APRIL 1954

THE MARXIST QUARTERLY

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The Marxist Quarterly

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R. Palme Dutt

THE PEACEFUL APPLICATIONS OF ATOMIC ENERGY
E. H. S. Burhop

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ANDRÉ STIL AND THE NOVEL OF SOCIALIST REALISM
Margot Heinemann

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The Communist Party and the Mass Movement

R. PALME DUTT

The 23rd Congress of the Communist Party, meeting at Easter, is an event of signal importance for the entire working-class movement and people. The Congress meets at a time when all signs point to the prospect of an era of sharpening industrial and political conflicts. Already the closing weeks of 1953 and the opening weeks of 1954 have seen the beginnings of action by the workers in the key industries on a scale not previously paralleled for a generation. The electricians' victory in March was a signal triumph of militant action and leadership.

The most positive feature in Britain in the present situation has been the advance of militant working-class action in industry, and of militant trends in the membership of the trade unions and the Labour Party. It is here that are revealed the true signs of the future for Britain.

This advancing revolt is still at a relatively early stage. The right-wing leadership is still in dominant control on a national scale, although its hold has been shaken. The industrial movement has been so far sectional in character, without a common co-ordination of leadership and policy. In the electoral and parliamentary sphere, Toryism has not yet been seriously challenged. The disruptive policies of the right-wing leadership hamper unity. There is still widespread confusion of policy. There can be no question that the initiative and campaigning of the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* have played a key part in the new advance. Yet this has not yet been reflected in any corresponding growth of the Communist Party or extension of circulation of the *Daily Worker*. These are indications of the relatively early and elementary stage of the movement up to the present. They point to the character of the problems which require now to be tackled in order to ensure further progress.

The main task before the Communist Party Congress arises from this situation—to give attention to the needs and problems of the advancing militant mass movement and the new trends in the trade unions and Labour Party, and to indicate the path of future advance and the role of the Communist Party in this development.

A QUARTER CENTURY OF PARTIAL CLASS PEACE

The significance of the new era of industrial class battles which has opened needs to be seen against the background of the whole preceding era. For twenty-seven years, ever since the General Strike and miners'

lock-out of 1926, there had been scarcely a single national official strike in any industry in Britain, with the exception of the National Union of Vehicle Builders' strike in 1948. Thus hardly any worker under forty years of age had had previous experience of officially organised strike action on a national scale. The apostles of class peace and class collaboration might imagine that they had triumphed in Britain, and transformed the machinery of trade unionism from its function of militant action on behalf of the workers into a machinery to hinder and hold back that action. But the events of December 1953 undeceived them. Once again British trade unionism has begun to swing into action.

What lay behind this preceding period of official class collaboration and partial class peace? What has led to this first breach in the system?

The working-class movement in Britain has developed from the outset, not in a straight line, but through successive cycles of militant advance and temporary reaction. The revolutionary era of Chartism was succeeded by what Engels called the "forty years slumber" of the working class during the heyday of the Victorian era. This was ended in the 'eighties by the militant revival of the Socialist pioneers and the new unionism. This in turn gave place again to a period of lower activity, during which the workers took the first steps to build up the Labour Party, and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Tories, although mainly through Liberal candidates, in 1906. Following the disillusionment with the Liberal Government of 1906-10, a new period of militancy developed from 1911 to 1926; it was only partially interrupted by the outbreak of war and soon flared up anew even in the course of the war (the average number of days lost through industrial disputes during 1914-18 was 5 million days a year) and developed up to the General Strike of 1926. The General Strike of 1926 was deliberately provoked by the Tory Government, and was only led by the right-wing General Council in order to betray it, with the aim of striking a decisive blow at the militant, semi-revolutionary advance of the working class before it had reached sufficient strength of organisation, policy and leadership to sweep past the right-wing leadership and usher in decisive social change in Britain.

It was immediately following the General Strike of 1926 that the "new" right-wing policy of class collaboration was proclaimed under the slogan of "Never Again."

The new policy of "Mondism" was proclaimed as the magic path forward which through rationalisation of industry and class collaboration would lead to prosperity.

Even when the ruinous consequences of this policy revealed themselves in the economic crisis of 1929-32 and the long stagnation and mass unemployment of the 'thirties, the right-wing trade union leaders continued to carry it forward.

Outstanding militant struggles were conducted by the British workers

It is this increasingly desperate situation which has been the immediate driving force giving rise to the new wave of militant action.

THE BATTLE AGAINST THE WAGE-FREEZE

The General Council's policy of the wage-freeze was never peacefully accepted by the trade union movement. The militant left, led by the Communist Party and Communist trade unionists, conducted a continuous and ever-stronger battle against the treacherous policy of the General Council. Already at the Conference of Trade Union Executive Committees in 1948, which officially confirmed the policy of the wage-freeze, two million votes were cast against the five million obtained by the General Council.

With the renewed "devaluation" crisis of 1949, the General Council of the T.U.C. was able to carry at the Annual Conference in September a resolution for "vigorous restraint on all increases of wages, salaries and dividends." Following this, however, a delegate conference of the miners compelled a coalfield ballot to be taken and this ballot resulted in an overwhelming reversal of the policy of the top leadership. As a result, at the Conference of Trade Union Executives in January 1950 the miners' vote was cast with the left against the wage-freeze, and the General Council's support fell to a total of 4,247,000 against 3,606,000 for the left.

By the T.U.C. of September 1950 the General Council's resolution in favour of the wage-freeze was defeated. A resolution against "any further policy of wage restraint" was carried, in opposition to the General Council, by 3,949,000 to 3,727,000.

The full effect of this victory was delayed through the conditions of the pre-election situation at the time of the T.U.C. in September 1951. A resolution by the Electricians' trade union for higher wages was defeated by 5,281,000 to 2,199,000. By 1952, however, the General Council felt compelled to sponsor a resolution for "justified wage increases." And by 1953 the General Council supported a resolution of the Post Office Engineers "rejecting any form of wage restraint," which was adopted, even though a more explicit resolution from the Electricians' trade union for wage increases was rejected.

Thus the battle of the left had defeated the right-wing policy of the wage-freeze and opened the way for militant action by the trade unions. But it was still necessary to transform this victory in principle into positive action for increased wages.

THE WORKERS IN ACTION

Prior to the latter period of 1953, the strikes conducted by the workers had in general taken on the character of "unofficial" strikes, owing to the entanglement of the official trade union machinery on a national scale in the elaborate structure of conciliation and collaboration. Every

strike, however justified the issue, was accordingly denounced, not only by the Tories and capitalist Press but also by the Labour Party and right-wing trade union leaders, as a "wild" strike, as a "plot of extremists."

By the latter part of 1953 a new element entered into the picture. The workers were beginning to get into a position of sufficient strength to utilise the official machinery in support of their claims. The honour of initiating such action rested with the Electrical Trades Union. In August 1953 the E.T.U. initiated a strategy of "guerrilla" action (i.e., action not over the whole industry, but at a series of selected key establishments) in order to compel the employers to abandon their refusal to negotiate on the wage claims.

The effect of this first demonstration of militant action officially led by a national trade union was felt throughout the trade union movement. Its influence was especially direct in relation to the three million engineers who had already presented their claim for a 15 per cent increase in wages in July. At the same time the Miners' Conference in June had given instructions for a demand for a wage increase to be lodged, and this claim was presented in September. In August the Railwaymen had presented their claim for a 15 per cent increase.

In preceding years these wage claims had been most commonly met by small token increases inadequate to meet the rise in the cost of living, but calculated to be just sufficient to hold off any action by the workers. Now, however, with the sharpening of the economic situation, the Tory Government and the employers turned to a policy of refusing any increases in wages. The wage claims of the engineers, miners and railwaymen were met with a flat refusal. No concessions were offered.

Feeling ran high among the workers, and mass demonstrations followed in the ensuing weeks. On October 18 the Welsh miners poured into Cardiff and demonstrated 60,000 strong against the Government's action in lapsing Section 62 of the National Insurance Act of 1946. On October 21 in Glasgow, 250,000 engineers struck work and 50,000 demonstrated in the streets of Glasgow. By the end of October similar strikes and token demonstrations took place in London, Belfast, the Clyde and many other industrial centres.

At first the Press endeavoured to keep silent on this new demonstration of militant action by the working class. The *Daily Herald*, which had screamed across its front pages every American-fabricated story of "strikes" and "uprisings" in Eastern Europe, discovered that the strike of a quarter of a million engineers in Glasgow was not news. *The Times* endeavoured to dismiss it in a minute paragraph of small type. But the rising mass movement could not long be hidden by these methods of Press silence. By October 23 the strike of the London Petrol Distributors, tying up London traffic—an unofficial strike—was met by the Government using troops with the support of the General Council and Labour

Party. *The Times* angrily demanded new anti-strike legislation to meet the situation:

> "There must be sanctions applied in the courts and in industry, and by the unions, against the wreckers, and Labour and Conservative leaders alike must give their backing" (October 24, 1953).
>
> "Parliament must take thought at once on the way to safeguard the nation against similar unconstitutional outbreaks" (October 28, 1953).

But events were to show that the advancing action of the organised workers was not to be so easily dismissed as the machinations of "wreckers."

THE PORTENT OF DECEMBER 2

On October 19 the Executive Committee of the thirty-nine trade unions comprising the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions agreed on a twenty-four-hour strike to take place on December 2. This was the big first testing of the readiness of the workers for action. Would the old machinery, rusted from disuse of a quarter of a century, function effectively? Would the younger generation of trade unionists, who had never known national industrial action, respond?

To the last the employers and the right-wing labour leaders hoped that the action would win only a partial response and end in a fiasco. In place of the usual hasty intervention by the Minister of Labour, the Government remained ostentatiously passive in order to observe this test of the mood of the workers and in the hopes that it would fail. The *Daily Herald* on December 2 came out on its front page with a shameless strike-breaking article which declared that the decision to strike had only been taken "under pressure from the left" and proclaimed the hope that the response to it "will be very patchy." All these calculations of the capitalists and right-wing Labour leaders were swamped by the result.

The response was overwhelming. The measure of response in many establishments exceeded the level of the General Strike in 1926. The younger generation of British trade unionists had shown that they were worthy sons of their fathers.

This action of the engineers led to immediate repercussions among the railwaymen. On December 12 the National Union of Railwaymen's Executive issued instructions to all its branches to strike at midnight on December 20 in support of their wage claim and against the miserable award of 4s. which had been offered by the Railway Staffs National Tribunal on December 4 (i.e., after the action of the engineers).

This time there was immediate intervention by the Government. Although the Transport Commission had declared that there could be no possibility whatever of any advance beyond the 4s., the Government

exercised pressure to gain a promise that within six weeks there would be a further advance on the 4s. (unofficially stated to be in the neighbourhood of an additional 3s.), and only on this basis the strike notices were called in. In the angry words of the *Daily Telegraph* next day, on December 17:

> "The award has been overruled by the threat of force. That is undeniably a blow to the orderly settlement of disputes through the machinery of negotiation . . . the unions have been reinforced in the conclusion that the threat of force pays dividends."

TACTICS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND EMPLOYERS

The subsequent experience has shown a concerted shift in policy of the Government and employers. They have had to abandon the absolute negative stand which they had attempted in the latter half of 1953, and endeavoured to buy off the threatening movement by partial concessions. After the railwaymen had received their promise of an increase on the Tribunal award to reach a figure of 7s., the miners (without action or threat of action, but on the basis of the action of the electricians, engineers and railwaymen, busmen, builders and others) obtained an offer of 7s. 6d. to 8s. 6d. conditional on agreeing to co-operation for increased production; this was accepted by a vote of 537,000 to 227,000, and after a coalfield ballot for acceptance by 542,000 to 221,000.

The general trend of wage policy of Government and employers in face of the demonstration of action and threats of action by the workers has thus been to shift from the previous blank negative to the line of granting increases ranging about 7s. a week or 6 per cent in place of the 15 per cent generally demanded. This was not, in fact, enough to meet the rise in the cost of living.

The Electricians' battle continued through the early part of 1954, with the 24-hour strikes of January 18, and successive "guerrilla" strikes. By March the employers were compelled to concede terms previously offered by the union and refused. The demands of the engineers, builders and others remained still unsettled at the time of writing.

Thus the initial advance of the working class has already extracted partial concessions from the Government and employers, although far short of the workers' demands. On the basis of these concessions, and with the aid of the right-wing leadership, a temporary check was dealt to the advance of the movement. But it was clear to all that major issues of conflict were in front.

THE ROLE OF THE T.U.C. GENERAL COUNCIL

In the face of the advancing militant action of the working class, it is necessary to signalise the openly hostile role of the right-wing Labour Party and trade union leadership.

The long and obstinate battle of the General Council to maintain the policy of the wage-freeze against the mounting and finally victorious opposition of the trade union membership has already been described.

Every public declaration of the General Council slavishly followed the policies of Tory imperialism. In 1952 the Memorandum on Rearmament not only declared that the requirements of rearmament must have priority over the needs of the workers, but even argued that rearmament was a means of keeping unemployment at bay, and that it had no effect on the Balance of Payments (directly contradicted later by Butler at Sydney, when he declared that rearmament resulted in an adverse effect of £350 to £400 million annually on the Balance of Payments). In 1953 the Report on Public Ownership was aptly described by the General Secretary of the N.U.P.E. at the Douglas Congress as "a speakers' handbook for every Tory candidate."

During 1953 the open flirtation of the dominant General Council leadership with the Tory Government ("not a bad bunch") shocked the entire trade union movement. They denounced, not only the Communists and the left, the Bevanites and *Tribune*, but even Mr. Attlee for being insufficiently ruthless against the left. Hints were thrown out of possible dissociation of the trade unions from the Labour Party, although these hints were rapidly withdrawn when it was realised that this would leave the Labour Party membership free to move to the left.

The disruptive role of the General Council found expression in the offensive against the Trades Councils, the most representative bodies of the rank and file in the industrial centres. This offensive was especially directed during this period to disrupting the London Trades Council, the historic body which was in fact older than the Trades Union Congress, and which under left leadership had reached a record level of membership and activity.

In accordance with this systematic anti-working-class policy, the advancing wage movement of millions of organised workers — the majority of the membership of the T.U.C. — found no support or leadership in the General Council. On the contrary, the shameless strike-breaking article of the *Daily Herald* on December 2, 1953, reflected the right-wing policy.

THE SITUATION IN THE LABOUR PARTY

What of the Labour Party?

Here the consequences of the right-wing policy of disruption of the working classes, of erecting an absolute wall of separation between the industrial and political movement, made themselves conspicuously felt as soon as the workers moved into action.

Already the series of protest strikes at the beginning of 1952 against the Butler budget cuts had led to solemn denunciation by the National Council of Labour, as if such traditional demonstrations of working-class anger (which in the past had often extorted concessions from Tory

Governments) were a breach of the Constitution and an offence against democracy.

In 1952 it could still be argued that the action of the workers was unofficial, and that by challenging the Tory budget cuts it had invaded the sacred realm of politics. What, then, in 1953, when the action of the workers was conducted through the official machinery of the trade unions and was directed solely to the industrial aim of securing a wage increase?

The Labour Party is based, alike in its organisation, in the source of its finance and its electoral support, on the organised workers in the trade unions. Yet the decision of the three million organised workers of the Confederation of Engineering & Shipbuilding Unions—indeed of the five to six million trade unionists engaged in pressing wage claims —was regarded as of no concern to the Labour Party. Not only did the Labour Party leadership refuse to stir a finger in support of the workers' wage claims either on the platform or in Parliament. They openly expressed their sympathy and congratulations to the Tory Minister of Labour in his efforts to stop the action of the workers. Their official policy was that expressed in the programme *Challenge to Britain* adopted at the Margate Labour Party Conference in October which declared that the workers should "postpone improvements in living standards" in order to meet the requirements of the rearmament programme, war economy and the American-imposed trade bans.

Could anything demonstrate more clearly than this experience in action the contrast betwen the role of the right-wing trade union and Labour bureaucracy as the open allies of the Tories and the employers against the workers, and the role of the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker*? From the outset the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* have been in the vanguard of the fight, equally for the ending of the wage-freeze and for the wage demands of the workers and for action in support of these demands.

At the same time the revolt which has developed in the trade unions has also spread in the Labour Party. This was shown already at the Margate Conference in 1952, and further at the Margate Conference in 1953. The most significant feature of this advance of the left fight in the Labour Party was the alliance of an extending series of progressive trade unions with the majority of the Divisional Labour Parties.

It was undoubtedly the growth of the mass pressure which led to the reconstitution of the Parliamentary Trade Union Committee at the beginning of 1954, and the moves to bring forward a resolution in Parliament on the wages issue, even though there has been no indication yet of any firm and unqualified stand in support of the action of the organised workers.

A new height in the developing battle was reached on February 23 on

the issue of German rearmament, when the Attlee-Morrison leadership was only able to achieve a majority of two in the Parliamentary Labour Party by the inclusion of Labour peers in the vote.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The vanguard role of the Communist Party and of the *Daily Worker* in this entire development of the mass movement and of the left advance of the trade unions and Labour Party has been evident and admitted by friends and foes.

The Communist Party led the long and ultimately victorious fight against the wage-freeze, was in the forefront of the fight for wage increases and against every attack by the Tory Government, and at the same time fought for a basic revision of the policy of the Labour movement—to turn it from acceptance of the cold war, rearmament and subservience to the United States to an alternative policy for peace, national independence, the improvement of living standards, the speedy defeat of the Tory Government and the advance to Socialism.

From the outset the theme of working-class unity as the indispensable condition of victory was continuously stressed by the Communist Party:

> "9 million workers through their trade unions are demanding wage increases, and 9 million workers, once their power is united, are such a mighty force as can put paid once and for all to the attempts of the Tory Government to place the whole burden of the economic crisis, caused through its policy, on to the backs of the workers" (Communist Party Manifesto *The Wage Freeze Can Be Beaten,* July 1952).

The favourite accusation of the right-wing leaders against the criticism and demands of the left wing and of the rank and file, alike in the trade unions and in the Labour Party, was to declare that their views were "Communist-inspired." Already in 1952 Mr. Gaitskell declared of the Labour Party Conference at Morecambe:

> "A most disturbing feature of the Conference was the number of resolutions and speeches which were Communist-inspired, based not even on the *Tribune* so much as the *Daily Worker.* I was told by some observers that about one-sixth of the Constituency Party delegates appeared to be Communists or Communist-inspired" (*Times* report, October 5, 1952).

This attempt to frighten the left with denunciations of Communism and allegations of imaginary "Communist infiltration" was unsuccessful. In 1953 the resolutions of the left, which were uniformly denounced

by the platform as "Communist-inspired," received steady votes of some 2½ million in the Trades Union Congress and 1½ to 2 million at the Labour Party Conference.

There is no doubt that the consistent policy put forward by the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker,* the programme of *The British Road to Socialism* and the unity proposals of Harry Pollitt's *Labour—What Next?* and *A Policy for Labour,* and the influence and personal example of Communists at every level in the trade unions and in industry, have powerfully contributed to the advance of the left and strengthened the fight of the working class.

Yet the advance of Communist influence and activity during this period has not yet been reflected in a corresponding advance of membership or of the circulation of the *Daily Worker.* This is a negative feature of the situation. The registered membership of the Communist Party declined slightly from 35,124 in March 1952, to 35,054 in March 1953; and the complete re-registration of membership which was completed in March 1954 is not likely to show any appreciable advance, despite the recruiting drive which the extended meeting of the Party's Executive Committee initiated in February 1953. The *Daily Worker* has had a heavy battle against the tendency of circulation to drop. The electoral vote of the Communist Party in the local elections fell from 162 candidates with 49,983 votes in 1952, to 152 candidates with 35,970 votes in 1953.

It is evident that this situation reflects a weakness in the role and method of work of the Communist Party in the midst of the development of united working-class activity on immediate issues. For permanent fruits are not won in the course of and through this activity to build up the strength of the Communist Party as the decisive instrument for the further advance of the Left and of the whole working-class movement.

STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

It is now possible to sum up briefly the strength and weakness shown in the present stage of development of the mass movement. The strength has been shown in:

(1) The solidarity and fighting spirit of the rank and file, as soon as the call to action was given, as on December 2 and in the Electricians' strike. It is noticeable that this enthusiasm and united response extended to all sections, not only to the older, experienced trade unionists, but equally to the youth, the women, and often also to the unorganised. This belies the picture of mass "apathy" often given by political observers; the "apathy" observed (in elections, attendances at meetings or attendances at trade union branches) is rather the reflection of the deadening effects of right-wing leadership and disruption, and the lack of a fighting leadership or visible difference between the front bench Tory and Labour policies. The conclusion can therefore be drawn that

a swing to a fighting policy of the entire industrial and political Labour movement would rapidly dispel this "apathy."

(2) The drawing of the official machinery of the trade unions into action, despite General Council sabotage, and the growth of the influence of the left at all levels in an extending series of national unions.

(3) The first beginnings of the link-up of the economic and political struggle, with the parallel advance of the left in the trade unions and in the Labour Party, and the increasing recognition that the fight for wages and living standards is bound up with the fight against the rearmament and cold war programme with its consequences in the deterioration of economic conditions.

(4) The increasing response among wide sections of the Labour movement to the colonial peoples' struggle.

(5) The leading role of the Communist Party in the development of the movement both in the industrial and political fields, in the shaping of policy and the promotion of united action.

The main weaknesses have been:

(1) The continued domination of the right-wing leadership on a national scale in the T.U.C. and in the Labour Party, maintaining policies closely associated with those of the Tory Government, and hampering working-class unity and action at every point.

(2) The failure of the Parliamentary Labour Party to represent the fight of the working class in the country.

(3) The consequent failure at the nearly thirty by-elections so far held since the General Election to make any impact on the Tory majority, and even a recent relative increase in the Tory proportion of the poll.

(4) The uneven character and sectional development of the industrial movement; the lack of co-ordinated and concerted action behind the various wage demands; the temporary isolation of the miners on a national scale, under the present majority leadership, from the advance of the progressive unions, thus assisting to maintain the reactionary majority in the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference.

(5) The inadequate recognition of the unity of the economic and political struggle in the present situation; not only the separation of the political wing from the industrial battles, but the tendency of many militant trade unionists to see the question of wages or the attitude to increased production in purely economic terms (i.e., the size of the workers' share), and not as inseparably bound up with the fight for a reversal of the war policy which causes the worsening of conditions. Inadequate political participation of the trade unions at all levels in the work of the Labour Party, to use the full strength of the militant organised workers in the fight for a progressive policy and for militant candidates and representatives.

(6) The harmful effects of the right-wing system of bans and purges to prevent working-class unity and co-operation. The inadequate fight

to defeat this offensive of disruption; and the still relatively low level, outside the workshops and industry, of co-operation and unity under these conditions on general issues (the fight for peace, against rent increases, etc.).

(7) The lack of growth of the Communist Party in the midst of rapid advance of the mass movement.

PERSPECTIVE AND TASKS

The general perspective of the present situation points to the further development of the new era now opened of deepening class battles in industry and politics.

The ice has been broken by the beginning of large-scale national action of the working class at the end of 1953. There is no doubt that the Government and the right-wing trade union leaders will endeavour to utilise every manœuvre and every weapon in their arsenal in order to stem the tide and turn aside the pressure of the workers for action. Nevertheless this objective is not so easy for them in the present circumstances.

The sharpening economic situation, and the prospects of a United States slump and intensified trade competition, as well as the increasing burdens of the rearmament programme, colonial wars and the economic trade bans—all these have led to a hardening attitude of the employers in relation to wage claims, at the same time as the worsening conditions of the workers strengthen the demands for action to gain concessions. If the trade situation continues to worsen, the near future may see the launching of an offensive by the employers against existing wages, hours and conditions.

Nor can this situation be separated from the political situation, with the increasing unpopularity of the American war policy and the Tory Government's subservience to it. The demonstration of the rising living standards in the Soviet Union and Peoples' Democracies affords a powerful contrast to the experience in Britain and the other countries of Western Europe.

This situation calls for intensified effort and the most rapid advance of the militant fight alike in the industrial and the political Labour movement.

The lessons which stand out from the present actions are manifest.

First and foremost is the need to strengthen the unity of the workers in action.

In the battles of 1919 to 1925 the railwaymen, miners and transport workers forged a common front in the Triple Alliance. This played an important part in the strength of the fighting front that was established. Today, there are many differences in the conditions from the period of the early 'twenties. But the need of strengthened unity is all the more pressing in relation to the scale of the present struggles. This unity needs

to be forged at every level, especially at its base in the workshops and the pits and throughout the machinery of the organised trade union and Labour movement.

The second lesson is the necessity to strengthen the fight for a progressive policy and a stronger progressive representation in the leadership of all the trade unions and to defeat the reactionary policies and role of the right-wing trade union leaders. The right-wing trade union leaders have shown themselves as the direct allies of the Tory Government and the employers. So long as they are allowed to maintain their controlling positions, the action of the workers is faced with heavy handicaps. The experience of December 2 has nevertheless shown how the advancing action of the workers can go forward in spite of resistance and sabotage by the right-wing leadership. But the fullest effective mobilisation and extension of large-scale action for victory demands the decisive defeat of the right-wing leadership.

The third lesson is the necessity to recognise the inescapable close connection between the economic and political struggle in the present situation. The battle for the wage demands of the workers is bound up with the fight to end the reactionary policies of the Tory Government and to unite the whole Labour movement economically and politically, on the basis of a positive programme of peace and national independence and improved living standards, which can rally the entire people to defeat the Tory Government and return a new government to represent the whole people on the basis of such a programme.

Finally, the fourth lesson which has been emphasised and reinforced by these recent events is the indispensable role of the Communist Party as the organ of the vanguard of the working class alike in the economic struggle and in the whole field of the fight against Toryism and for a new policy. There is no room for dispute on the significance of the role which the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* have played as the champions of the advancing mass movement which has so powerfully shown its strength in the action of December 2. If it has been possible to achieve the measure of advance of the left that has already become manifest both in the industrial and political movement with the present level of strength of the Communist Party, the conclusion must be borne in on every militant trade unionist and socialist: how much greater an advance can be achieved as soon as the ranks of the Communist Party are further strengthened in relation to the enormous tasks before us.

The most critical approach will be necessary within the ranks of the Communist Party to expose and overcome all the weaknesses which stand in the way of the rapid growth of the Party. It is not possible to take refuge in pleas of the difficulties of the objective situation, when in fact the mass movement is advancing, and at the same time the Communist Party is failing to advance. The obstacles evidently arise in subjective weaknesses, such as:

(1) Under-estimation of the new trends among the workers in the trade unions and Labour Party (signalised already in Comrade Pollitt's Report to the Extended Executive in February 1953, as one of the two main weaknesses in the current work of the Party), and of the consequent readiness of increasing numbers to come to the Party, if approached with understanding and consistent attention.

(2) A superficial attitude to united activity in such a way as to counterpose such united activity to the task of building the Party.

(3) Surrender to Left Labour illusions of the possibility of decisive advance of the Labour movement without the strengthening of the Communist Party; and insufficient explanation of the key role of the Communist Party.

(4) Organisational weaknesses, reflected in the character of branch life, inattention to new members, or to the development of cadres.

(5) Inadequate level of agitation and propaganda, not only for the immediate aims of the mass movement, but for the entire policy and programme of the Communist Party, showing the path to the solution of Britain's crisis and to the achievement of socialism.

There is no doubt that great new possibilities are now opening out before the working class in Britain and that the advance of their action can have a decisive influence, not only on the prospect of the political situation in Britain, but on the further development of the international situation and the fight for peace.

The outcome of the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party at Easter will help to chart the way forward for the whole working-class movement and the people of Britain in this new situation which is now opening.

The Peaceful Applications of Atomic Energy

E. H. S. BURHOP

The important possibilities that could flow from the peace-time application of atomic energy have been referred to in several recent authoritative statements. But whether and how soon we shall be in a position to take advantage of these possibilities depends on whether our atomic energy programme is directed in the main toward military or peaceful industrial, medical, and scientific application.

Both in the United States and in this country the atomic energy effort has been and still is directed overwhelmingly towards military application. It is only comparatively recently that any official interest at all has been taken in America in the development of atomic power plants for non-military purposes—a policy that was viewed with approval by many of the Utilities companies. During the past few years, however, several of the larger corporations, sensing the fact that the atomic power industry could develop into a future rich source of profit, and urged on by some of their more enthusiastic scientific personnel, have been undertaking the design study of nuclear reactors for power production. And at last, in October of last year, Mr. Thomas Murray of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission announced that the Westinghouse Electrical Corporation had been awarded a contract for the construction of an atomic power reactor to generate 60,000 kilowatts of electric power.

It is interesting to note the reason Murray gave for the change in U.S. policy. "This recent U.S.S.R. accomplishment" (of a thermo-nuclear weapon), he said :

> "is less dangerous today to the free world's hopes than would have been the case if the Soviets had announced that it had been successfully operating a practical industrial nuclear power plant—and was that day offering foreign nations nuclear power technology in exchange for uranium, coupled with other favourable economic and political agreements.
>
> "Unless we embark on an all-out attack on our nuclear power programme immediately we may be deprived of foreign uranium ores. There is a possibility that power-hungry countries will gravitate towards the U.S.S.R. if it wins the nuclear power race."

But even so the new U.S. budget proposals for 1954 reveal that the atomic power programme remains small in comparison with the military programme. Of a total atomic energy budget of $2,425 million,

some $43.6 million are allocated to nuclear reactor development, and some of this will go to the development of a reactor for a submarine.

In Britain, where, according to Sir David Eccles, Minister for Works, nine-tenths of the annual budget of £50 million has gone into atomic weapons development and production, two atomic power projects are planned—one under construction at Calder Hall, Cumberland, designed to generate 40,000 kilowatts and the other, a more advanced "breeder" type of reactor, to produce about 50,000 kw, is to be commenced soon at Dounreay in Caithness.

The basic orientation toward peaceful application of the atomic energy programme of the Soviet Union has been referred to many times by Soviet spokesmen ever since 1947, when Mr. Molotov first disclosed that Soviet scientists had successfully solved the problem of initiating a nuclear chain reaction. It was underlined again last August when Mr. Malenkov confirmed that the successful trial of a thermo-nuclear weapon in the U.S.S.R. would cause no change in the main direction of the Soviet atomic energy effort toward peaceful industrial purposes.

It is clear that increasingly in the years ahead we shall be hearing more about the industrial application of atomic energy and this article is an attempt to review the potentialities and limitations of these applications as they appear at present.

NUCLEAR FIRES

The most striking feature of atomic (or nuclear) energy is the very large amount of energy produced from a given amount of fuel material. The "burn-up" of one pound of the fuel, uranium 235, produces as much heat as 13,000 tons of coal.

Nuclear "fires" have something in common with conventional fires, both being essentially "chain" processes. Ordinary fuels produce heat when they combine with oxygen, but such combination only takes place when the fuel is already hot. A few molecules of the fuel are heated in the kindling process, combine with oxygen and give out heat which is passed on to other molecules, enabling them in turn to combine with more oxygen and produce more heat. And so the process spreads.

Some nuclear fuels work on almost exactly the same principle, except that oxygen is not an essential constituent. In their case, however, the "kindling" temperature amounts to many tens of millions of degrees, Nuclear "fires" produced in this way are called thermo-nuclear reactions, and they form the basis of the hydrogen bomb. The fuel materials that can be "burnt" in this way are two special types (or isotopes) of hydrogen called deuterium and tritium. No reliable published accounts of peaceful uses of thermo-nuclear reactions have yet been given.

The nuclear fuels for which immediate peaceful application is practicable work differently. They give out heat when they absorb a neutron, one of the basic constituents of atomic nuclei. There are always some

neutrons present in the atmosphere due to the effects of cosmic radiation. If a neutron hits a nucleus of fuel material a violent break-up of the nucleus occurs, with the evolution of a large amount of heat and the emission, in addition, of 2.5 neutrons (on the average). These neutrons may be absorbed by still other nuclei giving more heat and further neutrons. The fuel material soon becomes raised to a very high temperature and the concentration of the neutrons present becomes very large. The neutrons both produce the initial excitation that causes heat production and carry on the process from one nucleus of fuel material to another.

The process of neutron absorption described above is called a "fission process" and the fuel material is said to be "fissile". Only three fissile materials suitable for a nuclear furnace are known at present, uranium 235, uranium 233 and plutonium (henceforth called U235, U233 and Pu respectively).

U235 is an essential constituent of all uranium ores, representing 1 part in 140 of all the uranium. The remainder of the uranium is U238. U235 and U238 are two isotopes of uranium, indistinguishable by chemical means but vastly different in their behaviour in the presence of neutrons.

When U238 absorbs a neutron it eventually goes into the entirely new material, plutonium, which is fissile but does not occur naturally on the earth. So that although U238 is not a fuel material it becomes changed into one in the presence of neutrons.

Another metal, thorium, although not itself a fuel material, can likewise be changed into the fissile material, U233.

Unlike the gaseous products of ordinary fires, the "fission products" from nuclear fires are mostly solid at ordinary temperature, but they are very highly radioactive, emitting beta and gamma rays like those given off by radium.

EXPLOSIVE AND CONTROLLED NUCLEAR FIRES

A sufficiently rapid build-up of heat in a nuclear chain reaction produces an atomic explosion. The chain will only build up, however, if the lump of fissile material is above a critical size.

If on the other hand the number of neutrons present in the fissile material can be maintained constant, neither increasing nor decreasing, the heat will be evolved at a constant, controllable rate. Contrary to what might have been anticipated, the chain reaction is easy to control because if the neutron concentration starts to increase slightly, the chain does not immediately get out of hand. The concentration increases slowly over a period of several hours. This happens because all the neutrons are not emitted instantaneously in a fission process but a small fraction are delayed.

Nuclear furnaces (or reactors) are commonly classified as either slow

or fast. In slow reactors the neutrons move comparatively slowly with a speed not very different from that of the molecules of the material. They have the advantage that ordinary uranium may be used in them as fuel without any necessity of separating any of the non-fissile U238 from the fissile U235. U238 will of course absorb some of the neutrons and so tend to break the chain process, but this occurs mainly before the neutrons have been slowed down fully. In such slow reactors a material called a moderator is added which has the sole purpose of reducing the neutron speeds as quickly as possible below that at which they can be easily absorbed by U238. A moderator has to be a light material that does not absorb neutrons effectively. Graphite, beryllium and "heavy" water may be used as moderators but not ordinary water because it absorbs neutrons too effectively.

A typical slow reactor would then consist of a large block of graphite about the size of a room containing a lattice of uranium rods. The heat produced is removed by circulating a "coolant" through it. In the reactor being built at Calder Hall, this coolant is pressurised carbon dioxide gas. The reactor could be made smaller if heavy water were used as a moderator, while if the uranium were enriched so that it contained a higher proportion of U235 than normal, it would become practicable to use ordinary water as moderator. Such enriched material can be produced at the Capenhurst atomic energy plant.

In fast reactors the moderator is dispensed with and the essential core of the reactor consists of almost pure fissile material. This core is quite small—about the size of a football—and is surrounded by a cylindrical reflector which reflects back into the core a fraction of the neutrons that would otherwise escape. Heat is extracted by circulating a coolant through the reflector. Since the size of the reactor is so small the heat extraction must be extremely efficient if high-power outputs are required. A liquid alloy of sodium and potassium can be used for cooling a fast reactor. Control of the neutron multiplication factor can be achieved by inserting rods of material that absorb neutrons a variable distance into the reactor.

DISPOSAL OF FISSION PRODUCTS

The fission products that accumulate in a reactor have to be removed periodically since they absorb neutrons and would inhibit the action if they were allowed to remain. They are highly radioactive and their removal is fraught with grave difficulties. The uranium rods are removed, dissolved, and the fission product separated chemically, the whole process being carried out by remote control. The disposal of the fission products presents a problem of some magnitude. They can be concentrated into a container and stored in a strongroom with concrete walls at least six feet thick. After some years their activity will decay to a safe level.

However, as discussed later, there are several ways in which the fission product radiation could be turned to useful account.

HAZARDS OF NUCLEAR POWER

Concrete walls six or seven feet thick must surround the reactor to reduce the intensity of the harmful neutron and gamma radiations to a tolerable amount. But even when this has been done there are special hazards associated with the operation of nuclear reactors. It is very difficult to cope with mishaps owing to the very high build-up of radioactivity associated with their operation. For example some cans housing uranium rods in the large heavy-water reactor at Chalk River in Canada exploded recently owing to the build-up of gaseous by-products. Highly radioactive spray was scattered over buildings in the vicinity which had to be evacuated for a long period. Fortunately there was no loss of life.

Explosions of this kind would generally be ordinary explosions, not atomic bomb explosions, but they could be very grave since they could spread highly radioactive fission products over a large area. Sir Christopher Hinton, Deputy Controller of Atomic Energy in the Ministry of Supply, pointed out that some reactors were inherently unsafe and if trouble were experienced in the cooling system, could explode. But dangers of this kind can be readily avoided with proper design. In fact there seems no reason why the large-scale operation of atomic reactors should be fraught with greater dangers than many other industrial processes.

GENERATION OF ELECTRIC POWER FROM NUCLEAR REACTORS

To generate electric power, pipes carry the coolant through a large vessel or "heat interchanger" containing water which the heat from the coolant converts into superheated steam. It is believed that reactors can be operated at a temperature of 700°F. Steam at this temperature can be used to operate a steam turbine with an overall efficiency of about 25 per cent. The rest of the equipment necessary to produce electricity is just the same as that of a conventional power station.

BREEDING

In the slow reactor, the neutrons absorbed in the U238 are not altogether wasted. The U238 is changed into plutonium which partially replaces the nuclear fuel used up. So that in a reactor using ordinary uranium as fuel one is not limited to the U235 present (one part in 140). If, for example, of the 2.5 neutrons produced in a fission process, 0.8 are on the average absorbed by U238, the total available nuclear fuel is increased five-fold. If on the average more than one of them were absorbed by U238, not only would each atom of U235 used up be replaced by plutonium but there would be some over. This excess plutonium could then be extracted from the reactor and used to build another reactor. This process is known as breeding.

Only in the past twelve months has breeding been really established as practicable, and its success seems to ensure the immensely important future role of nuclear power. A fast reactor is used for breeding. The core consists mainly of fissile material while the cylindrical reflector contains most of the U238 (or thorium) used to breed further fissile material.

ECONOMICS OF POWER PRODUCTION

Owing to the very small amount of fuel needed, transport costs for nuclear power are negligible so it should prove economical first for areas remote from conventional fuel sources. But it appears now that nuclear power will eventually be cheaper than conventional power even in countries like Britain with large coal resources.

In 1952 the cost of fuel for electricity production amounted to 0.43 pence per unit. Dr. W. H. Zinn, director of the Argonne National Laboratory, Chicago, has estimated the cost of nuclear fuel in a generator in which only U235 is burnt as about 0.3 pence per unit. (*Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, vol. IX (1953), p. 171.). But with breeding this cost might be as small as 0.01 pence per unit. This figure is uncertain because of the difficulty in estimating the cost of chemical processing necessary to extract the fuel in a breeder reactor. But it appears clear that the cost of fuel in a breeder reactor will be negligible.

However the initial cost of a nuclear reactor will be greater than that of the boiler of a conventional power station. But in the article quoted above Dr. Zinn estimated that with a breeder reactor nuclear power would be more economical than power from a coal consuming station, even if the nuclear reactor cost three times as much as the boiler.

But even if it were not so economical it would still be important to develop nuclear power facilities. The world resources of conventional fuel are not unlimited. Reserves of easily workable coal in Great Britain may not last more than about 200 years. Dr. R. Spence, chief chemist of A.E.R.E., Harwell, stated recently :

> "By 1960, the B.E.A. estimates it will require another 13 million tons of coal. At the present time we consume about three times less power per operative than the U.S.A. so that we feel electricity consumption is likely to go on doubling about every ten years for a considerable time."

It is important to conserve our coal for other purposes if alternative sources of fuel are available since it has vital and increasingly important applications in the chemical and metallurgical industries.

SOURCES OF RAW MATERIALS

Before the last war uranium had no great economic importance, being valued mainly for its association with radium. High grade ore deposits

were known in the Shinkolobwe area of Belgian Congo and near the Great Bear Lake in Canada. Since the war large deposits have been found near Lake Athabasca in Northern Saskatchewan, Canada, and at Rum Jungle in the Northern Territory of Australia.

Uranium is known to occur in Saxony, Czechoslovakia and Tadjikistan, and it would be surprising if there were no deposits in the Urals region where so many minerals occur. In 1948 Associated Press reported a major uranium find in Polish Silesia which it said was one of the richest in Europe, surpassed only "by recent discoveries in the Soviet Union".

No really rich deposits of uranium ore occur within the territorial boundaries of the U.S.A., although secondary deposits occur on the Colorado plateau. There has recently been a tendency to utilise lower grade ore. In fact the largest supplier of uranium to the U.S.A. now appears to be South Africa, where deposits of low grade ore are associated with the Witwatersrand gold field. Its exploitation is economic since the ore has already been crushed in the gold extraction process.

There are quite large deposits of thorium-bearing sands in India and in Australia.

There should be no great difficulty in supplying the world's power requirements for many thousands of years from available deposits of uranium and thorium.

THE TIME SCALE FOR NUCLEAR POWER

The main factor holding up the development of power hitherto has been the overwhelming concentration of effort on the military application of nuclear energy. Provided the necessary priorities are given it seems reasonable to expect that a sizeable fraction of our electrical power will be coming from nuclear reactors in twenty years time.

Of course it would be uneconomic to replace existing stations by nuclear power stations immediately. But as these stations become obsolete and new stations are needed to expand our power resources it is to be expected that nuclear, rather than coal burning, stations will be built.

MOBILE NUCLEAR REACTORS

In a recent lecture, Sir John Cockcroft mentioned a nuclear reactor that could be designed to operate in a two-gallon drum. Such a reactor (together with appropriate shielding) could well prove economical for ship propulsion. A reactor to develop 20,000 horse-power at 25 per cent efficiency would require the consumption of less than 50 lb. of fuel per annum. Even an atomic-powered locomotive might have an application for special purposes such as service over a long stretch of desert.

Work on mobile reactors has been going on for a considerable time in the U.S.A. but this has aimed at the development of a nuclear-powered submarine for the Navy.

USES OF FISSION PRODUCTS

A nuclear power station producing electric power at a rate of 100,000 kilowatts for a year could yield fission products which, when extracted, would have a radioactive strength of 10 million curies—that is, equivalent to the radiation intensity given off by 10 million grams of radium.

(a) *Production of heat.* The idea has been suggested that small vessels containing waste fission products could be used for radiators in houses, for driving small cars, and so on. A rod 3 in. in diameter and weighing 3 lb. made from separated fission products could give out about one kilowatt of power and the surface temperature would reach about 900° F. But only about 100 such radiators could be fabricated from the fission products extracted after one year's operation of the above reactor so that there seems little future in this method of utilising fission products.

(b) *Food sterilisation and pest eradication.* The radiations from fission products could be used as an alternative to present heat treatment methods for food sterilisation. The fission products, after chemical treatment, would be placed in a sealed enclosure and the food to be sterilised placed around it.

Very large radiation intensities would be needed. For the 100,000-kilowatt station considered above, the fission products extracted after one year's operation would be sufficient to sterilise 10,000 gallons of milk or 80 tons of canned meat per day and would treat about 2,000 tons of grain per day for insect deinfestation.

A generator of this size would supply a city of about 100,000 people and while figures of this kind cannot be precise it does look as though the fission products from such a nuclear reactor could be usefully employed for food sterilisation. Much remains to be done, however, before such treatment could be advocated. It will have to be established that such radiations do not produce harmful changes in the food or do not spoil its flavour.

Radiations from fission products may also be applicable to the artificial aging of meat, whisky and other products.

(c) *Radiation chemistry and metallurgy.* Chemical changes may be produced by the exposure of materials to intense radiations from fission products or to neutron radiations from the reactor. The polymerisation of the gas ethylene to produce the long-chain plastic, polyethylene, can be stimulated by beta and gamma radiations. About half a ton of polyethylene could be produced per day with the radiation from the fission products extracted from the 100,000-kilowatt reactor described above.

Some plastics can be given more useful properties by exposure to radiation. For instance, instead of melting when heated, they become rubbery and elastic. A piece of polythene, treated in this way, can be pressed, when hot, into any shape and it will keep this shape on cooling.

Practically all rubbers and plastics, when treated with radiation, become harder and more heat resistant.

Plants for the production of some kinds of plastic may actually be built alongside nuclear reactors. Methods of continuous extraction of fission products from the reactor may be developed. This would greatly increase the amount of radiation available for industrial processes.

(d) *Radio-isotope batteries.* An insulated plate exposed to beta radiations from some of the fission products may became charged to a potential of several thousand volts after a few weeks. Devices of this kind have been suggested for batteries in applications where only very tiny currents are needed. One suggested application has been for use for power supplies for electrical equipment to be carried in rockets. It is well known that consideration is being given to the launching of an artificial satellite which will circle the earth indefinitely at a height of about 1,000 miles. Important scientific data on cosmic and solar radiation, unobtainable on earth, could be obtained by means of instruments on such a satellite, and radio-isotope batteries have been suggested as a means of energising these instruments. To obtain 1 watt of electric power a source of strength 25,000 curies would be needed.

USE OF MATERIALS MADE RADIOACTIVE IN NUCLEAR REACTORS

Almost any material may be made radioactive by exposure to the neutrons in a nuclear reactor but the intensities of radiation induced in this way are much smaller than those obtained from fission products. The advantage is that a particular type of radiation may be readily obtained by selecting the right material for exposure to the neutrons.

The production of radioactive isotopes in this way, while interesting and important, does not require a large-scale application of atomic energy. Some of the most interesting applications of these radioactive isotopes are listed below:

(a) *Medical treatment.* Cobalt 60, produced in quantity by the irradiation of cobalt in a nuclear reactor, is increasingly replacing radium in deep therapy. Radio-cobalt sources up to 100 curies strength are now being produced.

For irradiation of particular organs of the body special isotopes may be used. For example, radio-iodine produced in the reactor is taken up selectively by thyroid tissue and can be used for the treatment and diagnosis of thyroidal cancer or other thyroid disorders.

(b) *Industrial radiography.* Cobalt 60 sources may be used instead of high voltage X-ray machines for the examination of industrial castings, forgings, etc.

(c) *Static elimination.* The accumulation of static electricity causes difficulty in many industrial processes, particularly in the textile industry. There, static charges may be conducted away by exposure to radiation.

"Fog-marking" caused by dust particles attracted to charged warps left in the loom overnight can be prevented in this way.

(d) *Thickness gauges.* The absorption of beta rays may be used as a measure of thickness for the automatic control of the thickness of paper and other sheet products.

(e) *Radio-active tracers.* There seems no limit to the applications of radioactive tracers. Some of these are mentioned below:

(i) *Detection of leaks in cables.* Leaks in pressurised underground telephone cables can be detected by introducing a radioactive gas at one end. The soil near the leak becomes radioactive and the Geiger counter can locate the position of the leak from the surface.

(ii) *Applications to industry.* One important application is in the study of wear in gear trains, bearing materials, cutting tools and so on. For instance, to study bearing wear one of the bearing surfaces is made radioactive by exposure to neutrons in a reactor. After a time the lubricant is removed and the amount of radioactivity in it gives a measure of the wear of the bearing surface.

There are innumerable other applications in industry including the labelling of melts of special steels, diffusion studies in metals and so on.

(iii) *Applications to chemical and biochemical research.* The unravelling of complicated processes is greatly facilitated by using appropriate "labelled" radioactive isotopes of the chemicals involved. Techniques of this kind have particular application in physiology since they enable details of physiological processes (such, for example, as metabolism) to be studied without harm to the subject.

(iv) *Medical diagnosis.* Tracer methods are assuming increasing importance in medical diagnosis. The diagnosis of thyroid cancer has already been mentioned. Recent work includes the diagnosis of brain tumours using radio-phosphorus.

PEACEFUL APPLICATIONS OF ATOMIC EXPLOSIVES

Under certain circumstances, atomic explosions might be of great value in blasting operations for the construction of dams, diversion of rivers, and so on. One difficulty would be the intense radioactivity remaining after the explosion. Also the destruction might be too large and indiscriminate except for special applications.

If a thermo-nuclear explosion were used for blasting, an equivalent strength to that of 20 million tons of T.N.T. should be obtainable, sufficient to demolish large mountains. Dearth of published material makes it difficult to draw any conclusions about these kinds of applications, but their use for peaceful purposes in the U.S.S.R. has been reported unofficially.

THE CONTROL OF WORLD URANIUM SUPPLIES

In view of the great and increasing importance of uranium it is not

surprising that the struggle between powerful capitalist interests for control of the world's oil supplies is being repeated in the field of uranium ore. An analysis of this struggle has been made recently by J. S. Allen in his book *Atomic Imperialism* (International Publishers, New York). All the familiar methods are being employed—cartel agreements here, bitter struggle there.

The United States monopoly groups started the struggle at rather a disadvantage. Control of the rich Canadian resources is vested in a Canadian Government corporation, Eldorado Mining and Refining Co. (1944), although, as is usual with such corporations, several of the directors have close connections with the leading monopoly groups of Canadian economy and with groups like International Nickel.

The much richer uranium resources of the Belgian Congo remained, after the war, firmly in the hands of the Anglo-Belgian Union Minière which has established over the resources and labour of the Katonga province of the Congo a control as complete as that over any colony. British capital shares control of Union Minière through Tanganyika Concessions. In 1950, 1,667,961 shares in Tanganyika Concessions were reported as being transferred to the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa in which Morgan interests have strong holdings. Six months later 600,000 of these shares were sold to a number of New York investment bankers associated with Rockefeller interests. So, according to Allen, two of the pillars of American finance capital now share in the control of African uranium.

It is clear that if the Baruch proposals for the control of atomic energy had been accepted these same interests would now have had a finger in the control of all the uranium supplies throughout the whole world. For this would have been the effect of the proposals for international control of all atomic energy resources contained in the Baruch plan. Fortunately, owing mainly to the vigilance of the Soviet representatives, this proposal was not accepted, so that over a large part of the world at least the people are still in control of these priceless resources.

ATOMIC ENERGY AND THE FUTURE

It is clear that the peaceful applications of atomic energy can have a great transforming effect on the mode of life of people in the future. Bountiful supplies of cheap power could be available to enable a very great rise in living standards. This power should be available just as cheaply to the remote, undeveloped areas that lack other fuel resources as to the more highly industrialised parts. Because no smoke is produced it should enable us in England to banish smog from our cities. In addition many of the by-products from nuclear power should have most exciting industrial applications.

But the application of atomic energy in these ways is not inevitable. So far all the main emphasis in the Western world has gone on the construction of most frightful weapons of mass destruction which have been used as an instrument of power politics in a most blatant and unashamed way. And the control of the uranium raw material is largely in the hands of the most powerful monopoly interests who are exploiting it wastefully for immediate gain, regardless of the enormous significance of these materials to posterity.

It is time the people of this and other countries started to plan for the future of atomic power. New power stations will need capital. It is useless to talk of the boon of nuclear power for the colonial and undeveloped areas unless we point to some way in which capital could be made available to these countries for the building of nuclear power stations. But this capital must be made available in such a way that it does not tie the colonial peoples still tighter in imperialist bondage.

In this connection the proposals, made recently by President Eisenhower, for the establishment of a pool of fissile material under the control of the United Nations for the purpose of bringing the benefits of the peaceful applications of atomic energy to backward peoples, have to be assessed. The timing of these proposals was undoubtedly influenced by the fears of Soviet progress in the field of nuclear power as voiced by Mr. Murray, and quoted earlier. However, provided the political difficulties of the control of the pool could be solved in such a way as to ensure that it did not fall into the hands of an international monopoly, the proposals could represent a step forward. But it is a very small step because the amount of fissile material envisaged as being put in the pool is only small. The reason it is small is very clear. It is because the overwhelming share of fissile material is being set aside for weapon production. This is the immediate key to the problem of the peaceful application of atomic energy. There are just not the resources of nuclear fuel nor the necessary supply of scientific and technical manpower to enable us to continue the present vast effort in atomic weapon production in addition to carrying out a really serious attack on the problem of nuclear power.

The dreams of the scientists and engineers of the prospects of large-scale peaceful application of atomic energy seem likely to remain dreams until we can obtain agreement on the abolition of atomic weapons and until we stop the mad race in their production.

Nationalisation

FINLAY HART

The issue of nationalisation is being handled by the present leadership of the Labour and trade union movement in such a way as to raise doubts in the minds of many workers whether the extension of nationalisation, at the present time, would be a good thing or a bad thing.

At the 1952 Trades Union Congress a resolution was passed—against the wishes of the General Council—the third paragraph of which read:

> "Congress therefore calls upon the General Council to formulate proposals for the extension of social ownership to other industries and services, particularly those now subject to monopoly control, such proposals to have due regard to the 'Plan for Engineering' of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions and other proposals submitted by affiliated organisations. Congress further calls upon the General Council to formulate general proposals for the democratisation of the nationalised industries and services calculated to make possible the ultimate realisation of full industrial democracy."

That was the Congress decision urging, or I should say instructing, the General Council on two points: (1) extending nationalisation; and (2) giving the workers more power within the nationalised industry.

During March and April, 1953, there were joint meetings between the Economic Committee of the T.U.C. and the working parties set up by the Labour Party to work out a common policy. This subsequently appeared in the Labour Party *Challenge to Britain* and in the "Interim Report on Public Ownership" presented to the 1953 T.U.C. Congress.

The Interim Report is a long-winded document which seeks to make a case for the right wing's opposition to the extension of nationalisation. These gentlemen dare not openly express their opposition, as the demand for nationalisation is deep-rooted in the desires and aspirations of the working class. In presenting the Report to the T.U.C. Mr. C. J. Geddes had to resort to sweeping and unsupported statements in his efforts to convince the Congress that the Report was in line with the 1952 Resolution. The Interim Report was only carried finally by 3,702,000 votes to 2,640,000. Mr. Geddes tried to assure us that:

> "the Report says clearly and precisely that the British trade union movement is going forward on the path of Socialism by means of

> the extension and expansion of social ownership, going forward without any doubt in its mind as to the need, merely expressing doubt from time to time as to the correct method which should be employed in that expansion and that extension."

Mr. Geddes claimed that the Report was an alternative policy between capitalism on the one hand and Communism on the other; but examination of the Report shows that it is distinctly closer to capitalism.

The document, apart from the Introduction and Conclusion, is divided into three parts: (1) Experience of Public Ownership in Major Industries Nationalised since 1945; (2) The Nation's Requirements; (3) Criteria for the Extension of Public Ownership.

The introduction reviews the previous declarations of the T.U.C., and deals particularly with the 1944 Report on Post-War Construction. The doubts and hesitations of the authors are revealed right at the outset when comparing the task of preparing the 1944 Report with that of preparing the present one. They say that whilst the authors of the 1944 Report realised that Britain would emerge from the war much weakened, and would have a hard fight to maintain and improve living standards,

> "it may be doubted whether in the abnormal conditions of wartime the extreme precariousness of the position in which this country now finds itself could be fully foreseen."

They then express doubt as to whether public opinion is strongly for the transfer of further industries to social ownership.

EXPERIENCE OF PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

The more closely we examine this Report, the more apparent does it become that the primary concern of the authors is to save capitalism and not replace it. In the review of Public Ownership under four separate headings—(1) Efficiency and Development; (2) Redistribution of Wealth; (3) Increased Public Control; (4) Better Industrial Relations—the authors try to be objective and unbiased, and are therefore compelled to conceal the hard facts of life arising out of the stern class conflict that is going on all around them.

Under the heading "Efficiency and Development", there are two important points revealed: (1) that output per worker in all industries nationalised is greater than pre-war; (2) the developments planned in the early years of nationalisation are not being realised.

From 1946 to 1952 the output of deep mined coal rose by 19 per cent. In 1952 British Railways, with 40,000 fewer employees, 1,500 fewer locomotives and 100,000 fewer freight cars, carried more freight than in 1948 and much more than in a pre-war year. In London Transport the total number of staff fell by 4 per cent between the end of 1948 and the end of 1952, although the total route miles increased by 3 per cent. In

Civil Aviation a substantial expansion in the scale of their operations has been accompanied by a spectacular increase in output per employee and a considerable reduction in costs. In 1946 output of steel was up 15 per cent per head employed above pre-war, and by 1952 that figure had risen to 44 per cent.

The impact of rearmament on the nationalised industries is not mentioned in the review, although the consequences are there for all to see. The British Electricity Board planned to step up their output capacity further, but are being held back by limits set by the Government. Investment in mines has not reached the levels set in *Plan for Coal* in 1950. At the same time the railways' proportion of capital investment for the United Kingdom has fallen from 4.4 per cent to 3.3 per cent.

One of the arguments used in favour of nationalisation is that it would bring about a redistribution of incomes from the richer to the poorer. There is no evidence that the nationalised industries are paying any less out in interest than the owners got when these industries were in private hands. There is, on the other hand, plenty of evidence that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst the workers engaged in these industries, particularly among railwaymen, who have only had wage increases equivalent to three-fifths of the increases won by workers in manufacturing industries. This evidence of the class conflict is ignored in the Report. It obviously is not important in the eyes of the authors, who were instructed by the 1950 T.U.C. to examine the financial structure of coal mining and transport with a view to easing the burden of compensation on these industries in particular: this is still being examined.

The section on increased public control is very "statesmanlike" in the most extreme sense. There is no demand for more workers' control. They argue against the case very forcibly in this section. In the section on better industrial relations we get samples of ambiguity very hard to beat; for example in dealing with parliamentary control it is said:

> "Parliament will have to build up a code of practice to guide itself as to where the boundary of control must be drawn."

To show how completely objective they are, they say:

> "the effectiveness of public control depends a great deal upon the quality of the persons operating it; no machinery, however elaborate, can work effectively unless its personnel, both lay and expert, understand the nature of their task and are prepared to face the problems of public ownership without violent prejudice or rigid ideas."

As the reader will see later, to ask for more workers' control or higher wages is, in the view of those who framed the Report, to have violent prejudice and rigid ideas.

WORKERS' CONTROL

The T.U.C. leadership attempts to "correct" the attitude of unions which are dissatisfied with the structure of the nationalised industries and with the limited extent to which they can influence the policy of those industries. It seems that anyone who wants more control by the workers and less by the ex-owners has out-of-date ideas. In paragraphs 113 and 114 we are told:

> "Only one or two unions are now officially committed to support of workers' control, although within many of the others there are sections of the rank and file who disagree with the official policy of their organisations. The source of these minority viewpoints is usually to be found in the syndicalist conceptions prevalent in the early part of this century. Although only a comparatively small number of trade unionists may hold such views, their influence at branch and workshop level is important, as many of them are the active members who hold trade union offices and who serve on the consultative and negotiating committees at their places of work."

So what is to be done about such views? The Report continues:

> "It is not sufficient to wait for time to work an alteration in such opinions. Trade unionism is not learnt out of a book, and the great majority of the active trade unionists who do the day-to-day work of the movement learn their trade unionism from older men in the workshop. Out-of-date ideas about industrial relations can thereby be propagated for generations."

It would be interesting to see one of the authors trying out their new "up-to-date ideas" at a works-gate meeting.

They continue the argument by stating that those who urge "workers' control" are guilty of wishful thinking and the desire to avoid unpleasant or difficult economic problems. They are quite emphatic that, despite the existence of problems, "there is no fundamental weakness in industrial relations that calls for any radical change in Congress policy". That is in face of the overwhelming opinion of the movement as expressed by the 1952 Congress.

THE NATION'S NEEDS

Mr. Butler could quite easily have written the section on "The Nation's Requirements". The authors are supposed to be looking at the contribution social ownership in its various forms can make to the solution of Britain's economic problems. The problem as they see it is the "extreme precariousness" of our position in the world, which they describe in terms that are very familiar from Government speeches. And we get a familiar conclusion:

> "During the next few years, therefore, if we are to maintain present living standards—let alone improve them—we must strain every nerve to reduce our deficit with the dollar area and to achieve a regular surplus in our balance of payments as a whole sufficient to build up our reserves to a more adequate level. We must provide capital for the development of the rest of the sterling area in order to help the whole area, including this country, to balance its payments with the rest of the world. Both our economic and our political interests may also require us to participate in other international schemes for assisting the under-developed areas of Asia and Africa. . . . The achievement of these aims will prove extremely hard and will require far-reaching adjustments in our economy."

Let us do a bit of searching for the "adjustments" and the manner of carrying them out. Is what has to be done, in their opinion, forward on the path of Socialism so bravely stated by Mr. Geddes, or is it in line with Mr. Butler's ideas? You pay your money and you take your choice:

> "The danger in our present situation of not attaining a high enough level of investment is of such importance that it dwarfs some of the risks in public ownership of which much is heard."

Wait for it!—

> "On the other hand it cannot be denied that the very precariousness of our position heightens certain risks inseparable from the extension of public ownership. There is the danger that vital industries, on which we depend heavily for exports or for essential foodstuffs and industrial components, will be temporarily reduced in efficiency during the take-over period; there is also the possibility that overseas undertakings of certain industries will either have to be 'hived off' or will encounter prejudice and discrimination in foreign markets; and that in either case our balance of payments will suffer. These dangers must be weighed."

They were duly weighed, and a complete case was made out for the public ownership of . . . the water supply industry.

Beneath all the profound phrasing and statesmanlike approaches of the General Council of the T.U.C. there is opposition to any extension of nationalisation in the sense in which it was understood by the pioneers of the Labour movement. Their only concern is to make capitalism work efficiently, and it is within this framework that we see the proposals on Public Ownership in *Challenge to Britain*. Steel is to be re-nationalised—they have no alternative but to propose that; but all other "adjustments" suggested are a combination of public ownership and/or control and private enterprise.

There is no real challenge to monopoly capitalism in either the Interim

Report or *Challenge to Britain*. Without such a challenge we shall never reach the goal outlined in *Let us Face the Future*, for which the majority of the British people voted in 1945:

> "the establishment of the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain, free, democratic, efficient, progressive, public spirited, its material resources organised in the service of the British people."

The examination of the right-wing Labour and trade union leaders' approach to the extension of nationalisation reveals why there has been no fight on their part to make it serve the interests of the mass of the people and the workers in the industries concerned. In spite of the deep feeling expressed in opposition to the excessive compensation paid, particularly in mines and railways, nothing has been done. In 1952 over £100 million was paid out to the capitalist class in interest on compensation and on new loans. This is not the kind of nationalisation the workers voted for. It makes many workers doubt what advantage, if any, will it be to the workers in shipbuilding, in engineering, and all large-scale industry.

So far as this doubt exists in the minds of organised workers and Labour voters, the responsibility for their confusion rests fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the right-wing trade union and Labour leaders. After all, nationalisation, the transfer of ownership of an industry from many private capitalists to the State, is only a form of organisation. It has certain technical advantages in the way of centralising the control and management of the industry, making possible the planning of both production and distribution, as well as providing centralised funds for development.

But this is only to speak of nationalisation as a *form* of organising one or more industries. Simply considered as a form, it may serve different aims, it may have a different content, in accordance with whether it is serving capitalist society or socialist society. It may serve the interests of the capitalist class, or it may serve the interests of the working class. The traditional demand of the Labour movement for nationalisation was for a *class* measure, a measure that would serve the interests of the workers in the industry and of the working class in general—that is, for taking an industry away from private owners, who run it for their own profit, and putting it in the hands of the State to run it for the benefit of the people.

CAPITALISTS NEED SOME NATIONALISATION

At the same time, as Engels showed, the capitalists themselves at a certain stage find it necessary for the State to take over certain industries, and for the capitalist State to run them for the benefit of the capitalist

class as a whole. As experience has shown, this is particularly the case with means of communication (post office, telephones and telegraph, railways and other forms of transport) which can be run more economically under a single control and thus provide a cheaper service for capitalist enterprises in other industries. In Britain, coal (owing to the large numbers of owners and other historical reasons) and power were also important from the standpoint of providing cheap services to capitalist industries.

Thus the class demands of the Labour movement and the class interests of the capitalists were not in conflict as to the *form* of nationalisation *in respect of certain industries.* And the right-wing Labour Government of 1945 was the perfect instrument through which the Labour movement's demand could be satisfied in *form,* while the *content* of the nationalisation actually carried through served the needs of the monopoly capitalists.

It was this contradiction that gave rise to the sense of frustration, so far as it exists, among many workers in the nationalised industries. But it would not be true to say that this sense of frustration is general, or that its existence means that the workers in the nationalised industries feel that nationalisation has made no difference at all to them, and they would not care whether their industry was denationalised or not. The fact that there was no strong movement among the workers concerned over the denationalisation of road haulage and steel was due to the attitude of the trade union leaders rather than to the indifference of the men. There is no evidence whatever that the workers in the nationalised industries wish to return to the conditions before nationalisation. Every coal owner or rail boss that was removed from direct control of their destinies represented a victory. Even when some of these bosses returned as chairmen and directors of nationalised boards, many workers felt that these gentlemen now had not got such decisive and arbitrary power over the lives of those engaged in the industry as when they were private owners. Moreover, certain concessions had to be given by the Government and the nationalised boards under the pressure of the unions.

I think it would be generally true to say that the sense of grievance of the workers in the nationalised industries is directed against those aspects of their conditions which have been carried forward from capitalist ownership without change, and that under the influence of the Communists and Labour militants this sense of grievance is being turned more and more into positive demands (cutting down compensation, workers' share in control, etc.) rather than developing into disillusionment with nationalisation itself.

On the other hand, the T.U.C. Report examined above is calculated to create disillusionment with nationalisation in general—to show that it has really made no difference, that it is not the important thing, and anyway that it should not be extended very far if at all. Mr. Geddes himself stated that the Interim Report had been welcomed by those who detest and oppose and will continue to oppose public ownership in any form

whatever. This is only natural, because the right-wing Labour policy of not extending nationalisation suits the monopoly capitalists now, just as the policy of nationalising certain industries after 1945 had certain advantages for the monopoly capitalists in that period.

But among the workers and the Labour movement as a whole the traditional demand for nationalisation as a class measure *against* the capitalists and *for* the workers and working people generally is as powerful as ever, even though it is somewhat damped down by the right-wing leaders' attitude. In my opinion, this traditional demand for nationalisation as a step towards Socialism is of very great importance in the present situation, and the need to fight for it is not weakened by our criticism of the existing type of nationalisation.

It is true that we cannot realise the full content of the Labour movement's class demand for nationalisation until we have a socialist State in the full sense of these words. But that is no reason why we should not fight now (1) for definite gains in the workers' interests so far as the industries already nationalised are concerned; (2) for the extension of nationalisation to other industries.

For a fight on these lines can bring immediate gains to the workers; it can make inroads into the wealth and power of the capitalists; in so far as it wins successes it is paving the way for socialist nationalisation when the conditions are ripe; and above all, it can serve to develop class consciousness and mobilise the workers against the Tories and their right-wing Labour supporters, and thus prepare the way for industrial and political working-class victories.

THE NATIONALISED INDUSTRIES

Four principal issues have been raised in regard to the industries already nationalised; these concern not only the workers in those industries but the whole Labour movement. They are:

(1) The high rates of compensation, which place on each industry a burden that acts both to keep down wages and keep up prices. The 1950 T.U.C. demanded the easing of the burden of compensation and each year the demand for this grows.

(2) The amounts paid to the ex-owners remain a burden on each nationalised industry. The demand is now widespread that any compensation paid, whatever the amount, should be the responsibility of the State.

(3) The relations between the workers and the management are unchanged. There is a growing demand for the removal of ex-owners and other capitalist representatives from the boards, and greater working-class representation.

(4) The secrecy of financial transactions is continued as under private ownership, making it possible for nationalised concerns to sell at

specially low rates to the privately owned industries, while prices are kept high to the consuming public; hence the demand for publication of accounts and the right of workers' representatives to get all information they require.

These demands, put forward by the Communist Party in its early criticisms of the Labour Government's nationalisation measures, have now become more or less the general demands of the workers in these industries and of the Left Labour movement as a whole.

FURTHER NATIONALISATION

The fight for these demands in the industries already nationalised has the same class character as the fight for the nationalisation of further industries. In both cases the aim is to mobilise the movement for measures which will weaken the monopoly capitalists and strengthen the position of the workers from both an industrial and a political standpoint.

As shown above, the monopoly capitalists as a whole (whatever may be the attitude of particular capitalist groups) get some advantages from the nationalisation of certain raw material, power and transport services, because the cheaper services provided to them cheapen their costs of production in other industries, and thus enable higher profits to be made in these other industries. It follows from this that they can accept a small nationalised sector alongside a large privately owned sector of industry—in fact the "mixed economy" which is so dear to the right-wing Labour and trade union leaders, whose policy always reflects the needs of the monopoly capitalists.

Any extension of nationalisation beyond this small sector is not only politically dangerous for the monopoly capitalists, but begins to cut into their really basic economic interests: therefore both they and the right wing of the Labour movement oppose it (offering water as a harmless alternative to anything more drastic).

But this is just why the workers should insist on the nationalisation of further industries, especially those in which high profits are being made. The fight for this extension, alongside the fight for changes to the benefit of the working class in the industries already nationalised, is the continuation of the traditional fight for nationalisation as a *class* measure against the capitalists.

The question must not be put in the form: are further measures of nationalisation of the Labour Government type any advantage to the workers? The real question is: how can the fight for nationalisation as a class measure against the capitalists best be developed? The answer, I hope, is clear from what has been said above.

Also, the fight on these lines has to be related not only to the present political situation but to the future as well. Every action by the working class on these issues mobilises the workers for more far-reaching issues—

for a fully socialist nationalisation. Every victory won is a step that will make easier the socialist transformation of the whole of industry.

This is why, in the struggle on these current issues it is also necessary to make known and win the movement for the conception of full socialist nationalisation put forward by the Communist Party in its programme *The British Road to Socialism*.

> "Socialist nationalisation", this programme states, "is necessary to put an end to capitalist profit-making and exploitation of the workers, to ensure control over our economic life, and to make economic planning a reality, and to lay the basis for a great advance in the living conditions of the people. It is the way to transform the system of capitalist private ownership into socialist people's ownership."

Compare that attitude to nationalisation with the proposals contained in the Interim Report, and *Challenge to Britain*. The introduction to *Challenge to Britain* tells us, "The plan for Britain which we outline in the following pages will involve sacrifices not only of material benefits but of many cherished habits and traditions."

How can anyone expect the workers to be enthusiastic about such a plan? On the other hand, the *British Road to Socialism* presents us with an alternative to sacrifices. It says: Socialist nationalisation will

> "make available for social use immense wealth that has hitherto gone to build up the capitalist profits and power of the rich property owners. It will enable the Government, with the co-operation of the workers and technicians, to end restrictions and bring about a great increase in production, to re-equip and re-organise industry on the basis of a national plan to increase the productive resources of the country, improve wages and working conditions, reduce prices, extend all social services and remove for ever the danger of economic crises and unemployment."

Academic Freedom and the Communists

EDWARD BURTON

I

In recent years, events in the U.S.A. (and some nearer home) have made the question of academic freedom a common subject of discussion in British educational circles and in those sections of the Press which are largely addressed to these circles. This discussion has suffered, however, from a striking weakness. There has been a general failure to consider seriously a question which should logically have been the first to be raised, namely, why has the threat to academic freedom arisen, and where does it come from?

The defence of academic freedom rests on two simple principles, principles to which all democrats, Communist and non-Communist alike, subscribe. These are: first, that knowledge cannot advance without controversy and the clash of opposing viewpoints; and secondly, that you may punish a man for what he does, but you are not entitled to punish him for what he thinks. Who is challenging these principles in the world today?

Tendencies which make for the restriction of academic freedom are nothing new. Past history shows that established authority has always resisted ideas which threaten to undermine its ascendancy, and in so doing has sought to penalise in varying degrees those who hold such ideas. But the greatly intensified threat which we face today is the direct product of the cold war.

Those who most zealously attack academic freedom are precisely those who are the most ardent protagonists of the cold war policy.

It is a well-tried tactic of such circles to start with the Communists, both because the Communists are their most resolute and effective opponents, and because they count on the widespread misconceptions of Communists and Communist aims which capitalism has always fostered to restrain other democrats from rallying to their defence. Thus they seek to pave the way for a gradual extension of the attack to all those who do not conform. The protagonists of the cold war usually impute their own methods to the Communists; according to them, the "Communist" States and Communists everywhere seek to impose their system on the rest of the world by force, seek to destroy democracy everywhere, and are the enemies of all freedom of thought and expression.

In actual fact the Communist position is the exact reverse of theirs. Communists stand for peace between the opposing social systems, so that the superior system may prove its superiority in peaceful competition.

They stand for national independence and for the maintenance and extension of democracy, so that the people of each country may express its will and bring about whatever changes it may desire. And they stand also for freedom of controversy without which the knowledge which man needs to extend his power over nature and over his own destiny cannot advance.

Ever-widening circles are coming to realise these facts. Particularly during the last year a great revulsion against McCarthyism has manifested itself in Britain. Both the need and the desire to resist it are being widely felt. But it would be foolish to underestimate the extent to which the torrent of propaganda since the beginning of the cold war has left its traces in the thinking even of those millions who are now rejecting its central thesis. That is why the incipient forms of McCarthyism which have appeared in Britain have not until recently begun to meet with the resistance which is called for.

The British McCarthys, running true to form, have started with the Communists, and many honest intellectuals who see the danger signal are nevertheless held back from offering resistance because they too have their doubts about the Communists. But if British McCarthyism is to be quickly and decisively defeated, it must be resisted from the very start, and resisted unitedly by all whom it threatens. The removal of misconceptions which impair prompt and united resistance therefore becomes a task of great importance, and one which needs to be undertaken not only in the interests of the Communists but of all those who wish to see our tradition of academic freedom upheld; for otherwise McCarthyism will find it easier to win the initial victories which it needs if it is to develop its attack.

II

Can McCarthyism be defeated without the Communists? There are many liberals, especially in America, who seem to think so.* These liberals have commonly conceded to McCarthyism that Communists are an exception, and that discrimination against them is justified. Some have made this concession in all honesty; but others who should know better have done so in the mistaken idea that this tactic strengthens their own fight against the enemy. America has produced in recent years a sizeable crop of such resisters, and the publication in this country of such books as Owen Lattimore's *Ordeal by Slander* and Barth's *The Loyalty of Free Men* has familiarised British readers with the approach. One may leave aside the moral shabbiness of such an attitude, and point simply to the signal lack of success achieved by it. This unprincipled concession, so far from strengthening the position of the liberals, has generally proved fatal to their own defence.

* Or perhaps, more accurately, seem to have thought so; for there have been in recent months some welcome signs that many American liberals are having second thoughts on the subject.

Lattimore's own experience well illustrates the point that no effective resistance is possible this way. Throughout his investigation he answered all questions put to him "frankly and openly." He has described in his book the whole process of his long and costly efforts to clear himself, and at the time of its publication in 1950 he seemed to have succeeded. Two years later, however, he was indicted on a charge of perjury in connection with his testimony. The Lattimores are not yet out of the wood; nor are they likely to be until a united, principled resistance which makes no concessions to McCarthyism inflicts a decisive defeat on it.

Communists take a positive attitude to all expressions of opposition to McCarthyism, not excluding the type of opposition just described. But they point out that only an all-inclusive united resistance of those whom it threatens can actually defeat it. American experience again supports this conclusion. In Detroit, in Chicago, and in Los Angeles the Un-American Activities Committee received a sound thrashing, and those who have heard the recordings of the Los Angeles hearings will appreciate that it was precisely the united and uncompromising resistance to it which made this possible.

The impression has been sedulously fostered that Communists in advocating such a united resistance are angling to improve their position at the expense not only of their enemies but also of their allies. This is absolutely untrue. Communists seek in this sphere, as in others, to achieve united action on a programme of common aims reached by the free and voluntary agreement of all the parties to it. True, they do not give up their right publicly to express their Communist views and carry on their own independent activity, and in so doing they confidently expect to win increasing support. But neither do they demand any surrender of exactly similar rights from those with whom they seek to co-operate. In such a united front, no participant enjoys any right which every other participant does not also enjoy.

It must be said that many of those who seek to uphold the liberal tradition would be less diffident about co-operating with Communists if they would take a little more trouble to acquire a first-hand acquaintance with the essentials of Communist theory, instead of accepting at their face value the misleading accounts of hostile writers. That misconceptions about Communism should be widespread is quite understandable. But when British academic figures priding themselves on their fairness and objectivity set out to discuss the "problem" of the Communists and academic freedom, we have a right to demand that Communism too should enjoy the benefit of their fair and objective study. That benefit is all too rarely extended to it.

To take a typical example, a university lecturer, Mr. W. H. Burston, who is apparently a man of liberal views, in May 1951 contributed an article on this question to the *Universities Review*. In it he reached the

welcome conclusion that in making teaching appointments Communists should not be discriminated against, but he reached it, judging by his article, only after severe mental conflict, and when one sees what he thinks Communism is one can only be surprised that he reached it at all. All the hoary old alleged "descriptions" of Communists are there. The Communist apparently believes "that his politics provide the key to history, rather than the other way about." His version of history "will be nothing but an inference from a political creed" (i.e., from a dogma). The Communists sacrifice everything to the attainment of their ends, and "amongst other things which are sacrificed is respect for truth". Communism is defined as "economic determinism". And so on.

It is worth while pointing out that all this is common ground between the liberal Mr. Burston, who believes that appointing bodies should not discriminate against Communists, and the anonymous reviewer of Jack Lindsay's *Byzantium into Europe* (*Times Literary Supplement*, December 1952), who demanded that they should. It is also worth pointing out—though perhaps not to the *T.L.S.* reviewer, who clearly had no intention of presenting a fair picture of Marxism—that anyone who honestly seeks to find out what Marxism really is, will at a very early stage of his investigation rid himself of the major misconceptions which appear in Mr. Burston's account. Thus the very first chapter of the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, which occupies only eleven pages in the latest edition of Marx and Engels' Selected Works, shows that Communists are far from believing that "politics provide the key to history", and that the precise opposite would be nearer the truth.

In the whole literature of Marxism, nothing will be found to support the ideas about Communism quoted above, and much will be found which explicitly contradicts them. On "economic determinism", for instance, Communists have many times had occasion to draw attention to a celebrated letter of Engels (that to J. Bloch, dated September 21, 1890) in which in the space of three pages the idea that Marxism is synonymous with economic determinism is explicitly refuted and the true Marxist conception of history is brilliantly outlined. The classics of Communism are readily accessible, and it needs to be stated bluntly that those who presume to discuss the subject without reference to them, do themselves no credit.

III

At the same time let us recognise that the sustained flood of anti-Communist slander has exercised a certain effect on the thinking of many honest men and women, and that more needs to be done to correct the misconceptions and confusion which still exist in their minds.

Many sincere democrats are still sceptical about the Communists. They use such arguments as the following: "You deny that Marxism

is a dogma, but in the Soviet Union were not biologists, linguists and others called to account because their teachings did not correspond with Marxism? You ask us to co-operate with you in resisting the McCarthys, but you are opposed not only to the McCarthys, but to our conception of liberty as well; and historical experience suggests that after dealing with them it will be our turn next, that you *do* in fact in the end swallow up those who ally themselves with you and impose your own minority rule. And finally, how can we trust you? Your morality is subordinate to the interests of Communism, and if the interests of Communism demand it, you will have no compunction about presenting one policy for public consumption while you secretly pursue another."

All of these points have to be answered honestly and understandingly, and clearly the last needs to be taken up first, since unless conviction is won upon this point our answers to the others can be dismissed as "propaganda" in which we ourselves do not believe. The charge presented is not a new one, and it may be answered in two ways. It is quite true that our morality is not based upon any supernatural sanction. "The supreme being for man is man himself," wrote Marx. "Consequently all relations, all conditions in which man is a humiliated, enslaved, despised creature, must be destroyed." Communist morality derives wholly from the needs of the struggle to realise this great aim. In the present period of history the interests of humanity demand the replacement of the capitalist system by socialism; any act which contributes to the fight against capitalism and against its inevitable concomitants of mass suffering, colonial oppression and war, is a good act. "Morality for us is subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat," says Lenin. "Morality serves the purpose of helping human society to rise to a higher level and to get rid of the exploitation of labour." But it does not follow that disregard of the truth is any part of Communist doctrine. On the contrary, Communism more than any other philosophy demands the strictest regard for truth, since only by taking into account all the facts in a situation, both favourable and unfavourable, can a correct line of advance be worked out.

Moreover, Communism confidently sets itself the aim of winning and permanently retaining the support of the overwhelming majority of the people in every country in the world, and all historical experience shows that no party which deceives the people can hope to achieve such an aim. Stalin has been explicit on this point. In 1925 he was asked by a correspondent whether a certain formulation was "a fact or an agitational slogan." His reply opens with a sharp rebuke.

> "Such a presentation," Stalin writes, "suggests that our Party is capable of issuing intrinsically false slogans, slogans . . . in which the Party itself does not believe, but which it nevertheless puts into circulation . . . to deceive the masses. [Other parties] may act like that, since deception of the masses is one of [their] principal weapons. But never and in no circumstances can our Party put the question in this way."

Dimitrov, in his historic speech at the Reichstag Fire Trial in 1933, was also faced with this charge. Replying to it along the same lines as those just quoted, he further pointed out that Communism is a world-wide movement, numbering its adherents in millions, and that it would be a sheer impossibility for such a world movement to say one thing to the millions of its followers and at the same time secretly do the opposite.

> "Such a party . . . does not know double book-keeping. . . . When it speaks to the million-strong masses . . . [it] does so seriously and with a full sense of its responsibility."

The argument, then, that Communists say one thing and do another, will not stand up to serious examination. In the light of this conclusion, let us return to the first charge—that Marxism is (to use the *T.L.S.* reviewer's words) "immutable dogma".

The truth is that Marxism has at every stage of its development repudiated such a conception. Marx and Engels themselves many times stressed that their theory was "not a dogma but a guide to action". The point is most fully elaborated in the *Short History of the C.P.S.U.(B.)*. Declaring that Marxism-Leninism is a science, it continues:

> "and as a science it does not and cannot stand still, but develops and perfects itself. Clearly in its development it is bound to become enriched by new experience and new knowledge, and some of its propositions and conclusions are bound to change in the course of time . . ." (p. 355).

Several pages follow in which the point is elaborated. It is worth stressing that this book is perhaps the most widely studied of all the classics of Communism.

The great Soviet controversies of the post-war years, far from contradicting this picture, serve to confirm it, notwithstanding all that the anti-Soviet Press has asserted to the contrary. The linguistics controversy well illustrates this point. The battle was here directed against certain self-styled Marxists who were refusing to admit well-established facts which clearly invalidated their theory, and who moreover were seeking to stifle criticism and prevent debate of the issues. Stalin in his contribution stressed that "no science can develop and flourish without a battle of opinions, without freedom of criticism", and called upon those working in this field to acknowledge shortcomings revealed "in due time, openly and honestly, as befits scientists". What emerged from the contro-

versy was both a clearer understanding of the problems of linguistics and a further development of the science of Marxism-Leninism, as those who have followed subsequent discussions on basis and superstructure are well aware.

Here again a first-hand study of some of the readily accessible key documents of these controversies would show how grossly distorted is the picture of them which the anti-Soviet Press has presented.

But to return to the main question of the defence of liberty; what the liberal says about his conception of freedom not being the same as the Communist's is perfectly true, and no Communist has ever pretended otherwise. This is, of course, no argument against co-operation to resist a common danger, since, as was pointed out above, none of the partners in such a co-operation is asked to renounce his conception of liberty, and none possesses any right which the others do not also possess. But since the future results of such co-operation are sometimes regarded with misgivings, it is necessary to clarify the Communist position.

It is common ground to all who believe in liberty that complete liberty for everyone to do anything he pleases is an impossibility, for the individual is part of society and must be subject to certain restraints imposed in the interest of society as a whole. Many liberals would further agree with the Communists when they say that in order to assess the exact state of liberty in any particular society, it is necessary to ask the questions: "For whom is there liberty, and what are they at liberty to do?" Communists in seeking the answers to these questions are guided by their whole theory of social development. They believe that in a society divided into antagonistic classes an extension of freedom for one class generally involves a restriction of freedom for the classes opposed to it.

For example, in present-day British society, there is virtually untrammelled freedom for the big monopoly capitalist Press, and most liberals would not quarrel with the statement that suppression and distortion of news are common features in its organs. This freedom enjoyed by the capitalist Press in itself necessarily restricts the freedom of other members of society in at least two ways. First, it makes it impossible in practice for a democratic organisation to launch a newspaper enjoying in any way comparable facilities. Secondly, it greatly restricts the liberty of the citizens of Britain to exercise their democratic rights on the issues of the day, since they are prevented from knowing all the relevant facts necessary for a sound decision to be made.

The Communist Party makes no secret of the fact that it works to convince the British people of the need drastically to reduce the liberties enjoyed by the capitalist Press. Amongst other things, it wishes to see legislative action to prevent the publication of propaganda for war and the dissemination of material fomenting anti-Semitism and racial hatred. It would like to see the British people compel their Government to take

away the liberty to publish, print and distribute the American so-called "comics" from all those who enjoy that liberty at the present time.

In another field, it fights to abolish the position where many colleges and university authorities are at liberty to impose a ban on political and religious activity among their students. (This is particularly common in the technical colleges.) Every one of these proposals would involve a curtailment of the liberty of certain persons and certain groups; but they would also involve an infinitely more significant *extension* of liberty for infinitely more numerous sections of society, and for that very reason there is not one of the proposals quoted which does not command democratic support extending far beyond the ranks of the Communist Party.

To state the position more generally, the Communist Party believes that the most real and extensive freedoms in Britain today are enjoyed by the monopoly capitalist class, and exercised by it at the expense of the freedoms of the British people. It stands for the maximum extension of the freedom of the people, well aware of, and not seeking to conceal, the fact that this will involve inroads into the freedom of the monopoly-capitalists, the real rulers of Britain today, and believing that this process will need to be continued until the British people become in fact what they are only in name today—the real masters of the destinies of their country.

It is absolutely false to say that the Communists seek at any stage of this development to impose their own minority rule. The party programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, which was published and sold in over 200,000 copies, is fully explicit on this point:

> "The people cannot advance to Socialism, therefore, without real political power, which must be taken from the hands of the capitalist minority and firmly grasped *by the majority of the people*, led by the working class. . . . The essential condition for establishing such a people's power is the building up of a broad coalition or popular alliance of all sections of the working people: of the organised working class, of all workers by hand and brain, of professional people and technicians, of all lower and middle sections in the towns, and of the farmers in the countryside." [My italics—E. B.]

It is clear that this means the overwhelming majority of the population.

The bogy that "Communists swallow up their allies" is similarly based on a complete misrepresentation of Communist methods of work. It is an undeniable fact that within the broad alliances which overthrew feudal and capitalist rule and established people's democracy in the countries of Eastern Europe, the strength and influence of the Communist Parties has increased as that of no other party has. But this position has not been achieved by deception and underhand manœuvres; it has been won by the soundness of Communist policies and by that

devotion to their cause which characterises the Party's members and supporters, and to which their bitterest opponents all over the world have often paid grudging tribute. These two qualities characterise the Communist Party everywhere, but they are clearly not advantages unfairly obtained at the expense of other parties. The Communist Party in Britain seeks to build the broad alliance which its programme describes. In such an alliance it would not only work loyally for commonly agreed aims, but at the same time do what every other party to the alliance would be free to do—that is, carry on its own independent activity and seek to win support for its policy as a whole.

All historical experience goes to show that *every* party to such a broad, progressive alliance increases its strength at the expense of the opponents of the alliance, and that party will do so most rapidly which by precept and example wins most favour from the people of the country. The Communist Party does not conceal the confidence which it feels that Marxist ideas will one day become the leading force in Britain as they have in an ever-increasing number of countries since the great Russian Revolution of November 1917. But it starts from no position of artificially contrived advantage and it absolutely rejects any idea of attempting to impose its will on the British people by force. To win the victory of which it is confident, it relies upon the force of example of Marxism in practice in the U.S.S.R. and the people's democracies, upon the force of its own record and its ability to win the day in free discussion before the people, and upon the force of the conclusions which the British people will themselves draw from their own historical experience.

What existing parties will disappear and what new parties may come into existence in the future are questions upon which Communists do not speculate. It is certain, however, that the decline of some parties and the rise of others is no new phenomenon in British history, and no one has hitherto seen anything sinister in it. Thus the Liberal Party has declined since World War I to a relatively insignificant force in British politics, but no one says that the Tories or the Labour Party have "swallowed" it. The term is applied to the Communists in an attempt to scare people, just as attempts are made to scare the non-Communist trade unionist with the picture of Communists "infiltrating" into his union. Anyone who pauses to think a moment realises that what a Communist does when he "infiltrates" into a trade union is simply to join it, in the same way that any other man does; but those who use the term do so in the hope that people will not pause to think.

What the Communist Party *is* certain of is that the broad coalition of classes of which its programme speaks, comprising the overwhelming majority of the British people, will be no less an essential feature of social advance *after* the achievement of people's democracy in Britain than it was before it. For a prolonged period the Communists in such

a coalition are likely to constitute a minority, although if they succeed in winning the confidence of the British people to the extent which they hope, it will be a key role within the coalition which they play. The experience of the people's democracies in Eastern Europe and of the U.S.S.R. supports this conclusion.

The situation in the field of university education well illustrates this position. Thus in Poland, not a single member of the academic staff of the universities has been "purged". (Reported by Brian Simon, a lecturer at Leicester University, who visited Poland in 1952.) In the U.S.S.R., the majority of university teachers are non-Communists. Visiting Moscow University in December 1950, Andrew Rothstein found that only 25 per cent of the teaching staff were Communists and that among the positions occupied by non-Communists were those of the Dean of the Faculty of Chemistry, Dean of the Faculty of Mechanical and Mathematical Sciences, Dean of the Faculty of Philology, Director of the Institute of Chemistry, and Director of the Institute of Astronomy. Most of the Heads of Departments, too, were non-Communists. One of the most distinguished of Soviet medievalists, S. B. Veselovsk, who died in 1951, was not only not a Communist but was definitely anti-Marxist. Yet his work *Feudal Landowning in N.E. Russia* was published by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. in 1949 with only a brief preface by a Marxist courteously noting differences from him in treatment, but warmly recommending his work to students. Such is the situation in the U.S.S.R. today, 36 years after the Revolution. There is no reason to assume that a substantially different situation will obtain under people's democracy in Britain.

IV

We have been concerned so far to counterpose to the distorted, propagandist picture of what Communism allegedly stands for, a true picture of the Communist position on the question of academic freedom. It is pertinent at this stage to refer to an aspect of the question which the British McCarthyites have preferred to leave well alone.

It is well known that there are many university teachers who are Communists and who make no secret of the fact. Is it not, then, extremely significant that the charges levelled so sweepingly against Communist teachers *in general* are never supported by reference to the lectures and writings of *particular* Communist teachers, in which ample evidence should presumably be found? The McCarthyites do not attempt such an impossible task, for they know perfectly well that in the works of Communists teachers no such evidence can be found. Examples are not wanting of attempts to remove Communist teachers *on other grounds* or, even more frequently, to prevent their appointment to teaching posts. But wherever attacks have been made upon such teachers which their colleagues and students even suspect to be on

political grounds, the rebuff has been a resounding one. We may instance as an example the testimony to Andrew Rothstein's high qualities as a teacher which came from both staff and students at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies at the time of the non-renewal of his appointment in 1950.

Honest misconceptions nevertheless exist about the methods of Communist teachers, and these need to be corrected. Doubts are often expressed, for example, as to whether a Communist can teach his subject objectively and impartially, guided as he is by a particular philosophy and a particular theory of social development. It is necessary to point out that a certain confusion exists in the framing of the question. *Every* teacher approaches his subject with a point of view of his own; in some cases that point of view is shared by a sufficiently large number of other people to be given a general name, but whether that is the case or not, the teacher's point of view exists and inevitably influences him in his presentation of the subject. You cannot lecture on any subject without selecting what seem to you to be the most salient aspects, and in making your selection you are guided by your general views of the subject as a whole. What is important is that on controversial questions the teacher must make his student aware of what other points of view exist, and do his best to present them fully and fairly. He must further be ready at once to modify his own viewpoint in the light of newly-discovered material and of fresh experience. Both of these things Marxist teachers are always ready to do, as hundreds of their former pupils can testify, and that readiness qualifies them as fully as any other teacher to maintain a high academic standard, whether their subject be history or physics, politics or literature, or any other.

Moreover, Communism demands from its adherents that they really master the subject with which they are concerned, precisely because the aim of Communism cannot be realised unless this is done. "We can build Communism", wrote Lenin, "only from the sum of knowledge . . . bequeathed to us by capitalism. . . . It would be a mistake to think that it is enough to learn Communist slogans, the conclusions of Communist science, without acquiring the sum of knowledge of which Communism is itself a consequence." And Engels before him emphasised to Marxist historians that the study of historical materialism is not a substitute for the study of history.

The fear is also sometimes expressed that Communist teachers may use their position to influence their students. Here, too, there is perhaps a lack of clarity in the formulation. Communist teachers do the job which they are appointed to do, and do not use the classroom as a forum for the exposition of their political views. But certainly they influence their students in the broader sense of the term, as every other teacher brought into regular contact with his students inevitably must. A good teacher, who displays an obvious mastery of his subject, who is

at pains to assist his students to overcome difficulties and advance their studies, and whose whole approach to his subject is one which they find helpful, naturally wins and deserves their admiration.

The cause of Communism may benefit to the extent that a Communist's qualities as a teacher are associated in the minds of his students with his political beliefs; but the same applies to any other lecturer of any other point of view. If Communists do win such respect, not only for themselves but also for their party, not the least reason for it is the fact that their enemies have created the impression that Communists *cannot* be good teachers, and the discovery that they can makes a correspondingly greater impact.

V

In short, Communists are emphatically not guilty of the manifold charges levelled against them, as an examination both of their theory and their practice conclusively shows. Unfortunately it does not follow from this that no menace exists to the high academic standards for the preservation of which the *Times Literary Supplement* expressed such zealous concern. There is a very real menace to such standards, a menace which needs to be vigorously resisted, and it comes precisely from those who raise such a din about the alleged danger from the Communists. There are, indeed, in British academic circles those who, in the words of the *T.L.S.* reviewer, "start with certain presuppositions which are . . . immutable dogma, revealed truths to which the facts must be made to conform." But Marxists are not of their number.

Andrew Rothstein, in an article in *Modern Quarterly* (Spring 1953), commented on the aptness with which the *T.L.S.* description "fits the blatant Tory, or Roman Catholic, or High Church, or imperialist propaganda, masquerading as impartial history" which is frequently met with. Such trends are not of recent origin, though the contingent of academic recruits to the cold war would develop them further than in the past.

As an example of the trends to which he refers, Andrew Rothstein quotes the treatment of Russian history. No less marked is the distortion of the history of the British Empire. It is nearly 30 years since the liberal scholar, the late Edward Thompson, who was a staunch believer in the beneficent role of British imperialism, was so outraged at the shameless misrepresentation of the history of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 in British histories that he wrote his book *The Other Side of the Medal* (1925) in an attempt to counteract their effect. In a brief appendix he surveys most British works of importance on the subject, not excluding those intended for popular consumption, and does not mince words in characterising them. It is worth noting that it is precisely in popular accounts, such as were frequently given to children to read, that the bias is most shameless. Many thousands of British men and women must in their childhood have read the Rev. W. H. Fitchett's *The Tale of the Great*

Mutiny: Thompson justly calls it "perhaps the most contemptible of all histories of the Mutiny". Thompson's belief in the beneficence of British rule in India is one which Communists do not share, but they believe that he maintained the best academic traditions when he insisted that the facts of history must be expounded even when they are unpalatable to the historian expounding them.

Communist teachers do not shrink from such a duty. They are not guilty of the tendency to "make the facts conform" to "certain presuppositions", and they will not be behindhand in coming to the support of conscientious scholars who assail such tendencies wherever they are to be found. They do not, however, demand such drastic measures as dismissal or refusal to appoint any scholar in whose work such tendencies may appear, relying instead on free and open controversy to achieve the correction of such faults and confident that their colleagues have the courage when such faults are proved to acknowledge them "in due time, openly and honestly, as befits scientists".

The attempts to transplant McCarthyism on to British soil deserve to meet with a more vigorous rebuff than they have hitherto received. At the time of writing, the disgraceful decision of the Middlesex authorities which discriminates against Communist teachers has not been reversed. Nor has London University cleared itself of the widespread suspicion which the Rothstein case aroused.

These instances have received some publicity and are fairly widely known. But the British McCarthyites generally pursue their aims more unobtrusively than their American counterparts, and many cases of political discrimination occur which are more difficult to expose and combat—cases where, for example, Communist candidates for academic appointments holding much better qualifications than other applicants are rejected on the ostensible grounds that they are "temperamentally unsuited" or "not interested in the required field of study", etc., or where academic referees conclude glowing testimonials as to the qualifications of Communist candidates with some such remark as: "This would not influence me, but I think I should in fairness mention that Mr. —— is a Communist." Such practices need to be no less vigorously assailed than open witch-hunting of the Middlesex type.

The right of teachers to be appointed on their merits, without political discrimination, and the right to take part in political activities without being penalised have long been traditionally recognised. If attempts to withdraw these rights from Communist teachers are allowed to succeed, the time is not far distant when all but the militant supporters of capitalism and the cold war will have to face attack.

Fortunately there are unmistakable signs of mounting resentment against such attacks. To the extent that this takes the form of a united and principled resistance, the British tradition of freedom will not only be preserved but further strengthened.

André Stil and the Novel of Socialist Realism

MARGOT HEINEMANN

There is still a great deal of misunderstanding as to what is meant by Socialist Realism in literature. Its opponents caricature the very idea, like the reviewer of André Stil's *The Water Tower* in the *New Statesman*, who wrote that it was "a pure example of 'Socialist realism', which has nothing to do with realism as it is generally understood. It is indeed an æsthetics of wishful thinking, i.e., propaganda."

What then, briefly, do we mean by Socialist Realism in the novel?

Firstly, it is *realistic* and lifelike—that is, it represents vividly and truly a concrete historical reality, at a particular time and place. It represents this not merely superficially, by accurate recording of details of scenery, conversation, dialect, and so on, but in the sense that the people in the action are at the same time individuals and socially representative, and therefore their fate has a wider significance and interest. The conflicts behind the novel are in essence real and important conflicts in the society of which it writes.

Secondly, it is socialist in the sense that it reveals, directly or indirectly, not merely the conflicts, frustrations and hardships of capitalism, but the new elements which will eventually lead to its overthrow. And in doing this it inspires the reader to help in the great change.

Thirdly, it is a work of creative imagination, concerned not with the "average man" and "average story", but with *heightening* and sharpening the presentation of reality, through insight into the minds of people, through making us hear, feel and see more keenly than we can for ourselves. It is life, but intensified life.

> "Nature provides the only source of material for literature and art in their finished form. And although it is incomparably richer and more poignant in content than art, nevertheless people are not satisfied with nature and ask for art. Why? Because, while both are beautiful, the creative forms of literature and art supersede nature in that they are more systematic, more concise, more typical, more idealised, and therefore more universal" (Mao Tse-tung, *Problems of Art and Literature*).

The general principles of Socialist Realism have been many times discussed, but in the capitalist countries there have been few novels where they have been effectively carried into life. This is the great importance of André Stil's trilogy *The First Clash*, the first volume of which, *The Water Tower*, has already appeared in English (the others are to come shortly).

A GREAT THEME

Stil is, technically, an extremely talented writer, a clear-eyed observer, capable of evoking a scene or a character in a few words. He is first of all close to the French working class, and writes of it with a simplicity, concreteness and warmth of feeling that is in itself exceedingly rare in the literature of capitalist countries.

But Stil's book does not only reflect working class life in general. It deliberately takes as its theme the sharpest and most dramatic class conflict of the day.

"The First Clash" of the title is the clash between the American overlords and the people of France. The setting is a French seaport, still half-ruined from the war and the German occupation, where the American forces are moving in and preparing to take over the whole town as a base for bringing war supplies into France, and, above all, into Germany. The resistance movement among the dockers, the organised militant core of the town's population, is being sapped by poverty and unemployment. Because the workers have refused to load supplies for the war in Indo-China, the port has been victimised and the ships diverted. Most of the dockers have had only a few days' work in months, scarcely enough to entitle them to the wretched fall-back wage. And so, even though the dockers are organised and led by the C.G.T. and strongly influenced by the Communist Party which opposes any handling of war material, it seems not unlikely that when the expected munition carrier for the U.S. forces arrives in the port, men will be found to unload her.

This is the situation revealed in the opening chapters of the book. They poignantly bring before us a dangerous moment in the life of a great people, when the long political deadlock, brought about by American intervention, threatens to exhaust and demoralise the nation, and even—the essential thing—the key sections of the working class, who have had to bear the brunt of one hard struggle after another without seeing a decisive victory.

This historical picture is built up, not by any formal or abstract exposition, but by a series of sketches—more like short stories than chapters of a novel—each of which gives, tersely and concretely, a facet of the life of ordinary people and of human relationships under these conditions.

I have heard criticism of these opening chapters on the grounds of "too much gloom—we don't want to read about poverty, we know enough about it from experience." I think, however, that this is a mistaken judgment. For the poverty described here is not static, hopeless misery, but an active agent in the story. It is poverty *deliberately planned* to break the workers' spirit and to enable the rulers to carry forward their war plans. How is it to be defeated? To leave out the painful, compelling rendering of poverty itself would be to reduce the problem to formal argument—and to depart from realism.

As one of the dockers puts it in a discussion among the men:

> "Supposing everything was going well, we were all as fat as pigs, stuffed to the eyes, with cash in the house, the kids decently dressed, the hen-runs full, all the provisions you want. The day their arms arrive, there wouldn't be anyone who'd think twice. We'd say: 'we've got enough to be going on with. We can do without their dirty money.' We'd all be ready to fight. No one'd be afraid of going to jail. You'd know there was enough at home and in the homes of your mates to keep your family going while you're inside. . . . But if you're famished the day it arrives . . ."

The present stage of the struggle in Britain is different. Poverty is for the time being less acute among the dockers, there is more social security. Brute force plays a smaller part, and illusions about Labour politics a much greater one, in limiting their political actions. It would be quite wrong to transfer Stil's picture automatically to Britain, but equally wrong to suppose that it must be exaggerated or overdrawn in relation to France.

The main action of the book deals with the growing and rising opposition to the Americans and their French helpers—opposition encouraged, led and organised by the Communist Party in the port, up to the climax when the American munition ship arrives. The young secretary of the Party, Henri, who takes over the job at the most critical period, and has the heaviest responsibility for carrying it through, gradually emerges as the central character among the scores of human beings, of all social classes and political opinions, whose personal stories are involved in one way or another in the general theme.

It stands out from the novel itself that this theme has not been chosen "by the order of the Party", but because it has most powerfully seized the writer's imagination, and offers him the richest material, the most shattering contrasts, the most dramatic revelations of heroism and baseness in human beings. What he *understands* to be of supreme importance as a political worker is also what he *feels* to be of supreme interest and fascination as a writer. This is primarily because—unlike so many who sincerely want to be Socialist or Communist writers—he lives the kind of life that feeds his inspiration, a life of intense political activity. (He is editor of *Humanité*, and has just—March 1954—contested a key by-election in Seine-et-Oise.)

MUST A POLITICAL NOVEL BE WOODEN?

Even many progressive writers still think that a novel with a directly political theme and standpoint must necessarily become wooden and stereotyped. Once the reader knows that the writer is a Communist, according to this argument, he knows all the answers and will not read the book. There is no room for the unexpected, for life—everything will be twisted to fit preconceived ideas, there will be no suspense and no tension.

Now it is, of course, quite possible for a Socialist or Communist writer to write wooden and stereotyped novels, where the characters merely serve as the mouthpieces of particular abstract ideas—and more or less obvious ideas at that. But it is completely wrong to suppose that a political novel *must* be like this, as Stil's book shows.

What is attempted here is not to reproduce in a fictionalised form the analysis and ideas of the Party leadership, but to represent concretely and from the inside the life, thoughts and feelings of the people at a particular time and place, on which these ideas themselves depend—"politics in the raw state" as Stil calls it (*Vers Le Realisme Socialiste*, by André Stil. Collets, 3s.). For in real life, political actions and attitudes arise from human and personal experiences which, on the face of it, may appear to have nothing to do with politics.

It is difficult to give an impression of Stil's method by quoting, for, like Barbusse's *Under Fire* (with which it has much in common) it depends very largely on clipped, dramatic dialogue and action. But consider a few examples from *The Water Tower*. Paulette has to go out cleaning and leave her small children, because her docker husband hardly ever has work. Georgette and Lucien let their little girl go to stay for a few weeks with people in Paris who have offered, out of political sympathy, to take a docker's child; when it comes to the point, instead of being grateful, they feel the parting terribly. ("It isn't so much seeing her go. It's knowing we aren't able to keep our family. I'm ashamed, Georgette, I'm ashamed.") Little Paul, for whom poverty means not only hardship but losing his chance of secondary school, runs away from home, he himself hardly knows why. Jacques is worried because he has had work so much more often than the other dockers that he suspects the authorities are trying to make him into a scab—and yet he desperately needs the money, with his wife expecting a third baby. It is Jacques who bursts out with a thought that runs right through the book:

> "The worst of poverty is that it affects everything. If it were only a matter of cold and hunger. . . . But the bitch ferrets into everything, even into where you think you are quite alone, or just the two of you, into the purest, the most secret depths, into the best, the most precious things you have. It defiles everything."

Political discussions and political action are seen, in the light of all this, as what they really are—the conscious effort to make sense of it all, to find a way out and be able to live happily with those one loves.

It would, as a matter of fact, be quite impossible to write a serious realistic novel about contemporary France which ignored the political tension, the immense resentment of almost all classes of the population with foreign rule and corrupt Governments. These things appear not only in the works of Communist writers, but in novels by such non-

Communists as Sartre, Cesbron and a host of others. Stil's work stands out, not simply because it treats such subjects, but because direct participation and responsibility in the struggle, along with deep Marxist understanding, enables him both to express the human and class conflicts in their full sharpness and complexity, and to begin to resolve them—or at any rate give a glimpse of how they might be resolved.

Even so, there is a very big gap, in political life as on an Everest expedition, between knowing what one wants to achieve and being able to achieve it; and it is largely with this gap that *The First Clash* is concerned. The Everest adventure is not rendered stereotyped and boring just because the members of the expedition know they want to get to the top. In the conquest of Socialism the initiative and daring is far more complex and many-sided, the strain on men and their families far greater, and the endurance required lifelong; so that it is ridiculous to suppose that once a man has taken out a Communist Party card the human interest and suspense of his story is at an end.

DEEPENING THE CHARACTERS

Stil avoids over-simplification and flatness, not, as you might expect, by toning down the relative emphasis on political issues in the novel, but rather by penetrating into them more deeply and showing the manifold human and intellectual problems involved at every turn of the struggle.

One aspect of this is the skill with which wrong tendencies and mistakes in the movement are presented. The anarchist, the would-be terrorist, the waverer, even the blackleg—all their points of view, and the reasons for them in the life of each character, are convincingly presented. And this in itself gives far greater dramatic weight to the Marxist ideas which gradually and with difficulty make their way through the tangle of individual experiences and judgments.

Another and more important aspect: the great *variety* of kinds of people, characters, social classes who in one way or another, through their quite dissimilar experience of life, are drawn into the national struggle.

It is a far cry from the militant dockers to M. Ernest, the retired customs official, and his wife, whose whole life is centred in the little house they have managed to build for themselves with their own hands, and who would never have been anything but respectable Gaullist voters if the Americans had not decided to put this precious house inside the barbed wire of their camp. It is further still to the Sister of Mercy who devotedly nurses a sick old woman, in sublime disregard of her old secularist husband's running commentary; the bullying sea-captain's wife who at sixty, for the first time, dares to buy a Left Wing newspaper; the factory-owner's son who dreams of "partnership" between workers and management; the elegant old head-waiter, who makes one noble gesture of assistance to the Communists he rather dislikes, before he and his wife

commit suicide as the only way of escape from their poverty. It is truly the whole French people that is mirrored here, and the picture is worth a boat-load of general argument about the need for unity against war.

Stil shows us the living and continuing connection between personal and political life, which are presented as one concrete whole. You do not have the sense of switching from a personal to a political theme and back again which you find even in such fine novels as *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane, Alton Locke,* or *Felix Holt* (and to some extent still in Jack Lindsay's *Rising Tide*) and which makes their political scenes somehow less gripping than they ought to be.

Moreover, Stil's characters are not static; each one *develops* and *changes,* for better or worse, as a result of the decisions they make. It is here that his method of spotlighting his characters *at a moment of action* shows its value. Instead of a gallery of what E. M. Forster (in *Aspects of the Novel*) calls "flat characters", each consisting of a few fixed physical and verbal attributes, we get a sense of people who, however briefly, are sketched "in the round", reacting in their own way to the whole story.

TRUTH OR DISTORTION?

Stil has been sharply criticised in some quarters on the grounds that he stresses the strong and positive sides of his working-class characters, whereas in dealing with the Americans and their French allies (the black marketeer butcher, the Prefect, the police, and so on) he concentrates on their greed, brutality and corruption. This is said to be a distortion of reality. Thus the *New Statesman* critic writes:

> "When propaganda comes into fiction, humanity flies out, and so does the observation of human beings, who are turned into monsters. So, in *The Water Tower,* we wait for the inevitable, for the wicked Americans, who think nothing of shouting out from their truck naughty words at nuns, to run down, without stopping, a small child or a poor old man ; and sure enough it happens."

One may wonder where Walter Allen does his "observation of human beings" (species G.I., date 1954), that these road manners should seem to him so monstrous and improbable! But his deeper implication is, of course, that Stil ought to have presented his American troops, like his children and old men, in a loving, sympathetic light. On this Mao says:

> "A true love of mankind is attainable, but only in the future when class distinctions will have been eliminated throughout the world. . . . Today we cannot love the fascists nor can we love our enemies. We cannot love all that is evil or ugly in society. It is our objective to eliminate all these evils. The people know that. Cannot our writers and artists understand it?"

Or, still more tersely, our own William Blake:

> "He who loves his enemies, hates his friends:
> This is surely not what Jesus intends."

Of course, if the American forces, however bad their mission, had actually endeared themselves to the population of France and Britain by their courtesy and kindness, on the road and elsewhere, then Stil would indeed be guilty of serious artistic and political distortion. But have they?

It is true that Stil's picture of the working class stresses what is positive. He does not disguise that there are weaklings, police informers and wife-beaters. But his emphasis is on the fine qualities—the toughness and devotion, the endless care and sacrifice for the children, the ability of ordinary workers to read and study and master the most complicated ideas, the unconquerable humour and initiative. And is not this essentially the *true* picture of the class that is going to change the world?

Those superior critics who dismiss *The First Clash* as "æsthetic wishful thinking" have not explained the most important thing. If this, or something like this, is not how matters stand—if this is not *realism* in the sense of representing the conditions, feelings and actions of the people concerned—then how is it that the dockers of La Pallice and Marseilles actually *did* stop American arms consignments? How is it that no French Government which tries to govern against these patriotic feelings can be stable, however its majority is rigged?

Certainly, Stil's characters are lacking the kind of complexity for its own sake that we find in the saintly wantons of Graham Greene (*The End of the Affair*) or the sensitive fascist spy of Elizabeth Bowen (*The Heat of the Day*). But every one of Stil's people is shown confronted in his own mind with difficult decisions, choices and conflicts, which are not *less* but on the contrary *more* dramatic for being typical of real life.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The conflicts do not stop short at the boundaries of the Communist Party. Only there they are worked out in full consciousness. Indeed, one of the key conflicts in the whole book is the political clash (which is first revealed in the Party meeting in *The Water Tower* and reaches its climax when the American arms ship actually arrives, in the third volume of his trilogy) between the young Party secretary, Henri, who wants the Communists to centre their work on the difficult and dangerous fight against the American occupation of their own port, and the Communist trade union secretary, Robert, who wants to limit the struggle to economic issues in the docks and general propaganda outside. What may perhaps seem to be an argument about finer points of definition in the first book becomes a life-and-death question for the people in the third.

There is nothing idealised about Stil's picture of the French Communist Party—that great Party to which, after the Soviet and Chinese, we in

Britain owe more lessons than to any other. It is shown to consist of ordinary men and women, not all and always equally strong and brave and wise. Some of its work is romantic and thrilling (slogan painting on the submarine base where the lads are lucky not to break their necks); some, even more, is humdrum. But what Stil does here with extraordinary feeling and conviction is, in his own phrase, "to light up with the glorious daylight they deserve even the smallest actions, the carrying out of the smallest practical tasks, at a time when our Party and the mass organisations are being presented as a sort of gloomy barracks cut off from life".

REALISM AND NATURALISM

The sense of a great action and the subordination of detail to it influences not only the general plan of the book but also what one may call its texture. Description for its own sake, as "documentation" or "local colour", is the death of many a would-be realist novel, which ends in a flat and boring naturalism. Detail can be piled on detail, and yet most of it—including even detail about personal appearances and habits of the characters—may be just "scenery" which is irrelevant to the story. So it is not enough for the writer to follow his average worker through an average day (as actually happened in the draft of a novel I recently read), from half-cold porridge for breakfast, *via* soggy steak and kidney pie in the canteen at lunchtime, to burnt kippers for tea; for while this is all likely enough, the reader gets tired of hearing about it, and instead of a vivid sense of reality we find our attention wandering. Stil uses description dramatically and economically to strengthen the main theme. For example, the image of a baby's bottle filled with mashed potato and water helps to symbolise the fearful conflict in the mother's mind —how can she bear another child in a home like this?

It is not necessary that English admirers of Stil should copy his technique exactly. The criticism can, I think, justly be made that there are *too many* characters, viewpoints and human destinies introduced in the relatively short space of *The First Clash*. Indeed, in a less impassioned writer, this would lead to a complete dissipation of our interest. And though Stil's skill as a short story writer enables him quickly to win our sympathy for a new character whom we have not met before, his very fertility and dramatic imagination become a difficulty, because there is no space to tie up many of these stories, and a number of them are left still "in the air" at the end of the book.

Many outstanding recent works of Socialist Realism have, like *The First Clash*, an immense number of characters of roughly equal importance. But these enormous canvases are not an essential condition. One of the greatest works of Socialist Realism is Gorky's *Mother*, whose action and development revolve round a small group and especially the one central figure. Depth is as important as range.

OPTIMISM

The greatest attractive power of *The First Clash* is its *optimism*. When Socialist writers begin the work of representing our time, it is usually the dark side that they give most effectively at first. They are deeply stirred by their own experience of capitalism and its ugliness, they want passionately to show the injustice and cruelty that cries out for a remedy, to shatter all complacency. So we get "slum realism" or "exposure literature"—and very often it goes no further. But this kind of realism, however honest, too often only depresses the reader.

The optimism of a book like *The First Clash*, however, is not a matter of giving every story a happy ending. Neither does it consist in sliding quickly over the bad, ugly and horrifying things in the workers' life under capitalism, as even some socialist critics would prefer.

To such critics, the optimism of a Stil is right out of court. For Stil, like Gorky, gives us the slums with the grimmest intensity—smells and all. The *optimism* lies in showing, in the midst of all this, the force that will change it. Stil's book is truly optimistic because it shows again and again, without exaggeration or false sentimentality, the real, undefeatable goodness and courage of ordinary working people; and also because it gives, more clearly than any novel that has yet come from the capitalist countries, the picture of the advanced revolutionary worker, the man who is a step ahead of the rest in consciousness and responsibility, and the Party that creates and guides such men. It is precisely because the first chapters of *The Water Tower* have so shaken us with their picture of degrading conditions that we are so moved dramatically by the Communist Party meeting, where men living under this oppression, who might otherwise be stupefied or brutalised by it, come together to discuss, though often in a confused way, how they can *act* together to change it.

There are a number of reasons why this is still something rare in our literature. *First*, it requires a deeper and richer experience—not only the experience of poverty, of war, of greed and gain and race hatred, but the equally concrete, true and living experience of conscious struggle and solidarity and unity, which is not spontaneously come by.

Secondly, the writer who shows *only* suffering, slums, bloodshed, ugliness, is on pretty safe ground. He can do this as "fearlessly" as you please, and still be able to broadcast on the Third and be published in the literary magazines; if he is "fearless" enough he may even be serialised in the Sunday press. But once he starts to show a convincing way out he cannot help challenging the whole foundations of society and of institutions like the B.B.C., and they are very quick to sense this and to treat him accordingly.

So it is not surprising that many writers stop short at exposure. Others avoid the problem by setting all their stories far in the past, when there was no modern working class and no Communist Party. Much can be done with this method, both in evading censorship and in reviving the

best in our traditions to strengthen us in today's fight. The disadvantage of it is that in past epochs the revolutionary movement of the people could not have the same magnificent prospect of success that it has today. All previous revolutionaries at best overthrew one ruling class for the benefit of another. And so the older themes have inevitably a certain tragic and limited quality which is not sufficient for our new needs. I do not want to detract from the fine work of Howard Fast and others in this field, under extremely difficult conditions, but to stress that the far more splendid and hopeful themes which our own time naturally yields the revolutionary writer have remained untouched except by a very few—in this country, for example, Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Lewis Jones, James Aldridge, and Jack Lindsay.

This raises a problem which everyone who wants to be a socialist writer has to face. The first essential for him is to know the people he is writing for and the people he is writing about. But this is not as easy as it sounds in a class-divided society. It cannot be done simply by going down for a few weeks to collect local colour or "documentation" in a coalfield or a port; for though you can learn in that way quite a lot about the look and the technical processes of the pit or the dock, and pick up a certain amount of language, the essence of the thing is not coal-cutters or cranes or even dialect, but people and their lives, which is a longer and more complicated business to piece out, especially since the decisive traits are only revealed *in action*. Indeed, a writer who does not know much at first hand about the strike struggles in the coalfield but does know a good deal about, say, the purge of left wing teachers in the Universities, or the intrigues of diplomacy against the Soviet Union, will almost certainly write very much better about what he does know. (James Aldridge's *The Diplomat* is a brilliant example.)

What is the moral? It is that if we in Britain are to produce the works of socialist literature that the movement so desperately needs, *those who are already equipped as writers* will have to deepen their knowledge, and hence the content of their work, through participation in the struggle ("without thinking whether it will go well in a book", as Stil says) and closer links with the general life of the Labour movement.

At the same time, *more working class writers*, and others who are active in the movement, will have to try to create literature out of their living experience. And they will make the effort to do this once they see writing as a *political* task of the first importance.

Recent Books

MARXIST ANALYSIS

Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. I. 1926-36. Lawrence and Wishart, 6s.

The British Political System, by John Gollan. Lawrence and Wishart, library edition 10s. 6d., popular edition 7s. 6d.

The publication in English of the works of Mao Tse-tung is a tremendously important addition to fundamental Marxist works available. The great original contribution made by Mao to the theory and practice of Marxism is his development of Marxism in application to the national revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries, and it has been triumphantly vindicated in the victory of People's China.

The first volume covers the periods of the First and Second Revolutionary Civil Wars in China, culminating in the beginning of national resistance to the Japanese invasion. Of absorbing interest and importance here are his contributions concerning the peasant movement and the analysis of classes in Chinese society, military questions, and the development of the policy of the Chinese Communists.

The second volume will appear in the autumn, and three more volumes, completing the set, will probably be completed within the following year. A first rate job has been done by the translators.

Dealing with vital questions in Britain comes John Gollan's *The British Political System*. This is a major work by a British Marxist, for the first time analysing in detail the nature of the British capitalist state.

John Gollan makes use of abundant factual material, quotes numerous authorities, shows in detail how monopoly capitalism controls the entire state apparatus, and thereby blows sky-high the right-wing Labour illusions about the "neutrality" of the state. From these premises he is able to show what steps the British working class movement must carry out to change the capitalist state into a people's state.

WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

The Tyrants' Might is Passing, by William Gallacher. Lawrence and Wishart, 3s. 6d.

Good to be Alive, the Story of Jack Brent, by Stanley Harrison. Lawrence and Wishart, 5s.

Gallacher's new book, autobiographical in form like his previous ones, contains a series of commentaries on current political affairs. He does not pull his punches in dealing with question of working-class policy today. Nor are his comments confined to political issues in the narrow sense, since the book contains chapters about such things as the Catholic Church, Moral Rearmament and Industrial Psychology.

Good to be Alive was published as a tribute to a modern working-class hero, Jack Brent. Wounded in Spain fighting fascism with the International Brigade, Jack Brent was for the remaining fifteen years of his life always in and out of hospital, crippled and in pain. But he remained to his death in 1951 a dauntless fighter and organiser, playing a leading part wherever he found himself.

THE WORLD FOOD PROBLEM

Let There be Bread, by Robert Brittain, with a Foreword by Lord Boyd Orr. Spalding and Levy, 12s. 6d. (For *People's Books* members, 5s.)

This book is a concise, well-argued and complete statement on the subject of world population and food supplies, answering the reactionary propaganda of neo-Malthusianism. The titles of the two parts into which it is divided sufficiently indicate its contents—World Enough, and Food Enough.

PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

N. G. Chernyshevsky, Selected Philosophical Essays. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 8s. 6d.

I. P. Pavlov, his Life and Work, by E. A. Asratyan. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 3s. 6d.

Claude Helvetius, Philosopher of Democracy and Enlightenment, by Irving Louis Horowitz. Paine-Whitman, New York, 3 dollars.

The volume of selected essays by Chernyshevsky is a companion to the volumes already published of Belinsky and Dobrolyubov. Chernyshevsky was the greatest of all the Russian pre-Marxist materialists, and these essays make fascinating reading. They include his *Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality,* a major materialist contribution to aesthetics.

Asratyan's study of Pavlov can be read not only as the best short book available on this subject, but also as a model of "popular science" writing.

From America, in defiance of Senator MacCarthy, comes a brilliant Marxist study of one of the greatest of the French materialists of the 18th century, Helvetius. Not only does it give a most readable account of the work of this very important philosopher, whose writings have been totally ignored by bourgeois historians of philosophy, but the concluding chapter, on "Helvetius, Bentham and Marx", draws profoundly interesting conclusions concerning the relations of the French philosophers of enlightenment with the English utilitarians, and then discusses the significance of Marx's ideas in relation to both.

(The above three books may be obtained from Central Books or Collets.)

POEMS AND PLAYS

Poems of Resistance from British Guiana, by Martin Carter. Lawrence and Wishart, 1s. 6d.

Two Plays About Malaya: Strangers in the Land, by Mona Brand, and *For Our Mother Malaya,* by Lesley Richardson. Lawrence and Wishart, 12s. 6d.

Thirty Pieces of Silver, by Howard Fast. The Bodley Head, 7s. 6d.

Martin Carter is the foremost poet of the Carribean people, and one of their foremost leaders, arrested at the time of the suppression of the Constitution of British Guiana. Several of these poems were written in prison, and they will take their place amongst the very finest productions of the rising people's liberation movement today.

The infamous war in Malaya is the subject of two plays published by Lawrence and Wishart. *Strangers in the Land* is already known to frequenters of Unity Theatre, where it had a successful run. It has been banned for public presentation by the Lord Chamberlain. The other play has never been produced in Britain, though its production is in preparation overseas. It gives a vivid picture of the struggle of the Malayan liberation forces.

Howard Fast's *Thirty Pieces of Silver* is about a minor government official in the U.S.A. who is "investigated" by the F.B.I. It has never been produced in either America or Britain, but has been widely acclaimed in other countries.

THE NEGRO PEOPLE

The Negro People in American History, by William Z. Foster. International Publishers, New York, $6.

This book of nearly 600 pages is a comprehensive history of the Negro people in the United States, relating their struggle with the main issues of American history, showing the role played in history by the Negro people and pointing the liberation perspectives of the future.

Following on W. Z. Foster's *Political History of the Americas* and *History of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.*, this is a major work of American Marxism. All these books are obtainable from Central Books or Collets. But in view of their very high price for individual buyers, efforts should be made to get such important volumes included on the shelves of libraries.

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