and faster away from Stalinism than the worker-militants of the party. (It should perhaps be noted that there are in the party a number of people who can best be called worker-intellectuals and that these have always tended to move, usually with fewer zig-zags, with the intellectuals.) It was very noticeable that in the first days after the XXth Congress the bulk of the letters to the *Daily Worker* attempting to draw the lessons of the criticisms made of Stalin were from university lecturers, teachers and

other members of the learned professions. Today everywhere, from Moscow to Oxford, the intellectuals are setting the pace in the drive against bureaucratic "Marxism". The magazine *The Reasoner*, published by two university dons, for some time became the main rallying ground for the intellectuals in the Party. A comparison of the first and third issues of this journal also shows how far and how fast they travelled in a few short months. Professor Hyman Levy has been the leader in the movement inside the Party to uncover and denounce the anti-Semitism of the Soviet leaders. Dozens of different round-robins are being circulated among party and ex-party specialists, as, for instance, the letter which appeared in *Tribune* prepared by the party historians. Witness also the resolution on the need for inner-party factions to be organised, circulated by the educationists and psychologists group.

There are of course a number of reasons for this far reaching revolt of the intellectuals and perhaps the most important reason is connected with the tools of their trade. It was quite "natural" for the intellectual when Khrushchev dropped his bombshell, to turn to **books** for the answers. Those people who could find the right books at this stage could not help discovering very quickly the major distortions of Marxism which Stalinism represents. It was inevitable that in the first stages these theoretical criticisms tended to be rather abstract. The contributors to *The Reasoner* in the first two issues saw the major problem as one of party organisation and even went so far as to say that they had no disagreement with the political line of the party. It was not until some time later than some of them began to see the connection between the revisionism and reformism of *The British Road to Socialism* and the bureaucratic despotism of King Street. I know that, for several comrades, the watershed was reached when they read Trotsky's book *The Revolution Betrayed*. This book has saved more people for Marxism in these last few months than any other single book. I suppose you have read it? It's a must.

In recent months, this sharp contrast between the speeds of development of the worker-militants and the intellectuals has become acute. I find that one of our greatest difficulties in talking to party workers about the situation in the party is that we have been able to spend so much time reading books that we are choc-a-bloc with so much information about this and that series of events in China, Russia, the Comintern, so agog to communicate this information, and we have so many books to quote from that all we succeed in doing is overpowering our friends. I can always tell when this happened for, at best, some faintly sarcastic remark is made about our erudition and, at worst, some contemptuous retort is made about "arm-chair socialists". One of our most important tasks is to discover ways of eliminating, rather than strengthening, the British workers' dislike of theorists. But there is another aspect to this problem of worker-intellectual differences and one which puts the whole matter in an entirely different perspective.

WORKERS AND COMMUNISM

Workers seldom, if ever, join the Communist Party because they have been convinced by Marxist economics that they are being exploited. Text-books of historical materialism have few proletarian recruits to

their credit. Workers usually join the Communist Party because they have become acutely aware of the class struggle "at the point of production", in the factory and mine. Moreover, through their everyday struggles, they can come fairly easily to see the reformist leaders of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions as people who, though ostensibly elected by the workers to lead the class struggle on their behalf, have deserted to the enemy and who are content to live a life of ease and calm as a sort of labour aristocrat. Workers who arrive at this stage of insight are ripe for recruitment to any party with a reputation for uncompromising class struggle. The Communist Party has recruited thousands of worker-militants on this basis. The Communist Party has gained a reputation for being different from all other political parties because it never "lets the workers down", never "sells out" and its leaders are self-sacrificing on the workers' behalf. The leaders of the party have consistently striven, at every stage, and above all else, to preserve this reputation. The strange quirk of history is that their best allies in keeping up this reputation for them is the capitalist press with their hysterical anti-Communist propaganda and industrial scare-mongering.

Now it is not the party intellectuals who are likely to be the first to discover that this reputation, which the leadership of the party now rest on, is even more empty than their reputation for being Marxist theoreticians. On the contrary, it is the worker-militants who are the first to find this out through their day-to-day experiences. I dare say that you, Frank, are more than somewhat surprised that I should make this charge against the Party leaders. You will want to remind me that on many occasions the Communist Party has given its support to strikes when all the other parties have been antagonistic. Of course this is true. A reputation cannot exist for long without **some** factual basis. In the factories, communists are often the most devoted and self-sacrificing leaders of struggle against the bosses. I would even go so far as to say that when the party has been in one of its left-sectarian phases (phases reflecting chiefly changes in Russian foreign policy) the leadership has sometimes indeed provoked wild-cat and ill-prepared strikes which have weakened rather than strengthened the workers and their organisations. But in their right-opportunist phases, such as the one they are passing through today, King Street has often acted in the closest co-operation with the right wing leaders of Transport House, selling out, in exchange for some petty "party" gain, the workers engaged in struggle in the factories. Their attitude to trade union struggle is always seen in the narrow framework of Communist Party politics. I am not objecting to the introduction of political issues in industrial struggles. Far from it. I am objecting to their equation of "politics" with Russian foreign policy. All this has meant, from time to time, terrific upheavals and a great deal of acrimony between the worker-militants in the factories and the party leadership. The most glaring example, in recent years, of the united front of King Street and Transport House was the dockers' strike of 1954. What eventually emerged into open daylight was that the Communist leaders, in the mood of "peaceful co-existence", were prepared to **force** the dockers into the T.&G.W. Union rather than allow them to join the "Blue Union", in the hope that, in

exchange, the leaders of the T.&G.W. would relax their witch-hunting rules against Communist Officers.

THE B.M.C. SELL-OUT

But the most glaring sell-out which the Communist Industrial Department assisted in carrying through was the Standard Motors and then the B.M.C. strikes of the engineers against redundancy. Ask any party engineer in the motor manufacturing industry how this betrayal was carried through . . . against the wishes of the union members and against the wishes of the party members in the industry. The up-shot of this was that the engineers returned to work defeated on their slogan of "No sackings" and with a redundancy grant of exactly half of what they had been offered before the strike was called. Do you remember how the *Daily Worker* called this a "great victory"?

In dozens of factory branches of the party, in practically every industrial group, especially in those industries which have a number of full-time Communist trade union officials, there has, over the last ten years, been a growing dissatisfaction with the party's industrial policies. At first, the worker-militant regarded those policies, foisted upon the membership by the Industrial Department, as a series of "errors". Later when they came to see that the leaders ignored all warnings and pressed always their own policies regardless of what was happening in the factories (often pressing them with the crudest of threats), the worker-militants began to express the opinion that, I quote a comrade I met accidentally in the pub the other night, "As soon as a man gets a penny in wages from the Union or the Party, he's gone over to the bosses' side". Strong words. No doubt an exaggeration. But they are words which reveal a growing attitude of our rank and file members.

Now I think, Frank, that you can begin to see that this series of bunglings and betrayals of the class struggle in the factories and pits, which are so disturbing to large numbers of worker-militants, are really all of a piece with the party leadership's rejection of revolutionary Marxist politics. Class collaboration in the factories is yet another product of the approach to politics that produced the revisionist "parliamentary" *British Road to Socialism*, the theory of "peaceful co-existence" (or socialism in **only** one country), and the reliance upon UNO, "the thieves kitchen", to defend the world from atomic war. They all derive from King Street's subservience to the need of the Russian bureaucracy to defend its own special interests.

I see that John Gollan in his latest pamphlet "End the Bans" says that the aims of the Communist Party and the Labour Party are identical. Could anything be clearer? What Gollan wants is a new united front of revolutionary class struggle, for the establishment of workers power and socialism, led by Gaitskell, Tewson, Kerrigan and Gollan. No wonder the party is in a crisis.

Now, as you know, the current crisis inside the Party, especially in its early phases in the summer of 1956 was decreed by the leadership as "a storm in a teacup engineered by a group of intellectuals." Party members in the factories were led to believe that what was hindering the Party's fight in the factories for jobs and for higher wages were the "antics" of the party intellectuals who were "damaging the party" by "kicking

up a fuss about their bad consciences resulting from the exposures of Stalin's methods of rule." I suppose you have heard in the aggregate in your District the full time officials of the party say something like this—I am quoting my own aggregate: "What's all this fuss about Krushev's speech? Party members in the factories will tell you that the workers are not interested in Krushev or Stalin—they are interested in redundancy, the cost of living, and the rises in rents. It's time we stopped this 'inexcusable luxury' (fancy daring to quote Lenin in this demagogic way) of interminable recriminations about the past. It's time all these carping intellectuals got down to the job of helping to organise the workers and their wives against increased rents, or got back to selling the 'Daily Worker' on the knocker, or back to carrying out street propaganda on the line of 'Out with the Tories'. Then you intellectuals would be doing something really valuable for the Party and the working class. As it is all you are doing is undermining the unity of the Party." How many times since February, 1956, has Harry Pollitt entered the columns of the *Daily Worker* to say something on this theme. "All right boys, we have had our discussion—it's done us good 'to have a good wrangle'. Now let's get united again for the job of defeating the Tories."

COMMUNIST PARTY AND SUEZ

Unfortunately for Pollitt, after each effort of this sort, life itself has given him his answer. Things were getting back to "normal" in late September when the Polish and the Hungarian events posed, even more sharply than ever before, the future role of the Communist Party in Britain. Yes, it's "one world" alright. The paralysis of the Communist Party during the great days when the Labour Movement stopped in its tracks, British Imperialism's attack upon Egypt, was in marked contrast to the practical leadership of this struggle shown by the non-Communist Left. Did you notice too how the *Daily Worker*, as usual, presented the news of this struggle against Eden, as if the people were just following the lead of the Communist Party? This "climbing on the band wagon", always the Party leadership's favourite device for "proving" its own effectiveness, deceived many Communist Party members. They said, "Anyway, the Party did a good job on Suez." In point of fact, in the early days of the Suez crisis, whilst the Soviet Union was trying to do a deal with Britain, swopping "internationalization" of the Canal for the liquidation of the Baghdad Past, the *Daily Worker* sat back and said nothing. The hypocrisy of Party speakers on that fateful week-end when Suez and Hungary were both invaded, of using the vote in UNO as an argument against Britain and France on the Suez issue while ignoring this same UNO's vote on Hungary, passes comprehension. The workers saw through the hypocrisy at once. In point of fact, the Communist Party in Britain **hindered** the movement against Eden, not helped it.

Now I come to the crucial point of my argument. What the leadership has been trying to do in these days, above everything else, is to prevent the linkage, by the party membership as a whole, of the betrayals ("mistakes") of the Communist leaders of the class struggle in the factories (which the worker-militants know about) with the political and theoretical betrayals of Marxism ("mistakes") about which the intellectuals are complaining.

The urgent task of revolutionaries in the British Communist Party today is precisely this—to bring together these two streams, the worker-militants and the Marxist intellectuals. Once the workers in the Communist Party can be brought to see clearly that the betrayal of the B.M.C. strike derives directly from the theoretical revisions of Marxism, the theories of Stalinism, which the Communist leaders still cling to, and which the intellectuals are now rejecting, no power on earth can stop them destroying this decadent leadership once and for all. Once the intellectuals in the party begin to see that the fundamental revision of Marxism represented by “Peaceful Co-existence”, “the parliamentary road to socialism”, “People’s Democracy”, “Socialism in one country” and by those falsifications of history and science which sustained these “theories” leads to the **isolation** of the worker members in the labour movement and that this, in turn, leads directly to **sectarianism** (the chronic disease of the British C.P.) and, in the latest stage, to deliberate collaboration with the right-wing sections of the trade union bureaucracy, against the workers, against uncompromising class struggle, once the intellectuals realise this, then their theoretical researches will be a hundred-fold enriched.

You see, Frank, as Gomulka said in his famous speech after he had returned to leadership of the Polish Workers’ Party:

“After the 20th Congress people began to straighten their backs, silent enslaved minds began to shake off the poison of mendacity. Above all, the working people wanted to know all the truth without embellishments and omissions.”

MINDS OUT OF CHAINS

The *Daily Worker’s* technique of the Big Lie on Hungary cuts little ice today.

Yes — what Kruschew initiated (and don’t underestimate the importance of his unwitting contribution to Marxism in making his famous revelations), was nothing less than a mass return to Marxism. Everywhere the “enslaved minds” which we ourselves represented, began “to shake off the poison of mendacity”.

But the after-effects of poison are different in different people. We all reacted in different ways. A large number of different and even divergent trends have appeared inside the ranks of the Communist Party. Yet whilst it is true that many people, including myself, said (a hundred years ago—last April) that Kruschew’s speech opened up again all those problems which we had long considered to be settled, **even Marxism itself**, only a few, in rejecting the line of King Street, have defected from the Party to the right —away from Marxism.

In point of fact, the events of the last year have been a triumphant vindication of Marxism. Our Marxism but failures caused by our own substitution failures in the past have not been the failures of empirical, non-dialectical methods for the method of Marxism.

You will see that in this letter I have not gone into details about the “mistaken policies” of the Communist leadership. I have only suggested that I think a number of incorrect revisionist theoretical propositions have led to the thorough degeneration of the Com-

munist Parties of the world, and particularly of the British Party. Each one of these propositions needs full and detailed study by us all. Each needs at least one big book writing on it. These are some of the important questions which, as I see it, need to be given this thorough critical examination. Firstly, it is essential to try to get clear about the historical origins of Stalinism. What we have to see is how Stalinism is more than a practical degeneration of a Workers’ State, but also a basic revision of Marxist theory. This means also that we have to discover the true history of the Soviet Revolution from 1917 up to the present day. Our ignorance of this history, after years of Stalinist falsification, is truly gigantic. Incidentally, it is interesting to see that Kruschew wants us to start “rewriting” history only from 1933. Surely it is obviously of much greater importance to get straight the history of those crucial years from 1923 to 1928 during which Stalin consolidated his power.

INTERNATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF STALINISM

Secondly, I think it important to study the three great proletarian revolutions of fairly recent times which were defeated, and defeated, I believe, primarily because of the influence of Stalinism upon the Communist Parties in these countries — Germany, China (1926) and Spain. Here we shall be seeing working itself out in practice the international implications of Stalin’s revisionist theory of “socialism in one country”. I know that you will not be misled as some people have into thinking that this is now a dry and unimportant question. I think it is the most serious question of all—the central question of our theoretical investigations.

Thirdly, we need to study all over again the post-war period—the defeat of the French and Italian workers who had, in 1945, power within their grasp. We need to achieve a satisfactory definition of the distortions of Socialism represented by the People’s Democracies. We need an analysis of Titoism, of the colonial revolution and of the impact of all these upon the Communist Parties of the world.

Fourthly, on the groundwork of our studies on these themes, we need to make an entirely new assessment of the tasks for revolutionary socialists in Britain today. For us, in particular, this means making a detailed Marxist criticism of the Communist Party’s programme, *The British Road to Socialism* as a preparation for drawing up a new programme for a revolutionary party that still remains to be built.

You will remember that it was the glaring contradiction between this party programme and Leninism which led me into political opposition to the leadership some four years ago. I saw then that *The British Road to Socialism* is, first and foremost, a re-hash, for British consumption, of the works of the leading Polish Stalinist, Hilary Minc, on *People’s Democracy* (East European brand). The naivete of the compilers of *The British Road* in basing the programme of a British revolutionary party exclusively on the “discoveries” about a “new” road to Socialism which allegedly had been made in Poland and elsewhere (in fact, the Communist Parties in these countries were **placed** in power by the Russian Armies as the Nazis retreated) is, to me, quite past comprehension. The fact that the Communist Party

accepted this programme without a murmur is a sign of its political backwardness. The central error of the *British Road* is that it slanders the basic idea of **Soviets**—whereas the main contribution of Lenin to Marxism was his demonstration that Soviets (with of course their own specifically national features) had been and always would be **necessarily** the new organs of proletarian state power in any modern revolution. It is because they have no Soviets in Eastern Europe that they have not got workers democracy.

THE NECESSITY OF SOVIETS

In the recent revolution in Hungary, Soviets (Revolutionary Committees of Students, Soldiers and Workers) inevitably appeared and proved this thesis of Lenin yet again. Soviets are the necessary expression of the participation of the masses in making history. In this they are fundamentally different from Parliaments.

The British Road to Socialism rejects the idea of Soviets and states that a Parliamentary majority will do the job of building socialism better than would Soviets, in Britain at least. If I had time I could also begin to show you how the *British Road* is nationalistic rather than internationalist. This shows itself very clearly in the sections on the British Empire. In fact, in a hundred and one different ways, this programme may be shown to be anti-Marxist, reformist revisionism. Of course I would be the first to agree that every-one of these criticisms of it that I have made need concrete substantiation.

In order to make these reassessments of revolutionary socialism in Britain it is absolutely essential for us to be able to conduct a literary debate. We badly needed this new theoretical magazine, *Labour Review*, which will break away from the sterility which characterized our party theoretical organs these last twenty years. More than that, this debate cannot be confined by any means to Marxists inside the Communist Party. It is a sorry fact that small groups of courageous Marxists in different parts of the world **outside** the Communist Party have done more to preserve our Marxist heritage than any of us inside it. We shall need these same people to help us to reach proper understanding of the tasks of socialism in Britain.

As I said at the beginning of this letter, when I

began to plan it I thought that I ought to concentrate upon the chaos and confusion that now reigns inside every Communist Party branch and committee. A storm of criticism has spread far and wide and touched every cranny of the British party. At times, the leadership has become so confused that as each new catastrophe hit them, they stood petrified like a rabbit before a snake, unable to commit themselves on any point. They were like frail plants bending all ways to ride the storm.

I believe that the present leaders of the party will make concessions without end in an effort to reach a compromise with the membership. They will compromise on every point except one. They will resist to the end the demand that they themselves get out, so that the members can freely elect a new leadership uncompromised by the shame of the past and able to tackle the task that lies ahead in a flexible, principled way. The development of the various trends inside the Communist Party into a coherent body of revolutionary theory will certainly take a number of years. The most important thing that we can do today is to play our part in this rescue of Marxism in order to reinstate it as the guide to the practice of revolutionary leadership.

Finally, may I ask you to give your support to this new journal *Labour Review*, which a group of Marxists are getting out. We want you to read it, we certainly want you to write for it. but, most important of all, we want you to take the initiative of setting up in your town an **informal Labour Review discussion group**. Bert wrote to me yesterday saying that the tragedy of the present crisis in the Communist Party is this—that we in Britain, as in 1926, are moving towards a new revolutionary crisis but we haven't yet got a Bolshevik party capable of leading the working class to power. There is some truth in what Bert says—but it's not the whole truth. I think that the crisis in the Communist Parties of the world has come just in time—in time for us to achieve that unity and clarity as Marxists which will enable us to build "parties of a new type", Leninist Parties, to lead the working class to power and to socialism. But this means that you, Frank, have an important part to play.

All the best,

John Daniels

The Law of Uneven and Combined Development.

William F. Warde

THE UNEVEN COURSE OF HISTORY

THIS ARTICLE and a second one to be published in the next issue aim to give a connected and comprehensive explanation of one of the fundamental laws of human history—the law of uneven and combined development. This is the first time, to my knowledge, that this has been undertaken. I shall try to show what this law is, how it has worked out in the main stages of history, and also how it can clarify some of the most puzzling social phenomena and political problems.

THE DUAL NATURE OF THE LAW

The law of uneven and combined development is a scientific law of the widest application to the historic process. This law has a dual character or, rather, it is a fusion of two closely connected laws. Its primary aspect deals with the different rates of growth among the various elements of social life. The second covers the concrete correlation of these unequally developed factors in the historic process.

The principal features of the law can be briefly

summarized as follows. The mainspring of human progress is man's command over the forces of production. As history advances, there occurs a faster or slower growth of productive forces in this or that segment of society, owing to the differences in natural conditions and historical connections. These disparities give either an expanded or a compressed character to entire historical epochs and impart varying rates and extents of growth to different peoples, different branches of economy, different classes, different social institutions and fields of culture. This is the essence of the law of uneven development.

These variations amongst the multiple factors in history provide the basis for the emergence of exceptional phenomena in which features of a lower stage are merged with those of a superior stage of social development. These combined formations have a highly contradictory character and exhibit marked peculiarities. They may deviate so much from the rule and effect such an upheaval as to produce a qualitative leap in social evolution and enable a formerly backward people to outdistance, for a certain time, a more advanced. This is the gist of the law of combined development.

It is obvious that these two laws, or these two aspects of a single law, do not stand upon the same level. The unevenness of development must precede any combinations of the disproportionately developed factors. The second law grows out of and depends upon the first, even though it reacts back upon it and affects its further operation.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The discovery and formulation of this law is the outcome of over 2,500 years of theoretical investigation into the modes of social development. The first observations upon which it is based were made by the Greek historians and philosophers. But the law itself was first brought into prominence and consistently applied by the founders of historical materialism, Marx and Engels, over a century ago. This law is one of Marxism's greatest contributions to a scientific understanding of history and one of the most powerful instruments of historical analysis.

Marx and Engels derived the essence of this law in turn from the dialectical philosophy of Hegel. Hegel utilised the law in his works on universal history and the history of philosophy without, however, giving it any special name or explicit recognition.

Many dialectically-minded thinkers before and since Hegel have likewise used this law in their studies and applied it more or less consciously to the solution of complex historical, social and political problems. All the outstanding theoreticians of Marxism, from Kautsky and Luxemburg to Plekhanov and Lenin, grasped its importance, observed its operations and consequences, and used it for the solution of problems which baffled other schools of thought.

AN EXAMPLE FROM LENIN

Let me cite an example from Lenin. He based his analysis of the first stage of the Russian Revolution in 1917 upon this law. In his *Letters From Afar*, he wrote to his Bolshevik collaborators from Switzerland: "The fact that the (February) revolution succeeded so quickly . . . is due to an unusual historical conjuncture

where there combined, in a strikingly 'favourable' manner, absolutely dissimilar movements, absolutely different class interests, absolutely opposed political and social tendencies." (*Collected Works*, Book 1, P. 31).

What had happened? A section of the Russian nobility and landowners, the oppositional bourgeoisie, the radical intellectuals, the insurgent workers, peasants and soldiers, along with the Allied imperialists—these "absolutely dissimilar" social forces—had momentarily arrayed themselves against the Czarist aristocracy, each for its own reasons. All together they besieged, isolated and overthrew the Romanoff regime. This extraordinary conjuncture of circumstances and unrepeatable combination of forces had grown up out of the whole previous unevenness of Russian historical development with all its long-postponed and unsolved social and political problems exacerbated by the first imperialist world war.

The differences which had been submerged in the offensive against Czarism immediately asserted themselves and it did not take long for this *de facto* alliance of inherently opposing forces to disintegrate and break up. The allies of the February 1917 revolution became transformed into the irreconcilable foes of October 1917.

How did this hostility come about? The overthrow of Czarism had in turn produced a new and higher unevenness in the situation, which may be summarized in the following formula. On the one hand, the objective conditions were ripe for the assumption of power by the workers; on the other hand, the Russian working class, and above all its leadership, had not yet correctly appraised the real situation or tested the new relationship of forces. Consequently it was subjectively unready to solve that supreme task. The unfolding of the class struggles from February to October 1917 may be said to consist in the growing recognition by the working class and its revolutionary leaders of what had to be done and in overcoming the disparity between the objective conditions and the subjective preparation. The gap between them was closed in action by the triumph of the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution which combined the proletarian conquest of power with the widespread peasant uprising.

THE FORMULATOR OF THE LAW

This process is fully explained by Trotsky in his *History of the Russian Revolution*. Just as the Russian Revolution itself was the most striking example of uneven and combined development in modern history, so in his classic analysis of this momentous event Trotsky gave to the Marxist movement the first explicit formulation of that law.

Trotsky the theoretician, is most celebrated as the originator of the Theory of the Permanent Revolution. It is likely that his exposition of the law of uneven and combined development will come to be ranged by its side in value. Not only did he give this law its name but also was the first to expound its full significance and to give it a rounded expression.

These two contributions to the scientific understanding of social movement are in fact intimately interlinked. Trotsky's conception of the Permanent Revolution resulted from his study of the peculiarities of

Russian historical development in the light of the new problems presented to world socialism in the epoch of imperialism. These problems were especially acute and complex in backward countries where the bourgeois-democratic revolution had not yet taken place or set about to solve many of its most elementary tasks at a time when the proletarian revolution was already at hand. The fruits of his thinking on these questions, confirmed by the actual developments of the Russian Revolution, prepared and stimulated his subsequent elaboration of the law of uneven and combined development.

Indeed, Trotsky's theory of the Permanent Revolution represents the most fruitful application of this very law to the key problems of the international class struggles in our own time, the epoch of the transition from the capitalist domination of the world to socialism and offers the highest example of its penetrating power. However, the law itself is not only pertinent to the revolutionary events of the present epoch but, as we shall see, to the whole compass of social evolution. And it has even broader applications than that.

UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT IN NATURE

So much for the historical background out of which the law of uneven and combined development has emerged. Let us now consider the scope of its application.

Although directly originating in the study of modern history, the law of uneven and combined development is rooted in features common to all processes of growth in nature as well as in society. Scientific investigators have emphasized the prevalence of unevenness in many fields. All the constituent elements of a thing, all the aspects of an event, all the factors in a process of development are not realized at the same rate or to an equal degree. Moreover, under differing material conditions, even the same thing exhibits different rates and grades of growth. Every rural farmer and urban gardener knows that.

In *Life of the Past*, G. G. Simpson develops this same point. He writes:

"The most striking things about rates of evolution are that they vary enormously and that the fastest of them seem very slow to humans (including paleontologists, I may say). If any one line of phylogeny is followed in the fossil record it is always found that different characters and parts evolve at quite different rates, and it is generally found that no one part evolves for long at the same rate. The horse brain evolved rapidly while the rest of the body was changing very little. Evolution of the brain was much more rapid during one relatively short span than at any other time. Evolution of the feet was practically at a standstill most of the time during horse evolution, but three times there were relatively rapid changes in foot mechanism.

"Rates of evolution also vary greatly from one lineage to another, even among related lines. There are a number of animals living today that have changed very little for very long periods of time: a little brachiopod called *Lingula*, in some 400 million years; *Limulus*, the horseshoe 'crab'—really more of a scorpion than a crab—in 175 million or more; *Sphenodon*, a lizard-like reptile now confined to New Zealand, in about 150 million years; *Didelphis*, the American op-

possum, in a good 75 million years. These and the other animals for which evolution essentially stopped long ago all have relatives that evolved at usual or even at relatively fast rates.

"There are, further, characteristic differences of rates in different groups. Most land animals have evolved faster than most sea animals—a generalization not contradicted by the fact that **some** sea animals have evolved faster than **some** land animals." (Pp. 137-138).

The evolution of entire orders of organisms has passed through a cycle of evolution marked by an initial phase of restricted, slow growth, followed by a shorter but intense period of "explosive expansion", which in turn settled down into a prolonged phase of lesser changes.

In *The Meaning of Evolution* (Pp. 72-73), G. G. Simpson, one of the foremost authorities on evolution, states, "The times of rapid expansion, high variability and beginning adaptive radiation . . . are periods when enlarged opportunities are presented to groups able to pursue them." Such an opportunity for explosive expansion was opened to the reptiles when they evolved to the point of independence from water as a living medium and burst into landscapes earlier barren of vertebrate life. Then a "quieter period ensues when the basic radiation has been completed" and the group can indulge in "the progressive enjoyment of a completed conquest."

The evolution of our own species has already gone through the first two phases of such a cycle. The immediate animal forerunners of mankind went through a prolonged period of restricted growth as a lesser breed compared to others. Mankind arrived at its phase of "explosive expansion" only in the past million years or so, after the primate from which we are descended acquired the necessary social powers.

The evolution of the distinctive human organism has been marked by considerable irregularity. The head developed its present characteristics among our ape ancestors long before our flexible hands with the opposable thumb. It was only after our prototypes had acquired upright posture and working hands, that the brain inside the skull expanded to its present proportions and complexity.

What is true of entire orders and species of animals and plants holds good for its individual specimens. If equality prevailed in biological growth, each of the various organs in the body would develop simultaneously and to the same proportionate extent. But such perfect symmetry is not to be found in real life. In the growth of the human foetus some organs emerge before others and mature before others. The head and the neck are formed before the arms and legs, the heart at the third week and the lungs later on. As the sum of all these irregularities, we know that infants come out of the womb in different conditions, even with deformations, and certainly at varying intervals between conception and birth. The nine-month gestation period is no more than a statistical average. The date of delivery of a given baby can diverge by days, weeks or months from this average. The frontal sinus, a late development in the primates since it is possessed only by the great apes and men, does not occur in young humans, but emerges after puberty. In many cases, it never develops at all.

THE UNEVEN EVOLUTION OF PRIMITIVE SOCIETIES

The development of social organization, and of particular social structures exhibits unevenness no less pronounced than the life-histories of biological beings out of which it has emerged with the human race. The diverse elements of social existence have been created at different times, have evolved at widely varying rates, and grown to different degrees under different conditions and from one era to another.

Archaeologists divide human history into the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages according to the main materials used in making tools and weapons. These three stages of technological development have had immensely different spans of life. The Stone Age lasted for around 900,000 years; the Bronze Age dates from 3000-4000 B.C., the Iron Age is less than 4,000 years old. Moreover, different sections of mankind passed through these stages at different dates in different parts of the world. The Stone Age ended before 3500 B.C. in Mesopotamia, about 1600 B.C. in Denmark, 1492 in America, and not until 1800 in New Zealand.

A similar unevenness marks the evolution of social organization. Savagery, when men lived by collecting food through foraging, hunting or fishing, extended over many hundred thousands of years while barbarism, which is based upon the breeding of animals and the raising of crops for food, dates back to about 8000 B.C. Civilization is little more than 6,000 years old.

The production of regular, ample and growing food supplies effected a revolutionary advance in economic development which elevated food-producing peoples above backward tribes which continued to subsist on the gathering of food. Asia was the birthplace of the domestication of animals and stock-raising. It is uncertain which of these branches of productive activity preceded and grew out of the other, but archaeologists have uncovered remains of mixed farming communities which carried on both types of food production as early as 8000 B.C.

There have been purely pastoral tribes, which depended exclusively on stockraising for their existence, as well as wholly agricultural peoples whose economy was based on the cultivation of cereals or tubers. The cultures of these specialized groups underwent a one-sided development by virtue of their particular type of production of the basic means of life. The purely pastoral mode of subsistence did not however contain the potentialities of development inherent in agriculture. Pastoral tribes could not incorporate the higher type of food production into their economies on any scale, without having to settle down and alter their entire mode of life. This became specially true after the introduction of the plough superseded the slash-and-burn techniques of gardening. They could not develop an extensive division of labour and go forward to village and city life, so long as they remained simply herders of stock.

The inherent superiority of agriculture over stockbreeding was demonstrated by the fact that dense populations and high civilizations could develop on the basis of agriculture alone, as the Aztec, Inca and Mayan civilizations of Middle and South America proved. Moreover, the agriculturalists could easily incorporate domesticated animals into their mode of production,

blending food cultivation with stock breeding and even transferring draft animals to the technology of agriculture through the invention of the plough.

It was the **combination** of stock breeding and cereal cultivation in mixed farming that prepared inside barbaric society the elements of civilization. This combination enabled the agricultural peoples to outstrip the purely pastoral tribes, and in the favourable conditions of the river valleys of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India and China, to become the nurseries of civilization.

Since the advent of civilization peoples have existed on three essentially different levels of progress corresponding to their modes of securing the necessities of life. The food-gatherers, the elementary food-producers, and the mixed farmers with a highly developed division of labour and a growing exchange of commodities. The Greeks of the classical age were very highly conscious of this disparity in development between themselves and the backward peoples around them who still remained at earlier, lower stages of social existence. They summed up these differences by drawing a sharp distinction between civilized Greeks and barbarians. The historical connection and distance between them was explicitly articulated by the historian Thucydides when he said, "The Greeks lived once as the barbarians live now."

THE NEW WORLD AND THE OLD

The unevenness of world historical development has seldom been more conspicuously exhibited than when the aboriginal inhabitants of the Americas were first brought face to face with the white invaders from overseas Europe. At this juncture, two completely separated routes of social evolution, the products of from ten to twenty thousand years of independent development in the two hemispheres, encountered each other. Both were forced to compare their rates of growth and measure their respective total achievements. This was one of the sharpest confrontations of different cultures in all history.

At this point the Stone Age collided with the late Iron and the early Machine Age. In hunting and in war the bow and arrow had to compete with the musket and cannon; in agriculture the hoe and the digging stick with the plough and draft animals; in water transportation, the canoe with the ship; in land locomotion, the human leg with the horse and the flat foot with the rolling wheel. In social organization, tribal collectivism ran up against feudal-bourgeois institutions and customs; production for immediate community consumption against a money economy and international trade.

These contrasts between the American Indians and the West Europeans could be multiplied. However, the inequality of the human products of such widely separated stages of economic development was starkly apparent. They were antagonistic and so removed from each other that the Aztec chiefs at first identified the white newcomers with gods while the Europeans reciprocated by regarding and treating the natives like animals.

The historical inequality in productive and destructive powers in North America was not overcome, as we know, by the Indian adoption of white man's

ways and their gradual, peaceful assimilation into class society. On the contrary, it led to the dispossession and annihilation of the Indian tribes over the next four centuries.

THE BACKWARDNESS OF COLONIAL LIFE

But if the white settlers thereby displayed their material superiority over the native peoples, they themselves were far behind their motherlands. The general backwardness of the North American continent and its colonies compared with Western Europe predetermined the main line of development here from the start of the 15th century to the middle of the 19th century. The central historical task of the Americans throughout this period was to catch up with Europe by overcoming the disparities in the social development of the two continents. How and by whom this was done is the main theme of American history throughout these three and a half centuries.

It required, among other things, two revolutions to complete the job. The colonial revolution which crowned the first stage of progress gave the American people political institutions more advanced than any in the Old World—and paved the way for rapid economic expansion. Even after winning national independence the United States had still to conquer its economic independence within the capitalist world. The economic gap between this country and the nations of Western Europe was narrowed in the first half of the 19th century and virtually closed up by the triumph of Northern industrial capitalism over the slave power in the Civil War. It did not take long after that for the United States to come abreast of the West European powers and outstrip them.

THE INEQUALITY OF CONTINENTS AND COUNTRIES

These changes in the position of the United States illustrates the unevenness in the development between the metropolitan centres and the colonies, between the different continents, and between countries on the same continent.

A comparison of the diverse modes of production in the various countries brings out their unevenness most sharply. Slavery had virtually vanished as a mode of production on the mainland of Europe before it was brought to America—thanks to the needs of these very same Europeans. Serfdom had disappeared in England before it arose in Russia . . . and there were attempts to implant it in the North American colonies after it was on the way out in the mother country. In Bolivia feudalism flourished under the Spanish conquerors and slavery languished while in the Southern English colonies feudalism was stunted and slavery flourished.

Capitalism was highly developed in Western Europe while only meagerly implanted in Eastern Europe. A similar disparity in capitalist development prevailed between the United States and Mexico.

Disparities in the quantity and quality of social formations in the course of their developments are so conspicuous and predominant that Trotsky terms unevenness “the most general law of the historic process.” (*History of the Russian Revolution*, P. 5). These inequalities are the specific expressions of the contradictory nature of social progress, of the dialectics of human development.

INTERNAL INEQUALITIES

The inequality of development between continents and countries is matched by an equally uneven growth of the various elements within each social grouping or national organism. In fact, the one is the outgrowth and the specific internal expression of the other.

In a book on the American working class written by Karl Kautsky early in this century, the German Marxist pointed out some of the marked contrasts in the social development of Russia and the United States at that time. “Two States exist,” he wrote, “diametrically opposed to each other, each of which contains an element inordinately developed in comparison with their standard of capitalist production. In one State—America—it is the capitalist class. In Russia it is the proletariat. In no other country but America is there so much ground for speaking of the dictatorship of capital, while the proletariat has nowhere acquired such importance as in Russia.” This difference in development, which Kautsky described in the bud, has since grown into a global opposition.

Trotsky gave a superb analysis of the significance of such unevenness for explaining the course of a nation's history in the opening chapter of his *History of the Russian Revolution* on “Peculiarities of Russia's Development.” Czarist Russia contained social forces belonging to three different stages of historical development. On top were the feudal elements: an overgrown Asiatic autocracy, a state clergy, a servile bureaucracy, a favoured landed nobility. Below them was a weak, unpopular bourgeoisie and a cowardly intelligentsia. These opposing phenomena were organically interconnected. They constituted different aspects of a unified social process. The very historical conditions which had preserved and fortified the predominance of the feudal forces—the slow tempo of Russian development, her economic backwardness, her primitiveness of social forms and low level of culture—had stunted the growth of the bourgeois forces and fostered their social and political feebleness.

That was one side of the situation. On the other side, the extreme backwardness of Russian history had left the agrarian and the national problems unsolved, producing a discontented, land-hungry peasantry and oppressed nationalities longing for freedom, while the late appearance of capitalist industry gave birth to highly concentrated industrial enterprises under the domination of foreign finance capital and an equally concentrated proletariat armed with the latest ideas, organizations and methods of struggle.

These sharp unevennesses in the social structure of Czarist Russia set the stage for the revolutionary events which started with the overthrow of a decayed mediaeval structure in 1917 and concluded in a few months with placing the proletariat and the Bolshevik Party in power. It is only by analyzing and understanding them that it is possible to grasp why the Russian Revolution took place as it did.

IRREGULARITIES IN SOCIETY

The pronounced irregularities to be found in history have led some thinkers to deny that there is, or can be, any causality or lawfulness in social development. The most fashionable school of American anthropologists, headed by the late Franz Boas, explicitly denied

that there were any determinate sequence of stages to be discovered in social evolution or that the expressions of culture are shaped by technology or economy. According to R. H. Lowie, the foremost exponent of this viewpoint, cultural phenomena present merely a "planless hodge podge," a "chaotic jumble." The "chaotic jumble" is all in the heads of these anti-materialists and anti-evolutionists, not in the history or the constitution of society.

It is possible for people living under Stone Age conditions in the 20th century to possess a radio—that is a result of combined development. But it would be categorically impossible to find such a product of contemporary electronics buried with human remains in a Stone Age deposit of twenty thousand years ago.

It does not take much penetration to see that the activities of food-gathering, foraging, hunting, fishing and fowling existed long before food-production in the forms of gardening or stock-breeding. Or that stone tools preceded metal ones; speech came before writing; cave-dwellings before house-building; camps before villages; the exchange of goods before money. On a general historical scale, these sequences are absolutely inviolable.

The main characteristics of the simple social structures of savages are determined by their primitive methods of producing the means of life which, in turn, depend upon the low level of their productive forces. It is estimated that food-gathering peoples require an average of forty square miles per capita to maintain themselves. They could neither produce nor maintain large concentrations of population on such an economic foundation. They usually numbered less than forty persons and seldom exceeded a hundred. The inescapable smallness of their food supply and dispersion of their forces set strict limits to their development.

FROM BARBARISM TO CIVILIZATION

What about the next higher stage of social development, barbarism? The noted archaeologist, V. Gordon Childe, has recently published in a book called "**Social Evolution**" a survey of the "successive steps through which barbarian cultures actually passed on the road to civilization in contrasted natural environments." He acknowledges that the starting point in the economic sphere was identical in all cases, "inasmuch as all the first barbarian cultures examined were based on the cultivation of the same cereals and the breeding of the same species of animals." That is to say, barbarism is marked off from savage forms of life by the acquisition and application of the higher productive techniques of agriculture and stock-raising.

He further points out that the final result—civilization—although exhibiting concrete differences in each case, "yet everywhere did mean the aggregation of large populations in cities; the differentiation within these of primary producers (fishers, farmers, etc.), full-time specialist artisans, merchants, officials, priests and rulers; an effective concentration of the economic and political power; the use of conventional symbols for recording and transmitting information (writing), and equally conventional standards of weights and measures, and of measures of time and space leading to some mathematical and calendrical science."

At the same time Childe points out that "the in-

tervening steps in development do not exhibit even abstract parallelism." The rural economy of Egypt, for example, developed differently from that of temperate Europe. In Old World agriculture the hoe was replaced by the plough, a tool which was not even known to the Mayas.

The general conclusion which Childe draws from these facts is that "the development of barbarian rural economics in the regions surveyed exhibits not parallelism but divergence and convergence." (p. 162) But this does not go far enough. Viewed in their totality and historical interconnections, the many peoples which entered barbarism all started from the same essential economic activities, cereal cultivation and stock-breeding. They then underwent a diversified development according to different natural habitats and historical circumstances, and, provided they traversed the entire road to civilization and were not arrested en route or obliterated, ultimately arrived at the same destination: civilization.

THE MARCH OF CIVILIZATION

What about the evolution of civilization itself? Is that all a "planless hodge-podge"? When we analyze the march of mankind through civilization, we see that its advanced segments passed successively through slavery, feudalism and capitalism and is now on the way toward socialism. This does not mean that every part of humanity passed, or had to pass, through this invariable sequence of historical stages, any more than each of the barbarians passed through the same sequence of stages. In each instance, it was necessary for the vanguard peoples to work their way through each given stage. But then their very achievements enabled those who followed after to combine or compress entire historical stages.

The real course of history, the passage from one social system to another, or from one level of social organization to another, is far more complicated, heterogeneous and contradictory than is set forth in any general historical scheme. The historical scheme of universal social structures—savagery, barbarism, civilization, with their respective stages, is an abstraction. It is an indispensable and rational abstraction which corresponds to the essential realities of development and serves to guide investigation. But it cannot be directly substituted for the analysis of any concrete segment of society.

A straight line may be the shortest distance between two points but we find that humanity frequently fails to take it. It more often follows the adage that the longest way round is the shortest way home.

There is both regularity and irregularity mingled together in history. The regularity is fundamentally determined by the character and development of the productive forces and the mode of producing the means of life. However, this basic determinism does not manifest itself in the actual development of society in a simple, direct and uniform fashion but in extremely complex, devious and heterogeneous ways.

THE UNEVEN EVOLUTION OF CAPITALISM

This is exemplified most emphatically in the evolution of capitalism and its component parts. Capitalism is a world economic system. Over the past five

centuries it has spread from country to country and from continent to continent and passed through the successive phases of commercial capitalism, industrial capitalism, finance capitalism and state monopoly capitalism. Every country, however backward, has been drawn into the network of capitalist relations and became subject to its laws of operation. While every nation has become involved in the international division of labour at the base of the capitalist world market, each country has participated in its own peculiar way and to a different degree in the expression and the expansion of capitalism and played different roles at different stages of its development.

Capitalism rose to greater heights in Europe and North America than in Asia and Africa. These were interdependent phenomena, opposing sides of a single process. The capitalist underdevelopment in the colonies was a product and condition of the overdevelopment of the metropolitan areas at their expense.

The participation of various nations in the evolution of capitalism has been no less irregular. Holland and England took the lead in establishing capitalist forms and forces in the 16th and 17th centuries while North America was still largely possessed by the Indians. Yet in the final stage of capitalism in the 20th century the United States has far outdistanced England and Holland.

As capitalism absorbed one country after another into its orbit, it increased their dependence upon one another. But this growing interdependence did not mean that they followed identical paths or possessed the same characteristics. As they drew closer together economically, profound differences asserted themselves and separated them. Their national development in many respects did not proceed along parallel lines but at angles to each other, and sometimes even at right angles. They acquired not identical but complementary traits.

SAME CAUSES — DIFFERENT EFFECTS

The rule that the same causes produce the same effects is not an unconditional and all-embracing one. The law holds good only when the historically produced conditions are the same — and since these are usually different for each country and constantly changing and interchanging with one another, the same basic causes can lead to very different, and even opposite, results.

For example, in the first half of the nineteenth century England and the United States were both governed by the same laws of industrial capitalism. But these laws had to operate under very different conditions in the two countries and, in the field of agriculture, they produced very different results. The enormous demand of British industry for cotton and cheap foodstuffs immensely stimulated agriculture here at the same time that these very economic factors strangled farming in England itself. The expansion of agriculture in the one country and its contraction in the other were opposite but interdependent economic consequences of the same causes.

To shift from economic to intellectual processes, the Russian Marxist Plekhanov pointed out in his remarkable work *In Defence of Materialism* (p. 206) how the uneven development of the diverse elements

composing a national structure permits the same stock of ideas to produce very different impacts upon philosophical life. Speaking of ideological development in the 18th century, Plekhanov stated: "The very same fund of ideas leads to the militant atheism of the French materialists, to the religious indifferentism of Hume and to the 'practical' religion of Kant. The reason was that the religious question in England at that time did not play the same part as it was playing in France, and in France not the same as in Germany. And this difference in the significance of the religious question was caused by the fact that in each of these countries the social forces were not in the same mutual relationship as in each of the others. Similar in their nature, but dissimilar in their degree of development, the elements of society combined differently in the different European countries, and thereby brought it about that in each of them there was a very particular 'state of minds and manners' which expressed itself in the national literature, philosophy, art, etc. In consequence of this, one and the same question might excite Frenchmen to passion and leave the British cold; one and the same argument a progressive German might treat with respect, while a progressive Frenchman would regard it with bitter hatred."

NATIONAL PECULIARITIES

I should like to close this examination of the processes of uneven development with a discussion of the problem of national peculiarities. Marxists are often accused by their opponents of denying, ignoring or underestimating national peculiarities in favour of universal historical laws. There is no truth to this criticism, although individual Marxists are sometimes guilty of such errors.

Marxists deny neither the existence nor the importance of national peculiarities. It would be theoretically stupid and practically reckless for them to do so, since national differences may be decisive in shaping the policy of the labour movement, of a minority struggle, or of a revolutionary party in a given country for a certain period. For example, most politically active workers in Britain follow the Labour Party. This monopoly is a prime peculiarity of Great Britain and the political development of its working people today. Marxists who failed to take this factor into account as the keystone of their organizational orientation would violate the spirit of their method.

Here is another, but remoter example. In most of the colonial countries today the coloured races are fighting against imperialism for national independence from the white oppressing nation. In the United States, on the contrary, the Negro struggle against second-class citizenship is marked, not by any move toward separation, but rather by the demand for unconditional integration into American life on an equal basis. Without grasping this special feature it is impossible to understand the main trend of development in the struggle of the American Negroes at its present stage.

Far from being indifferent to national differences, Marxism is the only historical method and sociological theory which adequately explains them, demonstrating how they are rooted in the material conditions of life and viewing them in their historical origins, development, disintegration and disappearance. The schools of bourgeois thought look upon national peculiarities in

a different way, as inexplicable accidents, god-given birthrights, or fixed and final features of a particular people. Marxism regards them as historical products arising out of concrete combinations of world-wide conditions and international forces.

This procedure of combining the general with the particular, and the abstract with the concrete, accords not only with the requirements of science but with our everyday habits of judgment. Every individual has a distinctive facial expression which enables us to recognize him and separate him from all others. At the same time we realize that this individual has the same kind of eyes, ears, mouth, forehead and other organs as the rest of the human race. In fact, the peculiar physiognomy which produces his distinctive expression is nothing but the outward manifestation of the specific complex of these common human structures and features. So it is with the life and the profile of any given nation.

Each nation has its own distinctive traits. But these national peculiarities arise out of the operation of general laws as they are modified by specific material and historical conditions. They are at bottom individual crystallizations of universal processes.

Trotsky concluded that national peculiarity is the most general product of the unevenness of historical development, its final result.

THE LIMITS OF NATIONAL PECULIARITIES

But however deep-seated these peculiarities may be in the social structure and however powerful their influence upon national life, national peculiarities are limited. First, they are limited in action. They do not replace the over-riding processes of world economy and world politics nor can they abolish the operation of their laws.

Consider, for example, the different political consequences the 1929 world crisis had upon the United States and Germany, owing to their different historical backgrounds, special social structures and national political evolution. In one case Roosevelt's New Deal

came to power; in the other, Hitler's fascism. The programme of reform under bourgeois-democratic auspices and the programme of counter-revolution under naked totalitarian dictatorship were totally different methods utilized by the respective capitalist classes to save their skins.

This contrast between the American and the German capitalist modes of self-preservation was exploited to the hilt by the apologists for American capitalism who attributed it to the inherently democratic spirit of the American nation and its capitalist rulers. In reality, the difference was due to the greater wealth and resources of U.S. imperialism on the one hand, and the immaturity of its class relations and conflicts on the other.

However, at the very next stage and before the decade was over, the processes of imperialism drove both powers into a second world war to determine which would dominate the world market. Despite the significant differences in their internal political regimes, both arrived at the same destination. They remained subordinate to the same fundamental laws of capitalist imperialism and could not abolish their operation or avoid their consequences.

In the second place, national peculiarities have definite historical limits. They are not eternally fixed and absolutely final. Historical conditions generate and sustain them; new historical conditions can alter and eliminate them, even transform them into their opposites.

In the 19th century, Russia was the most reactionary country in Europe and in world politics; in the 20th century it became the most revolutionary. In the middle of the 19th century the United States was the most revolutionary and progressive nation; in the middle of the 20th century it has taken Russia's place as the fortress of world counter-revolution. But this role, too, will not be everlasting, as we shall indicate in the next article in which we shall deal with the character and consequences of combined development.

(To be concluded)

Stalinism, Socialism & Democracy

How to write History

William Hunter

IS IT POSSIBLE to express horror at Stalin's crimes, to denounce them, and yet withal to be an apologist for Stalin and Stalinism? Certainly! Bob Davies in the July 1956 *Marxist Quarterly* shows how it can be done.

Davies, who is a specialist in theories of history, calls his article "The New Stage of Soviet Democracy". His main thesis is that Stalin must be viewed in general as a leader of a progressive development in the Soviet Union. If, in trampling down the enemies of the revolution, he crushed some innocents, then, suggests Davies, we must balance that against historical progress, and explain it by the difficult circumstances and barbaric

conditions he had to overcome.

We are told that the industrialisation of a backward country necessitates ruthless methods. "The speed with which the work had to be done in the face of the rise of fascism imposed conditions which generated ruthlessness, bureaucracy and dogmatism."

Stalin committed "mistakes" and very grave "injustices" but we would, it appears, be lacking in historical sense if we made too much of them. They must be considered against a "harsh background" and "weighed against" historical achievement.

Therefore, if the restrictions at times were a little

severe, if the repressions went a little too far, if the "cult of the individual" was sometimes a little nauseating—then, well, it is all a question of balance. We expect our author at any time to release again the winged aphorisms from the dictionary of Stalinist apologetics, current in the thirties—"Nature is prodigal in its evolution" and "You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs."

Davies promises us a searching investigation—a contribution to discussion in the "profound questioning and rethinking among British Marxists". But walking in the footprints of Krushchev he produces only weak soporifics which end the investigation at the point it should seriously begin.

"We must learn to use historical materialism in our study of the U.S.S.R. I believe this is a question of cardinal importance to British Marxism", he tells us.

Absolutely right! Let us take off from there.

What are the first elementary steps in "learning to use historical materialism" in our study of the U.S.S.R.? Obviously, to assemble the **facts** by objective research, to uncover the processes and developments in the Soviet Union **as they really were**. Without that we cannot even pretend to making a scientific analysis.

But the history of the Soviet Union—and indeed of the Communist International and of all Communist Parties without exception—has been buried by Stalin and his henchmen under a monstrous mountain of lies. Vital facts have been suppressed. The socialist opponents of Stalin have been viciously slandered, their ideas distorted.

"Scientific work in the sphere of the history of the party and of Soviet society is, perhaps, the most backward sector of our ideological work," Mikoyan was forced to admit to the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. He asked for a textbook on the history of the October Revolution and the Soviet State without "any colouring".

"Colouring" is a euphemism for the lies, half-truths, and distortions which embroider every page of the "Short History of the C.P.S.U.(B)".

Stalin tried to cheat history. In millions of articles, books, and speeches, violence was done to the truth. Heroes were turned into villains, revolutionary fighters were recast as tools of reaction, brilliant Marxist theoreticians were "transformed" into mad dogs and saboteurs. Brazen falsehoods, cynical lies, suppression of facts—these made up the devils-and-god myths which Stalinism passed off as "history".

The first, absolutely essential task in making a serious contribution to the "**rethinking**" in the Communist Party is, therefore, a **rediscovering**" of the truth about the past. This entails ruthless probing, genuinely thorough research.

It is a task which Davies lamentably fails to fulfil. On the contrary, in spite of all his calm pretentiousness, he is content to build on the myths which formed part of the Stalinist baggage, and which cover the origins of Stalinism like a murky fog.

Those who opposed Stalinism when it first began to express itself—not in 1935, as Krushchev would have us believe—but in 1924—are to be sure no longer denounced as paid agents of the imperialist powers.

Nevertheless, Davies finds it essential to his argument to repeat an old Stalinist slander that Stalin's opponents were "opponents of industrialisation". In fact, Davies suggests that just by attacking Stalin, his opponents added to the difficulties which Stalin, the great industrialiser, had to overcome. They so aggravated the circumstances that they generated Stalinist ruthlessness, bureaucracy and dogmatism.

He considers the "prolonged and bitter struggle against the Trotskyites" inside the C.P.S.U. in the twenties as a factor making for the "historical limitations of the stage through which Soviet Socialism has now passed". Behold! The circle is now squared! The men and women who fought Stalinism when it first expressed itself as a fundamental revision of Marxism, as a product of a degeneration of the first workers' state, are now made responsible for Stalin's "mistakes" and "grave injustices".

The most consistent, most principled, most persecuted and most slandered opposition to Stalin was the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky. Was the Left Opposition's bitter struggle a struggle against industrialisation? Not a bit of it—even though it was said to be so in Stalin's discarded "Short History of the C.P.S.U.(B)". Tsis is an old lie of Stalin's.¹

An essential part of the platform of the Left Opposition in its fight against Stalin and his group in the middle twenties emphasised, precisely, the need for a planned development of industry, for industrialisation, and this demand was **opposed by Stalin**. It should not have taken Bob Davies, the specialist in Russian History, long to discover this fact. After all, the platform of the Left Opposition has been available for many years, in English. This was the period when Trotsky was condemned as a "super-industrialiser". Even as late as 1927, Stalin was denouncing as impracticable Trotsky's proposal to construct the Dneiperstroy hydro-electrical station. This he ignorantly declared in a speech to the Central Committee, would be the same as "for a muzhik to buy a gramophone instead of a cow".

It is then a lie to say the Trotskyists opposed industrialisation. In fact it was Trotsky who put forward the proposition of a State Planning Commission to coordinate planning in industry. At the 12th Congress of the C.P.S.U. in 1923, it was none other than Trotsky who presented the report on the problems of industrialisation; a report which was adopted **unanimously**.

"SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY"

Davies declares the "Trotskyites . . . thought that socialism could not be built in this backward country without the help of the revolutionary Governments in the West" and deftly identifies opposition to the nationalist-socialist theory of "socialism in one country" as opposition to Soviet industrialisation.

Thus, he shows an appalling ignorance of Lenin's and Trotsky's conception of the place of the Russian Revolution in the struggle for World Socialism. Of course, if he is not to appear too ridiculous, Davies has to lean on a Stalinist definition of Socialism, a definition which reduces socialism to an empty phrase.

Industrialisation and socialism are not synonymous. It is hardly necessary to state that without industrialisation there can be no socialism. But the social-

ist society, as conceived by Marx, Engels and Lenin implied the expansion of production to a level far beyond that achieved even under advanced capitalism.

Marxists have always conceived of Socialism as a society demonstrating its vast superiority over capitalism in its satisfaction of human needs, i.e. as a society where material want, which gives rise to inequality and the individual struggle for existence, has disappeared. Essential to Socialism is the withering away of inequality and the struggle for existence and with them, the withering away of the State, itself a product of inequality and competitive society. Socialism is accordingly possible only in a society participating in an international division of labour, a society freed from the distorting pressures of imperialism. In attacking Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country" Trotsky was attacking a purely nationalist revision of Marxism.

Both Lenin and Trotsky, always, viewed the Russian Revolution as an outpost of the world revolution, to be defended with all the resources at hand, but the fate of which was bound up with that of the world socialist struggle. The fundamental problems arising from the backwardness of Russia and her isolation could not be solved without the overturn of capitalist relations in the advanced capitalist countries. Events of the last few years have dramatically shown that these fundamental problems of Soviet Society have not been solved.

Lenin and Trotsky saw that industrial development would proceed with forced marches, unevenly, distorted by its severance from the more advanced countries and by the necessities of defence against a hostile world. Soviet society would, inevitably, face grave dangers from degeneration if forced to rely only on its own resources.

Lenin and Trotsky based their views on Marxist internationalism, which always had as its starting point the world socialist revolution—the conception that the final emancipation of the Russian masses could only be accomplished by the emancipation of the world working class.

With his new theory of "Socialism in One Country", Stalin fundamentally revised Bolshevik internationalism. The starting point of this "theory" was the supposed national peculiarity of Russia. It began by asserting that the success of the international revolution had ceased to be the necessary guarantee for the success of "socialism" in the Soviet Union. The corollary was revolutionary movements in other countries had to be manipulated so as to achieve the limited aim of preventing imperialist intervention against the Soviet Union.

This was what Stalin's theory required. The history of the Communist Parties since 1925 is the history of how the manipulations were carried out.

The material base which begot the theory of "Socialism in One Country" was the growth of a privileged bureaucratic strata in Soviet society. This strata had already in 1924 begun to achieve and enjoy their own peculiar brand of "socialism"—"socialism" for the bureaucrats.

The last political fight of Lenin himself was directed against the bureaucratic tendencies within the Soviet party and state institutions, and against Stalin²

as the personification of them. By the term bureaucratic tendencies Lenin did not mean merely "red tape" methods of administration in the State organs. He meant rather the autocratic rule over society which was being established by the new elite—the Party "bosses" and their hangers-on. Power gave them privilege and even wealth.

Trotsky and the Left Opposition continued the struggle for Marxist, Leninist, Bolshevik principles as the bureaucracy began to consolidate itself. Step by step, the Stalin group built up its power, at first by the suppression of internal party discussion to be followed later by the physical liquidation of the entire Bolshevik leadership.

THE LAWS OF DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALISM

"It seems to me," writes Davies, "that much of our confusion over recent developments is due to a lack of perspective in the past.

"... To put it another way, our preoccupation with polemics has led us to pay insufficient attention to the laws of development of socialist society."

What are these "laws of development" which Davies considers were not paid "sufficient attention" in the past?

"There is a struggle between the new and the old in a socialist society; technical development and the level of skill and education may outgrow existing social institutions and methods which then hamper development," he tells us.

However, the social institutions and methods adapt themselves to the new conditions. Socialist society is self-adjusting, although in the adjustment the gears may grind a bit.

"Socialist society develops by overcoming contradictions and in the process mistakes will be made."

The proposition that under socialism, social development would outgrow institutions was something discussed by Marx, Engels and Lenin. Hence their conclusion, that as the productive forces developed, as culture expanded, as the habits of the old society fell away, so the state would wither away and die. The new society will create, in future generations, a new socialist man. The flowering of its material base will remove the individual struggle for existence and with it the necessity of any apparatus of coercion. With the elimination of the struggle of each against all, there will be no need for an apparatus to express the interests of all against each. It is possible to describe this process as one of "outgrowing" its old institutions.

However, to label the Soviet Union a socialist state does not **thereby** implant within it the laws of socialist development.

In the Soviet Union, the state has not withered away as industry has advanced, privileges and inequality have not diminished but increased. According to the official indictment, Stalin's criminal activities **be-**gan twenty years ago just at the very moment when "socialism" was announced as accomplished!

The laws of development, the contradictions of the Soviet Union are not those of a Socialist society but of a transitional society—a workers' state, which has suffered a bureaucratic degeneration.

The institutions of socialist society embrace all its

members. "Every cook must learn to run the state. When everybody is a bureaucrat, nobody is a bureaucrat," said Lenin. There is no contradiction between truly socialist institutions and the development of society.

In the Soviet Union a bureaucratic caste usurped control and proceeded to revise Marxism in an attempt to justify itself. It turned party and state institutions into instruments for defending its own interests. Its "social institutions and methods" are a **barrier** to development in the direction of socialism. That is the essential contradiction in the Soviet Union, a contradiction that can only be resolved in convulsion and conflict in political revolution.

WHY DID KRUSHCHEV MAKE HIS SPEECH?

It is the sharpening of this very contradiction which is responsible for the 20th Congress revelations, for the attacks on the "cult of the individual", and for the promises of concessions to the Soviet people. These events are the reaction of the bureaucracy, in face of popular antagonism to privilege and parasitism, in face of the urge for **Soviet democracy** on the part of the Russian working class.

The pressure of the Russian masses has forced their leaders into a condemnation of Stalin's crimes. To be precise, these leaders have been compelled, in self-preservation, to indict Stalin for some—but by no means all—of the terrible acts committed against revolutionaries and against the whole Soviet people.

At the same time, although forced to make certain concessions, they certainly have no intention of bowing themselves gracefully off the stage and thus "overcoming" a contradiction in Soviet society. In this they do not differ from any other ruling group throughout history. On the contrary, their condemnation of the "grave injustices" and "mistakes" of the past has the purpose of convincing the Soviet people that they can now have confidence in the present ruling group.

Krushchev has in fact been saying "Certain things were wrong in the past; they have now been put right; the future is assured!" Such is the bromide administered by Krushchev and Company. Davies dutifully follows with doses of the same sedative intended for members of the British Communist Party, though to be sure, the chocolate coating is a little thicker.

The heirs of Stalin have been forced to adjust themselves to the pressure of the Soviet masses in order to prevent a thorough "de-Stalinisation" by revolt from below. Today, as in the past, at every stage they seek to limit the self-expression and independence of the Soviet workers. Thus *Pravda* denounced as "rotten elements" those who, in the factory discussions following the 20th Congress, "tried to question the correct policy of the Soviet Communist Party".

Davies, in order to bolster his theory of the self-adjusting society, informs us, however, that "... after the war, with a powerful heavy industry established, the move forward required new basic decisions, and political discussion of a fundamental nature was essential—inner-party democracy needed to be concerned more with the formation of policy rather than merely with the best way of implementing it."

Perhaps Davies will tell us how "inner-party democracy" can be concerned with the "formation of

policy" when anyone who even tries to question the correctness of what the bureaucrats say is denounced as a "rotten element".

To be sure, the Soviet leaders attack bureaucracy and call for "initiative". Krushchev, it is true, remarked that a "good wrangle is sometimes necessary". When Soviet workers take his words seriously, however, and are involved in a "good wrangle"—as assuredly they will be—what then will be Krushchev's reaction? The answer lies in the reaction of Soviet leaders to Poznan (and now more brutally, Hungary).

"It is clear," declared a resolution of the 30th June, from the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., that what is denounced as "anti-popular riots in Poznan" were paid for by U.S.A. imperialism. This slandering of fighters against bureaucratic mismanagement and oppression is in the best tradition of Stalin.

How can a bureaucracy which has maintained itself by repressive police measures usher in a regime where the authority of the leadership is determined solely by its ability and by the correctness of its policies?

Stalinism has dealt blow after blow at working class independence and at critical thought. All those leaders, representing the Leninist brains of the Bolshevik Party and who had carried through the Russian Revolution were, one after another, liquidated and replaced by Stalinists. The present "collective leadership" consists precisely of Stalin's nominees.

All the signs are that the stage is set for the **regeneration** of the Soviet Union. Different tasks, however, demand different men. It will be a new leadership which carries through the regeneration. That leadership will be created and will gain support among the mass of the Soviet people in conflict with the bureaucracy.

THE RUSSIAN WORKING CLASS

The political tyranny of Stalinism attempted to justify itself before the Russian working class on the grounds that it was necessary for the defence of the Soviet Union. But the Russian worker now finds himself in a world one-third of which is non-capitalist. He sees a constant wave of struggle undermining imperialism in the colonial and semi-colonial countries. By his efforts, a vast industrialisation of the Soviet Union has been accomplished.

He feels less and less necessity to accept, with gritted teeth, the stifling dictatorship. His hostility has grown to the growing proportion of the goods he produces being siphoned off for consumption by a privileged section of the population.

The self-confidence of the Russian workers can only be increased by the spectacle of the top bureaucrats denouncing a cult they helped to create. The demands from below will not be silenced, but increased further, by the elimination of some of the more arbitrary acts of the dictatorship. Thus Stalin's successors help in digging their own graves by unleashing a process the Soviet masses will finish.

The regeneration of the Soviet Union bears a direct relationship to the development of the organised strength of the Russian working class. This is the force which will burn out Stalinism from Soviet society and return it to the traditions of Leninism. From its victory will come a genuine "New Stage of Soviet Democracy".

INDUSTRIALISATION, COLLECTIVISATION AND DEMOCRACY

According to Davies, the new flowering of Soviet Democracy is the reward for the successes of industrialisation. He justifies the repressions, by implication, if not in so many words, as necessary "in order to give priority to the forcing through of the most essential social forces at top speed".

It is, however, a sober historical fact that the bureaucratisation of the Soviet regime and the centralisation of all authority in the hands, first of a small clique and then of Stalin, began long before the Stalin clique mooted the first Five Year Plan. Bureaucratisation and its crimes began in those years indeed when "super-industrialisation" was the main crime of "Trotskyism".

Industrialisation and collectivisation of the peasant farms were seen by the Left Opposition as two sides of the same coin. The alliance between the workers and the peasants which formed the basis for the Soviet regime, could only be maintained if industry was developed so as to supply the countryside with its requirements. Collectivisation would only become practical politics when industry was in the position to supply the collective farms with the technical equipment for conducting large-scale agriculture.

But for Trotsky and the Left Opposition the policy of rapid industrialisation and collectivisation did not entail the necessity to suppress Soviet democracy. Davies believes that there was a necessity. But the contrary was, in fact, the real truth! Side by side with their demands for big economic changes, the platform of the Opposition put forward concrete proposals to make democracy in the State and in the Party a reality. This was not put forward in the interest of factionalism as the Stalinists have said. On the contrary, the Opposition saw that industrialisation demanded, as an absolute necessity, the democratic participation of the workers at all levels. Similarly, large scale collectivisation of the peasant farms demanded the democratic co-operation of the poor peasantry. When the impact of the world crisis of capitalism forced Stalin to revise his opposition to industrialisation, in the interests of the bureaucrats, he drove through decisions from the top, utilising all the repressive forces of the State in the process. This inevitably resulted in the gross distortions of the slaughter and devastations of the enforced collectivisations.

The final results of this policy we are witnessing today in Poland and Hungary (and soon in the other "People's Democracies" as well) because in these countries the self-same anti-democratic policies of industrialisation, bureaucratically imposed from the top and forced collectivisation of the peasant farms, were being operated. In Poland, as in Russia in the nineteenth-thirties, the workers and peasants resisted these efforts. In the Soviet Union, the repressive apparatus of the State was too powerful and, by crushing the Opposition, Stalin had deprived the masses of their natural leaders. In Poland and Hungary the situation may yet be saved by the timely actions of the workers and peasants. The far-reaching effects of these events will also determine future developments in the U.S.S.R. itself.

The recent history of Poland and Hungary is also the direct result of the policy of "Socialism in One Country". The economies established in the satellite countries after the war were geared to the needs of the Soviet economy, in strict conformity to the theory of "Socialism in One Country" which prescribed for Russia a special place in the comity of nations. Hence the first demands of the Yugoslavs, Poles and Hungarians were for the ending of the unequal economic treaties with Russia. The narrow nationalistic propaganda during the war; the aggrandisement of the Great Russians as against the other peoples of the Soviet Union—all this and much more followed, as night follows day, from the messianic role which Stalin's false, anti-Leninist theory ascribed to Russia.

"VICTORIOUS SOCIALISM"

If one is to believe Bob Davies, democracy can now flourish in the Soviet Union, presumably because Socialism is finally established within the frontiers of that country. But as long ago as April 4, 1936, *Pravda* could pontificate: "In the Soviet Union, the parasitical classes of capitalists, landlords and kulaks are completely liquidated, and thus forever ended the exploitation of man by man. The whole national economy has become socialistic, and the growing Stakhanov movement is preparing the conditions for the transition from Socialism to Communism." Those with inconveniently long memories will remember how joyously the official communist press in this country echoed these sentiments. Time and again we were assured of the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. Simultaneously we were told that the Stalin Constitution was "the most democratic in the world." We know now from Krushchev's own mouth, that this democracy existed only on paper. This is true also of the claim that Socialism had been established. This is what Davies refuses to see.

Socialism is not only a question of economics, though, to be sure, without the nationalisation of the means of production and distribution, socialism is impossible. Socialism is also a question of human relations and this, it is evident from Krushchev's revelations, leaves very much to be desired in the Soviet Union. But even economically, as we have already pointed out, only the foundations of socialism have been laid. To come to fruition, a great expansion of production must take place and this is only possible on the basis of a world division of labour.

THE MYTH OF THE "CULT"

The evils of the Stalin era were not due, as many now like to pretend, to the evil genius of Joseph Stalin or to the growth of a "cult of the individual"; Stalin, to whom Krushchev in 1939 was singing the most revolting praises, has now become his convenient scapegoat. The bureaucracy was able to fasten its stranglehold on the Soviet Union using Stalin as its willing instrument precisely because **where there is an insufficiency of commodities, a policeman is necessary to supervise distribution.** A successful revolution in an advanced industrial country would have eliminated these insufficiencies. There would have been no need for a policeman, and the bureaucracy would have become anachronistic and superfluous. So, "Socialism in One Country" became a life-line for the bureaucracy

whose first aim was to safeguard its own privileged share of available goods. From this flowed the whole series of policies which resulted, within the Soviet Union, in the crushing of all internal democracy and the economic zig-zag of the pre-war era. Outside the Soviet Union, there flowed from the same source, the policies which led to the defeat and betrayal of the revolutions in China (1926), Germany, Spain and elsewhere.

Finally, Davies vaguely senses that the isolation of the British Communist Party from the workers is somehow due to Soviet policy. So he deplors the fact that Zhdanov, in 1947, had not sufficiently appreciated the development of the "Third Camp", not committed to either the socialist or imperialist camp. Surely, Davies knows that the theory of the emergence of "peace loving" nations is not new. Did not Stalin, and with him our own Communists, divide the pre-war world into "peace-loving" and "fascist" camps? This type of reasoning lay behind the false policies which led, first to the formation by the Communist Parties of National and People's Fronts, and inevitably to defeats in 1939, in France and Spain. Are we now to tread this same

discredited path again? In serving such themes, Davies shows that he still has to learn the ABC of Marxism.

Summing up, for Davies, as for others who, throughout the Stalin period, remained his devoted disciples and lavished sickening praise on him, the present crisis of world Communism will remain a mystery so long as he takes Krushchev's speech and the 20th Congress of the C.P.S.U. as the starting point for research into the reasons why Soviet Democracy perished. He must go back to the years when Stalin first emerged out of the shadows of obscurity and became a leading personality in Soviet political life, back to the year 1923, when Lenin lay dying and, almost with his last breath, tried to avert the catastrophe to which he knew Stalin would lead the Party. He must dig out the old *Imprecors* and *Pravdas* and study the documents of that period. He must try to discover the real views of those people in the Soviet Communist Party and in the International who opposed Stalin right from the moment of his usurpation of power. Only then will he discover those basic facts of history which, interpreted by means of historical material, will enable him to assess the present crisis and to chart the future course of the struggle for Socialism.

NOTES

1 At the Twelfth Congress of the C.P.S.U.—the first Bolshevik assembly not attended by Lenin, who was desperately ill—the chief reporter was Leon Trotsky. Soviet economy was in a serious crisis. The low productivity of labour meant an inadequate supply of manufactured goods and high prices. At the same time the prices of agricultural produce was falling. This economic crisis contained a serious threat of a political crisis—the rupture of the "smychka", the alliance of the workers and the peasants on which the Soviet government was based. Trotsky proposed that the whole economy be organised according to a single, comprehensive plan; he proposed strict economy in political and economic administration, especially the cutting down of overheads, that is to eliminate bureaucratic inefficiency in general and bureaucrats in particular. Further, he proposed the concentration on the most efficient enterprises and rationalisation of all enterprises and the revival of workers' democracy by drawing rank-and-file workers into the leadership and direction of industry.

No one reading the History of the C.P.S.U.(B) would even suspect that Trotsky had put forward these proposals for a planned economy. On page 263 of the History we read: "Trotsky proposed... we should build up our industry by exploiting the peasants." Trotsky's plan, which was in fact adopted by the Congress, and which aimed at saving the alliance with the peasantry, is dismissed with the words that he (Trotsky) "did not accept the policy of an alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry". What a travesty of facts!

2 This is the meaning of Lenin's testament.

ON SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY

On April 8, 1917, Lenin wrote in his "Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers": "The Russian Proletariat single-handed cannot bring the Socialist revolution to a victorious conclusion." (Collected Works (English Edition) Vol. XX p. 87).

In his famous "April Theses", Lenin moved that "The proletariat of Russia, taking action in one of the most backward countries of Europe among the masses of a petty-peasant population, cannot set itself the goal of an immediate

realisation of socialist transformation... The impossibility of an independent socialist transformation in peasant Russia does not in any case give us the right to renounce the conquest of power, not only for the sake of democratic tasks, but also in the name of a series of practically ripened steps towards socialism, such as the nationalisation of the land, control of the banks and so forth..." Speaking to the resolution, Lenin emphasised the international character of the Russian Revolution, "To talk only of Russian conditions is a mistake..."

At the Seventh Congress of the Party, in March, 1918, Lenin said: "It is absolutely true that without a German Revolution we will perish... International imperialism... which represents a gigantic actual power... could in no case and under no conditions live side by side with the Soviet Republic. Here a conflict would be inevitable. Here... is the greatest historical problem... the necessity of invoking an international revolution."

What a far cry was Lenin's policy both from Stalin's Socialism in One Country and from current "peaceful co-existence".

Tell the comrades to hold on. Doing my best, but it's damned hard finding a suitable quotation without using Stalin.



Strachey versus Marx

Tom Mercer and Peter Reed

IN AN IMPORTANT new work by John Strachey, the author sets out to prove several propositions. They are:-

- 1) that the "Labour Theory of Value" is one-sided, outworn and disproved by the facts of the economic development of society over the past 100 years, and particularly since 1939;
- 2) that Marx's political errors were even greater than his economic errors;
- 3) that "Marginal Utility" is not a theory of value at all (He does this conclusively and with an economy of effort and a directness which shows his considerable knowledge and ability);
- 4) that Keynes, despite his "eccentric genius", was just as wrong as Marx, although for different reasons.

This is the method he has chosen to justify the politics and economics of "Democratic Capitalism". We are concerned in this review, primarily, with his attack upon Marxism.

The main difference between Mr. Strachey's book and that of dozens of similar books in the past that have attempted to refute Marx's theories, is that Mr. Strachey is much better informed than his predecessors. He knows and understands more clearly his subject matter. This makes his vulgarization of Marx's views all the more indefensible.

THE TWO OBJECTIONS TO THE THEORY OF VALUE

Mr. Strachey has two main objections to the labour theory of value. His first objection is that if we use "socially-necessary labour time as our unit of value, we shall have no way of expressing changes in the productivity of labour . . . with a given working population and given hours of work that total (the total value of the product of society) must always be the same . . ." Page 63.

It is difficult to take this objection seriously. True the total value will be the same irrespective of the increase in productivity but to say that because of this we cannot measure changes in productivity is nonsense. If 10% more commodities produced by the same number of workers in a given time, this year as against, say, last year, then the increase in the productivity of a unit of "socially necessary labour time" is 10%.

Furthermore the statistical indices necessary to measure such changes could be easily developed as required. The fact that no such indices have been developed is not a proof that they could not be produced, but merely that the capitalists have found no use for such indices.

Mr. Strachey's second objection to the labour theory of value is the important one. It is the old, old objection, however, that Marx's general law of capitalist accumulation has been disproved by the facts of history.

In order to maintain this objection he has to dis-

tort Marx's views. He does this first, by linking them much too directly with Ricardo, and second, by giving a series of carefully selected quotations from "The Communist Manifesto" and "Capital".

Mr. Strachey writes on page 64 as follows: "For the commodity which the labourer has to sell (his labour power as Marx was to call it) must also sell at its value, that is in proportion to the number of man hours taken to produce it, and that number must be the minimum needed to produce the wage goods (as we should call them now) necessary to sustain the labourer and his family, that is, subsistence. Therefore a subsistence theory of wages has always been, implicitly for Ricardo, explicitly for Marx, an essential part of the theory of value. But wages have not remained at subsistence, therefore one vitally important commodity, namely labour power, has not even tended to sell at its value. . . ."

Over and over, Mr. Strachey returns to this point of subsistence level of wages. He insists that it is the main error in the Labour Theory of Value.

It is true, of course, that the value of labour power is the cost of replacing it. Like every other commodity, its cost of production is the value of all the goods used up in replacing it after it has been used up—in other words, the food, clothing and shelter required to maintain not only the worker himself but also his family as well, in good physical condition.

He has not only to present himself each day refreshed and able to work as he did the day before, but, when he is worn out like any other piece of factory equipment, he has to be replaced by a fresh labourer, just as an old worn out machine has to be replaced by a new one. Therefore the value of labour power includes the maintenance of the labourer's family as well as the labourer himself.

But the value of labour power differs from country to country and within each country it varies at different periods according to the historically recognised standard of living of the time.

Even in 1867, when "Capital" was first published, the standard of living was not the same in England, Germany, Belgium, India, or the U.S.

The value in England in 1815 was not the same as the value in 1835 and it had altered again by 1866. It would be absurd to suppose that Marx who was always so thorough in his collection of facts was ignorant of these facts.

To establish that Marx did hold the view that the workers would only get a "constant amount per head", a bare subsistence or "in fact even less than that," Mr. Strachey quotes from the *Communist Manifesto* and from Vol. 1 of *Capital*. The quotation from the *Manifesto* may be ignored because that work did not express Marx's mature opinions. It was written in 1848, several years before he started his long detailed studies in the field of economics. On the other hand the

quotations Mr. Strachey gives from Vol. 1 of *Capital* obviously distort Marx's views.

Marx's real opinion was that the value of Labour Power was variable. This can be shown from *Capital* and from *Value, Price and Profit*, a speech to the General Council of the First International in 1865, only two years before the publication of the 1st Volume of *Capital*.

In the section of *Capital* dealing with the General Law of Capitalist Accumulation, from which Mr. Strachey quotes, Marx continues: "This is the absolute general law of capital accumulation. Like all other laws it is modified in its working by many circumstances, the analysis of which does not concern us here." (*Capital*, Vol. 1, page 660, Kerr Edition.)

Mr. Strachey omits this qualification from his quotation, since it obviously suits his purpose to do so.

Again in *Value, Price and Profit*, Marx says: "... the value of labour is in every country determined by a traditional standard of life. It is not mere physical life, but it is the satisfaction of certain wants springing from the social conditions, in which people are placed and reared.

"... By comparing the standard of wages, or values of labour in different countries and by comparing them in different historical epochs of the same country, you will find that the value of labour itself is not a fixed, but a variable magnitude, even supposing the values of all other commodities to remain constant..." (Pages 86 and 87).

In short, Marx is arguing that the value of labour power is not a constant but a variable quantity. But only once does Mr. Strachey show that he is aware of it. That is when he states on page 88.

"... Marx... fixed the law... that the level of wages would be determined by what it cost to 'produce' the workers... this is the statement that wages will in all capitalist countries tend towards **what is for that time and place** a subsistence level..." (Note: Reviewer's emphasis).

Here Mr. Strachey has left himself a way out against his Marxist opponents. He uses the phrase which we have italicised in order to be free to argue that he did not distort Marx's views. But it won't do! His arguments and conclusions flow from the large number of distortions, not from the one statement that could be interpreted as a correct exposition of Marx's ideas.

Either Mr. Strachey is aware of Marx's views on the value of labour power and bases his attack on the labour theory of value on a distortion of them, or he is ignorant of Marx's real opinions. In either event the criticism of the Labour Theory of Value by Mr. Strachey is valueless.

MARXIST METHOD IN POLITICAL ECONOMY

Since this particular misunderstanding of Marx's views seems widespread, and deeply rooted, it would be useful here to re-examine the methods which Marx used in investigating the laws of capitalism in order to assess the importance of the law of capitalist accumulation.

The scientific method used by Marx in his researches on political economy are in sharp contrast with the methods used by modern bourgeois economists. Bourgeois economists divide knowledge into nar-

row, separate compartments. There is a minute division of intellectual labour among scholars, each working in his own special field. For instance, those modern economists who subscribe to the subjective theory of value, declare that they have nothing to say about politics or sociology or about any matter related to economics. They declare themselves to be unconcerned with the ends to which economic theory is put. Any such 'peripheral' influences are simply assumed to be irrelevant and unimportant. Economists **qua** economists have no right to pronounce on such 'external' matters as, for example, politics. They are purely and simply interested in the technicalities of price formation, in the cost-curves of a particular firm or in the subjective behaviour of consumers. Usually they have no intrinsic interest in the historical evolution of economic problems, no conception of the fact that present day economic problems are essentially historical problems. Having no theory of history, they attempt to lay down a series of general laws applicable to all times and places, laws which are equally applicable to Robinson Crusoe's island economy and the Sixth Soviet Five Year Plan.

The aims and methods of Marx are entirely different. Marx's aim is not the prediction of the consequences of allocating scarce resources in various alternate ways.* Nor did Marx busy himself constructing beautiful, intricate and quite useless diagrams showing consumers' 'indifference' to various goods. His object was, like the Newton of economics, to lay bare the economic laws of motion of capitalism. Marx asked what makes the system go, where has it come from and where is it going? Questions like these cannot be answered without penetrating below mere surface forms. Marx saw what was needed was an examination of the social relationships arising from the capitalist method of production. In other words, Marx was conscious that production affects the whole of social life and cannot be studied scientifically in a social vacuum. This means that the boundaries of 'pure' economics have had to be crossed. Therefore, Marx, in his investigations into political economy felt bound to deal with **all** the social sciences. What he succeeded in doing was no less than to construct a new, unified, social science, with political economy as its keystone.

Faced with enormous masses of factual material, Marx used the methods of investigation used by natural scientists: abstraction, induction and deduction followed by the progressive removal of initial, qualifying assumptions so bringing the theoretical model more and more into line with concrete reality. The natural scientist can always conduct carefully controlled laboratory experiments in which he consciously varies the experimental conditions, holding first one and then another variable constant. But in applying the methods of natural science to economics, Marx comes up against a major obstacle. He writes: "When you come to the analysis of economic forms, we have neither microscope nor chemical reagents to help us out. The power of abstraction has to replace both these expedients."

* Recently, Mr. R. W. Meek has attempted to show that Marx was conscious of this 'scarcity' problem—as it is known to modern academic economists. See his article in 'Oxford Economic Papers' for October, 1955, 'Some Thoughts on Marxism, Scarcity and Gosplan'. See also the comment on Meek's paper by P. J. Wiles, in the February (1956) issue.

The method developed by Marx was to isolate, for the purposes of investigation, the most characteristic and general features of the capitalist economic system and then reduce these features to their purest form, in order to study their development, free from all extraneous and irrelevant* disturbances. He came, on the basis of a searching study, to the conclusion that economic relations are fundamental. Marx then constructed a theoretical 'model' of capitalism. This model was not static but a moving model mirroring the most important tendencies within society and enabling predictions concerning the probable evolution of these 'purified' tendencies to be made, it being assumed, of course, that no other tendencies needed to be taken into account. This scientific method, applicable to the whole science of history itself, was a valuable contribution to knowledge.

The bourgeois economists, by contrast, having made their **static** abstractions, proceed to develop them far beyond any possible hope of empirical verification. This, as is now widely recognised, inevitably leads to barren conclusions. The most fruitful step the bourgeois economist could take would be to remove some of the over-simplifying assumptions, which are basic to his scheme and by this means to bring his analysis more into line with actual reality. Thus, step by step, the initial assumptions should be removed leaving a final result which accounts for all the important facts at the lowest possible level of abstraction. This is the method employed by Marx in *Capital*.

Marx at the first stage of the analysis simplifies his argument by excluding from consideration all social relationships except that between capitalists and proletarians, i.e. the relationship expressed in terms of the production and distribution of commodities by and between the two social classes, workers and capitalists. In addition, he reduces the relationship between capital and labour to its most significant form. Then, in *Capital*, Marx shows that the form of the capital-labour relationship arising from 'machinofacture' is the most significant relationship in modern capitalist society. Individual differences and characteristics of workers and capitalists are, for the most part, ignored at this stage. Workers and capitalists are considered only 'in so far as they are personifications of economic categories, representatives of special class relations and interests'. Marx also assumes in this first stage that he has to deal with a stage of 'perfect competition' such as that described by the **laissez faire** economists. He assumes everywhere a "free market" in which prices are fluctuating according to supply and demand. This "free market" is the mechanism by which prices come to be, on the average and in the long run, equated with values. The state of affairs in the Lancashire cotton industry during the Victorian era was, possibly, the closest approximation to these 'ideal' conditions. This industry was also the most fully developed form of capitalism in Marx's time.

Almost the whole of Volume I of *Capital* is concerned with studying the mode of operation of this highly abstract model of capitalism.* Of course the propositions derived from a study of a simple and abstract model then have to be extensively modified at a later stage, when one comes to deal with reality at a lower level of abstraction. The validity of these elementary propositions is obviously related to the level of abstrac-

tion of the model upon which they are based. The degree of modification to which they have to be subjected increases as the analysis approaches the concrete. The "absolute general law of capitalist accumulation" is derived on a high level of abstraction. The word "absolute" is used here in the Hegelian sense of "abstract" thus makes plain that Marx is not making firm predictions about the future.

"The truth," said Lenin, "is always concrete." The imposition of rigid, unalterable laws upon nature or society is completely alien to dialectical materialism. Marx would have been behaving completely out of character if he had really drawn up a detailed blueprint of the "Rise and Fall of the Capitalist Empire". Precisely because he was a good social scientist, Marx permitted himself the luxury of making only the most general type of forecast. It is still amazing how many of these have been or are being triumphantly justified.

The general system known as Marxism is one of the greatest achievements of the human mind. It has become almost a truism to say that that achievement is still unfinished and must not be allowed to harden into dogma. In the sphere of political economy this means that a serious study of such problems as are presented by the most recent phase of monopoly capitalism needs to be made. The role of the state in modern bourgeois economy needs to be investigated. There is also a need for a scientific appraisal of such modern schools of thought and economic technique as Keynesianism, and the recent revisionist Communist Party treatises such as that of Sam Aaronovitch on "Monopoly" which purports to bring Lenin "up to date".

THE POLITICAL ATTACK ON MARXISM

"There was nothing basically wrong with Marx's economic insight. It was his political judgment which was at fault. He failed to see that other, essentially political forces would arise in the advanced capitalist societies which would balance, and, in the end, even begin to outweigh the inherent tendencies of the system. . . ." (Strachey, op. cit. p. 151) "... it is most unlikely . . . that the democratic counter pressure upon Capitalism will get too strong. . ." (op. cit. 189) "... Can democracy sustain such a role? Is it realistic to believe that the mere exercise of the franchise every 3 or 4 years can modify the very structure of the economy in such a way that it will cease to be 'so formed' that it drives blindly towards maximum accumulation, cost what it may. Put that way the proposition seems most unlikely. But this is too narrow a definition of democracy. Contemporary democracy . . . includes . . . solidly organised and genuinely democratic trade unionism, also such things as the statutory buttressing of the agriculturalists, deeply entrenched traditions of free speech, free assembly and personal liberty. . ."

"When we see it whole, in this way, its capacity to modify the economic structure of society does not seem so incredible. Its action may seem weak indeed

* Some readers may here object that Vol. I of '*Capital*' contains masses of factual material. This is true, nor is it incompatible with the use of the method of abstraction. The important thing is to ensure that the theoretical models are not completely divorced from reality but mirror as closely as possible the **essential** features of reality. In *Capital* these essential aspects of capitalist reality are illustrated by Marx with factual data collected after much painstaking research.

in comparison with the iron compulsions of capitalism. But, like a living thing, so long as life is in it, democracy is immensely persistent and persuasive, and it may yet save the day." (op. cit. p. 185).

In these passages Mr. Strachey poses his main criticism of Marx and states his own credo unequivocally. He denounces Marx for his revolutionary theories and incidentally he is denouncing Mr. Strachey's own past. What he is trying to tell us is just that socialism can be achieved by a parliamentary majority, without revolutionary struggle.

In order to "negate" the labour theory of value he had to vulgarise and distort it. Like so many people before him, Mr. Strachey is good at knocking down his own Aunt Sallies. To refute Marx's politics, he has to make out that Marx did not realise the political strength of the working class, the enormous power of organised mass trades unionism in capitalist society and the ability of the working class to force concessions from capitalism. This is, of course, just plain nonsense. Marx appreciated the power right at the beginning of his political life. Marx not only realised this power; he also considered that the working class could not help itself by arguing with the capitalists but by organising and learning in the course of struggle what the struggle is really about. If Marx believed that the workers could eventually become so strong as to wrest state power out of the hands of the capitalists, how could he have failed to believe that the working class was powerful enough to win concessions? But he also saw what Mr. Strachey has "forgotten", that all concessions and reforms are, in a sense, merely by-products of the work-

ers' revolutionary struggles. In the course of these struggles, the workers come to understand more clearly the need for revolution. Obviously the more clearly they understand this, the more desperately will the capitalists try to 'buy' the workers away from struggle. If they do not succeed in 'buying' off the workers, they must either capitulate or try to break the power of the workers by more violent and open suppression of working class organisations.

Mr. Strachey's book is only the first volume of a longer work. We hope that the other volumes will not be long delayed, if only because Mr. Strachey has promised us an alternative to the labour theory of value. We await this "latest" alternative with interest, for up to date, the only alleged alternative to the labour theory of value, namely, the theory of marginal utility, is not a theory of value at all. Some economists may dispute this, but Mr. Strachey won't, because he proves this himself. Therefore in promising us an alternative he must be aware that he proposes to break entirely new ground in economic history. In fact, if he is as good as his word and does produce an alternative theory of value, his work will be the most important in the field since Marx's *Capital* was published. We doubt, however, that the promise will be kept, for, if the evidence supplied by the volume already published is a reliable guide to what is to follow, Mr. Strachey is not going to make history.

"Contemporary Capitalism" by John Strachey
(Gollanz, 25s.)

HUNGARIAN TRAGEDY

HUNGARIAN TRAGEDY by Peter Fryer.
(Dobson, 5/-)

When the **Daily Worker** sent Peter Fryer to Hungary to "get the facts", it did not anticipate that a book such as "Hungarian Tragedy" would be the outcome. For once the subscriptions of the **Daily Worker** readers got them the 'facts' on Eastern Europe, and not the customary Stalinist lies and distorted half-truths.

Peter Fryer went on his assignment full of confidence to a country where "we" were in power, a country where, as he thought "a new life was being built, where workers were in command..." A few hours in Magyarovar stripped him of all these beautiful illusions and ripped the scales (which had covered them for 14 years) from his eyes. He saw the truth of the Stalinist regime, of the people's democracies, the 'glorious' monolithic communist party, and the way Socialism was being built. He also saw the hideous truth of the police state and its privileged bureaucracy, and over all the role of the Kremlin. (Although to be sure this is not clearly enough exposed). What is important is that he had the courage and the honesty to tell what he had seen.



BOOKS

His book is first of all a trenchant answer to the **Daily Worker** and to the British Communist Party leaders, and to all those who characterise the Hungarian uprising as counter-revolutionary and fascist. It is also a record of one of the most significant events of our time, different from other records of these events in that it is written from a Marxist point of view. As such one could perhaps compare it with John Reed's "Ten Days that Shook the World", on a smaller scale. He lived in the midst of a revolution. A revolution this time not against capitalism, but against a corrupt and degenerate bureaucracy. He was with the people that made this revolution, visited Workers' Councils, and saw their first fumbblings with responsibility and true democracy, and had his last illusion shattered (as he says) when at an election to a council, one of the delegates walked up and apologised for the long time taken, saying, "I am sorry it is so slow, but you must understand that we have not got much practice in electing people"! He was also present when the Soviet troops—troops of the first workers' State in history—came in to crush a workers' uprising.

Here, however, it is necessary to make an observation which the author has unfortunately failed to make. That is, the absence of a democratically organised and centralised Marxist leadership capable of co-ordinating and directing the spontaneous and irrepressible struggle of the working class against the Stalinist Moloch. This was the **real** tragedy of the Hungarian Revolution and it is best illustrated when Fryer tries to justify, wrongly in my opinion, the weak and dilatory policy of Attila Szigeti and the Győr government before the second Russian intervention. Instead of marching immediately on to Budapest and organising its defence, the Győr

government, which had whole units of the Hungarian Army under its command and the support of the whole of Western Hungary behind it, placed its faith in the round table negotiations of Nagy and the Russians. The working class, as is usual in such a situation, were a thousand times to the left of their leaders. If the leaders had paid more attention to the feelings of the workers and placed less reliance on the promises of the Russians, Budapest could never have been isolated and history might have taken a different turn. But this, alas, did not happen.

What made the uprising possible in the first place? He tries to answer this question, giving a brief resume of the political history from 1945. He puts the blame where it belongs. On Stalinism and Stalinist policy which, claiming to be Marxist, distorted and twisted Marxism so that it was not even a caricature of Marxism but its very negation.

Why did the Soviet leaders try to crush the revolution? This question is not answered in this book. To answer it, one must explain the nature of Stalinism. What is it? How did it arise and why did it flourish? For the answer one must go to the writings of Leon Trotsky, particularly his book "The Revolution Betrayed", where he analyses and explains the growth of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union, and the theories propounded to nourish and safeguard this caste, which today we know as Stalinism, and states quite clearly that its overthrow will be a violent one. "There is no peaceful outcome for this crisis. No devil ever yet voluntarily cut off his own claws. The Soviet bureaucracy will not give up its positions without a fight. The development leads obviously to the road of revolution." These words have been amply borne out by Peter Fryer.

Peter Fryer calls his book "Hungarian Tragedy", and so far as he explains in his introduction it is correct. But this chapter of Hungarian history will surely be classed with the great revolutions of our time, and will have as far-reaching consequences for the world proletariat. He is privileged in being able to record it—and immortalise it.

K. M.

Colour, Colonies, Capitalism

NEGROES ON THE MARCH by Daniel Guerin.

Paper cover 7/6, hard cover 12/6, postage extra.
New Park Publications, 266, Lavender Hill,
London, S.W.11

Because nearly all the colonial countries are inhabited by dark-skinned people and nearly all the imperialist countries by people with white skins, the movement for colonial freedom, which is today sweeping the globe, is often represented as a clash of colour. This movement is a tremendous explosive force, threatening the very existence of imperialism. But to see it simply as a clash of colour is to see only one aspect of the picture and that not the most significant.

The United States of America is not, traditionally, a colonising country. When it emerged as a world power, imperialism had already developed to the stage where the export of capital had superceded the conquest of capital as its main feature. But within the United States itself we find a faithful reproduction of imperialist-colonial relationship in the attitude of the industrial North to the more backward Southern States. The Negro people of the United States have suffered all the indignities and exploitation which are the lot of colonial people everywhere.

In this account of the struggles of the American Negro, the well-known French writer, Daniel Guerin, has employed to the full the Marxist method. This has enabled him to dig below superficial appearances and to expose the underlying

causes of social phenomena.

Part I gives us a vivid picture of racial oppression and demonstrates that it is part and parcel of capitalist oppression as a whole "and one of its most virulent and repulsive forms." In Part II the author examines the question: "To what extent and in what ways the Negro people are likely, first of all, to take their emancipation into their own hands, and then, to ally themselves with the labour movement for the common liberation of all the oppressed, white and black."

He first of all asks the question: "Where does race prejudice come from?" Is it instinctive? A type of mental sickness? If the latter, how was it caused, by whom and why? He examines the various theories put forward and then establishes beyond argument the fact that race prejudice had its origin in economic exploitation. To justify the "right" of one race to exploit another you must, first of all, establish that there are "superior" and "inferior" races. This *Herrenvolk* mentality is not, of course, confined to America. It was the underlying motive of Hitler's racial creed and is the justification of *apartheid* in South Africa today.

On the foundations of economic exploitation was raised the super-structure of "racial folk-lore . . . grounded on centuries of irrational instincts and mental habits and which finally sank into the depths of the subconscious." These prejudices of centuries cannot be wiped out overnight by a single ruling of the United States Supreme Court.

In the course of his study, Guerin shows that "race prejudice is not born spontaneously but has been artificially and systematically manufactured by the subtlest and most diabolical methods, by a constant mass propaganda comparable to that put forward by European Fascism."

Tracing the historic origins of the Negro question, he comes to the conclusion that racism was born with modern capitalism and colonialism. "It was one of the fruits of the proletarianisation of labour. The servitude of the Negroes . . . had as its counterpart the subjugation of the white workers."

At the end of the Civil War, the Negroes were freed from chattel slavery. For a time they enjoyed full citizen's rights. But, with the complicity of the Supreme Court, these rights soon came to be mere scraps of paper. Above all, American capitalism was afraid of unity between the Negro and white workers. This had to be avoided at all costs. A gulf had to be created between whites and Negroes—this gulf was segregation. Northern industrialists joined forces with Southern ex-slavers to impress upon the minds of the people that the Negro was an inferior being, fit only for helotry and the most vicious exploitation.

By legal means ("Grandfather Clause," poll tax, etc.) and by terror (Klu Klux Klan), the barriers between the races were erected. Negro children were separated from white children in special schools where they received an inferior education. Admission to higher education was virtually barred to all but a few favoured Negroes.

Racial prejudice, like disease, knows no frontiers. Once the climate of hatred is established, it spreads rapidly. Not only Negroes, but Irish, Poles, Italians, Jews, Japanese, Chinese and Mexicans, all became victims to race and religious prejudices. As with other imperial powers, "divide and rule" became the favourite method whereby the American ruling class maintained itself in power.

Having analysed the historic origins of the Negro question, Daniel Guerin next goes on to discuss the various movements which have been thrown up in the course of the struggle for emancipation. The "back-to-Africa" movement of Marcus Garvey in the early nineteen-twenties; the spurious slogan of "Independence for the Black Belt" which was the contribution of the American Communist Party during the "Third Period" of the nineteen-thirties and which was dropped overnight when the party switched over to "Popular Frontism" and sought an alliance with Roosevelt; the movements of the Negro liberals, which culminated in the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of the Coloured People (N.A.A.C.P.).

Each of these movements contributed something to the cause of Negro emancipation but it was not till organised labour began to turn its attention to the millions of Negro workers that real dents began to appear in the edifice of racial prejudice.

As economic exploitation is the foundation of racial hatred, so the joint struggle of the Negro and white workers

against their common exploiters points the road to the final solution of the "Negro problem." As a product of capitalism, it will disappear from the face of the earth only when capitalism itself is destroyed. Negro and white workers, marching side by side, will accomplish this task in the United States.

"Negroes on the March" is indispensable reading, not only for those who wish to understand the problems confronting the American Negro but also for those who want a brilliant example of the application of the Marxist method of investigating and analysing social phenomena. It is a book which should be on every socialist's bookshelf and in every public library.

C. v. G.

THE POWER ELITE

THE POWER ELITE by C. Wright Mills. (Oxford Univ. Press, 1956).

The starting point for understanding politics and developing a sound policy for labour's political action in the United States today is an accurate knowledge of the real structure of American society. That society is composed of different classes ranging from wage workers in the factories and offices to shareholders of the corporations which own and operate them. Which class rules this country and how do its agents secure their domination over our economic, political and cultural life?

This book is an attempt to answer these questions. Imagine an 18th century account such as the Duc de St. Simon gave of the Absolute Monarchy of Louis XIV of France, his statesmen and generals, his bankers and bureaucrats, his courtiers and nobility, his entertainers and mistresses. Mills presents an analogous portrait of the more impersonal and hypocritical but no less tyrannical regime of King Capital and his entourage in the United States today.

Mills is a Professor of Sociology at Columbia University. Something of an "outsider" to the normal academician, who seldom strays far from the haven provided by his bourgeois patrons. He is a shrewd observer, an honest reporter and a scornful critic of monopoly capitalism. He is in the American tradition set by Gustavus Myers, author of "The Great American Fortunes"; Thorstein Veblen, author of "The Theory of the Leisure Class"; and the Ferdinand Lundberg of the 1930's who wrote "America's 60 Families." This school of left liberal sociologists exposed the pretensions of the plutocrats and told many truths about them from the shady formation of their fortunes to the shoddy, imitative fabric of their culture.

This is the third in Mills's trilogy of studies concerning the most significant social strata in America. In *The New Men of Power*, Mills analysed the union officialdom; in *White Collar*, he investigated the urban middle class. Now his lens is focussed upon the people who command the heights of American life. He gives a close-up view of the principal traits, private and public attitudes and modes of functioning of the ruling class in the U.S.A. He exposes the realities behind the masks which have been so skilfully prepared for them by the public relations experts and the press. A streamlined Veblen, he uses the weapon of irony to pierce the hides of the sacred cows of the capitalist caste system, from the Brass Hats to the button-pressing, company big-business magnates. This is descriptive sociology at its best.

Mills first sets out to demolish the fiction that there are no classes in the Marxist sense in American society. He views the population as divided into three strata, not in strict accordance with their property relations and economic functions, but according to the measure of power they actually possess. These strata he calls the power-elite, the middle levels, and the mass.

He then proceeds to demonstrate that the proclaimed equality of American democracy is a fraud. As a Colonial wit observed:

"Men are born both free and equal,
But differ greatly in the sequel."

There is a colossal, almost unbridgeable gap between the bulk of the population at the bottom and the rulers on top

in the possession, enjoyment and exercise of wealth, power, freedom and the good things of life.

The ordinary American is powerless to influence those very decisions that most vitally shape his life. He is not consulted beforehand and often does not even know what these decisions are until their consequences hit him. The major decisions are made for him by people in key positions, by people who have centralised the media for disseminating information and the power to make policy into their own hands. Consequently "the men and women of the mass society . . . feel that they are without purpose in an epoch in which they are without power." (P. 3)

The power elite, on the other hand, are "in positions to make decisions having major consequences. . . Their failure to act, their failure to make decisions, is itself an act that is often of greater consequence than the decisions they do make. For they are in command of the major hierarchies and organisations of modern society. They rule the big corporations. They run the machinery of the state and claim its prerogatives. They direct the military establishment. They occupy the strategic command posts of the social structure, in which are now centred the effective means of the power and the wealth and the celebrity which they enjoy." (P. 4)

The government, the armed forces, and the business corporations are the major institutional hierarchies. These are more important than any other institutions. "Families and churches and schools adapt to modern life; government and armies and corporations shape them, and, as they do so they turn these lesser institutions into means for their ends." (P. 6)

In a passage as searing in its truth as in its irony, Mills observes:

"The life-fate of the modern individual depends not only upon the family into which he was born or which he enters by marriage, but increasingly upon the corporation in which he spends the most alert hours of his best years; not only upon the school where he is educated as a child and adolescent, but also upon the state which touches him throughout his life; not only upon the church in which on occasion he hears the word of God, but also upon the army in which he is disciplined.

"If the centralised state could not rely upon the inculcation of nationalist loyalties in public and private schools, its leaders would promptly seek to modify the decentralised educational system. If the bankruptcy rate among the top five hundred corporations were as high as the general divorce rate among the thirty-seven million married couples, there would be economic catastrophe on an international scale. If members of armies gave to them no more of their lives than do believers to the churches to which they belong, there would be a military crisis." (P. 6-7)

These three institutions have become so swollen and centralised that they overshadow and overwhelm all other departments of American life.

"The economy—once a great scatter of small productive units in autonomous balance—has become dominated by two or three hundred giant corporations, administratively and politically interrelated, which together hold the keys to economic decisions.

"The political order, once a decentralised set of several dozen states with a weak spinal cord, has become a centralised, executive establishment which has taken up into itself many powers previously scattered, and now enters into each and every cranny of the social structure.

"The military order, once a slim establishment in a context of distrust fed by state militia, has become the largest and most expensive feature of government, and, although well versed in smiling public relations, now has all the grim and clumsy efficiency of a sprawling bureaucratic domain." (P. 7)

The leading men in each of these three domains, the corporation chieftains, warlords and political directors, form the power elite. This interlocking directorate, "share decisions having at least national consequences", and often determining world developments. The scope and effects of their operations make their power qualitatively superior to those lower in the social scale. "The owner of a roadside fruit stand does not have as much power in any area of social or economic or political decision as the head of a multi-million dollar fruit corporation; no lieutenant on the line is as powerful as the Chief of Staff in the Pentagon; no deputy sheriff carries as much authority as the President of the United States." (P. 18)

The heads of these institutions fuse with the very rich to constitute the inner circle of the ruling groups which have acquired the consciousness, customs, connections and assurance of rulers. Although the smaller cities have hierarchies of their own, these are petty, provincial and subordinated to the national institutions, the giant business corporations, the federal government, and the military. The big shots in the little cities look to the commanders in the metropolitan centres for leadership. In passing, Mills gives a graphic description of the realities of small town life. He describes too the breeding grounds of the elite, select circles of high society in the metropolis.

He establishes the fact that the very rich did not get rich by saving their salaries or even by climbing rung by rung up the ladder of the company administration. In the main the rich have inherited their wealth and along with it their power, prestige and the other privileges of aristocracy. The very rich of 1956 are largely the descendants of the very rich of 1900. These forbears acquired their fortunes thanks to the right of private property, by corporate manipulations, by favourable tax legislation, by exploiting of other peoples' inventions, by "outright gifts out of the people's domain", and by war profiteering. "The very rich have used existing laws, they have circumvented and violated existing laws, and they have had laws created and enforced for their direct benefit." (P. 99)

Their immense incomes are derived from their ownership of the giant corporations. They are closely tied up in a thousand ways with the Chief Executives of the monopolies. The rich alone are really free. At least they enjoy incomparably more freedom than anyone else. Their wealth affords them unrestricted command over the solid labour of men and of labour's products, wealth liberates them from the grim material necessities of the lower classes. "Money provides power and power provides freedom."

Mills points out that the plutocracy, the business executives, military and political leaders are in the main drawn from the Protestant, urban, white and native-born sections of the population.

The new note in this up to date study, compared to previous portraits of America's ruling class, is the ascendancy of the military. This is the most ominous aspect of the new phase in the degeneration of American democracy, resulting from the predominance of monopoly capitalism and its imperialist policies. The American Republic, born as a staunchly anti-militarist nation, has become transformed into the opposite since World War II. Professional army men, once regarded as potential oppressors and parasites, have now become the most exalted of untouchables. The Pentagon is their headquarters and monument; the occupation of the White House their principal domestic conquest to date.

The military and political representatives of monopoly capitalism have no outlook other than maintaining the nation on a permanent war footing. They have saddled the country with a permanent and ever-growing military establishment which already dominates the economy through its expenditures, and the male youth through conscription, in addition to scientific research and development and higher educational institutions.

Mills emphasises that permanent militarism means permanent war as an indispensable instrument of capitalist policy. As American politics have become more militarised, the military have become more political. As politics gets into the army, the army gets into politics on the highest level. Senator McCarthy was bridled and gagged primarily because he tried to interfere with the Army High Command. The military men not only shuttle between the capitals of the world as diplomats but they increasingly staff the directorates of big business corporations and enter the highest State posts from Secretary of State to the Presidency. The corporate rich, the war-lords and the big politicians jointly develop and administer domestic and foreign policies. They have been amalgamated into a single force through the present Republican "Cadillac cabinet." "The three top policy-making positions in the country (secretary of state, treasury and defence) are occupied by a New York representative of the leading law firm of the country, which does international business for the Morgan and Rockefeller interests; by a mid-west corporation executive who was a director of a complex of over 30 corporations; and by the former president of one of the three or four largest corporations and the largest producer of military equipment in the United States." (P. 232)

Mills adds: "The military capitalism of private corporations exists in a weakened and formal democratic system containing a military order already quite political in outlook and demeanor." (P. 276) It would be hard to improve on this definition.

Mills does not give much comfort to those who see any fundamental differences between the Republican and Democratic Parties. He says: "During the New Deal, the corporate chieftains joined the political directorate; as of World War II, they have come to dominate it." (P. 275)

"More and more of the fundamental issues never come to any point of decision before the Congress or before its more powerful committees, much less before the electorate in campaigns." (P. 255) Most important decisions are more and more made by a small, uncontrollable group centred around the President.

Mills scornfully dismisses the notion that there is any "balance of powers" among the different sections of the population as a whole. Decisive power on decisive issues is concentrated exclusively in the top circles, centralised around the President. He says that a small amount of power is scattered around among the middle class, while the masses are deprived of any power whatsoever.

Mills paints a sad, but faithful picture of the decadence of liberalism.

"Post-war liberalism has been organisationally impoverished: the pre-war years of liberalism-in-power devitalised independent liberal groups, drying up the grass roots, making older leaders dependent upon the federal centre and not training new leaders round the country. The New Deal left no liberal organisation to carry on any liberal programme; rather than a new party, its instrument was a loose coalition inside an old one, which quickly fell apart so far as liberal ideas are concerned. Moreover, the New Deal used up the heritage of liberal ideas, made them banal as it put them into law; turned liberalism into a set of administrative routines to defend rather than a programme to fight for.

"In their moral fright, post-war liberals have not defended any left or even any militantly liberal position; their defensive posture has, first of all, led them to celebrate the 'civil liberties', in contrast with their absence from Soviet Russia. In fact, many have been so busy celebrating the civil liberties that they have had less time to defend them; and, more importantly, most have been so busy defending civil liberties that they have had neither the time nor the inclination to use them. 'In the old days,' Archibald MacLeish remarked at the end of the 'forties, freedom was 'something you used... (it) has now become something you save—something you put away and protect like your other possessions—like a deed or a bond in the bank.'" (Pp. 333-334)

If liberalism has collapsed as an influential force, the intellectuals as a whole have surrendered their roles as independent opinion-moulders and enlighteners of the people. The field has been left free for the unchallenged supremacy of the monopolist advocates of "The American Century."

Mills does not have any higher appraisal of the qualifications and objectives of the union bureaucracy. The labour leaders are today "well below the top councils; they are of the middle levels of power." But they are striving for higher stakes among the "national power elite." In pursuing "the strategy of maximum adaptation," they encounter obstacles both from above and from below. "They feel a tension between their public: their union members—before whom it is politically dangerous to be too big a 'big-shot' or too closely associated with inherited enemies—and their newly found companions and routines of life." (P. 263) As a result, they occupy very uneasy positions between their business associates and the union ranks.

Mills ends his survey of the power elite with this indictment. The present day monopolists of power have no responsibility either to the people or to anyone else. Within the existing social framework they are both uncontrolled and uncontrollable. They profit enormously from this condition of irresponsibility. The possessors of power are divided from and opposed to the possessors of knowledge. He terms their irresponsibility the "higher immorality." "Commanders of power, unequalled in human history, they have succeeded within the American system of organised irresponsibility." (P. 361)

Lenin wrote his classic analysis of world imperialism in 1916 based on material provided by the Englishman Hobson and the German Hilferding. In the forty years since then, enormous changes have affected imperialism as a world system, and especially the position of the U.S. within it. The imperialist system, which was then at its peak, is crumbling before our eyes and instead of a network of comparatively equal competitive states, it has tended to become centralised in the American Colossus.

Equally important modifications have been introduced into the internal organisation of U.S. monopoly capitalism. The Mills study is valuable in its analysis of some of the psychological and cultural superstructure of American imperialism.

It is plain that American monopoly capitalism has passed into a higher stage of its development. In place of the more or less automatic operation of capitalism, the Federal government and its military component has today become the principal prop of the economy. Whole industries such as aircraft, and the national prosperity, directly depend upon the federal expenditures made possible by heavy taxation. As the monopolists have become more dependent upon the state power, the government has become more openly dependent upon them.

"The invisible government" that the progressive democrats some years ago sought to disclose, has become not only visible but insolent. The monopolists hold the reins of government tightly in their hands. The ripe fruits of capitalist evolution, as Mills describes them, are vast inequalities of wealth and of power, plutocracy in the place of democracy, and a disastrously expensive and expanding militarism.

In some countries, such a militarised state monopoly capitalism has taken on fascist or openly dictatorial forms—but not yet in the U.S.A. Thanks to its historical privileges, immense wealth and the under-development of class conflicts, the U.S. capitalists have not been compelled to discard the

old democratic forms, even though they have severely curtailed them. But the ever-present danger of extreme reaction, as evidenced in the shapes of McCarthyism and militarism, remain lodged in the inner structure and inescapable tendencies of the system.

Mills exhibits both the strong and the weak points of his school of sociology, which owes more to the German sociologists Karl Mannheim and Weber than to Marxism. He excels in the generalised description of the outstanding traits of social groupings. He often stumbles and falls down, however, in dealing with the fundamental nature and relations of the class forces in our society. For example, he takes exception to two fundamental propositions of historical materialism. He claims that "the American government is not... a committee of the ruling class" (P. 170) and refuses to acknowledge that there is any single ruling class in this country. These, he says, are over-simplified Marxist theses.

His contention that the American government is not a committee of the ruling class is based upon his own special conception of the power elite. He says that there are three sides of the triangle of power—the big business rich, the brass-hats and the politicians. Which of these is predominant and which subordinate? Which is the master and which the servants?

It is instructive to note that Mills, who is so scrupulous about defining inequalities in other segments of the social structure, places all three forces on an equal footing. He does so on the ground that every one of them exercises a portion of power. But does this dispose of the basic issue? Of course not. In whose interests do they wield their power? The facts which he himself amasses demonstrate that the military and the politicians, while feathering their own nests all right act primarily in promoting the requirements of the billionaires.

(To be continued: next issue)

WILLIAM F. WARDE.

AFTER THE THIRTIES

AFTER THE THIRTIES by Jack Lindsay. (Lawrence and Wishart, 15/-).

Borrow this book, if you must, with its wrapper still hanging to it. For once, we have a blurb which is almost accurate and it must be confessed that, in this case, a lot of time will be saved by possession of this foreknowledge. The pity is that in spite of his liberal disregard for either literary or political truth and his banal repetition of crippled slogans that should by now be 10 years dead, Mr. Lindsay is really trying to do something which needs doing—to clarify our ideas about the nature and function of art and to clarify our ideas about the society in which we live.

Of course the artist desperately needs to see his environment clearly, though one would have thought that a great many artists are showing daily through their work that, in fact, they see society far more clearly than does Mr. Lindsay, in that they do not overlook the most deadly enemy an artist can have—the "thought-policeman". I suppose that Mr. Lindsay can see McCarthy as most of the rest of us can, but what Mr. Lindsay can't see and the people he criticises can is the "thought-policeman" Zdanhov, who is McCarthy's twin. One expects to see policemen, narks, stooges, stool-pigeons, provocateurs and similar things in the corrupt societies Mr. Lindsay is trying to analyse, but the majority of people are revolted when they see the alternative posed by Mr. Lindsay—that vast network of barbed wire and double-dealing which keeps the rouble fortunes of socialist realism safe from premature socialisation.

Thus when the blurb, speaking of Orwell's 1984, evokes "that tortured conception of a mind gone sour", one is unfailingly reminded of a famous remark of Picasso's.

In Paris during the occupation a group of Nazi officers came to Picasso in his studio to examine his work. On the walls were some sketches for his immortal *Guernica*, burning with the terror of the Fascist bombardment of that city.

"Did you do this?" said one of the conquerors.

"No," replied the master, "you did."

Mr. Lindsay's blindness to the betrayal of socialism by the rulers of the Soviet Union, immediately revealed by his treatment of Orwell, makes spurious most of his case against the majority of ex-communist writers who lost sight of the ideal of socialism, in the bloody haze created by Stalin's men as they carved it up all over the world, whilst they cynically flashed the label of socialism on their executioners' axes for the benefit of Mr. Lindsay and the Dean of Canterbury.

But his treatment of the writers whom he claims as socialist-realists is no more objective. The index contains five references to Sean O'Casey but no assessment of his work. This enables him to canonise O'Casey as a sort of socialist-saint and at the same time to condemn James Joyce saying of his discoveries in form, that there can be "only a weakening repetition, not a creative renewal." Of course O'Casey's autobiography must, if this is true, be a "weakening repetition" of Joyce instead of what it is, a vital and inspired work of socialist art firmly rooted in the Irish peoples' struggles on the one hand and in Joyce's all-important new tradition on the other.

He similarly invokes Hugh MacDiamid, with the kind of praise which shows a complete lack of understanding, even ignorance, of his work. MacDiamid is perhaps the greatest poet of the age. His latest published work is, *In Memoriam*—James Joyce. What a crass deviation!

Quite rightly Mr. Lindsay devotes a fair deal of space to Grassie Gibbon, who was a novelist of the very highest stature and unjustly neglected by socialists today.

Only when he can separate Marxism from Stalinism and socialism from theocracy will Mr. Lindsay be able to separate himself from these dishonesties. When this separation has been effected by the workers, they will do things which will make even Mr. Lindsay see straight in spite of himself. We shall defeat the "thought-policeman" McCarthy when we are strong enough to defeat his brother Zdanhov, and vice versa. Artists who see this are nearer to "clarity" and nearer to the workers than either Mr. Lindsay or his Party.

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