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SUMMER 1953

SOME ASPECTS OF STALIN'S "ECONOMIC PROBLEMS"

STALIN AS SCIENTIST

THE PEOPLE AND THE MONARCHY

"THE HOLY WAR" AND "THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS"

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## *Contents*


STALIN AS SCIENTIST *J. D. Bernal, F.R.S.* . . . 133

SOME ASPECTS OF "STALIN'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS" *Ronald L. Meek and George Houston* 143

THE PEOPLE AND THE MONARCHY *W. S. Adams* . . 159

"THE HOLY WAR" AND "THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS" *Alick West* 169

REVIEWS:

*A. J. Toynbee's Reith Lectures* RODNEY HILTON . 183

*Byzantium into Europe* CHRISTOPHER HILL . . 186

COMMUNICATION:

*Power Without Glory* JACK LINDSAY . . . 190

ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN U.S.A. . . . . 191



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## *Stalin as Scientist*

By J. D. Bernal, F.R.S.

In thinking of Stalin as the greatest figure of contemporary history we should not overlook the fact that he was at the same time a great scientist, not only in his direct contribution to social science, but, even more, in the impetus and the opportunity he gave to every branch of science and technique and in the creation of the new, expanding and popular science of the Soviet Union.

Stalin's contribution to the development of science cannot be separated from his great work as the builder and preserver of socialism. He combined, as no man had before his time, a deep theoretical understanding with unfailing mastery of practice. And this was no accident. The success of Stalin both in his creative role and in his many battles against apparently overwhelming forces, was due precisely to his grasp of the science of Marxism as a living force. In learning from Marxism and in using Marxism he developed it still further. He will stand now and for all time beside Marx, Engels and Lenin, as one of the great formulators of the transforming of thought and society in the most critical stage of human evolution. In their different ways they each had crucial tasks to fulfil. Marx and Engels had to achieve the first knowledge of the nature of capitalist exploitation and of scientific socialism, at a time when the domination of capitalism seemed assured beyond any question, and had to create the methods of dialectical materialism completely foreign to the official thought of the time. They had to bring to the newly emerging industrial working class the first consciousness of their strength and destiny. Lenin was the first to make the decisive break and, through the creation of a communist party of a new kind, succeeded by revolution in forming the first socialist state. But he lived only to see it triumphant against the first onslaught of its enemies. The task of turning a backward and half-ruined country into a great and prosperous industrial and military power, the task of showing that socialism would work, was, throughout all the crises of internal difficulties and external attack, the responsibility of Stalin and history records his success.

But though his was the guiding hand and his also the undaunted strength of purpose that all could rely on, this achievement was the achievement of hundreds of millions of men and women infused with the same determination and inspired by the same ideas. The true greatness of Stalin as a leader was his wonderful combination of a deeply scientific approach to all problems with his capacity for feeling and expressing himself in simple and direct human terms. His grasp of theory never left him without clear direction. His

humanity always prevented him from becoming doctrinaire. He expressed himself on this point most clearly in his answer to Kholopov in the linguistics controversy:

> "The dogmatists and talmudists regard Marxism and the various conclusions and formulae of Marxism as a collection of dogmas, which 'never' change, despite changes in the conditions of the development of society. They think that if they learn these conclusions and formulae by heart and begin to quote them without rhyme or reason, they will be able to solve any problems whatever, reckoning that the memorized conclusions and formulae will serve them for every period and country, for every possible contingency. But this idea can be entertained only by people who see the letter of Marxism, but not its essence, who learn by rote the texts of conclusions and formulae of Marxism, but do not understand their content.
>
> "Marxism is the science of the laws governing the development of nature and society, the science of the revolution of the oppressed and exploited masses, the science of the victory of Socialism in all countries, the science of building a Communist society. Marxism as a science cannot stand still, it develops and improves. In its development Marxism cannot but enrich itself with new experience, new knowledge—consequently its various formulae and conclusions cannot but change with the passage of time, cannot but be replaced by new formulae and conclusions, which correspond to the new historical tasks. Marxism does not recognize immutable conclusions and formulae, obligatory for all epochs and periods. Marxism is the enemy of all dogmatism."

The study of Stalin's written works needs to be related step by step with the actual political, social and economic problems which called them forth and which in turn they illuminate. In his youth he counted as a "practical" Marxist though this was largely because his success in revolutionary agitation masked his profound and wide reading. The amount of economic and philosophical material that this student from remote and backward Georgia mastered sixty years ago is enough to put to shame students of to-day in advanced centres of culture. It included such diverse works as Darwin's *Descent of Man*, Lyell's *Antiquity of Man*, Adam Smith's and David Ricardo's books on political economy, Victor Hugo's *Toilers of the Sea*, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England*, Mendeleev's *Chemistry*, Spinoza's *Ethics*, and the classics of Shakespeare, Schiller and Tolstoy. Already in the seminary of Tiflis, as his earliest writings show, he had seized on the essentially scientific character of Marxism. He could see that





it was no arbitrary creation but the discovery of objective laws of nature and of society. That concept of scientific law never left him. He gave it its fullest expression in the last of his great contributions to Marxism, the *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.* There at the outset he states categorically:

> "Marxism regards laws of science—whether they be laws of natural science or laws of political economy—as the reflection of objective processes which take place independently of the will of man. Man may discover these laws, get to know them, study them, reckon with them in his activities and utilize them in the interests of society, but he cannot change or abolish them. Still less can he form or create new laws of science."

Though Stalin had no professional connection with science, apart from a few months as an observer and computer at the observatory of Tiflis, he retained a lively and practical interest in the progress of science and his appreciation of its needs and difficulties was of decisive importance to the great efflorescence and transformation of science in the Soviet Union.

The chapter on "Dialectical Materialism" which Stalin contributed to the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* is the finest example of his range of understanding and his skill in exposition, which he had first shown in his *Anarchism and Socialism* forty-six years before. Set out simply and logically are the ideas on the development of the world and of society that are to be found scattered in many places and often obscurely expressed in the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin. The simplicity is somewhat deceptive. In a short compass are ideas and formulations that are worth reading many times over and from which many new ideas and practical applications can be extracted. Particularly illuminating are his remarks on the science of the history of society which "despite all the complexity of the phenomena of social life can become as precise a science as, let us say, biology and capable of making use of the laws of the development of society for practical purposes" (*Leninism*, p. 601). Here also we find the idea which he developed further in *Concerning Marxism in Linguistics*, of the nature of ideological superstructure and of the importance of social ideas:

> "New social ideas and theories arise only after the development of the material life of society has set new tasks before society. But once they have arisen they become a most potent force which facilitates the carrying out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, a force which

facilitates the progress of society. It is precisely here that the tremendous organizing, mobilizing and transforming value of new ideas, new theories, new political views and new political institutions manifests itself. New social ideas and theories arise precisely because they are necessary to society, because it is *impossible* to carry out the urgent tasks of development of the material life of society without their organizing, mobilizing and transforming action. Arising out of the new tasks set by the development of the material life of society, the new social ideas and theories force their way through, become the possession of the masses, mobilize and organize them against the moribund forces of society, and thus facilitate the overthrow of these forces which hamper the development of the material life of society" (*Leninism*, p. 603).

Throughout, and from the very beginning of his mastery of Marxism, Stalin maintained a dynamic conception of natural and social progress. He noted and confidently relied on the triumph of the growing, and the defeat of the decaying, forces of society whatever their apparent strength at the time. As early as 1906 he wrote,

"That in life which is born and grows day after day is invincible, its progress cannot be checked. That is to say, if, for example, the proletariat as a class is born and grows day after day, no matter how weak and small in numbers it may be *today*, in the long run, it must conquer. Why? Because it is growing, gaining strength and marching forward. On the other hand, that in life which grows old and is advancing to its grave must inevitably sustain defeat even if *today* it represents a titanic force. That is to say, if, for example, the ground is gradually slipping from under the feet of the bourgeoisie, and the latter is slipping further and further back every day, no matter how strong and numerous it may be today, it must, in the long run, sustain defeat. Why? Because as a class it is decaying, growing feeble, growing old, and becoming a burden to life" (*Anarchism or Socialism?*, J. Stalin, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1950).

It was this belief firmly founded on science that helped to surmount successive dangers without ever losing heart.

This exposition of Marxism is however only a nucleus to which Stalin added in practice and theory contributions of his own. The major contribution, characteristic both of the man and of the creation of socialism in one country, can be summed up in one phrase—learning with the people. Stalin's capacity to learn was the secret of his success in action. It began with his first political





experience. "My first teachers were the workers of Tiflis" (*Pravda*, June 16, 1926) and it lasted to the very end as the *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.* shows. It is the basis of his most celebrated parallel of Bolsheviks to the giant Antaeus of the fable who was strong only if he kept his feet on mother earth, "As long as they maintain connection with their mother, with the people, they have every chance of remaining invincible" (*History of the C.P.S.U.(B.)* p. 363).

It was this profound feeling for the people and for people as individuals that gave Stalin himself his sure touch in good and bad times alike. It was the basis for his judgment that kept a balance between doctrinaires who wished to push forward irrespective of circumstances, and the cautious time-servers who would go no faster than the slowest of the crowd. He showed it at its best in his decisive *Pravda* article of March 2, 1930, "Dizzy with Success", where he checked, and only just in time, the irresponsible and self-defeating forcing of the pace of collectivisation.

That great double transformation, the industrialisation of the Five Year plans, and the formation of collective farms is Stalin's most enduring monument but, though it needed profound economic and technical study and the greatest firmness of purpose in execution, it was only possible because it expressed the active will of the great majority of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

Shallow thinkers, philosophic defenders of "Western Civilisation," have accused Stalin of being motivated by love of power, but to those who have followed his thoughts and works, the accusation is only a revelation of utter ignorance. Stalin understood the nature of political power far too well to imagine that it was something that could be sought or held by any man or group of men. He knew that the events of political life only express the outcome of social forces, of the wills and aspirations of millions of men who can only be moved if and when the material conditions are propitious and they are conscious of this.

"It would be foolish to think that the production plan is a mere enumeration of figures and assignments. Actually, the production plan is the embodiment of the living and practical activity of millions of people. What makes our production plan real is the millions of working people who are creating a new life. What makes our plan real is the living people, it is you and I, our will to work, our readiness to work in the new way, our determination to carry out the plan" (*Leninism*, p. 387).

Over and over again by example and warning Stalin urged the need for the way of co-operation and persuasion and denounced

the bureaucratic practice of administrative orders. He had nothing but contempt for the bogus "Führer prinzip" which led Hitler to his doom.

As he insisted once again in his last work, the laws of social progress are objective: they cannot be laid down, they must be discovered; and in the process of discovering them, there is always the possibility of revealing the new and unexpected. The transformation of capitalism to socialism and of socialism to communism produced many surprises, good as well as bad. It was Stalin's peculiar genius to detect and cherish the significant new manifestations. It came all the more naturally to him because of his ability to appreciate and cherish the achievements of individuals and to learn the lessons they could teach.

The most striking example of this was his immediate seizing of the achievement of Stakhanov and his understanding that here was not merely someone who worked harder and more enthusiastically, but someone from the ranks of the workers who had mastered modern scientific technique and was able to combine it with his practical experience. Stalin saw at once that this opened the way to using the hitherto untapped reserves of intelligence of the people which capitalism could never touch, and that it broke at once the barriers of accepted standards of production. Here, for the first time in history, the workers were entering science in a positive way and science must make way for them:

> "People talk about science. They say that the data of science, the data contained in technical handbooks and instructions, contradict the demands of the Stakhanovites for new and higher technical standards. But what kind of science are they talking about? The data of science have always been tested by practice, by experience. Science which has severed contact with practice, with experience—what sort of science is that? If science were the thing it is represented to be by certain of our conservative comrades, it would have perished for humanity long ago. Science is called science just because it does not recognize fetishes, just because it does not fear to raise its hand against the obsolete and antiquated, and because it lends an attentive ear to the voice of experience, of practice" (*Leninism*, p. 555).

This was his appreciation of the revolutionary effect of a whole working population contributing to the making of knowledge and not merely to the using of it. Stalin drew the moral in his toast to science at a gathering of workers in higher education in May, 1936:

> "To the flourishing of science! Of such science as does not segregate itself from the people, does not keep aloof from the





> people but which is ready to serve the people, to place all its achievements at the disposal of the people; of the science which serves the people, not under constraint, but voluntarily, willingly. . . .
>
> "To the flourishing of science! Of such science whose devotees, while realising the force and significance of the traditions established in science and making skilful use of them in the interests of science, yet refuse to be slave to these traditions; of science which has the daring and determination to shatter old traditions, standards, and methods when they become obsolete, when they turn into a brake on progress, and which is able to establish new traditions, new standards, new methods.
>
> "In the course of its development science has known quite a number of courageous people who have been able to shatter the old and establish the new regardless of, and in the teeth of all obstacles. Such men of science as Galileo, Darwin, and many others are widely known. I should like to dwell on one such Corythaeus of science who is at the same time the greatest man of modern science, I have in mind Lenin, our teacher, our mentor. . . .
>
> "It also happens that new trails in science and technique are sometimes blazed, not by widely known scientists, but by people who are absolutely unknown in the scientific world, by ordinary people, men engaged in practical work, innovators. Here at the table with us all sit comrades Stakhanov and Papanin, men unknown in the scientific world, without academic degrees, practical workers in their fields of activity. But who does not know that Stakhanov and the Stakhanovites in their practical work in the field of industry scrapped as obsolete the existing standards established by well-known men of science and technique and introduced new standards, corresponding to the demands of real science and technique? Who does not know that Papanin and the Papaninites in their practical work on the drifting ice-flow, incidentally without any special effort, scrapped as obsolete the old conception of the Arctic and established a new one corresponding to the demands of real science? Who can deny that Stakhanov and Papanin are innovators in science, men of our advanced science?" (*International Book Review*, Nos. 1–2, published, Marx Memorial Library, 1938).

The development took shape even more clearly after the second World War with the recognition of the two complementary groups of worker-scientists, the rationalisers who continually improved production in detail and the innovators who provoke radical alterations in the mode of production.

The discovery of the unlimited new source of scientific and technical advancement that lay hidden, and was indeed actively suppressed by all earlier systems, will in the long run prove the greatest of benefits conferred to socialism. Stalin saw well how it was needed to pave the way to the next stage, the transition to communism. This involved the abolition of the essential distinction between mental and physical labour:

> "It is necessary, in the third place, to ensure such a cultural advancement of society as will secure for all members of society, the all-round development of their physical and mental abilities, so that the members of society may be in a position to receive an education sufficient to enable them to be active agents of social development" (*Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 76).

This would in itself require a shortening of the working day to six or even five hours.

> "It is necessary, further, to introduce universal compulsory polytechnical education, which is required in order that the members of society might be able freely to choose their occupations and not be tied to some one occupation all their lives" (*Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 77).

It is this development, made possible only by socialism, that will in turn make its triumph inevitable and rapid. A totally educated population is a power equivalent to billions of atom bombs and it is a constructive and not a destructive one. Already two years ago the Soviet Union was turning out more trained men and women than the United States and the disparity is bound to grow as long as capitalism persists and higher education is employed to ensure the dominance of a class. In this country the fatuous complacency of university authorities who accept a consolidation which is really a cut in an intake that represents 3¼ per cent. of the age group, spells disaster to the economy, indeed to the very life, of the country. The new force that Stalin discovered and which he specially fostered could only be realized in a genuinely socialist state. He followed closely the transformation of the old bourgeois intellegentsia under the impetus of great technical developments, and its new widening through the entry of the working people to form the new Soviet intelligentsia.

"Our Soviet intelligentsia," he said in his speech on the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R., "is an entirely new intelligentsia bound up by its very roots with the working class and the peasantry. . . . Formerly it had to serve the wealthy classes, for





> it had no alternative. Today it must serve the people, for there are no longer any exploiting classes. And that is precisely why it is now an equal member of Soviet society, in which, side by side with the workers and peasants, pulling together with them, it is engaged in building the new, classless, Socialist society" (*Leninism*, pp. 566, 567).

The real greatness of Stalin is shown most of all by the way in which he could keep an active balance between the material and the human elements in a developing society. No one knew better, no one understood more widely, the productive mechanism of modern industry, the need for raw materials, the need for technique and the application of science. But he was never hypnotised by that knowledge and experience into an inhuman faith in the machine, into any form of technocracy. Indeed he reserved his most bitter sarcasms for those who thought in this way, as the discussion on economic problems shows. He always put man first, "men produce not for production's sake, but in order to satisfy their needs . . . production divorced from the satisfaction of the needs of society withers and dies" (*Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, p. 84).

Stalin's concern for men and women also found expression in his concern for the advancement of oppressed people and nationalities who, far from being backward, contained, as he knew well from his own experience, even greater relative possibilities than those of so-called advanced civilisations. In the world as a whole it will be Stalin's solution to the Nationalities question that has made the most lasting impact. He showed how to preserve the living core of national culture while raising the political, technical and economic lives of all peoples, even the most primitive, to the level of the highest. The contrast between the success of this method and the abject failure of the Point Four projects and Colombo Plans, emphasises the fundamental Marxist condition of the abolition of capitalist exploitation as an absolute necessity for the self-development of any country. That was a lesson which not only the republics of the Soviet Union have learned, but many other nations of Asia are already learning and all will learn in their time.

It was in this field too that Stalin made his most direct contribution to social science. His article *Concerning Marxism in Linguistics* is far more than its title indicates; it is an extension of Marxist thought over the whole social, cultural field particularly in the clear distinction it draws between the ideological superstructure limited to a period and serving a particular class, and general auxiliaries of social existence like language and material means of production that can, whatever their origin, serve a new as well as

an old structure of classes. The same consideration certainly applies to science and Stalin's strictures on the way it had been allowed to develop were a most valuable corrective to mechanical, stupid and uncritical applications of Marxism.

> "It is generally recognized", he wrote, "that no science can develop and flourish without a battle of opinions, without freedom of criticism. But this generally recognized rule was ignored and flouted in the most unceremonious fashion. There arose a close group of infallible leaders, who, having secured themselves against any possible criticism, became a law unto themselves and did whatever they pleased" (*Concerning Marxism in Linguistics*, "Soviet News", London, p. 22).

Stalin's intervention at this point as in similar cases in the economic field shows his continued awareness of the need to correct misplaced zeal and distortions of Marxism by a strong infusion of practical common sense. He aimed always at the fullest and freest development of Marxist ideas but he saw that their application required unceasing vigilance if they were not to degenerate into dogmatism.

Stalin's achievement is something greater than the building up and defending of the Soviet Union, greater even than the hope for peace and progress that he gave to the whole world. It is that his thought and his example is now embodied in the lives and thoughts of hundreds of millions of men, women and children: that it has become an indissoluble part of the great human tradition. However great the changes of the next few years, and they will be great changes which he worked for and would welcome, this remains. The ideas of Marx have found and can find no final resting place but Stalin has given them an illumination and an impetus that will never be forgotten. In the words which he quoted from the earliest of the Greek philosophers of change, Heraclitus:

> "The world, the all in one, was not created by any god or any man but was, is and will ever be a living flame."



# *Some Aspects of Stalin's "Economic Problems"*

By Ronald L. Meek and George Houston[1]

There is dogmatic Marxism and creative Marxism. I stand by the latter.

J. V. Stalin, at the Sixth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, 1917.

HENRI BARBUSSE, writing in 1935, said of Stalin that since 1917 not a single year of his life had passed without his having done something which alone would have made any other man famous. And how much more true this is of Stalin's achievements from 1935 to the date of his death! To take the last decade only, of how many men can it be said that during a similar period they directed military operations comparable in scale and importance to the Battle of Stalingrad, inspired economic plans of the magnitude of those at present operating in the U.S.S.R., and produced theoretical works of such significance as *Concerning Marxism in Linguistics* and *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*?

It is fitting, in a way, that Stalin's last work should have been the *Economic Problems*, for this work possesses, perhaps to a greater degree than any other which he wrote, three characteristics which pervaded his life-work as a whole—a penetrating manysidedness, a strong sense of realism, and a recognition of the essential unity of theory and practice. The *Economic Problems* is many different things at once. Looked at from one point of view, it is a blueprint of the transition of Soviet society from socialism to communism. From another point of view, it is an essay on economic policy, particularly in relation to agriculture. From still another, it is an attack on a certain "dizziness with success" which had been manifesting itself in various ways in the U.S.S.R. since 1943. And finally, it is the most important contribution which has yet been made to the great task of distilling the experience of socialism in the U.S.S.R. into general theoretical propositions.

The work, as its title indicates, deals primarily with economic problems of socialism *in the U.S.S.R.* Its main emphasis is on the nature and effects of the economic relationship at present existing between the collective-farm sector and the state sector in the U.S.S.R., but it also deals with wider questions such as the general crisis of the world capitalist system, the inevitability of wars between capitalist countries, and the basic economic laws of modern capitalism and socialism. On none of these questions does Stalin set out to provide us with "all the answers". What he does is rather

[1] Both authors are jointly responsible for the first section of this article, but the first-named alone is responsible for the second section.

to erect new sign-posts, to point out new paths of research, and to stimulate his readers to follow them. By following these new paths, we can provide Stalin with as fine a memorial as he could receive, or would have wished.

The present article will be confined to a consideration of two particular questions raised in the *Economic Problems*, both of which are of special interest to us in Britain. The first is the future of "commodity production" in a socialist society, and in a socialist Britain in particular; and the second is the basic economic law of modern capitalism. Our aim is to shake out some of the implications of Stalin's remarks on these questions, and to advance a little further along some of the paths of research which he indicates.

### *I. "Commodity Production" under Socialism in the U.S.S.R. and in Britain*

In the *Economic Problems*, Stalin characterises the economic relationship at present existing between the state sector of production and the collective-farm sector (i.e., roughly, between the town and the country) in the U.S.S.R. today as a "commodity relation". This bold characterisation is really the axis around which the major part of the work as a whole revolves.

Marx used the terms "commodity" and "commodity relation" in a rather special sense. A "commodity" is not simply a product, nor is it simply a product which is sold. "Only such products can become commodities with regard to each other", said Marx, "as result from different kinds of labour, each kind being carried on independently and for the account of private individuals".[1] A "commodity relation" exists between individual producers (or groups of producers) *whose productive activities are carried on independently of one another* and who satisfy their needs by mutually exchanging the "commodities" which they produce. The exchange of commodities began, according to Marx's account, on the boundaries of primitive communities, "at their points of contact with other similar communities, or with members of the latter".[2] Commodity production existed and developed under slavery and under feudalism, but it reached its highest form only in capitalist society, where almost every product (including labour power) is produced and sold as a commodity.

Marx and Engels seem to have believed that the end of capitalism would mean the more or less immediate end of commodity production. "The seizure of the means of production by society", said Engels, "puts an end to commodity production, and therewith to the domination of the product over the producer".[3] And Marx,

[1] *Capital*, Vol. I (Allen and Unwin edn.), p. 9. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 60.
[3] *Anti-Dühring* (Martin Lawrence edn.), p. 311.





speaking specifically of socialism (i.e., of the *first* phase of communism) said that "within the co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products".[1] Stalin, on the other hand, argues that a special kind of commodity production continues to exist (within certain limits) under socialism in the U.S.S.R. What is the reason for this discrepancy?

Fundamentally, the reason lies in the fact that Marx and Engels put forward their main theoretical generalisations at a time when it would have been impossible for them to foresee the rise of imperialism and the effect which it would have in altering the whole approach to the question of the proletarian revolution.[2] It is *not* true to say, as so many enemies of Marxism have said, that Marx and Engels failed to anticipate that the world revolution might begin in a backward peasant country: there are a number of references in their writings which show that they were perfectly well aware of this possibility, and even named Russia as the country in which the movement might begin.[3] But it *is* true to say, we think, that in making their main theoretical generalisations about socialism they assumed that the *typical* socialist revolution would occur in an advanced capitalist country—a country where capitalism had developed to such an extent, in agriculture as well as in manufacture, that it would be possible (owing to the absence of any "peasant problem") to expropriate *all* the means of production fairly soon after the assumption of power by the proletariat.

With the coming of imperialism, it was recognised by Lenin and Stalin that the revolution need not necessarily begin in countries where capitalism was more developed, but, rather, that it would begin in those countries which constituted "the weakest links in the chain of imperialism". The typical revolutions of our own times have occurred in countries with a substantial peasant population—countries to which the original Marxist model is in some respects not completely applicable. In the U.S.S.R., for example, it was impossible for the victorious proletariat to expropriate *all* the means of production. Capitalism had concentrated the means of production in manufacture to a sufficient extent to enable them to be expropriated and made the property of society, but agriculture was still "divided up among numerous small and medium owner-producers to such an extent as to make it impossible to consider the expropriation of these producers".[4] What, then, was to be done

[1] *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (Lawrence and Wishart edn.), p. 11.
[2] Cf. Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. I (English edn. of 1934), pp. 30 ff.
[3] Cf. Karl Marx, *Selected Works*, Vol. II (English edn.), pp. 667 ff.
[4] Stalin, *Economic Problems*, p. 15.

about agriculture? The policy adopted by Lenin and Stalin involved uniting the peasants in collective farms, and preserving for a certain period their right of disposition over their products. These collective farms, operating with means of production and land owned by the state, were early characterised by Lenin[1] and Stalin[2] as "socialist enterprises".

Was it in fact true, then, that the coming of socialism *in a country of this type* would mean the more or less immediate end of commodity production? Stalin, in the *Economic Problems*, concludes that the productive activities of the collective-farm sector and the state sector are sufficiently "independent" of one another for the economic relation between the two sectors to be capable of characterisation as a commodity relation. Although the means of production and production itself in agriculture are *socialist* property, they are not *public* property (in the full sense in which they are public property in manufacture), since the *product* of agriculture is not within the disposition of the state, and "the collective farms are unwilling to alienate their products except in the form of commodities".[3] This continued existence of a commodity relation between town and country means that the Marxian "law of value" continues to operate up to a point in this sphere, so that the relative prices of the consumer goods exchanged between town and country are to some extent determined by economic forces which are outside the control of the planning authorities. And this means, as Stalin puts it, that obstacles are created to "the full extension of government planning to the whole of the national economy, especially agriculture".[4] Thus the abolition of commodity production—i.e., the "raising of collective-farm property to the level of public property"—is necessary not only in order to terminate the reign of the law of value, but also as a precondition of the transition to the second phase of communism in the U.S.S.R. Stalin advocates that the job should be done by gradually diverting the surplus collective-farm output from the market and including it in a sort of barter system between the state and the collective farms—an extension of the system of "products-exchange" which is already in operation in certain cases.

How far would this analysis apply to a socialist Britain? Would it be possible for the British proletariat, in the event of its assumption of power, to transform *all* the means of production—in agriculture as well as in manufacture—into public property, thus doing away entirely with commodity production and the operation of the law of value? In an extremely interesting passage, Stalin suggests

[1] See, e.g., "On Co-operation", in *Selected Works*, Vol. IX (Lawrence and Wishart edn.), at p. 407.

[2] *Leninism*, Vol. II, pp. 266–70. [3] *Economic Problems*, p. 19. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 76.





that Britain is perhaps the only country in which this might in fact be possible. When Engels refers in *Anti-Dühring* to the seizure of *all* the means of production, Stalin says, he has in mind countries—

> "where capitalism and the concentration of production have advanced far enough both in industry and in agriculture to permit the expropriation of *all* the means of production in the country and their conversion into public property. Engels, consequently, considers that in *such* countries, parallel with the socialization of *all* the means of production, commodity production should be put an end to. And that, of course, is correct.
>
> "There was only one such country at the close of the last century, when *Anti-Dühring* was published—Britain. There the development of capitalism and the concentration of production both in industry and in agriculture had reached such a point that it would have been possible, in the event of the assumption of power by the proletariat, to convert *all* the country's means of production into public property and to put an end to commodity production.
>
> "I leave aside in this instance the question of the importance of foreign trade to Britain and the vast part it plays in her national economy. I think that only after an investigation of this question can it be finally decided what would be the future of commodity production in Britain after the proletariat had assumed power and *all* the means of production had been nationalized.
>
> "However, not only at the close of the last century, but today too, no country has attained such a degree of development of capitalism and concentration of production in agriculture as is to be observed in Britain. As to the other countries, notwithstanding the development of capitalism in the countryside, they still have a fairly numerous class of small and medium rural owner-producers, whose future would have to be decided if the proletariat should assume power".[1]

It is clear that Stalin's remarks on British agriculture are mainly designed to show that Engels' treatment of the ending of commodity production is not and was not meant to be applicable to countries with a fairly numerous peasant class. At the same time, Stalin implies that once the working class came to power in Britain the means of production in agriculture as well as in manufacture could be converted into public property, and commodity production ended. (We shall leave aside the problem of foreign trade at present). Under these circumstances there would not be in a socialist Britain, as there are in the Soviet Union today, two

[1] *Economic Problems*, pp. 14–15.

basic production sectors, the state sector and the collective-farm sector; there would be "only one all-embracing production sector, with the right to dispose of all the consumer goods produced in the country".[1]

There are two distinct but closely related questions involved here. On the one hand there is the transition to a socialist agriculture in which the means of production are owned and disposed of by the state; on the other hand there is the establishment of a single production sector in which not only all the means of production but also all consumer goods are disposed of directly by a single state authority.

These questions are distinct from one another because the first transformation can take place (and has taken place in the U.S.S.R.) before the second development has become immediately practicable. They are closely related to one another because the nature and form of the transition to a socialist agriculture establishes the conditions within which the second change must take place.

If all the enterprises of a socialist agriculture were state farms, analogous to state factories in the sphere of manufacture, then the formation of a single production sector would coincide with the socialisation of agriculture, assuming that manufacture were already part of the state sector.[2] It is quite likely that state farms will be more important in a socialist Britain than in most other countries. This follows from the main difference between agriculture in Britain and elsewhere—the higher degree of capitalist development, reflected in the fact that the decisive rural class in Britain is the farm working class which makes up two-thirds of the agricultural population. Farm workers are essentially part of the British proletariat; as such they stand for the social not the private appropriation of the product of their labour as well as for the social ownership of the means of production.

But, although state farming is likely to be very important in Britain, there are many parts of the country where some form of co-operative farming may turn out to be more suitable. Detailed consideration of these points does not concern us here. The view we wish to put forward is that regardless of the relative importance of state or co-operative farms in a socialist Britain, a single production sector could be established and commodity production ended[3] at the same time as agricultural production is socialised.

In the Soviet Union, Stalin points out, a single all-embracing

[1] *Economic Problems*, p. 20.

[2] It is hardly necessary to stress that the socialisation of agriculture need not take place at the same time as the socialisation of manufacture. Indeed, due to the number of relatively small-scale units found even in British farming the transition to a socialist agriculture is likely to be a fairly slow process in comparison with manufacture.

[3] Once again leaving aside the question of foreign trade.





production sector could be formed in the future not only by the (hardly likely) method of the state sector swallowing up the collective-farm sector, but by the "setting up of a single *national* economic body (comprising representatives of state industry and of the collective farms), with the right at first to keep account of all consumer product in the country, and eventually also to distribute it, by way, say, of products-exchange".[1] The method of products-exchange is favoured by Stalin, we think, because it may prove to be more acceptable to the Soviet collective farmers than, say, a system of guaranteed prices. In countries where the members of co-operative farms were prepared to alienate all their products not as commodities but by direct delivery to the state at guaranteed prices fixed by the state, then a single national economic body would be in a position to dispose of all consumption goods as well as all the means of production, and (if foreign trade is ignored) commodity production would be ended.

There are a number of features of British agriculture which suggest that in a socialist Britain the product of the co-operative farms as well as that of the state farms could in fact be put at the disposal of the state in such a way. In the first place, many of the members of the co-operative farms would be former wage workers who, unlike peasants, have no desire as a class for the private appropriation of the product of their labour. In the second place, working farmers in Britain who would also join the co-operative farms may desire, as a class, to alienate their products as commodities, but, as a result of the development of capitalism in this country, their position *vis-à-vis* the market is significantly different from that of the peasants of other countries. In Britain to-day there is nothing quite like the peasant markets of Europe or the collective-farm markets of the U.S.S.R. In war-time and up till recently almost all farm products in Britain had to be sold to the state at fixed prices. Even before the war many of these products were disposed of through large marketing boards or big distribution firms. In short, the high degree of capitalist development in British agriculture which Stalin mentions is paralleled by an extremely high degree of monopoly capitalism in the relations between agriculture and the rest of the economy. The ties between town and country in Britain are commodity relations dominated by monopoly capital. The state, by taking over the disposition of the product of agriculture, would be delivering a blow against monopoly capitalism, the main enemy of the working class and its allies, and such a step might well be acceptable to the majority of farm workers and working farmers in the countryside. If we are right, then, the

[1] *Economic Problems*, p. 20.

formation of a single production sector in our country could be brought about at approximately the same time as the establishment of a socialist agriculture.

As Stalin indicates, however, the formation of a single production sector would not necessarily eliminate commodity production and the operation of the law of value from all spheres of productive activity in a socialist Britain. The question of foreign trade would have to be investigated before the future of commodity production could be finally decided. The point Stalin makes here is a fascinating one, with a significance reaching far beyond its present application to the rather special case of Britain. Commodity production in the Marxist sense, as we have seen, is associated with the existence of producing units which are economically "independent" of one another, and which satisfy their needs by mutually exchanging their products. But each individual country, whether capitalist or (under present conditions) socialist, is itself an "independent" producing unit *in so far as it engages in foreign trade.* The goods which a socialist Britain produced for exchange with other countries, therefore, would be commodities, and the economic relation between Britain and the countries with whom she traded would be essentially a commodity relation.

The problem of integrating the two "independent" production sectors in countries like the U.S.S.R., therefore, will have its international counterpart under world socialism in the problem of integrating the economies of the different "independent" national units which enter into trade with one another. Strictly speaking, commodity production under world socialism will disappear only when collective-farm property is raised to the level of public property in all countries like the U.S.S.R., *and* when, in addition, *world* production is controlled by a single international economic organisation. This has two important consequences. The first arises in relation to Stalin's important statement to the effect that the Marxian law concerning the role of the relations of production and the productive forces in the development of society continues to operate under socialism in the U.S.S.R., owing above all to the continued existence of collective-farm property (and therefore commodity circulation) in that country. It seems to follow that even after collective-farm property has been raised to the level of public property within each socialist country where it is necessary for this to be done, the Marxian law (in a different form) will continue to play an important part in the development of the relations between the "independent" socialist countries which exchange commodities with one another, if they have not by that time ceased to be "independent" owing to their integration into some sort of world community. The second consequence arises in





relation to Stalin's statement that only after the abolition of commodity production in the U.S.S.R. will the transition to communism in that country be possible. It follows, we think, that it will not be possible to achieve communism in any individual country to which foreign trade is important, or over the world as a whole, until world-wide economic integration has been achieved.

### *II. The Basic Economic Law of Modern Capitalism*

In the previous section, we have dealt with Stalin's amendment of the classical Marxist model of *socialism*—an amendment which was necessary, in the last analysis, owing to the fact that the classical model was formulated before the development of modern monopoly capitalism. In the present section, I shall deal with Stalin's amendment of the classical Marxist model of *capitalism*—an amendment which was necessary for precisely the same reason.

"The main features and requirements of the basic economic law of modern capitalism", says Stalin—

> "might be formulated roughly in this way: the securing of the maximum capitalist profit through the exploitation, ruin and impoverishment of the majority of the population of the given country, through the enslavement and systematic robbery of the peoples of other countries, especially backward countries, and, lastly, through wars and militarization of the national economy, which are utilized for the obtaining of the highest profits".[1]

The concept of a single "basic economic law" which defines the *purpose* to which society subordinates social production under any given social formation and the *means* adopted for the achievement of this purpose, and which in this way can be said to determine the *essence* of the particular mode of production concerned,[2] seems to be a new one. What Stalin is doing, in effect, is to describe the essential difference between capitalism and socialism, not in terms of the familiar contrast between the very different degrees to which economic planning is carried on under each system, but rather in terms of the contrast between the aims which society sets social production in each case. Economic planning is neutral in itself, a mere means to an end.[3] "Planning" of a sort is carried on even under monopoly capitalism—but hardly (as under socialism) with the aim of securing "the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society"![4] Stalin's definition of the two "basic economic laws", then, is an extremely effective device for laying bare what has now become the

[1] *Economic Problems*, pp. 43–4.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 82–7 and 42.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 46.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

really essential difference between the two systems—a difference of *basic purpose*, which necessarily arises from the difference in their economic structures.

But it is of course very much more than this. In particular, Stalin's formulation of the basic economic law of modern capitalism serves to indicate the respects in which the classical Marxist model of capitalism needs amendment in the light of the rise of monopoly capitalism. This is the aspect of the law which I now wish to consider.

The basic economic law of capitalism, Stalin says, must "determine the essence of capitalist production and the principles of capitalist profit".[1] Is the law of the average rate of profit, then, the basic economic law of modern (i.e. monopoly) capitalism? No, answers Stalin—

> "Modern capitalism, monopoly capitalism, cannot content itself with the average profit, which moreover has a tendency to decline, in view of the increasing organic composition of capital. It is not the average profit, but the maximum profit that modern monopoly capitalism demands, which it needs for more or less regular extended reproduction".[2]

In saying this, Stalin does not of course mean to deny that there is a certain sense in which the great majority of capitalists have always sought to secure the "maximum profit". It is obviously a fact that they have always tried to get *as much profit as possible in any given situation.* What Stalin is doing is to put forward a new concept—the concept of "maximum profit"—in order to draw a distinction, first, between the rate of profit which was "sufficient for capitalist development"[3] in the days before the rise of monopoly capitalism and the rate which is sufficient today; and, second, between the *methods* normally employed by the capitalists in the two periods to secure the profit necessary for this development.

In Britain in Marx's day, the degree of competition between capitalists was such that it was still possible to assume that capital was normally withdrawn from spheres with low rates of profit and transferred to others which promised a higher rate. "By means of this incessant emigration and immigration", said Marx, "in one word, by its distribution among the various spheres in accord with a rise of the rate of profit here, and its fall there, it brings about such a proportion of supply to demand that the average profit in the various spheres of production becomes the same".[4] What happened in essence during this process, according to Marx's analysis, was

[1] *Economic Problems*, p. 42. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 43. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[4] *Capital*, Vol. III (Kerr edn.), p. 230.





that the pool of surplus value created by the general body of wage-labourers was parcelled out among the capitalists in accordance with the amount of capital possessed by each.[1] The "average profit" which resulted from this competitive division of the pool was sufficient, generally speaking, for "more or less regular extended reproduction"—i.e., enough profit was available for "ploughing back" to secure an adequate rate of accumulation. Thus it was not necessary for the capitalists to adopt any "abnormal" or "extra-economic" methods of securing profits: it was enough to employ the "normal", "economic" method of exploiting wage-labour and accepting the share of surplus value which fell to one's lot as a result of the competitive process.

Under modern conditions, however, as Stalin points out, the "average profit" in this sense becomes insufficient to satisfy the needs of capitalist development. This is due partly to the fact that the average profit "has a tendency to decline, in view of the increasing organic composition of capital". But in the main it is due to the fact that the great monopolistic combines of our own times require a much larger rate of profit in order to carry on "more or less regular extended reproduction" and to protect themselves against the fierce competition of rival monopolists. The "average profit" is no longer sufficient. The monopoly capitalist therefore begins to seek what Stalin calls the *maximum* profit, as distinct from the *average* profit. In other words, he begins to use what were formerly regarded as "abnormal" or "extra-economic" methods in order to increase his profit. And this means, as Stalin puts it, that the law of surplus value put forward by Marx must be "made more concrete and developed further in adaptation to the conditions of monopoly capitalism".[2]

Marx's account of the origin of surplus value was aimed in particular against those "vulgar" economists who still continued to argue that profit was obtained by "buying cheap and selling dear". In the early days of capitalist accumulation, when production was still largely in the hands of workers owning their own means of production, it was indeed true, as Engels pointed out, that merchant capital "could only make its profit . . . out of the foreign buyers of domestic products, or the domestic buyers of foreign products".[3] Profit was in fact "profit upon alienation", and was conceived as such by economists. In later times, however, when production came to be organised more and more on a capitalist

[1] The best short account of this analysis will be found in the *Selected Correspondence* of Marx and Engels, pp. 129-33. I am abstracting here (and elsewhere in this article) from the fact that incomes other than profit—e.g. interest and rent—are paid out of this surplus value.

[2] *Economic Problems*, p. 43. [3] *Engels on "Capital"*, p. 110.

basis, and competition increased in both foreign and internal trade, the "profit upon alienation" concept became less and less plausible. Profit then gradually came to be conceived, not as something which was created in the sphere of exchange, but as something which was created in the sphere of production and merely *realised* in exchange. The source of profit began to be seen in the capacity of labourers employed on a capitalist basis to produce in a day's work more than enough to keep them going for a day. Profit became essentially the fruit of the exploitation of these wage-labourers by the capitalists. Marx's theory of surplus value represented the culmination of this line of thought. In Marx's account, the workers in each branch of production produce a surplus value over and above the value of their labour power. But the surplus value produced in each branch does not necessarily remain there. The competition of capitals ensures, as I have already mentioned, that the total surplus value produced in the whole of the economy is in effect pooled and divided up between the capitalists in proportion to the amount of capital owned by each.[1] Thus each capitalist, under competitive conditions, receives only the average rate of profit, the level of which is determined in such a way that the total profit received by all the capitalists taken together is roughly equal to the total surplus value created by all the workers.

This analysis was put forward, of course, only as a first approximation to reality. Marx was well aware of the fact that individual capitalists under certain circumstances could obtain more than this average rate of profit. For example, suppose that a manufacturer—

> "exploits a new invention before it has become general, undersells his competitors and yet sells his commodities above their individual values, that is to say, he exploits the specifically higher productive power of the labour employed by him as surplus-value".[2]

Such a manufacturer will secure what Marx calls a "surplus-profit" or "super-profit". And similarly—

> "Capitals invested in foreign trade are in a position to yield a higher rate of profit, because, in the first place, they come in competition with commodities produced in other countries with lesser facilities of production, so that an advanced country is enabled to sell its goods above their value even when it sells them cheaper than the competing countries. To the extent that the labour of the advanced countries is here exploited as a labour of a higher specific weight, the rate of profit rises, because labour

[1] See, e.g., *Capital*, Vol. III, pp. 186–7.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 279, and cf. pp. 310–11.





> which has not been paid as being of a higher quality is sold as such."[1]

Then again—

> "Capitals invested in colonies, etc., may yield a higher rate of profit for the simple reason that the rate of profit is higher there on account of the backward development, and for the added reason, that slaves, coolies, etc., permit a better exploitation of labour".[2]

And finally, the equalisation of the surplus value into average profit may meet with obstacles "in the shape of artificial or natural monopolies, particularly of monopoly in land, so that a monopoly price would be possible". But this monopoly price, Marx argued—

> "would merely transfer a portion of the profit of the other producers of commodities to the commodities with a monopoly price. A local disturbance in the distribution of the surplus-value among the various spheres of production would take place indirectly, but they would leave the boundaries of the surplus-value itself unaltered".[3]

The important thing to notice about these exceptions to the law of the average rate of profit is that they are still analysed by Marx within the broad framework of the general law of surplus value. The above-average profits are regarded as the result either of an increased exploitation of labour or of an increased share in the pool of surplus value. But when monopoly capitalism develops, when certain methods of securing profits which were formerly regarded as "abnormal" begin to become "normal", and in particular when the state machine is subjugated to the monopolies—then, as Stalin puts it, the law of surplus value becomes "too general a law".[4] For the "maximum profit" which the monopolists now begin to seek, and which now becomes "the motor of monopoly capitalism",[5] differs from the old "average profit" not only quantitatively but also (in part) qualitatively. A "hiatus" (to use Stalin's term) arises, which has to be filled.

There are two new factors in particular which help to bring about this change. In the first place, it seems to me that there are now many cases in which a part of the excess profit received by certain monopoly capitalists should properly be regarded as something like the old "profit upon alienation". For example, one of the methods which monopoly capitalism adopts to secure maximum profits, as

[1] *Capital*, Vol. III, pp. 278–9. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 279. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 1,003.
[4] *Economic Problems*, p. 43. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Stalin notes, is "the conversion of a number of independent countries into dependent countries".[1] When this happens, the monopoly capitalists usually secure for themselves certain special privileges and advantages in their trade with the dependent countries. In some cases it may be reasonable enough to say that a portion of the abnormal profits of the monopoly capitalists which result is gained at the expense of capitalists in the dependent countries. In other cases, however, particularly when the commodities which the monopoly capitalists export to the dependent countries are not already being produced there in any significant quantity, it seems more plausible to say that a part of the excess profit is in fact obtained as a result of the "systematic robbery" of the *general body of consumers* in the dependent countries.

In the second place, as Jean Duret has recently pointed out in an important article in *Cahiers Internationaux*, "the economic policy imposed by big monopoly capital leads not only to a redistribution of *income* (to the advantage of big capital and to the detriment of the masses of the people) but also to a redistribution of *wealth* and a real expropriation of certain strata of society by monopoly capital, and the incorporation in its profits of the wealth so expropriated".[2] Take, for example, the case of a state embarking upon a large-scale rearmament policy. In order to finance its expenditure on armaments—which will of course greatly increase the profits of a large section of monopoly capital—the state will probably resort both to open or disguised inflation and to increased taxation. These measures will bring about, first, a redistribution of *income*: prices will probably rise faster than wages, so that the rate of surplus value (in the original Marxist sense) rises, and the pressure of taxes on the working people will produce what Duret calls "a supplementary transfer of income".[3] But the measures may also bring about, second, some redistribution of *wealth*: inflation tends to depreciate the real value of securities yielding a fixed money income, so that small rentiers and similar sections of the community are in effect partially expropriated, and the increased taxes may be sufficiently heavy to force certain hard-pressed groups to dispose of some of their assets. Thus, as Duret says, "the maximum profit of monopoly capitalism includes the product of the expropriation and spoliation of the other strata of society. This is an element of which it is always necessary to take account, for example in order to calculate the approximate rate of surplus value. If this is not done, the results will be seriously distorted".[4]

It appears, then, that the original Marxian law of surplus value

[1] *Economic Problems*, p. 44.
[2] *Cahiers Internationaux*, No. 43, February 1953, p. 37 (my emphases).
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*





must indeed be "made more concrete and developed further in adaptation to the conditions of monopoly capitalism", since the source of the "maximum profit" which monopoly capitalism now requires is no longer solely the exploitation of the workers employed by the capitalists, but rather, as Stalin puts it, "the exploitation, ruin and impoverishment of the majority of the population of the given country", etc. Stalin's formulation of "the main features and requirements of the basic economic law of modern capitalism" is an attempt to bring all the different sources of profit together under one and the same heading.

Stalin does not deal in any detail with the further changes in the Marxian model which this new way of looking at profit may necessitate. There are two problems in particular, I think, which Marxists will have to solve. First, what happens to Marx's law of the falling tendency of the rate of profit? In Marx's original formulation of this law, the above-average profits of colonial investment, etc., appear among the "counteracting causes" which may "thwart and annul" the depressant effects upon the average rate of profit of the increasing organic composition of capital.[1] Stalin's analysis seems to me to suggest that profits of this type have now attained a status higher than that of mere "counteracting causes", and that it may no longer be possible to lay down any general law concerning secular movements in "the" rate of profit. Even if this is so, however, it remains true that any studies of the causes of the behaviour of the rate of profit in the past, or any estimates of its probable behaviour in the future, must still be largely based upon a consideration of the factors indicated by Marx—supplemented, where necessary, by a consideration of those indicated by Stalin. The exploitation of wage labour still remains, after all, the *chief* source of "maximum profit", just as Marx's analysis of the labour-capital relationship still remains the essential pre-requisite for the understanding of the "internal essence and inner form" of capitalist production.

Second, what happens to Marx's conclusion that the prices of *individual* commodities under capitalism are ultimately governed by the relative quantities of labour required to produce them? This conclusion was based on two assumptions, both reasonable enough at the time when Marx wrote—that competition was more or less free, and that the only significant source of profit was the exploitation of the workers. On these assumptions, it could be shown that the "production prices" at which individual commodities tended to sell, even though they generally diverged from values, were *ultimately* determined by the relative quantities of labour required to produce the commodities.[2] Even when the first

[1] *Capital*, Vol. III, pp. 278–9 and 272.
[2] *Ibid.*, Chapter 9.

assumption was dropped, and the existence of monopoly prices higher than production prices and values was recognised, it could still be said that "the limits imposed by the value of commodities would not be abolished thereby"[1]—provided that the second assumption remained valid. But if both assumptions are dropped, as they appear to be in Stalin's analysis, then "the limits imposed by the value of commodities" are in fact abolished. The substitution of maximum for average profit implies, I think, that the law of value no longer operates to determine individual prices in the way that it did in Marx's day. This does not mean, of course, that the law of value no longer operates at all under modern capitalism. "Wherever commodities and commodity production exist", says Stalin, "there the law of value must also exist".[2] All that it means is that it operates in a rather different way. And the science of political economy, as Marx pointed out, "consists precisely in working out *how* the law of value operates"[3] in various forms of society where commodity production exists. Here, then, is a challenge to British Marxists. Marx and Engels showed very clearly how the law of value operated in pre-capitalist social formations, and in the era of pre-monopoly capitalism. Stalin has gone a long way towards elucidating the manner in which it operates under socialism. It is up to us to throw further light on the manner in which it operates in the period of monopoly capitalism.

[1] *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 1,003. [2] *Economic Problems*, p. 23.
[3] *Letters to Kugelmann*, p. 74.



# *The People and the Monarchy*

By W. S. Adams

A Coronation . . . debauches the understandings of the people and makes them the slaves of sense and show.

HAZLITT: *The Liberal*, January, 1823.

## I

CORONATIONS are rare: in living memory there have been only three. The crowning of Queen Elizabeth, therefore, provides an appropriate occasion for a reassessment of the monarchy in the life of the British People.

Coronations are rare: in the world as a whole they are on the way to becoming extinct. Where, one can imagine a Rip Van Windsor observing, where is the Tsar of all the Russias, the Emperor of Germany, the Emperor of Austria, the King of Italy, the King of Rumania, the King of Bulgaria, etc., etc? And the answer which he would receive would be: the people would not put up with them any longer.[1]

It is against this background of reality that the British Monarchy should be considered. How has it come about that, while other thrones have fallen, Britain's survives apparently more secure than ever? What function does the monarchy now play in the life of the British people? What is its future?

## II

The tradition of the bourgeoisie was anti-monarchical. The statue of Cromwell outside Westminster Hall appropriately overlooks the scene of the Coronation of Kings and Queens. The return of Charles II, determined never to go on his travels again, was on terms; and when the Glorious Revolution of 1688 replaced James II with William and Mary, the merchant bourgeoisie with their landed allies made it clear that their acceptance and support of the Crown was of a monarchy limited after their own prescription. But until 1832 the newer industrial bourgeoisie remained a largely unsatisfied class. Meanwhile the French Revolution, interpreted by the perverse genius of Burke and distorted by the great betrayal of

[1] In some of the monarchical expulsions the People have been cheated—Franco for Alfonso; Tito for Michael; Neguib for Farouk. Only in the U.S.S.R., China and the People's Democracies is there, "government of the people, by the people, for the people". But the current of the popular will flows everywhere in the same direction.

Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth, had brought a certain consolidation of frightened property owners around the Crown, but it is from the Reform Act (not from the accession of Queen Victoria five years later) that the rehabilitation of the monarchy in its present form causally flowed.

The Chartist agitation fanned monarchical sentiment among the ruling class, and Prince Albert, acting on the advice of Lord Shaftesbury, actively wooed the workers.[1] In 1857 Disraeli wished to enlarge the prestige of the Crown, at home as well as abroad, by making Queen Victoria "Empress of India", and although the Mutiny compelled him to wait for more propitious circumstances the consummation so devoutly wished by the Queen was only postponed.[2]

In the seventies a dangerous corner was turned, leading directly to the elimination of republicanism as a 'respectable' attitude and to the beginning of the employment of modern methods of monarchical advertising.

The overthrow of Napoleon III was greeted by Joseph Chamberlain;[3] Dilke and Bradlaugh were also active; there were republican clubs in most of the large cities; and Swinburne, to whom "these Royalties" were "rust-eaten . . . worm-corroded lies", was writing fervid republican verses. By the end of the following year Radical republicanism was no longer feared by the Court, and as a political force it was never to recover.

For this transformation a conveniently timed illness of the Prince of Wales is usually given the credit. This is official nonsense. In April, 1871, the authorities had had to permit a republican demonstration in Hyde Park. At that time the Commune was still in control of Paris. The situation needed very careful handling but a month later the Commune was brutally crushed and the breeze which blew from across the Channel died away. The press was filled with bitter slanders on the brave Communards. Royalty was praised to the skies and the 'convenient'[4] illness of the Prince in November was used to whip up monarchical sentiment.

The bourgeoisie had had a nasty fright. They proceeded to close their ranks. The monarchy had long since ceased to be an obstacle to their power. Anti-monarchical sentiments, which till now had

[1] T. Rothstein, *From Chartism to Labourism*, 86.

[2] W. F. Monypenny and G. E. Buckle, *Life of Disraeli*, Vol. 2, 796.

[3] "For my part I do not feel any great horror at the idea . . . of the possible establishment of a Republic in this country." Speech at Birmingham Town Hall, September 12th, 1870. J. L. Garvin, *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, Vol. 1, 152.

[4] The Duke of Cambridge declared: "Heaven has sent this dispensation to save us." J. R. Green, the historian remarked: ". . . one remembers that all France went mad with anxiety when Lewis the Well-Beloved fell sick in his earlier days, and yet somehow or other, '89 came never the later." S. Lee, *Life of King Edward VII*, Vol. 1, 329.





lingered, disappeared. To the ruling class the monarchy—as with the other institutions which they had brought to heel—was now a symbol and fount of conservatism, the useful screen behind which the realities of power could be exercised. In the late nineteenth century, therefore, there begins the increasingly deliberate elevation of the monarchy as an aid in the protection of the *status quo*; and in that policy the emergence of Queen Victoria from her mourning was useful, as it enabled the bourgeoisie to put on the great jubilee performances of 1887 and 1897.

But what of the working class? Deserted by the Radicals after 1871, why did they fail to carry on the struggle? Their tradition was strongly republican. The Chartist leaders, Harney and Ernest Jones, were followed by Keir Hardie[1] and then the tradition was abandoned. For Ramsay MacDonald the issue did not exist, and although the cost of monarchy has continued to receive automatic official Labour criticism,[2] republicanism was already dangerously weakened by the turn of the century.[3]

There was of course the insidious erosion of the waves of monarchical propaganda:[4] there was the imperialist siren song:[5] there was the bourgeoisification of a portion of the British working class. To justify their opportunism, the leaders of the Labour Movement, the "Marxists" with the rest, evolved a most plausible excuse for ceasing the difficult policy of republican propaganda. The S.D.F., in

[1] "As a believer in republican principles I cannot see the uses of the Royal Family." Commons, May 9th, 1901.

[2] Labour Party Report, 1937, 87. "Occasion was taken to criticise the glorification of Royalty and it was urged that in future simplicity should be the order of the day." A rather milder line was taken by Mr. Attlee in connection with the present Civil List.

[3] The traditional Labour attitude of anti-monarchical sentiment was preserved by among others James Connolly (*see Socialism and Nationalism*, 196, 198–9), F. W. Jowett (see *Clarion*, June 12th, 1908), George Lansbury (see *Labour Leader*, June 23rd, 1911), Willie Gallacher (Commons Debate, December 11th, 1936). In May, 1937, Sir Stafford Cripps at Sunderland said: "Capitalism in its times of difficulty and crisis loves to call upon the workers to save their country. God, King and Country and a jolly good Coronation. That is the spirit which is rife to-day in this country. That is the reason why the Government is spending three-quarters of a million pounds on coronation festivities." This kind of speech ceased when Cripps was reconciled with the Labour Party.

[4] Cf. the memoirs of Rt. Hon. John Hodge, *Workman's Cottage to Windsor Castle*. One might expect that this leads to the climax of some important post at the Castle, but no! The book begins: "Born in an ordinary workman's cottage in the village of Muirkirk, Ayrshire in the early hours of the 29th October, 1855, I had the great honour after many years vicissitude of being invited by their Majesties, the King and Queen, to be their guest for one night at Windsor Castle. I cannot remember that even in my wildest dreams of future greatness I ever imagined an honour such as this."

[5] Cf. *Reynold's*, June 25th, 1911. "It is not that democracy has become subservient, but because monarchy has become reasonable. The King reigns not in defiance but in conformity to the popular will. The people, no longer trampled serf-like underfoot by hereditary despotism are now controlling partners, managing directors if you will in the great Imperial syndicate."

an open letter to Edward VII, on the occasion of his Coronation, stated that they would not "depose you in order to set up King Capital with his horde of greedy sycophants as President in your stead." The I.L.P. *Labour Leader*[1] also stressed that capitalism was the main enemy of the working class. "Republicanism has been superseded by the socialist movement . . . It would sooner tolerate Government by Kings and nobles than the control of national affairs by millionaires." That the writer was uneasy, however, is shown by his adding: "Yet we think there is a danger of socialists becoming too tolerant of monarchy, for we must not forget that the plutocrats are the most powerful upholders of the monarchical system."

Now, it was correct to *include* the attack on monarchy in the attack on capitalism. The present monarchy is only a part of capitalism. Destroy capitalism and monarchy will be destroyed with it. But the opportunist leadership, as might have been expected, first dropped republicanism and then proceeded to drop socialism as well. "The socialist revolution," wrote Lenin, "is not one single battle on a single front . . . It would be a fundamental mistake to suppose that the struggle for democracy can divert the proletariat from the socialist revolution or obscure or overshadow it, etc. On the contrary, just as socialism cannot be victorious unless it introduces complete democracy, so the proletariat will be unable to prepare for victory over the bourgeoisie unless it wages a many-sided, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy."[2]

But it was not only at home that the monarchy served the bourgeoisie. The imperialist era was beginning: the Empire was growing apace. Large territories were being added to Britain by colonial war and by treaties between intimidated or deceived native chiefs and the Great White Queen. The Crown was convenient to the imperialists. The adding of another source of profit to the bourgeoisie was concealed behind the chivalrous gesture of supplying another jewel for the Imperial Crown, another 'child' for the Imperial Family.

Also important as an influence in preserving the British monarchy was the attitude of Australia, Canada and the other white-settled territories. Struggling towards self-government, they preferred the Crown to some new republican constitution, which, so they feared, might be the means of keeping them subordinate to the British Government in London. The Crown to them was a

[1] July 12th, 1902.

[2] *Selected Works*. Vol. 5, 268. *Theses: The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, 1916.





revered symbol, just because to them it was only a symbol and not the reality of metropolitan tutelage.

The survival of the British monarchy, therefore, is to be attributed to a variety of coincident factors. Its relationship with the bourgeoisie had been settled by the long struggle of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—settled as the relations of the crown were not settled in Russia, in Spain, in Egypt—with the result that for the maintenance of the throne the British bourgeoisie would exert the highest arts of advertisement and salesmanship. To them the British monarchy, for whose restriction they had fought a Civil War, executed Charles I and made James II flee down Wapping Stairs disguised as a washerwoman, was now their trusted partner, junior partner. So long as it kept its proper place[1] and fulfilled its new function as a screen of respectability and a decoy of glamour, they would lend it their loyal support. In close alliance, therefore, bourgeoisie and Crown now confronted the new claimant to power, the organised working class, while alternate use was sought of Royal tours and the forces of the Crown to prevent colonial revolt.

## III

The monarchy has a triple significance in our society. It retains political authority and influence, which recent writers have tended to underestimate and misunderstand. It is the apex of the social pyramid. It has become, increasingly in the period of imperialism, a fig leaf to cover the shocking reality of exploitation; it is the source of a superstitious reverence, a manufactured mystique, which pervades and reinforces the political and social influence of the bourgeoisie.

The political authority of the monarchy consists of powers of initiative and of delay. Writers have largely ignored the latter, which can nevertheless be important, since a crisis can be delayed by royal intervention until after the summit of a popular upsurge has been passed. The constitutional Conference of 1910 could have been important in this respect, although it was abortive and the Irish conference of July, 1914,[2] played an important delaying role,

[1] This of course was the unforgivable sin of King Edward VIII. Cf. G. M. Young, "Government", in *The Character of England*, ed. Sir E. Barker. "A Sovereign who was disliked might be endured in hope of better things to come. A Sovereign who was distrusted might be the last of his line."

[2] The Conference was welcomed by the King with a speech in which he referred to the Ulster rebels as "the most responsible and sober-minded of my people." As a result the Irish members refused the King's invitation to lunch and there was Liberal and Labour criticism. Asquith, as was his constitutional duty, assumed responsibility for the speech, but it was clearly a Palace intervention.

the full effect of which was of course masked by the outbreak of war. It is this delaying power which might prove very useful to a bourgeoisie hard pressed by a revolutionary movement. Instances of initiative in recent history are the notorious telegram to Marshal Pilsudski in 1920[1] and the formation of the National Government in 1931.[2] But in all these events it is important to note that the powers were used only when and in the way it was desirable for the bourgeoisie that they should be.

The influences flowing from the position of the monarch as the apex of the social pyramid are more subtle and pervasive.[3] They form part of the general influence of traditional ceremony.[4] But in addition are those influences which derive from the specific place of the monarch as the fountain of honour and as the well-furnished[5] head of an aristocratic as well as of a royal family. The friends and companions of royalty are drawn almost exclusively from the upper classes:[6] the leisure activities of royalty are those of the upper classes.[7]

But when these factors are given their proper importance it remains true that it is the mystique of monarchy, which is the most significant feature of our times.

The monarch was venerated in ancient days. He was held in superstitious awe. But this veneration was destroyed by the great

[1] *The Times*, May 10, printed a telegram from George V to Marshal Pilsudski with good wishes for Poland's National Day. It was dated May 3 and nicely timed for the aggressive operations of the Polish forces, equipped with British munitions against the U.S.S.R., which brought the invaders into Kiev. George V, of course, was personally interested in the overthrow of the Soviet Government. Tsar Nicholas had been his cousin and he was now engaged in having a whip round to provide allowances and residences for the remaining members of the Romanov family. But the telegram was clearly part of the Government's war plot, which was defeated only by the Hands off Russia Campaign, and the threat of action by a united Labour Movement.

[2] See Harold Nicolson, *King George V*, 464.

[3] Also useful commercially; the setting of fashions, for instance. Thus Queen Alexandra started the fashion for pekingeses, Queen Elizabeth II for corgies.

[4] The ex-Radical and ex-Republican, John Morley was so overcome by the Coronation pageantry of 1911 that he remarked: "What a glorious moment to die." Fitzroy, *Memoirs*, Vol. 1, June 22nd, 1911.

[5] The incidence of taxation has substantially increased the position of the Royal Family *vis-à-vis* the remainder of the Aristocracy. The Royal Family is also 'well furnished' by reason of the private fortune, whose amount is not disclosed. It was of course aided by the personal attention of Sir Ernest Cassel, who was made K.C.M.G. (1899); K.C.V.O. (1902); Privy Councillor (1902); G.C.M.G. (1905); G.C.V.O. (1906); G.C.B. (1909).

[6] It is significant that the two important Labour Party friends of George V were the traitors, MacDonald and Thomas.

[7] There were few rivals of George V in the quantity of birds massacred. This tradition was maintained by his son, George VI.





events and the great polemics of the seventeenth century; and the revival in our own times is a deliberate and degrading cult, ever assuming more decadent forms.

Prominent in the new cult is the State Church. It renders homage and receives a spiritual rake-off, seeking to elevate itself while elevating the monarchy.[1] The mystical nature of the Coronation, akin to the Consecration of a Bishop, is stressed and the young Queen asks her Christmas broadcast audience to pray for her during the solemn act of her crowning, although of course her exercise of the powers of sovereignty is not dependent on this barbaric exhibition.

One consequence of Queen Victoria's long reign was the elevation of the Royal Family and not only of the single person of the monarch. The Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) had to wait until he was nearly 60 for the crown, but meanwhile he had played his part in the Royal charade. The moral contrast between his way of life and his mother's, so far from destroying respect for the monarchy only served to spread it more widely,[2] while it was he who started the condescending policy of inviting Labour leaders to the Royal palaces, which has made its contribution to the blunting of the fighting edge of those chosen by their fellow workers to lead them against the class enemy.

The emergence and enfranchisement of the working class produced new problems for the monarchy. Compelled to transfer its main powers to the bourgeoisie, within sight of the mingling of its royal blood with the more common variety,[3] the monarchy plotted its course in accordance with the realities of power. 'One man, one vote' might have arrived, 'ransom' according to the Chamberlain-Lloyd George formula might now be paid by the bourgeoisie (with coercion and strike-breaking as the other side of the coin), but Britain remained a class society. It was this reality and the need

[1] The rebuke of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the friends of Edward VIII is notorious. My *Edwardian Heritage*, 13, gives some striking examples of the sermons preached after the postponement of the Coronation of Edward VII. The Bishop of London neatly turned the lesson for the benefit of the lower orders: "There was needed a lesson against the growing love of comfort common amongst the poorer classes as well as amongst the rich."

[2] Wilfrid Blunt. *My Diaries*, Part 2, 320, mentions "his Philistine tolerance for other people's sins; which endear him to rich and poor from archbishops down to turf bookmakers and the man in the street."

[3] Colonel Repington, *Diaries*, Vol. 2, August 8th, 1917, records a conversation. "In the evening at Alloa we discussed the Prince of Wales's marriage to a non-royal person. H(ardinge), Mar and the Ladies M(ar) and L(ondonderry) strongly opposed it, affirming that it would ultimately mean the ruin of the monarchy, when all the shabby relatives—there are always such people—of the family honoured, claimed cousinship with the King. I thought that if King Cophetua married a beggar maid it would be immensely popular, but I was in a minority of one."

of the bourgeoisie to obscure the fact, which dictated the new guise of the monarchy.

George V begins to visit[1] the centres of the new democracy, the industrial cities and the mining valleys. A smile, a handshake, a word of good cheer, a cup of tea in a cottage; with practice the technique is perfected and the impression grows of a centre of kindliness from which the rays of a natural, *classless* friendliness strike hopefully on to the dark lives and straitened circumstances of the poor.

A kind word never comes amiss, but the cost of these is to be measured not only in the public money provided for the monarchy, but by the misleading nature of the impression. For this indeed is *vox et praeterea nihil.* On the one occasion in recent history when a monarch promised that "something would be done", nothing was done and the monarch who made it found himself removed in a matter of days and another installed in his place.[2]

To believe that there is a benign divinity, a Holy Father, who looks after you is a comforting concept until it is revealed as an illusion. To believe that in our cruel, capitalist society there is a benign Royal Family, working—so you are informed—harder than anyone else, always smiling, full of all the human virtues, particularly the virtue of doing their duty without complaint, is a very convenient belief—for the ruling class. It has become the essential glue in our crumbling society. The tremendous emission of propaganda to 'sell' this idea should not be taken as a sign of strength. Rather is it a sign of weakness. It is as true now as fifty years ago, when Keir Hardie remarked that if "the people generally are favourable to Royalty . . . that is because they do not understand Royalty or what it means to them."[3] And if they do not understand, that is because the Labour Movement has failed to teach them.

## IV

So far the monarchy has been considered largely in its relation to the people of this island. But the Queen is more than Queen of the United Kingdom and, as has already been indicated, the rehabilitation of the monarchy has been aided by other than insular influences; by the peculiar historical circumstances of the 'self-governing' Dominions.

[1] He may have had the idea from his Indian tour, 1905–6. "Our visit there (Calcutta) was most opportune as the feeling was very strong against the Government owing to the Partition of Bengal and it made them think of something else." Nicolson, *op cit.*, 87.

[2] The promise was given by Edward VIII during his visit to South Wales, November, 1936, shortly before his abdication.

[3] Commons, May 9th, 1901.





For the Empire to have held *in its present form,* the monarchy has been a necessary link. The skill of the constitutional lawyers has matched the requirements of self-interest. Now for the first time there has been promulgated the Divisibility of the Crown and it is with this new expedient that the monarchy moves forward into the second half of the twentieth century.

It may be a comfort in those midnight fears, which must sometimes assail any crowned head in our times, for the estimable young lady on our throne to realise that, if the people of the United Kingdom should have no further use for her, she might still be Queen of South Africa (with perhaps the Central African Federation thrown in). But not, for some reason, Defender of the Faith. The recommendation of Pakistan as a place of residence is less agreeable. Not only would Elizabeth Windsor not be Defender of the Faith there: she is not Queen of Pakistan, although recognized as Queen of the United Kingdom. In India not even that title is vouchsafed. She is only Head of the Commonwealth.

The present position of the Crown, therefore, although it may delight Mr. Patrick Gordon Walker in his restatements of Socialism,[1] represents quite precisely the present uneasy association of the British Commonwealth under the aegis of the Crown. King George V proceeded from his crowning in Westminster Abbey to the great Coronation Durbar at Delhi. "Those who knew him best," writes his personal biographer, " . . . consider that that tremendous experience, the magnificent ceremonial among those millions of his subjects, many of whom felt for him and hailed him almost as a god, convinced him finally and for his life of the majesty of his office."[2] This experience will not be granted to the present Queen, although certainly the Earl Marshal and his troupe have done their best to supply a home-made substitute.

## V

But when stress has been laid and rightly laid on the contribution of the "other realms and territories" to the present position of the monarchy, it remains true that it is at home in the United Kingdom that the immediate impact of the Crown is felt and on people there that the main responsibility lies for seeing the institution clearly and for breaking free from the hypnotic effects of the doses of propaganda which bemuse and besot.

The language of the school girl 'crush' and of the cheap novelette is used to inflate the creatures of flesh and blood who occupy and surround the throne. No fawning phrase is considered too degrad-

[1] Commons, March 3rd, 1953.

[2] John Gore, *King George V*, 264.

ing, no form of sycophantic sentimentalism is neglected.[1] The perfection of the Royal Family is repeated with the deadly reiteration of an advertisement. All this has its effect on people and it is wrong to think that it is not very widely successful.

And now this greatest of sales campaigns blazes into the dazzling set-piece of the Coronation. All the issues which most nearly concern the people are in danger of being obscured—the rising cost of living and the cuts in the social services; the wars in Korea, in Malaya and in Kenya; the drive towards a third world war.

It is here that the immediate peril of monarchical adulation lies, and only the truth can set the people free.

[1] On the higher level of pedigree see the remarkable discovery of the Assistant-Editor of *Debrett*, 1952 edition. The Queen and Shakespeare are of common lineage! Those of us who have been wondering whence the literary masterpieces of the new Elizabethan age are to come from need wonder no longer.



# *"The Holy War" and "The Pilgrim's Progress"*

By Alick West

## I

THIS year of grace and coronation inaugurates, we are told by Mr. A. L. Rowse, the second Elizabethan age. Within fifty years of the close of the first—*absit omen*, Mr. Rowse must surely pray—England was a commonwealth, not in to-day's debased meaning of the word, but a true commonwealth, a republic.

Though the Commonwealth lasted barely a decade, its memory endured. Twenty-two years after the Restoration a book was published, called *The Holy War*. It is an allegory of the war of the people against the forces of the crown, and its author was a tinker, John Bunyan.

This is the outline of the story.

In the gallant country of Universe there is "a fair and delicate town, a corporation called Mansoul". It was fortified, and its walls so strong that they could never be broken down unless the inhabitants consented:

> "There was not a rascal, rogue, or traitorous person then within its walls; they were all true men, and fast joined together; and this, you know, is a great matter."

But it is captured by the Diabolonians, who kill its Captain Resistance, depose the mayor and council, and set up their own rule, with the support of the richer citizens. Emanuel comes to its rescue, and fighting breaks out within the town between those who wish to remain under the rule of Diabolus and those who wish to expel him as a foreign tyrant. Emanuel takes the town by storm; all the Diabolonians are dismissed from their offices, and the leaders tried by jury and executed. Emanuel, however, warns the people that Diabolus, though defeated and fled, will not give up the struggle; rather will his hatred of Mansoul become more fierce. Nor will he be without friends in Mansoul; for not all the Diabolonians have been exterminated, and those within the city will conspire with those outside to enslave it again. Therefore the people must not relax, nor must they think that because Emanuel has appointed captains for their defence all dangers are over; the captains can do nothing unless the people themselves "strengthen them and encourage them". Emanuel's warning is justified. A "tattling Diabolonian gentleman", named Mr. Carnal-Security, persuades the people that there is no longer need of vigilance. Receiving no support from the people, the captains grow sick and feeble; and the Diabolonians within the town prepare to put all the Mansoulians to

the sword and to open the gates to the forces of Diabolus. But not all the people have forgotten Emanuel's warning; and Mr. Prywell, "a great lover of the people of Mansoul", overhears the Diabolonians at a secret meeting boasting that the town will soon be theirs. He immediately informs the mayor, and a meeting of the town is summoned; the captains, strengthened like "so many Samsons" by the energy of the people, are instructed to organize the defences; the Diabolonians within the town are ruthlessly hunted out. Diabolus opens his assault; but not being so assisted as he had hoped by treachery from within, he succeeds only in taking part of Mansoul, and resistance continues in the heart of the town. Now that the people have shown their resolution, Emanuel sends word that he is coming to their help. Led by Captain Experience fighting upon his crutches, the Mansoulians renew the attack; the Diabolonians, caught between the armies of Mansoul and of Emanuel, are routed, and their dead lie spread upon the ground, "as one would spread dung upon the land". Emanuel enters the town, Mansoul is free.

Such is the bare plot, of which Mr. York Tindall, in his book *John Bunyan Mechanick Preacher*, suggests the following interpretation:

> "The first reign of Diabolus is the government of Charles I; the first appearance of Emanuel is the rule of the saints from 1649 to 1653; the decline of the town is the defection of Cromwell; and the return of Diabolus is the Restoration. The second kingdom of Emanuel becomes the real Fifth Monarchy of which the interregnum rule of the saints had been a foretaste."

Whether Bunyan intended so close a correspondence with contemporary events remains, as Mr. Tindall says, uncertain. There is, however, no doubt that it is the general course of the Revolution and the Restoration that Bunyan is relating; and though writing at a time of reaction, he is describing it from the standpoint of the mechanic preachers and their congregations. The forces of the monarchy are symbolized by the forces of the Devil; the traitorous friends of Diabolus within Mansoul belong to the nobility and gentry, and are great freeholders. Those who love Mansoul best and show most energy and initiative in its defence come from the ordinary people, like Mr. Desires-Awake, who "dwelt in a very mean cottage". Just as the state, both before and after the Restoration, endeavoured to suppress the preaching of the new Jerusalem and instituted a system of spies and informers, so Diabolus ordered spies to report on all those who "prated" of the coming of Emanuel. Just as the bourgeoisie were willing in their fear of the people to come to terms with feudal reaction both at home and abroad, so the Diabolonians call





in foreign mercenaries against the town which they profess to love, and one of the leaders of the Bloodmen whom they throw into the last desperate battle is Captain Pope. And when Bunyan made Diabolus new-model the corporation of Mansoul, he was relating the history of Bedford: towards the end of 1681, not long before *The Holy War* was published, the Deputy-Recorder of Bedford was accused before the Council at Whitehall of being a supporter of Bunyan's dissenting congregation and later dismissed from his post. In 1683 the Bedford Corporation was packed with the King's supporters, who surrendered their town charter and gave up the control of the municipality to the crown.

Nor is it only in the details reflecting contemporary events that the significance of the book lies, but above all in its presentation of a community possessing and losing and regaining its liberty. We see first a society of "true men, and fast joined together; and this, you know, is a great matter;" then this free people become the subjects of an alien state, and are divided into those who support this tyranny and those who remember their former liberty; then there is the joy of liberation, the losing of freedom again by lack of vigilance against a defeated but still determined enemy, again the division of the community into true men and traitors, the revival of courage and resistance through the action of the people, the suppression of their enemies by the people's courts of justice, and the winning of freedom again. The book is written with a political and artistic understanding that makes the community real, both when it is torn by divisions and "became as a ball tossed, and as a rolling thing before the whirlwind", and when it is jubilant in liberty.

On one essential point Bunyan as good as abandons Christian theology. He makes but the most brief and passing reference to the redemption of mankind by the death of Christ upon the cross; by the action of the story he shows the salvation of mankind as won by their own struggle, with the help of Emanuel, against an alien state power.

## II

Bunyan's life and work show that the defeat of the Levellers in 1649 was not the end of the popular forces in the English Revolution.

Four years after that defeat, when he was a young man of twenty-five, Bunyan joined the dissenting congregation of Bedford. He became a mechanic preacher just when the government was trying to suppress mechanic preachers (Cromwell stated in Parliament on September 4th 1654: "This government . . . hath endeavoured to

put a stop to that heady way . . . of every man making himself a minister and a preacher"). He did so with his eyes open—"Before I came to prison, I saw what was a-coming."

He was arrested on November 12, 1660. He had gone to speak at a small meeting to be held at a farm not far from Bedford. When he arrived, he learned that there was an order out for his arrest, and the farmer—

> "questioned whether we had best have our meeting or not; . . . to whom I said, no, by no means, I will not stir, neither will I have the meeting dismissed for this."

He was brought up for trial about seven weeks later on the charge—

> That John Bunyan, of the town of Bedford, labourer . . . hath . . . devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service, and is a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles. . . .

The judges were Sir John Kelynge, Sir Henry Chester, Sir George Blundell, Sir Wm. Beecher, and Thomas Snagg, afterwards high sheriff—"not a promising bench," as Bunyan's biographer remarked. Sir John Kelynge in particular had shown his conception of justice by fining a jury a hundred marks apiece for acquitting poor people who had met for worship without prayer books.

When the charge was read to him, Bunyan answered that he was "a common frequenter of the church of God. And was also, by grace, a member with the people over whom Christ is the head." When Sir John Kelynge asked him:

> "Do you come to church, you know what I mean; to the parish church, to hear Divine service?"

Bunyan replied that he did not, "Because I did not find it commanded by the Word of God."

> "He said, We were commanded to pray.
> "I said, But not by the Common Prayer Book. . . .
> "But, says Justice Keelin, what have you against the Common Prayer Book?
> "I said, Sir, if you will hear me, I shall lay down my reasons against it.
> "One of them said, He will do harm; let him speak no further. Justice Keelin said, No, no, never fear him, we are better established than so; he can do no harm; we know the Common Prayer Book hath been ever since the apostles' time. . . ."





Such were Bunyan's judges—so boorishly ignorant that they did not know their Common Prayer Book had been compiled under one of their own kings.

Bunyan was sentenced and taken to Bedford Gaol, where he remained twelve years, and was later imprisoned a second time. When offered his liberty if he would stop preaching, he declared that he would rather stay in prison "even till the moss shall grow on mine eyebrows".

What kind of sermon Bunyan might have preached, and why the landlords had him arrested before he could preach it, may be judged from his pamphlet *A Few Sighs from Hell*, written in 1658, which takes as its theme the story of Dives and Lazarus, the rich man and the beggar.

He attacks the priests of the established Anglican church because they sell religion.

> "How many souls hath Bonner to answer for, think you, and several filthy blind priests? How many souls have they been the means of destroying by their ignorance and corrupt doctrine? Preaching, that was no better for their souls than ratsbane to the body, for filthy lucre's sake. (O ye priests, this word is for you.) . . . Will it not grieve thee to see thy whole parish come bellowing after thee to hell, crying out, This we may thank thee for, this is long of thee, thou didst not teach us the truth; thou didst lead us away with fables, thou wast afraid to tell us of our sins, lest we should not put meat fast enough in thy mouth."

He attacks the rich for their pursuit of gain:

> "they are still striving, by hook and by crook, as we say, by swearing, lying, cozening, stealing, covetousness, extortion, oppression, forgery, bribery, flattery, or any other way to get more, though they get together with these, death, wrath, damnation, hell, the devil, and all the plagues that God can pour upon them."

He attacks the rich because they persecute "the poor saints of God" and try to break up their religious organization:

> "They will build houses for their dogs, when the saints must be glad to wander, and lodge in dens and caves of the earth, He. xi. 38, and if they be in any of their houses for the hire, they will warn them out or eject them, or pull down the house over their heads, rather than not rid themselves of such tenants . . . O what red lines will those be against all those rich ungodly landlords, that so keep under their poor tenants that they dare not

go out to hear the word, for fear their rent should be raised, or they turned out of their houses!"

It was in defiance of "those rich ungodly landlords" that Bunyan and his fellow dissenters met together—artisans, like Bunyan himself, and agricultural labourers working fourteen hours a day for an average wage, Bunyan says, of 4*s*. a week, though according to the reckoning even of a contemporary Chief Justice "a man and wife with four children could not maintain themselves in meat, drink, clothing and house rent under ten shillings a week". They met illegally. They did not meet in the "steeple houses", as the parish churches were called; for "those old chyming chimneys of the druncken whore of Babylon", in Samuel Chidley's phrase, were the churches of the landlords. Like the poor people, for acquitting whom Sir John Kelynge had fined the jury, they used no Common Prayer Book; for where in that "mess of pottage", as it was popularly called at that time,[1] was there one sentence that called upon "the poor saints of God" to constitute themselves, in Bunyan's phrase, "the body public in Christ"?

But that was their aim. Religion and the salvation of their souls meant for Bunyan and his companions to strengthen one another in the conviction that they were "the people over whom Christ is the head", and to stand firm against oppression by the state and church of the rich. The holy spirit was not yet for them the spirit of quietism; it was still the spirit in which one of the Fifth Monarchy Men, John Rogers, accused Cromwell that he had "a worldly interest which God would destroy." "Ha! And do you judge me?" Cromwell asked. Rogers replied:

> "Yea, by the word of the Lord, in the majesty, might, strength, power, vigour, life, and authority of the Holy Ghost I can, do, and dare judge you and your actions."

Bunyan himself numbered among his acquaintances some of the leading Fifth Monarchy Men, who believed, even after the Restoration, that within the next few years, with the help of King Jesus, the body public in Christ would become the body public in real power. Not long before his death in 1688 Bunyan wrote these words:

> "God will have his primitive church state set up in the world, (even where Antichrist has set up his;) wherefore, in order to this, Antichrist must be pulled down, down stick and stone; and then they that live to see it, will behold the new Jerusalem come down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband."

[1] See Jack Lindsay, *John Bunyan*, pp. 70 ff. I am greatly indebted to this book.





## III

In prison Bunyan began *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come.*

Its essential quality is an unresting consciousness that there can be no progress without conflict. Bunyan's writing is one with his life, and into it has gone his experience of the war of the rich against the poor who "go with flail and rake". He knew the cunning and violence by which the rulers of the poor would try to bribe, shame, intimidate, and crush them. He knew how variously could be disguised that hatred in the rich for the brotherhood of man that the community of Christ was striving to realize on earth. Therefore in his writing he carries the conflict to the point where the disguise of the enemy is stripped off, so that he and his companions may know clearly who is their enemy and what is their own goal, and strengthen themselves with confidence that their triumph is certain.

Bunyan sets immediately before our eyes—

> "a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back."

All those for whom Bunyan wrote would recognize in this man their own condition; and they would recognize the friends of Dives who try to stop him when he runs across the plain, crying "Life! life! eternal life!"

First comes the fatherly warning of Mr. Worldly Wiseman:

> "Hear me, I am older than thou; thou art like to meet with, in the way which thou goest, wearisomeness, painfulness, hunger, perils, nakedness, sword, lions, dragons, darkness, and, in a word, death, and what not! These things are certainly true, having been confirmed by many testimonies."

But Christian replies:

> "Why, Sir, this burden upon my back is more terrible to me than are all these things which you have mentioned."

Mr. Worldly Wiseman then repeats the common gibe that Christian must be crazy.

> ". . . it is happened unto thee as to other weak men, who, meddling with things too high for them, do suddenly fall into thy distractions . . ."

But neither does this weaken Christian's resolve, for he replies:

"I know what I would obtain; it is ease for my heavy burden."

Then Mr. Worldly Wiseman holds out to Christian the bait of respectability:

"Why, in yonder village—the village is named Morality—there dwells a gentleman whose name is Legality, a very judicious man, and a man of a very good name, that has skill to help men off with such burdens as thine are from their shoulders: . . . there, I say, thou mayest be eased of thy burden; and if thou art not minded to go back to thy former habitation, as, indeed, I would not wish thee, thou mayest send for thy wife and children to thee to this village, where there are houses now standing empty, one of which thou mayest have at reasonable rates; provision is there also cheap and good; and that which will make thy life the more happy is, to be sure, there thou shalt live by honest neighbours, in credit and good fashion."

The same means are employed to deter another pilgrim, Faithful. He is told by Discontent as he is entering the Valley of Humility that—

"all my friends, as Pride, Arrogancy, Self-conceit, Worldly-glory . . . would be very much offended, if I made such a fool of myself as to wade through this valley . . ."

Then he is assaulted by bold-faced Shame:

"*Christian.* Why, what did he say to you?

"*Faithful.* What! why, he objected against religion itself; he said it was a pitiful, low, sneaking business, for a man to mind religion; . . . He objected also, that but few of the mighty, rich, or wise, were ever of my opinion; . . . He, moreover, objected the base and low estate and condition of those that were chiefly the pilgrims of the times in which they lived: . . . He said, also, that religion made a man grow strange to the great, because of a few vices, which he called by finer names; and made him own and respect the base, because of the same religious fraternity. And is not this, said he, a *shame*?"

It is part of the realism of the book that both Christian and Faithful are momentarily weakened by the promises and threats of respectable morality. But as they advance, they gain firmness; and when they meet another of these moralists, Mr. By-Ends, it is they who attack.

Mr. By-Ends is, as Professor Talon remarks, "a bourgeois of short standing."





"I am become a gentleman of good quality, yet my great-grandfather was but a waterman, looking one way and rowing another, and I got most of my estate by the same occupation."

He also is going on pilgrimage, though he admits that he somewhat differs in religion from those of the stricter sort—

"yet but in two small points: first, we never strive against wind and tide; secondly, we are always most zealous when religion goes in his silver slippers; we love much to walk with him in the street, if the sun shines, and the people applaud him."

Christian replies:

"You must own religion in his rags, as well as when in his silver slippers; and stand by him, too, when bound in irons, as well as when he walketh the streets with applause."

Not liking such talk, Mr. By-Ends falls back, and waits for three old friends, Mr. Hold-the-world, Mr. Money-love, and Mr. Save-all; and to divert their minds "from things that are bad" he propounds the question whether a minister or a tradesman, in order to get "the good blessings of this life", may become "extraordinarily zealous in some points of religion that he meddled not with before". Whether he be minister or tradesman, they all agree that of course he may.

"For why—

"1. To become religious is a virtue, by what means soever a man becomes so.

"2. Nor is it unlawful to get a rich wife, or more custom to my shop.

"3. Besides, the man that gets these by becoming religious, gets that which is good, of them that are good, by becoming good himself; so then here is a good wife, and good customers, and good gain, and all these by becoming religious, which is good; therefore, to become religious, to get all these, is a good and profitable design."

From the run of the sentence one can hear how pleased they are with themselves—so pleased that with characteristic unawareness of their own baseness and of the stature of their opponents they assault Christian and Hopeful with this unanswerable proof that one may become religious for profit. But Christian answers:

"If it be unlawful to follow Christ for loaves, . . . how much more abominable is it to make of him and religion a stalking-horse, to get and enjoy the world!"

At this answer, "there was a great silence among them".

The pilgrims know what they stand for; when they meet an enemy, though they may for a moment be deceived or uncertain, yet with one another's help they get at the root of the enmity. When Mr. Talkative professes that nothing is so pleasant or profitable as to talk of the things of God, they confront him with the emptiness of his mere talk: saying and doing—

> "are as diverse as are the soul and the body; for as the body without the soul is but a dead carcass, so saying, if it be alone, is but a dead carcass also . . ."

Finding that with the pilgrims words alone do not count, Mr. Talkative reveals his true self, and "whets his tongue" like Dives against Lazarus:

> "I cannot but conclude you are some peevish or melancholy man, not fit to be discoursed with; and so adieu."

In the encounters between the pilgrims and their enemies, Bunyan drives the opposition onwards to the point of open and fundamental antagonism, not only in word but in action. Its heights are Christian's victory over Apollyon, and the trial of the pilgrims in Vanity Fair.

Before his fight with the dragon Apollyon, Christian had had a brief rest on his pilgrimage. He was taken by three grave and beautiful damsels to the top of a hill, from which he could see in the distance the Delectable Mountains of the land of Emanuel;

> "and it is as common, said they, as this hill is, to and for all the pilgrims."

But Apollyon's land is his private property. As soon as he has learned that Christian comes from the city of Destruction, Apollyon's first words to him are:

> "By this I perceive thou art one of my subjects, for all that country is mine, and I am the prince and god of it."

The dragon (the contemporary political meaning of the image is illustrated by Winstanley: "Truly most Laws are but to enslave the Poor to the Rich and so they uphold the Conquest and are Laws of the great Red Dragons"), having asserted his ownership over lands and men, softens his tone; if Christian will return, he promises him as wages "what our country will afford". Then, like Mr. Worldly Wiseman, he warns Christian of the dangers of his pilgrimage, that transgressors against the dragon's laws are always punished, that





their God never helps them, least of all Christian, who in being tempted by Mr. Worldly Wiseman's promises of easy and legal salvation has already been unfaithful to his God;

> "and when thou talkest of thy journey, and of what thou hast heard and seen, thou art inwardly desirous of vain-glory in all that thou sayest and doest."

It is an old trick to use a little truth against an honest man, but Christian turns the truth against Apollyon:

> "All this is true, and much more which thou hast left out; but the Prince whom I serve and honour is merciful, and ready to forgive; but, besides, these infirmities possessed me in thy country, for there I sucked them in . . ."

As throughout *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the courage of the pilgrims forces their enemies to show their true purpose:

> "*Apollyon.* Then Apollyon broke out into a grievous rage, saying, I am an enemy to this Prince; I hate his person, his laws, and people; I am come out on purpose to withstand thee.
>
> "*Christian.* Apollyon, beware what you do; for I am in the king's highway, the way of holiness; therefore take heed to yourself.
>
> "*Apollyon.* Then Apollyon straddled quite over the whole breadth of the way, and said, I am void of fear in this matter: prepare thyself to die; for I swear by my infernal den, that thou shalt go no further; here will I spill thy soul."

The power of this challenge is matched by Christian's grim resolution.

> "I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword; then, indeed, he did smile, and look upward; but it was the dreadfulest sight that ever I saw."

Then he went on his way again, with his drawn sword ready in his hand.

The arrest and trial of Christian and Faithful in Vanity Fair is the summary of Bunyan's experience.

In Vanity Fair, money rules, and everything is for sale—

> "houses, lands, trades, places, honours, preferments, titles, countries, kingdoms, lusts, pleasures, and delights of all sorts, as whores, bawds, wives, husbands, children, masters, servants, lives, bodies, souls, silver, gold, pearls, precious stones, and what not."

In this heap of commodities no difference is made between souls and silver. If Vanity Fair itself is a realistic description of a contemporary England where "filthy priests" valued silver above souls, the trial of the pilgrims is a no less realistic description of the rich men's justice which Bunyan knew from his own trial. They are brought before the court "in order to their condemnation"—decided upon before their trial begins. They are arraigned "before their enemies", and three suborned witnesses give evidence. On the instructions of the judge, the packed jury find Faithful guilty of causing a hubbub in the Fair because he refused to look at the traders' wares, saying, "We buy the truth". He is sentenced to death by burning at the stake. Thus Christian loses his companion; but Hopeful, convinced of the truth of the pilgrims' cause by their brave bearing, takes his place.

> "Thus one died to bear testimony to the truth, and another rises out of his ashes."

## IV

The Celestial City that is the end of the pilgrimage is not the heaven of the "steeple house". For it is won in a struggle in which the pilgrims must rely on their own courage and intelligence and on their mutual help. It is his own resolute spirit that carries Christian on through the Valley of the Shadow of Death; it is from a human companion that he gains the strength to go on living when Despair tempts him to suicide. The pilgrims never once pray to God, nor indulge in religious practices of any kind; and the only reference to churches or priests is the mention of Mr. By-Ends' kinsman, Parson Two-tongues (this omission of organized state religion prompted a contemporary to write another *Pilgrim's Progress*, in which this slight to the church was repaired).

Bunyan's heaven belongs to the same kind of popular imagination as his figure of the dragon, Apollyon. The Celestial City is not remote but familiar. When the pilgrims, accompanied by the trumpeters, reach its walls and "some looked from above over the gate, to wit, Enoch, Moses, and Elijah, &c.," these patriarchs and prophets are like ordinary people leaning out to watch a demonstration. And doubtless to the anger of Bunyan's improver, there is in the Celestial City no God. There is a King; and the tone of the word is that in which the mechanics and their preachers spoke of King Jesus, not that in which the rich spoke of King Charles. The Celestial City is Bunyan's vision of what he believed some would live to see—





> "the new Jerusalem come down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband."

And though a knowledge of the contemporary belief in a new Jerusalem on earth helps in the understanding of Bunyan's meaning, yet even without such knowledge the quality of Bunyan's style itself carries his energy and that of the movement of which he was part. In his instructions for the censuring of literature, issued shortly after the restoration of Charles II, Roger L'Estrange called particularly for the suppression of the writings of the "great Masters of the Popular Stile" because they "strike home to the Capacity and Humour of the Multitude". Bunyan was such a master. He follows his own counsel:

> "Words easy to be understood do often hit the mark, when high and learned ones do only pierce the air. He also that speaks to the weakest, may make the learned understand him; when he that striveth to be high, is not only for the most part understood but of a sort, but also many times is neither understood by them nor by himself."

Because Bunyan spoke to the poor, as one of themselves, to strengthen them in their struggle against the rich and against their own weaknesses, his style is marked not only by the simplicity, which is never poverty, of popular speech; it also has its rhythms, its colloquialisms, and its richness of imagery. Bunyan expresses his general and abstract ideas through metaphors from the daily experience and activity of his hearers, as when he says of a man whose conscience has grown hard, that he—

> "will lie like the smith's dog at the foot of the anvil, though the fire-sparks fly in his face";

or when he says:

> "It is the devil and sin that carry away the cart loads, while Christ and his ministers come after a gleaning."

That in his form of expression Bunyan shares the manner of speaking and thinking of the poor mechanics and labourers is an essential part of the content of what he says. Because in the last quotation the image identifies the devil with his listeners' landlord and Christ with themselves, this is a different Christ than that of the Common Prayer Book.

That Bible on which dissenters at their trials were commanded (and many refused) to take the oath, Bunyan changes through the popular style in which he re-tells, for example, the beheading of John the Baptist:

"Here is sudden work for sufferers; here is no intimation beforehand. The executioner comes to John; now, whether he was at dinner, or asleep, or whatever he was about, the bloody man bolts in upon him, and the first word he salutes him with is, Sir, strip, lay down your neck, for I am come to take away your head. But hold, stay; wherefore? pray let me commit my soul to God. No. I must not stay; I am in haste: slap, says his sword, and off falls the good man's head. This is sudden work."

From the story of Lazarus no priest in parish church ever drew such a conclusion as the last words of this passage:

"And do not let the thoughts of the rareness of the place make thee say in thy heart, This is too good for me; for I tell thee, heaven is prepared for whosoever will accept of it . . . Consider, therefore, that as base as thou have got thither; thither went scrubbed, beggarly Lazarus, &c. Nay, it is prepared for the poor: 'hearken my beloved brethren,' saith James, *take notice of it*, 'Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom?' Ja. ii. 5. Therefore take heart and RUN, man."

"Therefore take heart and RUN, man." Because throughout *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come* Bunyan is urging the poor to be bold and win the new Jerusalem, and because he exposes the tricks, threats, and violence by which the rich will try to stop them, Bunyan's world which is to come is different from the heaven of the bourgeois and feudal church. It is not so much the image of the unreal as of the not yet real.

Bunyan and the dissenters did not know how to make it real. Mansoul cannot be liberated without the help of Emanuel, and the pilgrims enter a Celestial City which they have not built. Their religion is for the dissenters both a spur and a compensation for political powerlessness. But however strong the enemy, Bunyan had burning faith in the greater strength of the English people. His work lives because, inspired by that faith, he sounds the people's call against the rich and against the crown, and the people's unvanquishable hope in a new Jerusalem—

"In England's green and pleasant land."



# Reviews

## A. J. TOYNBEE'S REITH LECTURES

PROFESSOR A. J. TOYNBEE is a significant person for two reasons. First, his position as Director of Studies at the Royal Institute of International Affairs means that he may be regarded as an academic spokesman of Britain's rulers. The influence of the Foreign Office in the "slanting" of information about foreign affairs through the press is well known; the Royal Institute and Professor Toynbee are media for the propagation of the same official general line at a more sophisticated level. Second, Toynbee's *Study of History* is regarded by many people, and especially by university teachers and students, as containing great wisdom issued from a superior mind which takes into its ken the whole sweep of human experience. How could a man who is as much at home with the ancient Assyrians as with the Ottoman Turks be moved by the immediate short term political needs of what he must consider to be an ephemeral ruling class of an almost extinct civilisation? Such a question must be asked by many a bemused reader of the *Study of History*, who will answer in the negative, and assume with the editor of the *Times*, that Toynbee views the world *sub specie æternitatis*.

The B.B.C. Reith lectures for 1952,[1] containing an abbreviated treatment of matter in forthcoming volumes of the *Study of History*, convey a number of ideas which, in spite of a preliminary crying of *mea culpa, mea culpa*, seem to be intended to justify current Anglo-American (or simply American) politics. The ideas are presented in historical form, for an examination is made of the impact of the "West" on other parts of the world, and the series finishes with an attempt to solve the resultant dilemma by means of a historical analogy. Toynbee's ideas, therefore, may be examined not merely in terms of their contemporary political logic, but also in terms of the validity of the arguments drawn from history.

A study of Toynbee's historical method in these lectures reveals an amazing tailoring of historical facts in order to fit an argument. Some examples of this tailoring are worth considering.

In the first lecture, devoted to the relations between Russia and the "West", Toynbee stresses the amount of suffering that the "West" has inflicted on Russia by its aggression. A generous appreciation of an opponent's point of view? No, for the presentation of this argument is a way of drawing attention to Toynbee's favourite thesis that throughout history the "West"—meaning Western Europe and America—and Russia have been exclusive and antagonistic civilisations. Yet serious historical studies do not bear out this thesis. They demonstrate

[1] *The World and the West*, Oxford University Press, 1953, 7*s*. 6*d*.

the great similarities between the evolution of Kiev Rus and medieval Western Europe, their points of contact, their common debt to Byzantium; and in spite of the break of the Tartar invasions, the considerable economic, cultural and political relations, from the 16th century onwards, between Muscovite Russia and the western countries. Toynbee's thesis is, of course, the reflection in historical theory of the contemporary effort in the world of N.A.T.O. to justify and promote hostility to the U.S.S.R. But an additional reason exists, within the terms of Toynbee's own theory, why Russia can be presented as a world apart. Nowhere in these lectures is capitalism recognised as a stage in mankind's social development. For Toynbee, therefore, Russian history since Peter the Great can be described in terms of the adoption of a device of western origin which he calls "technology". Russian history is thus simplified, and falsified, just as the conflict between capitalism and socialism today is falsified as the conflict between the "West" and the world.

What are the facts? Capitalism grew up in Russia as a natural economic development, though of course it was influenced by the more advanced capitalism of Western Europe, culturally as well as economically. Russian capitalism on the eve of the Revolution was at the same time exploited by western capitalism as well as being the joint exploiter with western capitalism of colonial areas within the Russian state frontiers. The Russian working class inevitably grew with Russian capitalism. It adopted Marxism because, in spite of its small size compared with the whole population, it was concentrated in an industry which in many ways operated in larger units and was technically more advanced than that of the West; and because its sharp political experience of the class struggle taught it that Marxism was the only socialist theory which corresponded to the facts and could equip a revolutionary leadership for its tasks.

Such matters are not unknown to historians. They are the facts without which we cannot understand Russian history. But Toynbee ignores them. Instead he uses statements without objective validity, such as that communism is a western heresy. The only thing that such a statement tells us is that Toynbee regards western capitalism as orthodoxy. But there is not only mystification. Embarrassing facts are omitted. Let us give an example. In describing the impact of the "West" on Russia, Toynbee lists the invasions that Russia has suffered. A list of dates is given, but it is a deceitful list. For it omits a date crucial in the relations between Russia and the western powers. It omits 1918, the date when the western powers began to invade the Russian lands, in alliance with counter-revolution, and tried to strangle the world's first socialist state at birth.

Since Toynbee is regarded as an authority on history, a reference to other dubious statements about historical events should be made. To present the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century geographical discoveries as





the western retort to the Turkish conquest of Eastern Orthodox Christendom (p. 21) is so superficial that one would hardly expect it in a school text-book. No hint of deep economic and social causes, for that would spoil the slickness of the argument. What can any serious historian make of the statement that the Indian land-revenue organisation persisted over centuries "because it had become an Indian habit" (p. 35)? Or that the present governments of India and Pakistan are conducted as Great Britain's government has been since 1688 (p. 36)? Or that the industrial revolution was due to the diversion of capital from religion to technology, as a result of disillusion in the destruction caused by religious fanaticism (p. 60)? But above all, when we are so often rightly warned against the misapplication of historical parallels, what can we think of the final lecture? Here the spiritual vacuum of the late Roman Empire is compared with that of the modern West. The Graeco-Roman military conquest of the world was answered by the world taking its conqueror captive through the victory of the Christian religion. The next, unwritten, chapter in the history of the modern world, says Toynbee, can be discerned by examining the fully unrolled scroll of ancient history. And so we are to await the second coming of religion. But could any comparison be more superficial? The only features common to the two situations which Toynbee can present are the facts of conquest, revolt against the conquerors and the spiritual malaise which rots the dominant state from within. Vast differences in social structure, cultural level, productive techniques, processes of thought, scientific knowledge, not to speak of political developments are omitted.

What is the reason for all this bad history? Western civilisation as a concept, it must be admitted, has struck a bad patch. The gushing wells of propaganda, so productive five or six years ago, have almost dried up. The fact is that many people have seen through the pretence, even when they have not themselves arrived at any fundamentally different ideas. Western civilisation has shown itself in practice to be a matter of armies, napalm and atom bombers, high taxation, hard work, military conscription and death. The freedom for which these sacrifices was to be made is not conspicuous. The menace from the East has not materialised, but the war against colonial peoples has extended.

Toynbee's lectures are the reaction to this new phase. They offer a confession that the western mission has had its seamy side. They display contrition, an apparent rejection of complacency. They constitute a sort of apology to the colonial peoples. But is not all this simply a tactical shift in order more successfully to sell the Western mission? Compliments are bestowed on "revolutionary" Turkey, on Pakistan and on India, but chiefly as an accompaniment to a warning against the Communist solution to the agrarian problem. The attitude of apology does not persist after the first lecture. The facts of western aggression are dissolved into a mist of words about the export of technology.

Impermissible analogies from natural science are used to give an air of precision to the argument that only the technical and not the ideological elements of exported cultures take root abroad. Soon, the "West's" responsibility for aggression is overshadowed by the "world's" responsibility for adopting only such unsuitable products of western culture as technology, nationalism and communism.

What lessons does Toynbee try to teach? First, implicit rather than explicit throughout, it is that, heresy or no heresy, communism has an appeal that must be answered. Toynbee regrets the failure of the Jesuits in the Far East and hopes that their work will be taken up again, and Christianity brought to Communist China. Second, he tries to teach the "East" that it must not imitate the western vice of nationalism. National movements, it is argued, are undesirable and will be fruitless in oriental conditions. Perhaps the real reason for this argument can be seen concealed behind a few words of advice to the Islamic peoples. The Arab world, he says, must maintain its unity, building on the basis of its common use of classical Arabic (the written language of its *ruling* class). New nations (such as Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq) whose personality is expressed in the popular spoken tongues, are for Toynbee just a copy of the seamy side of western civilisation. A convenient argument for oilmen and N.A.T.O. strategists, for whom Arab national movements are the chief obstacles to the economic exploitation and military co-ordination of the Middle East as an anti-Soviet base.

Yet we cannot but conclude that Professor Toynbee does not teach his lessons with much force. Harsh criticism from bourgeois sources has already greeted the republished lectures (editorial in the *Times Literary Supplement*, February 13th, 53; Bertrand Russell in the *Sunday Times*, February 15th, 53). The "philosophical" theme running through the lectures concerning the encounter of cultures is woolly and expressed in misleading analogies; the history is dubious; the condemnation of colonial nationalism, coming from a "western" spokesman, is too obviously self-interested. Above all, the weakness of, or in fact failure to state, the case against communism cannot but leave the fair-minded reader with the question in his mind: Is it not precisely communism which in the 20th century addresses its message "to all human souls without discriminating"—not perhaps between "rulers and subjects"—but certainly "between Greeks, orientals and barbarians"?

RODNEY HILTON.

*Byzantium into Europe*. By JACK LINDSAY. The Bodley Head. 37*s*. 6*d*.

THIS is the book which led an anonymous reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* of December 17th, 1952, to suggest that Marxist historians should be dismissed from teaching posts, since they start with certain "revealed truths to which the facts must be made to conform".





Ensuing correspondence revealed that this defender of "western scholarship" had not read the Soviet books and periodicals on the basis of which he condemned all Marxist history. These people are so terrified of Marxism that they abandon all scholarly standards the minute they begin to discuss it. But despite this exposure, and despite a large number of letters protesting against the review, the *T.L.S.* on January 2nd supported editorially the view that it was "a dereliction of duty" "to employ or retain in employment" a Marxist teacher. This, it added with naïve hypocrisy, was not to advocate a witch-hunt!

The book, then, is important. It calls for serious evaluation. But we must guard against the temptation to assume that any book which so annoyed the ill-informed bigot of the *T.L.S.* must be good; or, following him, to equate Mr. Lindsay's book with Marxism. I share Mr. Lindsay's Marxist outlook. The *T.L.S.* reviewer would therefore pretend to expect that I must accept his interpretations whether they seem to me to fit the facts or not. This propaganda seems merely silly to anyone who has ever read a Marxist historical work or heard a Marxist discussion: but it is not so silly when combined with the *T.L.S.*'s openly expressed desire to impose a censorship. If "western scholarship" can maintain its sacred dogmas only by suppressing those who produce facts which challenge them, it is self-confessedly moribund. "The banner of bourgeois democratic freedoms," said Stalin in his last speech, "has been thrown overboard by the bourgeoisie."

It is difficult to do justice to Mr. Lindsay's argument in a brief summary. He considers that "the third century A.D. was a revolutionary epoch shaking the foundations of ancient society with its basis in slave economy, and that the fourth century saw the transformation of the Empire into a state already definitely and inevitably oriented towards feudalism" (p. 453). The transference of the capital to Byzantium, and the adoption of Christianity as the state religion, mark a fresh start. Whilst in western Europe the central state power crumbled as a result of internal revolt and "barbarian" invasion, in the East a state of a new type was being consolidated. It was not until the twelfth century that the kingdoms of the West caught up with Byzantium in economic development, political organization and culture. During these eight centuries Byzantium was a source of civilizing influences for its backward neighbours. Mr. Lindsay gives fascinating details of the nature of this influence, through trade, ideas and the arts. One of the first acts of "western civilization" after it had reached the economic level of the Eastern Empire was, under pretence of a crusade against the infidel, to send an army to pillage and occupy Byzantium. Mr. Lindsay dates the end of Byzantium's supremacy from the sack of 1204.

Some of Mr. Lindsay's points are irresistible. The most dogmatic propagandists of "western civilization" regard "Roman law" as one of their glorious inheritances. Yet they should more properly speak of

Byzantine law, since the Roman law which later influenced the West was that codified in sixth century Byzantium (pp. 110–11): it was centuries before the barbarian kingdoms reached a level of economic development at which this law could be received. Mr. Lindsay argues convincingly that the Benedictine monastic rule was derived from Eastern models (pp. 189–90); that whilst from A.D. 450 to 1000 there was no theological advance in the West, in the East most of the later developments of scholasticism were being anticipated (pp. 202–3, 219, 344–6, 412, 455). The foundations of modern science, modern painting and modern music were being laid. In a fascinating study of the heresies of the Byzantine empire and their relation to the village commune, Mr. Lindsay suggests that they contributed far more to the sixteenth century reformation than is usually recognised (Chapters 26–7). These are only some of the more outstanding of the many suggestive ideas to be found in this long and tightly-packed book.

Some points I should wish to criticize. First, in a book which so admirably aims to synthesize, interpret and bring before the general reader the work of many scholars, special care should have been taken to make it easy for that reader to check statements or follow up subjects of interest to him. But Mr. Lindsay's system of references is most unsatisfactory. Secondly, the author has a jargon of his own which not all his readers will like. It seems to me sometimes to conceal a certain confusion. For my third criticism is lack of precision. Take the passage which I quoted above. Did the "revolutionary epoch shaking the foundations of ancient society" overthrow the social order based on slave labour or not? Was the Byzantine state ("already definitely and inevitably oriented towards feudalism") a feudal state or not? I suspect that Mr. Lindsay's guarded formulae mean that he is not quite sure. He has every excuse, for he is, I believe, the first English historian seriously to raise these vital questions. But it would inspire more confidence if he admitted his uncertainty. It would have prepared readers for an equal uncertainty about what precisely was the social achievement of the iconoclast movement of the eighth century. Another question with which Mr. Lindsay does not grapple is why so much of the Byzantine cultural influence on western Europe was exercised not directly but through the Arab civilization.

Mr. Lindsay claims—astonishingly but accurately—that his book is "the first in any language which comprehensively seeks to consider Byzantine influences on the West" (p. 459). Of such a book the above criticisms are relatively trivial. It is undoubtedly a serious and important work, of which future historians will have to take account and by which anyone who is still thinking cannot but be stimulated. Not all its formulations will equally stand the test of time. I believe, for instance, that Mr. Lindsay sees the Papacy too much as a *diabolus ex machina*, and that a less one-sided account of medieval Europe would attribute a more





positive rôle to that institution. But the book is a huge quarry of facts and ideas: its scope, in time and in subjects covered, is astonishing. It is written with the vigour and cunning artistry in which Mr. Lindsay never fails. Thus when he wishes to show that a Byzantine historian of the eleventh century could reveal the cool detached scientific curiosity which we associate with the Italian Renaissance, he gives us a couple of pages of Psellus in translation (pp. 364–7); and I for one am convinced. The relative levels of Byzantine and West European civilization in the early fourteenth century are illustrated by quotation from the Byzantine writer who decided to translate Thomas Aquinas into Greek because "the name of Latin merely evoked among our people the idea of sails and oars, merchants, artisans, pub-keepers. . . . We set the Latins in the category of barbarians, leaving to them the art of war and all low trades" (p. 382). The photographs, excellently chosen and reproduced, leave an overwhelming impression of the power of Byzantine art.

The critics of this book, with their noses sharply lifted to catch any little breeze which might blow down their capitalist system, have drawn attention to its political implications: so we may conclude with them. Mr. Lindsay explains dispassionately, as a historian, how it came about that Byzantine civilization was identified in men's minds with the last ossified centuries of its decline and fall: and how historians from the Renaissance to Gibbon, in their enthusiasm for classical Roman antiquity, had a blind spot for the great centuries of Byzantium. Mr. Lindsay also very properly emphasises the part played by the Papacy's vendetta against the Orthodox Church, and German legends about the Holy Roman Empire, in obscuring the Byzantine contribution to our civilization. Finally Mr. Lindsay disposes of Professor Toynbee's more recent attempt to cut Europe in two, to identify the Papacy with the West, and to see Byzantine influence only in Russia and the Balkans. He identifies the static despotism of the last two centuries of Byzantium (extended backwards to cover the whole Byzantine period) with Soviet Russia today: it is all one civilization. "Western civilization" is the home of liberty, religion and culture; in the eastern civilization the keynotes are servility, materialism and the subordination of the arts to a stagnant despotism. It is easy to show that this is current reactionary politics: Mr. Lindsay aptly quotes Professor Toynbee's dictum that the concept "Europe" can only be defined to suit one's political convenience, to exclude "the enemy". Politics are none the worse for being founded on scientific history: what Mr. Lindsay has shown is that Professor Toynbee's is unscientific history as well as bad politics.

CHRISTOPHER HILL.

# *Communication*

## POWER WITHOUT GLORY

THERE are many good observations in Jack Grahl's criticism of Frank Hardy's *Power without Glory*, but a failure to understand fully the nature of Australian political development spoils some of the comments.

Thus Grahl says, after describing the typical forms of corruption among British right wing Labour leaders, "So also would it have been in Australia." It would be just as correct to sweep aside all the gangsterism and peculiarly violent forms of corruption in American trade-unionism with the comment that if it hadn't been for a few eccentrics, "So also would it have been in America."

American and Australian capitalism are not at all identical in form and content, but they share certain characteristics that are absent in Britain. To state that West is not a "typical" capitalist because he does not hobnob with the squattocracy and the more "respectable" financiers is to state that Al Capone is not a typical part of American capitalism, and with him the gangster type of trade-union leader.

But the differences between America and Australia in turn make incorrect Grahl's comment that Ford, typical, tried to smash genuine trade-unionism, while West corrupted and used the Labour movement, and was thus untypical. The highly-developed working-class political movement in Australia in 1900, and the lack of any such organisational form in America, dictated the differences in policy. (Incidentally Grahl is not correct in saying that West did not desire power to safeguard his economic interests. The novel shows him building up his organisation and carrying out his corruptions precisely to save the economic system he has developed.)

West, representing the nexus of predatory interests, Tammany Hall groupings, and Catholic controls which have in fact played a crucial part in corrupting the Australian Labour Party, is truly typical of the Australian situation in the years of his vigour. The tremendous fight put up for Hardy's novel by the Australian working class is the recognition of this truth. Hardy has clarified the nature of the reactionary forces in his Labour Movement with a new unifying grasp; and that is why he evoked such a response. Such an achievement, despite incidental weakness in the novel, is truly socialist-realist.

The concept of the Type has proved of extreme value in the clarification of the nature of socialist realism; but practice in the Soviet Union has shown that it is also easily used in oversimplified and obstructive ways.

JACK LINDSAY.

**EDWARDIAN HERITAGE:**
a study in British History, 1901–6
W. S. ADAMS
248 pp. *Demy 8vo.* 5*s.*
obtainable from Central Books, 2 Parton St., London, W.C.1



## ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN U.S.A.

*(We have received the following information concerning Professor Barrows Dunham from a correspondent in the United States.)*

PROFESSOR BARROWS DUNHAM of Temple University, Philadelphia, author of *Man Against Myth*, has appeared before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. He invoked the Fifth Amendment, which excuses witnesses from giving self-incriminating evidence, and refused to testify.

Dr. Robert L. Johnson, President of the University, and recently appointed acting Head of "Voice of America", has dismissed Professor Dunham from his position at the University. Professor Dunham commenting on his suspension said, "No act of mine could have better displayed my loyalty to this country and its traditions than the course I followed last Friday", the time of his appearance before the Committee.

It is significant that McCarthy is himself investigating "Voice of America", so that Principal Johnson is now in the position of seeming to sack Dunham in order to save his own career.

Professor Dunham's new book *Giant in Chains* has just been published, and although no review has yet appeared in the press, the wide-spread interest in Dunham's case is selling the book across America.

Dunham's students in Temple University are protesting vigorously. There was a mass meeting of 300 odd over his dismissal, and indignation is city-wide and almost nation-wide. Along with similar prosecutions, such as that of Professor Struik, the proceedings against Professor Dunham have undoubtedly aroused indignation among many liberals. Progressive Americans are even saying that the response has been so great as to almost look like a turn in the tide. But whether or not it is a turn, these events suggest the fact, and it may well be that the real America, the liberal forthright America, is about to show itself.

# *Our Contributors*

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