

THE MARXIST QUARTERLY

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CONTENTS

	Page
Towards Peaceful Co-existence: <i>George Matthews</i>	195
An Estimation of Lewis Grassie Gibbon's "A Scots Quair": <i>Ian Milner</i>	207
The Contribution of Pavlov to Medicine: <i>Ruscoe Clarke</i>	219
Arbitration in Industrial Disputes: <i>J. Hendy</i> ...	231
The French Revolution: <i>George E. Rude</i> ...	242
Recent Books	252
Index to Vol. I, 1954	256

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THE MARXIST QUARTERLY

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Towards Peaceful Co-Existence

GEORGE MATTHEWS

Profound changes in the world situation have taken place during the last few months. The conclusion of the armistice in Korea in August 1953 was rightly hailed as a decisive victory of the peace forces. It marked a turning point not only for Korea, but for the international situation as a whole. The lessening of tension in the Far East helped to make possible the Berlin Conference, which although it produced no immediate positive results on Germany paved the way for the Geneva Conference and the settlement of the Indo-China war.

This second decisive victory of the peace forces has also brought with it a certain shift of policy on the part of Great Britain and France, whose subservience to America's war plans is no longer complete, with the result that these war plans are likely to have to undergo an "agonising reappraisal" (to use Dulles' phrase).

The total change is perhaps most significantly expressed in the fact that the policy of peaceful co-existence, formerly advocated only by the peace camp and presented by the war camp as deceptive propaganda, has now been openly supported—in words at least—by many leading spokesmen of the Western Powers.

Peaceful co-existence has always been the policy of the Soviet Union. Such a policy flows from the very nature of a socialist State, in which there are no groups who can gain financial benefit from the exploitation of other peoples, while the fundamental economic law of Socialism—"the securing of the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society"—needs conditions of peace for its fulfilment.

This fundamental need of peace for the building of a socialist society has been reinforced by the terrible experiences of the Soviet people in the Second World War and the consequent determination to do everything they can to avoid another war.

Nor is there a vestige of truth in the accusation often made by anti-Soviet elements that the Soviet Union wants to impose the socialist system on other countries by force, and aims at "the export of revolution". The Soviet leaders and people firmly believe that only the people of each country have the right to decide what economic and social system they wish to live under. Of course they are convinced, on the basis of their own great successes and achievements, that the socialist system is far superior to the capitalist system. But just because of this they are quite

content to leave the matter of which is best—capitalism or Socialism—to be decided by peaceful and friendly competition between the two systems. They reject the idea of interference in the internal affairs of other countries, just as they will not tolerate interference in their own internal affairs.

This is the viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism, and is shared by Communists everywhere. As *The British Road to Socialism* puts it: "The Communist Party brands as a lie the charge that Communism is to be imposed by aggression and conquest, and declares that social transformation can only come through internal changes in accordance with the actual conditions in each country."

In his speech to the Supreme Soviet of April 26, 1954, Malenkov reaffirmed the Soviet view:

"The Soviet Government has stood, and continues to stand, by the view that it is fully possible for the capitalist and socialist systems to co-exist peacefully, engaging in economic competition with each other. . . . The Soviet policy of strengthening peace stems from the belief that in present conditions it is peaceful co-operation among the nations, irrespective of their social structure, that can and must determine the development of international relations."

The developments of the past few months have enormously strengthened the feeling in the capitalist countries in favour of peaceful co-existence. Millions of ordinary people had brought home to them how vital a concept this is when they read of the American H-bomb explosions in the Pacific. "Co-existence or No existence" is the phrase which put the issue in a nutshell.

This deep feeling of ordinary people has also been reflected in the speeches of statesmen in the capitalist world.

Mr. Nehru, recently said:

"If we are to admit that peaceful co-existence is impossible then we must admit defeat, since the only alternative is war, and that is no settlement of the question."

At Washington on June 28, Churchill, implicitly answering the slogans of Dulles and the war party in America, said:

"I am of the opinion that we ought to have a real good try at peaceful co-existence, though anyone can see it doesn't solve all problems. But time, accompanied by vigilance, may provide a different situation from the one so full of peril, so gloom-ridden, as the one in which we live."

In the House of Commons on July 12 he spoke again of "peaceful co-existence, vigilantly safeguarded"; and later in the debate (July 14) Attlee also, while declaring "We are as anti-Communist as the United States", added, "but we believe, as the Prime Minister has said, in peaceful co-existence. . . . We recognise the need for adequate strength, but we stand for peaceful co-existence".

While noting these declarations we must also note the references to "vigilance", "vigilantly safeguarded", "adequate strength" and so on. These imply an intention to adhere to the "peace through strength" policy. And indeed on some of the most important and decisive issues the British Government shows no sign of making a break *in deeds* with the American war policy. This is particularly clear in relation to German rearmament. It must be obvious to all thinking people that no amount of *talk* about peaceful co-existence is of much value if *actions* are being carried through which will put arms again in the hands of the ex-Nazis, who are the bitterest enemies of the idea of peaceful co-existence.

There is a certain reflection of the new situation to be observed in the United States itself. American policy has been openly based for a long time on building up an allegedly overpowering strength for attack on the socialist countries and the so-called "liberation" of their peoples. This is still the basis of American policy, judged again by deeds and not words, for the colossal arms programme is being carried forward, the emphasis on a huge atomic and hydrogen bomb programme is greater than ever, while the steps to outlaw the Communist Party are a further stage in the war preparations. Nevertheless President Eisenhower has found it necessary to repudiate some of the most outrageous declarations of the war party in the United States: On August 11, following warlike shouts by Admiral Radford and Syngman Rhee, and warlike mutterings by Dulles, he rejected talk of converting the United Nations into a simple capitalist alliance against the socialist States, and condemned the idea of a preventive war, which he spoke of as "ridiculous in itself" and "completely unthinkable in today's conditions".

If this means that Eisenhower, like some of the more far-sighted statesmen of the capitalist world, is gradually coming to realise the insanity of American policy up to now, his statements can only be welcomed. But again it must be stressed that it is deeds, not words, that count, and in the absence of such deeds Eisenhower's words can be interpreted as merely another attempt to deceive the people.

For while the peace forces have won important victories, and the trend of events and policy declarations in the recent period has been in the direction of peaceful co-existence, the war party in the United States, with their Nazi colleagues in Western Germany, are by no means defeated, and they are doing everything they can to prevent the lessening

of tension, to carry through the preparations for war and to stage new provocations which they hope will spread the area of conflict.

It is therefore necessary to examine the principal factors which have contributed to the improved world situation and to understand the character of the struggle that still has to be conducted if the prospect of continued negotiations and the settlement of the major questions, leading to really peaceful co-existence, is to be realised.

THE PEOPLES TAKE A HAND

The truce in Korea was made possible by the defeat of the American military aggression, inflicted by the heroic Korean people with the aid of the Chinese volunteers; and the Geneva settlement of the Indo-China war was made possible by the military defeat of the French invaders by the people of Viet Nam. In spite of overwhelming British forces against them, the liberation forces and the people of Malaya have taught the British imperialists that they can reach no solution by arms—a lesson that is being repeated by the people of Kenya. In North Africa as well as in Indo-China the rulers of France have found that no settlement is possible by military measures. This—the determined struggle of the colonial peoples against imperialist rule—is one of the major factors that contributed to the checking of the war plans of the imperialists.

The development of the organised international peace movement and the work of the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries is another major factor. The world petition for the banning of the atom bomb, the campaigns for the ending of the Korean war, for a meeting of the Great Powers, and for the unification of Germany as against the rearming of the Nazis in West Germany, have played an extremely important part in rousing public opinion against the war plans, and in winning the two major victories for peace in Korea and Indo-China.

In France, the dismissal of the Laniel-Bidault Government and the coming to office of Mendès-France with the direct mandate to settle the war in Indo-China is concrete evidence of popular pressure which is still being exerted with effect against the rearming of the Nazis. The world-wide protest at the American explosion of the hydrogen bombs compelled the American Government to abandon its projected further experiments. In Britain the movement against German rearmament has strongly challenged the “bi-partisan” attitude of the right-wing Labour leaders on this question.

In all capitalist countries the popular movement for peace—for co-existence—is exerting pressure on the Governments; even in the United States, in spite of war propaganda and near-fascist measures against progressives, the influence of the movement for peace must not be underestimated—the Gallup polls for the ending of the Korean war were

evidence of that, and Eisenhower’s repudiation of a “preventive” war was undoubtedly influenced by the popular feeling against the war party.

Nor can we leave out of account the feeling of the people in India, Burma, Ceylon and Indonesia, which has brought their formerly somewhat hesitant Governments into concert against America’s aggressive plans and for the establishment of completely friendly relations with People’s China.

The increasingly conscious solidarity of the Asian peoples against Western imperialism is itself a development of the colonial peoples’ struggle for liberation, and is a factor of which all the imperialist powers have to take account.

With the disillusionment of the peoples in the war propaganda and their growing resistance to the American war plans, another factor has developed in importance: the industrial struggle of the working class in the capitalist countries against the rising cost of living and the other “sacrifices” imposed on them by their Governments in the interests of the war plans. We have seen the growth of the struggle for higher wages in Britain, at the same time as the feeling against the war preparations, and particularly against re-arming the Nazis, showed that the war propaganda was losing its grip over the minds of the workers. The wages movement that came to a head in West Germany in August was also connected with the rise of feeling against the increasing power of the Nazis and for the unity of Germany as against the permanent division and permanent occupation by the Western Powers.

The alarm expressed in the capitalist press at the growth of the Left in the Labour Party, with the consequent decline in the authority of the right-wing leaders and the threat to the bi-partisan policy in foreign, colonial and home affairs, shows the importance of the popular movement in Britain against the preparations for war, which cannot be ignored by either Churchill or Attlee, or even by Eisenhower.

It is significant that Mendès-France, at the Brussels Conference of the E.D.C. States, told the representatives of the other Governments that:

“If the treaty were submitted in its existing form to the French Parliament it would be defeated, his Government would fall, and it would probably be followed by a Popular Front Ministry”—(as reported in *The Times*, August 20).

It is gradually dawning on important capitalist circles in the West that not only would a war against the socialist States endanger the very existence of capitalism, but even the continued preparations for war, and especially the rearming of the Nazis, may bring about such a shift of political power in their own countries as may threaten the position and profits of the ruling class.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN ANTAGONISM

In *Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.*, Stalin spoke of "those profound forces which, although they are so far operating imperceptibly, will nevertheless determine the course of developments", and indicated that:

"Capitalist Britain, and after her, capitalist France, will be compelled in the end to break from the embrace of the U.S.A. and enter into conflict with it in order to secure an independent position and, of course, high profits."

The antagonistic interests of British and American monopoly capital were not liquidated by the American post-war loan, by Marshall Aid, or N.A.T.O. On the contrary, they grew deeper in the very process of development of Britain's dependence on America, for the reason that America's "generosity" was deliberately calculated to weaken Britain and facilitate America's penetration into spheres of trade and investment that had hitherto been dominated by Britain.

As that penetration developed, so also Britain's resistance grew, on political and even military issues as well as economic. At first the British ruling class, mainly through the Labour Government (but in full agreement with the Tory leaders, who were consulted on every major question), was content to state its difference of opinion, but in the end gave way or accepted some minor modification of the American demand. Among these differences were those on the sharing of atomic secrets; on the recognition of People's China; on the type of rifle to be standardised for the N.A.T.O. forces; on the conduct of the Korean war; on convertibility of the £; on Empire preferences; on the height of American tariffs; and a host of others, many of which were confined to high-level discussions and were never made public.

The existence of these conflicts, alongside the general subservience of British Governments to America, has been known during the whole post-war period. Yet on the major question of America's war plans against the socialist countries, the actions of British monopoly capital were in full agreement with American policy. On the division of Germany and repudiation of the Potsdam Agreement; on the formation of N.A.T.O.; on the rejection of every effort made by the Soviet Union to ease tension, to secure the banning of the atom and hydrogen bombs and some measure of disarmament; even on the condemnation of People's China as an aggressor, and the bans on trade—as well as on the general conduct of the "cold war" in propaganda and hostile relations with the socialist countries—there has been a more or less common policy. The contradictions between the capitalist countries and

the socialist countries seemed to be stronger and more insistent than the contradictions between the capitalist countries themselves.

In considering what has brought about a certain change in the attitude of Britain and France to the war plans against the socialist countries, one important factor is undoubtedly the growing economic and military strength of the Soviet Union, together with the military defeats sustained by the Americans in Korea and the French in Indo-China. Of decisive significance is the possession by the Soviet Union of the atom and hydrogen bombs, which has certainly acted as a deterrent so far as the British ruling class is concerned—Churchill's speeches increasingly testify to this. And in spite of the anger aroused in the United States at being defeated militarily in Korea, and the sustained aim of taking revenge on People's China, the question could not but be raised: if all our resources cannot defeat these "backward" countries, what would happen if we attacked the whole socialist world together? France has had its own separate experience in Indo-China; and Britain has learnt from both Korea and Indo-China.

The British ruling class has also become increasingly attracted by the prospect of a vast extension of trade with China, and the Labour Party delegation to China is only one—though an exceedingly important—sign of the growing feeling that British-Chinese co-operation and friendship can be of the utmost value to both countries. This is in marked contrast to the exceedingly bitter, hostile and aggressive American attitude to China.

Moreover, Britain and France have known all along that the Soviet Union is not aggressive, that the so-called "defence" plans of America were really plans of aggression, and that neither country had anything to fear from the socialist countries so far as their territorial integrity and economic interests were concerned.

Thus we have seen the working out of the two considerations to which Stalin referred as important in determining the eventual attitude of the capitalist powers to war on the Soviet Union in present circumstances: first, that such a war "must certainly put in question the existence of capitalism itself"; and second, that in spite of their propaganda the capitalists do not believe that the Soviet Union is aggressive.

Therefore a point had to come when sections of the ruling class of Britain and France would begin to fear and break away from America's war plans against the socialist countries, at the same time as the American menace to their economic interests—and even territorial integrity—began to loom large.

As Stalin wrote of the period leading up to the Second World War:

"The struggle of the capitalist countries for markets and their desire to crush their competitors proved in practice to be stronger

than the contradictions between the capitalist camp and the socialist camp.”

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE BRITISH EMPIRE

With the immense accumulation of profits in the United States during the war and post-war years, the chief barrier to the unlimited expansion of American trade and investment in the capitalist world was the British Empire. American policy, therefore, alongside the preparations for armed aggression against the socialist countries, was directed to weakening the position of Britain and enlarging the footholds American capitalism had already secured in various parts of the British Empire.

Apart from purely economic competition—in which relatively up-to-date American industry had the advantage—it was necessary for the United States to undermine Britain's influence in the Dominions and colonies, and above all to break down the barrier of Empire preferential tariffs. The financial penetration has been considerable. By the end of 1952 United States capital invested in Canada was over four times the figure of British investments there, 64 per cent of Canada's exports go to, and 74 per cent of her imports come from the United States. Direct United States investments in South Africa and Australia have increased every year since the war, and with these investments the trade turnover has grown. American economic influence secured the ANZUS Pact, a military agreement for the Pacific area from which Britain was deliberately excluded. While American penetration into India has been relatively slow, Pakistan has been effectively swallowed.

In the Middle East, where until the war British influence was predominant, the United States has now drawn into its sphere Turkey, Greece, Israel and Arabia, and has succeeded in intervening in Egypt and Iran to weaken Britain's position and strengthen its own. Before the expulsion of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. from Iran, the total Middle East output of crude oil was shared equally between Britain and the United States; now the British share has fallen to a third, and the American has risen to two-thirds. The settlement of the Anglo-Iranian dispute has given a new share to the United States oil trusts.

In the sphere of trade, America has forced some concessions from Britain on the use of quota agreements and Empire preference, and under the slogan of “free trade” has pressed continuously for the breaking up of the sterling bloc and full convertibility of the £ with other currencies—especially with the dollar. In this campaign the Americans have exploited the separate interests of the South African and Australian capitalists, who are torn between the need for the British market for their produce, and their reluctance to hand over their dollar earnings to the sterling pool, administered by Britain in order to tie the Dominions

as far as possible to buying their requirements from Britain and not from America.

In the general struggle for markets, Britain has more or less held her own, and could have developed her exports much further but for the trade bans imposed by America both as part of her war plans and in order to prevent Britain finding alternative markets and suppliers. These bans hurt Britain far more than they hurt the Soviet Union, China and the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe. These countries have made enormous economic progress, strengthened trade relations with each other, and on the basis especially of Soviet help have been able to raise living standards, increase agricultural production and carry through great schemes of industrialisation. Other capitalist countries like West Germany and Japan have also not been as subservient to America in operating the trade bans, and have stepped in where British firms have been forbidden to tread. For these reasons and with the pressure both from capitalist groups and from the organised Labour movement, here too the British Government is taking a slightly firmer line against the American pressure.

To all this must be added the growing West German and Japanese competition for markets, and conflicts and fears arising from the developing economic difficulties in the United States, for example in connection with the sale of wheat; Britain refused to participate in the Wheat Pool because of the excessive price demanded by America as the basis for the agreement, and is buying from Canada and Australia rather than help the American Government to get rid of its enormous stocks.

These are some of the factors in the economic background which have combined with the popular movement to increase resistance to America's war plans.

THE BASIS OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE

In the joint Chinese-Indian and Chinese-Burmese statements on June 28 and 29, issued as a result of Chou En-lai's visit to India and Burma, five principles for peaceful co-existence were embodied. These were: mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty; non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit in relations; peaceful co-existence.

And in his report to the Chinese Central People's Government Council on August 11, Chou En-lai, referring to the agreements reached, said:

“We are of the opinion that these five principles with respect to peaceful co-existence should likewise be applied to relations

between various nations and in international relations generally. . . . We believe that if these five principles win support from more countries, even the fears and apprehensions prevailing between nations which have been antagonistic to each other would give place to a sense of security and mutual confidence."

There can be no doubt that the working people of every country would accept these principles as fully conforming to their country's interests; the trouble is that they are absolutely incompatible with the aggressive aims of the ruling class in the United States at the present time, and that therefore the winning of peaceful co-existence requires action by the peoples of the other capitalist States to prevent their Governments' continued participation in the American war plans.

In Europe, the rearming of the Nazis in West Germany is the key issue; it violates every one of the conditions for peaceful co-existence. On the other hand, the Soviet proposals for European Collective Security as an immediate step, leading on to the unification of Germany and genuine free elections for an all-German Government, provide the basis for peaceful co-existence.

Following the successful outcome of the Geneva Conference so far as Viet Nam was concerned, the Soviet Government proposed to the Western Powers an all-in European Conference to discuss the proposed Soviet plan for an all-in European Security Pact or any other proposals the other Powers wanted to make regarding European security, and suggested a Four-Power meeting to prepare for the conference.

Instead of responding by agreeing to such talks, the American Government increased its pressure on Western Europe for the ratification of the European Defence Community and the rearmament of Western Germany. At the time of writing, the American rulers have suffered a heavy set-back with the failure of the Brussels Conference of the E.D.C. Powers, and the refusal of the French Assembly to agree to the ratification of E.D.C.

This is a further victory for the peace forces, but it would be the greatest mistake to assume that the battle is over. On the contrary, with the support of the British Government, the Americans are making every effort to find another way of pushing ahead with their supreme aim in Europe—the rearming of German militarism.

The utmost popular pressure is needed to force them to agree to new talks on Germany and to the European conference proposed by the Soviet Union, and to ensure that such discussions are not sabotaged in advance by Western determination to maintain the division of Germany and rearm West Germany.

In the Far East, the issues which must be settled to ensure peaceful

co-existence centre on: the final settlement in Korea; the carrying through of the Indo-China settlement; the return of Taiwan (Formosa) to People's China, and the admission of the Chinese People's Republic to the United Nations.

In his speech of August 11, Chou En-lai paid particular attention to Taiwan and the Indo-China settlement, and the American plan for a new war alliance directed against China—the so-called South-East Asia Treaty Organisation. He pointed out that the United States aggressive circles, checked in Korea and Indo-China, are increasingly using Chiang Kai-shek to carry out "a war of harassment and destruction against our south-east coastal areas and islands, slaughtering our compatriots, plundering the coast and sending special agents by parachuting and other means to our mainland to carry out sinister activities". He added:

"The Government of the People's Republic of China once again declares that Taiwan is inviolable Chinese territory, that its occupation by the United States absolutely cannot be tolerated, and that it is equally intolerable to have it placed under United Nations' trusteeship. The liberation of Taiwan is an exercise of China's sovereignty and it is China's own internal affair: we will brook no foreign interference."

In regard to the carrying through of the Indo-China settlement, Chou En-lai warned that United States aggressive circles will strive to prevent the smooth and thorough implementation of the agreement, and that "the so-called South-East Asia defence *bloc*" is intended to undermine "the collective co-operation on the Indo-China question".

The United States effort to form some kind of S.E.A.T.O. is an illustration not only of the growing separation between Britain and the United States, but also of the persistence of the Americans in their aggressive plans and the reluctance of the Churchill Government to make any decisive break with these plans.

The project was first mooted as an immediate alternative to the American proposal of joint British-American intervention at the time of the siege of Dien Bien Phu. The British Government accepted the general idea, but secured the postponement of discussions until after the Geneva Conference; and in the meanwhile tried to work out some form of South-East Asia alliance that would bring in India, whose opposition had been declared from the first. But the Americans pressed, and at last Britain agreed to the conference in the Philippines beginning on September 6, in which the Philippines, Siam, Pakistan (with reservations) were the only Asian countries represented, along with the United States, Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand. Any organisation put together on that basis is quite clearly not a security

organisation of Asian States, but an organisation dominated by imperialist powers and directed against the peoples of Asia, and could only serve America's aggressive aims.

Britain's interests lie not in such policies, but in real friendship and trade with China, in opposition to America's aggressive plans in the Far East, in an end to the war in Malaya and to the hostilities against the people of Kenya, and in support for, instead of repression of, the movements for liberation of all the colonial and dependent peoples.

The decisive factor in the whole situation is the peoples' fight for peace. The contradictions between the imperialists are growing, but only the greatest possible development of the peace movement, with the working class in the leadership, can bring about a complete change in British foreign policy.

It is of the greatest importance that the victories already won should not lull us into complacency, but rather act as the spur to new efforts. For any tendencies to sit back and relax would give the opportunity to the war forces to carry forward their desperate and adventurist plans. It must never be forgotten that until the balance is tipped decisively on the side of peace each advance of the peace forces increases the desperation and fury of the most extreme aggressive tendencies in the capitalist world. Consequently, now more than ever before the peace forces need to be on guard, to be increasing their activities and strengthening the organisation of the peace movement.

It is also obvious from what has been said that Britain's role is crucial. In view of the position in France and the opposition even in West German bourgeois circles to Adenauer's policy (expressed in the actions of Doctor Otto John and Herr Schmidt-Wittmack), if Britain took a firm stand for peace the United States imperialists would be completely isolated and unable to carry forward their aggressive plans.

The votes against German rearmament at both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party Conference were a remarkable demonstration of the desire for peace of the working people, achieved in the face of an unprecedented campaign of distortion, pressure and intimidation on the part of the right-wing leaders. They show that the basis exists for a movement which will compel a change in British foreign policy.

The lesson of Geneva was that even a hesitant and half-hearted stand by Britain placed enormous difficulties in the way of United States policy. Real co-operation for peace between Britain, France, the Soviet Union and China would force the dominant American capitalist circles to recognise the lunacy of their present policy, and could ensure that peaceful co-existence becomes the principle guiding the policies of the major capitalist powers as well as the countries of Socialism.

An Estimation of Lewis Grassie Gibbon's "A Scots Quair"

IAN MILNER

Of the novels of our time concerned with direct and not merely incidental interpretation of the life of working people, Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* and Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* stand out as landmarks. It is a measure of the relativity of literary values that the ample enough embrace of the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* finds not a line for either of them (the first edition came too soon doubtless for regard to be taken of Gibbon's trilogy, but the abridged version of 1939 makes no reference to it, though Mr. P. G. Wodehouse and others of similar substance find honourable mention).

Only the final part of Gibbon's trilogy, *Grey Granite* (1934), deals directly with the lives of industrial workers. The environment of the middle volume, *Cloud Howe* (1933), is rural, though the experiences of spinning-mill workers have a place in the story. The first part, *Sunset Song* (1932), has for its milieu a typical Scottish village and is wholly concerned with farming life in a peasant community. The central character, giving unity to the work as a whole, is the daughter of a crofter and herself a peasant. Only in the final volume does her son Ewan, as a steel worker in a typical Scottish industrial city, supply a theme rivalling hers in emphasis and dramatic significance: that of working-class struggle against economic oppression and cross-currents in the workers' movement towards Socialism.

The first volume, *Sunset Song*, tells the story of Chris, daughter of the crofter John Guthrie of Kinraddie, from her childhood to marriage with Ewan Tavendale, son of a ploughman, and the birth of their son Ewan. The period is the years leading up to the First World War. Chris's husband enlists, becomes estranged from her and while on active service deserts from the front lines and, after a court martial, is shot. The war and its revolutionary ferment bring changes, even in Kinraddie. War-enriched farmers are dismayed by the emergence of a ploughman's union ("whoever heard tell of such nonsense . . .") and even a farm servants' union. A new minister comes to Kinraddie kirk, Robert Colquhoun, reflecting the changing times: ". . . he whistled when he went on a Sunday walk and he stormed at farmers for the pay they paid and he helped the ploughman's union; and he'd . . . speak as though Christ had meant Kinraddie . . ." (p. 141). He marries Chris, while the village gentry are asking "what could he want with a common-bit quean like the Tavendale widow?"

John Guthrie had seen himself as one of the "last of the farming folk that wrung their lives from the land with their own bare hands" (p. 50). Most of his neighbour peasant farmers are killed in the war. And in dedicating a memorial to them, significantly inscribed on the ancient Standing Stone of Blawearie Hill—symbol of the peasants' earthbound primal faith, the Rev. Colquhoun declares:

" . . . these were the last of the peasants, the last of the old Scots folk. . . . And the land changes, their parks and their steadings are a desolation where the sheep are pastured, we are told that great machines come soon to till the land, and the great herds come to feed on it, the crofter has gone, the man with the house and the steading of his own and the land closer to his heart than the flesh of his body" (p. 143).

Here, dramatised in the lives of Chris, her father and their peasant neighbours, is the essential theme of *Sunset Song*: the old order of virtually pre-capitalist Scottish peasant farming, with all its deep associations of individualist crofter pride, love of the land and strong sense of tradition, yielding to the pressure of new economic forces creating the basis for capitalist agriculture. The peasant, with the exception of a few enriched ones joining the new landed gentry, was to be reduced to wage earner.

The wrenching of peasant life from its deep-rooted home had already been treated by Hardy in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. The conception is wholly tragic: Tess symbolises the death-agony of the Wessex peasantry caught amidst forces which deny escape or control.

At the end of *Sunset Song*, however, in his address to the "Last of the Peasants", Colquhoun goes beyond the mood of defeatism or nostalgia to sound at once a warning and a call to action:

" . . . here in Kinraddie where we watch the building of those little prides and those little fortunes on the ruins of the little farms we must give heed that these also do not abide. . . . They died for a world that is past, these men, but they did not die for this that we seem to inherit. Beyond it and us there shines a greater hope and a newer world . . ." (p. 143).

New social and political forces have matured: trade unionism and socialist ideas have reached Kinraddie. It is a measure of Gibbon's realism that we see the passing of the Scottish peasantry not as an isolated and final tragedy but as part of a vaster process of social conflict and change.

Chris Guthrie embodies all the pride, integrity and self-reliant indi-

vidualism of the peasant tradition. At the same time she acquires more than the normal amount of education and this, combined with a searching and candid mind, leads her to despise and revolt against the ignorance, crass prejudice, gossip-mongering and dirtiness of mind of many village people, especially those holding themselves a cut above "common folk". For despite his own peasant-born feeling for the land and the crofter way of life, there is no idealisation in Gibbon's vividly earthy sketches of village life and its spites, gossip, lusts and twisted personalities. In her marriage with a ploughman Chris affirms her faith in the peasant pattern of life. She deeply fulfils herself in passionate love with Ewan. Other peasant characters such as Chae Strachan, with socialist beliefs, and Long Rob, quiet-spoken lover of horses and a pacifist who defies the conscription call in 1914, confirm in Chris's mind the intrinsic worth of the peasant tradition. Yet the more inquiring and intellectually alert side of her nature, which falls silent before her passion for Ewan, makes her aware that the times are changing and that the old values stand on shifting ground.

The war of 1914-18—itsself a symptom of social crisis and portent of change—shatters the rhythm of Chris's life with Ewan. His enlisting, while exempt from the call-up, strikes Chris as a betrayal of their life together. When he returns from camp grossly coarsened by Army life and treats her like any of the women he has had, Chris is seared with humiliation and cannot bring herself to bid him goodbye when he leaves for France. She learns from his fellow peasant-soldier Chae Strachan that it was the longing for the scents of his native earth and for reconciliation with her that drove Ewan back out of the front lines, to be caught and shot for desertion. Afterwards she climbs Blawearie Hill, symbol of the peasant's love of his native soil, and has her vision:

"And then something made her raise her eyes, she stood awful and rigid, fronting him, coming up the path through the broom. Laired with glaur was his uniform, his face was white and the great hole sagged and opened, sagged and opened, red-glazed and black, at every upwards step he took. Up through the broom: she saw the grass wave with no press below his feet, her lad, the light in his eyes that aye she could bring.

"The snipe stilled their calling, a cloud came over the sun. He was close to her now and she held out her hands to him, blind with tears and bright her eyes, the bright weather in their faces, her voice shaping a question that she heard him answer in the rustle of the loch-side rushes as closer and closer his soundless feet carried him to her lips and hands.

"*Oh lassie, I've come home!* he said, and went into the heart that was his for ever" (p. 135, italics as in original).

The poignancy of sensitive love killed amidst the blasts of imperialist war recalls here Wilfred Owen's "Strange Meeting". In the coarsening of Ewan, the abrupt withering of the love between him and Chris, and the irony of his being shot as a deserter (he who had volunteered for King and Country), we see something of Gibbon's hatred of war and contempt for those who exploited patriotism and pride of manhood for imperialist ends.

* * *

The second volume, *Cloud Howe*, carries Chris's story forward through the period of her second marriage. The setting, the borough of Segget, is again rural but an important social influence is the spinning mills established in the town by the family of the local laird. The textile workers are not individually characterised, but their presence, and on occasions their social demands, call forth a new political consciousness in the rural community. The village gentry despise them as "coarse-like tinks" and there is a widespread peasant distrust of them as an alien element. Gibbon realistically shows how changing social forces, culminating in the General Strike, induce the more open-minded villagers to reject this traditionally suspicious attitude towards the workers.

As in *Sunset Song* Gibbon makes free use of a loosely-flowing, lilting prose rhythm both to evoke the colour and scents of the Scottish earth and to suggest the cadences of colloquial Scots speech. There is also a widespread and effective employment of local Scots diction and phrasing which, though slipping at times into mechanical repetition, gives the work an over-all vitality and earthy realism characteristic of folk-art.

The new social and political forces at work in Segget call forth responses from Chris and her husband: their personal relations are realistically shown as developing in the closest association with their changing environment. The demands and the needs of the mill-workers impinge more and more on Colquhoun's conscience. He struggles honestly to square his Christian theology with growing socialist convictions until his sermons begin to shock the gentry and their lesser brethren. Chris, though unshaken in her individualist peasant pride by any logic of the case for social change, sympathises with the integrity of Robert's response.

The need to take sides is forced on Robert and Chris by the return from England of Stephen Mowat, laird of Segget and owner of the spinning mills. Entertained by them at tea, Mowat asks for support in his plans:

"The thing that was needed everywhere was discipline, hwar? and order, and what not. The hand of the master—all the Jahly old things. He had been down in Italy the last few months and had

seen things there, Rahly amazing, the country awakening, regaining its soul, its old leaders back—with a new one or so. Discipline, order, hierarchy—all that. . . . Scotland a nation—that was the goal, with its old-time civilisation and culture . . ." (p. 61).

Mowat's bred-in-the-bone arrogance stings Chris's crofter pride into class hostility ("my father used to say you should trust a laird as far as you could throw him"), until, in a moment of insight into history, she glimpses the reality behind the laird's plea:

" . . . the folk—her folk—. . . dying frozen at night in their eirdes, earth-houses, chaving from the blink of day for a meal, serfs and landworkers whom the Mowats rode down . . . the folk who rose in the Covenant times and were tortured and broken by the gentry's men, the rule and the way of life that had left them the pitiful gossiping clowns that they were, an obscene humour engrafted on their fears, the kindly souls of them twisted awry and veiled from men with a dirty jest; and this snippet of a fop with an English voice would bring back worse, and ask her to help!" (p. 61).

Her reply comes almost unbidden to her lips: "If it came to the push between you and the spinners I think I would give the spinners my vote." There are associations here with the democratic instincts of the crofter of an earlier day: Burns's feeling for the common man and parts of Scott as, for instance, the first half of *The Heart of Midlothian* where Chris's forebears identify themselves with the common people against the urban gentry of their day.*

As the General Strike approaches, Colquhoun is more and more convinced that a great change is due and that the workers are God's chosen instruments for realising it. Chris, sceptical as ever of theories—for her the dreams of men—is taken up with the coming of her second child. Then, as elsewhere in the trilogy, the personal and social lines of development touch and fuse together. Striking Segget workers decide to blow up a railway bridge to prevent blacklegs being sent in to break their strike. Robert and Chris exert themselves to stop any loss of life and in consequence Chris's child is born prematurely and dies. On recovery from her grave illness Chris learns of the collapse of the General Strike: "Robert raved the leaders had betrayed the strike, they'd been feared that they would be jailed, the leaders, they had sold the strike to save their skins" (p. 86).

The defeat of the strike is not a blow at any vital part of Chris because the roots of her being are not in social convictions. But Colquhoun's personality breaks up. He withdraws into an inner world of mystic-like meditation and has a vision of Christ walking to meet him

* See Arnold Kettle: *An Introduction to the English Novel*, Vol. 1, pp. 112 ff.

in the woods—a “madman’s dream” as his wife sees. He turns from militant socialist sympathies to preaching a quietist resignation to the things that be. His previously deep feeling for Chris is replaced by a passionless kindness that sickens her.

The climax of *Cloud Howe* comes with the impact of the capitalist crisis of 1929 and formation of the National Government on Segget’s social life. The mills are closed down and the Means Test introduced, so that even the unco guid of Segget are thinking: “God dam’t! you had never much liked the spinners, but the things that were happening near turned you sick, it was kicking in the faces of the poor for no more than delight in hearing the scrunch of their bones” (p. 109). And this for a passing comment on the times (Ramsay MacDonald was easy enough game of course, but Gibbon had a genius for side remarks which hit off drily or mockingly the thinking of the gentry):

“... Segget affairs were fair in a state . . . Ramsay MacDonald had said that they would (alter), if we all went poorer, ate less, and spent more—ay, fair a fine childe, with a right clear mind, Ramsay MacDonald, as the English knew well, they couldn’t breed the like of Ramsay in England: though Ake Ogilvie said they smothered them at birth. But that was just one of his tink-like says, the English aye needed the Scots at their head, right holy and smart at the same bit time” (p. 114).

Comes the climax. Colquhoun, gravely ill with pneumonia, insists one winter’s morning on taking church service as usual. Voicing his pent-up indignation at the suffering inflicted on Segget’s impoverished working folk, he rallies to his old militant mood in his sermon:

“There is no hope for the world at all—as I, the least of His followers see—except it forget the dream of Christ, forget the creeds that they forged in His shadow when their primal faith in the God was loosed—and turn and seek with unclouded eyes, not that sad vision that leaves hunger unfed, the cry of children in unending dark. . . . But a stark, sure creed that will cut like a knife, a surgeon’s knife through the doubt and disease—men with unclouded eyes may yet find it, and far off yet in the times to be, on an earth at peace, living and joyous, the Christ come back . . .” (p. 116).

He collapses and dies.

Colquhoun’s grapplings with and final renunciation of conventional Christianity merely confirm Chris’s conviction that religion, equally with schemes of “social co-operation” between gentry and workers, offers no way out of the ugly, hunger-ridden conditions in which most Segget people now live. Yet her social consciousness has been aroused and she

cannot revert to that all-sufficing individualism of the peasant way of life which gave meaning and rhythm to her marriage with Ewan Tavendale. Her son Ewan now emerges as the protagonist in a conflict at once personal and social: the striving for an inner integrity of being, in personal terms, and, on the other hand, the claims of a deepening sense of social responsibility, involving the search for “a stark, sure creed that will cut like a knife . . .”. And Chris’s personal striving expresses that of her peasant class to adjust itself and take up new attitudes to a society now dominated by monopoly-capital.

In the final part, *Grey Granite*, Ewan and his mother have left Segget to make a fresh life in Duncairn, typical Scottish industrial centre. Chris helps to run a boarding house. Ewan becomes a smelter in the local steel works of Gowans and Gloag. Due to his pride and sense of intellectual aloofness, he meets with initial hostility from his fellow-workers, Duncairn’s “keelies”. Politically he at first seeks a middle way between the Labour Party, which he despises as run by careerist politicians and ineffectual reformers, and the Communists for whom he has some initial distrust. While on picket duty in a strike he is arrested for “assaulting the police” and is later beaten up Nazi-wise in a police cell (“this was Scotland, not America, the police were clowns and idiots enough, but they couldn’t . . .”). Yet they did “in the usual Duncairn way with Reds”). The experience burnt into Ewan’s mind a sense of identification with the universal, agonised struggle of the common people for liberation:

“He lay still . . . not Ewan Tavendale any more but lost and bloodied in a hundred broken and tortured bodies all over the world, in Scotland, in England, in the torture-dens of the Nazis in Germany . . . a Negro boy in an Alabama cell while they thrust the razors into his flesh. . . . He was one with them all . . . tortured and tormented by the world’s Masters while those Masters lied about Progress through Peace, Democracy, Justice, the Heritage of Culture—even as they’d lied in the days of Spartacus. . . . And a kind of stinging bliss came upon him, knowledge that he was that army itself—that army of pain and blood and torment that was yet but the raggedest van of the hordes of the Last of the Classes, the Ancient Lowly, trampling the ways behind it unstayable: up and up, a dark sea of faces, banners red in the blood from the prisons . . . the enslavement and oppression of six thousand years a cry and a singing that echoes to the stars” (p. 74).

There is perhaps a personal as well as dramatic emphasis here. Like Ewan, Gibbon himself was conscious of coming to the workers’ revolutionary movement as an intellectual, from outside. He felt the need for some kind of sacrificial dedication on his part to the revolutionary

cause as an earnest of whole-souled participation, particularly if one wished to become a Communist. Ewan's development would seem to represent fairly closely his own feelings though, unlike Ewan, he apparently did not join the Communist Party.

Ewan becomes a Communist partly as a result of his experiences of class struggle and partly out of respect for Jim Trease, the local Communist leader whom he has come to know personally. In personal life he falls in love, rather much on his own terms, with an English girl Ellen Johns, a school-teacher and sympathetic to Socialism. When Ewan discovers that under pressure from the school authorities Ellen has dropped out of Communist activities (which she took up largely out of love for him), he brusquely humiliates and abandons her. Chris meanwhile is persuaded into marriage with a former Segget peasant, Ake Ogilvie, only to find that the relationship means nothing to her. The end of the trilogy finds Ewan organising a hunger march of the unemployed to London, while Chris, separated from her husband, quits Duncairn and returns to her family's original homestead where she plans to farm the land herself.

In *Grey Granite* Gibbon sought to enter into the actual experiences of the Scottish working class during the early 1930s. In style and texture the book is looser than the earlier parts and seems hastily put together. While at any time the lilting prose rhythm used by Gibbon may slip into a kind of self-parody or the less satisfying sort of "poetic prose", on the whole its power of evoking the ever-changing atmosphere and colouring of Scottish earth and sky, as of the peasant response to his environment, is most compelling. In *Grey Granite*, however, while freely using the racy vigour and vivid pungency of colloquial Scots speech, the narrative sometimes chokes up with wordiness or falls into some tiresome mannerisms. And at times there is an aggressive coarseness which suggests that Gibbon, like Burns in his "Reply to a Trimming Epistle Received from a Tailor", felt goaded into shocking the unco guid for the sake of shocking them. Throughout the work one can sense Gibbon's contempt for the actual prurience of a middle-class sex morality based largely on repression. But in the last volume it sometimes takes on a strident emphasis out of proportion to its significance in the narrative.

The loose and episodic structure of *Grey Granite* accounts in part for its impression of thinness in the treatment of working class life. Except in their incidental relations with Ewan, we see little of the workers or their way of life. The minor characters drawn in some detail, are mostly lodgers at the boarding house where Chris and Ewan live and are lower middle-class people, clerks, journalists, school-teachers. When we meet the "keelies" working alongside Ewan at the steelworks,

we are mainly conscious of their negative attitude towards him as an intellectual toff; at least in the earlier stages they are full of individualistic spite and show Ewan some of the cruder kinds of animosity. That they have positive qualities, characteristic of their class historically, is clear when we see them participating collectively in strikes, organising demonstrations and defying police brutality.

Even when the negative aspects of working-class life are stressed, the individual personalisation on the whole lacks substance and flesh-and-blood vividness. No writer was more conscious than Robert Tressell of the bourgeois-dominated prejudices and conservatism of at least an important section of the British workers during the heyday of Liberalism. But his ragged-trousered philanthropists, however warped in mind by the daily press, are intensely alive in their very manifestations of prejudice as in their sceptical humour, not to speak of the positive aspects of genuine working-class consciousness which begin to show up in some under Owen's determined reasoning.

Gibbon's approach and method are of course entirely different, as are his dramatic range and imaginative power. But one feels it is significant that, Ewan apart—and Ewan is of peasant origin—he did not create working-class characters as rounded and memorable as several of his peasant farmers, or even some of the village eccentrics, in *Sunset Song* and *Cloud Howe*. The Communist leader Trease, for instance, quite apart from his influence on Ewan, provides the main initiative for the militant struggles of the workers: the demonstration against rearmament, the protest over the gas explosion at the steelworks, the hunger march to London. But, except for one brief scene when Ewan talks with him at his home, he rarely appears in the flesh. As a character he remains lightly sketched and shadowy, enlivened chiefly by a proven strength of leadership, springing from deep experience, and a laconic humour.

It is Ewan who becomes the heroic figure of the workers' movement. Yet his peasant-born pride, intellectual detachment and hard aloofness ("the cool boy with the haughty soul . . . apart and alone") mark him off from his fellow workers. The intellectual in him at first revolts against identification with their interests. He asks himself: ". . . what was there in them (the workers) that wasn't in the people of any class? Some louts, some decent, the most of them brainless, what certain tool to be found in crude dirt?" (p. 39). Step by step, his participation in the struggles of the workers and his own experiences of the violence used against them, bring him a new sense of identification with them:

"And as they cheered him and cried his name, the dirty, kind words of mates in the shops, a great chap that Ewan, just one of themselves . . . it seemed to Ewan in a sudden minute that he would never be himself again, he'd never be ought but a bit of them, the

flush on a thin white mill-girl's face, the arm and hand and the downbent face of a keelie from the reek of the Gallowgate, the blood and bones and flesh of them all, their thoughts and their doubts and their loves were his, all that they thought and lived in were his. And that Ewan Tavendale that once had been, the cool boy with the haughty soul and cool hands, apart and alone, self-reliant, self-centred, slipped away out of the room . . . and was lost from his life for ever" (p. 58).

The process of his self-identification with the workers is vividly told: one feels behind the sensitive awareness of Ewan's conflict Gibbon's own personal concern with the same problem. Yet in his search for final conviction, for a "creed that will cut like a knife . . . through the doubt and disease", Ewan's coldly analytic mind drives him to extreme conclusions. Talking together of the revolutionary struggle Ewan and Trease reach a common understanding:

" . . . neither had a single illusion about the workers: they weren't heroes or gods oppressed, or likely to be generous and reasonable when their great black wave came flooding at last, up and up, swamping the high places with mud and blood. Most likely such leaders of the workers as themselves would be flung aside or trampled under, it didn't matter, nothing to them. **THEY THEMSELVES WERE THE WORKERS . . .**" (p. 96, emphasis as in original).

In the first part of this passage there is a certain romanticised fatalism characteristic of the intellectual spectator which accords ill with the affirmation of complete class identity at the end. And again, in nodding agreement to his thought that Trease would betray him, or Mrs. Trease, to the police if it suited his party's purpose, Ewan concludes. "Neither friends nor scruples nor honour nor hope for the folk who took the workers' road; just *life* that sent tiredness leaping from the brain . . ." (p. 97). It is as if Ewan was obsessed with putting himself to a self-imposed supreme test as a would-be revolutionary. But does the test here take such a form in real life or is it rather the projection of Ewan's intellectualised and at times inhuman conception of the workers' struggle for Socialism?

Elsewhere in his talk with Trease, Ewan and he agree that:

" . . . for years it was likely the workers' movements would be driven underground, they'd to take advantage of legality as long as they could and then prepare for underground work—perhaps a generation of secret agitation and occasional terrorism" (p. 96).

It is this *Iron Heel*-like fatalism, the conviction of isolation and long years of wandering in the desert, that prompts much of the "super-revolutionary" aspects of Ewan's outlook. And no wonder the future looked black to Gibbon, writing in the worst days of the Nazi terror and during a period of severe repression at home. In Britain the Labour movement as a whole had suffered grave defeats from the General Strike onwards. In parts of industrial Scotland, those socialists opposed to the compromises culminating in MacDonald's defection and striving to keep alive the workers' confidence in their power to resist the attacks on their living standards, could not but feel how much it was an up-hill battle. The violence which arose during the strike in Duncairn's steel-works and Ewan's experience of police brutality again reflect realistically characteristic conditions of the times. One needs to keep it in mind that *Grey Granite* was written at white heat in 1934, against the background of the Scottish industrial scene, if one would understand some of the features Gibbon provides for his peasant-intellectual's conversion into revolutionary working-class leader.

* * *

Viewed as a whole *A Scots Quair* is a drama of the quest for human integrity, for that which answers the deepest needs of man's soul. Protagonist of the struggle for personal fulfilment is Chris Guthrie, a peasant woman caught up in social forces which are destroying before her eyes the traditional life-pattern of her class. At decisive points she takes sides with the working people. But the mainspring of her being is not any social or political faith. Taking leave of her son, now a Communist, she remarks at the end:

"Of Robert and this faith of yours. The world's sought faith for thousands of years and only found death or unease in them. Yours is just another dark cloud to me—or a great rock you're trying to push up a hill" (*Grey Granite*, p. 106).

Unable to find again that fulfilment experienced with Tavendale and Colquhoun and indifferent now to the claims of political creeds, she turns to her family's old peasant homestead, there to find last-minute solace in the acceptance of "Change" as the abiding reality. She climbs a hill overlooking her peasant birth-place. Night begins to fall:

"But she still sat on as one by one the lights went out and the rain came, beating the stones about her, and falling all that night while she still sat there, presently feeling no longer the touch of the rain or hearing the sound of the lapwings going by" (*ibid.*, p. 107).

So in her last days Hardy's Tess found a momentary peace in identifying herself with symbols of a peasant existence where integrity and happiness seemed to have their natural roots. "Now I am at home" says Tess, like Chris a "heathen", standing amidst the ancient Druid pillars of Stonehenge. Each in her own way seeks to recapture the primal faith, the lost innocence—having experienced in agony of spirit the destruction of their natural basis of existence.

Though Chris joins hands with her kinswoman Tess at the end, her son Ewan looks beyond the ruins of his class to "all those tomorrows that awaited his feet by years and tracks Chris would never see". Within the dramatic structure of the work there is deep meaning in the fact that Ewan, a peasant's son, provides in social terms the answer to man's quest for integrity. Inheriting the best qualities of the peasantry—Chris's essential link with the common people of Scotland—Ewan turns them to new use. In merging himself in the workers' struggle for Socialism, he discovers that his proud individualism can have real meaning only if put at the service of the working people, heirs of a new and greater freedom.

At the same time it is Ewan who, despite his mother's scepticism of his "creed", affirms the basic continuity between her values, the qualities of "the Old Scots folk", and his own (*Grey Granite*, p. 106). The personal and the social sides of man's ageless struggle here meet: peasant individualism is destroyed but the human qualities shared by the peasantry with the common people endure and, fused in a new pattern of social action, serve for the liberation of mankind.

Whatever the failings and blemishes of the final volume, Gibbon's is a great achievement. There is a restless sweep of life in his work, a passionate awareness of land and people, a nearness to the springs of man's nature that few in our time have surpassed. In his deep understanding of the Scottish peasant, as in his sensitive response to the moods of the Scottish earth, hills and skies, he stands in line with Robert Burns, like himself a peasant's son. Like Burns's in the "Address to the Unco Guid" and "Holy Willie's Prayer" is also his merciless realism, spiced with diablerie, taking issue with the would-be genteel and the privileged on behalf of the common man.

The Contribution of Pavlov to Medicine

RUSCOE CLARKE

Frederic Joliot-Curie, writing on the death of Joseph Stalin, attributed the flowering of science in the Soviet Union to the fact that scientists were working in a favourable environment. The results of their researches were freely placed at the disposal of the people. They were serving to defend liberties already won and to improve the material and spiritual conditions of life. He went on to say :

"The history of the sciences conceived from a Marxist point of view must be the basis for the teaching of science. Thus in my opinion one must attempt in the course of teaching, for each discovery, to examine the state of knowledge and the techniques of observation available at the time, the state of mind of the investigators ; in brief, one must try to relive the process of creation.

"This effort brings to light the fact that in spite of the continuous growth of knowledge we find ourselves like our predecessors, still blind in the face of a multitude of observed phenomena. This type of study will enable us the better to open our eyes on nature so that we may make fresh discoveries ; it will give us sober courage which can break the bonds of orthodoxy."

In attempting to evaluate the contribution of Pavlov to science in general and to medicine in particular, we must ask ourselves not only what he did and its significance for the future, but how he was able to make this particular contribution.

* * *

Born in 1849 in Ryazan, son of a poor parish priest, he won a scholarship to the University of St. Petersburg, where as a fourth-year physiology student he received a gold medal for his first scientific paper. In 1875 he entered the Academy of Medicine and Surgery, graduating in 1879 with a second gold medal for physiological research. Thereafter he worked under conditions of great personal hardship until 1890 when he became Professor of Pharmacology at the Military Medical Academy. After five years he transferred to the Chair of Physiology. In 1891 he had become Director of the Institute of Experimental Medicine, which post he retained until his death in 1936. Here he carried out most of his classical experiments, before and after its transfer to a magnificent new building in 1924.

His scientific research covered a wide range of topics related to physiology and medicine, but his main work centred on three main

themes which occupied successive periods of his life. His early work was concerned with the circulation of the blood, with the regulation and control of the heart and blood vessels by reflex nervous action. This continued for fifteen years during which time he established basic principles and attitudes to technique which were to lead on to his later discoveries.

Following this he returned to the problems of digestion which had interested him as a student. He developed new techniques and made a series of important discoveries concerning the nervous control of the digestive processes, of the production of digestive juices by the salivary glands, pancreas, stomach and intestines, and the external environmental influences affecting such processes. It was for these basic studies that he was awarded a Nobel Prize for Physiology in 1904.

By 1895 he had entered the third and most important section of his life's work. He adapted techniques already developed to initiate a new approach to the objective study of the activity of higher levels of the brain, including the cerebral cortex. This led directly to his discovery of conditioned reflexes and to the working out of their law of formation and disappearance, their development and interaction. This constituted a new and revolutionary basis for understanding the working of the brain in the higher animals and in man. It demonstrated the role of the highest levels of the nervous system as controlling all physiological activity, as vital to an understanding of the development of disease and of its prevention and cure.

* * *

While it is true that the full wealth of Pavlov's contributions to physiology and medicine is not yet available in English, it is even more true that only the earlier and more orthodox part of his work has received any adequate recognition. His later and more important discoveries have either been ignored or distorted. In the Soviet Union the position has been different although even there full recognition of the fundamental nature of Pavlov's work was delayed until 1950 when the Academy of Science and the Academy of Medical Sciences of the U.S.S.R. held a joint "Scientific Session on the Physiological Teachings of Academician I. P. Pavlov", preceded and followed by nation-wide discussions.

The importance of recent developments in the Soviet Union and the disastrous effect of his neglect elsewhere must be seen essentially in terms of his work on conditioned reflexes. The value of a consistently materialist and clear understanding of the processes underlying the activity of the brain is not confined to medicine and physiology. It is of direct and profound importance to psychology, to aesthetics, to education and to philosophy. Pavlov's discovery of the second signalling system underlying the use of words which act as conditioning stimuli and depend

upon new and more complex patterns of neural activity, can be seen as a detailed elaboration of Engels' account of the role of social labour in the transition from Ape to Man. It is a corollary to Stalin's work on linguistics, and an essential contribution to Lenin's theory of reflection.

The significance of Pavlov's work for medicine itself can only be appreciated against the background of the successes and limitations of medical science during the era of the rise and fall of capitalism.

* * *

Modern scientific medicine dates back to the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries; to the birth of modern anatomy with Vesalius, of physiology with Harvey's account of the circulation of the blood. These first stirrings arose from the flowering of culture which accompanied the rise of the bourgeoisie to a dominant position in society. The break-up of feudalism, with its fixed patterns of hierarchical social relations, required the rejection of scholasticism and encouraged the publication of direct observations in defiance of tradition. Society was on the move and with the process of change there was hope and confidence in the future. Francis Bacon could foresee the benefit to mankind of science based on observation and experiment. Harvey could study the relation between structure and function. He could make quantitative observations and plan qualitative experiments. He attempted somewhat prematurely to found a science of embryology, of development.

The bourgeoisie in power however, were faced with their own "grave-diggers". The full-blooded optimism of Shakespeare and Bacon was no longer in evidence in the older capitalist countries once the workers began to emerge as an independent force. The single-mindedness of the bourgeois ideologists was beginning to be replaced by an ambivalence which became more obvious as capitalism developed. Moreover, the rising bourgeoisie was interested primarily in industrial projects and as a result biology lagged behind physics and chemistry as objects of their patronage. In addition time was required for the development of new technical weapons.

So, after the first advances further progress was slow. Dissection of the human body, itself a bold defiance of superstition, developed a sound knowledge of visible anatomy and of the cruder manifestations of established disease. Careful association of such findings with the direct study of changes occurring in living patients allowed diseases to be classified. But the genuine advances in medicine which took place during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries derived their inspiration from social forces rather than from a scientific understanding of disease. Jenner's discovery of vaccination against smallpox in 1765 was essentially

empirical and derived from the experience of peasants handed down as folk lore. From this, too, emerged such scientific observations of the effects of naturally occurring drugs as Withering's discovery of digitalis. Hunter's attempt to establish a scientific basis for surgery was ahead of his times. The beginning of detailed knowledge of the working of the human body in health and sickness followed the maturing of the industrial revolution.

One of the essential technical advances necessary for this was the perfection of the microscope. Its early use had aroused curiosity, and Malpighi was able to complete the picture required by Harvey's theory of the circulation of the blood, by demonstrating the microscopic connections between arteries and veins. But interest flagged until with more effective lens systems and with tissue stains derived from the new German chemical industry, Virchow, Ehrlich, Koch, and Pasteur applied microscopy to the study of disease.

The study of the complex minute structure of animals and man was a new stimulus to physiology and pathology. The microscopic appearances of diseased tissues were correlated with their grosser appearances and with phenomena encountered in the living. Virchow described a cellular basis of disease and elaborated his "Cellular Pathology". Pasteur turned from his work on the microbic causes of fermentation and silkworm disease—inspired by the patronage of two of France's major industries—to the founding of modern bacteriology. Koch and Ehrlich developed his work and extended the theory of specific germs causing specific diseases. They studied the reactions of the organism to infection. One dramatic cure was born of their efforts to find specific chemical antidotes to bacterial infection. From their work grew the modern practice of immunisation and inoculation, and eventually the discovery of the anti-biotics.

This same period saw the discovery of X-rays and their application to medical diagnosis, the evolution of the lens-bearing instruments for the examination of the body cavities, the liberation of surgery from pain and major sepsis by the discovery of anæsthetics and aseptic technique. Biochemistry emerged and the beginning of an understanding of the components of nutrition, of proteins, carbohydrates, fats and vitamins.

Claude Bernard laid the foundations of modern experimental physiology. He discovered the endocrine glands and began to develop an understanding of the mechanics of digestion, respiration and the circulation. He was able to work out a number of basic patterns of reflex action. Others had begun to study localisation of function within the nervous system. The closing years of the century saw the birth of Freudian psycho-analytic psychology.

Orthodox medical historians have listed such discoveries in varying orders of importance, but with little understanding of their ideological significance and ultimate contribution to the health of the people. Yet in the long run the latter is decisive and the former will provide the key. Falls in infant mortality and a rising expectation of life have taken place at different rates in various parts of the world during the past century. They have resulted from social needs and pressure from the people themselves. The development of modern sanitation in Britain antedated the discovery of the germs responsible for cholera, typhoid and dysentery. The basic conception of asepsis was put forward by Semell-weiss in 1840, well ahead of Pasteur.

But the advancing understanding of structure and function in sick and healthy organisms has begun to bear fruit, and increasingly during the present century. The advances have continued. New drugs have transformed the treatment of acute infections and changed the pattern of serious illness. The invasion of new fields by the surgeons; new vitamins and hormones; new methods of diagnosis; new recognition of social origins of disease and of the relationships that must exist between diseases of the body and disturbance of the mind—all these have contributed to health. To some the present horizon appears limitless but there are growing signs of recognition that medical science has entered a state of crisis. This crisis consists in a failure fully to apply developing knowledge to the treatment and particularly to the prevention of disease as well as in a relative failure to utilise the advances in science for the generation of new knowledge. This crisis is reflected by the failure to make new knowledge available for use by doctors for their patients, by the realisation that the present fixed nature of "specialisation" is a drag on progress—a crisis that appears in the laboratory with research workers frustrated in attempts to find problems to suit their apparatus, while the machinery of research is largely inaccessible to those in contact with the problems that need to be solved. The crisis means that useful discoveries will not continue to emerge automatically; a number of present trends are becoming less productive, like mineral seams nearing exhaustion. Nowhere is the existence of crisis clearer than in relation to mental conditions, the neuroses and psychoses. There is in Britain a healthy disillusionment with all brands of Freudian psychology including its more recent "psychosomatic" variant. There is a parallel revolt against the empirical and routine use of crude methods of physical treatment like leucotomy and convulsive therapy.

There is a growing recognition of the need for a basis for synthesis, of the ineffectiveness of the mere accumulation of facts without hypothesis to guide their collection. The crisis is in fact the result of this need for a new theoretical basis. The crude materialism of the eighteenth

century was evidently useless in biology but methods which retain many of its vital features still pervade medical research and practice. Such mechanism was rejected by Claude Bernard and many of his successors but they found nothing to put in its place; no unifying approach to biology or medicine which would allow us to study the whole man in his total environment. Science had seemed only capable of providing us with a lot of detail about isolated bits. That great surgeon and philosopher Wilfred Trotter could turn away from science and reason. Rejecting "dogmatic" rationalism he turned to irrationalism in the name of "the practical art". Meanwhile orthodox physiology had attempted to bridge the gap between animals and man but with inadequate recognition of fallacies inherited from the past. It is not yet sufficiently appreciated that the ideological and theoretical foundations which sufficed for the past 100 years have brought with them limitations which must be discerned before they can be discarded.

* * *

All this was appreciated by Pavlov. Certainly he contributed his quota to the detailed advances, but in addition and at an early stage of this period he began to see what was needed if physiology and medicine were to become genuinely and progressively scientific. He was able to discern the fundamental fallacies of the nineteenth century approaches and to develop his own work with ever deeper content. His understanding of the way forward is shown not only in his critique of methodology but in his consistently materialist approach which recognised the dynamic complexity of living organisms in their evolution, their development and in their adaptive responses to their environment.

Firstly, he was convinced that the future of medicine lay in physiology, in the unravelling of the processes, of the forms of biological movement, which take place in the organism in health and disease and in the transformation of the one into the other. He was convinced moreover that a solid basis for this must emerge from animal experiments, for it was impossible for the necessary experiments to be carried out on man.

Secondly, he realised the limitations inherent in the type of experiment which had been commonly used—the acute experiment in which an attempt is made to understand the function of organs or parts of the animal by their crude extirpation; or by equally crude interferences with normal functioning carried out with the animal under anaesthesia. The reaction of the animal to these disturbed so many other functions that results were frequently totally misleading. He saw that the study of isolated organism parts cannot go far to understanding their role in a complex whole. Knowledge obtained by such methods is frequently irrelevant to an understanding of the functioning of the body under con-

ditions of normal conscious activity. He understood further that disturbances of function can take place without changes in structure detectable by available methods of study.

He took over and developed techniques from the past but used them so that his basic studies were carried out on unanaesthetised animals or on animals who had recovered from the effects of any necessary operations. He devised methods of quantitative study of internal organs so that their behaviour could be related to that of the animal as a whole. In his original work on the control of blood pressure he developed techniques of handling animals so that they would permit observations to be made without anaesthetics and without serious disturbance from the conditions of the experiment. For his later work on digestion he elaborated techniques for the study of the digestive juices so that these could be investigated during the course of normal feeding. He was thus able to proceed to study the impact of a variety of stimuli derived from changes in the external and internal environment.

But he was never dictated to by technical considerations. New techniques were evolved for the solution of problems emerging during the course of the work. Old techniques were modified and changed and discarded. His own technical proficiency was of a very high order, and was not confined to the surgery required by these experiments. Nor did he insist at any time that his own methods would lead to final understanding. He indicated that it would be possible in the future to bring together, at a new level of synthesis, the results obtained from methods of study that must for a time proceed independently. In particular he visualised the future possibility of integrating his work with cyto-architectonics and with biochemistry.

Thirdly, inspired by the physician Botkin and the physiologist Sechenov, he came to recognise the full importance of the central role of the nervous system and of its highest level, the cerebral cortex. He saw the higher nervous activity as playing a constant and fundamental part in regulating and controlling all processes taking place in the body. His earlier work had dealt with the nervous control of digestion and the circulation. Using the same techniques he began to use the behaviour of the digestive processes as indicators of the behaviour of the cerebral cortex in response to a range of stimuli apparently unconnected with the process of digestion. Thus he discovered in the conditioned reflex, the basic pattern of nervous activity of these higher levels of the brain.

This third and most important phase of his work lasted for over forty years. It arose not only from an appreciation of the dominant role of the cerebral cortex but from a two-fold conviction: firstly, that the physiology of the higher levels of the nervous system had reached an impasse which could not be overcome by any purely analytic or sub-

jective type of approach ; secondly, that progress was possible and must be based on objective investigations and a materialist foundation. His insistence on the intact organism in relation to its environment enabled him to escape the limitations of mechanism. His rejection of all subjectivism in the study of the brain made it possible for him to transcend the apparent limits of his age and to clear the ground for the future.

But he was able to do far more than clear the ground. He continued his work on the higher nervous activity during his latter years under almost ideal conditions. He was thus enabled to provide a basis for extending physiology to new levels of practical and theoretical attainment, a basis for a new flowering of medicine that will be increasingly scientific but at the same time more completely human. It will be able to recognise and study and prevent and cure the reactions of human patients to adverse environmental influences by taking into account all in man that *is specifically human*, all of which is mediated through the activity of the brain, the site of consciousness, thought and motivated activity.

* * *

There is no space here to attempt even to summarise Pavlov's work on conditioned reflexes. It is nevertheless necessary to indicate something more of the basic nature of this work. Professor Russinov in a lecture given in London in 1952 stated that :

“Pavlov's theory of reflex activity is based on three fundamental principles of exact scientific enquiry : (1) the principle of determinism ; (2) the principle of analysis and synthesis ; and (3) the principle of structure, that is, the relation of dynamics and structure, the disposition of a force in space.”

Academician Bykov in his opening contribution to the Scientific Session referred to above describes four characteristics of the Pavlovian conception of the human organism,

“which is not a machine, but a single entity . . . not a simple whole but a single whole.”

The first characteristic is that the organism is considered as a single internally connected unity integrated rather than summated by the combination of cells, organs and fluids into a single complex, by the connections established by chemical changes in the circulating fluids and chiefly by the nervous system linking all together.

The second characteristic is :

“That there is scarcely a function of the body that is not controlled by the higher department of the nervous system.”

The third characteristic is that no distinction is made between the internal and external life of the organism, between the “vegetative” and “animal” life. Man in relation to his environment is not separated from man in relation to himself. The functioning of his organs from stomach to nerve and from brain to muscle, comprises a single interconnected whole. The last characteristic is that :

“In the life of the body a definite set of relationships, a specific form of equilibrium, between the external environment and the internal processes is established, organised by the cerebral cortex. These relationships constitute definite dynamic types with different individuals. Disturbance of the established type leads to disturbance of the vital functions.”

Pavlov's work has enabled us to establish scientific laws describing the intricate complexity of man's capacity to adapt to an environment that is not only biological but social. It enables us moreover to link our understanding of the reactions of man as he is today with the process of evolution. Pavlov had suggested and his successors are demonstrating that conditioned reflexes can be transmitted, providing a new basis for inheritance. Pavlov was inspired by Darwinism and this element in his approach is vital to an understanding of the effect of environment on evolution.

Pavlov's work requires deep study but not in academic isolation. It can only be profitably evaluated in connection with practical activity. It can only be firmly grasped in the course of its application. It must be seen as the extension of physiology but in a way that transforms everything that has gone before. In medicine it has already laid the foundations of progress. It has allowed, for example, the new approach to painless childbirth based on the concept of such pain as a reflex phenomenon which can become conditioned, can be induced not just by the actual hardships and damages that accompanied childbirth under primitive conditions, but by associated happenings both inside and outside the body—by words and the repetition of words—by a million other apparently extraneous events. Such understanding can enable the situation to be transformed and pain be replaced by its opposite, joy.

But not only the pain of childbirth ; all pain, whether or not it appears to play any protective role, can be better understood and treated in terms of Pavlov's approach to cortical activity.

His own studies on the neuroses led to their experimental production and cure in animals. This work is being successfully applied to psychiatry in the Soviet Union today, where they are investigating the transformation of neuroses, of disturbances of function which may at first be transient, not only into established patterns of mental upset but into

organic conditions like gastric ulceration and high blood pressure. This understanding is beginning to lead to more scientific application not so much of specific remedies but of all kinds of remedies, old and new, medicinal and environmental, combinations of changes in the internal and external environment, forming the basis for the application of medical science to prevention, to the early stages of disease, to research at the level of the general practitioner and the clinic.

All this is but the beginning and we shall have to build from it. In so doing it is essential to realise that we shall not find it easy. The past has not so much got to be unlearned, as worked over again. The best of the orthodox must provide the basis for a way forward in various fields. Pavlov's techniques are not universally relevant. New techniques are emerging today with their own new qualities. We have radioactive isotopes for the study of changes in chemical balances, flows and distributions. We have electronic equipment providing methods of dynamic measurement and recording. We must study the specific new features of new techniques, but their application to physiology and medicine will not be profitable without a clear theoretical approach. This I believe can be found in the work of Pavlov but it will only become a useful guide to the use of our modern technical equipment if we attempt to carry out the advice of Joliot-Curie and try to "relive the process of creation" so that our own discoveries will no longer come by chance.

* * *

The final question that we must attempt to answer here is how it was possible for Pavlov to accomplish this great work, the foundations for which were firmly laid not under Socialism but under the Czarist autocracy. Here we must look beyond the formal existence of a certain type of social system. Pavlov entered the field of scientific physiology when capitalist society had created the basic tools for progress and these were available across the barriers of State boundaries. His capacity to transcend the ideological limitations of most of his contemporaries and successors requires an explanation which can be found, at least in part, in particular features of Russia during the nineteenth century. Capitalism had developed late and it developed in a highly concentrated form under the influence of British and French capital. This created a new and militant working class, arising not only later but more rapidly than the working classes in the older European capitalist states. For a vital period in Russian history this exerted an influence on a section of the bourgeois intellectuals in revolt against czarism and willing to associate themselves with the revolutionary workers. Pisarev, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov, Russian materialists of the middle of the nineteenth century, were bolder in their criticism, and lived at a later period of

scientific discovery, than their counterparts at corresponding historical periods in England and France. They influenced Sechenov directly. They must surely have been read by the young Pavlov when he first came to study in St. Petersburg. This renaissance helped to give Pavlov not only his materialism—his attitude to the brain as the organ of thought is clearly based on their writings—but his courage, singleness of purpose and confidence in the future. His reaction to the czarist autocracy was to resist it. He joined protests on behalf of persecuted students. He refused to kowtow to authority. During a period of raging reaction after the Russo-Japanese war he said that "only a revolution can save Russia! The government which brought the country to such a disgrace must be overthrown". On the occasion of his award of the Nobel prize, the King of Sweden is said to have remarked: "I am afraid of your Pavlov. He wears no medals. He must be a socialist". His opposition to autocracy did not take the form of a life of politics for he was too devoted to his work. But his work was in itself a challenge. The Stolypin reaction did not break him and he survived to see the birth of Socialism in his beloved Russia.

His personal position was immediately transformed by the new Soviet State. Lenin proposed a decree of the Council of Peoples' Commissars in 1921 to make certain that Pavlov would continue the work whose significance he had long understood. In 1894 he had written:

"You cannot argue about the soul without having explained the physical processes in particular: here progress must consist in abandoning general theories and philosophical disquisitions about the nature of the soul, and in knowing how to put the study of facts which characterise any particular physical process on a scientific footing."

This was written one year before Pavlov started his work on conditioned reflexes. Lenin and Pavlov were products of the same epoch. Later their paths became linked and Pavlov surely justified the confidence placed in him by the leaders of the Soviet Government.

Finally, in his personal character Pavlov differed from many of the great scientists of his time, whose work will survive less completely. Pasteur once wrote:

"In each of us there are two men: the man of learning, . . . who by observation and reason wishes to raise himself an understanding of nature, and the man of feeling, of tradition, of faith, of doubt . . . the man of sensitivity. The two domains are distinct and woe to him who wishes to impose one upon the other in the present imperfect state of human knowledge."

How many men of science have known this duality! How often has this been their reaction to the conflicts of class divided societies! But Pavlov was one man, a whole man, an integrated man. His personal qualities emerge clearly in a letter written to the youth of the Soviet Union shortly before his death:

“What would I wish for the youth of my fatherland who devote themselves to science!

“First of all—Consistency. Consistency and more consistency . . . second, Modesty. Never think you know everything. No matter in what high esteem you are held always have the courage to say to yourself: I am ignorant. Third, Passion. Remember science requires your whole life. Even if you had two lives to give it would still not be enough. Science demands of man effort and supreme passion. Be passionate in your work and in your quests.”

Such is the man whose work we must begin to understand if we are to develop medical science in this country so that it shall be worthy of our great people. His sober courage will light our way forward. His living picture of the material basis of human thought can inspire the approach to medicine that the transformation of the material conditions of life in Britain will soon demand.

Arbitration in Industrial Disputes

J. HENDY

I

In elaborating the financial framework of the Tory “dash for freedom” in his Budget Speech of March 6, 1954, Mr. Butler none the less found it incumbent upon him to reiterate the call for wage restraint.

The grounds upon which this plea is based have been made familiar by a succession of Chancellors; Mr. Butler merely repeated a formula which holders of his office must by now have learned by rote:

“Both stability at home and competitive power abroad require that wage increases should not outrun productivity. . . . At no level of the industrial process can we afford denial of personal effort or indulgence of personal motives if, in this sharply competitive world which we now face, our exports are to maintain and to expand their share of world trade.”

The conception of Britain as an embattled nation riding the seas of economic adversity—a nation in which, therefore, the paramount duty of all responsible citizens is the safeguarding of the national well-being rather than the promotion of personal interest—is one which in recent years has been urged upon the people through every means capable of influencing public opinion.

The leaders of the T.U.C. and the Labour Party have vied with the Tories in inculcating what is described as “a sense of national responsibility”, while leading industrialists have not been slow to follow the lead by dressing up their annual balance sheets with appeals for national unity.

Typical of this attitude has been the long and stubborn fight of the General Council of the T.U.C. against all attempts to replace the “wage freeze” by a policy of pressing for general wage increases. So, too, was the policy statement of the Labour Party *Challenge to Britain*, whose central theme was “the need for sacrifices by all”. More touching, perhaps, was the appeal made by Lord Balfour of Burleigh in presenting the annual accounts of Lloyds Bank on February 12, 1954:

“. . . It is worth reminding ourselves that he [the shareholder] is the source of the life blood of industry, the risk capital without which labour could not have been set to work in the first instance. And without a constant supply of fresh risk capital industry cannot work properly or continue to provide full employment. . . .

The wage earner is at heart as magnanimous as anyone else, and I believe that if these facts could be brought home to him he would hesitate before pressing a claim to a still larger share of the national income."

With engaging candour Lord Balfour freely admitted that it was beyond doubt that "if the wage earners exert their full power they can in the present conditions, and in the short run, secure for themselves a still greater share of the national cake", so he thoughtfully supplemented his call for magnanimity with an appeal to the wage earner's self-interest: higher costs brought about by increased wages would bring grave unemployment. "My point is that—as things are now—he cannot safely take more until there is firmly and solidly a larger cake to divide, and a stable pound in which to draw his weekly wage."

Unfortunately, however, for Lord Balfour, the past twelve months have not seen magnanimity prevail, nor have the wage earners interpreted their economic self-interest in the terms which he recommends.

If it has not yet become clear to all that the basic causes of Britain's economic difficulties arise from the fundamental contradictions that lie at the roots of capitalist society, it has none the less been realised by millions of wage earners that their interests are being gravely threatened by the policy of the cold war, by the drive for capitalist profit, and by the enormous increase in the cost of living. Realisation has been followed by action. The past year has been marked by some of the most stubborn wage battles in living memory, and more workers have participated in official strikes than at any time since 1926.

Inevitably, therefore, in recent months increasing attention has been focused in certain quarters upon the means for the avoidance of industrial disputes, and the processes of collective bargaining and wage negotiation have been subjected to critical examination, particularly by those who have cause to believe that their interests may be adversely affected by any recourse to strike action by the workers.

These deliberations have been assisted by the recommendations of certain Courts of Inquiry into particular disputes, and by the personal observations of representatives of the Ministry of Labour, and, of course, by the press—ever ready to advise the trade union movement on all matters which may affect "the national interest".

II

The first stage in this prolonged search for a reliable means of ensuring the preservation of industrial peace can be said to have begun with the report of the Court of Inquiry into the dispute in the Electrical

Contracting Industry. In its report, issued in October 1953, the Court, in calling for further joint negotiations on the points at issue, suggested that the normal negotiating machinery should immediately be strengthened to allow finality to be reached: "We feel strongly that at such a meeting both sides should be armed with full power and authority to proceed to a conclusion, without the necessity of further consultation with the constituents or branches."

Having indicated that the thing to be aimed at was *finality*, the Court went on to urge its own solution:

"If in such negotiations no agreement can be found . . . then these matters should be referred to arbitration by the voluntary action of the parties . . . it is only a bad case that will not stand impartial investigation. . . . In the light of what has transpired at this Inquiry, we are of the opinion that the parties should consider improving and strengthening the N.J.I.C. machinery by including therein some more positive provision than it contains at present for the settlement of disputes, including a provision for reference to arbitration in the event of the two sides of the Council being unable to agree."

The E.T.U. however declined to accept a permanent provision for arbitration, and refused to go to arbitration even on the point at issue until such time as the employers had shown the colour of their money. The dispute did not, therefore, reach the Industrial Disputes Tribunal till the middle of March 1954, when strike action had compelled the employers to concede an interim advance of 2d. per hour.

In the meantime the advocates of finality had received an even more severe setback in the outcome of the dispute in the railway industry.

On December 4, 1953, the Railway Staffs National Tribunal rejected a joint demand by the railway unions for an increase of 15 per cent, and instead offered a flat rate increase of 4s. a week. This award was rejected by the A.S.L.E.F. and N.U.R., who decided in favour of strike action. The N.U.R. finally set the date for their 400,000 members to strike, as from midnight on December 20. After almost continuous discussions during December 14, 15 and 16 between Sir Walter Monckton (Minister of Labour), Sir Brian Robertson (chairman of the Transport Commission), and union leaders; and after further consultations between Sir Winston Churchill, Monckton and Lennox Boyd (then Minister of Transport), it was announced on December 16 that agreement had been reached. By the terms of this agreement the strike was to be called off and the Commission was to grant a further improvement of rates on a percentage basis within the next six weeks in addition to the Tribunal's 4s. On February 1, 1954, the unions accepted an offer of 6 per cent, making a total increase of seven to ten shillings a week.

For the first time in railway history the award of an arbitration tribunal had been set aside, and the employers compelled by a display of strength to concede what they had themselves declared to be impossible. Well might *The Times* Review of Industry, in commenting on this case, head its melancholy report: "Arbitration under a cloud".

The Times itself on February 1, 1954, devoted its leading article to a vigorous denunciation of all efforts to obtain increased wages, and berated the Chairman of the Labour Party for not going further in his January 30 broadcast than advise workers "not to start an endless chain reaction between wages and prices", nor to press "claims which as in 1951 it accounted for a mere 6.9 per cent of the settlements, in called in Professor Pigou to write an article headed "Money Wages and Real Wages—the limits to increases". Professor Pigou, however, has the old world courtesy of always providing the academic answers to his own arguments, and though he argued that higher wages unaccompanied by higher productivity must bring unemployment, he also showed that this development could be prevented either by extra Government expenditure, or, more easily still, by taxing non-wage-earners to subsidise wages.

Perhaps *The Times* would have done better if it had called upon Professor Frank Paish, whose report to the economic committee of the Liberal Party, summarised in *The Times* of December 14, 1953, and subsequently utilised by the ship-building employers, had claimed that "the general pattern of working class consumption (is) nearer to the pattern existing in the late nineteen-thirties than at any period since 1940". There was, therefore, "less ground now for demanding general wage increases, except for increased output, than at any time in recent years".

Millions of workers, however, indicated that they were of a very different opinion. Following the nation-wide one-day stoppage in the engineering and ship-building industries in support of the claim for a 15 per cent increase in wages, the Confederation of Engineering and Ship-building Unions on December 23, 1953, endorsed a recommendation calling for the imposition of a ban on overtime and a limitation of piecework as from January 18, 1954. The reaction of the Government was immediate. On January 1, the Minister of Labour set up two Courts of Inquiry into the dispute, one for engineering, the other for ship-building. After nearly two months of deliberation, the Courts issued recommendations indicating the granting of increases of something in the region of one-third of the amount claimed, and on March 24 increases ranging from 6s. 6d. to 8s. 6d. were offered and accepted. The most striking feature of the reports of the two Courts lay, however, in their close examination of the wage structure of the industries, and

in their proposals for avoiding future disputes. The engineering Court stated that it was led to feel that:

"the parties should give consideration to the setting up of some joint body which could keep wages and related matters under review and to which preliminary negotiations on national wages questions might be delegated without the formality of . . . large meetings and elaborate recording of proceedings".

In their search for finality the Courts did not rest content with proposals for the strengthening of the existing machinery. Like the Court of Inquiry into the electrical dispute they went further; indeed, much further. They suggested that an authoritative and impartial body should be set up to consider the wider problems relating to wage claims and the complex and sometimes conflicting arguments which surround them, "to form a view upon their implication for the national economy and our ability to maintain our present standards, and to give advice and guidance as to broad policy and possible action".

The Times commented on March 2:

"What they envisaged, apparently, was a body which would examine Britain's economic relationships with the rest of the world in present circumstances and consider whether it is possible to maintain our present standards and if so what steps are necessary to that end." It would "take into consideration not only German and Japanese competition, but the tendency for large areas of the world to become more industrialised so that they are in some fields our competitors instead of our customers . . . and draw conclusions as to our wage and price policy and related matters."

One cannot but note that no suggestion was made as to any inquiry into the policies responsible for our late enemies' ability to compete, nor into why developed territories should be a hindrance rather than a help to our economy.

It was, however, clear that the Courts of Inquiry were not without the guidance of authoritative opinion elsewhere. On January 20 Sir Godfrey Ince, Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Labour, stated in a speech at Birmingham:

"It is characteristic of our British institutions and typical of our British character that constitutionalism should have developed in industry as it has developed in other fields. But has this constitutionalism gone far enough? In many industries there is provision in the constitutional machinery for finality in a dispute by way of arbitration. In my view there should be this finality in all negotiating machinery."

On March 3 Sir Walter Monckton gave the Government's official view: "We want to see wherever possible introduced into the machinery provision voluntarily agreed upon for voluntary arbitration."

The bait was soon taken. On March 6 *The Times* was able to report that at least one major union had indicated support for proposals of this nature. The Transport and General Workers' Union had issued a statement which, it was said, "points out that arbitration obviates the necessity of stoppages which interfere with the economic prospects of the country, and says that the essential problem at the present time is to maintain the social services and the principle of full employment". The union's decision, remarked *The Times*, "was based upon a report from Mr. Arthur Deakin, their General Secretary, and it may be assumed that it has his weight behind it as well as that of the union, which with its 1,300,000 members, is easily the largest in the country".

It was, therefore, with justifiable optimism that a further report was made in the newspaper on March 10 that the General Council of the T.U.C., the British Employers' Confederation, and representatives of the Nationalised Industries had accepted the invitation of the Minister of Labour to discuss the suggestion of the Courts of Inquiry that an impartial body should be set up to examine general economic questions affecting wages.

But, alas for poor Yorick, on April 27 it was announced that the T.U.C. had rejected not only the proposal to set up the suggested impartial body, but also the Minister's further proposition that industries which have not already done so should provide for arbitration in collective wage agreements. The reason was not far to seek; the General Council had demonstrated that it is reluctant to allow its sense of "national responsibility" to blur its acute perception of the probable outcome if such proposals were debated and voted upon at Congress.

The pressure of propaganda against the use of the strike weapon and in favour of some form of arbitration will, however, undoubtedly be increased in the months to come; and it would be well for us to understand the issues at stake.

III

In that valuable little book *Trade Unions Today* Mr. Henry Collins shortly defined the main purpose of a trade union as "to protect and further the interests of its members". Clearly, the degree to which it is able to do this will depend, among other things, on its ability to bargain with employers on their behalf. For this reason the trade union movement has always supported the establishment and maintenance of machinery to permit employers and unions to meet and negotiate, and it has always welcomed any attempt to make such machinery more

readily available, particularly in those cases where employers have tended to display a hostile attitude to trade union organisation. Trade unions in Britain have long regarded it as right and proper that the State should take a hand in the provision of machinery of which the two sides of industry could take advantage in their efforts to reach agreement.

The State, however, though it had—after years of bitter hostility—granted legal protection to trade unions in 1871 and to trade disputes in 1906, soon discovered the value of what might be called the principles of homeopathy in dealing with the recurrent demands of trade unions for improved negotiating rights. The modest "hair of the dog that bit you" that constituted the original Conciliation Act of 1896 has grown, through the Industrial Courts Act 1919, the Wages Councils Act 1945, and many other statutes and orders, into a veritable network of enactments regulating, controlling, or conditioning the exercise of trade union power, and attempting more and more closely to confine the exercise of that power within what the ruling class considers a constitutional field.

During the recent war the noose was drawn tight by S.R. and O. 1305, which prohibited strikes and made arbitration compulsory. This provision was maintained as long as possible after the war had ended, and it was not until August 1, 1953, that it was replaced by the Industrial Disputes Order (S.I. 1376). This Order has revoked the prohibition of strikes, but it still reserves to the Minister of Labour power to refer otherwise unresolved disputes to an Industrial Disputes Tribunal which may issue an award which "shall for the purpose of this order be treated as constituting a final settlement of that dispute".

In actual fact this residual power to refer without the consent of both of the parties has not been resorted to, for the organised opposition of trade union opinion, particularly after the unsuccessful prosecution under S.R. and O. 1305 of the leaders of the London dock strikers, has rendered the retention of compulsory arbitration politically impossible.

But what has proved impossible by means of legislation may yet be achieved by persuasion. Hence the tremendous drive in recent years to create a climate of opinion which would regard strikes as both unjustifiable in the light of "Britain's precarious economic position", and unnecessary in view of the "excellent" provisions existing for the settlement of disputes. The belief that strikes are both disruptive of the national economy and damaging to the interests of the participants is now by no means confined to the representatives of capital. Years of indoctrination with the theories of social democracy have resulted in producing on the other side of the negotiating table representatives of labour who feel that they have a real community of interest in making collective bargaining "work" for the greater prosperity of *both* sides, and to whom strike action means a failure of their function in society.

Thus, in a debate organised by the Westminster Branch of the W.E.A. on March 5 this year, Mr. R. Edwards, general secretary of the Chemical Workers' Union, had no hesitation in proposing a motion "That as a weapon for the resolving of industrial disputes, the strike weapon has outlived its usefulness"; and he went on to suggest that even the conditions necessary for normal collective bargaining no longer existed, if by this was meant that the union merely bargained to advance the interests of its own members. Mr. Edwards forecast that actions like the electricians' guerilla strikes would ruin the country, and held that the only ultimate solution of these problems lay in a national wages policy arrived at by arbitration based upon an economic survey and cost-of-living index supervised by State-appointed economists.

Similarly, Mr. Harry Douglass, general secretary of B.I.S.A.K.T.A., in an address to the E.T.U. conference at Margate, went out of his way to warn the delegates against pressing their claims to the extent of strike action which could, he thought, do nothing but harm to the national interests. The views of Mr. Arthur Deakin have already been mentioned and are, of course, urged upon the movement as often as he observes the advance of a more militant section of opinion.

Even to those who have no preconceptions about the matter, however, there is little doubt that arbitration, as a means for resolving disputes, has a certain appeal. It appears to be a solution that is essentially reasonable and in accordance with what has been so often described as "the British genius for compromise". It seems to appeal to fair play and common sense. Thus, in *Full Employment in a Free Society*, Sir William Beveridge (as he then was) wrote:

"In the new conditions of full employment wages ought to be determined by reason, in the light of all the facts, and with some regard to general equities and not simply by the bargaining power of particular groups of men. This suggests, not that there should be a continuance in peace of the compulsory arbitration that has been accepted in war, but that bargains in each industry should in general include a clause for arbitration by an agreed arbiter in default of agreement between the parties."

(It will be noted, perhaps, in passing that Beveridge regarded arbitration as dependent upon full employment, whereas his more modern successors regard full employment as dependent upon arbitration.)

The essential flaw in this "appeal to reason" is that it presupposes that there is fundamentally a basic unity of economic interest between the parties and that it is possible to find an impartial umpire who will resolve the apparent contradictions which have temporarily arisen. Even if, as one trade union delegate put it, "the justification of space-travel

will be if it can bring to our industrial disputes absolutely open-minded arbitrators from another planet"—a development of which we have not yet had the advantage—the stubborn fact remains that, apart from points of interpretation, every industrial dispute is an issue that represents a conflict between classes, classes whose interests are fundamentally divergent. The invoking of abstract justice to reconcile such interests is mere futility.

It is true that in recent times certain evidence of a statistical nature has been advanced in an effort to rebut this analysis, and to support the view that on balance arbitration has tended to promote the workers' interest. The Municipal and General Workers' Union has issued a review of the first 400 awards of the Industrial Disputes Tribunal, and claims that in the main the bulk of these have favoured the claims of the unions. Similar conclusions have been drawn from the summary of wage settlements issued yearly by the *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, in which is indicated the mode of settlement. The trend of these settlements is worth noting. They are as follows (in percentages):

Medium of settlement	1951	1952	1953
Wages Councils, etc.	2.1	19.2	35.7
Arbitration and Mediation	4.8	12.8	20.0
Sliding scales	5.5	14.6	19.4
Direct negotiation	45.7	28.2	13.7
Joint Industrial Councils	24.4	23.7	9.9
Other standing councils	—	1.5	1.3

For purposes of statistical comparison we may regard Wages Councils and Arbitration and Mediation as similar forms of statutory machinery, resulting in an *award*; Direct Negotiation and Joint Industrial Councils as similar forms of voluntary machinery, resulting in an *agreement*.

Here there is overwhelming evidence of the emergence in recent years of the *award* as the chief means of arriving at wage settlements. Whereas in 1951 it accounted for a mere 6.9 per cent of the settlements, in 1953 it accounted for more than one-half of all the settlements; and, urge the supporters of "the appeal to reason", the case is thus proved.

Their conclusion is, however, unfounded; and this for two reasons. In the first place, and very obviously, the increase in the number of settlements reached through the medium of statutory machinery has automatically been accompanied by a reduction in the number reached through voluntary machinery. This is clearly due to the increasing stubbornness of the employers' refusal to grant wage increases upon direct application and to their determination to find a convenient alibi in the fact that "there is arbitration at the end of the road". It is certainly profitable to the employers to make use of the delay created by

the arbitration machinery. Whilst arbitration proceedings are taking their course, no wage increases are paid, but profits continue as they were.

Second, and more important, is the fact that certain wage settlements are creative, in that they break fresh ground; others merely consolidate the territory newly won. The spearhead of the movement for advances in wages has remained in recent years in the hands of a few determined unions. The majority of the path-breaking advances made have been reached by direct methods of negotiation, often with resort to strike action before, during, or after, the discussion of the claim. The vast majority of the settlements arrived at through the *awards* of statutory machinery have, on the other hand, been merely consequential adjustments in other industries as result of the differentials created by the advances won.

This is so much so, that some trade union leaders have become quite adept at what might be termed mopping-up operations, even in industries which operate under Joint Industrial Councils. When the Assistant General Secretary of the A.S.W. boasted at their recent conference that they had got a similar increase in wages without spending "the £160,000" it had cost the E.T.U., he was betraying not ignorance but mere lack of manners. For it was very clearly the fight of the electricians and engineers and the threatened action of the railwaymen which obtained the increases in wages for the building workers, and for many others who have since been awarded advances.

What happens when there is no tradition of militant action may be seen, perhaps, in the proceedings of the Civil Service Arbitration Tribunal in February last, where after hearing the details of the Post Office Workers' claim, and without calling upon the other side, the chairman of the tribunal stated that it was the unanimous view of his colleagues and himself that "If we had heard nothing else than what appears on this case, we should have rejected the claim". Mr. Geddes, general secretary of the U.P.W., thereupon indignantly withdrew the claim from the purview of the Tribunal, and said that the union would consider taking strike action.

As *The Times* remarked, with some significance: "It is unusual for the leader of a Civil Service union to refer to the possibility of strikes as Mr. Geddes did. There is no law forbidding civil servants from striking, but they have rarely done so."

It is significant that since then, in the presentation of new claims by other Civil Service unions, the staff side of the Whitley Council decided to make strong representations to the Treasury about their attitude in immediately referring all claims to arbitration, as well as criticising the attitude of the Tribunals when claims were being considered.

How essentially opportunist is the capitalist advocacy of arbitration

is well demonstrated by the fact that whereas in the opening months of this year *The Times Review of Industry* was bemoaning the refusal of workers to accept arbitration, by April—when it felt that the pressure for wage increases had abated somewhat—it could observe: "If unrest has increased because of a refusal to go to arbitration or to accept its awards, it is because tribunals are being asked to determine wage levels instead of to close gaps, and are being treated as a substitute not of the strike, but of wage negotiation." Never was it more clearly revealed that arbitration can never be a weapon in the hands of the workers, but must remain what it has always been—a "defence in depth" for the employers, a defence which is to be resorted to at periods when a break-through of the employers' outer bastions is imminent.

The Editor of *Electron*, the journal of the Electrical Trades Union, wrote in a recent issue that, owing to the long period when strikes have been unofficial or both unofficial and illegal, the new generation of workers has little or no knowledge of the earlier bitter struggles; and he continues: "But the events of the past year clearly demonstrate that the workers of today are no less militant than their forefathers, and that providing they get proper leadership their response, their loyalty, and their discipline augurs well for the future of our great movement. If the history of the working class teaches anything at all, it is that its standard of living can only be defended by these qualities, and not on the benevolence of employers or the so-called impartial judgment of arbitration courts and tribunals."

The fact is, that during the past sixty years proposals for the avoidance of disputes, for the strengthening of negotiating machinery, and for recourse to arbitration, have been urged upon the trade union movement precisely at those moments when the workers are in a favourable position to enforce their demands, when there is a rising spirit of militancy among the workers, or when the employers are about to launch an attack upon the workers' living standards.

At the present moment it is clear that these conditions are more than fulfilled, notwithstanding any momentary lull in the wages battle, and that the conflict between the interests of labour and the interests of capital will become still more intense in the months that lie ahead.

In such circumstances the true nature of the propaganda in favour of arbitration is plain. It is an attempt to deceive the workers and to defraud them. As Mr. F. L. Haxell, the assistant general secretary of the E.T.U., summed up at their Margate conference: "It is clear that any proposal, however well it may be dressed up, which seeks to remove the worker's right to withhold his labour is not in the best interests of working people, and to lend one's support to such proposals is in fact to betray their interests."

The French Revolution

GEORGE E. RUDE

No single decade in world history—if we except the years following the Revolution of October 1917—has been so pregnant with social change as the French Revolution of 1789-99. No single historical event has, perhaps, been the subject of so much publication, comment and controversy or aroused such passionate devotion, hatred or calumny. Yet, while it is admitted by its friends and detractors alike that the French Revolution marked one of the great turning-points in history, the basic issues on which it was fought have tended, in the course of debate, to become confused or even wilfully obscured. If the last fifty years have seen a great revival in the study of the history of the Revolution, they have also witnessed a new upsurge of vilification or questioning of its fundamental principles and achievements. It will be the purpose of this article, therefore, rather to attempt to restate its essential historical significance than to tell the story of its development, and to take note of certain problems that have arisen in the course of recent discussion.

Among historians it has been a commonplace that the great achievement of the French Revolution was to have destroyed the feudal monarchy and feudal property relations in France and to have laid the foundations of a new (bourgeois) social order on its ruins. This is no longer accepted without question today. How, it is argued, can feudalism be said to have existed after the destruction of the administrative and political power of the old nobility during the Religious Wars of the sixteenth century or by Louis XIV after the Fronde? How can the label "feudal" have any meaning in an age of enlightenment like the eighteenth century, or during the earlier years of Louis XVI, when the old régime was being transformed into a liberal order, a process that the Revolution interrupted? In short, was not the Revolution, at best, unnecessary or, at worst, a hindrance, rather than an aid, to progress?

It is true enough that the feudal order in France had, long before 1789, reached an advanced stage of decay. The nobility and upper clergy no longer held direct administrative and political power in the State. One third of the land—once held almost exclusively by the two privileged orders—was owned by peasant proprietors and another fifth, perhaps, by the bourgeoisie. Only the remnants of serfdom remained—mostly on ecclesiastical estates along the eastern frontier. The absolute monarchy, created by the Cardinals and Louis XIV, had, with the help of the bourgeoisie, "mopped up" most of the islets of seigniorial justice and local

administration and created its own bureaucracy, staffed by commoners: the old "nobility of the sword" was virtually excluded from political office and the higher nobles, divorced from their estates, were made to dance attendance on the King at Versailles.

Yet, basically, the feudal mode of production and the feudal State remained in being. Though subservient to the Crown, the nobility continued to live on the extraction from the land of a multiplicity of feudal dues. The basic producer, the peasant—whether serf, *métayer* (share-cropper), or "free" proprietor—saw his livelihood threatened and his enterprise stifled by such seigniorial exactions as the *oens* (feudal rent in cash), the *champart* (rent in kind), the *lods et ventes* (charges on sales of land), the *corvée* (exacted in cash or kind), and monopolies such as the rights of hunting and fishing, of owning flour-mills and pigeon-cotes, and a host of others; rights once tolerated by custom, but long since become an intolerable burden and a fetter on production. Ernest Labrousse's studies on wages and prices during the eighteenth century have shown how particularly onerous they had become, in the context of general economic crisis, on the eve of the Revolution.

The clergy, too, formed a closely-knit privileged corporation, a State within the State, living on its traditional exaction of the feudal *dîme* (or tithe). The bishops, drawn almost exclusively from the aristocracy, shared with them in the rich pickings garnered from the land and, like them, were almost entirely immune from direct taxation. Nor was it only the traditional privileged orders that clung to, and prospered by, the feudal order: a large proportion of the upper bourgeoisie, also, were able to "live nobly" either through the purchase of feudal fiefs or of lucrative public offices; and financiers, Farmers-General (with their 30,000 officials), corporations of lawyers and merchant-manufacturers—all had, in different ways, a stake in the old régime. These, like the privileged orders themselves, were to be among the victims of the Revolution.

At the apex of this system sat the absolute monarch at Versailles, no longer "the first among equals", yet entirely committed to the survival of the disintegrating feudal order administered in his name. The high nobility might be, to a large extent, divorced from administration or the direct control of their estates, but, in return, they were guaranteed the unhampered exercise of their privileges, immunity from taxation and a monopoly of high military posts; in fact, during the period of "feudal reaction" since Louis XV's time, these privileges, far from being relaxed, had been extended. The selection of bishops had long been a royal prerogative, and so, in moments of crisis, the King could be relied upon to maintain the privileges and authority of the Gallican bishops against Jesuits, Jansenists, parish priests, freethinkers and restive peasants alike. The *parlements*, or privileged corporations of lawyers, might thunder

against the encroachments of "ministerial despotism" on the "traditional liberties" of France and might even, in order to exact further concessions from the Crown, join with the Notables and provincial nobility in provoking the *révolte nobiliaire* of 1787-88, which led to the summoning of the States-General and helped to prepare the atmosphere of revolution. Yet this merely meant (in Lenin's words) that it had "become impossible for the old order to carry on in the old way"; and, as soon as the Third Estate began to assert its claims, feudal monarchy and privileged orders closed their ranks and refused any form of peaceful surrender of their class interests.

The main achievement of the French Revolution was precisely that it destroyed this feudal order lock, stock and barrel and did it more quickly than it had ever been done elsewhere before. Already before the Constituent Assembly came into being, the Declaration of the Rights of Man laid down the principles of equality before the law, equal taxation and equal eligibility to public office. Under the constant pressure of the town and country masses, there followed a spate of legislation to this end, much of which was incorporated in the Constitution of 1791. The feudal system of justice, with its seigniorial courts, reactionary *parlements* and *lettres de cachet*, was swept away and replaced by a unified judicial system, divorced from royal control and based on elected judges and juries. The army was reformed, its higher officers "purged"—often by their own troops—or forced to take an oath of allegiance to the Nation; and *milices bourgeoises*, or citizens' militias, with elected officers, were set up in every large town. Church lands were declared national property and put up for auction; tithes, annates and religious orders were abolished and bishops and clergy made elective. Local government of privileged oligarchies was replaced by that of elected mayors and municipal councils. In addition, all venal offices were done away with and their owners compensated; civil and military posts were declared open to all; titles and hereditary nobility were abolished; the feudal guilds were destroyed, tolls and barriers to internal trade removed.

Most spectacular of all were the series of measures adopted on the famous night of August 4, 1789, when, by what has been claimed to be a demonstration of spontaneous generosity and self-denial, the wealthy bourgeois and liberal aristocracy of the National Assembly voted away the basic feudal land system. It is true that the remnants of personal servitude and the *corvée* were abolished without compensation; but rights of hunting, ground-rents, *champarts*, *lods et ventes* and all the other onerous feudal obligations were made redeemable by individual purchase. The fact that the landowners never got their money (the total cost of compensation has been estimated at 4,000 million livres) was due to the revolutionary temper of the peasantry—as was the initial "surren-

der" of August 4 itself, which followed the widespread burning of *châteaux* and manorial rolls. In July 1793, the Jacobin Convention declared the outstanding debt to be null and void.

The feudal monarchy, too, was progressively destroyed. The prerogatives of the Crown had already been considerably curtailed by the measures noted above; and under the Constitution of 1791, its powers of intervening in legislation were limited to a "suspensive" veto. But the monarchy proved too heavily committed to the retention of the old order and, in September 1792, after the storming of the Tuileries by the armed people, it was finally abolished and the Republic proclaimed.

The Revolution was to take many a backward step before the temporary restoration of the monarchy in 1815; but the essence of this achievement was maintained. Some historians have argued that the period of "constructive" legislation stopped with the adoption of the Constitution of 1791; others—like Salvemini¹—that it ended virtually with the fall of the monarchy. This is a mistake: we have seen that the legislative destruction of feudalism was not completed until 1793. In a wider sense, the work of the Revolution was crowned and consolidated by Bonaparte, both in the Code Napoléon and in his military conquests.

It might seem self-evident that the French Revolution, by the very nature of its achievement, was a bourgeois revolution; yet this, too, has been questioned. There are those, for example, who, pointing to the composition of the revolutionary assemblies, have claimed that it was a "lawyers' revolution" (this contention is implicit in at least a part of Professor Goodwin's recent book²); or those, like Daniel Guérin, who profess to see in it the embryo of a proletarian revolution.³ Even Albert Mathiez, for all his careful analysis of the causes and course of the Revolution, appears to note a fundamental change in its class-content as it moves forward: according to his presentation, the revolt of the nobility (1787-88) is followed by a bourgeois revolution (1789-91) which, in turn, is followed by a democratic and republican revolution (1792-3) and a social revolution (June 1793-July 1794).⁴ That these mark important stages of the Revolution cannot be doubted, but the basic objective of the revolutionary struggle, through all its changing forms, remains the same throughout: the destruction of the feudal aristocracy and the consolidation of economic and political power in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

It is not suggested, of course, that the bourgeoisie as a whole, on the eve of revolution, was bound by a common identity of interest and, as a single class, desired the overthrow of the old order. We have seen that an important part of its upper stratum was tied to the old régime and

¹ G. Salvemini, *The French Revolution* (English edition, 1954).

² A. Goodwin, *The French Revolution* (Hutchinson's University Library, 1953).

³ D. Guérin, *La Lutte des Classes sous la 1^e République* (2 vols., Paris, 1946).

⁴ A. Mathiez, *La Révolution Française* (3 vols., Paris, 1922-27).

went down with it. Bankers and financiers were divided in their loyalties: they had generally prospered under the absolute monarchy (the national income of France doubled between 1715 and 1789), but the financial crisis following the American War threatened them with a moratorium on the Public Debt, and the dismissal of Necker, the Finance Minister, in July 1789 created a panic among the monied interests. The great body of the commercial and manufacturing bourgeoisie had deeper cause for dissatisfaction. Colonial trade, land-values and luxury-spending had enormously increased; the foundation of large-scale capitalist industry had been laid; but capital investment and the expansion of manufacture were everywhere impeded by the restrictions imposed by privileged corporations, feudal land-owners and Government on the basic capitalist "freedoms"—the freedom to hire labour, the freedom to produce and the freedom to buy and sell.

It is, above all, the demand for these "freedoms" that underlies the writings of the encyclopaedists and early revolutionary pamphleteers and, more directly, appears in the *cahiers des doléances* of the Third Estate. But that the bourgeoisie, as the crisis developed, was ready, not only to formulate economic grievances, but to assume political control of affairs was shown in the Abbé Sieyès pamphlet, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?*, published on the eve of the convocation of the States-General. Here the case for the transfer of full political power to the bourgeoisie was already clearly stated. And, once the States-General assembled, it was the deputies of the Third Estate—representing the upper sections of the commercial, financial and professional bourgeoisie—that formed the hard core of the self-constituted National Assembly and rallied to their cause the lower clergy, the liberal aristocracy and a handful of bishops. Without the popular insurrection that took place in Paris in July the Assembly would have been lost, but it was the bourgeoisie that reaped the fruits of the popular victory, that controlled the newly established Paris Commune and citizens' militia, and inspired the political slogans on the forced return of the royal family to Paris in October.

It is well known that the work of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies was dominated by the class interests of the bourgeoisie. The right to vote—the Declaration of the Rights of Man notwithstanding—was limited to "active" (i.e., property-owning) citizens; the new municipalities and bishoprics were created by the vote of the manufacturing and professional classes; the sale of Church property was carried out in the interests of wealthy farmers, landowners and speculators; internal trade was promoted by the dissolution of the mediaeval guilds and the removal of customs barriers and tolls; strikes were banned under the repressive provisions of the *Loi le Chapelier*. They are to be seen, too, in the aggressive war-aims enunciated by Brissot in support of the commercial

interests in early 1792; and even in the proclamation of the Republic.

A similar concern for the class interests of the bourgeoisie is evident in the work of the National Convention. Under the Girondin ascendancy (September 1792 to June 1793), speculation was allowed to thrive, the *assignat* (revolutionary paper-money) declined to one-third of its nominal value, and all demands for the control of prices and supplies were sternly rejected in the name of "freedom". The period that followed Robespierre's fall on 9 Thermidor (July 27, 1794) was again a heyday of "new rich" and war profiteers, released from the temporary shackles imposed by the Revolutionary Government—a "bourgeois orgy", as Engels called it. For a brief period, it is true, Robespierre and his associates had imposed controls on the prices of all essentials and halted inflation; but, after March 1794, when faced with the conflicting demands of the bourgeoisie and the *sans-culottes*¹—on the support of both of whom they depended for their survival—the Revolutionary Government and Paris Commune had yielded to bourgeois pressure and let prices rise and wages fall; workers striking for higher pay were sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal. The Revolution, even at the height of Jacobin democracy, remained bourgeois.

This does not mean, of course, that the aims of the various bourgeois factions, contending for power as the Revolution developed, were identical. A section of the higher bourgeoisie, though "revolutionary" at the outset, fought hard to effect a compromise with the nobility on the English model; when this proved impossible owing to the intractable opposition of the nobility and the monarchy, their leaders (Malouet, Mounier and, later, Lafayette) deserted the Revolution and went into exile. The constitutional monarchists who dominated the Constituent Assembly, while refusing to temporise with the privileged orders, were bitterly opposed to the interests of the lesser bourgeoisie and the popular masses and proved incapable of forming a strong government or of conducting a revolutionary war. The Girondins—voicing, in the main, the commercial interests of the big ports—were willing to make temporary concessions to the petty bourgeoisie (male adult suffrage, democratic rights) to promote their war policy; but, from fear of the *sans-culottes*, who had overthrown the monarchy and whose claims were becoming more insistent, they began to make overtures to the counter-revolution and to sabotage the war which they themselves had started. The Mountain, the party of extreme bourgeois democracy, representing a medley of petty and upper bourgeois interests, was alone able to form an alliance with the masses that lasted long enough to win the first major victories of the revolutionary war and to carry the bourgeois-democratic revolu-

¹ The *sans-culottes* were, broadly speaking, the small producers and non-propertied classes of town and countryside. For a fuller analysis see p. 249 below.

tion to its highest point. After the victory of Fleurus (June 1794), the main body of the revolutionary bourgeoisie united to overthrow Robespierre and to destroy the *sans-culottes* as a political force. The wheel had turned full circle: having destroyed its mass support, the bourgeoisie was compelled, to safeguard its gains, to resort to military dictatorship.

While bourgeois in essence, the French Revolution was also a great popular and democratic revolution, which drew great popular forces into active participation. The masses of town and countryside intervened both as the direct allies of the bourgeoisie (in the fight to end feudal dues and privileges) and in support of their own particular economic and social demands, which often ran counter to, or beyond, the aims of their bourgeois allies. The dual nature of this intervention was to leave a profound mark on the course and outcome of the Revolution.

It is on this question of popular intervention that even the best bourgeois historians—Michelet, Aulard and even Mathiez, among them—have shown the greatest confusion. Unlike the reactionary historians of the school of Taine, who have denounced each popular movement as the blind intervention of the “mob”, they have, in general, correctly appraised the rôle played by the common people in the great political *journées* of the Revolution; yet they have all tended to see these movements “from above”—i.e., through the eyes of the bourgeois leaders of the Jacobin Club or the National Assembly—and to bestow their praises or their strictures on these movements according as they appeared to advance or to obstruct the interests of the revolutionary bourgeoisie.

It is only in comparatively recent years that any serious effort has been made to study the particular interests and aspirations of the small peasantry, agricultural labourers, urban craftsmen, shopkeepers, small workshop masters and journeymen—in fact, the great bulk of the non-capitalist, non-proprietary (or small-proprietary) classes which, under the Revolution, were to become known by the collective title of *sans-culottes*. Georges Lefebvre's great book, *Les Paysans du Nord* (1924), has shown that the revolutionary activity of the bulk of the small and landless peasantry was prompted not only by their hatred of the feudal nobility, but by their determined hostility to capitalist farmers, speculators in grain and engrossers of land, whose activities threatened their traditional rights and forced up the price of grain. In the towns, too, while the bourgeoisie were able to unite behind their political aims all sections of the population against the privileged orders and the feudal régime, the particular concern of the mass of petty tradesmen and producers—both masters and journeymen—with the supply of cheap and plentiful food tended to align them in common opposition to the merchants, grain-monopolists and speculators. At a time when there was as yet no factory system or developed industrial proletariat, it was this social division,

rather than that between capital and labour, that formed the main dividing line and source of conflict within the Third Estate. Though strikes were becoming more frequent and more bitterly fought, as the journeyman was becoming reduced to the status of a proletarian, it was the food riot rather than the strike that was still the typical form of mass struggle.

In addition, there were many thousands of unskilled labourers, city poor, unemployed land workers and vagrants—the *gens sans aveu* or *non-domiciliés*—whom the years of economic crisis heralding the Revolution had driven into the multifarious petty trades of the city or into the *ateliers de charité* or regimented schemes of public works. Despised by the bulk of the *sans-culottes*, they played an indeterminate rôle, though they tended to follow the lead of the small workshop producers. Historians have made the mistake of either equating them with the later proletariat or dismissing them as “brigands”; their problems have yet to be studied.

Among Marxist historians, Albert Soboul has rightly criticised Guérin for his portrayal of the *sans-culottes* as a revolutionary, near-proletarian, vanguard and as the consistent opponents of capitalism.¹ Caught, as they were, between the anvil of dying feudalism and the hammer of resurgent capitalism, the *sans-culottes* voiced social aspirations impossible of fulfilment: the independence of the small producer or tradesman, freed from both feudal restriction and capitalist encroachment, the limitation of incomes and the restoration of the collective rights and protection of the peasant commune or mediæval guild. Even their insistence on the regulation of food prices, which brought them into open conflict with the commercial bourgeoisie, was an appeal to ancient custom. Yet, as the champions of direct democracy and the fullest social equality, their political impact on the Revolution was wholly progressive; and even their voicing of social demands that looked to the past was, in the context of revolutionary struggle, to carry the bourgeois-democratic revolution decisively forward. Without their vigorous direct action against feudalism (“the plebeian manner”, as Marx termed it), there could have been no rapid destruction of the old order; without their determined hostility to speculators, engrossers and hoarders, and the narrow class legislation of constitutional monarchists and Girondins, the bourgeois revolution could not have been carried through or the country saved from foreign invasion and disaster. It is true that their impact was greatest in the “high period” of 1793-94, but, throughout the formative period of the Revolution (1789-94), they left their particular mark on events. While adopting the political slogans and objectives of the bourgeoisie,

¹ See his article, “Classes et luttes des classes sous la Révolution Française”, *La Pensée*, No. 53, January-February 1954, pp. 39-62.

it was the Parisian *sans-culottes* who forced the middle class leaders at the Hotel de Ville to organise resistance to the Court in July 1789, to capture the Bastille and to take power; it was they again who, prompted by the shortage and high price of bread, launched the social movement which led to the return of the royal family to Paris in October. It was the resolute action of the peasantry which compelled the National Assembly to take the first steps to abolish feudal property rights on August 4, 1789, and to complete the process in July 1793. It was the Parisian *sans-culottes* again who, by capturing the Tuileries by armed force in August 1792, forced the wavering Assembly to abolish the monarchy and proclaim the Republic, and to convene a National Convention based on male adult suffrage. It was they who, by their mass protests and demonstrations against rising food prices, prepared the way for the elimination of the Girondins in the revolution of May 31-June 2, 1793; and, having assured the Mountain of its mass support, drove the unwilling Jacobin leaders to impose controls on the price and supply of food and raw materials, thus making it possible for the poor to live and for the armies of the Republic to repel the invader. Negatively, by their abstention on 9 Thermidor, they enabled Robespierre's enemies to overthrow him. In March and May 1795 (Germinal and Prairial of the Year 3), they tried to stage a come-back, adopting as their slogan, "Bread and the Constitution of 1793". It was too late: they were crushed by the combined force of army units and the bourgeois battalions of the Parisian National Guard. This was to prove the last great popular upsurge of the Revolution. When Baboeuf, a year later, put forward his plan for a democratic dictatorship of "Equals", he was left high and dry: there was no mass movement to support him.

The intervention of the *sans-culottes* did more than merely modify the course of the Revolution: to a large extent, it determined its final outcome, as well. Without it, Marat and Hébert would have remained obscure pamphleteers; even Robespierre, for all his ascendancy in the Assemblies and in the Jacobin Club, would have had no opportunity for national leadership. Without their intervention, there would have been no experiments in universal suffrage or in the direct democracy of the Paris Sections and popular societies; above all, the democratic dictatorship established by the Jacobins in the Year 2 would never have come into being. These were, in the outcome, to prove short-lived; yet they left enduring memories and reappeared in 1848 and 1871. Even more substantial was the impression left on the countryside: a large new class of small peasant proprietors was created by the operation of the law of June 3, 1793, which divided the estates of *émigré* landowners and sold them in lots to small purchasers; and, in one respect at least, the aims of the revolutionary bourgeoisie were not realised: the obstruction of the

rural *sans-culottes* proved a barrier to enclosure and to the final destruction of the traditional rights of gleaning and common pasture. These gains were left intact by the Empire and the Restoration and have left their mark on the French countryside to the present day.

But the French Revolution was even more than a bourgeois-democratic revolution that destroyed the old régime and created a new social order in France. Like the Russian Revolution of 1917, it had profound international repercussions. When the revolutionary era ended in 1815, feudalism had been uprooted in France and Belgium, in parts of Germany and Italy, and its foundations shaken in Spain, and even in Austria and Prussia. This had been achieved, partly by the march of the French Republican and Imperial armies but, even more, by the spread from France of the contagious ideas of bourgeois nationalism and the sovereignty of the people. Robespierre, Saint-Just and the other great revolutionary leaders understood perfectly well that the fight to destroy the old régime in France was part of a fight to destroy feudal tyranny and absolutism everywhere; so, too, did the representatives of the old order and, with the aid of the *émigré* nobles, the "coalition of Kings" tried to stamp out the Revolution by armed intervention. When at last they appeared to succeed in 1815, they devised a Holy Alliance to "contain" bourgeois nationalism and democracy wherever they might appear. Yet they failed absolutely: the whole nineteenth century was punctuated by national and democratic movements in Europe and America that derive, in one form or another, from the French Revolution. The early working-class movement, too, was directly enriched by the Communist ideas of Baboeuf which were handed down by Buonarrotti.

Today, in the new context of the world socialist revolution, the bourgeois-democratic ideas of revolutionary France have joined with those of Marxist Socialism in inspiring millions of men and women in the great national-revolutionary upsurge that is taking place in Asia and Africa. It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that the conspiracy against the French Revolution has received a new lease of life. After the Paris Commune, eighty years ago, Taine devised a vocabulary of invective against the Revolution that has done service ever since. In Pétain's France they went further and tried to obliterate every memory of 1789; the latest work of Georges Lefebvre was burned by the police. Today, when the book-burners are at work again, we find a diatribe against the "totalitarian democracy" of revolutionary France written to curry favour with the State Department and an American professor apologising for his interest in Jacobin democracy. But the ideas contained in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and in the Constitution of 1793 have, in truth, become "a material force" and the Holy Alliance of today is not likely to achieve what its forebears failed to do 140 years ago.

Recent Books

The Imprisonment and Defence of Mátyás Rákosi. Lawrence and Wishart 9s. 6d.

At the great trial before his Hungarian fascist judges in 1935 Rákosi gave a brilliant analysis of the history and lessons of the Hungarian Soviet of 1919. The translation of this in the present volume will be of especial interest to English readers, since it is the first time we have had before us a full account of that heroic chapter of working-class history. Rákosi was a captive of Hungarian fascism from 1925 to 1940, when international solidarity at length won his release. He was tried before fascist courts in 1925 and again in 1935, and his defence is recorded in this volume. In his speeches in court he defended Communism, accused his judges and gave a magnificent lead to the entire working-class movement.

Science and Our Future, by Roy Innes, with Foreword by J. D. Bernal. Lawrence and Wishart, 2s. 6d.

The importance of this little book is not proportionate to its size. It presents the facts about British science today, culled from official reports, showing exactly how science is being strangled for the sake of war preparations. The figures quoted speak for themselves—for example, Government expenditure on civil research, £27 million, on military research, nearly £236 million. The author surveys the situation of British industry and shows the scale of research needed for its successful peaceful development. Nowhere else is there such a concise and readable account of the position of science today.

Pragmatism, Philosophy of Imperialism, by Harry K. Wells. Lawrence and Wishart, 15s.

The writer of this important work of philosophical criticism is a lecturer at the Jefferson School in New York, against which proceedings are at present being taken by the McCarthys. It is a complete exposure of

American imperialist philosophy. Wells does not simply discuss pragmatism as an abstract theory, he brings it down to earth and shows its applications. The chapters on educational theory, psychology, law and history are among the best. This is an outstanding work of Marxist philosophy.

The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti, by Howard Fast. John Lane, 12s. 6d.

It is right that in the time of McCarthyism and the murder of the Rosenbergs, the American novelist Howard Fast should write once more the story of Sacco and Vanzetti, martyrs of an earlier American anti-red campaign in the 1920s. For younger readers, this will be their first knowledge of how two Italian workers were framed on a charge of armed robbery and, despite their manifest innocence and a world-wide campaign of protest, electrocuted in 1927.

The Soldier at the Door, by Edith Pargeter. Heinemann, 12s. 6d.

This new English novel voices the people's deep protest against war. Its scene is a small industrial town in England, its heroine the mother of a lad who was killed in Korea during the truce negotiations. Edith Pargeter herself lives in the industrial midlands, and she knows what she is writing about. This is a novel which every *Marxist Quarterly* reader should read and urge others to read: it should be in demand in every library in the country.

Science and Civilisation in China: Volume I, Introductory Orientations, by Joseph Needham. Cambridge University Press, 52s. 6d.

Dr. Needham is projecting a series of seven volumes, to provide a survey of China's contribution to human knowledge and power in the domain of science and technology. This first volume deals with the history of China and of her cultural relations with Europe, as an introduction to the detailed studies which will follow.

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Index to Volume I 1954

- The Abuse of Poetry and the Abuse of Criticism by T. S. Eliot, *Alick West* No. 1, p. 22.
- Academic Freedom and the Communists, *Edward Burton*, No. 2, p. 104.
- Arbitration in Industrial Disputes, *Jack Hendy*, No. 4, p. 231.
- Christian Faith and Communist Faith (Review), *John Lewis*, No. 3, p. 181.
- The Commune of Paris and English Literature, *Jack Lindsay*, No. 3, p. 169.
- Communism and Mankind, *John Gollan*, No. 1, p. 33.
- The Communist Party and the Advance of the Mass Movement, *R. P. Dutt*, No. 2, p. 66.
- The Contribution of Pavlov to Medicine, *Ruscoe Clarke*, No. 4, p. 219.
- Crisis and the U.S.A., *John Eaton*, No. 3, p. 131.
- The Emperor's Clothes (Review), *Arnold Kettle*, No. 3, p. 185.
- An Estimation of Lewis Grassie Gibbon's "A Scots Quair", *Ian Milner*, No. 4, p. 207.
- Folk-song for Our Time, *A. L. Lloyd*, No. 1, p. 47.
- The French Revolution, *George Rude*, No. 4, p. 242.
- Lives of Labour Leaders, *R. Page Arnot*, No. 1, p. 57.
- Nationalisation, *Finlay Hart*, No. 2, p. 94.
- The Origins of Christianity (Review), *B. Farrington*, No. 3, p. 183.
- The Peaceful Applications of Atomic Energy, *E. H. Burhop*, No. 2, p. 82.
- Philosophical Problems of Quantum Physics, *Arthur Suddaby and Maurice Cornforth*, No. 3, p. 154.
- The Position of Britain, *Emile Burns*, No. 1, p. 3.
- Science in the Service of Society, *J. D. Bernal*, No. 1, p. 9.
- Soviet Culture and Criticism, *Thomas Russell*, No. 3, p. 143.
- André Stil and the Novel of Socialist Realism, *Margot Heinemann*, No. 2, p. 117.
- Towards Peaceful Co-existence, *George Matthews*, No. 4, p. 195.
- Arnot, R. Page, *Lives of Labour Leaders*, No. 1, p. 57.
- Bernal, J. D., *Science in the Service of Society*, No. 1, p. 9.
- Burhop, E. H., *The Peaceful Applications of Atomic Energy*, No. 2, p. 82.
- Burns, Emile, *The Position of Britain*, No. 1, p. 3.
- Burton, Edward, *Academic Freedom and the Communists*, No. 2, p. 104.
- Clarke, Ruscoe, *The Contribution of Pavlov to Medicine*, No. 4, p. 219.
- Cornforth, Maurice, *Philosophical Problems of Quantum Physics*, No. 3, p. 154.
- Dutt, R. Palme, *The Communist Party and the Advance of the Mass Movement*, No. 2, p. 66.
- Farrington, B., *The Origins of Christianity* (Review), No. 3, p. 183.
- Eaton, John, *Crisis and the U.S.A.*, No. 3, p. 131.
- Gollan, John, *Communism and Mankind*, No. 1, p. 33.
- Hart, Finlay, *Nationalisation*, No. 2, p. 94.
- Heinemann, Margot, *André Stil and the Novel of Socialist Realism* No. 2, p. 117.
- Hendy, Jack, *Arbitration in Industrial Disputes*, No. 4, p. 231.
- Kettle, Arnold, *The Emperor's Clothes* (Review), No. 3, p. 185.
- Lewis, John, *Christian Faith and Communist Faith* (Review), No. 3, p. 181.
- Lindsay, Jack, *The Commune of Paris and English Literature*, No. 3, p. 169.
- Lloyd, A. L., *Folk-song for Our Time*, No. 1, p. 47.
- Matthews, George, *Towards Peaceful Co-existence*, No. 4, p. 195.
- Milner, Ian, *An Estimation of Lewis Grassie Gibbon's "A Scots Quair"* No. 4, p. 207.
- Rude, George, *The French Revolution*, No. 4, p. 242.
- Russell, Thomas, *Soviet Culture and Criticism*, No. 3, p. 143.
- Suddaby, Arthur, *Philosophical Problems of Quantum Physics*, No. 3, p. 154.
- West, Alick, *The Abuse of Poetry and the Abuse of Criticism by T. S. Eliot* No. 1, p. 22.