

# SOCIALIST REVIEW

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW, BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

VOL. 6 No. 4

JANUARY, 1957

SIXPENCE

## WHO'S TO FOOT THE TORIES' WAR BILL?

By STAN NEWENS

Bitter as the effects of the Tories' Egyptian adventure are on British living standards to date, they are but a foretaste of what is to come. Petrol rationing, higher fares, increased road freight charges and reduced transport services are hard to relish but the long term results of this ill-conceived imperialist bullying will be much more serious.

They will be felt over a long period in the immense set-back to capitalist Britain's economic position in the world at large. It is true that the pound has been saved for the time from devaluation by American help in obtaining credit from the International Monetary Fund and the release from a debt of loan interest. However, the immense fall in the gold reserves by 279 million dollars in November, largely as the result of speculation against the pound reveals only too clearly how little confidence foreign and native capitalists have in Britain at the present time.

This is after a lengthy period of Tory cheeseparing in an effort to strengthen the British economy—after we have been subjected to a credit squeeze, higher interest rates (which have crippled the housing programme), reduced subsidies and increased purchase tax. How much weaker still will capitalist Britain be as the result of the closure of Suez?

First and foremost, of course, the problem of selling enough to obtain the dollars required for American goods has been greatly increased. Three-quarters of Britain's oil supplies are normally obtained via Suez and the

Iraq Petroleum Company's pipeline in Syria both of which have been blocked. To make good even part of the deficit in oil supplies, therefore, will run up an immense new dollar bill.

Insofar as the deficit is not made good, the economy will be crippled for lack of a commodity second in importance only to coal. Already the blow which has been inflicted on private motoring has hit the car industry which was previously in serious difficulties. Road transport is also gravely affected. These troubles have been made worse by the heavy increase in the cost of petrol. All industries which are directly or indirectly dependent on the use of oil fuel lie under the same threat.

Industry is also affected by the shortage of other raw materials from the East. Immense quantities of cereals, oil seeds, fibres, rubber and ores apart from oil normally come to Britain via Suez. To cut in imports of these commodities will not help the British economy, despite the play that has been made over the favourable November balance of payments figures which largely resulted from it. The truth is that the British import bill has been cut partly by the reduction of vital supplies. Exports will inevitably drop as well when the full effects of these reductions are felt.

### EXPORTS HIT

Even more will exports fall as the result of a shortage of shipping space as the result of ships on eastern voyages being away from home much longer on the voyage around the Cape. The round trip to the Persian Gulf, for example now takes 65 days instead of 37 from London, and to Singapore, 58 instead of 41.

Inevitably the British economy has sustained an immense shock. Already burdened by the heaviest arms bill in western Europe and lagging behind in investment, it is difficult to see how industry is to avoid new and heavy losses in export markets. In these she has been losing ground steadily for some years. The results of Suez in Britain give new opportunities to Japan and to Germany who have installed the most modern plant to replace that

destroyed in the war and who will be less affected by the Suez blockage.

### PASSING THE CAN

Realising this it is only natural that the representatives of the capitalist class should call for further sacrifices by the workers. Mr. A. A. Shenfield, Economic Director of the Federation of British Industries, for example, speaking at Birmingham "did not believe that we should ever solve our balance of payments problems until we spent more money on investment and

industry, both private and public and less upon the Welfare State. There might be a silver lining to the Suez affair. It might make people more ready to accept such a fundamental change in policy . . ." (*Manchester Guardian*, October 22, 1956). On the principle that it is an ill wind that blows no one any good he went on to say that "if production went down and the level of employment fell, we should have a good chance for cutting out of the economy the elements which caused inefficiency and overloading"---

[continued on back page]

## The Voice of International Socialism rings through the Iron Curtain--By Owen Roberts

Last month Milovan Djilas, former vice-president of Yugoslavia, was hauled before a court in Belgrade and sentenced to three years' hard labour. His "crime" was that he spoke up for democracy or, in the language of Titoland, "hostile propaganda against the state." But, in bringing Djilas to trial, Tito exposed quite clearly the similarity of his regime with that of the "Stalinism" he professes to despise. And he also showed how afraid are the rulers of the so-called People's Democracies of the growth of real independent Socialist thought.

Djilas first began to slip from favour in December, 1953, when—at a special congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party—other Titoist leaders attacked him because he had suggested that Yugoslavia's revolution was decaying. Djilas's attitude at this time was not alarmingly heretical; he had merely said that ugly vices were becoming apparent in the Yugoslav Communist Party.

Local party officials, he said, were taking bribes and showing favours. The wives of leading party members were getting ahead of themselves—forming social cliques and rushing to drape themselves in the latest Paris fashion. But even these mild criticisms were sufficient to put the skids under Djilas. Very soon he was stripped of his positions and expelled from the party. His fall from grace was accompanied by that of Dedijer—another leading Yugoslav Communist and the author of the official biography of Tito. Dedijer's "crime" was that he dared to speak up for Djilas.

Later, in 1955, Djilas got into even hotter water with the Titoist rulers of Yugoslavia. Denied means to state his views in his own country, Djilas

gave an interview to an American newspaper in which he outlined a series of proposals which he thought would take Yugoslavia along the road to a Socialist Democracy. Again the heavy hand of Tito's police descended and Djilas was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment. An outcry by world Socialists, however, caused Tito to have second thoughts and the sentence on Djilas was suspended although he was kept under continuous police surveillance.

The recent "hostile propaganda" for which Djilas is now serving his three years' sentence was contained in an article published in the American *New Leader* and subsequently re-published by *Tribune* in Britain. In this article Djilas denounced Soviet intervention in Hungary, spotlighted the dilemma the Hungarian revolution had created for Communist governments in Eastern Europe and showed the identity of interest between Moscow and Belgrade notwithstanding their occasional squabbles.

Basically, said Djilas, the Russian and Yugoslav regimes are the same.

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### 1957

This year promises to be a good one for the British Labour Movement. The Tories' Suez War and its consequences have shown that the ugly face of Western capitalism is not merely a cartoon but a reality; the brutal oppression in Hungary has shown that the other side of the Iron Curtain is equally frightful a reality. The Labour Movement is on the high road to learning, through its own experience, the way to Third Camp, international Socialism for which this paper stands.

We hope that 1957 will be a good year for us, too. Make our paper sell, readers!

# He was in Budapest

By Gerry Howard

At a time when everyone interested in politics is eagerly attempting to probe beneath the surface of official and unofficial statements and interpretations of the events in Hungary, any eye-witness account of what occurred would be extremely interesting. Peter Fryer's book, *Hungarian Tragedy* (Dennis Dobson), is trebly so since it is also the work of one who is at this moment an extremely controversial figure in the British Labour Movement.

Anyone who reads this book can hardly fail to be impressed by the passionate description of what he saw. The bodies of the eighty unarmed demonstrators shot down by the secret police at Magyarovar, with dried blood still on their clothing; the lynching of the wounded Lieutenant Stefko responsible, after being handed over on a stretcher; the noise and bustle of the delegates to the Gyor National Committee with their rifles slung over their shoulders—all these things must move anyone with a heart softer than stone.

## A Workers' Revolution

But apart from the stirring stories of heroism and terrible stories of sheer horror—reading like a sequel to John Reed's classic account of the Russian Revolution, "Ten Days that shook the World," the reader who really wishes to find out what occurred in Hungary will wish to find the answer to his questions about the character of the uprising. Was it directed by counter-revolutionaries, was there a real chance that capitalism would be restored, or was it a workers' revolution?

Fryer leaves us in no doubt about the answer to this question. Speaking of the Workers Committees he states:—"They were at once organs of insurrection—the coming together of the delegates elected by factories and universities, mines and any units and organs of popular self government . . . it is no exaggeration to say that until

the Soviet attack of November 4th the real power in the country lay in their hands."

While he agrees that counter-revolutionary elements were present—as incidentally they were in every revolution in history—he declares: "that the Uprising was neither organised nor controlled by counter-revolutionaries." (P. 7).

About the true cause of the uprising he has no doubt whatsoever "the responsibility for this lies squarely on the shoulders of the Communist Leaders . . . who promised the people an earthly paradise and gave them a police state as repressive and as reprehensible as the pre-war Fascist Dictatorship of Admiral Horthy" (page 8).

## Unbiased Witness

Anyone who considers that Fryer was a biased witness—against Hungary—should bear in mind the fact that the *Daily Worker* sent him to Hungary in 1949 to the Rajk trials—now admitted to have been rigged and he previously defended the justice meted out there. He was now sent to Hungary to "find out the truth" for readers of the *Daily Worker*. Only an unprecedented set of events like those that Fryer describes could have transformed so devoted a CP supporter to such a critic.

As Fryer points out the Hungarian Revolution is not merely a tragedy for the Hungarians, but also for the British Communist Party. Illustrating with a number of stories which it is difficult to believe that he invented (such as that two paragraphs of the British Road to Socialism were drafted by Stalin and not democratically approved by the British CP) he makes a far more convincing case against the "petty-Stalins" who control the British Communist Party, than any outsider could possibly make at the present time.

In his own struggle against them, it is to be hoped that he will ask himself

# IRON CURTAIN — continued

They are both systems of exploitation of the workers by a new ruling class. The break between Yugoslavia and Russia was merely the resistance of the Yugoslav Communist leaders to Moscow domination, and came about because in Yugoslavia—unlike the other Eastern European countries—the so-called Peoples' Democracy had not depended upon the Soviet army for its establishment.

**The Hungarian revolution, continued Djilas, placed Stalinist-Titoist regimes on the spot because—had it succeeded in establishing political democracy and the social ownership of production—it would have demonstrated that the totalitarianism practiced in those countries was but an excuse to exploit the workers. "The Hungarian Revolution threatened to reveal the Soviet internal system as the totalitarian domination of a new exploiting class—the Party bureaucracy," said Djilas.**

He concluded by saying that the Hungarian revolution had blazed a path which, sooner or later, other communist countries must follow. It marked, he said, the beginning of the end of "Communism" generally.

In speaking out in such a fashion Djilas not only earned himself a three-year spell in one of Tito's jails, he also

demonstrated how the ideas of the Third Camp—the camp of Socialism as opposed to the twin imperialisms of the East and West—are spreading. And, further, he showed just how afraid the world ruling classes are of this Third Camp.

## Third Camp Socialism in Hungary Too

In Hungary itself there is striking confirmation of the growth of real independent Socialist thought of the kind advanced by the Third Camp. Consider, for an instance, the broadcasts from Radio Rajk, a Hungarian rebel radio station, on November 5—after the Soviet army had once again attacked Budapest.

The place of all true Hungarian Communists is on the barricades in the struggle against brutal imperialism, said Radio Rajk. We must frustrate the activities of those who serve Russian imperialism and try to keep Hungary in a colonial status.

"We shall do our best to present a clear picture of the Russians' colonial rule not only to our Russian comrades but to our comrades in Yugoslavia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria and in the 'free' countries. We shall tell them that the Russians do not want communism. For the trampling underfoot of free nations is not communism . . ."

This is the clear voice of Third Camp Socialism ringing out from the Stalinist jungle. It is a voice which at one and the same time spells the death knell for Stalinism and offers no hopes to those who wish to restore capitalism. It is the voice of workers in revolt.

For Socialists in Britain there is a task as great as that undertaken by the Hungarian workers. While supporting their fight, and that Djilas and similar men in Yugoslavia, we must not lose sight of our job here. And that job is to win the Labour Party over to a programme of red-blooded Socialism both in national and international affairs.

## A Letter from Paris Shows

# WHO MADE THE HUNGARIAN SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

THE DISTORTIONS of the capitalist press have veiled the fact that the Hungarian revolution was essentially a proletarian revolution, led by a working class conscious of its goal—Socialism. Quite understandably, the bourgeoisie does not emphasize the fact that the Hungarian revolutionaries demanded workers' control of the factories. Quite understandably it suggests that all the Hungarian workers wanted was the supreme well-being enjoyed by the workers in Western capitalist countries.

The Communist Party press, equally understandably, does not emphasize the socialist nature of the revolution. Andre Stil, a leader of the French Communist Party and editor of its daily, *l'Humanite*, asserts that the Hungarian insurrection was led by Catholic reactionaries. But he has also admitted that the working class and youth of Hungary were in the forefront of the struggle and that it was the peasantry who remained relatively loyal to the regime (*l'Humanite*, December 18, 1956), and we know that it is precisely the working class and the youth who are always the spear-head of the struggle for Socialism.

## Workers take the lead

It is clear that a class conscious proletariat took the lead in Hungary. Apart from Budapest, the main centres of the uprising were: in the coal and uranium mines of the Baranya district; the coal mines, steel works and power stations of the Borsod district; the town Miskolc, the centre of the chemical industry; Diosgyoer, a heavy

industry centre; Szeged, a university city and the third largest in Hungary; Szolnok, a centre of the iron industry; Gyoer, an industrial centre.

This list shows that the base of the Revolution was in the large factories; that the vanguard of the Revolution was the Industrial working class.

## The role of the trade councils

The workers spontaneously created a system of trades councils—workers' councils or soviets—which became the leaders of the entire people in revolt. These trades councils which sprang up in different parts of the country immediately faced the task of federating. The workers were grouping towards the establishment of a Soviet Republic.

As an example of the trades councils' activities, take the one in Miskolc, one of the most important. It was elected on October 24 by all the workers in the town. It organized itself as a government of the district; formed a workers' militia; declared and organized a strike in all industries except the power stations, public

transport and the hospitals; and sent a delegation to Budapest to maintain contact with the revolutionaries in the capital. In a broadcast on October 27, the Council of Miskolc declared that it had taken power in the whole region of Borsod.

**It put forward the following demands:— Withdrawal of Russian troops, formation of a new government, a general amnesty for all revolutionaries, and the right to strike. In a broadcast on October 25, the Council demanded "a government containing communists devoted to the principle of proletarian internationalism." Another workers' council, that of Szeged, demanded the withdrawal of Russian troops, and workers' control of factories.**

On October 26 the Hungarian trade unions demanded, amongst other things, the formation of a national guard recruited from amongst the workers and youth; the formation of workers' councils in all factories; the abolition of norms of production; an increase in wages; a decrease in wage differentials; and the establishment of a maximum wage.

## Workers and peasants

These demands are profoundly Socialist. What has confused the clear Socialist outline of the Revolution has been the fact that the peasantry and

the petty-bourgeoisie, although united with the workers in the struggle for national independence and democracy have yet posed demands with an emphasis different from that of the workers. It is these demands that the Nagy government acceded to. It is these demands that received the greatest prominence in the capitalist press.

But there is no doubt that the workers' councils led and controlled the Revolution. Did not Kadar admit as much, in deed if not in word, when he had to treat with them, and later when he had to dissolve the Central Workers' Council in Budapest in order to break the back of the Revolution? Even the peasantry, while politically more confused than the workers, showed as much by their unity with them (as in the days of the Russian Revolution) and by the fact that when the puppet Kadar government was trying to starve the workers of Budapest into submission they came into the capital and distributed food to the workers.

DONA PAPERT.

P.S.—Most of the facts cited were taken from a pamphlet published by the French journal, *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, entitled *l'Insurrection Hongroise*.

## FORUM

Discussion of the Socialist  
Program :NATIONALISED COAL AND  
SOCIALISED INDUSTRY

It is impossible, in the space of a few thousand words to discuss more than a very few aspects of such an important and interesting industry as coal mining. The following article therefore makes no claim to be exhaustive and is intended merely as a contribution to discussion.

PRIVATE OWNERS'  
MISMANAGEMENT

The coal industry, before 1939, presented a sad picture of stagnation and decay. Continued depression of the main power-using industries and competition from continental producers and power substitutes such as oil and electricity all contributed to this situation.

Short time working was common and the labour situation in the coalfields resembled nothing so much as a primitive struggle for subsistence between man and man as well as between men and management. Vicious and degrading systems of labour sub-contracting were responsible for these antagonisms between the miners themselves. They were probably used by the management for this very purpose.

The industry was composed of numerous, often quite small, units arranged into an unco-ordinated pattern of ownership. It lacked completely the capital or inclination to adapt itself to changed economic circumstances. As a result, the capitalist class, as a whole, intervened with various government schemes of "rationalisation" or, rather, cartellisation.

The "remedy" actually aggravated the situation. Instead of having the smaller high-cost producers put out of business, the various schemes were aimed at keeping all concerns, even the hopelessly uneconomic ones, in operation. Most of the working units were already below optimum size. Now they were all to work at below optimum capacity in the bargain. This represented a tremendous waste of resources.

But state interference led to even more crazy occurrences. In South Wales, large coal, for which too high a price had been fixed was broken up into small. In Liverpool, ships were loaded with coal for Eire, taken out of the Mersey and then brought back to the other side of the harbour. There they were unloaded to take advantage of the differential price between export and import coal, fixed by the government.

Although government intervention was even more marked during the 1939-45 war, little money was spent on the mines and the process of decay continued.

PROBLEMS INHERITED BY  
N.C.B.

After the war, the situation on the "demand side" was to be entirely different. Previously, the most important task which the capitalists had set themselves had been to reduce output. The National Coal Board was to be

faced with the problem of how to produce enough coal.

Two tremendous obstacles faced the Board when it first took over. First, coal extraction inevitably shows a historical tendency to increasing costs. When mines are started, the easiest seams are usually worked first. After these are tackled the deeper, thinner, less accessible, more contorted and and faulted ones.

This involves a progressive historical increase in costs unless the organisation and techniques employed improve in efficiency at an equal rate, measured in terms of cost. More money has to be spent on shafts, props, safety precautions, lighting, transport, ventilation, etc., all of which are reflected in the increased cost of coal.

The second obstacle, coupled with the first, was that of making up for all the pre-war neglect, of catching up with all the arrears in capital investment.

According to the report of the Reid Committee (1945), the industry was in a very sorry technical state indeed, compared to the best continental practices. Units were much too small for

## By PETER W. REED

efficient operation and ought to be amalgamated. Roads should be driven independently of seams, instead of following them, thus cutting out sharp curves, gradients and circuitous routes.

These measures would enable modern methods of transporting coal and men to be employed. Electricity ought to be introduced extensively. There ought to be centralised workshop facilities. There was a lack of skilled planners, engineers and managers. Possibly the best comment on this is that, between the wars, a whole generation of skilled shaft-borers was allowed to drift away from the industry. After nationalisation, the NCB actually had to import the necessary skilled personnel from Germany!

## WHAT THE N.C.B. DID

How did the Board tackle these problems? In 1950 a document was issued, "Plan for Coal," which outlined a fifteen year plan of development. During that time, production would be increased from 200 to 240 million tons per annum. 20 large new collieries would be established, most of the sinkings being scheduled for the "concealed" areas on the Eastern edge of the Yorks-Notts-Derby field.

Obviously, the benefits from this type of investment will not be felt for a long time yet—the sinking of a single shaft might take as long as ten years. Thus, one can see how stupid it is to complain about current deficits when possibly, as in 1954, investment totals more than double the deficit.

The Board has not been content with the mere expansion of production. Great emphasis has been placed on

lighting, ventilation and dust suppression in attempts to cut down health risks to the workers. Much money is being spent on these subjects at the Central Research Establishment. Under private ownership, none of the little concerns could afford such research or introduce such "luxuries." Anyway, where were the profits from such expenditure?

Much money has also been spent on the provision of pithead baths, houses, welfare facilities, canteens, clubs and even football pitches. Much of this is, of course, aimed at making the industry more attractive to new entrants—but it is something never attempted before, on any sizeable scale.

## THE CONSUMER GAINS

Yes, but what about the consumer? He doesn't seem to be doing too well out of all this!

Actually, the consumer is doing alright. The pithead price of coal has risen less, proportionately, than the average wholesale prices of other consumer goods. There are good histor-

ical reasons for the increased price of coal as we have mentioned above.

Also, there is the archaic and inefficient distributive system. And, more important still, the high cost of transporting coal by rail. The freight charges on coal coming to the London area from the Midland fields, for instance, add something like 50 per cent. to the pithead price. This excludes further distribution costs.

These charges could be cut with the introduction of bigger wagons, faster freight trains and improved terminal facilities. The old railway companies and the former mine-owners must share the blame—the mine-owners, in particular, were guilty of insisting on having their own private, too-small wagons.

Another complaint is about the low quality of coal. In part due to the best coal being worked out by private operators, machine mining must also take part of the blame. Due to the advantages of centralised research and workshop facilities, however, much money can be, and is being, spent on solving this problem.

UNFAIR BURDENS ON THE  
N.C.B.

It might be possible to improve the price and quality of coal if some of the unfair burdens placed on the NCB were removed. One thinks immediately of the question of compensation to former shareholders which ought to be taken over by the Treasury.

Many agreements seem to exist by which the Board supplies private industry with coal at less than cost price. Why should private industry be sub-

sidised by the ordinary consumer in this way? In most cases, it would appear that the NCB is bound by contracts which it took over from the private owners (i). But it is difficult to make detailed comment here because the figures are simply not available. The NUM which does appear to possess such information is unequivocal in its condemnation of the practice. Full publication of such agreements would be a good agitational issue.

Another unfair burden placed on the Board is that of bearing the loss on imported foreign coal. In accordance with government policy, the NCB is obliged to export as much coal as possible. But, in addition to this "public duty," it has also the responsibility of maintaining adequate home supplies.

If home production sags or if domestic demand experiences a seasonal increase, foreign coal has to be imported at the same time as home coal is being exported.

Not only has the coal to be brought all the way from America, sometimes, but, due to inadequate unloading facilities in English ports—coal never having been imported before—it has to be transferred to smaller vessels at Amsterdam and brought back across the North Sea to England. With this extra breakage of bulk added to the long sea journey, no wonder the Board makes such a loss on imported coal.

THE IDEA OF WORKERS'  
MANAGEMENT

Nowadays there is much controversy over the structure of the National Coal Board, but few of the critics seem to realise that the miners obtained exactly what they wanted. Indeed, it is instructive to note the way the miners, themselves, have changed their minds about the organisation of their industry.

For example, in a document entitled "The Mines for the Nation" published in 1920, Henry H. Slessor gives details of a Bill proposed by the Miners' Federation of Great Britain in which a mining council, consisting of eleven members appointed by the government and ten by the miners, will run the nationalised industry. The administration of the individual collieries was to be vested in a Pit Council of which half the members would be miners.

Readers, we have set aside these centre pages for serious discussion and for contributions to Socialist theory. We believe that we are unique in this country in being able to offer a forum for serious socialists who are committed to neither Washington nor Moscow but to international Socialism. We believe that such people will not be frightened by the "heaviness" of the material in this section—our forum.

## FORUM

## NATIONALISATION — continued

The basic idea seemed to be that the Boards should be made up of workers' and technicians' representatives i.e. on guild lines of complete industrial self-government, subject to control by the government of the day on general matters.

This demand for workers' management appears to have been dropped as a result of the discussions in the Labour Movement of 1932-5.

When the NCB was set up, the NUM does not appear to have made any effort to obtain direct representation at any level. Indeed, no important section of opinion in the Labour Movement failed to support the position taken on public ownership by the TUC in 1944.

According to the Congress' "Interim Report on Public Ownership" (ii) "... it is essential that responsibility to the public shall be maintained by the appointment of the members of its governing body by a minister responsible to Parliament, and they should therefore be selected on the basis of their competence and ability to administer the industry efficiently." (Italics mine—P.W.R.)

WORKERS' CONTROL IN  
MARXIST THOUGHT

The advocates of "workers' control" they really mean workers' management—seem to misunderstand the place of this concept in Marxist thought. Historically, workers' control has been used mainly as an *agitational* slogan directed against *private* industry.

When Lenin and his followers were preparing for power, they expounded a theory of dual control over private industry by employers and workers. To be true, it was the intention that the workers were to prepare themselves to take over exclusive management and were progressively to widen the sphere of their responsibility.

But this dual power stage, which was to end with the elimination of the capitalists was viewed as part of the general process of transfer of power. It did not follow that workers' collective management was to be the norm under socialism.

Indeed, as soon as the revolutionary and civil war period seemed to be drawing to a close i.e. well before the advent to power of the Stalinists, a new turn in policy presented itself. At the Ninth Party Congress in March-April, 1920, there was a powerful movement towards the substitution of individual for collective management. Economic necessity was the immediate reason for this reform. Committee management was found to be extremely inefficient and the resulting labour discipline very poor.

The leading spokesmen of the Bolshevik Party, Lenin, Trotsky and Bukharin, put forward the view that the standing of the working class, as the ruling class in the Soviet Republic, was not really involved in the management controversy. Rather was it a question of the working class, which controlled the state, delegating powers of management to individuals.

Several types of management were provided for—but the guiding principle of *individual* management was made clear.

LENIN ON WORKERS  
CONTROL

As Lenin says in his pamphlet "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government" which he quotes at the Ninth Congress:

"Large scale machine industry—which is precisely the material productive source and foundation of socialism—calls for absolute and strict unity of will, which directs the joint labours of hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of people. The technical, economic and historical necessity of all this is obvious, and all those who have thought about socialism have *always* (my italics—P.W.R.) regarded it as one of the conditions of socialism—only thus can strict unity of will be ensured . . ."

"But be that as it may, unquestioning submission to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of labour processes that are based on large scale industry."

In the body of his speech, Lenin continues (iii):

"Soviet socialist democracy is not contradictory to individual management and dictatorship in any way (and) . . . the will of a class may sometimes be carried out by a dictator who, at times, may do more alone and who is frequently more necessary."

NATIONALISATION  
NEUTRAL IN A CLASS SENSE

The coal mines were nationalised because the miners wanted it that way. They also achieved the form of public ownership they wanted.

Now, above, the argument of Lenin has been reproduced about the form of management in socialist enterprise. The principles of management are neutral—there is no specific form of socialist management just as there is no specific form of socialist railway engine or tractor.

It was obvious that the question of state power was the key to the discussion at the Ninth Congress. The British nationalised industries, *in themselves*, are neither capitalist nor socialist. It follows that if the working class was to smash the capitalist state machine and replace it with its own, such autonomous appendages as the public corporations would immediately and comfortably fit into the pattern of socialism.

## AN EFFICIENCY ARGUMENT

But this is an argument from authority and materialist thinkers naturally suspect even the greatest of authorities. Does the argument in favour of individual management rest solely on the experience of the Russians and the authority of Lenin?

Certainly not!

It has the support of every economic and business organisation expert who has ever considered the problem seriously. One may quote, as a good example, the by-no-means reactionary Professor Sargent-Florence who writes:

"The main reason for the flight from representative boards is that such boards are liable to become debating societies particularly for airing grievances of the several parties represented, rather than bodies making final decisions on policy and organisation. It is for this reason that, in spite of propaganda and ideology, no nationalised industry has direct representatives of the labour it employs on its governing board." (iv).

This point has particular weight in the coal industry where the managerial organisation is, to a large degree, functional. At area level, for instance, the Area General Manager is in charge of specialist departments of production, accountancy, labour, etc. The Area manager must possess considerable knowledge, of colliery engineering, modern mining practice and geology. A committee of ordinary workers from the industry, whatever their personal qualities, would not be able to cope with such a situation.

## QUESTIONS OF PROMOTION

What one should look for inside the industry is whether there is an "open ladder" of promotion. It is there in the form of the Ladder Plan by which the Board is attempting to train its own personnel to fill the highest positions of trust and responsibility.

It is doubtful whether the rank and file workers of any industry anywhere have ever had such opportunities to rise to the top positions.

Remarkable incentives are given to younger workers to attend sandwich courses, day-release and evening classes. The Board even sends its more promising young men to University.

## IMPERFECTIONS OF COAL BOARD

Does all this mean that the Coal Board is perfect? Far from it! Many of the labour upsets can be blamed on to the legacy of bitterness from the past, but it is undeniable that there is a certain bureaucratic rigidity and, often, a failure to consult the workers before important developments or decisions are made or introduced.

Often, managers seem to have to consult higher-ups before they take decisions. Delays in dealing with local wage disputes thus often erupt into strikes. Too little has been done to eradicate the archaic, nay pre-historic, wage structure which was inherited from the previous owners. There are many glaring wage anomalies which are a frequent cause of friction. The miners suspect, often with reason, that officials are trying to sabotage nationalisation. They think that officials who are appointed to positions of great importance ought to have to pass a loyalty test on the principles of public ownership.

WORKERS' NOT INTERESTED  
IN CONTROL

But these are not grievances directed against the basic form of nationalisation. They are really structural modifications *within* the present framework. These are the issues with which miners are concerned. Certainly they do not have the slightest interest in workers' control or management.

What machinery of consultation that does exist at present suffers from lack of interest on the part of the men. It is clear that the success or otherwise of any form or degree of workers' participation or consultation depends on the degree of social consciousness attained by the workers in the industry. Whatever experiments are made in this direction will be doomed to failure unless desired and actively supported by the great majority of miners.

At present, the men exhibit a tough, but ephemeral, militancy over local issues. But, significantly, the Board is very sensitive to the miners' demands. At one colliery in Yorkshire, a few years ago, the miners went on strike to get rid of their manager. They succeeded!

And it would be difficult to imagine a closer union-employer relationship than that between the NCB and NUM. It has even reached the stage where union cards are no longer issued, the colliery clerks deducting union dues from wages. Anyone refusing to pay union dues if fired *by the colliery*.

Lastly, we have to deal with the inevitable allegations of "managerialism" which will greet the views stated above. A frequent, if not well-founded argument, is that efficiency is not so important as democracy. Even if the workers do not want what is described as "industrial democracy," it should be foisted on to them. The answer to this should be quite obvious.

## IMPORTANCE OF EFFICIENCY

As for the view that efficiency is relatively unimportant, this is quite at variance with one of the fundamental ideas of Marxism: the emphasis on the expansion of the forces of production. Indeed, in the classical Marxist diagram, the expansion of the forces of production is the key to the millennium.

Many socialists have tended uncritically to accept certain vague formulas concerning workers' management or control. At the same time they have failed to answer the charges made about the nationalised industries by those who are seeking to make socialism conform to the requirements of the "Manchester Guardian." If this article raises any controversy regarding these issues, its author will consider that the writing of it has been well worthwhile.

## Notes to article :

(i) In most cases, the same financial groupings controlled both the buyer and the seller of the coal. It was very largely a "profit-shunting" device. Profits were deliberately lowered in the mining industry where the men were led by a militant union and where wages formed a high proportion of costs, in order to have a stronger bargaining position in face of wage demands. The profits were passed on to industries like iron and steel where the men were not so militant and where, anyway, labour costs form a much smaller proportion of total costs.

(ii) See TUC 76th, *Annual Conference Report*, pp. 400, para. Form of Public Ownership, No. 38.

(iii) See Lenin, *Selected Works*, Volume 8, pp. 221-2, speech "Economic Development" for both these references.

(iv) Sargent-Florence, *Logic of British and American Industry*, pp. 237.

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# NATIONALISATION IS A CLASS ISSUE

We are very happy to publish Comrade Reed's article on *Nationalised Coal and Socialist Industry* as a contribution to the discussion on this subject which is of such vital importance to the Labour Movement. We find it extremely informative and lucid. However, we believe that it suffers from a basic deficiency quite common in our movement in that it fails to deal with the social aspect, the class content, of the nationalised mining industry.

For lack of space, we shall have to confine our comments to the major points of difference between us and Comrade Reed (leaving aside such questions, important as they are, of compensation payments to the ex-owners who ruined the lives of generations of miners).

## COAL — PART OF CAPITALIST ECONOMY

Comrade Reed considers the mining industry in isolation from the capitalist economy of which it is a part. It is surely the essence of schematism and formalism to say that "the British nationalised industries, *in themselves*, are neither capitalist nor socialist" and to stop there. We have only to look at the basic decisions on wages, prices and investment policies and how they are taken to see how meaningless the neutrality of the industry is.

The demand for coal depends on conditions in the private capitalist economy. If there were general over-production with too many cars, too much steel, too many machines in the market; in other words, if we were faced with a slump as in the 'thirties with two or three million unemployed, the demand for coal would drop considerably and unemployment spread to the pits. If, as is usual under such conditions, wages were under pressure generally, there is no question that miners' wages would be a target for the offensive as well.

Finally, the ceiling on coal prices is determined directly or indirectly by international capitalist competition. Car exporters, machinery exporters, ship-builders and the rest are under pressure to keep their costs low. That pressure is a basic determinant of the price of coal.

In other words, where the nationalised sector of the economy forms only a small part of the whole and where general economic planning does not exist the running of a nationalised industry is determined by just those elements which determine the running of any individual capitalist enterprise, namely the anarchy of international competition.

## WHO HAS POWER TO HIRE AND FIRE

Comrade Reed fails to appreciate the class significance of the organisational structure of National Coal Board.

It is true, as he suggests, that in every advanced economy, whether capitalist or socialist, technicians are

necessary for production. Who would deny it? But the relations between technicians or managers and workers today are certainly not derived from technical considerations alone, or even basically from such considerations. On the contrary, they reflect rather fundamental social relationships.

In a private firm the manager appoints his deputies. These appoint section managers who, appoint foremen etc. Instructions come from the top downwards. Hiring and firing decisions also travel downwards. And the same applies to the nationalised mining industry where the miner is subject to the discipline and direction of a whole host of officials from the deputy immediately above him, through the overman, the deputy manager, the manager, and so on up to the NCB itself. And the NCB itself does not decide on its directives arbitrarily. It is, as we have already seen, subject to the pressures generated in the anarchic competitive capitalist economy of which the mines are a part.

Two forms of organisation, two kinds of discipline cannot coexist in one economy for any length of time. There is no half freeman, half slave.

## "OPEN LADDER"

And what of the "open ladder of promotion" about which Comrade Reed speaks? We might well ask him what is the criterion of promotion? Will the militant miner active in the defence of his comrades be the one to climb up the ladder of promotion? Or will a deputy from the ranks be less obnoxious to workers than someone else? Experience has proved otherwise. The fact that Ford started at the bottom rung has not endeared him to his workers despite the American myth.

## OWNERSHIP, CONTROL AND MANAGEMENT

In dealing with the question of workers' control Comrade Reed falls into the common error of not distinguishing between three different functions: ownership, control and management.

At the dawn of capitalism, when the individual factory was usually quite small, it was normal for the capitalist to fill all three: he owned it, controlled it (in the sense of making all the operative decisions on the policy of the firm) and personally managed it. Today, in all the big corporations, ownership by shareholders is usually divorced from control by the big financial or industrial families and both are far removed from management which is exercised by (highly paid) salaried employees.

We can expect that after the overthrow of capitalism and during the first years of socialism, ownership will be in the hands of the state which, in turn, will be "owned" by the working class collectively. There is no question of Guild Socialism here: each factory will not be owned by its own workers, nor will the question of competition and conflicts between various factories arise. Management will continue to be the job of technicians, but control over them will be in the hands of the workers. Of course, the exact mechanism of this control and the delimitation of the areas of control of the various bodies representing the working class is a question of great importance, but it is one that cannot be entered into here.

## LENIN OUT OF CONTEXT

When referring to Lenin, Comrade Reed forgets the context of Lenin's remarks. Lenin started from the basic assumption that the means of production were owned by the workers' state, that is by the workers' collective organisation. Secondly, he assumed the existence of a planned economy. Under such conditions, every growth in production would be in the workers' interest. And yet, even in these conditions one-man management was very much subject to the control of the workers. Thus the Bolshevik Party made it clear in its programme (adopted at the 8th Party Congress, March 18th to 23rd, 1919) that

"the trade unions must in the fullest possible measure induce the workers to participate directly in the work of economic administration. The participation of the trade unions in the conduct of economic life, and the involvement by them of the broad masses of the people in this work, would appear at the same time to be our chief aid in the campaign against the bureaucratisation of the economic apparatus of the Soviet Power. This will facilitate the establishment of an effective popular control over the results of production."

The Party cells participated in the running of industry together with the workers' plant committees. Together with these, and under their control, worked the technical manager; the combination of these three formed the *Troika*, the basic unit of workers control in Revolutionary Russia, the first to be axed by the bureaucratic reaction.

(By the way, Comrade Reed to the contrary, Lenin did not advocate the statification of the unions but the unionisation of the state as a way of bringing unions and state together. This is certainly unlike the present, "ideal" relations between the NCB and the NUM.)

## THE APATHY ARGUMENT

Finally, Comrade Reed bolsters up his argument by saying that the miners "do not have the slightest interest in workers' control or management." Why on earth, then, is it a basic plank in every revolutionary socialist platform?

A similar argument has often been used to defend bureaucratic rule in the trade unions. The Bevins and the Deakins and the contemporary followers in their footsteps trot out the fact that only 4 or 5 per cent. of union members attend branch meetings and pretend that it means a silent vote of confidence.

## WHY THIS APATHY

It is a fact, a sad fact, that the overwhelming majority of miners, as well as workers in other industries, are not interested in workers' control. But we should understand why.

First, there is the existence of bureaucracy which has, in state, union and party, accustomed the worker to let decisions go by default. Second, every worker knows that the economy of the country runs according to certain rules of a capitalist game which would require more than the effort of one man or even a group of workers to change. Third, like every other enterprise, the nationalised mining industry keeps its books tightly shut. As Comrade Reed states, even the price of coal is not publicly known. How can one expect any interest in control where the possibilities of change, the resources with which to change are known only to a group of privileged bureaucrats?

Finally, and this is the most important of all, it must be realised that under capitalism, the money nexus rules supreme. When coal is in great demand and miners hard to come by, wages will be good at the pits. Why worry about control while the sun shines, is quite a normal reaction in such circumstances.

Of course, by the same token, conditions of insecurity and unemployment will change the miners' attitude quite quickly. After all, the majority of workers do not attend trade union meetings—until there is a strike. Apathy towards the question of control is as fleeting as the stability of capitalism.

## At the centenary of his birth

# PLEKHANOV : THE FATHER OF RUSSIAN MARXISM

By Tony Cliff

A hundred years ago, on December 11, 1856, George Valentinovich Plekhanov, the father of Russian Marxism and precursor of the Russian workers' movement, was born.

The greatness of his historical contribution can be gauged only when set against the background of the anti-Tsarist liberatory movement as it existed prior to his work.

### THE POPULISTS

For decades already the heroic acts of individual terrorism directed against the Tsar and his henchmen by the Populists (*Narodniks*) had captured the imagination of Western Socialists. Herzen, one of the fore-runners of Populism, stated the belief of these fighters: "The man of the future in Russia is the peasant, just as in France it is the workers." (A. Herzen, *Collected Works*, Russian Petrograd, 1919-25, Vol. 6, p. 450). The peasants, argued the Populists, could pass straight into Socialism without passing through the stage of capitalism, by basing themselves on the *mir*—the Russian village community. Under this system the land of the village, except for that on which the peasants' houses stood and the small plots which surrounded them, was the property of the whole village. Part was used as common pasture and the rest was divided into strips, a certain number of which were allotted to each family according to its size. From time to time the land was redivided among the peasants. In the *mir* the Populists visualised the peasants as the standard-bearers of the future.

### PLEKHANOV DISCOVERS THE RUSSIAN WORKING CLASS

However, history mapped its path out differently. Before long it became clear that capitalism was developing in Russia, that a new class of wage workers was coming into being, and that the *mir* was disintegrating.

As early as the end of 1878 and the beginning of 1879, large scale workers' strikes and disturbances broke out in the centres of Russian industry, and Plekhanov, at the time a Populist, was forced to recognise that the working class, born of this developing capitalism, would play a part in the coming Russian revolution. In a leading article in a Narodnik paper, *Zemlia i Volio* on 20 February, 1879, he candidly wrote: "The agitation of the factory workers which has continuously grown in strength and now occupies everybody's attention, compels us to deal earlier than we had calculated with the role which the town worker should play in this organisation ('the revolutionary battle organisation of the people'). The question of the urban worker is one which life itself, independently, pushes forward and raises to an appropriate plane despite all the *a priori* theoretical resolutions of the revolutionary activists." (G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Russian, Second Edition, Moscow-Leningrad, 1923-7, Vol. 1, p. 67).

Plekhanov still believed that the revolution would be brought about by

the peasants, but thought that the workers would help them by initiating revolts in the towns and agitating in the villages. He was now just a step from recognising the decisive role that the working class would inevitably play in the revolution, concentrated as it was in large factories and living in big towns, compared with the subsidiary role to be played by the peasants, dispersed as they were in small villages and using individual methods of production.

### PLEKHANOV BECOMES A MARXIST

In *Socialism and the Political Struggle* (1883) he exposed the main fallacies of the Populists and counterposed to their ideas the principles of Marxism. The importance of its new ideas prompted Lenin to compare this pamphlet with the *Communist Manifesto* for its effect on the Russian working class movement. The next year, in replying to the attack of the Populists, Plekhanov published another outstanding essay, entitled *Our Differences*, which Engels called a turning point in the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia.

In these works and others that followed, Plekhanov applied the Marxist method to an analysis of Russian reality. Although he was not the creator of the theory of dialectical materialism or historical materialism and had not actually enriched them with new discoveries, he nevertheless carried out the important task of introducing them into Russian life, doing so in a series of brilliant works. With great strength of expression, precision and beauty, lucidity of exposition and brilliance of style, Plekhanov "Russified" Marxism. His works on philosophy, the cultural history of Russia, art and literature, alone would have earned him a permanent and prominent place among the Socialist classics. Of Plekhanov's philosophical essays Lenin wrote: "It is impossible to become a real Communist without studying—really studying—all that Plekhanov has written on philosophy, as this is the best of the whole international literature of Marxism..."

But above all, the importance of Plekhanov's work for the future history of Russia was his conclusion that the key role in the struggle against Tsarism would belong to the young Russian working class. As he said at the foundation Congress of the Socialist International (1889): "The proletariat created through the disintegration of the village community will overthrow the autocracy... The Russian Revolution can only conquer as a working-man's revolution—there is no other possibility, nor can there be any." (*Works*, Vol. 4, p. 54).

Inspired by the same thoughts, Plekhanov's disciples, on founding the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' Party (1898) declared: "The farther east we go in Europe the weaker, more abject and more cowardly becomes the bourgeoisie, and the more its cultural and political tasks fall to the lot of the proletariat. On its strong shoulders the Russian working class must bear and will bear the task of winning political

liberty. This is a necessary step, but only the first step toward the realization of the great historic mission of the proletariat, to the foundation of a social order in which there will be no place for the exploitation of man by man."

The overthrow of Tsarist absolutism would be effected neither by the peasants nor the cowardly bourgeoisie, but by the working class, said Plekhanov. How well history was to confirm this prognosis!

### ANALYSIS OF PEASANTRY

Breaking with the Populists, Plekhanov did not have any of their illusions about the Socialist nature of the peasant. He knew that the peasant was a small capitalist attached to private property and individual production. He wrote in 1891: "The proletariat and the 'muzhik' (peasant—ed.) and political antipodes. The historic role of the proletariat is as revolutionary as the historic role of the 'muzhik' is conservative. The muzhiks have been the support of oriental despotism for thousands of years. In a comparatively short space of time, the proletariat has shaken the 'foundations' of West European society." (*Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 382-3).

While Plekhanov was right in emphasizing the non-Socialist nature of the peasantry, he was wrong, as future events showed, not to point out the revolutionary, anti-Tsarist and anti-feudal potentialities of this same class. During the Russian revolution of 1917 the peasantry showed its one, progressive historical face, sweeping feudalism from the countryside in a revolutionary upheaval. Having accomplished this, it then showed its other historical face, wrapping itself round with conservatism and proving in time to be the bulwark of a new "oriental despotism." It was by relying on the backward agricultural countryside, on the muzhik, against the worker, that the Stalinist bureaucracy rose to independence of workers' democratic control, and developed into an absolute autocracy.

### SOCIALISM IN A BACKWARD COUNTRY

Considering the youthfulness and small size of the Russian working class, and the backwardness of the country's productive forces, Plekhanov time and again warned that the revolution might lead to a seizure of power by Socialists, who wanted to suppress economic inequality, before the material conditions necessary for social equality—wealth and abundance were present. Where the productive forces are meagre, economic and cultural progress is not possible except through the exploitation of the majority by a minority: equality would be equality of poverty and ignorance.

He wrote in 1883: "After having seized power, the revolutionary socialist government must organise national production. It will then have (possibly) . . . to seek an issue in the ideals of patriarchal and authoritative communism, by modernising it only to the extent that the socialised production will be controlled by a 'Socialist' caste,

instead of by the 'Sons of the Sun' and their functionaries as in ancient Peru . . . Such Peruvian tutelage, further, would never succeed in initiating the Russian people into Socialism. On the contrary, it would cause them to lose all ability to progress unless they returned to the same economic inequality, the suppression of which should have been the immediate object of the revolutionary government. And we say nothing of the play of international complications . . ." (*Socialism and the Political Struggle*).

Thus Plekhanov clearly saw the dilemma of a Socialist government in a backward country: either stagnation based on equality, or a new division of society into an exploiting and an exploited class.

The only path leading out of this blind alley was pointed to later by Lenin, Trotsky and other Russian Marxists. They sought a solution through the spreading of the revolution to more advanced countries. Thus, for instance, Lenin said: "We always staked our play upon an international revolution and this was unconditionally right . . . we always emphasized . . . the fact that in one country it is impossible to accomplish such a work as a socialist revolution." (Lenin, *Works*, Russian, Third Edition, Vol. 25, pp. 273-4. My emphasis.)

### TRAGEDY OF A FORERUNNER

The course of history did not contradict Plekhanov's formulation of the alternatives facing a revolutionary socialist government in backward Russia. The Russian revolution, isolated by the defeat of the German, Austrian and Hungarian revolutions, led to the rise of a new tutelage, of an authoritarian, exploitative bureaucracy.

Plekhanov suffered from one great weakness. Being a precursor of the actual Russian labour movement, he scarcely had the opportunity of addressing the masses of the workers, organising them and leading their struggle. He thus lacked experience of the true capacity of an active revolutionary working class.

This weakness, wedded to a number of elements in Plekhanov's theory (his emphasis on the backwardness of the country, the smallness of its working class, the conservative nature of the peasant) led him to compromise with the Russian liberal bourgeoisie. During the latter years of his life he opposed Bolshevism and supported Menshevism.

It would take us too far afield to follow Plekhanov's drift toward this compromise, which culminated in his support of Tsarism during the 1914 war.

These blots, however, cannot cancel out Plekhanov's important contribution as the father of Russian Marxism, and consequently as the father of the Great Russian Revolution.

Today, the working class of Russia, oppressed by an autocracy not less tyrannical than that of the Tsar, can yet find a weapon of struggle in the Marxist works of Plekhanov. Plekhanov's prophetic motto on his journal *Iskra* (Spark) was: "The spark lights the fire." The spark of revolutionary Marxism has already once lit the fire that burned the citadel of oppression. The same spark will do it again.

# FATHERS and SONS in the TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

By TOM HERBERT

Last year some 613,000 boys and girls in Britain reached the normal school leaving age of 15. A few, among the more fortunate, were able to stay on at school for further studies; but the vast majority stepped out into the adult world of factories, shops and offices to begin their life as wage earners. In most cases these new workers were able to find jobs with little difficulty and, largely because the post-war shortage of labour has helped push young workers' wages up faster than those of adults, they began drawing reasonable wage packets compared to those received by pre-war school-leavers.

Now, however, there are signs that things will be getting tougher for youngsters leaving school. On the one hand the economic consequences of the Tory war in Egypt and the credit squeeze will make it harder to find jobs—particularly in areas containing a large proportion of industries now feeling the pinch. Coupled with this the number of school leavers in the coming years is going to rise rapidly.

In five years' time the number of youngsters reaching the age of 15 will be 930,000—almost half as many again as last year. This will undoubtedly mean keener competition for available jobs among teenagers.

## Double-talk in Officiales

The recent report of the National Youth Employment Council, when looking at this situation, endeavours to allay the fears of young people and their parents. It first makes the assumption that there will be no change in the national employment position and then says that the extra flow of school leavers should be able to find jobs and "there should be no increase in unemployment among young workers."

Having made this sweeping assertion the Council then proceeds to demonstrate that it will be tougher for young workers in the future.

"It may, however, take longer for young persons to be absorbed into

employment on leaving school and there may be some lengthening of the average period of unemployment in changing jobs. In addition, it may prove more difficult to find openings for disabled and other handicapped persons than in recent years when the demand for young workers has persistently exceeded the supply."

Stripped of Civil Service jargon, this quote from the Council's report is a warning to future young workers that the brief honeymoon is over. It means that things are going to get progressively harder and, as is usual in a capitalist economy, it means that those who need help most—the disabled and handicapped—are going to be among the early sufferers.

## The dead-end job

One of the consequences of this situation is that young persons starting work will not be able to look around for the job which best suits their abilities and preferences. They will be forced to jump into the first job that comes along, or else join the lengthening queue of young people at the labour exchanges. The old evil of blind-alley will once again make its appearance.

A second consequence of the situation is likely to be a general depression of wage rates for young people. Prior to the war young workers generally received very low wages—even by

standards in a capitalist country—and very often performed an adult job. Since the end of the war the position has changed considerably and wages for young workers have risen more than adult rates.

With thousands more young persons looking for scarce jobs the employers will try to revert to pre-war practices. Juvenile wage rates will be frozen and young workers will be more and more expected to take on jobs better suited to more adult workers.

## Unions' attitudes

This clearly points out a big job which the trade union movement must undertake. It must place more emphasis on organising young workers and must set up special machinery for dealing with their problems.

Some unions already do this. The AEU, for instance, goes out of its way to interest young engineering workers and holds a special youth conference each year. But, by and large, the trade union movement is apathetic and very often, outright antagonistic, to the need for giving special consideration to young workers.

## "Elders" fear youth

An indication of the prevailing mood among many leading trade unionists can be gathered from the fate of a resolution moved by the Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union at last year's Trades Union Congress. The resolution, which asked the TUC to set up a National Youth Advisory Committee and to hold an annual youth conference, was defeated on a show of hands after leading trade unionists had

appeared at the rostrum to oppose it. Speaking on behalf of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, Mr. J. W. Wardle typified the rather contemptuous attitude which some right-wing trade unionists adopt when dealing with youth. Where, he asked, are you going to hold your youth conference? At Butlin's Holiday Camp? And then, in one revealing sentence, he said: "Just imagine a decision taken on the Suez problem being acceptable to the elders."

## The Task

Here lies the foundation of the attitude towards young workers held by the right wing of trade unionism. They are openly afraid to allow youth to express itself in a clear united voice because the young people may strike a line in opposition to that adopted by "the elders" of the movement. As a consequence youth is held in check and its own peculiar and particular problems receive nothing like the attention they should. This is paternalism at its very worst.

If such an attitude persists in the trade union movement, and employment prospects for young people follow the expected pattern, the results may be disastrous. Confronted with new problems, and denied adequate attention by the trade unions, the young people might well react with apathy towards the trade unions and the Labour Movement.

The immediate task is inside the trade unions—and it is a task for the active rank and file. The particular problems of young workers must be raised whenever the occasion presents itself and in such a fashion that the pressure on top trade union leadership to provide such facilities is never for a moment relaxed. Every effort must be made to get the matter raised again and again at the TUC.

By its enthusiasm and activity during the coming years the left-wing of the Labour Movement can demonstrate to the young workers of Britain who are their real friends. And in doing so they will be gaining valuable allies in the struggle for Socialism.

## EX—THE UNKNOWN

By M. PAUL

Where will the Ex-CPer go in this wintertime of disillusion?

Will he disappear from the political scene—to form a new geological stratum on the mound of dissipated idealism and wasted effort, a tragic by-product of Stalinism? Doubtless some will but the great majority will remain politically active. For they are, by their very nature, political—without the warmth of the collective, the selfless dedication, the never-ending activity, they would surely succumb to the trivia of aimless existence, and atrophy. What will be the future of those whose inspiration is no longer the tortuous virtuosity of the *Daily Worker* editorial but independent thought and study free from Stalinist taboos?

Two trends have emerged among them—the formation of a new organisation (political party or Marxist study circles?) and individual entry into the Labour Party, the latter being generally regarded as the very last resort. BUT the convening of an elective CP Congress at Easter has not only halted the flow of resignations by postponing the climax of the crisis, but has also slowed the development of those already resigned. For, if the opposition within the Party forces far-reaching changes, many of them will certainly reconsider membership.

Is a victory of the opposition a possibility?

The cards are certainly stacked

against them. They are handicapped by the loss of many of their best leaders, lack of cohesion and means of expression, and a naive estimation of their opponents. The Stalinists have the overwhelming advantage of control of the Party machine and press, decades of experience in political and organisational intrigue, and mastery of the black art of the meaningless concession, the false retreat, the isolation of oppositional figures, but not, as in other countries, the backing of the Soviet Army.

If, as seems likely, the Congress will reveal the omnipotence of the Pollitts, Dutts and Gollans at all levels, then every "Ex" now awaiting its outcome will be joined by at least several more and the practical consideration of alternatives to the discredited Communist Party will be given fresh impetus.

A pointer to the future has been the formation of the Nottingham Marxist Group, twelve of the members of which (including four CP Area Committee Members, three CP Branch Secretaries and two YCL District Committee Members) have just issued a pamphlet in which they trace the stages which led to their resignation from the CP and the formation of the Group. This pamphlet ("Why we left the Communist Party," price 5d. post free from this paper) should be widely read for the accurate insight it

gives, despite its brevity, into the genesis of the "Ex."

The impression which emerges is that the present CP crisis differs not in depth or extent from previous crises but in kind. All previous upheavals have left unchallenged the basic faith of the CPer—the "socialism" of the Soviet Union, the "greatness" of Stalin, the "indispensability" of the Communist Party, the "integrity" of the leadership. This upheaval has seen the faith dissected, questioned piece by piece—and found wanting. Whatever the future of the "Ex" the lessons learned in these months may well prove decisive in the struggles to come. The "Ex" is now a cadre in at least

one sense—he knows how NOT to build a mass, democratic party. But does he know HOW?

We believe that Comrade Paul (who has recently resigned from the Communist Party) is wrong in intimating that there is a need to build a mass democratic party. We believe that the task facing the left-wing in the Labour Movement is not so much the building of a party but the strengthening of the democratic elements within the mass party that already exists, the Labour Party. In this connection, we should like to point out that the members of the Nottingham Marxist Group mentioned by Comrade Paul are now members of the Labour Party.—Editor.

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SS **CASSIA'S** SS  
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COMMUNIST PARTY LEADERS all over the world have been digging down deep into the Stalinist vocabulary in order to find reasons which justify the use of Soviet troops against Hungarian workers. None, it appears, have dug quite as deep as Ajoy Ghosh, the general secretary of the Indian Communist Party and close comrade of Rajani Palme Dutt, vice-chairman of the British Communist Party.

Writing in the Indian CP journal, *New Age*, Ghosh produced an original apology for the Stalinist crime in Hungary. After trotting out the stock excuses—that Russian aggression was in the interest of world peace, Socialism and the Hungarian people—Ghosh added his own contribution to Stalinism's fairy tales by saying that Russian action in Hungary was "in the interest of the freedom of Asiam and African people."

Perhaps Palme Dutt, long regarded by British CP as its specialist on India, can explain by what process of politics and geography Ghosh arrives at this conclusion? Or perhaps Palme Dutt has too many worries in Britain at the moment?

THE BRITISH PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL devotes its time to telling British workers and, less frequently, their bosses how to produce more goods. It is supported by both employer's organisations and the trade unions and no less than ten members of the TUC General Council take part in its activities.

Recently the deputy director of the BPC earned nationwide press publicity for himself when he said:

"It takes infinitely more mental and physical agility to avoid doing a fair day's work than it does to do it. You have to have eyes at the back of your head, the grapevine in operation, and an ear to the bush telegraph. I have seen men completely exhausted at the end of an eight-hour day by the exertions of avoiding work."

Mr. Speakman did not say, however, whether he himself felt completely exhausted after standing around for eight hours watching men dodging work.

LAST MONTH Mr. Harold Watkinson, Tory Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, got cross with Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell. "As long as Mr. Gaitskell remains leader of the opposition," he said, "it will never be possible to return to bi-partisanship between the main parties on foreign affairs."

Less than a week after this outburst Sir Hartley Shawcross, Labour MP for St. Helens and former Labour Attorney General, also had something to say on foreign affairs. "No matter who is in office, Tory or Labour," he said, "in matters of foreign policy there is only room for a British policy."

This frank call for a return to bi-partisan foreign policies, coming so soon after Harold Watkinson's indication that the Tories are not prepared to play ball with Hugh Gaitskell, had led to some speculation whether Sir Hartley Shawcross was indicating that he was willing to co-operate with an extreme right-wing anti-Gaitskell group in the parliamentary Labour Party.

Earlier last year Shawcross had his knuckles rapped because of his infrequent attendances at the House of Commons and it is thought that he is still smarting from the sting and the annoyance he felt that Hugh Gaitskell permitted him to be subjected to the indignity of such a telling off.

# Tory War Bill — —

continued from front page

an unashamed invitation to use unemployment and economic coercion on the workers.

When we consider that only one week before the Suez War began the Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced economies in national expenditure of £5½ million only to dissipate £50 millions—enough to build more than 30,000 houses—one week later in military expenditure alone; when we further consider that these meagre savings were made at the expense of the sick and poor by extending the shilling charge on prescriptions to every item received under the National Health Scheme and raising the retail price of milk from 7½d. to 8d. we can see what a mistake it would be to concede any further reduction in its living standards without a bitter struggle.

## DIRECT CONTROLS

If, as a result of Tory Government crimes, the scarcity of dollars and lack of shipping space become so severe that imports must be cut, it is absolutely necessary that certain priorities be fixed. Imports must be controlled so that food and raw materials come into the country, not luxuries or commodities for speculative purposes. If scarcities are unavoidable, there should also be direct control over capital investments so that the most urgent jobs are carried out. This is part of official Labour Party policy. Let us make sure that it does not remain on paper.

## REDUNDANCY

But the worst effect of the Suez war is already becoming apparent—short time and unemployment.

In recent years the rise in prices has not been intolerable, as it has to some extent been compensated for by full employment and overtime pay. Now, a sudden sharp rise in prices, loss of overtime, short time, or worse, unemployment, will cause the greatest hardship.

British workers have not come face to face with large-scale unemployment for a long time. The hungry thirties are very distant. Under such conditions the trade union leadership easily managed to side-step a clear policy for unemployment.

EVEN THOUGH battered down under a Stalinist press censorship the writers of Eastern Europe still manage to make crafty digs at the methods of their rulers; as this skit from *Sonntag*, an East German cultural review, shows.

In Schilda School the children had for years been taught that two plus two equalled nine. One day the staff discovered their error and set about rectifying it. In order not to undermine the authority of the mathematics teacher, nor to tax youthful powers of comprehension, it was decided to reveal the truth to the children gradually.

The mathematics teacher, it was decided, would first announce that two plus two equalled eight. On the following day he would say that two and two equalled seven; and so he would continue until he reached the correct total of four.

On the first day the plan went well and the children were told that two plus two equalled eight. On the second day however, when the children were to be told that two plus two equalled seven, the teachers made a discovery. They found that during play-time the children had scribbled all over the lavatory walls: "Two and two make four!"

Even though some unions have fairly recently passed policy decisions on the subject (like the AEU's famous "No Sackings" resolution) the rank and file were not mobilised to discuss the policy and become really convinced of the methods of achieving it. The lack of a militant lead resulted in a sell-out in Standards and BMC and a stab in the back at Norton's.

## NEED FOR INDUSTRIAL POLICY

The time has now come for the unions to hammer out their policies. There are a number of possibilities. A "No Sackings" policy could be adopted, which involves the redistribution of available work among all workers in the factory. "Full Work or Maintenance" puts a responsibility on the state to supplement the worker's income when he is on short time or pay the unemployed worker a sum that would bring his income up to the full rate. Or a Guaranteed Annual Wage on the lines of some American unions might win support; under this arrangement every worker laid off receives a certain proportion of his normal pay for a stated period. The British miners have an arrangement like this—26 weeks on  $\frac{2}{3}$  pay. Why can't the rest of us have it, or an even better arrangement?

## NEED FOR POLITICAL PROGRAM

In the factory and trade union branch, the policy must be discussed and decided. But to have an industrial policy and fight for its implementation is not enough. The industrial struggle must be aided by a political struggle. Labour must expose the Tories and their system by showing the people how their present and future troubles are part and parcel of capitalism and Tory rule. Only when the Tories get out and stay out and are replaced by a government which cuts all ties with capitalism—a government pledged to a policy along similar lines to the one on the back of this paper, do we believe that the British people will march forward along with many others in the world to lasting and ever increasing prosperity.

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# WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Socialist Review stands for international socialist democracy. It opposes the exploitive system of both Washington and Moscow—the two rival imperialist forces which now dominate the world—and seeks to advance the ideas of a Third Camp which conducts a relentless struggle against both class societies.

It believes that—in the struggle against the reactionary policies of the Tories, against the power of the capitalist class, in the struggle for independence from both Washington and Moscow and for the transformation of British society into one founded upon Socialism—a Labour Government must be brought to power on the basis of the following programme:

- The complete nationalisation of heavy industry, the banks, insurance and the land, with compensation payments based on a means test. Renationalisation of all denationalised industries without compensation. The nationalised industries to form an integral part of an overall economic plan and not to be used in the interests of private profit.

- Workers' control in all nationalised industries i.e., a majority of workers' representatives on all national and area boards, subject to frequent election, immediate recall and receiving the average skilled wage ruling in the industry.

- The inclusion of workers' representatives on the boards of all private firms employing more than 20 people. These representatives to have free access to all documents.

- The establishment of workers' committees in all concerns to control hiring, firing and working conditions.

- The establishment of the principle of work or full maintenance.

- The extension of the social services by the payment of adequate pensions, linked to a realistic cost-of-living index, the abolition of all payments for the National Health Service and the development of an industrial health service.

- The expansion of the housing programme by granting interest free loans to local authorities and the right to requisition privately held land.

- Free State education up to 18. Abolition of fee paying schools. For comprehensive schools and adequate maintenance grants—without a means test—for all university students.

- Opposition to all forms of racial discrimination. Equal rights and trade union protection to all workers whatever their country of origin. Freedom of migration for all workers to and from Britain.

- Freedom to all colonies. The offer of technical and economic assistance to the people of the underdeveloped countries.

- The abolition of conscription and the withdrawal of all British troops from overseas.

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

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