

# **LABOUR REVIEW**

Vol. 2

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1957

No. 6

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## **FORTY YEARS OF SOVIET RUSSIA**

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TWO SHILLINGS

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# LABOUR REVIEW

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## Editorial

# 40 YEARS

**E**ARTH satellites, atomic power stations, helicopter buses, billions of motor cars, radio-active tracer elements, automatic engineering factories, supermarkets, pre-stressed concrete, electronic 'brains', television, jet air liners, conveyor belt production of houses and flats, synthetic cloth fibres, selective weed-killers, the multiple range of plastics—the list is endless. Man's conquest of nature has, during the last forty years, advanced in seventy-league boots. Our minds boggle at the stupendous possibilities. Is there nothing which men will find impossible?

It is salutary to remind ourselves from time to time of the enormous potentialities which modern scientific and technical discoveries hold for man once he has created a social system which can effectively use them. Yet we should also remind ourselves of the contrast between what is possible and what exists.

Millions of peasants in Asia, Africa and South America living on the borderland of hunger and famine, old-age pensioners vegetating on bread and tea, the 60-hour 'overtime' week, wooden ploughs pulled by oxen or human draught animals, the peasants of China, India and Indonesia building clay flood-barriers with bare hands and basket-work hods, mile upon mile of smoke-blackened slum dwellings in our big cities. Apartheid, Little Rock and the shanty towns of Johannesburg. On the other hand, gold-plated Daimlers, mink collars for Mayfair toy dogs, cocktail parties with 20,000 guests, fabulous wealth poured down the drains by the millionaires who suck the life-blood out of hundreds of millions of ordinary people.

And, above it all, the stark horror of the H-bomb and the inter-continental guided missile!

These gigantic paradoxes of our modern world, the source of capitalism's instability and neurotic irrationalism, the fount of the ever-intensifying struggle between rich and poor, exploiters and exploited, bear urgent witness to the outstanding fact of our age: that mankind on this globe is faced with the inescapable choice—socialism or perish.

There are millions who have faced up to this choice,

yet remain passive observers. Only those who have trained themselves to use the scientific weapon of Marxism can take the pulse of society, diagnose the source of its sickness and prescribe a cure for its pressing ills.

The sick minds of those who rule mankind, imperialist politicians and Russian bureaucrats alike, have one fatal flaw, a flaw which is inevitable in those who hold a privileged position in society and who therefore cannot contemplate their own downfall. It is their inability to rise to a scientific understanding of man himself in his social relationships. Whatever sincerity they can muster to denounce the ills of modern social life (and with most this is precious little) they remain unable to control the societies they dominate, and are only blind playthings of the dynamics of social life, ineffective, puzzled, panicky, doomed to constant failure. Their societies stagger on from crisis to crisis, continuing to breathe only because no one has yet given them the long-expected death-blow.

This death-blow, however, can be delivered only by a class which can grasp the greatest achievement of modern science, the knowledge of how man can consciously control himself and plan and create his own future. This class is the working class and that knowledge is the science of Marxism. Only under Marxist leadership can the working class become conscious of its historical task: the ending of capitalism and the creation of a socialist world.

This month LABOUR REVIEW greets the fortieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution of October 1917. This event has shown itself to all mankind, to its friends and foes alike, as the most pregnant in man's history. It marks the point where man began to pass over from the age of blind necessity to the age of freedom, i.e., to the higher stage of human existence when he consciously controls and plans his future.

In October 1917 the downtrodden workers of poverty-stricken, war-torn tsarist Russia 'stormed heaven' and set up their own State. This workers' State was the first great leap into a new era when State oppression and economic exploitation of men would be ended, and

when they would begin to realize in action all that modern science has to give.

The twisted path of the Russian Revolution since 1917 in no way dims the brilliance nor lessens the significance of this achievement. Every single person alive on this planet today is, in a real sense, a product of October 1917. For every social institution, every historical event during the last forty years, has been profoundly influenced by the existence of the Soviet State. This is true both of its period of revolutionary ascendancy and of its latter, temporary, phase of Stalinist degeneration.

**A**MONG the hostile political commentators on this fortieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, two main groups are to be observed. Both damn the revolution, the one with faint praise and the other with coals of fire. One group pretends to agree with its aims but looks askance at its methods. The other deliberately equates Bolshevism with Stalin's Russia and is content to call both 'man's greatest error'. There is, of course, a third view of October 1917: that associated with the official Communist Parties of the world; the shame of their position is that they are content to give aid to the Revolution's bitterest enemies by praising every new distortion of Bolshevism, every new monstrous act of the Stalinists—in the name of Bolshevism, socialism and October.

Stalinism is not socialism nor is it Bolshevism. Stalinism is not a product of October 1917 but of its partial defeat. Stalinism and Bolshevism are the deadliest of enemies. There is nothing in common between Leninism, Bolshevism, Marxism, and the murderous tyranny which Stalin, in the interests of a new caste of privileged people, fastened upon the young Soviet State. In fact the edge of Stalinist tyranny was mainly directed against those who remained true to the ideals of Bolshevism.

Since the Twentieth Congress many former members of the Communist Party, in reaction against the harsh oppressive régime inside the British and American Communist Parties, have 'discovered' the roots of Stalinist brutality in the 'excessive centralism' of the Bolshevik Party. Stalinist methods of rule, they claim, are the logical and inevitable development of Leninist methods of party organization. Some hastily expressed views of Rosa Luxemburg, and even of the young Trotsky, are made use of in this connexion. The seeds of the great purges of the thirties and after were, they assert, sown by Lenin when he insisted, even to the length of splitting the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, upon party rules which we know by the term 'democratic centralism'. We believe that these people are profoundly mistaken and that their views of what Leninist democratic centralism implies have been coloured and distorted by their acquaintance with the bogus democratic centralism of the Stalinized Communist Party.

However, before we elaborate on this matter, it might be helpful to make a few timely remarks on the positive achievements of the October Revolution—for they are by no means inconsiderable. Years of Stalinist rule have been quite unable to destroy many of these achievements—a fact which demonstrates the enormous viability of social revolution. Let us speak first to the pale pinks,

the Fabian frauds, the Right-wing trade union compromisers and, yes, to Mr Bevan, the Master Centrist, himself. The young Soviet Government kicked out the landlords of semi-feudal Russia, never to return. They nationalized the land and handed it over to the peasants. Yet after four Labour governments and nine years of Labour rule, the Labour Party in Britain has not yet plucked up enough revolutionary *élan* to abolish a single tied cottage.

The capitalists of tsarist Russia have long ceased to exploit the labour of the Russian workers; long ago their factories became nationalized property and, *in spite of* Stalinist rule, this nationalized industry and the planned production which nationalization made possible became the basis for the stupendous advances of Russian industry, whose achievements continue to strike terror in the hearts of imperialists everywhere. In contrast, the 'advanced', 'cultured', 'democratic' (praise the Lords and the block vote) British Labour Party, after nationalizing two bankrupt industries (with super-compensation and jobs for the 'old boys'), is now contemplating the revolutionary act of . . . entering the Stock Exchange on its own account.

These, gentlemen of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, are harsh 'chiels that winna ding'. Mr. Gaitskell and his theorists should be induced, one feels, to show a little more modesty about the 'socialist' achievements of the British Labour governments.

On the other hand, there are others who are also somewhat immodest about their achievements. They credit the undoubted great successes of Soviet science, technology and industry not to the Revolution and the new social relations it established, but to themselves, the very people who have done most to undermine those achievements—the Stalinist bureaucrats. A serious study of the negative influence of Stalin upon Russian industry, agriculture, science and education makes the successes of the Russian people in these fields seem even more remarkable; and no less a man than Khrushchev himself has testified to the fact that Stalin's military interventions nearly cost the Soviet republic its existence though now he seems to be 'discovering' that after all his once-favourite general, Zhukov, was also a military failure. But the official line of the Communist Party is that Soviet technical prowess is due to the wisdom and far-sighted policies of industrialization, allegedly worked out and pushed through by Stalin against the resistance of certain 'malcontents', though it is now graciously admitted that judicial murder was, perhaps, a 'mistaken' method of curbing their activities.

In these days, when the Russian bureaucrats are feeling the draught from every quarter, the sputniks are being made to do overtime on their behalf—and even a little spare-time odd-jobbing on the side ('The Red Moon is shining on our Fund this month' sang the *Daily Worker's* Barbara Niven). The launching of the sputniks, says the Communist Party, is proof that the Soviet Union has now surpassed and left behind the capitalist powers. We think this is, perhaps, a little premature. Russian technical know-how is certainly very advanced but its advance has been very uneven. Housing, textiles, surface and water transport and, above all, agriculture lag far behind the capitalist world. An uneven rate of technical development was also a feature of Nazi Germany; after all, modern space rockets are little more

than improved versions of the German V2 and it was the USA which first produced atomic weapons. To quote one-sided technical advances, especially when they are in the sphere of war-production, as evidence of the superiority of one social system over another is a very dangerous argument.

Mr. Khrushchev, too, unlike the *Daily Worker*, left us in no doubt about the military significance he attaches to the sputniks. But his boast that they prove that Russia can now manufacture (and presumably is manufacturing) inter-continental missiles with H-bomb war-heads which can wipe out the populations of all the cities of Europe and America is hardly a Leninist, internationalist approach to the question of how to prevent imperialist war. Threats of annihilation are a very poor substitute for proletarian internationalism. Khrushchev now finds that he can no longer appeal to the workers of America and Britain for joint action to prevent war; a generation of Stalinist policies has seen to that. So now he embarks on the oldest of old wives' phoney remedies for preserving peace—threats, boasts and appeals to his opponents' 'common sense'. It is probable that the sputniks have increased the danger of war by further aggravating the tensions between the powers and by substituting, even more blatantly than before, the diplomacy of threats for the building of socialist solidarity among the workers of the world. Here again Stalinism and Bolshevism find themselves poles apart—with the Communist Parties ranged squarely behind the chauvinist diplomacy of Stalinism.

Finally, a word to those post-Twentieth Congress socialists who believe that the Poles and the Yugoslavs have discovered new, democratic, non-dictatorial roads to socialism, roads charted by democratic, non-centralist Communist Parties which have learned new methods of leadership from Rosa Luxemburg and the bitter experiences of Stalinism. No one would wish to belittle for a second the contributions of the Yugoslavs and Poles to the fight against Stalinism in the international Labour movement; but recent events have shown that *Centrist politics* (for that is what Gomulka and Tito practise) lead inevitably back to the blind alley of Stalinism. Stalinism (as the wavering history of Stalin's policy demonstrates) is a special form of Centrism. Polish and Yugoslav opposition arose out of the special difficulties into which the ruinous policies of Russia had driven these countries. But the Polish and Yugoslav parties still rest on a bureaucratic base, still defend the special privileges of the bureaucracy and therefore inevitably return, step by step, to Stalinist methods and to uniting afresh with the Russian bureaucracy—to the dismay, astonishment and even anger of our 'Liberal' Marxists.

**W**E began by illustrating the dilemmas of our modern world, the contradictions between what is possible and what exists. What the world today needs to cut the Gordian knot of social contradiction is clear-headed Marxist leadership. What every country of the world needs is something more powerful than H-bombs or sputniks: a Bolshevik Party. On this fortieth anniversary of the great October Revolution, LABOUR REVIEW states boldly its political credo:

*The greatest single gain of the Russian Revolution was its discovery of the Bolshevik Party.*

When the full significance of this discovery has borne due recognition throughout the international Labour movement the socialist reconstruction of our planet will thereby be placed on the order of the day.

In the past many caricatures of Bolshevism have been elaborated, from the 'cloak and dagger' creations of thriller fiction to the precision army of knowledgeable robots dreamed up by the leaders of the western Communist Parties. All fall far wide of the mark.

What was the Bolshevik Party like?

First and foremost, it was a party of revolution. Its members were not pale-pink careerists nor would-be party bosses. It was a party of humane men, dedicated to socialism and to the task of wiping the filth of oppression and want from the face of the earth.

Secondly, the Bolshevik Party was a party of social scientists. Armed with the science of Marxism, they learned how to intervene in and give clear guidance and assistance to every struggle of the oppressed against the oppressors—particularly of the working class against the bourgeoisie. Marxism is a science, and a science has not only to be learned from books but developed in experiment, in practice. By its very nature, Marxism must therefore be enriched by generalizing every new experience of struggle; if this is not done, its cutting edge is blunted and its guidance is rendered ineffective. This requires that each new phase of struggle has to be discussed under conditions of the fullest possible democracy.

For the Bolshevik Party, democracy was not a Liberal luxury but a scientific necessity. Democratic discussion of members' experiences in the class struggle is to Marxism what laboratory experiments are to chemistry. Moreover, unlike chemistry, social science always has two unified opposites buried deeply within its experimental evidence—the objective aspect of concrete, real, observable events and the subjective aspect of the observers who are themselves participating in those events, each as a unique individual. It is democratic discussion of individual experience which enriches the common revolutionary heritage refracted through the subjective experiences of each revolutionary. The Bolshevik Party discovered that its policies would inevitably be ineffective, out of touch with the real struggle of the workers, unless arrived at through the fullest, freest democratic discussion. This inevitably meant the temporary formation of loose groupings of those whose views were in disagreement with others, for without factions of this kind the views of the whole party would become distorted by the suppression of fully worked out statements of other points of view and other experiences.

Thirdly, the Bolshevik Party was a disciplined party. It is here that all sorts of erroneous impressions of Bolshevism arise. By Bolshevik discipline was meant not some sworn duty of every member to jump smartly into political activity in military obedience to some gauleiter's command. The Bolshevik Party conceived its task as that of giving guidance and leadership, but how could this be successfully communicated except through those who had a rich, many-sided understanding of the revolutionary significance of particular policies? Therefore decisions of the Bolshevik Party could be operated only by members who were either convinced of the correctness of a particular policy or understood as fully as possible the reasons which had led the majority to make that

decision. For both those who agreed and for those who disagreed the carrying out of any decision was in the nature of an experiment—practice would decide who was right, the minority or the majority. Thus centralized party discipline is an extension of its opposite, democratic discussion, for both serve the purpose of improving the quality of leadership and guidance; both serve the aim of ensuring that correct policies will be found.

Thus it is not an assumption that the majority is necessarily right, but a recognition the majority may be wrong and the minority right, which requires that all party members shall operate majority decisions of the party organization. It is the only way of checking and correcting mistakes. What a cruel parody of democratic centralism the Stalinized Communist Parties practise. And how near to the 'cloak and dagger' concept they are. There are social reasons for this.

The bourgeois picture of the Bolshevik is the hard, stern and basically inhuman party activist who will turn his deadly organizing efficiency, at the snap of the party bosses' fingers, to performing any foul act required of him: a cog in the all-powerful apparatus which engineers 'The Revolution'.

Let us now take a brief look at the *Daily Worker's* picture of the Russian working man. He is like no ordinary mortal, this 'new Soviet man'. He is a very contradictory figure. First, he is a political prig—a big-head, a know-all. His constant preoccupation is the index of his factory's industrial production, and the splendid accomplishments of Russian scientists and sportsmen. Yet, secondly, he is also a stupid political yes-man whose only political function is to applaud, at his factory meeting, each new all-wise decision of the central committee. If, in order to help in the demotion of Molotov, Zhukov is to be acclaimed by Khrushchev as the greatest military genius of the second world war, then this strange Russian worker dutifully records this 'truth' by an ovation at a factory meeting. If four months later Zhukov has to be removed because it is he who stands in Khrushchev's way, the *Daily Worker's* Russian proletarian is there again, in that same factory meeting hall, cheerfully recording the fact that Zhukov is a bad general, is hostile to the party and is 'cultivating' his own personality. Truth for him is what the top party boss has decreed to be true. What a dolt he is to be sure—if he exists.

Are there no 'ordinary guys' in Russia who can tell when some high-up is pulling a fast one? Of course there are. Take for example, the experiences of Maurice Pelter, a young ex-member of the Communist Party, who recently went to Moscow. He opened his eyes and could see plenty of 'ordinary guys' around, even if the *Daily Worker* cannot. His report<sup>1</sup> showed that the 'ordinary guy' of modern Russia is neither an impetuous fool nor a gullible idiot. He is a serious political thinker who is weighing things up and waiting his opportunity.

No, the British Communist leader does not speak for, or about, the 'ordinary guy' of Russia. But it does not take a genius to see that what he is describing in the *Daily Worker* is not the Russian worker, but *himself*, as he really is. He speaks not of the Russian

worker but of the lower-grade bureaucrat, ground small like himself between the workers' ca' canny and his boss's whims. For Mr Pollitt, 'when father turns, we all turn' is still a good motto, even when father's name is changed from Joe to Niki. Accordingly he organizes his (!) Communist Party on the same principles. His 'rank-and-file' members are the imaginary 'Joe Soap' Russian factory workers *Pravda* and he invented. A series of jamborees and a touch of 'the Red Dawn' is how to organize such a party and keep himself there, on top. All this empty tomfoolery of the British Communist Party has nothing, nothing at all, to do with Marxism, Leninism or Bolshevism.

If it were not so tragic it would be laughable to realize that every able-brained man woman and child in the country knows, with the certainty of tomorrow's dawn, that had Molotov overthrown Khrushchev (as he yet may) then Pollitt, Gollan, Dutt, Campbell, the whole rotten gang, would still be applauding the 'wise decisions of the Soviet party and people'. What a pretty pass would-be Marxists have come to. What a devoted band of worshippers of the great god of the Accomplished Fact. And who is the Joe Soap?

This is what thirty years of Stalinism have done to some people who were once fine men and women. Is it much different from the sorry sight of old Ernie Bevin, the open tool of black reaction, who was bought and corrupted by those very capitalists that he, in his younger days, had so tirelessly fought? The corruption of revolutionaries takes place in many strange ways.

**T**HIS parallel between the corrupting influences of capitalism on trade union leaders and of Stalinism on Communist Party leaders contains much more truth than a mere superficial resemblance. What indeed is Stalinism?

Stalinism is the political ideology of a ruling social caste and the method of rule of that social caste. We call this caste the bureaucracy. With Stalin as its chosen instrument it took over the power of the workers' and peasants' soviets under the special conditions of the isolation of the Russian Revolution resulting from the defeat of the revolutions in the advanced industrialized countries of western Europe—particularly the defeat of the German revolution in 1923. The working class of Russia, at once the politically most developed and culturally most backward of the working classes of Europe, were left high and dry, with backward Russia in their hands. Consumer goods were scarce. A bureaucracy developed which took for itself material privileges not available to the whole people. The primary concern of this bureaucracy (which later numbered millions of party and government officials, factory managers etc.) became the defence of outrageously high living standards maintained at the expense of the working people.

Against whom had the bureaucrats to struggle to defend these special privileges? Clearly, against the working class and the peasants. And who had always helped the workers and peasants in their struggles for equality? The Bolsheviks. This is not the place to record the detailed history of the struggle between Bolshevism and Stalinism. That has been best done by

<sup>1</sup>'Russian Youth Awakes' (A Newsletter Pamphlet, 1957).



one of the most notable of all the Bolsheviks who survived this period—Leon Trotsky, whose book *The Revolution Betrayed* remains today the best Marxist account of the outcome of this struggle.

As everyone now knows, Stalin, as the representative of this caste of bureaucrats, directed the most powerful blows against the Bolshevik Party and tried to erase its ideas from history. He organized a secret police force and turned it loose against the Bolsheviks; he brutally intervened inside the party itself, expelling, by the use of his police-backed machine, hundreds of leading Bolsheviks; he opened the party's ranks to hundreds of thousands of uncultured political riff-raff and, with their help, took formal control of the party. But, in the Left Opposition, the ideas of Bolshevism lived on and remain today a warning to Labour bureaucrats and imperialists everywhere.

The puny figures of the Stalinized CPSU, strutting around with Lenin's name on their lips, do so on the corpses of thousands of great men. For the Bolshevik Party was a party of real men—cultured, literate, devoted and courageous. Their names and their deeds must never be forgotten. Consider, merely as one example, the twenty-nine known members of the central committee of the Bolshevik Party elected in August 1917. Seven died before 1924, some of them at the front. Of the remainder, eight (Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Sokolnikov, Rykov, Smilga, Preobrazhensky and Krestinsky) died utterly inhuman deaths as self-confessed 'spies' in the 'treason' trials of 1936-38. Two (Joffe and Skrypnik) were driven to suicide with Stalin's police on their trail. Trotsky was assassinated in 1940 by one of Stalin's thugs. Five (Berzin, Kiselev, Lomov, Muranov and Varvara Yakovleva) 'disappeared', while Bubnov was released from a Siberian jail, aged 77, in 1956. Only Dzerzhinsky, Milyutin, Kollontai and Stalin himself (perhaps!) died natural deaths. This was the Bolshevik central committee

which organized, led and inspired October 1917—and Pollitt, Khrushchev and the rest of the Stalinist gang have the effrontery to celebrate forty years of 'Bolshevism'.

On the plinth of the Lenin-Stalin mausoleum on November 7, 1957, stood a bunch of parasites who call themselves the 'Soviet Government'. They were there to celebrate the sputnik satellite, the massive, mechanized Russian army, the huge advances of Russian industry and technique. Only one small scientific achievement was lacking. Apparently no one in that vast country can be found who is sufficient of an historian to write one little book—to explain how those 'great' men on the plinth came to be there. They are apparently men without a past; surely they are men without a future.

Today, after thirty years of dominance, after a series of apparently annihilating victories over Bolshevism, it is not Bolshevism but Stalinism which finds itself plunged into a state of chronic crisis—its stability rudely shattered under the hammer blows of the workers of Russia, China and the countries of eastern Europe. History demonstrates once more that she cannot be cheated. More hammer blows will follow, and, as *LABOUR REVIEW* has accurately predicted throughout this year, crisis continues to be followed by further crisis. On a world scale the forces of Bolshevism steadily gather strength. After the long night of blood-stained imperialism and Stalinist degradation, the workers are once more on the march and are beginning to learn that most important lesson of all which Lenin first taught the Russian workers, that their final emancipation rests, unconditionally, on their successes in building anew a Bolshevik, revolutionary Marxist International.

Forty years. And forty years on? Capitalism and Stalinism alike will surely be no more than dark memories on the background of man's glittering future.

# Radio, Science, Technique and Society

Leon Trotsky

On the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution we are publishing, for the first time in English, a speech delivered by Trotsky on March 1, 1926. It is his inaugural address at the First All-Union Congress of the Society of Friends of Radio.

Forty years after the seizure of power by the Russian working class and the establishment of a system of nationalized industry and planned production the enormous potentialities of these economic achievements of the October Revolution are only just becoming clear to the capitalist world. An education system serving an economic system which does not fear economic crisis has placed Russian science ahead of the science of all the advanced capitalist countries. The 'Red Moons' circling above our heads are a constant reminder of the great scientific and technical achievements of the Soviet Union.

There are those who credit the advances of Soviet science to Stalin and his successors, who have allegedly diverted funds to science which would have been better spent on improving the Russian people's living standards. Others say that Russia's scientific achievements merely show that the men in the Kremlin understand the importance of science for war preparations. Others again say that Russian science remains backward as a whole, but that it has developed a number of specialists in spectacular fields.

We believe that all these views are profoundly mistaken, and that the present victories of Russian science flow directly from the victory of the working class in

November 1917. Nationalized industry released men from the fetters of private property. The Revolution released scientists from the fetters, material and ideological, of class society, and laid the foundations for men's conquest of nature.

The Stalinist bureaucracy have hindered and distorted the development of Soviet science. The anger with which it greeted Dudintsev's novel 'Not by Bread Alone', whose theme is the barriers to genuine scientific research erected by self-seeking bureaucrats, shows that scientific advance has been made in modern Russia in spite of, not because of, the rule of the bureaucracy.

This speech by Trotsky, delivered only a couple of years before his expulsion from Russia, comes from a period when men could only dream of the controlled release of atomic energy and of space travel, and when the science of electronics, the basis of modern automatic control of factory production, was in its infancy, in the shape of radio broadcasting. But Trotsky, with the vision born of a thorough grasp of Marxist science, here explains why November 1917 and scientific advance are indissolubly linked. Moreover the sections on science and war show that the theory of the hydrogen-bomb as the ultimate weapon and the Great Deterrent are not as novel, nor as valid, as some people imagine.

The speech has been translated by Leonard Hussey from volume 21 of the Collected Works of L. D. Trotsky (Moscow, State Publishing House, 1927).

## A NEW EPOCH OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL THOUGHT

**C**OMRADES, I have just come from the Turkmenistan jubilee celebrations. This sister-republic of ours in Central Asia today commemorates the anniversary of its foundation. It might seem that the subject of Turkmenistan is remote from that of radio technique and from the Society of Friends of Radio, but in fact, there is a very close connexion between them. Just because Turkmenistan is *far* it ought to be *near* to the participants in this Congress. Given the immensity of our federative country, which includes Turkmenistan—a land covering five to six hundred thousand versts, bigger than Germany, bigger than France, bigger than any European State, a land where the population is scattered among oases, where there are no roads—given these conditions, radio-communication might have been expressly invented for the benefit of Turkmenistan, to link it with us. We are a backward country; the whole of our Union, including even the most advanced parts, is extremely backward from the technical standpoint, and at the same time we have no right to remain in this backward state, because we are building socialism, and socialism presupposes and demands a high level of technique. While constructing roads through the countryside, improving them and building bridges to carry them (and how terribly we need more such bridges!), we are obliged

at the same time to catch up with the most advanced countries in the field of the latest scientific and technical achievements—among others, first and foremost, that of radio technique. The invention of the radiotelegraph and radio-telephone might have occurred especially to convince the bilious sceptics among us of the unlimited possibilities inherent in science and technique, to show that all the achievements that science has registered so far are only a brief introduction to what awaits us in the future.

Let us take the last twenty-five years—just a quarter of a century—and recall what conquests in the sphere of human technique have been accomplished before our eyes, the eyes of the older generation to which I belong. I remember—and probably I am not the only one among those present to do so, though the majority here are young people—the time when motor-cars were still rarities. There was no talk, even, of the aeroplane at the end of the last century. In the whole world there were, I think, 5,000 motor-cars, whereas now there are about 20 million, of which 18 million are in America alone—15 million light cars and three million trucks. The motor-car has before our eyes become a means of transport of first-class importance.

I can still recall the confused sounds and rustlings which I heard when I first listened to a phonograph. I was then in the first form at secondary school. Some enterprising man who was travelling around the cities

of south Russia with a phonograph arrived in Odessa and demonstrated it to us. And now the gramophone, grandchild of the phonograph, is one of the most commonplace features of domestic life.

And aircraft? In 1902, that is, twenty-three years ago, the British man of letters, Wells (many of you will know his science-fiction novels), published a book<sup>1</sup> in which he wrote, almost in so many words, that in his personal opinion (and he considered himself a bold and adventurous fantast in technical matters) approximately in the middle of this present twentieth century there would be not merely invented but also to some degree perfected, a flying machine heavier than air that could be used for operations of war. This book was written in 1902. We know that aircraft played a definite part in the imperialist war—and there are still twenty-five years to go to mid-century!

And cinematography? That's also no small matter. Not so very long ago it didn't exist; many present will recall that time. Nowadays, however, it would be impossible to imagine our cultural life without the cinema.

All these innovations have come into our lives in the last quarter of a century, during which men have, in addition, accomplished also a few trifles such as imperialist wars, when cities and entire countries have been laid waste and millions of people exterminated. In the course of this quarter-century more than one revolution has taken place, though on a smaller scale than ours, in a whole series of countries. In twenty-five years life has been invaded by the motor-car, the aeroplane, the gramophone, the cinema, radio-telegraphy and radio-telephony. If you remember only the fact that, according to the hypothetical calculations of scholars, not less than 250,000 years were needed for man to pass from a simple hunter's way of life to stock-breeding, this little fragment of time, twenty-five years, appears as a mere nothing. What does this fragment of time show us? That technique has entered a new phase, that its rate of development is getting continually faster and faster.

Liberal scholars—now they are no more—commonly used to depict the whole of the history of mankind as a continuous line of progress. This was wrong. The line of progress is curved, broken, ziz-zagging. Culture now advances, now declines. There was the culture of ancient Asia, there was the culture of antiquity, of Greece and Rome, then European culture began to develop, and now American culture is rising in skyscrapers. What has been retained from the cultures of the past? What has been accumulated as a result of historical progress? Technical processes, methods of research. Scientific and technical thought, not without interruptions and failures, marches on. Even if you meditate on those far-off days when the sun will cease to shine and all forms of life die out upon the earth, nevertheless there is still plenty of time before us. I think that in the centuries immediately ahead of us, scientific and technical thought, in the hands of socially-organized society, will advance without zig-zags, breaks or failures. It has matured to such an extent, it has become sufficiently independent and stands so firmly on its feet, that it will go forward in

<sup>1</sup> i.e., 'Anticipations' (Trans.)

a planned and steady way, along with the growth of the productive forces with which it is linked in the closest degree.

## A TRIUMPH OF DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

IT is the task of science and technique to make matter subject to man, together with space and time, which are inseparable from matter. True, there are certain idealist books—not of a clerical character, but philosophical ones—wherein you can read that time and space are categories of our minds, that they result from the requirements of our thinking and that nothing actually corresponds to them in reality. But it is difficult to agree with this view. If any idealist philosopher, instead of arriving in time to catch the nine p.m. train, should turn up two minutes late, he would see the tail of the departing train and would be convinced by his own eyes that time and space are inseparable from material reality. The task is to diminish this space, to overcome it, to economize time, to prolong human life, to register past time, to raise life to a higher level and enrich it. This is the reason for the struggle with space and time, at the basis of which lies the struggle to subject matter to man—matter, which constitutes the foundation not only of everything that really exists, but also of all imagination. Our struggle for scientific achievements is itself only a very complex system of reflexes, i.e., of phenomena of a physiological order, which have grown up on an anatomical basis that in its turn has developed from the inorganic world, from chemistry and physics. Every science is an accumulation of knowledge, based on experience relating to matter, to its properties, of generalized understanding of how to subject this matter to the interests and needs of man.

The more science learns about matter, however, the more 'unexpected' properties of matter it discovers, the more zealously does the decadent philosophical thought of the bourgeoisie try to use the new properties or manifestations of matter to show that matter is not matter. The progress of natural science in the mastering of matter is paralleled by a philosophical struggle against materialism. Certain philosophers and even some scientists have tried to utilize the phenomena of radio-activity for the purpose of struggle against materialism: there used to be atoms, elements, which were the basis of matter and of materialist thinking, but now this atom has come to pieces in our hands, has broken up into electrons, and at the very beginning of the popularity of the electronic theory a struggle has even flared up in our party around the question whether the electrons testify *for* or *against* materialism. Whoever is interested in these questions will read with great profit to himself Vladimir Ilyich's work on *Materialism and Empiro-Criticism*. In fact neither the 'mysterious' phenomena of radio-activity nor the no less 'mysterious' phenomena of wireless transmission of electro-magnetic waves do the slightest damage to materialism.

The phenomena of *radio-activity*, which have led to the necessity of thinking of the atom as a complex system of still utterly 'unimaginable' particles, can be directed against materialism only by a desperate specimen of a vulgar materialist who recognizes as matter only that which he can feel with his bare hands.

But this is sensualism, not materialism. Both the molecule, the ultimate chemical particle, and the atom, the ultimate physical particle, are inaccessible to our sight and touch. But our organs of sense, through the instruments with which knowledge begins, are not at all, however, the last resort of knowledge. The human eye and the human ear are very primitive pieces of apparatus, inadequate to reach even the basic elements of physical and chemical phenomena. To the extent that in our thinking about reality we are guided merely by the everyday findings of our sense organs it is hard for us to imagine that the atom is a complex system, that it has a nucleus, that around this nucleus electrons move, and that from this there result the phenomena of radio-activity. Our imagination in general accustoms itself only with difficulty to new conquests of cognition. When Copernicus in the sixteenth century discovered that it was not the sun that moved round the earth but the earth round the sun, this seemed fantastic, and conservative imagination still to this day finds it hard to adjust itself to this fact. We observe this in the case of illiterate people and in each fresh generation of schoolchildren. Yet we, people of some education, despite the fact that it appears to us, too, that the sun moves round the earth, nevertheless do not doubt that in reality things happen the other way round, for this is confirmed by extensive observation of astronomical phenomena. The human brain is a product of the development of matter, and at the same time is an instrument for the cognition of this matter; gradually it adjusts itself to its function, tries to overcome its limitations, creates ever new scientific methods, imagines ever more complex and exact instruments, checks its work again and yet again, step by step penetrates into previously unknown depths, changes our conception of matter, without, though, ever breaking away from this basis of all that exists.

Radio-activity, as we have already mentioned, in no way constitutes a threat to materialism, and it is at the same time a magnificent triumph of dialectics. Until recently scientists supposed that there were in the world about ninety elements, which were beyond analysis and could not be transformed one into another—so to speak, a carpet for the universe woven from ninety threads of different qualities and colours. Such a notion contradicted materialist dialectics, which speaks of the unity of matter and, what is even more important, of the transformability of the elements of matter. Our great chemist, Mendeleev, to the end of his life was unwilling to reconcile himself to the idea that one element could be transformed into another; he firmly believed in the stability of these 'individualities', although the phenomena of radio-activity were already known to him. But nowadays no scientist believes in the unchangeability of the elements. Using the phenomena of radio-activity, chemists have succeeded in carrying out a direct 'execution' of eight or nine elements and, along with this, the execution of the last remnants of metaphysics in materialism, for now the transformability of one chemical element into another has been proved experimentally. The phenomena of radio-activity have thus led to a supreme triumph of dialectical thought.

The phenomena of radio technique are based on wireless transmission of electro-magnetic waves. *Wireless* does not at all mean *non-material* transmission. Light does not come only from lamps but also from

the sun, being also transmitted without the aid of wires. We are fully accustomed to the wireless transmission of light over quite respectable distances. We are greatly surprised though, when we begin to transmit sound over a very much shorter distance, with the aid of those very same electro-magnetic waves which underlie the phenomena of light. All these are phenomena of matter, material processes—waves and whirlwinds—in space and time. The new discoveries and their technical applications show only that matter is a great deal more heterogeneous and richer in potentialities than we had thought hitherto. But, as before, nothing is made out of nothing.

The most outstanding of our scientists say that science, and physics in particular, has in recent times, arrived at a turning point. Not so very long ago, they say, we still approached matter, as it were, 'phenomenally', i.e., from the angle of observing its manifestations, but now we are beginning to penetrate ever deeper into the very interior of matter, to learn its structure, and we shall soon be able to regulate it 'from within'. A good physicist would, of course, be able to talk about this better than I can. The phenomena of radio-activity are leading us to the problem of releasing intra-atomic energy. The atom contains within itself a mighty hidden energy, and the greatest task of physics consists in pumping out this energy, pulling out the cork so that this hidden energy may burst forth in a fountain. Then the possibility will be opened up of replacing coal and oil by atomic energy, which will also become the basic motive power. This is not at all a hopeless task. And what prospects it opens before us! This alone gives us the right to declare that scientific and technical thought is approaching a great turning-point, that the revolutionary epoch in the development of human society will be accompanied by a revolutionary epoch in the sphere of the cognition of matter and the mastering of it . . . Unbounded technical possibilities will open out before liberated mankind.

#### RADIO, MILITARISM, SUPERSTITION

**P**ERHAPS, though, it is time to get closer to political and practical questions. What is the relation between radio technique and the social system? Is it socialist or capitalist? I raise the question because a few days ago the famous Italian, Marconi, said in Berlin that the transmission of pictures at a distance by means of Hertzian waves is a tremendous gift to pacifism, foretelling the speedy end of the militarist epoch. Why should this be? These ends of epochs have been proclaimed so often that the pacifists have got all ends and beginnings mixed up. The fact that we shall be able to see at a great distance is supposed to put an end to wars! Certainly, the invention of a means of transmitting a living image over a great distance is a very attractive task, for it is insulting to the optic nerve that the auditory one is at present, thanks to radio, in a privileged position in this respect. But to suppose that from this there must result the end of wars is merely absurd, and shows only that in the case of great men like Marconi, just as with the majority of people who are specialists in a particular field—even, one may say, with the majority of people in general—scientific thinking lays hold of the brain, to put the matter crudely, not as a whole, but only in small sectors. Just as inside the hull of a steamship

impenetrable partitions are placed so that in the event of an accident the ship will not sink all at once, so also in man's consciousness there are numberless impenetrable partitions: in one sector, or even in a dozen sectors, you can find the most revolutionary scientific thinking, but beyond the partition lies philistinism of the highest degree. This is the great significance of Marxism, as thought which generalizes all human experience, that it helps to break down these internal partitions of consciousness through the integrity of its world outlook. But, to get closer to the matter in hand—why, precisely, if one can see one's enemy, must this result in the liquidation of war? In earlier times whenever there was war the adversaries saw each other face to face. That was how it was in Napoleon's day. Only the creation of long-distance weapons gradually pushed the adversaries further apart and led to a situation in which they were firing at unseen targets. And if the invisible becomes visible, this will only mean that the Hegelian triad has triumphed in this sphere as well—after the thesis and the antithesis has come the 'synthesis' of mutual extermination.

I remember the time when men wrote that the development of aircraft would put an end to war, because it would draw the whole population into military operations, would bring to ruin the economic and cultural life of entire countries, etc. In fact, however, the invention of a flying machine heavier than air opened a new and crueller chapter in the history of militarism. There is no doubt that now, too, we are approaching the beginning of a still more frightful and bloody chapter. Technique and science have their own logic—the logic of the cognition of nature and the mastering of it in the interests of man. But technique and science develop not in a vacuum but in human society, which consists of classes. The ruling class, the possessing class, controls technique and through it controls nature. Technique in itself cannot be called either militaristic or pacifistic. In a society in which the ruling class is militaristic, technique is in the service of militarism.

It is considered unquestionable that technique and science undermine superstition. But the class character of society sets substantial limits here too. Take America. There, Church sermons are broadcast by radio, which means that the radio is serving as a means of spreading prejudices. Such things don't happen here, I think—the Society of Friends of Radio watch over this, I hope? (*Laughter and applause*) Under the socialist system science and technique as a whole will undoubtedly be directed against religious prejudices, against superstition, which reflects the weakness of man before man or before nature. What, indeed, does a 'voice from heaven' amount to when there is being broadcast all over the country a voice from the Polytechnical Museum?<sup>22</sup> (*Laughter*)

### WE MUST NOT LAG BEHIND!

**V**ICTORY over poverty and superstition is ensured to us, provided we go forward technically. We must not lag behind other countries. The first slogan which every friend of radio must fix in his mind is: Don't lag behind! Yet we are extraordinarily backward in relation to the advanced capitalist countries; this backwardness is the

<sup>22</sup>This address was given in the Polytechnical Museum, and was broadcast.

main inheritance that we have received from the past. What are we to do? If, comrades, the situation were to be such that the capitalist countries continued to develop steadily and go forward, as before the war, then we should have to ask ourselves anxiously: shall we be able to catch up? And if we do not catch up, shall we not be crushed? To this we say: we cannot forget that scientific and technical thought in bourgeois society has attained its highest degree of development in that period when, economically, bourgeois society is getting more and more into a blind alley and is beginning to decay. European economy is not going forward. In the last fifteen years Europe has become poorer, not richer. But its inventions and discoveries have been colossal. While ravaging Europe and devastating huge areas of the continent, the war at the same time gave a tremendous fillip to scientific and technical thought, which was suffocating in the clutches of decaying capitalism. If, however, we take the material accumulations of technique, i.e., not that technique which exists in men's heads, but that which is embodied in machinery, factories, mills, railways, telegraphic and telephone services etc., then here above all it is plain that we are fearfully backward. It would be more correct to say that this backwardness would be fearful for us if we did not possess the immense advantage which consists in the Soviet organization of society, which makes possible a planned development of technique and science while Europe is suffocating in its own contradictions.

Our present backwardness in all spheres must not, however, be covered up, but must be measured with a severely objective yardstick, without losing heart but also without deceiving oneself for a single moment. How is a country transformed into a single economic and cultural whole? By means of communications: railways, steamships, postal services, the telegraph and the telephone—and now radio-telegraphy and radio-telephony. How do we stand in these fields? We are fearfully backward. In America the railway network amounts to 405,000 kilometres, in Britain to nearly 40,000, in Germany to 54,000, but here to only 69,000 kilometres—and that with our vast distances! But it is much more instructive to compare the loads that are carried in these countries and here, measuring them in ton-kilometres, i.e., taking as the unit one ton transported over one kilometre's distance. The USA last year carried 600 million ton-kilometres, we carried 48,500,000, Britain 30 million, German 69 million, i.e., the USA carried ten times as much as Germany, twenty times as much as Britain and two or three times as much as the whole of Europe along with ourselves.

Let us take the postal service, one of the basic means of cultural communication. According to information provided by the Commissariat of Posts and Telegraphs, based on the latest figures, expenditure on postal communications in the USA last year amounted to a milliard and a quarter roubles, which means 9 roubles 40 kopecks per head of population. In our country postal expenditure comes to 75 million, which means 33 kopecks per head. There's a difference for you—between 9 roubles 40 kopecks and 33 kopecks!

The figures for telegraph and telephone services are still more striking. The total length of telegraph wires in America is three million kilometres, in Britain half a million kilometres, and here 616,000 kilometres. But the

length of telegraph wires is comparatively small in America because there they have a lot of *telephone* wires—60 million kilometres of them, whereas in Britain there are only six million and here only 311,000 kilometres. Let us neither mock at ourselves, comrades, nor take fright, but firmly keep these figures in mind; we must measure and compare, so as to catch up and surpass, at all costs! (*Applause*) The number of telephones—another good index of the level of culture—is in America 14 million, in Britain one million, and here 190,000. For every hundred persons in America there are thirteen telephones, in Britain two and a bit and in our country one-tenth, or, in other words, in America the number of telephones in relation to the number of inhabitants is 130 times as great as here.

As regards radio, I do not know how much we spend per day on it (I think the Society of Friends of Radio should work this out), but in America they spend a million dollars, i.e., two million roubles a day on radio, which makes about 700 millions a year.

These figures harshly reveal our backwardness. But they also reveal the importance that radio, as the cheapest form of communication, can and must have in our huge peasant country. We cannot seriously talk about socialism without having in mind the transformation of the country into a single whole, linked together by means of all kinds of communications. In order to introduce it we must first and foremost be able to talk to the most remote parts of the country, such as Turkmenistan. For Turkmenistan, with which I began my remarks today, produces cotton, and upon Turkmenistan's labours depends the work of the textile mills of the Moscow and Ivanovo-Voznesensk regions. For direct and immediate communication with all points in the country, one of the most important means is radio—that is, of course, if radio in our country is not to be a toy for the upper strata of the townspeople, who are established in more privileged conditions than others, but is to become an instrument of economic and cultural communication between town and country.

### TOWN AND COUNTRY

**L**ET us not forget that between town and country in the USSR there are monstrous contradictions, material and cultural, which as a whole we have inherited from capitalism. In that difficult period we went through when the town took refuge in the country and the country gave a pood of bread in exchange for an overcoat, some nails or a guitar, the town looked quite pitiful in comparison with the comfortable countryside. But in proportion as the elementary foundations of our economy have been restored, in particular our industry, the tremendous technical and cultural advantages of the town over the country have reasserted themselves. We have done a great deal in the sphere of politics and law to mitigate and even out the contrasts between town and country. But in technique we have really not made a single big step forward so far. And we cannot build socialism with the countryside in this technically deprived condition and the peasantry culturally destitute. Developed socialism means above all technical and cultural levelling as between town and country, i.e., the dissolving of both town and country into homogeneous economic and cultural conditions. That is why the mere bringing closer together of town and country is a question of life and death for us.

While creating the industry and institutions of the town capitalism held the country down and could not but do this: it could always obtain the necessary food-stuffs and raw materials not only from its own countryside but also from the backward lands across the ocean or from the colonies, produced by cheap peasant labour. The war and the post-war disturbances, the blockade and the danger that it might be repeated, and finally the instability of bourgeois society, have compelled the bourgeoisie to take a closer interest in the peasantry. Recently we have heard bourgeois and social-democratic politicians more than once talk about the link with the peasantry. Briand, in his discussion with Comrade Rakovsky about the debts, laid emphasis on the needs of the small landholders, and in particular the French peasants.<sup>3</sup> Otto Bauer, the Austrian 'Left' Menshevik, in a recent speech spoke about the exceptional importance of the 'link' with the countryside. Above all, our old acquaintance, Lloyd George—whom, true, we have begun to forget a little—when he was still in circulation organized in Britain a special land league in the interests of the link with the peasantry.<sup>4</sup> I don't know what form the link would take in British conditions, but on Lloyd George's tongue the word certainly sounds knavish enough. At all events, I would not recommend that he be elected patron of any rural district, nor an honorary member of the Society of Friends of Radio, for he would, without fail, put over some swindle or other. (*Applause*) Whereas in Europe the revival of the question of the link with the countryside is, on the one hand, a Parliamentary-political manoeuvre, and, on the other, a significant symptom of the tottering of the bourgeois regime, for us the problem of economic and cultural links with the countryside is a matter of life and death in the full sense of the word. The technical basis of this linkage must be electrification, and this is directly and immediately connected with the problem of the introduction of radio on a wide scale. In order to approach the fulfilment of the simplest and most urgent tasks it is necessary that all parts of the Soviet Union be able to talk to each other, that the country be able to listen to the town, as to its technically better-equipped and more cultured elder brother. Without the fulfilment of this task the spread of radio will remain a plaything for the privileged circles of the townspeople.

It was stated in your report that in our country three-quarters of the rural population do not know what radio is, while the remaining quarter know it only through special demonstrations during festivals, etc. Our programme must provide that every village not only should know what radio is but should have its own radio receiving station.

### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

**T**HE diagram attached to your report shows the distribution of members of your Society according to social class. Workers make up 20 per cent. (that's the small figure with the hammer); peasants 13 per cent. (the still smaller figure with the scythe); office workers 49 per cent. (the

<sup>3</sup>The reference is to the Franco-Soviet negotiations regarding payment of tsarist debts to French creditors. Rakovsky—later to be one of Stalin's victims—was then Soviet representative in France. (Trans.)

<sup>4</sup>The Land and Nation League, founded in 1923. (Trans.)

respectable figure carrying a brief-case); and then comes 18 per cent. of 'others' (it's not stated who they are exactly, but there is a drawing of a gentleman in a bowler hat, with a cane and a white handkerchief in his breast pocket, evidently a Nepman). I don't suggest that these people with handkerchiefs should be driven out of the Society of Friends of Radio, but they ought to be surrounded and besieged more strongly, so that radio may be made cheaper for the people with hammers and scythes. (*Applause*) Still less am I inclined to think that the number of members with brief-cases should be mechanically reduced. But it is necessary, though, that the two basic groups be increased, at all costs! (*Applause*) 20 per cent. workers—that's very little; 13 per cent. peasants—that's shamefully little. The number of people in bowler hats is nearly equal to the number of workers (18 per cent.) and exceeds the number of peasants, who make up only 13 per cent.! It is a flagrant breach of the Soviet constitution. It is necessary to take steps to ensure that in the next year or two peasants become about 40 per cent., workers 45 per cent., office workers ten per cent. and what are called 'others'—five per cent. That will be a normal proportion, fully in keeping with the spirit of the Soviet constitution. The conquest of the village by radio is a task for the next few years, very closely connected with the task of eliminating illiteracy and electrifying the country, and to some extent a pre-condition for the fulfilment of these tasks. Each province should set out to conquer the countryside with a definite programme of radio development. Place the map for a new war on the table! From each provincial centre first of all every one of the larger villages should be conquered for radio. It is necessary that our illiterate and semi-literate village, even before it manages to master reading and writing as it ought, should be able to have access to culture through the radio, which is the most democratic medium of broadcasting information and knowledge. It is necessary that by means of the radio the peasant shall be able to feel himself a citizen of our Union, a citizen of the whole world.

Upon the peasantry depends to a large extent not only the development of our own industry—that is more than clear: upon our peasantry and the growth of its economy there also depends, to a certain degree, the revolution in the countries of Europe. What worries the

European workers—and that not by accident—in their struggle for power, what the social-democrats utilize cleverly for their reactionary purposes, is the dependence of Europe's industry upon countries across the oceans as regards foodstuffs and raw materials. America provides grain and cotton, Egypt cotton, India sugarcane, the islands of the Malay Archipelago rubber etc. etc. The danger is that an American blockade, say, might subject the industry of Europe, during the most difficult months and years of the proletarian revolution, to a famine of foodstuffs and raw materials. In these conditions an increased export of our Soviet grain and raw material of all kinds is a mighty revolutionary factor in relation to the countries of Europe. Our peasants must be made aware that every extra sheaf that they thresh and send abroad is so much additional weight in the scales of the revolutionary struggle of the European proletariat, for this sheaf reduces the dependence of Europe upon capitalist America. The Turkmenian peasants who are raising cotton must be linked with the textile workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk and Moscow and also with the revolutionary proletariat of Europe. A network of radio receiving stations must be established in our country such as will make it possible for our peasants to live the life of the working people of Europe and the whole world, to participate in it from day to day. It is necessary that on that day when the workers of Europe take possession of the radio stations, when the proletariat of France take over the Eiffel Tower and announce from its summit in all the languages of Europe that they are the masters of France (*applause*), that on that day and hour not only the workers of our cities and industries but also the peasants of our remotest villages, may be able to reply to the call of the European workers: 'Do you hear us?'—'We hear you, brothers, and we will help you!' (*Applause*) Siberia will help with fats, grain and raw materials, the Kuban and the Don with grain and meat, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan will contribute their cotton. This will show that our radio-communications have brought nearer the transformation of Europe into a single economic organization. The development of a radio-telegraphic network is, among so many other things, a preparation for the moment when the people of Europe and Asia shall be united in a Soviet Union of Socialist Peoples. (*Applause*)

## THE CASE OF ANDRE MARTY

*Joseph Redman*

'Demands to return home sounded ever more loudly in the armies of the interventionists and cases of refusal to fight against Soviet Russia grew more and more frequent. The French sailors in the Black Sea rose in revolt against intervention.'

Theses of the Soviet Communist Party on the fortieth anniversary of the October Revolution.

'For thirty-one years we have watched with passionate sympathy the struggles of our comrades in the Soviet Union. And we have not merely watched—to the utmost extent of our ability we have, answering

Lenin's call, fought to ensure our people's solidarity with the Soviet Union. The living evidence of this solidarity, our glory and our honour, is André Marty.'

Maurice Thorez, March 1949.

ONE year ago this November died André Marty, aged 70. The last four years of his life had been spent in isolation from the party he had helped to build and from which he had been expelled with ignominy, in circumstances that deserve now to be recalled and ex-

amined anew. Besides Rajk, Kostov, Slansky etc., there was Marty—an outstanding communist leader victimized, slandered, persecuted by his former comrades, not in a country under MVD control, but in capitalist France. While the action taken against Marty had much in common with the drive in the same period against ‘Titoists’ in eastern Europe and seems, indeed, to have been linked with it in some way that is still obscure, the circumstance of his being outside the physical control of the Stalinists enabled Marty to survive his expulsion long enough to write a book about it and to publish this book before his death.

Apart from some valuable short articles by Eric Heffer in *Socialist Revolt* and *Tribune*, little has been done to explain the Marty case to the British public. Developments since the death of Marty—notably the repercussions of the Hungarian and Polish revolts and of the political crisis in the Soviet leadership—have greatly increased the number of socialists in this country who appreciate the importance of studying the history of the international communist movement as a means of understanding some of the problems that face us to-day. The modest task of this article is to summarize what we can learn from *l’affaire Marty*.<sup>1</sup>

First, to recall who Marty was. The son of a Communist condemned to death, he was a leading participant in the mutiny of the French fleet in the Black Sea in 1919, and was built up over many years of communist propaganda as its ‘leader’. (An abridged edition of his book about the mutiny, *Les Heures glorieuses de la Mer Noire*, was published here by the Communist Party in 1941 as *The Epic of the Black Sea*.) He joined the French Communist Party on his discharge from prison in 1923. Marty had been a successful candidate in some fifty elections while still imprisoned, and soon became a member of the central committee and a Parliamentary deputy. Later he served on the executive committee of the Communist International. During the Spanish Civil War, Marty was chief political commissar of the International Brigades (Ernest Hemingway depicts him in this role in *For Whom The Bell Tolls*). He functioned as the French communists’ chief representative in negotiations with De Gaulle and the Allied High Command in North Africa towards the end of the second world war. After the war, though he was still prominent in public life, his importance as a communist leader seemed somewhat diminished, even after the party’s sharp turn to the Left, with the intensification of the ‘cold war’, had led to republication of his book in 1949 and occasional evocation of his example in connexion with the danger of war with the USSR. Then, in September 1952, Marty was suddenly attacked by the French communist headquarters as an enemy of the party and within a few months he was being given the full treatment, with accusations of having been a police agent since 1919, his wife forced to break with him, and life made so difficult that he had to retire to a village in the Pyrenees.

The astonishment with which the charges against Marty were received by all outside the circle of dedicated Stalinists can be understood if it be realized that this man had always been the arch-symbol of incorruptible Stalinist rectitude and a most ferocious

enemy of all deviators. Marty was the French bourgeoisie’s *bête noire* among communist leaders—he was for them the ‘face of the party’ at its most militant and uncompromising. An official communist biography of him declared: ‘There is nobody whom the men of the Fifth Column have pursued with greater hatred and calumny.’ Trotsky, for whom political antagonism never served as an excuse for not giving credit where credit was due, wrote in his *Letter to the French Workers* on leaving France in 1935: ‘Only one [of the French communist leaders], André Marty, has shown in his time the qualities of a real revolutionary; his past deserves respect.’ That ‘the environment of the Comintern’ had ‘managed to demoralize him too’ was indeed a striking example of the evil power of Stalinism.

The indictment of Marty appeared in English in *World News and Views* of September 27, October 18 and December 20, 1952. He was accused of having opposed party policy in a ‘Leftist’, ‘sectarian’ spirit, especially of having reproached the party for not taking power in 1944, and at the same time of criticizing the Paris demonstration against General Ridgway on May 28, 1952, as an adventure. He had belittled the role of Maurice Thorez. He had been in contact with persons connected with the police, such as his brother (a doctor who carried out autopsies for the French equivalent of the Home Office). And not only that: in a declaration to the political bureau he had spoken ‘not of the “Trotskyist gang” or “group of Trotskyist police agents”—which is the language we ordinarily and naturally use in relation to these people—but referring to the “Trotskyist International” and even to “a party (Trotskyist) said to be an opposition party to our French Communist Party”’. Articles by Leon Mauvais in *For a Lasting Peace, For a People’s Democracy!* in January and February 1953, after Marty had been expelled, associated his criticisms of the French Communist Party leadership with those lodged by Tito and announced that André Marty had been in the service of the police since 1919 . . .

In his reply to the charges brought against him, Marty points out that the ultimate source for the accusation about ‘selling out’ to the police in 1919 was an article by the royalist Maurras in his *Action Française* in 1922, and that certain anonymous anti-communist articles in *Figaro* which he was said to have written were admitted in 1954; during the investigation of the leakage of information in connexion with the war in Indo-China, to have been written by a journalist named Baranès. He examines all the other allegations of this order and has little difficulty in showing their lack of foundation. The bulk of the book is devoted, however, to the politics of the affair, and in the first place to his alleged views about what ought to have been done in 1944 and the immediately following years.

Marty denies that he ever advocated a seizure of power by the Communist Party in this period. What he did fight for in the top councils of the Party, he explains, was unrelenting development of mass action by the workers against the capitalists, to enforce application of the anti-capitalist demands of the Resistance movement. He gives a number of interesting details and quotations to show how the French Communist Party faded out the more ‘awkward’ demands of the Resistance (notably that for the confiscation of the property of traitors) in order not to rock the boat of collaboration

<sup>1</sup>André Marty, ‘L’Affaire Marty’ (Paris, Editions des Deux Rives, 1955).



with De Gaulle and the British and American imperialists. Initiatives from below that threatened to disturb this combination were studiously damped down—e.g., the militant demands of the Congress of the Liberation Committees of Southern France, held at Avignon in October 1944, were ignored and so far as possible concealed by the party leadership. In Marty's view, had the line of this Congress been taken up by the party nationally, a movement could rapidly have developed that could have produced a socialist-communist government in France without any insurrection being necessary. Instead, the party tolerated the most outrageous acts by De Gaulle, designed to break the wave of revolution and ensure that post-war France should be as little unlike pre-war as possible. Partisan units were sent westward to besiege the pockets of Nazi resistance along the Atlantic coasts, so as to separate them from the regular army and keep the latter free of their 'contagion'; the arrest was ordered of Colonel Fabien, the famous communist partisan leader, when he defied these instructions and attached his brigade to the American forces moving eastward. In November 1944, without any explanation, the party's demand for an armed local 'Patriotic Guard', to be controlled by the Liberation Committees, was suddenly dropped, and on December 2, the day after his return from Moscow, Thorez gave out the slogan: 'One State, one police force, one army', which was soon followed by the break-up of the partisan forces and the suppression of the Liberation Committees.

According to Marty's account, he was fighting from the beginning of the Communist Party's entry into the De Gaulle Government in April 1944 for clear recognition, in theory and practice, that formation of a 'united front' government must in no circumstances restrict the independent activity of the working class, that entry into the Government constituted only an auxiliary means of struggle and that it increased rather than decreased the party's responsibility for developing popular mass action. He was not against the principle of communist participation in the French Government in 1944-47, but he did repeatedly criticize the way this participation was actually carried out and the practical conclusions drawn from it. The only measure of nationalization implemented in accordance with the Resistance programme was that of the aircraft industry. True, the coal-mines were nationalized, but with heavy compensation and without the by-products enterprises being touched, though that was where the big profits from coal were being made. These measures were misrepresented as being instalments of socialism, and France was said to be 'on the road to socialism'. Strikes were discouraged as 'embarrassing the communist Ministers'. A more-production campaign was launched which resulted in the profits of the largest concerns in France being in 1946 six times what they had been in 1945. When Marty protested in the central committee that the workers were being swindled and the Resistance martyrs betrayed, he was rebuked for his 'anti-party' attitude. The result of all this so far as the Communist Party's political standing was concerned was that, in the Paris regional elections of 1946, the party did worse than in 1936, and in 1947 the capitalists were able to get rid of the communist Ministers with no trouble at all.

In his review of this period, Marty does not omit to point out that people who talk so freely as Thorez and

Co. do about other people's police connexions ought to explain why, during the rising in Paris in August 1944, no attempt was made to seize the secret archives of the police, or why, when the communists were participating in the Government, they never put forward any demand to have revealed the names of the agents sent into the party by previous governments . . .

On the years between 1947 and 1952, Marty admits that he did argue in the political bureau against the excessive sub-division of party branches in Paris which was carried out in 1946, because this broke up the *arrondissements* which were real social and political units (a question which will remind some British readers of disputes in the British Communist Party regarding the fate of 'borough' organizations). This tended, he thought, to atomize the party membership. He had also criticized the undue concentration of party leaders and functionaries in Paris, and called for as many as possible to be sent into the provinces. It was true that he had not concealed his dislike of the 'cult' of Thorez and related phenomena. He did not think it was right that Party education should be based on Thorez's autobiography, *Son of the People*. The actual circumstances of the party's origin in the fight against French imperialism during the first world war were played down, as were the campaigns waged by the party in the period before Thorez emerged to his present prominence, such as the anti-chauvinist campaign in connexion with the occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 and the campaign against the war in Morocco in 1925-26. The building up of Thorez contradicted the basic communist idea that 'no saviours from on high deliver' and tended to transform the party into a mere 'executive mechanism' for carrying out the instructions of Thorez. The presentation of all sorts of gifts to Thorez and the appointment of his wife, Jeanette Vermeersch, to various high positions just because of her relationship to him, were examples of an unhealthy trend. Marty records that he was rebuked in 1950 for having mentioned Thorez's name only three times during a speech on the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of the party. He had on a previous occasion been ticked off for criticizing expenditure incurred for the annual banquet for communist deputies and their wives, instituted in 1936; when he said that the money so spent was needed for leaflets, Thorez had called him a demagogue.

Marty's own explanation of his expulsion starts from the fact that the drive against him began at the same meeting of the central committee where the project was launched for a 'United National Front' embracing Right-wing political groups, on the single basis of opposition to German rearmament. Thorez, Duclos and the others foresaw difficulties with Marty, since he was known to hold the view that the French working class had 'missed the bus' in 1936 and 1944 and might well jib at a third phase of opportunist man, could not but improve the party's chances in February he had criticized the weakness of the party's anti-imperialist activity; and in any case a public repudiation of Marty, the bourgeoisie's bogyman, could not but improve the party's chances in approaching Right-wing groups. Perhaps the most valuable parts of the book are those devoted to criticizing the 'national front' tendency in French communist policy.

Marty links together the opportunism shown in

connexion with German rearmament and the opportunism shown in connexion with the war in Indo-China. After September 1952 amazingly little was done by the Communist Party to impede this war. Even the campaign for the release of Henri Martin was dropped. In the main, activity was reduced to a signatures campaign. In June 1953, 60,000 signatures were obtained 'for peace' in the department of which Marseilles is the centre—but ships continued to leave Marseilles for the Far East without even a call for action to stop them. Only the dockers in the Algerian ports did anything. Marty contrasts the half-heartedness of the struggle against the war in Indo-China with what had been done in 1925-26 against the war in Morocco—then, the crews of a dozen warships had been persuaded to refuse to sail for Morocco, and a strike involving a million and a half workers had been called. The crisis caused by the fall of Dien Bien Phu presented the party with a wonderful opportunity to lead a movement against the whole gang of discredited bourgeois politicians, but it would not take this opportunity. Instead of actions being organized in the ports, a delegation of French dockers was sent to wait upon the statesmen assembled at Geneva. The absence of a real fight inside France matching the gallant struggle of the Vietnamese people enabled Mendès-France to bring off his extraordinary diplomatic triumph of the armistice of July 20, 1954. The Vietnamese people had been on the point of mastering the whole country and the French expeditionary force was utterly demoralized. Yet Mendès was allowed to win his political victory, retaining South Vietnam for imperialism, and set himself up as a great statesman; while the Communist Party held a mass meeting in the Vélodrome d'Hiver to proclaim that the armistice had resulted from the resistance put up by the French people under their leadership!

Particularly from September 1952 onward, the communist 'campaign' against the Indo-China war was focused on the achievement of a bloc with bourgeois politicians inside France which should lead to a coming together internationally of heads of States who would sign a Pact of Peace. Marty repeatedly criticizes this conception of the fight for peace as one which leads first to neglect of the independent struggle of the working class and the winning of a united front of the workers' organizations, and then to direct discouragement of these activities. Only a movement rooted in the masses and advancing to revolutionary action could effectively check capitalist war-making. Perhaps the denigration of himself and the pulping of stocks of his book on the Black Sea mutiny were measures undertaken to remove a dangerous example of genuine anti-war struggle, offensive to the bourgeois allies being sought by the Communist Party leaders and therefore embarrassing to the latter?<sup>2</sup>

Regarding the campaign against German rearmament, Marty makes two main criticisms: first, the backing and building-up of totally unreliable bourgeois politicians because they agreed, or pretended to agree, with the Communist Party on this particular

point; second, the restraining of the workers from any kind of struggle that could give offence to these politicians. The slogan of the United National Front, coupled with the expulsion of Marty, brought confusion and doubt into the ranks of the party, and the consequences were at once seen in the poor results of the Paris by-elections of December 1952. On July 14, 1953 the police opened fire on Algerian workers demonstrating in Paris, killing six and wounding 300. The communist leaders Mauvais, Servin and Feix, who were nearby, hastily left the area, and their example prevented the clash between French communist demonstrators and the police that would otherwise certainly have occurred. Twenty-five years earlier, Marty writes, a government that allowed its police to fire on the people on Bastille Day would have been swept from power. Now, however, there was only a formal protest in Parliament. 'On the pretext of agreement or alleged agreement to oppose the ratification of the treaties of Bonn and Paris they are allowed to get away with it.' When there were skirmishes in the *Quartier Latin* between socialist students and sellers of the quasi-fascist *Rivarol*, communist students declined to come to the aid of the socialists on the ground that *Rivarol* was 'against German rearmament'!

That the passivity of the Communist Party was not to be blamed on 'apathy' on the workers' part was vividly demonstrated by the great strike of railway and postal workers in August 1953. This sprang from below and spread all over France in forty-eight hours, four million workers being involved. The bourgeois papers wrote of it as the biggest threat since 1936. Solidarity actions were spontaneously organized by workers in other enterprises—but not where the Communist Party held decisive control, and conspicuously not at the great Renault works. *L'Humanité* suppressed news about the remarkable developments at Nantes, where the strike committee, composed of workers of all political views and trade union affiliations virtually took over the town, undertaking the supply of food-stuffs, maintenance of order, etc. Bold leadership by the communists could have led to the formation of a socialist-communist government, Marty considers. Instead, there was not even any attempt to get the Belgians and other neighbours to give financial aid or stop trains coming into France. All was sacrificed to the hope of a deal with the bourgeois parties that would stop German rearmament—a deal which, needless to say, failed to come off. Long afterwards, in *L'Humanité* of June 5, 1954, Duclos admitted that 'the strikes of 1953 had been on the way to bringing down the Government'. On the whole episode and its implications, Marty writes that the party leaders' attitude was: 'Speak—merely speak—against German rearmament, and we will hold back strikes', and he comments: 'It is treason to lead the workers to suppose that they can without danger ally themselves, on the basis of a phrase, with their own implacable exploiters and the Ministers and politicians of these latter, even if named Mendès . . . Because I have declared that, instead of chumming up with the worst enemies of the workers on the pretext of their claptrap against the European Defence Community, it is necessary first and foremost to undertake the defence of the working class, and that the prospect of revolution must always be kept before

<sup>2</sup>Marty was removed from the presidency of the Association of Black Sea Veterans and his place taken by a certain Le Ramey, who had been acquitted by a court-martial in 1919 and held aloof from the Left-wing movement until 1945, when he joined the Communist Party.

the eyes of the workers, I have been expelled. It is the entire direction to be taken by the French Labour movement that is being challenged in my humble person.'

Marty's second criticism of the conduct of the campaign against German rearmament relates to the chauvinist line of the propaganda undertaken—a necessary consequence of the abandonment of the class basis and the striving to find a common language with the bourgeoisie. He instances the holding of a demonstration on November 11, 1953, at the foot of Clémenceau's statue. It was Clémenceau, he recalls, who helped the German militarists to suppress the German workers in 1919. To link the campaign with the tradition of Clémenceau not only helps the German reactionaries by offending the German workers, it also helps the French reactionaries to strengthen their influence over the French workers. On this question of anti-German chauvinism, Marty mentions that as early as 1950 he had made a point of correcting in his speeches and writings a certain tendency that had appeared in Party propaganda to attribute all the atrocities in Indo-China to Germans in the Foreign Legion, silence being maintained about the contribution made by French troops!

So far we have seen Marty as a critic of the 'Right-opportunist' trend in French communist policy and practice. What of the charge that he opposed the demonstration of May 28, 1952? He claims that he did not oppose it, but that he did question certain features of it and, more particularly, he did disapprove of the frenzied tone adopted by *l'Humanité* immediately after it, with its call, out of the blue, for an 'unlimited strike' to secure the release of Duclos. His remarks of the party's attempt in this entire period to manipulate the working class from above and outside, in accordance with the requirements of 'high diplomacy'—trying to throw them into action (unsuccessfully) in May-June 1952, trying to hold them back in August 1953—link up with his general observations on French communist trade union policy. Trade unions, he declares, should not be subordinated to any party. Once they become stooge organizations of a particular party the workers grow suspicious of them. The workers found that they were being discouraged from fighting for economic demands common to all of them, on the grounds that this might interfere with the 'fight for peace', and then were suddenly called on to fight on political issues on which they were not all agreed. Marty only adumbrates a critique of the sophisticated combination of

opportunism with sectarianism characteristic of the French communist leadership; it is instructive to compare what he writes with the views of another prominent expellee from the same party, Pierre Hervé, whose books *La Révolution et les Fétiches* and *Lettre à Sartre* (both published by La Table Ronde, 1956), though written from a markedly different standpoint, leave a remarkably similar impression of the atmosphere in the leading circles of the party.

Marty wrote his book as a loyal Stalinist, criticizing Thorez and Co. entirely from within the framework of Stalinist ideas—e.g., he criticizes the line taken by the communist Ministers in 1944-47 on the basis of Dimitrov's speech to the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern. He never seeks the ultimate source of the policies and changes of policy he condemns, and his remarks on the cult of Thorez's personality are strictly confined to this specific case. Nor does he carry his critical analysis of communist policy in France back beyond the war years. Marty was no theoretician, and had been enclosed in the Stalinist milieu for nearly thirty years; he began his reassessment of his own past and that of his party on an empirical basis, forced to do it by his expulsion and the filthy slanders hurled at him. He had not got very far when he wrote this book. There is evidence, however, that during the last years of his life he took further steps along the road to revolutionary Marxism. The October 1956 events in Poland filled him with enthusiasm and he sent a letter of congratulation to Gomulka. In an interview with Eric Heffer he said that what happened in Spain in 1936-39 had been a political defeat for the working class, and that the leaders of the POUM (Workers' Party of Marxist Unification) had been framed and murdered. To Heffer I also owe the information that Marty was reading Felix Morrow's *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain* towards the end of his life, as well as studying the works of Rosa Luxemburg and other non-Stalinist Marxist thinkers.

André Marty was an elderly man when circumstances compelled him to examine the foundations of his political position. That he made as much progress as he did in the political reassessment he had begun—in conditions of isolation, poverty and terrible emotional strain—must serve as an example to young communists, fit to rank beside the example he set in April 1919 when he persuaded the crew of the cruiser *Waldeck-Rousseau*, sent to bombard Odessa, to hoist the red flag of international socialism.

# The Works of Sigmund Freud: A Marxist Critique

John McLeish

THE SIGNIFICANCE of Sigmund Freud in contemporary Western culture extends far beyond the field of psychiatry. His influence on the visual arts, for good or ill, has been profound; the literature of today would have a very different shape and content had he never lived. Even those who know neither his work nor his name use his ideas and technical terms as common intellectual coinage. Socialists should be especially concerned with his ideas and influence, as these contribute in a profound way to the irrational and anti-scientific tendencies and ideologies within our society. Freudism largely takes the place of the anti-humanist and anti-rational trends in nineteenth century Christianity, which were the main ideological defence against improving the lot of the working class and establishing a socialist society.

There is no doubt that Freud was one of the most voluminous writers on psychological topics which the

history of this subject has had to contend with. Except for that relatively insignificant part of his output which expounds his system for the general reader, most of his writings were intended as original contributions to psychopathology, to the history of civilization, to art criticism, to religious history, or to one of his other numerous interests. Much of what he wrote is rather remote from normal human interests, and both couched in a language and argued in a type of logic foreign to the ordinary man. Any attempt to summarize or analyse this vast material must of necessity be inadequate. In this article certain of Freud's most significant works will be examined in order to illustrate his characteristic modes of thought and the changes which took place in his views and system as time went by. A detailed or systematic examination of all his writings is not envisaged.

## *Freud's Early Opinions*

In his initial contributions to neurology and psychopathology Freud adopted a rigidly scientific approach. His methods were those of the anatomist and physiologist. His aim was to establish laws of mental functioning on the basis of brain physiology. Owing to the influence of the Helmholtzian school in which Freud was trained, it was commonly assumed that physiological processes, including the activity of the nervous system (and consequently, it was argued, psychological processes) were subject to the same laws as those of chemistry and physics. Freud for a time shared this somewhat one-sided view of mental function. It was a protest against the idea, based on religious conceptions, that biological and psychical phenomena in the case of the human organism were, *in principle*, inaccessible to investigation, because of the special nature of man, which was taken to consist in a unique combination of body and soul. The Helmholtzian protest was a necessary one; but it was one-sided because it attempted to reduce the laws operating at the highest reaches of nervous activity, namely the human brain, to those of the lower levels of mechanism and chemistry.

The early development of his thinking is shown clearly from a remarkable manuscript which was published recently (1950). This was no less than a *Project for a Scientific Psychology* which he composed in 1895, but which he made no attempt to recover from his friend, Fliess, to whom he had sent it, abandoning both the manuscript and the scientific monistic basis of his activities simultaneously.<sup>1</sup> The manuscript is remarkable for its attempt to base psychology and psychopathology on the anatomy and physiology of the central nervous

system. It was not, of course, unique: Sechenov had made a similar programmatic attempt as early as 1863; Exner as well as Fleischl-Marxow, two of Freud's colleagues, had written along similar lines only a year or two before Freud's attempt. The *Project* is highly speculative, depending on the deductive method rather than working from empirical observation. Where it is based on actual observations these are from the field of clinical psychopathology: Freud uses this material in order to deduce the nature of the nervous system in general, instead of working from the objectively determined data of neurology and using these as interpretative concepts with which to explain the subjective data derived from his patients. In spite of this fundamental defect of method, the *Project* presents us with a most ingenious model of the mind as a neurological machine. But it was a model which the techniques used by neurologists of that period, and even those in use today, could neither demonstrate to be true nor prove to be false. Unfortunately the details are too technical to discuss here: in any case the *Project* is mainly of biographical interest. It marks the end of a phase in Freud's thinking; after writing this monograph Freud turned away altogether from neurology as a basis for a scientific psychology and instead sought for this foundation in the data of his clinical experience.

In 1897 Freud broke away from the narrow Helmholtz-Brucke conception of mental functioning. Unfortunately, at the same time he abandoned the attempt to interpret mental processes (or better, *behaviour*) in terms of brain functioning, taking instead mental concepts as autonomous categories to be interpreted entirely in their own terms. He abandoned the monistic conception for a frankly dualistic view of the human psyche.

<sup>1</sup>His friendship with Brener also came to an end at the same time; by 1897 he had altered the whole pattern of his scientific work.

## *Psycho-Analysis: Basis and Method*

This turning away by psycho-analysis from the physiology of the central nervous system is perhaps its most characteristic feature, even at the present day. It means that the psycho-analyst works only with thought material for which he is completely dependent on his patient. This is shown very clearly by the fact that Freud derives most of his basic schemata from the patients themselves: psycho-analysis in fact represents an attempt to reduce to a consistent system the delusions and explanations of the neurotic and the insane. Freud's criterion of truth is consistency: objective reference is of secondary value. Thus the system as a whole bears all the marks of a paranoid construction: it attempts to give a universal explanation of all the phenomena of human history and behaviour; it is marked by internal consistency of such a high order that it transgresses the limits of common sense, of human decency—even of logic itself—in the service of a higher logic of its own devising. It is not a scientific body of knowledge so much as a way of life and a total attitude to reality. Its adherents believe that they are specially marked out from the rest of erring humanity by their superior insights and their radical conversion from those human weaknesses which theologically minded people might describe as 'sinfulness'. They believe that their peculiar tenets and methods, if universally accepted and applied to human life, would save humanity from crime, poverty, disease and war, by the method of inner 'conversion', without the necessity for any radical changes in the environment. Like Kepler, Freud discovered, or publicized effectively, certain important empirical facts; but he was unable to explain these except in a semi-magical framework, in terms of psycho-analytic myths.

This is shown in those papers which were republished in 1904 as *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. In this work Freud assimilates the normal person to the neurotic by attempting to show that the same mechanisms or unconscious mental processes operate in the former as in the latter. This demonstration is accomplished by taking certain incidents such as particular slips of the tongue and pen, certain cases of forgetting and complicated, apparently meaningless acts, and showing that in each case these apparently accidental happenings can be plausibly interpreted as having a certain underlying motivation and meaningfulness, of which their authors are unaware.

The underlying assumption—psychic determinism—is one of the guiding principles of all Freud's work. It holds that all mental phenomena have a cause and a meaning which can be elucidated by making use of the principles of association of ideas. Freud admits that this concept of psychic determinism was 'lifted' directly from his paranoid patients. He says in the course of a discussion of determinism:

It is a striking and generally recognized feature of the behaviour of paranoiacs that they attach the greatest significance to the trivial details in the behaviour of others . . . [The paranoiac] sees clearer than one of normal intellectual capacity . . . Many things obtrude themselves in the consciousness of the paranoiac which in normal and neurotic

persons can only be demonstrated as existing in their unconscious by means of psycho-analysis.<sup>2</sup>

The material which Freud presents in this book is singularly unconvincing. This is especially true of the analyses of numbers thought of at random, material which he considers to be most cogent in demonstrating the existence and operation of highly organized thinking processes of which consciousness has no knowledge. These analyses are too long for quotation in full, but the method can be illustrated from the case of 426,718, a number thought of 'at random' by one of Freud's patients. This was interpreted as a criticism of doctors (4267: 'If your catarrh is treated by a doctor it lasts 42 days, if not treated it lasts 6 weeks'); as a death wish directed at the brother and sister of the patient (they came 3rd and 5th in the family, and 3 and 5 are missing from this number); as a desire for a younger brother or sister, etc. etc.

This example, which is probably the best of those quoted by Freud since it requires the least arbitrary manipulation of the material, certainly proves the existence of a complex (to use Jung's term) or of an apperception mass (to go back to Herbart) in the case of this particular patient. A number of ideas, connected with his early family situation, become strongly associated together and have a strong feeling-tone associated with them. Freud has not demonstrated that the number was caused by the existence of this complex, but has merely shown that a particular combination of figures has the power of eliciting this particular complex of ideas. To make the position clear, the following experiment gives an analogue to the case quoted by Freud. If a person is deprived of food for two or three days and is then shown a series of meaningless drawings or ink-blots and asked to say what he sees in them, a large proportion of his answers will be concerned with food in one form or another. If we now take the 'non-food' responses and ask him for his associations to these, we can readily demonstrate that his whole thinking is coloured by the subject of food. I dare say if we presented him with the number 426,718 (or asked him to write down a series of numbers at random, and then asked him for his associations to these numbers) we could demonstrate that these form part of a complex of ideas associated with the subject of food.

Like Freud's analyses, these facts show merely that the mind is organized in a certain fashion on the principle of association; that the recall of certain ideas is easier than that of others, but that ultimately all experience and all organized systems of ideas can be elicited by the method of association. They also show the influence of the condition of the inner organs on the direction of conscious thought. In the case of the normal individual, the examples which Freud quotes indicate that it is possible in the long run to associate any two ideas, provided one is allowed to make arbitrary alterations by negating or breaking off portions of the material.

<sup>2</sup>Freud, 'Psychopathology of Everyday Life' (Pelican ed., 1942) p. 163.

## Freud and Causality

It is Freud's merit that he recognizes the principle of causality in mental events, and thus attempts to bring these under the sway of scientific method. But he perceives causality only in a fantastic form. For Freud, a mere sequence of ideas is *ipso facto* a causal sequence: thoughts are generated internally and have an autonomous character and existence, being derived only from internal motives; their character as a reflection of external reality, their objective social-historical content and context, are ignored. As against such philosophers as Petzoldt, Freud's assertion of determinism in the psychic sphere is of value, but by pushing the source of this determinism into the unconscious, and by erasing the border-line between the normal and the abnormal psyche, Freud obscured the objective, real source of the determinism of our concepts. The principle of causality in our mental processes derives from the fact that we are part of nature and society. Thoughts reflect reality, therefore the recognition of necessity in nature and society presupposes the recognition of

necessity in our thinking processes. By suggesting that there are only differences of quantity between the neurotic and the normal psyche and refusing to recognize qualitative differences Freud eliminates a necessary and legitimate boundary and obscures the source and origin of our ideas in external reality.

This elimination of legitimate boundaries is quite characteristic of the Freudian approach in general; it is what makes his doctrines so pleasing to his disciples. He seems to supply the key which opens to their understanding new realms of integrated phenomena. Had he been content to assert that many of the dividing lines, such as that between a correct evaluation of reality and a distorted or false evaluation, between the normal and the neurotic, were not as absolute as people imagined them to be, it is doubtful if he would have given rise to a school. Neurotic and normal are alike in so far as their thoughts reflect reality: the neurotic reflects reality in a distorted, sometimes even fantastic, fashion. Thus our thinking processes have only a relative autonomy.

## The Theory of Sex

In his *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, published in 1905, Freud eliminates another necessary boundary line and assimilates the child to the sexual pervert. This treatise on sexuality is perhaps one of the two most important books Freud wrote, the other being his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). Until one has mastered these books one cannot claim to have understood the Freudian system. The first contribution on the theory of sex deals with adult sexual aberrations or perversions. In it is established the erroneous character of the theory that sexual inversion (homosexuality) is due to congenital degeneration, and of the view that it is necessarily based on some anatomical peculiarity, the generally accepted view of perversions in 1905. The result of these demonstrations is to suggest an environmental determination of inversion: but Freud goes further in suggesting that the sexual constitution is extremely labile in everyone and that all men are capable of a homosexual object selection—indeed that everyone in fact makes such a selection in the unconscious. Other types of sexual perversion are considered in order to demonstrate the truth of the generalization that everyone, to some degree, great or small, is perverse in his sexual choice and sexual behaviour. Freud concludes this contribution by asserting that there is something congenital at the basis of perversions but it is something which is congenital in all persons, and that the assumed constitution which shows the roots of all perversions will be demonstrable only in the child.

This paves the way for the second contribution, in which it is alleged that the child is a 'polymorphous pervert', that is, an individual manifesting at different stages of development all the different possible kinds of overt, perverse sexual behaviour. 'The new-born child has the germs of sexual feeling', writes Freud. Of course, it must be made clear that Freud does not mean that the child is identical with the adult sexual pervert. The

three characteristics of infantile sexuality which distinguish it from adult perverse behaviour are:

(1) That it is anaclitic, meaning that it leans on other instincts such as feeding, elimination, etc., for its manifestation;

(2) That it is auto-erotic; that is, the child chooses itself as love object and manifests its sexuality by thumb-sucking, retention of faeces or urine, masturbation etc.; and

(3) That it is non-genital; that is, the sexuality of the child does not subserve the functions of reproduction.

The sexuality of the child normally passes through several developmental stages, from birth to about five years of age. Then a period of latency occurs during which all sexual interests and manifestations are withdrawn until the second great flourishing period of puberty. In the latter period all other sources of sexual feeling are subordinated to the genital zone. The third contribution is devoted to adult sexuality.

These *Contributions*, and the later developments of the ideas first adumbrated in them, show more clearly than does any other of Freud's writings the characteristic tendencies of Freudian psychology: the biologism of Freud's total approach, and his suppression of legitimate boundaries. In 1908 he wrote an article *Character and Anal-Erotism* in which he announced his discovery that persons whose pleasure lay in anal sensations (produced by the retention of faeces in infancy) developed in later life three character traits: orderliness, economy amounting to miserliness and obstinacy. It was already implicit in his 1905 articles that character traits in adult life were determined by fixations of the infantile libido at one or other stage of sexuality. When Freud abandoned the Helmholtz-Brucke reduction of psychological processes to physics and chemistry, he

moved only to the next higher level, that of biology. Individual destiny, the liability or non-liability to neurosis, personality traits and behavioural manifestations, all result from the transformations undergone by the sexual instinct. This is one aspect of biologism. The

other lies in his belief, expressed in the *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex*, that moral taboos, and presumably other cultural achievements of humanity, are fixed in the race through organic heredity.

## The Lamarckian Element in Freudism

The belief that psychic constructions of a very complex character are hereditary is a necessary assumption of the Freudian system; it is through a Lamarckian mechanism that he attempts to explain the alleged universality of the Oedipus complex.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the Oedipus complex, other mental constructions which he believed to arise independently of the experience of the individual and to be found universally in the human species (because of Lamarckian heredity) were: sexual fantasies of spying on parental coitus; the fantasy of seduction in childhood by beloved persons (including the parent of the opposite sex); and the belief that the male parent had continually uttered threats of castration against the male child. In his book *Totem and Taboo*, it can easily be demonstrated that Freud was forced to fall back on prehistory in an attempt to save his theory of the Oedipus complex, and to make up what can only be described as a myth to explain the alleged universality of this complex. In 1905 he calls in a fantastic Lamarckism in an attempt to save his theories of the origin of hysteria as the result of passive sexual experiences in childhood. The point is that he had discovered in 1897 that the supposed experiences which accounted for these disorders had never happened, but had been invented by his patients. This was admitted in a paper in 1913, *The Predisposition to Obsessional Neurosis*; in the interim period he retained the sexual aetiology but suggested that the fantasies of

seduction, which the hysteric and the obsessional had manufactured, acted on the neurotic temperament *as though* they were real. In trying to account for these fantasies Freud was obliged to postulate that at one period in the early history of humanity these had actually occurred as historical events, and that they had subsequently been passed down in the form of an organic inheritance to all members of the human species in the form of some kind of racial memory.

There has been a long and inconclusive controversy about Lamarckism. A great variety of experiments and observations has been made to try to establish whether or not characters acquired by the individual in the course of his life-experience are inheritable or not. Most biologists conclude that the case for Lamarck has not been made out, although there remains an element of doubt in relation to certain experiments and observations. What is certain is that one cannot light-heartedly assume that complex psychic experiences such as are postulated in the Freudian theory are 'remembered' in some way. The biological experiments have at least demonstrated the extreme unlikelihood of anything in the nature of a 'racial memory'. Ordinary observation shows that each generation has laboriously to learn what the preceding generation has laboriously been taught: if this were not the case all schools and educational establishments would long ago have become superfluous.

## The Social Environment and the Evolution of Freudism

But the main criticism of Freud's biologism stems from the fact that human personality is the result of centuries of social-historical evolution. We inherit a social environment which operates through conditioning, formal education, social institutions such as the family, the school, the nation, to reproduce in each new generation many of the characteristics of the old. Freud continually ignores social factors of this kind: he assumes that the characteristics of the rather peculiar people he studied are universally distributed, and then he falls back on Lamarckism and certain manufactured psycho-analytic myths to explain this alleged universality. According to the Freudian theory personality and neurosis are never formed in the present, through activity, but are always historical constructions, deriving from some infinitely far-off period in the history of the race, or in the corresponding period in the development of the individual. He falls back on the Oedipus myth, the

castration myth, the various sexual fantasies and 'racial memory' to explain the individual's educational and cultural development and the historical changes of his social environment.

It is remarkable that the present-day disciples of Freud continue to produce similar fantasies as explanations of character. For example, they teach that the determinants of national character are to be found in the nursery: some nations tie their children's limbs in swaddling-clothes; some breast-feed their infants whereas others quickly wean them to other kinds of food; some are strict in their bowel-training, others are lax. Depending on these cultural differences in the nursery we get the English or the French or the German or the Russian national character, with their typical social and political institutions. These infantile speculations are presented as serious contributions to the psychology of national differences, and various recipes are concocted on this nursery level to convert 'disliked' national characteristics into those 'favoured' by the English or American writer discussing them. Although these speculations effectively reduce the Freudian theories of character formation to

<sup>3</sup>The French scientist Jean Lamarck (1744-1829), in his *Philosophie zoologique* (1809) suggested that evolution in animal species took place through the transmission of individual modifications (inheritance of acquired characteristics).

an absurdity, nothing is more certain than that Freud would accept them as legitimate extensions of his views and would welcome them as contributions to knowledge, since they are already implicit in his 1905 *Contributions* and are made explicit in his 1913 paper on obsessional neurosis. No new principle is involved.

From 1902 onward Freud had been surrounded by a group of young medical men, artists, writers and others. Freud himself was not very happy with this group who, according to his later account, spent most of their time squabbling about who had thought of some particularly good idea first. Jung, who made the acquaintance of the group in 1907, described them as 'a medley of artists, decadents and mediocrities'. However, the situation of psycho-analysis changed almost overnight when the important Burgholzli (Swiss) group of psychiatrists, including Bleuler and Jung, declared for Freud. From 1907 onwards the psycho-analytic movement began to spread,

first to America, which Freud and Jung visited in 1909 at the invitation of Stanley Hall, then to various countries in Europe, especially Hungary and Germany. As it spread geographically it also crossed other frontiers, annexing prehistoric anthropology, mythology, art, literature, aesthetics, religion and education as its peculiar province. It became not merely an eccentric movement in psychiatry but also a cultural phenomenon. In spite of various break-away movements, or perhaps because of them—Adler broke away in 1910-11, to be followed by Stekel, Jung, Ferenczi and others at intervals—the psycho-analytic movement spread very rapidly, especially after the first world war, in the mood of mysticism, romanticism and reality-avoidance which followed on this catastrophe. Freud wrote a *History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement* in 1914, to explain the significance of the schismatic trends and to outline his characteristic doctrines.

## *From the Pleasure Principle . . . to Political Pessimism*

In 1920 Freud made an important alteration to his instinct theory. To understand this it is necessary to refer back to his *Two Principles in Mental Functioning* published in 1911. This was an attempt to trace the development and differentiation of consciousness and the growth of human attitudes. According to Freud the unconscious mental processes came first in time, and these were dominated by the 'pleasure-pain principle'. At this period in prehistory, according to Freud, the organism seeks only the gratification of immediate instinct, in a totally unreflecting way. However, this is unsatisfactory since it often leads to the death of the organism, and in other cases the shortest path to the pleasure goal may in fact result in frustration, the negation of pleasure. The 'reality principle' therefore comes into operation: this means that, in addition to its urge for gratification, the organism also takes account of what is happening in the outside world. A new faculty is developed, the faculty of attention, and then in succession arise memory, judgment, action and thought. The 'pleasure principle' and the 'reality principle' developed historically, and arise again in the life-history of each individual, following the same basic sequence. The reality principle does not dethrone the pleasure principle, on the contrary it is a device which postpones or suggests other routes to gratification in the interest of eliminating any painful consequences and of heightening the pleasure arising from gratification.

In this paper, which is one of the fundamental statements of Freud's doctrine, we have a repetition of the false methodology which was discussed in relation to his *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. The method used is to work from clinical observation (conceived in the Freudian mythological framework) and to postulate historical events on the basis of these observations and hypotheses.

It is obvious that the historical sequence of unconscious cerebration, pleasure principle, reality principle, attention, memory, judgment, action, thought, is quite arbitrary, and an unhistorical construction. It is not possible to argue from the neurotic or the normal psyche back to what happened in history. Obviously this is a

historical question. It has two aspects: the development of the race and the development of the individual. The former is the proper subject matter of palaeontology and comparative psychology, and the latter is a question for detailed historico-scientific investigation. Freud's attempts to short-cut these difficult, empirical studies by means of the arbitrary schemes derived from his inner consciousness have as much scientific value as the unhistorical accounts and sequences of the book of Genesis or the mystical propositions of the Hegelian system, to which they bear a very strong resemblance.

An important revision of this view resulted from the experience of war neuroses and of general conditions during the first world war. In 1920 Freud published *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. This is a book in which Freud reveals the fundamental pessimism of psycho-analysis, and argues in a perverse fashion comparable only to Schopenhauer (whose views obviously inspired Freud in an unreflecting way throughout his life and nowhere more obviously than in this book). Freud argues here that instincts are actually an expression of the conservative nature of the organism, being directed to the reinstatement of something earlier. They seem to strive after change and progress, whereas in fact they are merely trying to reach an old goal by ways both old and new. The goal of life is the ancient starting-point—death. We must therefore recognize two groups of instincts which are in continual conflict with each other. There is the group of self-preservative instincts which are perversely called 'death instincts' since in fact, according to Freud's interpretation, they are merely part-instincts which are designed to secure the path to death peculiar to the organism. These instincts are the power instinct and the self-assertive instinct. The other, opposing group of instincts are the sexual instincts, or 'life instincts'. The conflict between these two groups brings about an oscillatory rhythm in the life of the organism: one group pressing forward to reach the final goal of death as quickly as possible, the other group making detours and retracing its steps only to traverse the same stretch once more from a given spot. Eternal Eros (the 'life instinct') and eternal Thanatos (the 'death instinct'),



immortal adversaries, take their place with the other mythological Freudian mind-deities. As Caudwell puts it:

Freud's picture of a struggle between eternal Eros and eternal Thanatos, between the life and death instincts, between the reality principle and the pleasure principle, is only the eternal dualism of reflective barbarians, carried over by Christianity from Zoroastrianism, and now projected by Freud into the human mind. It represents a real struggle but in terms of a Western bourgeois myth.<sup>4</sup>

In the same book Freud denies that there is any impulse towards perfection and in fact disclaims implicitly any belief in progress. In a letter to a Dutch psychiatrist he made clear the basic pessimism about humanity on

which the psycho-analytic view is based. He wrote:

Psycho-analysis has concluded from a study of the dreams and mental slips of normal people, as well as from the symptoms of neurotics, that the primitive, savage and evil impulses of mankind have not vanished in any individual . . . It has furthermore taught us that our intellect is a feeble and dependent thing, a plaything and tool of our impulses and emotions; that all of us are forced to behave cleverly or stupidly according as our attitudes and inner resistances ordain.<sup>5</sup>

In *The Ego and the Id*, written in 1923, he comes back to the same theme, writing the Magna Carta of fatalism and quietism in the words: 'The conduct through life of the Ego is essentially passive; we are lived by unknown and uncontrollable forces.'

## Freud and Bourgeois Society

The denial of the role of reason in history and in the life of the individual is one of the most characteristic assumptions of Freudism, and accounts largely for its significance as a social and cultural movement in contemporary Europe and America. In his latest period, initiated by *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and continuing until his death in 1939, Freud found his doctrines becoming respectable intellectual coinage. The reason for this is not far to seek: it has nothing to do with his clinical studies, which are largely unknown to the intellectuals who have adopted Freudian principles as part of their anti-rational, anti-progressive and anti-scientific *Weltanschauung*. Freud's popularity is to be traced directly to his providing the particular emphases and myths necessary to serve as a deterrent to those who wish to bring about radical changes in the social system.

Pessimism about man, who 'after all' is only an animal; denigration of the drive for change as a 'mere' consequence of frustrated instincts; denial of the human reason as an active force in history; the mythologizing of human history and development and the denial of progress; the wilful blindness to the social and economic facts of life and their effects on human happiness and suffering; the placing of the whole load of human suffering, human history, social organization and human creativity on mysterious self-generated entities in the human psyche—these are the aspects of Freudism emphasized in the West today. They explain why Freud has been built up into a superman, as the greatest psychologist since Aristotle first gave the study a name. Freud has become one of the Sacred Cows of contemporary Western culture.

## Conclusion

The main defects of the Freudian method and theory have now been exemplified from the source material. Much of this has been left unexamined, because of the limitation of space. However, nothing in the remaining corpus of Freudian writings contradicts what has been said: this material shows the same anti-scientific tendencies as that analysed. These tendencies are: the lack of any physiological basis for the psycho-analytic explanations of neuroses and of the structure of the human psyche (this is due to the basic dualism of psycho-analysis, which takes the mental life as an autonomous category); the total neglect of the social basis of neurosis and of human behaviour in favour of a determinism based on self-determined entities in the human psyche; the idealistic mode of thought which disrupts the relation between thought and reality, between theory and practice, and isolates abstract, hypothetical entities, treating them as real causal forces; the failure to recognize levels of functioning, to recognize that quantitative changes eventuate in qualitative changes; lastly, the reduction of the human personality to simple biological categories (this is a special case of ignoring levels of functioning).

If we wished to redress the balance a little in favour of Freudism (as it may be thought that a total condemnation of his work is misplaced), we would single out: the fact that his theories were always couched in terms of dynamic opposition of forces, which is in conformity with the dialectical approach to reality; his emphasis on determinism as the appropriate category in a scientific study of the human personality; the way in which he fearlessly exposed some of the shams of the 'polite society' of his day; and his charming literary style, including the way in which he depreciated his own numerous flights of fancy. Dogmatism was alien to the expression of his theories; he attempted rather to gain the conviction of his readers by ingratiatingly suggesting that he shared some of the reader's misgivings. One cannot do better in concluding an analysis of the psycho-analytic theory than to quote one of these numerous disclaimers: this is Freud's own estimate of his writings: 'One might ask me whether and how far I am convinced of the correctness of the assumptions here developed. My answer would read that I am neither myself convinced nor do I ask that others shall believe them; or, better stated, I don't know how far I believe them.'

<sup>4</sup>Caudwell, C., 'Studies in a Dying Culture' (1948) p. 159.

<sup>5</sup>Jones, E., 'Sigmund Freud, Life and Work' (1957), vol. 2, p. 413.

# Communications

## *Fryer's Inflammatory Tone*

MAY I protest against the inflammatory tone of Peter Fryer's attack on Edward Thompson? Dogmatism and intolerance produce an evil offspring, as Fryer saw for himself in Hungary. Yet here again the true Leninist polemical style is reproduced, in all its bitterness.

Thompson is virtually depicted as an enemy agent poisoning the wells of Marxist purity. If, as Fryer states, 'the slightest concession to idealism . . . has its own fatal and compelling logic' then King Street is right about Hungary and Fryer is wrong. That I refuse to believe, but it is the logic of his own position. 'Under the cloak . . . an all-out assault', 'class duty', 'a disservice to the working-class movement', '[bringing] grist to the mill of [our] opponents'—all our old friends are back. The alleged deviationist is once more 'objectively' a fascist.

Such crude and cruel 'logic'—or anything resembling it—is absolutely unacceptable to the British working class. As a miner and an active trade unionist I belong to, and have the closest contact with, the working class. In so far as they have made a choice at all, they have rejected this 'tool'. And those who sought to thrust it into their hands were found to have a poorer grip of reality than the people they presumed to 'teach'.

Since they discovered that devastating fact, various efforts have been made to determine what went wrong. In my opinion, no one has grappled as successfully with the problem as Thompson has done in his essay on Socialist Humanism. He has gone to the roots, and this has naturally displeased our British Fundamentalists as much as it would Khrushchev.

One idol is down but touch not the other three! And so we are left with 'wicked Stalin and the Soviet bureaucracy' in place of the rich and profound analysis which Thompson has begun.

When Fryer eulogizes the teachings of Lenin as uncritically as he once did those of Stalin he must forgive us if we have our doubts. Certainly we cannot accept that it needs an acquaintance with Lenin's 'Philosophical Notebooks' to understand what he regards as flaws in Stalin's 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism'. That the Notebooks have not yet appeared in English, and only recently in French, is no excuse for the eulogies of Stalin as thinker, in which Fryer previously indulged. David Guest's book (1939) certainly did not ignore the identity of opposites, or the negation of the negation. But Fryer claims (rightly) that Stalin's work—published in the same year—did ignore these dialectical laws. This fact must have been known to Fryer for many years—yet the only criticism he made of Stalin's Collected Works was about the absence of an index. I hope this is not a case of an excuse being preferred to a confession.

It may be true that without the categories of dialectical logic 'we cannot think properly'. But not a few pre-nineteenth century thinkers didn't do so badly; while many present day 'thinkers', armed to the teeth with 'dialectics', completely failed to 'grapple with changing reality'.

One of them—a Scottish comrade of mine—was asked after the Khrushchev speech what conclusions he had drawn. He replied: 'For twenty years I've been thinking dialectically—but from now on I'm just going to think!'

I am far from disparaging the positive achievements of Marx and his followers. And I consider myself to be a communist in a far better sense of the word than the 'Marxists' of King Street. But fresh and bold thinking—unbounded by preconceived 'categories'—is the need of the hour. This, it seems, is what Edward Thompson is doing. He will, no doubt,

answer for himself should he care to follow Fryer along this particular trail. At this stage I merely wish to appeal to a comrade for whom I have a deep respect not to besmirch his fine new record with bigotry and intolerance.

Ballingry (Fife)

Lawrence Daly

## *Necessary and Salutary*

PETER FRYER'S article in the last issue of Labour Review was the finest piece of philosophical writing we have seen in the British Marxist Press for many years—and it was long overdue. It is interesting to note how two ex-Communist Party members have moved in opposite directions over the last year. There are important lessons in this.

I was an eager reader of the first cyclostyled Reasoner for I was myself in the process of breaking from the Communist Party. Yet, in spite of its impressively courageous stand against the King Street bosses, The Reasoner gave me an uneasy feeling that its editors and contributors were reacting to the crisis of Stalinism by moving, by easy stages, over to Fabianism—which, let us not mince words, means ultimately deserting socialism. This Right-wing tendency was simply, I can see now, an acceleration of the Right-wing revisionist trend which the Communist Party leaders had been encouraging, in response to Moscow's 'peaceful coexistence' line, ever since I joined the party in 1944.

Reasoner No 1's revolt against Communist Party stereotyped phrase-mongering (an excellent thing in itself) seemed, even at that stage, to be leading towards the theory that Marxism-Leninism does not really apply to Britain. British 'exceptionalism' (like its American cousin) has always been a theory, whatever its special form, associated with Marxists moving away from revolutionary socialism to Right-wing, parliamentary reformism. The best example, strangely enough, is the 1951 version of the Communist Party programme, 'The British Road to Socialism'. And, as always, political revisionism of Marxism soon becomes associated with the rejection of, or an eclectic modification of, the fundamental principles of dialectical materialism.

Subsequent issues of The Reasoner and the two issues of The New Reasoner have confirmed and strengthened my original impression. The same Left-Fabian, petit-bourgeois 'Liberalism' (especially when the question of the Marxist theory of the State came up) which I felt in Reasoner No 1. was worked out more comprehensively in Thompson's discussion article in New Reasoner No 1. In New Reasoner No 2 (incidentally, why did no Left-wing critic of Thompson's discussion article appear in that issue?) H. Hanson, the impetuous whole-hogger who has, apparently, passed right over from the Communist Party to Fabianism, had Thompson at his mercy when he drew the perfectly logical anti-Marxist conclusions from Thompson's confused questionings and 'novel' formulations.

Peter Fryer's sharp reminder of where Thompson's views are eventually leading was a necessary, salutary and most thorough piece of work and was all the more effective because Fryer chose deliberately to challenge Thompson's views at the fundamental, philosophical level. Thompson has a good deal of prestige amongst ex-Communist Party comrades which quite properly derives from his early public stand, with John Saville, against the disgusting intellectual prostitution of the King Street hacks after the publication of Khrushchev's 'secret' speech. But this only enhances the value of Fryer's contribution. He, of course, had the courage to speak up on Hungary. But he has also spoken up (and this was more difficult) when he felt that friends were in danger of leading the movement astray. When the history of the next few years of socialism in Britain comes to be written, the splendid contribution of

Peter Fryer's article 'Lenin as Philosopher' to the building of a Leninist party in Britain will be much clearer than it can possibly be today.

London

Edwin Heath

[These letters are selected from a number of similar ones expressing different views on Peter Fryer's article. We asked Edward Thompson to reply in Labour Review but he writes to say that he prefers to reply to both Fryer and Hanson in a future issue of the New Reasoner. Meanwhile Labour Review and, no doubt, The New Reasoner, would welcome more letters on this important subject.—Editors].

## The Stalinist 'Turns'

T. MARSHALL and Joseph Redman have suggested a key to the explanation of the great 'turns' of Stalinist policy—the foreign policy of the ruling élite.

I think that this is a useful line of approach. There were, as Redman points out, three major 'turns', that from Leninism to the Right in 1925-27, expressed in the Anglo-Russian Committee and the political support for Chiang Kai-shek, that to the 'Third Period', and that to the 'Popular Front'. The first may have been opportunistic seeking for allies against the major imperialist power of the old world, Britain. The second may have been a rapprochement with German nationalism against the Versailles settlement, its main beneficiaries, French and British imperialism and its main political supporters—social-democracy and the pacifists. The third, pretty clearly, was a turn away from Germany after Hitler's coup in 1933 towards seeking alliance with the 'democracies'. Naturally Stalin could not expect a pact of protection without paying for it: hence the subordination of the Communist Parties to bourgeois-socialist coalitions in France and Spain; hence the Moscow trials to draw a trail of blood between his régime and the old Bolsheviks; hence the savage hounding of his revolutionary critics, the true communists of their day.



But how could such gigantic manoeuvres be carried through? The members of the Communist Parties were not all blind idiots. The situation may have been more complex than Marshall suggests. Certainly the theoretical training of communists was defective; they were insulated from reading Opposition literature and anything by Trotsky. Certainly the apparatus-men of the Communist Parties were even in 1925 being hand-picked for 'loyalty'.

Communist Party members may themselves be the best source of information about the mechanics of putting such turns through. On each occasion there must have been people in the Communist Parties who were feeling frustrated and who seized on the new line in the hope that it would solve difficulties for them. This was especially true in 1934-36, when the 'Popular Front' line made it far easier to approach the people and recruit than during the sectarian 'Third Period', when all non-communists were condemned as either fascists or social-fascists.

At certain times it is possible to build up large movements based simply on demagogic phraseology; the social-democrats and Hitler have both done it. Such movements do not last. Perhaps it is the wrong basis on which the big movements of 1935-39 were built which explains the rapid decline, and the panic of the intellectuals when the Stalin-Hitler pact burst over their heads. Their previous indoctrination had not prepared them for what was essentially the old policy turned inside out!



Here and there in the documents of every period of Stalinism we find 'saving formulas'. Even in the wildest ravings of the 'Third Period' we find phrases about 'unity'. Even at the height of the super-patriotism of 1941-45 we find phrases about the class war. Consequently, in each period, the possibilities of a future 'new line' were latent. Not only Stalin but his henchmen too could never be wrong; the appropriate face-saving quotation could always be found. In the language of Leninism this

kind of document is called 'eclectic'.

No wonder this broke the hearts of the Communist Party 'critics'; it is to be wondered that any of them evolved politically. Why are things different now? Primarily, I think, because the world is different. The colonial revolution, the advance of the Soviet working class and the frustrations of the working class in the advanced countries: these all shake and upset whatever bargains the Kremlin rulers may be able to make for 'peaceful co-existence'. The Communist Party members themselves are no longer mentally imprisoned by the choice between imperialism and stone-bottomed Stalinism.

Perhaps Redman and Marshall can put some more flesh on the bones of their analysis of the 'turns' of Stalinist policy.

Birmingham

R. Sherwood

## First Bitter Fruit

JOSEPH REDMAN'S excellent article 'British Communist History' [Labour Review, vol. 2, no. 4, pp. 106-10, July-August 1957] is a detailed and factual analysis of 'what went wrong' and should help many seeking to avoid the errors of the past. Like Redman, I have certain doubts about the Communist Party History Commission and have been doing a little 'digging on my own'. I would like to record a few facts to supplement Redman's account.

The build-up given to the 'pseudo-Lefts' on the General Council of the Trades Union Congress by both the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Great Britain went to even further extremes than Redman states. For instance, writing of A. B. Swales (a member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union Executive and president of the TUC General Council) the Sunday Worker could say (May 24, 1925):

'It will be seen that he has held every high office in the trade union movement. And yet—and this is his strongest point as a Labour leader—he is still an ardent rank and filer and views every big problem from the angle of the worker at the bench.

'Many superficial people when they are dressed "in a little brief authority" become very "uppish" and begin to ape the mannerisms of "Society"'. Not so our friend Swales. He is at one with the workers, body and soul, in their everyday struggle. And he has nothing but contempt for those leaders who, when they leave the workshop, forget the masses and their struggle. . . .

'At the Trades Union Congress to be held in September at Scarborough he will deliver the chairman's speech. . . . It will be something stated in plain blunt language, and it will give the whole movement a bold and clever lead. It will personify the simple and rugged strength of a far-seeing and courageous leader.

'Swales is not one of your "standoffish" kind. At a social gathering he is the soul of merriment and can sing a good song, in a splendid resonant voice, with the best of them.'



All this under the heading 'Leaders of the Left'! Similar uncritical descriptions of Purcell, Hicks, Tillett and Co. can be found in many CPGB and Comintern publications of that period. The real tragedy was that while the CPGB was building up these 'pseudo-Lefts' and lulling the workers into believing that Swales and Co. could 'give a bold and clever lead', the ruling class was taking advantage of the nine month respite afforded by Red Friday, 1925, and preparing for the coming showdown. The OMS (Organization for the Maintenance of Supplies) was created, the country divided into ten areas each under a Civil Commissioner, special constables enrolled, mobile squads organized, blacklegs trained to drive locomotives in the railway sidings of large factories, potential scabs instructed in the operation of wireless and telephones, etc. Swales, Purcell and Co. meanwhile prepared . . . speeches!

How did this situation arise? Why was the CPGB (and behind it the Stalin-Tomsky faction of the CPSU) 'building up' the 'pseudo-Lefts' in this critical period? And why were

the TUC leaders at this particular time benevolently disposed towards the Russian unions?

The TUC leaders needed the association with the Russians as a shield from the attacks of the genuine militants and as a smoke-screen for their fundamentally reformist policies in industrial matters. The criticism from the genuine Left had become pretty sharp after the collapse of the Triple Alliance (miners, railwaymen and transport workers) and the betrayal of Black Friday, 1921. What easier than to assume a little of the reflected glory of the first Workers' State by indulging in verbal 'leftism'... confined of course to international affairs? This took on some curious aspects, not mentioned in Redman's article. For instance the leaders of the TUC saw it to their advantage to favour a 'reconciliation' with the Soviet trade unions. They began to advocate the admission of the Russians to the Amsterdam Trade Union International. When this policy was rejected at the Vienna congress of the International (in May 1924)—largely as a result of objections from the Right-wing German social-democrats—the leaders of the TUC approached the Russians directly and later sent a delegation to Moscow. The Labour bureaucrats must have seen eye to eye with the budding Soviet bureaucracy. The delegation came back with a favourable report—and probably with the (correct) notion that the Russian leaders were not the great threat to the Labour hierarchy they were made out to be. The net result was the creation of the Anglo-Russian Committee for Trade Union Unity, whose subsequent role Redman has so well illustrated.

The Stalinist faction in the USSR, on the other hand, were beginning to discover the advantage (to themselves) of the theory of Socialism in One Country. They used their considerable influence in the Comintern to convert the Communist Parties in the West from revolutionary organizations to border patrols destined to 'neutralize' (not to overthrow) their respective ruling classes, and to 'protect' the Workers' State (and of course the privileges which the bureaucracy was beginning to extract from it!). They saw the reformist Labour bureaucrats in the West as useful allies in this task and proceeded to daub them with 'revolutionary' red paint, assigning to them objectives which by their very nature they obviously could never

have fulfilled. Confusion and demoralization were sown in the minds of many genuine communist militants.

The 'red' paint was scarcely dry before the Labour leaders revealed their true colours during the General Strike. Redman does not mention that the CPGB had for weeks been advocating 'All power to the General Council!' Yet on the ninth day of the strike this very Council was to rush to Whitehall to discuss with the Baldwin Government how best to call a halt to the struggle. Redman records how the Stalin faction perpetuated the myth of the Anglo-Russian Committee, even after this betrayal, but he does not, perhaps, depict the full depths to which they sank in the process.

For the Stalin faction to break with the Committee would have been tantamount to admitting that the criticism of the Left Opposition, that they had consorted with the worst kind of opportunists, was valid. The defeat of the General Strike was consistently 'played down' in the communist Press. No serious attempts were made to analyze its causes. This refusal to examine the reasons for the defeat eventually drove many militants out of the party. As Redman shows, the Soviet leaders refused to bury the corpse of the Anglo-Russian Committee, despite the fact that this body was now emitting some pretty foul smells. Not only did the British members of the Committee, as the true social-patriots they always had been, refuse to denounce the bombing of Nanking by 'their own' government, but they showed their open contempt for the Russians by refusing even to protest at the Arcos raid. They moreover dropped the struggle for the admission of the Russians to the Amsterdam International.

The whole sorry affair did not help either the Russian or the British workers. Nor, ironically enough, did it really benefit the Stalinist bureaucracy. The only winners in the business were the British trade union bureaucrats and the British ruling class. Both were helped through a particularly stormy period. This was the first bitter fruit to grow on the tree of 'Socialism in One Country'.

Swansea

George Atkins

## Book Reviews

### *British Labour History*

**British Labour and the Russian Revolution, 1917-24**, by S. R. Graubard (Oxford University Press, 30s.)

**The First Labour Government 1924**, by Richard W. Lyman (Chapman and Hall, 25s.)

'FOR the Communist Party,' writes Dr Graubard in his bibliographical note, 'there is no history in any way comparable to Cole's "History of the Labour Party Since 1914". This is a serious lack.' The author has combed, in an endeavour to do-it-himself, *The Call*, *The Communist*, *Workers' Weekly* and *Workers' Dreadnought* and supplemented with some interesting details the account of Labour-communist relations in this period already available in Carl Brand's book, *British Labour's Rise to Power* (1941). It is good to have recalled the lively articles which Francis (now Sir Francis) Meynell contributed to *The Communist* under the pseudonym of 'John Ball', exposing the role played by Ernest Bevin in the 'Black Friday' period. (Bevin must have regretted his triumphant revelation of 'John Ball's' identity—yes, his adversary replied, he was indeed Meynell, whom Bevin had had dismissed from the *Herald*: 'Did I not sub-edit in the *Daily Herald* the long reports of [Bevin's] speeches for which he paid at advertisement rates?')

Nevertheless, in spite of many informative paragraphs, Dr Graubard has not written a very satisfactory book. In describing the attitude of the British Labour movement towards

the Russian Revolution and, against this background, the relations between the Labour Party and the Communist Party, he has remained too much on the high-level surface of events, so that the role of rank-and-file struggles and changes of mood among the mass of the workers does not stand out sufficiently. For this reason the real causes of happenings 'at the top' are sometimes obscured. Thus, the 'Jolly George' incident, though mentioned briefly, appears to drop out of the blue (p. 92). The importance of this rank-and-file action in impelling Bevin to move against the Government is acknowledged, but we are not shown how it was prepared and by whom. Dr Graubard might have consulted with advantage Harry Pollitt's pamphlet 'A War Was Stopped'. Again, though the Minority Movement receives mention, its remarkable 'Stop the Retreat!' campaign, which revived a depressed working-class movement in 1923 and made possible Labour's success at the polls, does not.



The book's general thesis is that the Labour Party leaders, though very properly hostile to the British Communist Party, were regrettably friendly towards Soviet Russia in these years. Some readers will feel that Dr Graubard is unfair to the communists in other ways besides playing down their very real positive contribution to the workers' struggles. In his treatment of the *Workers' Weekly* articles in 1923 on the subject of Clynes's income (pp. 252-4) he conveys the impression that here was just a mean stunt thought up by the communists, with which nobody outside their ranks could possibly sympathize. Yet we know that a well-placed observer very far from the communist standpoint felt much the same

in this period on the question of the Labour bureaucrats' way of life. Beatrice Webb, even if she did see fit to make her sentiments public, wrote in her diary at the time of the Labour Party Conference of 1921:

'The leading trade union officials and Labour MPs were there with their wives, living at expensive hotels and enjoying the brilliant sunshine at a fashionable seaside [resort], without any consciousness of the disparity between their lives and the circumstances of their members . . . I think the standard ought to be a simpler one.'<sup>1</sup>

It is strange that Dr Graubard apparently did not use Beatrice Webb's diaries, for they contain much that is relevant to the topics he deals with. Dr Graubard sticks up for Bevin and Thomas over the 'Black Friday' sell-out. It would have been interesting to read his comments on the contemporary impression of the Fabian First Lady:

'The leaders clearly funked it . . . There is . . . something strangely ludicrous in these unauthorized friendly talks with the capitalist Government and the capitalist MPs after all the talk about "the enemy" . . . As for Thomas, he feels himself at home in Downing Street, and among noxious competitors in a trade union conference.'<sup>2</sup>

On Dr Graubard's basic theme of Labour-Soviet relations Beatrice Webb has some fascinating pages on the personal contacts involved: it was she who, *inter alia*, introduced Messrs. R. P. Arnot and R. P. Dutt to the late L. B. Kamenev . . .

A new source from which Dr Graubard has drawn some useful information is the unpublished Reports and Minutes of the Labour Party's Advisory Committee on International Questions. It appears that when this Committee discussed, in July 1918, whether or not to recommend support for anti-Bolshevik intervention in Russia, among those voting in favour of the interventionist policy was Sidney Webb, the later co-author of 'Soviet Communism: A New Civilization'.

Dr Lyman, another American scholar, has written a competent, straightforward narrative of the Labour Government of 1924, based upon the memoirs of public figures, newspaper and periodical files, Hansard and interviews with some of the surviving actors in the political struggles of that time. (Conspicuously absent among his list of interviewees is J. R. Campbell, central figure in the 'Campbell Case', which was the immediate occasion of the Labour Government's fall. One wonders whether the author—who is assistant professor at Washington University—tried to meet the editor of the London Daily Worker. Perhaps fear of the witch-hunt may have got in the way of scholarship here?)

The book concentrates mainly on the details of the elections of 1923 and 1924, and on events in Parliament, and brings out particularly well the final collapse in that period of the Liberal Party as one of the two major partners in the British political system. Incidentally, it throws revealing light on the growing, though concealed, role in the inner circles of the Labour Party leadership of ex-Liberal and other ruling class individuals such as Lord Haldane. The Zinoviev letter episode is well reviewed, showing how Foreign Office heads, notably Sir Eyre Crowe, Permanent Under-Secretary, and J. D. Gregory, in charge of the department dealing with Soviet affairs, acted in such a way (exploiting MacDonald's known anti-communism) as to play into the hands of the Tories. Dr Lyman records that E. D. Morel expressed 'regret that the Labour Government had not revolutionized the Foreign Office'.

This book reminds one again of the need for a life of John Wheatley, whose Housing Act was perhaps the most positive achievement of the 1924 Labour Government, and who remained down to his death in 1930 an honest and determined leader of the Left in the Labour Party. An analysis of his successes and failures, strength and weakness, could be a valuable contribution to the historical literature of the British working-class movement.

I hope to discuss Julian Symons's important book 'The General Strike' recently published by the Cresset Press, in the next number of Labour Review, in connexion with a study of the first six years of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

J. REDMAN

<sup>1</sup>Beatrice Webb's Diaries, 1912-24, p. 211.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. pp. 207-208.

## The Eclectic Professor

Science in History, by J. D. Bernal (Watts. Second Edition. 42s.)

THIS big book by Professor Bernal has been aptly described by the News Chronicle reviewer: 'His facts are encyclopedic, making this book an indispensable reference source'—though 'indispensable' is a strong word. It is also a monumental demonstration that, for a Marxist historian, an encyclopedic memory for scientific and historical facts is not enough. If this review by a Marxist journal of his would-be Marxist history of science saddens the Professor, he should feel amply compensated by the fulsome praise his book has received from the bourgeois Press.

Professor Bernal is a Stalin Peace Prize winner, a noted physicist who has made important contributions to the field of X-ray spectrography and has the distinction of being described by a notable member of the ruling class as 'the wisest man on earth'. In spite of this he remains to this day King Street's champion whitewasher of bureaucratic terror in east Europe and Russia. Recently he wrote letters to the Press reporting the popular and professional support for Kadar which, he alleged, he observed on a recent 'friendly visit' to Hungary. However it is perhaps significant that he did not bring his 'friend' Professor Lukacs and his family back to Britain for a short holiday and a Press conference.

But 'Science in History' must be judged on its merits as a scientific study, not on the sillier antics of its author in political affairs. The book purports to be a Marxist history of science and if it had lived up to this purpose it would certainly have satisfied a long-felt need. Yet, though it covers a gigantic field of knowledge and records a thousand and one important facts of the historical achievements of science, it is, as a whole, a pretty poor book, superficial, disjointed and inconsistent—an enormous string of apparently related facts and half-truths about science and society which passes for Marxist history in some quarters, but which serves only to prejudice Marxism in the eyes of serious thinkers. Marxism does not consist, as Bernal seems to imagine, of recording correlations between the problems with which scientists of different societies were preoccupied and those societies' current economic and technical interests. One wonders if Bernal has ever heard of the significance of class struggle in history. Many bourgeois historians of science recognize and record these correlations and many of them have made a better job of it than Bernal.

It would have been easy to exemplify Bernal's eclectic addiction (that is just the right word) to Marxism from a dozen different chapters, but it will perhaps be most instructive to consider his 'corrections', in the second edition, of his earlier estimates of Stalin's contributions to social science. How a leading communist scientist reacted to the crisis of the Communist Parties is of great importance for young scientists who are looking for a comprehensive, scientific view of man, society and history. Bernal here had an opportunity to vindicate the Marxist method—but how lamentable is his failure.

The first edition of 'Science in History', published in 1954, described Stalin's achievements with all the usual superlatives employed in the communist Press of the early nineteen-fifties. Readers will remember how Bernal was, I think improperly, removed from the Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science for describing Stalin over Moscow radio as 'the great coryphaeus of science'. In the preface to this second edition, Bernal writes: 'On account of the great changes that have occurred since the death of Stalin, I have largely rewritten the section dealing with the Soviet Union and neighbouring countries, correcting, as far as information is available, errors in the first edition.' (My emphasis—J.D.) Now Bernal is a practised scientist and is supposed to know something about the collection and verification of information. We might therefore have expected Bernal, at the very least, to re-read the history of the Bolshevik Party, especially that period during which Stalin was consolidating his power, to study available documents of the controversies around Stalin's policies and to re-read the views of such eminent historians as Deutscher and E. H. Carr, before publishing a

'reassessment'. There is not a shred of evidence that Bernal has read anything fresh except the official Moscow 'explanation'. For Bernal, as ever, the 'available information' in political matters appears to consist of Communist Party propaganda 'releases'. For this rewriting of Bernal on Stalin consists of an almost word-for-word copy of the Pravda 'explanations'.

Reading it, one gets the uneasy feeling that he might at least have respected his readers and have rewritten and restyled Khrushchev so that we could believe that his views are products of his own brain. But no—it is all there: 'The crimes and abuses of Stalin's personal rule over the last twenty [!] years of his life.' 'Stalin's life and deeds—his achievements no less than his crimes.' Lenin had 'admitted that mistakes would be made'. 'Stalin must bear the main responsibility' for these 'mistakes'. (That lets out old B. and K.) We are then treated to the peculiar theme that the 'first socialist State' was created and governed dictatorially by a man 'totally alien to the humane ideals of socialism'. 'The conformity he demanded had a stifling effect on thought and checked the development of the arts and humanities.' (But apparently not science, though Bernal does 'now regret' defending the sacking of anti-Lysenko professors.) Stalin had 'great abilities or his long rule would have brought the USSR to ruin', but he 'lacked the courage, the humility and the love of the people to trust people' and so his 'manner, which got more and more extravagant in his old age' was 'imitated by all persons in authority leading to . . . [wait for it!] the cult of the individual.' However, we are pleased to learn that 'since the XXth Congress, steps have been taken to preclude any return to the conditions of Stalin's personal rule'.

This pitiable regurgitation of the emptiness of the Khrushchev 'explanations', which everyone with the merest acquaintance with Marxism can see are not explanations but the personal abuse of a 'devil cult', is offered, in a work called 'Science in History', as Bernal's Marxist reassessment of Stalin. The merest child in Marxism would have at least asked a number of the standard questions. What social forces created Stalin and placed him in power? What were the interests and aims of the privileged social strata (those 'in authority' who 'imitated him') which Stalin served? Who will remove that social grouping which usurped the power of the working class and its soviets? To put forward the most elementary Marxist questions, to consider for a second the Marxist view of the role of the individual in history, blows to smithereens Bernal's whole estimation of the Soviet Union and ridicules his notion of Khrushchev's 'revolutionary' reforms. Of course this completely wrong estimation of modern Russia precludes the possibility of his being able to explain the reason for Russia's economic progress and the success of Russian science.

Bernal touches once on the politics of the matter. 'It seems that the essential difference [the date is 1928] lay between Trotsky's thesis of a world revolution and Stalin's aim to establish socialism in one country. Stalin carried the majority of the party with him . . . fortunately so.' This triviality, which any Communist Party member who has ever read a book in the last twelve months knows is an excellent example of Stalin's fake history, is offered as a balanced and informative contribution on the USSR in a long chapter called 'The Social Sciences after the First World War'.

However, if Bernal's views on Russia today had been the product of a single 'blind spot' originating from too much Moscow junketing, we might be able to recommend the rest of this book. Unfortunately, the truth is that this section is all of a piece with the rest. Bernal knows much about physical science, a little about the bourgeois social sciences and scarcely anything about Marxism. A Marxist history of science still remains to be written.

JOHN DANIELS

## *Sanity on the H-Bomb*

*Mutiny Against Madness*, by Konni Zilliacus, MP.  
(Housmans, 1s.)

THE most significant debate at the Brighton Labour Party conference was that in which Mr Aneurin Bevan deserted his former Left-wing associates and lined up with the Right wing of the traditional executive on the key question of

British manufacture of H-bombs. The Gloucester by-election has not only taught the Tories a lesson but has also warned certain off-centre gentlemen of the Labour Party that a Labour government is not far off and that it is time to stop flirting with the Left to blackmail the Right if they are to make sure of a seat on the next Labour government's front bench. Mr Bevan, for instance, was courageous enough to face the boos of his erstwhile supporters among the rank-and-file constituency delegates, but not to face the Tory-minded Foreign Office diplomats as Labour's Foreign Secretary mandated to junk policies fashioned by permanent officialdom.

Thank heaven, therefore, for the few Labour MPs who are more devoted to principles than to position. This new pamphlet, supported by thirty-three Labour MPs, has been prepared by Zilliacus as ammunition for a campaign to persuade the Labour Party and public opinion to oppose the Government's policy of manufacturing H-bombs and of reliance on so-called 'nuclear deterrents'. It is to be hoped that this campaign, which was launched before Brighton, will now be pressed forward with new urgency.

The case which Zilliacus relentlessly piles up is that, on the Government's own showing, Britain, with or without H-bombs of her own, cannot defend herself in this nuclear age. Reliance on nuclear 'deterrents' is therefore simply a misleading way of restating the Roman general's ludicrous paradox: 'If you want peace, prepare for war.' This policy has always failed to bring peace and always will. Zilliacus believes that the 'West' and the Soviet Union both want peace but that they are driven to aggressive acts and war preparations by the psychosis of fear. Labour should break this psychosis of fear by unilateral renunciation of the manufacture of H-bombs when they come to office.

Zilliacus, however, does not expose the basic class origins of this social psychosis and so fails to point the way towards ending it. I should add that Zilliacus is going to write in the next issue of *Labour Review* on 'Socialism and War', and we can expect him to go beyond the excellent propaganda of this pamphlet to a deeper study of the forces that are driving the world towards suicidal war. But you must also read 'Mutiny Against Madness'.

J.D.

## *Mr Gluckstein's China*

*Mao's China*, by Ygael Gluckstein (Allen and Unwin, 40s.)

BY NOW we all know what to expect from a study by Mr Gluckstein of a country ruled by a Communist Party—a multiplicity of quotations from the home and foreign Press and a detailed analysis of statistical reports, all strung together with remorseless efficiency to establish a conclusion he knew before his studies were even begun. So let us begin, like Mr. Gluckstein (and the White Queen) with the conclusions first. Mao's China is a State capitalist country ruled by a bureaucracy with all the main characteristics of a class and being driven forward, inevitably and inexorably, by the same laws of capital accumulation as operate in modern monopoly capitalist countries, suitably modified by the fact that the class of bureaucratic State capitalists fully but collectively owns and controls the means of production. The dust-jacket blurb (often the product of the author) sums up the book admirably:

'It analyses the historical role of the Maoist bureaucracy in its mighty efforts to break through the vicious circle of poverty, inefficiency and backwardness, to wake the sleeping giant of the Chinese nation, modernize the country and turn it into a great industrial and military power. Various facets of Mao's regime are brought to bear on the central theme: land reform, forced "collectivization", the subordination of consumption to accumulation, bureaucratic management of industry, the increasing limitations of workers' legal rights, the spreading of forced labour . . . the differentiation of society into privileged and pariahs and the erection of totalitarian police dictatorship.'

In the social sciences it is possible to formulate many different hypotheses, each dealing separately and specially with

one particular constellation of selected facts—and it is always impossible to set up an artificially controlled experiment for their verification. A book, especially a big book like 'Mao's China', which is elaborating a hypothesis, will normally analyse and select for inclusion that particular array of facts which most suitably fits in with that hypothesis—even though, especially in association with other facts deliberately left out, this array of facts may also be well used to illustrate some totally different hypothesis.

Does this mean that it is impossible to verify any hypothesis in political science? Of course not. Put in the rather grandiose terminology favoured by some Marxists: 'history decides'.

Mr Gluckstein's massive and intensely interesting and valuable tome suffers from these difficulties. He mercilessly collects evidence to show the growth of bureaucracy, the utilization by the Communist Party leadership of the peasants' revolt for their own purposes, the strangulation of the democratic rights of the workers in industry. But search this book as you will, you will not find any evidence that the workers, peasants and intellectuals can resist, will resist, must resist and **are resisting** the 'inexorable' laws of development of bureaucratic State capitalism. This is no accident. As one reads 'Mao's China' one feels oneself slowly being gripped by a sense of pessimism, by rabbit-like, paralytic fascination as the bureaucratic snake slowly moves in for the kill.



But what of Mao's China since Mr Gluckstein put down his pen and handed over his MS to the publisher? Is the advance of 'bureaucratic capitalism' so inexorable as it once seemed? Why does Mao have to make lying but concessionary speeches and even give formal permission for strikes? The Khrushchev speech? Molotov's disgrace? Mao's weakness for Chinese compromise? No—not these, but the surge forward of the workers of every land, from China to Britain, from Moscow to Rio de Janeiro, from Jakarta to New York—a surge forward to revolutionary consciousness. And this produces, as temporary side-growths, Mr Cousins in Britain and a Mao speech on 'contradictions' in China.

Mr Gluckstein's book is therefore a most useful quarry of information on China just yesterday. I hope it will find many readers. I hope (and assume) that all his statistical tables are accurate and that his quotations are literally translated. However, alternative theories about the laws of development of modern China, e.g., that China is a workers' State with bureaucratic distortions, cover Mr Gluckstein's facts, plus many others of a more recent date, much more adequately than does this theory of State capitalism. Therefore, reluctantly, I have to tell Mr Gluckstein that as a piece of social science and social prognostication, Mao's China is, along with the theory of State capitalism, a failure.

JOHN WHITAKER

## *Studies of Capital*

*Capital*, vol. 2, by Karl Marx (Lawrence and Wishart, 7s. 6d.)

*The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, by V. I. Lenin (Lawrence and Wishart, 9s. 6d.)

THE Foreign Languages Publishing House in Moscow has now produced a new edition of volume two of *Capital*. The new translation, the 'Publishers' Note' states, 'follows the German 1893 edition, carefully checked with the manuscript edited by Engels. . . . Extensive use has been made of the second volume of *Capital*, published by Charles H. Kerr in Chicago in 1919'. The first and second prefaces written by Engels for the German editions of this volume are also included, and it is pleasing to note what is something of an innovation for Russian publishers—three adequate indexes, bibliographical, name and subject.

The translation, while not exactly 'free', maintains a high standard of readability. A few quick checks of several passages whose translation is well known to be tricky shows that the translators have worked with insight and accuracy. Two minor criticisms: why is it that English type faces used in the USSR are always so irregular and messy and what on earth is that smelly oil which Russian bookbinders seem to be so fond of?

There is no need to commend this masterpiece of Marx's to readers of *Labour Review* except to remind some that, if they finish their studies of *Capital* at the end of volume one, as so many British Marxists seem to do, their grasp of the Marxist explanation of the developmental forces at work in capitalism will be one-sided and incomplete. We await the new edition of volume three with interest and impatience.

\* \* \*

Lenin's first major work on political economy, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia: the Process of Formation of a Home Market for Large Scale Industry*, is now published in English for the first time. It first appeared in Russian in 1899 after more than three years' continuous work by its author. Lenin began to write the book in jail, where he had been sent for participating in the work of 'The League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class'. This work is a thorough analysis and refutation of the economic theories of an important trend in the early history of the Russian socialist movement, the Narodniki or Populists. These 'Russophile' socialists argued that because of the late development of capitalism in Russia, compared to the countries of Western Europe, it would be possible for Russia to skip a whole stage of social development and, by utilizing certain communal forms of social organization in feudal Russia which still remained (though in various stages of disruption) in the villages, to pass directly from feudalism to a specifically Russian form of socialism. Politically, this meant that the peasants (and the intellectuals who were to think for them) were destined to become the leading revolutionary class in Russia, a proposition which the Marxists rejected. They maintained that in the era of international capitalism and the growth of the world market the only truly consistent revolutionary class was the proletariat.

Lenin's work is devoted to defending this Marxist view of the development of the Russian revolution by showing that, under the very noses of the Narodniki themselves, capitalism was rapidly coming to dominate the whole of Russian economy. This demonstration was the theoretical foundation for the creation of the Bolshevik Party and the education of its leading forces and was, as a theory, soon to be fully verified by the 1905 and 1917 revolutions.

The care with which Lenin collected his factual data, cross-checked them, marshalled his arguments and refuted, point by point, the propositions of his political opponents, is in striking contrast to the methods of those latter-day would-be Marxists who imagine that a slogan or two and a few well-chosen polysyllabic political swear-words are sufficient answer to a political opponent.

L.N.

## *Deakin as Guinea-Pig*

*Trade Union Leadership* Based on a Study of Arthur Deakin, by V. L. Allen (Longmans, 30s.)

WHY was this book ever written? Primarily because inflation and full employment have greatly strengthened the bargaining power of trade unionists. The accumulation of capital is thereby checked, and a capitalist crisis, with revolutionary implications, threatens the declining economy of Britain.

Allen asks: what is the power which a trade union leader holds in society, and why does he hold it? But why ask the question? The only serious reason is left implicit. It is the need for the trade union leadership to justify its existence and policies. Allen fails in this task.

He has made Deakin his guinea-pig, and quickly shows how he was obsessed by the claim for complaisant obedience from his hundreds of thousands of members, by the claim for 'acceptance of majority decisions' rather than unofficial action against unpopular agreements.

Plod through the superficial personal psychology and you come upon two useful observations. First, ever since the eighteen seventies, trade union leaders have tended to model their aspirations upon those of the petty bourgeoisie. Secondly, industrial development over the same years has fostered huge national amalgamated unions.

Allen robs these correct observations of their full meaning. Chasing honours is not an automatic or necessary process. The ruling class has consciously and deliberately set out to

corrupt the workers in a thousand ways and to exploit their weaknesses. Allen does not hint that this process could be resisted.

That militants will 'give trouble' is for Allen a deplorable but secondary aspect of negotiation. For the employers have judged it necessary to recognize the unions and to make bargains covering millions of workers in numerous sections; and these bargains do not satisfy those sections which are in the best position to fight and have militant traditions, such as the dockers and London busmen. Therefore, says Allen, the leadership has to use the machine to discipline them.

This is simply to echo the official point of view. In fact militants can perfectly well understand the need for self-discipline. Why do they reject the official explanations? Allen does not go beyond such trivialities as the London busmen being 'excitable'! He does not look at the officials as real people, with interests and aspirations of their own, cultivated within the apparatus. What we have from him is 'sociology', about their favourite subjects of conversation—jobs on public boards, expense accounts, cars, decorations and post-retirement sinecures! These people cannot convince the militants, because they cannot put all the cards on the table. The dockers can perfectly well see that they make rotten bargains, and they have a pretty good idea why they make them. Therefore the ranks reject the explanations; hence apathy on the one hand and unofficial action on the other.

Yet from Allen's adulatory pages there appears darkly the outline of the trade union bureaucracy, inspired by a dual purpose: first to maintain social peace and enjoy the monopoly of the fruits of being the 'go-between' between workers and employers, and secondly to preserve its own base in a subservient, dues-paying mass membership. Allen probably did not see how significant it was for him to have put his dreary and inconclusive discussion about leaders accepting honours right after his pages about Deakin's loyalty obsession. He is right; the two subjects belong closely together.

But he has left out what the ranks would like to have explained. What really goes on? Never a word about the wages council structure which relieves officials from the task of winning recruits and helps to secure their monopoly of negotiating rights. Never a word about the same vested interests created by the Mond-Turner agreement and the Bridlington agreement, which imprison the membership by denying recognition to new unions and set on foot a real conspiracy between officials and employers against the membership. Never a word about how trade union 'democracy' is manipulated, how paper majorities are obtained, who counts the votes, who uses the machine to isolate section from section, to confuse and discourage and even victimize the militants. Never a hint that the dockers or the busmen might be right, and that consistent campaigning and class struggle could get better bargains here and now, though it would shorten the Honours List.

Allen's discussion of Deakin's 'trade union ethics' underlying his 'empiricism' gives no hint that his positive intervention to check wage claims was not at all a new and significant use of power'. The history of the German trade union bureaucracy under the Weimar republic is full of precedents, disguised then not as 'empiricism' but in Kautskyan phraseology. The name for it is the same—class collaboration. Consequently he does not look forward to the future; after all, the bureaucracy wants to hold back history, to preserve against further development the existing class relations in society. Already 'wage-restraint' has been thrown overboard, and the 'new shining light' of the Trades Union Congress, warned by the dockers' breakaway, has 'exerted pressure' through the provincial busmen. But the new 'Left' phraseology from Transport House did not help the London marketmen, and in any case will be taken more seriously by the ranks, and this will further shake the 'official' stratum of the privileged which lifts up the Deakins as its arbiters and spokesmen.

Allen's explanations fail. On the one hand the employers are preparing for a struggle, and this shows that they are not satisfied with the 'restraint' imposed by the trade union officials. On the other hand the ranks are preparing for battle. Between the upper and the nether millstone the big and little Deakins will be ground to pieces and our children will wonder why Allen took them seriously enough to write a book about them.

J.A.

## Fabian Elegance

Control of Inflation, by Geoffrey Maynard (Fabian Research Series, no. 187, 2s.)

THE CAPITALIST upsurge of the post-war years has been accompanied—to varying extents in different countries and periods—by continuous inflationary pressures. The relationship has not been fortuitous and has itself expressed the conditional and exceptional nature of the expansion. The great problem which faces the reformist socialists is whether continued expansion can be assured without the distortions and dangers inherent in a prolonged inflationary process which may either turn into its opposite or get completely out of control, with equally dangerous effects. To find a solution for the guidance of Labour governments is Mr. Maynard's task. The result is an elegant and concise piece of work worthy of the imprint it bears.

According to Mr. Maynard the answer to the question, 'To what is inflationary pressure to be attributed?' is that it is mainly determined by 'our social and political attitude of mind'. The answer he gives is consequently determined by the attitude characteristic of latter-day Fabianism.

One example should suffice to show the sort of delicacy this view imposes. It is common knowledge that a powerful element in the economic situation of the last decade has been the high level of military expenditure of the United States and the European countries and that such expenditure is especially likely to have inflationary consequences. The first time this fact is referred to is in the following way: 'If the international situation demands a high level of defence expenditure . . . there is hardly point in arguing that government expenditure is the cause of inflation.' It is a big 'if', and the whole sentence speaks volumes—in Fabian dialect.

Later some supplementary information is forthcoming. Thus we read: 'Nine per cent of the United Kingdom's national output (i.e., more than 50 per cent of total government expenditure) has gone into defence . . .' Much of the later argument revolves round the competing claims of investment and consumption and the inflation which results when this is left to the free play of market forces. But, Maynard says, 'a reliable estimate suggests that up to 1955 only about five or six per cent on average of our national output was devoted to net investment'. In other words, if there was both inadequate new net investment and inflationary pressure the responsibility lies with the system and the policies which determined the allocation of 50 per cent of government outlay to armaments. Even when the author returns to this question on page 25 he excludes from his frame of reference any comment upon this anomaly. In the meantime he has glossed over the problem in an inconsequential manner. Thus on page 15 it is remarked that: 'Of course [!] the intensive rearmament programme which was put in train by the events of Korea in 1950 also added to inflationary pressure, but we cannot doubt that the major factor was the wage-price spiral set in motion by the boom in commodity prices [!]'

We should be justified in assuming that the latter was an independent variable. Yet on the previous page we have read, after a mention of the fact that the financial crisis and devaluation of 1949 were followed by a rise in prices of the order of 20 per cent, 'worse still, the outbreak of the Korean war brought about a fantastic boom in commodity prices, and United Kingdom import prices rose by about 40 per cent'. In other words the boom in commodity prices was a direct outcome of the Korean war and stockpiling in the United States and not an independent causative factor at all. The war did it all, or virtually all. This turning the eyes away from the facts of life is in the true tradition of Webbery.

On a more equable plane, the whole notion of costs as a factor in inflation is not clearly investigated. We are still left wanting to know why, for example, costs of imports have risen. What forces have been at work in the world market over this period?

Mr Maynard, when he comes to put forward policy proposals, shows that he lives in the kind of private world which



academic economists too facily construct for themselves. It is a world in which governments are strenuously working to maintain full employment, in which 'economic man', converted to belief in the Welfare State, is striving to maximize social interest, in which to speak of a 'struggle' between 'workers' and 'capitalists' is to use 'convenient but no doubt misleading terminology' (p. 8). In justice, it should be said, that having been tainted with Fabianism, Mr Maynard is less remote from life than certain of his colleagues. For example, he is very keen on asserting the need to hold back consumption in order to increase the proportion of resources devoted to investment. In a socialist state this might be necessary. In Britain today, in a programme for the Labour movement, such a question cannot be separated from the question of the ownership of the assets thus created. It cannot be side-tracked, as it is here, into a discussion of reform measures like the expenditure tax, counter-cyclical investment, import subsidies and controls. Mr Maynard's policies are intended to be applied by a Labour government operating within the existing pattern of ownership. Yet the 'planning' he speaks of would, for all the lip service paid to equality and liberty, do nothing to widen the economic freedom of the working class.

It is characteristic in this regard that what is called 'government control of investment' leaves the rate of investment largely under the control of 'business men' as long as they 'are willing to expand', i.e., making good profits, public investment being correspondingly reduced to avoid inflation. Public investment will take up the slack when profits fall off, along the lines suggested by Hansen, Keynes and their followers these last twenty years. What is described as 'a return to a more conscious direction of the economy', complete with 'a wages policy' (details are given in a previous pamphlet) takes us back to the general line of Labour in power, 1945-51, not forward to the realization of socialist measures.

S. THOMAS

## Pretty Poor Answers

The Economic and Social Consequences of Automation,  
by F. Pollock. (Basil Blackwell, 25s.)

A STORY, surely apocryphal, relates how Walter Reuther, the American motor-car workers' union chief, was being conducted around an automatic section of Fords when the factory manager wickedly remarked: 'I'd like to see you collect union dues from those "fellows".' To which Reuther replied: 'And I'd like to see you selling them motor-cars.'

This story illustrates the kernel of the social problems presented by automation. Automation under capitalism heightens every social contradiction and demonstrates, more effectively than any long-winded deductive proof, that capitalism is ripe for revolution; that only socialized industry, producing for use instead of profit, can realize to the full the enormous potentialities of modern electronic methods of control of industrial production.

In this book, Pollock quotes a passage from the journal *Looking Ahead*:

'In the present early application of automation to factories, manpower is substantially reduced—not completely eliminated. Currently it is too costly for most factories to go to the limit. The necessary instruments and mechanisms could be made, but at a cost so great it is not profitable to deplace all production workers **right away**.'

*Looking Ahead* is saying here that capitalist industry will continue to use human labour only so long as it is profitable. Automation presents mankind with the opportunity to release all from irksome toil; the capitalist profit motive retains cheap manual 'slave' labour, tamely serving the machines, but is prepared to throw live labour on the scrap-heap as soon as electronic mechanisms become cheaper.

In a number of brilliant descriptive chapters Pollock describes the scope of the new techniques of automation ('a new industrial revolution . . . whose essence is the invention of machines which can control machines'). Anyone who today denies that all mankind today **could** be rich, prosperous and leisured, should be made to read these descriptive chapters.

Curiously, Pollock's Introduction apologizes for including these very chapters. The book, he explains, is really 'one of a series of inquiries into the structure of society which are being undertaken by the Institut für Sozialforschung at the University of Frankfurt' and is 'concerned mainly with the economic and social consequences of the advent of automation'.

It is this explanation of the purpose of the book which prevents our being too surprised when we come to a series of chapters which amount only to a ponderous reiteration of the oldest-fashioned Fabian platitudes about 'our complicated society'.

True to form, Pollock is Left-wing enough to expose the inadequacies of refurbished 'laissez-faire' slogans which the Establishment's tame economists hand out, but Right-wing enough to be dead centre on the Cold War 'Western civilization in danger' line.

Some writers regard the social consequences of automation as only short-term disturbances of the 'normal equilibrium'. They believe that automation will have long-term effects exactly like all previous industrial innovations, i.e., 'the men who lose their jobs because of technical changes will quickly find employment elsewhere because the reduction in production costs . . . soon stimulates an increased demand which leads to an expansion of output'. Pollock is devastating in destroying this myth. Yet he never comes within a hundred miles of developing a satisfactory alternative forecast. In fact Pollock can only dig up and slightly adapt the old Burnham rubbish about a managerial revolution.

As modern society advances towards completely automatic industrial production, Labour, he says, is being split into two groups: the 'minority', the qualified technicians and administrators, and the 'majority', those who 'have only an elementary education and have not got the brains or the training to understand the workings of either a modern economy or a modern society' and whose labour is 'unproductive in the economists' sense'.

The 'majority' will then have to buy, from the 'minority', with their labour, the products of automatic industry. But wait!

'Such a class structure would be a very insecure foundation for a free society. The great power of the minority coupled with the ignorance and weakness of the majority might well lead to the establishment of an authoritarian in place of a democratic form of government.'

The 'liberal' Pollock, as ever, is petrified by the prospects of revolution ('insecure foundation'), contemptuous of the intelligence and organizational ability of the working class ('ignorance and weakness') and resentful of absolute domination by big-business moguls ('great power of minority', 'authoritarian'). Oh dear, whatever shall we do? A good book of questions, but a pretty poor set of answers.

DAVID DEAN

## Trotsky's Classic

The Revolution Betrayed, by Leon Trotsky (New Park,  
10s. 6d.)

MANY readers of *Labour Review* have no doubt recently emerged, as I have, from many years in the Communist Party. Probably a good proportion of future readers will be dissident members and ex-members of that party. Judging from my own experience, the reprinting of Trotsky's classic will help them very much.

The members of the recent opposition in the Communist Party, in rejecting the Stalinist policy of the Soviet leaders, felt there had been a degeneration in the Soviet Union since the 1917 Revolution. In their struggle inside the British Communist Party they came to the conclusion that this party reflected that degeneration; but the nature of the distortions could not be understood by most of them. The Reasoner, unfortunately, had neither the opportunity nor the inclination to organize a discussion on this problem. This is the reason, I think, why the opposition did not become a definite trend

and was only able to form such a loose structure as the Socialist Forums.

While still passing through a period of ferment, the national Forum meeting at Wortley Hall showed that the discussion was dominated by 'Trotsky' and 'the value of Marxism', and that many Forum members were beginning to tackle the fundamental questions, those on the front cover of 'The Revolution Betrayed': 'What is the Soviet Union' and 'Where is it going?'

The communists who have joined the Marxist opposition to Stalinism must be impressed by this book, which was written in 1936, for their recent experiences must provide considerable evidence that Trotsky wrote a basic Marxist critique. Those who could not be quite convinced that the 'cult of personality' was responsible for the 'errors' and changes of line, will wish to examine the manner in which Trotsky analyses social relations in Russia, industry, agriculture, the strength of the classes and the zigzags of the bureaucratic leadership.

If this book had been new, rather than a reissue, one would have assumed that the chapter on 'Socialism and the State' had been written to satisfy popular demand stimulated by the Khrushchev speech and Hungary. The problem that is most unpopular with Communist Party tutors, 'Why has the Soviet State not withered away?' is examined in great detail.

Other questions examined include, 'Has every cook learned to govern?' and 'Is the Red Army equivalent to an armed people?'. We have learned recently about the Soviet commanding officer who issues orders to inferior ranks over a loud-speaker; Trotsky writes in 1936: 'The army is only a copy of the social relations'. How often in the Communist Party do the functionaries boast about the 'liberation of women in the USSR', describing how the Soviet women work in the factories, feeding their children during breaks and enjoying equal rights in all spheres? However, Trotsky's scrutiny shows how they really suffer almost similar deprivation of rights as do the working-class women in capitalist society, while the Soviet laws concerning the family are as 'conservative' as any bourgeois moralist would wish.

On the question of the nature of the Soviet régime, Trotsky's conclusion that it is 'a contradictory society, half-way between capitalism and socialism' seems to me to be logical, non-dogmatic and still valid. Probably there will be discussion on whether the advances made by Soviet economy in the past twenty years have altered the possibility of a backslide to capitalism, which Trotsky considered 'wholly possible'.

Present developments can only support Trotsky's charge that the Soviet 'Bonapartist' régime is 'a régime of crisis', for Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress could be described as a detailed confession from the accused. How to remove the cancer from what is still basically a workers' State is the problem. Trotsky refutes the accusation of the self-styled 'Friends of the Soviet Union' that socialist criticisms of Russia injure socialist construction, showing that this view suggests that the capitalist powers would wish to avenge any deviation from revolutionary principles.

The programme of the Fourth International, outlined by Trotsky in the concluding chapters, forecasting a political revolution in the Soviet Union, which can be helped by victories of the working class in the advanced countries of the West, is a programme I can support as a Marxist and anti-capitalist one. This programme leads towards the triumph of world socialism.

JIM JOHNSON

## *Hungarian Revolution*

**The Hungarian Revolution.** A White Book. Edited by Melvin J. Lasky (Congress for Cultural Freedom and Secker and Warburg, 25s.)

'BEFORE comfortable lies are produced . . .' So Luigi Fossati began a message from Budapest to his paper, *Avanti*, on November 4, 1956. Fossati went on to describe how the steel workers of Csepel had been and remained 'the strongest vanguard of the insurrection'. Fossati understood well the power of the trained falsifiers of history who have stage-managed the Russian Ministry of Propaganda this last thirty years to make sincere communists in the western world believe

that black is white, that truth is error, that revolution is counter-revolution. Fossati was not the only observer or participant who understood, on that fateful Sunday morning when Russian tanks crashed into revolutionary Budapest, that the truth about the Hungarian Revolution would have to fight hard to remain alive.

Had not the communists (and many other socialists and democrats of the world) been successfully lied to many times before? From now on, in the editorial offices of the *Daily Worker*, *Humanité*, *Unità* and a hundred other Communist Party journals in the capitalist world, the Hungarian Revolution would be slandered and smeared. The sloganized 'truth' had been invented: 'The Hungarian revolt was a counter-revolutionary, fascist, Arrow-Cross-Horthyite rebellion, planned, organized, financed and supplied with arms from outside, by the American State Department.' From now on, the task of the Communist Parties in the capitalist world was to try to convince the workers that this is the truth about Hungary. So they would assert it, manufacture 'evidence' to prove it, select quotations and doctor them to prove it, expel people who would not believe it, smear the Hungarian workers' leaders, slander those who deny it. After a while, the lie would be built into the communist journalists' stock phraseology, a calm assumption that the lie is the truth. 'Young Anna Kiraly, whose father was murdered by Horthyite agents in the counter-revolutionary rising last October, yesterday broke the record for . . .' 'The steel workers of Csepel, who, as is well known, last October fought so bitterly to defend their factories against the onslaughts of the American-organized fascist uprising, yesterday attended a mass meeting to celebrate the . . .'



The 'comfortable lie' will have taken hold. But I wonder. The old technique, this stereotyped approach to propaganda, ignores the far-reaching impact of the Khrushchev revelations upon the Communist Parties of the world. The old calculations of how to turn truth into lies will have to be given a New Look if ever they are going to be successful again. These old, experienced falsifiers of history press on as if they had never 'proved' that Tito was an American-fascist spy, never 'proved' that Rajk and Kostov and their fellow-victims were fascist wreckers, had never 'proved' that Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev and countless thousands of other leading communists were 'judicially' murdered because they opposed Stalin's rule, were 'fascists', 'Nazis' and 'counter-revolutionaries'. Surely even the most faithful King Street dupe is now on guard against Moscow's propensity to 'prove' guilt by loud-mouthed slandering of the innocent. The old falsifiers of communist history are today meeting with scant success in putting over their Big Lie on Hungary.

Nevertheless it is also true that among some honest people there is much confusion on what the Hungarian Revolution really was about. Stalinism has never taught them to examine revolutions dialectically, in their living reality, but to try to fit them into neat, lifeless formulas.

But listen to what the Bolshevik who was in charge of organizing the October 1917 uprising in Petrograd has to say about real-life revolutions!

'The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct intervention of the masses in historic events. In ordinary times the State, be it monarchical or democratic, elevates itself above the nation and history is made by specialists in that line of business—kings, Ministers, bureaucrats, parliamentarians, journalists. But at those crucial moments when the old order becomes no longer endurable to the masses, they break over the barriers excluding them from the political arena, sweep aside their traditional representatives and create by their own interference the initial groundwork for a new régime . . .'

'The revolution is terrifically chaotic . . . Everywhere aimless movements, conflicting currents, whirlpools of people, individuals astounded as though suddenly gone deaf, unfastened trench coats, gesticulating students, soldiers without rifles, rifles without soldiers, boys firing into the air, a thousand-voiced tumult, hurricanes of wild rumour, false alarms, false rejoicings. Enough, you would think, to lift a sword over all that chaos and it would scatter apart and leave never a trace. But that is a crude error of vision. It is only a seeming chaos. Beneath it is proceeding an irresistible crystallization of the masses around new axes. These innumerable crowds have not yet clearly defined what they want, but they are saturated with an acid hatred of

what they do not want. Behind them is an irreparable historical avalanche. There is no way back . . .

'The revolution begins a search for enemies. Arrests are made all over the city—'arbitrarily' as the Liberals will say reproachfully later . . . "we are witnessing the death of a great country" . . .

'Those who lose by a revolution are rarely inclined to call it by its real name. For that name, in spite of the efforts of spiteful reactionaries, is surrounded by the historic memory of mankind with a halo of liberation from all shackles and all privileges. The privileged classes of every age, as also their lackeys, have always tried to declare the revolution which overthrew them, in contrast to past revolutions, a mutiny, a riot, a revolt of the rabble. Classes which have outlived themselves are not distinguished by originality.'<sup>1</sup>

The Hungarian Revolution of 1957 was certainly not a revolution made to measure in the Stalinist text book—but it was a revolution nevertheless. Neither was it any 'purer' than any other revolution. Of course it is true that the Horthyite fascists crept out of their holes to pay off old scores and even to attempt their restoration. Of course the western imperialists, gravely embarrassed by the world-wide uproar against their action in Suez, shrieked their support for this 'anti-Russian' uprising. But no careful selection of incidental events and speeches, no proof of 'guilt by association', no amount of plain lying (and the communist Press has certainly done a lot of this) can ever alter the essential truth—that

<sup>1</sup>Leon Trotsky, 'History of the Russian Revolution', quoted in 'The Hungarian Revolution', p. 256.

the main force of the Hungarian uprising was the Hungarian working class, who were fighting against a foreign-imposed bureaucracy for workers' power, workers' democratic control of industry, a workers' State and socialism.

Let communists who read this book ignore the introduction if they prefer, because Hugh Seton-Watson is not a Marxist or a socialist (though, truth to tell, it is not a bad introduction at all). But they have a duty to read the rest of this big and well-produced book. It consists of hundreds of substantial extracts of newspaper reports, radio-transcripts, eyewitness accounts, official pronouncements of all the governments concerned, army orders, admirably put together in chronological order. There has, of course, necessarily been selection, but it is clear as you read on, fascinated by the richness of history in the process of its making, that the selection is well-balanced and includes, in as favourable light as the events themselves make possible, the views and news-stories of all those participating in the events—whatever their political colour or interests.

Read this book, estimate and re-estimate the significance of each report and piece the whole together in any way you like. Study the facts not as segments of dry formulas but in their reality. Then never, never, never, will you be able to make fascist counter-revolution out of the glorious deeds of the Hungarian people who in October and November 1956 'stormed heaven'. The immortal words of Marx on the Paris Commune ring out again on this first anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution: 'The workers have been beaten, but they have not been defeated. History will prove that it was quite others who suffered defeat.'

JACK FORSTER

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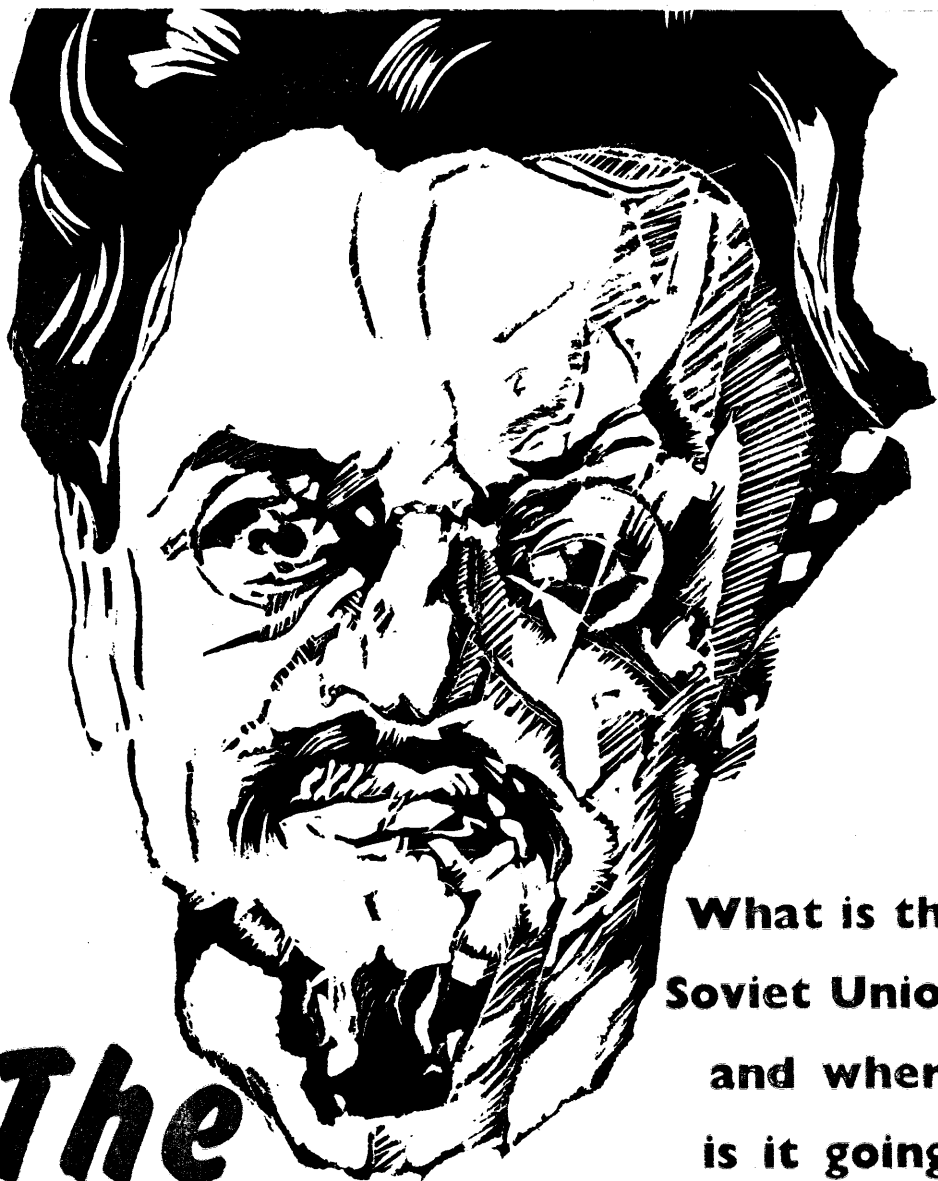
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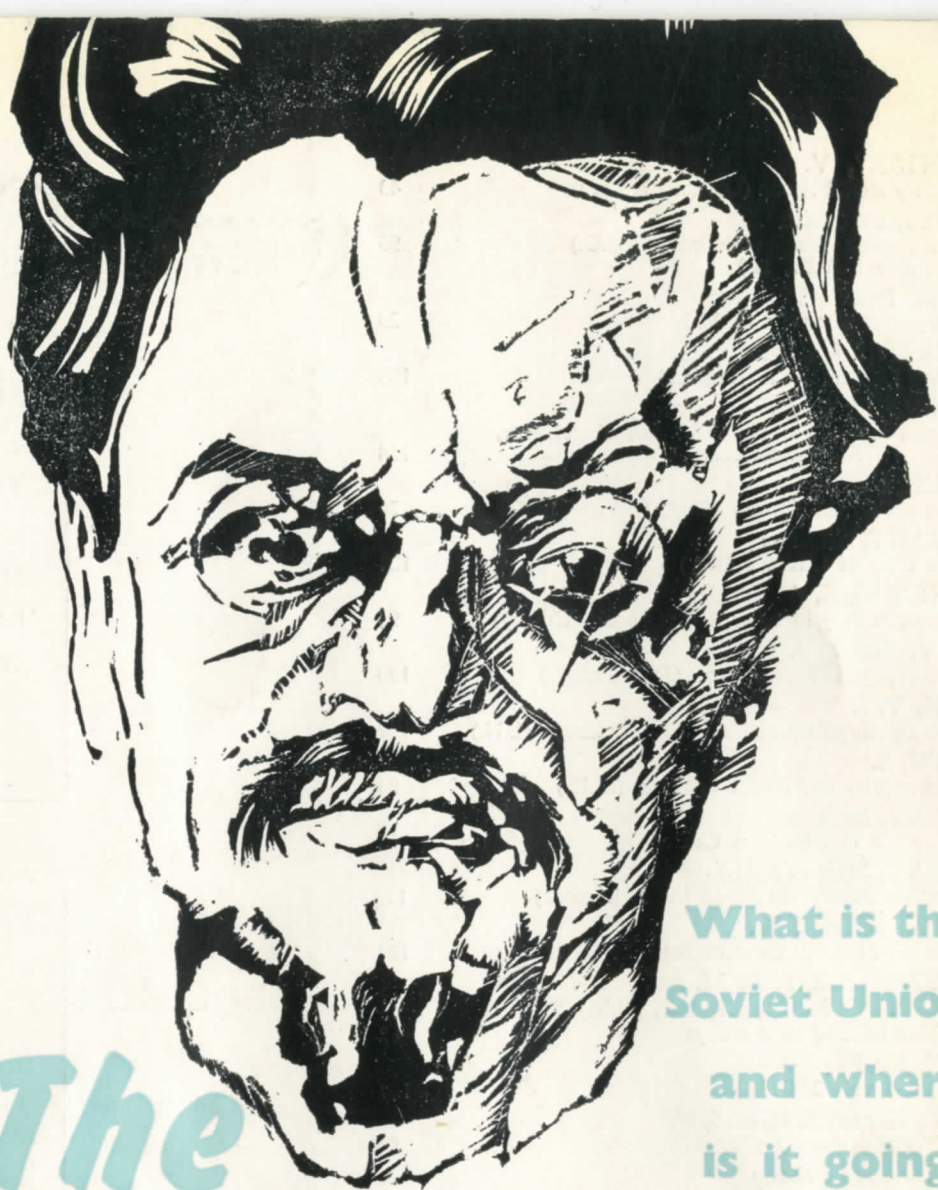
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