SOCIALISM OR YOUR MONEY BACK
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The Socialist Party of Great Britain

The greatest problem awaiting solution in the world to-day is the existence in every commercial country of extreme poverty side by side with extreme wealth. In every land where, in the natural development of society, the capitalist method of producing and distributing wealth has been introduced, this problem presses itself upon us. Not only so but the greater the grip which capitalism has on industry the more intense is the poverty of the many and the more marked are the riches of the few.

In observing the conditions of this problem, the fact is quickly forced under our notice that it is the producer of wealth who is poor, the non-producer who is rich. How comes it that the men and women who till the soil, who dig the mine, who manipulate the machine, who build the factory and the home, and, in a word, who create the whole of the wealth, receive only sufficient to maintain themselves and their families on the border line of bare physical efficiency, while those who do not aid in production - the employing class - obtain more than is enough to supply their every necessity, comfort, and luxury?

To find a solution to this problem is the task to which the Socialist applies himself. He sees clearly that only by studying the economics of wealth-production and distribution can he understand the anomalies of present-day society. He sees, further, that having gained a knowledge of the economic causes of social inequality, he must apply this knowledge through political action - through the building up of a Socialist organisation for the capture of Parliament and the conquest of the powers of government.

To every sober observer of social facts it is patent that the life condition of the workers is one of penury and of misery. The only saleable commodity they possess - their power of working - they are compelled to take to the labour market and sell for a bare subsistence wage. The food they eat, the clothing they wear, the houses in which they live are of the shoddiest kind, and these together with the mockery of an education which their children receive, primarily determine the purchasing price of their labour-power. By organising in their various trades they may force their wage a little above this normal value, but taken on the average they are bound to sell their activity - physical, mental and moral - for the bare cost of their subsistence.

In return for this wage they create, by the conversion of raw material into manufactured products or by other means, a value far in excess of the value paid them as wages. The difference between these two values is taken by the employing class, and constitutes the source of profit, interest, and rent. These three forms of exploitation are the result of the unpaid labour of the working-class.

So long as this lasts - and it will last as long as the capitalist system of society - it will not be possible for the workers by any Trades Union organisation to more than slightly modify their condition, and their power in this direction is becoming every day more limited by the combinations among employers to defeat the aims of the working class.

Then, too, the magnitude of industrial operations, ever tending to increase by the inherent tendency under free competition of the large producer to crush out his smaller trade rivals - the joint stock company takes the place of the large individual, capitalist, the trust the place of the joint stock company. The worker is thus brought face to face with an ever greater foe.

The Socialist can calmly view this struggle, knowing that ultimately the victory is with him. In the meantime, however, he has to show the workers that while their organisation in trades will prove an invaluable aid in the transformation of society by facilitating industrial reorganisation, yet at present they can best help to emancipate themselves from the thraldom of wage-slavery by recognising that in their class struggle with their exploiters they can be most certain of success in the political sphere of action.

Such political action will, however, be quite futile unless carried on by a class-conscious party with definite aims. Such a party must recognise that in the class-war they are waging there must be no truce. They must adopt as their basis of action the Socialist position, for in no other way can their ills be redressed. To neither of the two historic parties can we look with any hope. The Liberal Party, like the Conservative Party, is interested in maintaining the present class society, and cannot, therefore, be expected to help in its transformation from capitalism to Socialism.
The National Democratic League and the Labour Representation Committee are also to be avoided. The former has a programme of purely political measures, each of which is found in the constitutions of France and the United States of America without the working-class being in any way benefited. The latter organisation has no programme whatsoever, and its members possess no principles in common save the name “Labour.” As soon as any question of constructive legislation is brought before it its component elements will break part, being unable to agree among themselves. Unity is only possible among those who possess common principles. Unity can not, therefore, be secured for any length of time by the members of the Labour Representation Committee, but even if it could, the body is not based upon Socialist principles and should not receive the adhesion of working men.

We, as Socialists, venture to assert that the party which is ultimately to secure the support of the rank and file of the working-class must be a Socialist party. Such a party must be ever prepared to further the realisation of a Socialist Society. It must proclaim the fact that this realisation can be achieved by the members of the working-class using their political power to return to Parliament and other public bodies only those who are members of The Socialist Party.

In the past two bodies of men have put forward the claim to be Socialist parties, viz., the Independent Labour Party and Social Democratic Federation. We who have for many years taken a share in the work of the latter organisation and who have watched the progress of the former from its initiation, have been forced to the conclusion that through neither of them can the Social Revolution at which we aim be achieved, and that from neither of them can the working-class secure redress from the ills they suffer.

The Independent Labour Party, founded for the ostensible reason of forming a half-way house to Socialism, was fated to meet with the reward of every party founded upon a compromise. With a membership of those who were sympathetic with Socialism, but who were not Socialists, they were bound to drift nearer and nearer to the Liberal Party. Having neither the courage to proclaim themselves Socialists nor to disavow Socialism, they are to-day coquetting with that working-class wing of the Liberal Party - the Labour Representation Committee. When the question of Socialism was raised on the committee, their chief representative declared that was neither the time nor the place for such discussion. With a party of this kind, which, in the words of their president, “is independent to support, independent to oppose” the two historic political parties, the working-class should have nothing to do.

The Social Democratic Federation formed to further the cause of Socialism in Great Britain, has, during the last few years, been steadily following the compromising policy adopted from the first by the Independent Labour Party. So much is this the case that to-day, for all purposes of effective Socialist propaganda they have ceased to exist, and are surely developing into a mere reform party, seeking to obtain the provision of Free Maintenance for school children.

Those Socialists who, within its ranks, sought to withstand this policy, have found the task to be an impossible one, and have consequently seceded and formed themselves into the Socialist Party of Great Britain - a party determined to use its every effort in the furtherance of Socialist ideas and Socialist principles.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain is convinced that by laying down a clearly defined body of principles in accord with essential economic truths, and by consistently advocating them, swerving neither to the right nor to the left, but marching uncompromisingly on toward their goal, they will ultimately gain the confidence and the support of the working-class of this country. once this is secured it is a small step to the organisation of a Socialist Parliamentary party. When this is accomplished all is gained.

The first duty of The Socialist Party is the teaching of its principles and the organisation of a political party on a Socialist basis. The party becoming strong will capture parliamentary and other governmental powers. When these powers - legislative, administrative, and judicial, are wrested from their present class holders, they way is clear for the building up of the industries of the country upon the principle of collective production and collective distribution, and for the establishment of the Socialist Republic.

Men and women of the working-class, it is to you we appeal! To-day we are a small party, strong only in the truth of our principles, the sincerity of our motives, and the determination and enthusiasm of our members. To-morrow we shall be strong in our numbers, for the economic development of capitalist society fights for us, and as, through the merging of free competition in monopoly and the simplification of industry, the personal capitalist gives place to the impersonal trust as your employer, you will be forced to see that the welfare of the people can best be guaranteed by the holding of all material wealth in common.
We ask you, therefore, to study the principles upon which our party is based, to find out for yourselves what Socialism is and how Socialism and Socialism alone can abolish class society and establish in its stead a society based upon social equality. When you have done this we know that you will come with us and, by enrolling yourself a member of The Socialist Party of Great Britain, help to speed the time when we shall herald in for ourselves and for our children, a brighter, a happier and a nobler society than any the world has yet witnessed.

(September 1904)

The new "force" in politics

So! We are, it seems, to rejoice in the advent of a new force in English politics. We are to observe "the descent of a bolt out of the blue" and be happy. We are to note that "Labour" no longer sits on the "doorstep" but is inside the House of Commons and will do things. We are even to accept the fact as a sign of victory for—Socialism! Well! This is interesting. Because in our ignorance we thought this sort of "Labour" force descended from the blue, or, to be more accurate, ascended from the black, very many moons since. We seemed to have recollected even of a "Labour" minister in a Liberal administration before Mr Burns. It is true these old-time "Labour" representatives received the support of the Liberal Party. True also that the Rt. Hon. Thomas Burt was for very good reasons persona grata with Liberalism. But then so also was and is Mr Burns, the chairman of the "Labour" group in the last parliament. And is it not the indisputable fact that with few exceptions, the present "Labour" members were the unofficial candidates of the Liberal Party and were backed by most of the local Liberal associations? Then why should we rejoice?

Weighed in the balance

What if this sort of "Labour" representation has got inside the House of Commons in rather larger force than usual (which we suppose is what our enthusiastic exhorters mean when they have called upon us to be glad)—what then? Have they some greater power behind them by which they will be capable of performing greater deeds than their predecessors? What power? Are they not the nominees of an organisation whose members have not reached the stage of political development wherein they can dissociate their interests from the interests of the capitalist political factions? Are not these "Labour" members' wages therefore dependent upon the manner in which they approach the measures introduced by the capitalist parties? Can they freely attack these measures and the parties introducing them and be sure that their action will not be misunderstood by those who pay the piper? If so, what becomes of the argument in favour of the strict independence of the LRC candidates on the ground that if they were associated with the Liberal Party (for example) the Tory members of the LRC would break away? If not, are they not obliged to give their support to capitalist legislation (unless, of course, that legislation is so glaringly anti-Labour that even the members of the LRC could appreciate it) for fear the contrary action would be misunderstood? Are they not for the same reason forced to proceed with exceeding circumspection in their endeavours to induce the capitalist government to adopt measures they (the capitalist government) do not desire to adopt?

Found Wanting
Is it not the fact that the majority of these "Labour" representatives are themselves, in everything but name, Liberals, and, not understanding the reason for the position of the working class, cannot act as champions of working-class interests? And is it not undeniable that those who do profess to understand, and who at other times are prepared to call themselves Socialists, have repeatedly obscured their Socialism in order to secure the position (as when they stood for election) and confused the minds of those whose intellectual clarity they are supposed to desire, by associating themselves with the representatives of capitalism for capitalist objects? Then what can be expected from these more than their predecessors? What is the use of their separate party and separate whips? The fact is that nine out of ten of them have been elected in alliance with the Liberals; they are by education and sympathy Liberals; they are paid by an organisation overwhelmingly Liberal, and they may be expected to act, as Crooks and Shackleton and Henderson, and in a slightly modified manner, Hardie, have all along acted Liberal. The man who expects more from them is likely to be disappointed; the man who regards their return as a victory for Socialism simply doesn't know what he is talking about.

Why the "Labour" men will not do

Our position is that these men, whatever their intentions, are actually retarding the development of the only organisation of the working class that can enter into effective conflict with the forces of capitalism, because they obscure the fact that this conflict exists always in industrial affairs, and do not insist that it must be waged upon the political plane also. By association with capitalist representatives in both political and economic affairs they induce the idea (which capitalism does everything possible to foster) that the hostility does not exist, yet until that fact is grappled with and clearly understood there can be no material improvement in the workers' condition. It is unfortunate, of course, that the workers do not understand. It makes the task of those who are concerned with the overthrow of capitalism, and the emancipation of the working class from wage-slavery, very difficult. The results of their work seem so very slow a-coming. And some of them tire and drop out of the movement, and others—the Irvings and the McNabs of the SDF for example—curse the stupidity of the working class, while others again—the Hyndmans and Quelches and Hardies and the rest—weary of the work, endeavour to secure some immediate consolation by pandering to the ignorance they once may have thought to dispel, and so simply increase the difficulties in the way.

The irreconcilable few

Only the few remain in the forefront of the fight, waging unceasing battle for their class. These are they who, belonging themselves to the working class, have been at pains to obtain information as to the causes of the ignorance of their fellows; who have seen how, for generation after generation they have been oppressed and misled, sent off upon a barren quest by one set of supposed friends, confused by the actions and instruction of another set; now buoyed up with the hope of happiness, now plunged into the apathy of disappointment and despair. Knowing these things the few set out with no delusions upon the score of the reception their propaganda will receive at the hands of their class, and are not downcast and peevish when the results desired fail to materialise as quickly as they wish.
We of The Socialist Party of Great Britain are of this few. Our mission is simple. We have to proceed with our educational propaganda until the working class have understood the fundamental facts of their position—the facts that because they do not own the means by which they live they are commodities on the market, never bought unless the buyers (the owners of the means of life) can see a profit to themselves in the transaction, always sold when the opportunity offers because in that only can the necessaries of life be obtained. We have to emphasise the fact that no appreciable change is possible in the working-class condition while they remain commodities, and that the only method by which the alteration can be wrought is by the working class taking the means of life out of the hands of those who at present hold them, and whose private ownership is the cause of the trouble. Before this can occur the workers will have to understand the inevitable opposition of interests between them and the capitalist class, who, because of their ownership of the means of life, are able to exploit them, so that they will not make the mistake of voting into power, as they have always done hitherto, the representatives of the interests of those owning the means of life, because those who dominate political power dominate also the armed forces that keep the working class in subjection.

**The justification of hostility**

Therefore are we in opposition to all other political parties, holding on irrefutable evidence, that these other parties are confusing what must be clear to working-class minds before a change can be effected. This is our mission, and we shall conduct it with all the energy we have at our command. We know that the row we have to hoe is likely to be a long one. That does not affright us—because we know that were the row twice as long it would have to be hoed. There is no dodging the duty. There are no short cuts. Naturally, however, we wish the work to be covered as soon as possible, and that is why we oppose and expose those gentlemen who, sometimes with the best of intentions, blur the issue that must be kept unblurred, and so prolong our labours.

That is our position. If it contains flaws we shall be glad to hear of them. Meanwhile we regret that the entrance of the "Labour" men into the best club in Europe is not a Socialist victory and cannot be a Labour triumph. Labour only triumphs where Socialism wins. Meanwhile also, those who thought that the entrance of Burns into ministerial position would result in administration to the advantage of the unemployed should note that the Local Government Board has refused to sanction that portion of the loan applied for from Tottenham which was intended to meet the difference between the cost of work performed by a contractor and its cost if executed by the local unemployed. And those who thought that the advent of a new Liberal administration implied a large-hearted and sympathetic Labour policy should observe that sixty men have been sent to prison for five days each, and fifteen to one month each, for taking up collections in the street during unemployed demonstrations.

(February 1906)
The Sinn Fein Policy

The Policy Foreshadowed.

"I had come to the conclusion that the whole system ought to be met with resistance at every point; and the means for this would be extremely simple: a combination amongst the people to obstruct and render impossible the transport and shipment of Irish provisions; to refuse all aid in its removal; to destroy the highways; to prevent everyone, by intimidation, from daring to bid for grain or cattle if brought to auction under distress (a method of obstruction that had put an end to church tithes before); in short, to offer a passive resistance universally, but occasionally, when opportunity served, to try the steel."

The above lines were written by John Mitchell in 1847 when the Irish Confederation refused to endorse his policy of immediate resistance to the collection of rents, rates, and taxes. The portion relating to the transport and shipment of Irish goods referred to the exportation of Irish produce in a time when the country was devastated by famine and thousands were dying of starvation. Parnell's proposition to the Nationalist members, "to withdraw from the British House of Commons and organise the people in Ireland to resist English rule at every point" was defeated on a vote of the party.

The idea of carrying on a campaign of passive resistance to British rule in Ireland is therefore not by any means new, but the Sinn Fein Party is the first party that has attempted to organise the people for this object. It has already succeeded in winning over the youngest and most ardent of the Irish race; it has converted four of the official Nationalist members of Parliament including one of their whips, Sir T. G. Esmonde. At a meeting of the Nationalist Party in the House of Commons it was proposed and seconded that the Party adopt the Sinn Fein policy and withdraw from Westminster. In North Leitrim the member, Mr. Dolan, having embraced the new doctrine, is about to contest the seat against the official Nationalist candidate.

The Movement Realised.

The Sinn Fein Party claim to have a majority in favour of their policy in the County and District Councils in the country, and Mr. Sweetman, chairman of the Meath County Council, at the meeting of councillors from various counties proposed and caused to be discussed at length a resolution to this effect: "that we refuse to collect any more rates or taxes". Thus we see that the Sinn Fein policy will probably in the future be the method adopted throughout Ireland to resist and if possible destroy the domination of "the thrice accursed British Empire".
What is the nature and origin of the Sinn Fein movement? The words Sinn Fein mean "ourselves alone", and those who are acquainted with Ireland know that within the last ten years a movement was set on foot for the restoration of the Irish language, customs, industries, music and art; started and organised by the Gaelic League it was at first strictly non-political and non-sectarian, its ultimate object was an Irish Ireland, everything in language, clothing, manner and sport which was not originally Irish was banned and ridiculed, and the offenders were termed "Shoneens", "Flunkeys", and "West Britons". The Gaelic League was a decided success and it did not exist long before it had a political party formed independent of all others and having for its object "Ireland a Nation", not in the sense of a British colony, but independent of all external authority. This party was formed on the same basis as Wolfe Tone a century ago formed the "United Irishmen", and like Tone it wanted "to unite Catholic, Protestant, and Dissenter under the common name of Irishman". "Our independence must be had at all hazards; if the men of property will not support us they must fall; we can support ourselves by the aid of that numerous and respectable class of the community, the men of no property". Thus we see the Sinn Fein Party is the child of the Irish education movement, and is alluded to by the Parliamentarians as the "crowd of intellectuals", "armchair agitators", etc.

It sees the Futility of Compromise

The Sinn Fein Party is now possessed of several weekly journals that voice its views. It has also published a large number of pamphlets that have aided considerably in bringing the Party to its present position. In their weekly journals the Sinn Feiners riddle the arguments of the Parliamentarians, they point to the fact that in 1847 the population of Ireland was 9 millions, while today it is about 4 millions after over half a century of labour on the "flure of the House". That the Land Acts were fraudulent and did not even touch the question of the poverty problem, that a Liberal Government is now in office but not officially pledged to Home Rule; in short, that the Nationalist Party is ineffective as a weapon against British misrule in Ireland.

The Sinn Fein Party propose the immediate withdrawal from Westminster of the 82 Irish members and that the £30,000 now annually spent in maintaining this useless weapon be spent in sending consuls to foreign countries to open up markets for Irish goods. That all monies invested in the banks of Ireland at the present time be withdrawn and a People's Bank be formed to lend money and transact all business at interest to cover only the cost of management. That a National Stock Exchange be formed in Dublin. That the people refuse to pay rent, rates, or taxes, and that the County Councils and other such bodies responsible refuse to collect same. That, if possible, no articles from which the British Government derives a revenue be consumed by the people. That the money saved in rent, rates, and administration be used in fixing machinery and starting the disused mills and factories, to revive dying industries and introduce new ones. That, in short, by common consent, by means of duly elected members or a general council of the County and District Councils the people of Ireland will refuse to recognise English law, authorities, or customs, and that henceforth Ireland shall be ruled only by the will of the people of Ireland.

Some of the chief spokesmen of this movement are large land owners and capitalists. Mr. John Sweetman owns a large tract of land in C. Meath, is a county councillor, railway director, etc. Edward Martyn is a landowner of County Galway, a J. P. and the exact reflex of the English capitalist. Sir T. G. Esmonde, Bart, M. P., is a bank director, railway director, and landlord. These and many other connected with the Sinn Fein movement give as their principal reason for supporting it the insecurity of their stock, the railways are not making any profit worth speaking of, the canals are idle, and so on.

But is itself Futile,
From this it is quite evident that if the Sinn Fein movement succeeds profits are intended to rise at the expense of the Irish worker. The Irish capitalist class is still to remain the proud possessor of the land, factories, mills, railways, etc., and readers of this journal know what that means for the poor wretches employed.

The proud boast of the Sinn Fein Party is that Hungary was placed in much the same position as under Austria as Ireland is under England, and that when Hungary established her independence in exactly the same manner as the Sinn Fein movement proposes Ireland should, her trade increased by leaps and bounds, her population increased and new industries were developed, yet we know that today the Magyar is as much a slave as ever, and that there are in Hungary workhouses, prisons, asylums, unemployed, and all the other characteristics of the capitalist system. We know that the trade of Great Britain was greater last year than ever before, and that last year was nevertheless for the workers a year of great unemployment, poverty and privation. Even regarding the present success of the Sinn Fein movement it may be pointed out that the prospect differs vitally from that of Hungary in the important fact that Hungary was almost the equal in population and strength of Austria, and so was able to command political success. Hungary was also helped by the important tactical position it occupied as a barrier against Russian and Turkish advance. But as far as the condition of the people is concerned the Hungarian worker is not one whit better off than the Irish worker, whilst emigrants from Hungary may be counted by the hundred thousand, by whom, it is evident, the foreign exploiters are found at least no worse than the Hungarian masters from whom they flee.

**For only Socialism can help the Workers.**

In view of these facts it is our duty to warn our fellow-workers in Ireland of the futility of the Sinn Fein policy as far as they are concerned. There can be no relief for the oppressed Irishman in changing an English robber for an Irish one. The person of the robber does not matter—it is the fact of the robbery that spells misery. National divisions are a hindrance to working-class unity and action, and national jealousies and differences are fostered by the capitalists for their own ends. The crowd of hungry "intellectuals" clamouring for jobs both within and without the Irish parliamentary party do not represent the interests of the working class in Ireland. They do not, indeed, profess to favour other than capitalist interests, provided that the landlord or capitalist be Irish, but the Irish capitalist is in no wise more merciful than the English exploiter. The national sentiment and perennial enthusiasm of the Irishmen are being exploited by the so-called leaders in the interests of Irish capitalism, and the workers are being used to fight the battles of their oppressors. The Irish capitalist rebels against the English capitalist only because the latter stands in the way of a more thorough exploitation of the Irish workers by Irish capital. Let the thieves fight their own battles! For the worker in Ireland there is but one hope. It is to join the Irish wing of the international Socialist working class and to make common cause with the Socialist workers of all countries for the end of all forms of exploitation; saying to both English and Irish capitalists: "A plague on both your houses". For the true battle-cry of the working class in broader, more significant and more inspiring than mere nationalism, and that rally cry is: THE WORLD FOR THE WORKERS!

(September 1907)
Not long ago the hoardings of London startled the man in the street with ugly black and white posters asserting that women were poor, that women were sweated, that women walked the streets, and that misery and vice stalked in our midst, all because women had not the vote. Those statements, issued by the Suffragettes, were and are unblushing falsehoods, unsustainable and unsustained by any shred of evidence.

The Socialist is in no quandary as to why the many are poor. It is not because propertied women have not the vote, nor even because women in general are not electors—it is because the many are robbed. And the stopping of this robbery depends not upon a mere all round increase in the number of votes, but upon the intelligence of the workers and the correct use of the vote in their hands.

Democracy is not an end in itself, but a means to an end; and for us that end in Socialism. And were the workers to understand rightly their position and their policy, the political freedom they now possess would enable them to achieve their emancipation irrespective of sex.

It is, moreover, not a sex war that exists in Society but a class war, but the Suffragettes endeavour to blur this class issue by screeching qualifications.

What are the facts regarding the Suffragettes? Under the pretence of sex equality they are buttressing class privilege. Under the guise of democracy they are endeavouring to strengthen the political power of property. They plausibly propose that women be admitted to the franchise on the same terms as men, and since all Socialists want sex equality this looks attractive. But wait. What does it really mean? Men vote at present under the £10 franchise. The suffrage is thus upon a property basis with plural voting for the wealthy. Therefore, according to the proposals of the women Suffragists, only those women having the necessary property qualifications are to be allowed to vote. This excludes not only all those single working women unable to qualify because of their poverty, but it also bars practically the whole of the married women of the working class who have no property qualifications apart from their husbands'. Further, it increases enormously the voting power of the well-to-do, since the head of the wealthy household can always impart the necessary qualifications to all the women of his house, while the working-man, through his poverty, is entirely unable to do so.

The limited suffrage movement is consequently only a means of providing votes for the propertied women of the middle class, and faggot votes for the wealthy; possibly tipping the balance of votes against the workers—men and women. Yet the Suffragettes pretend that this is a movement for the benefit of working women! The huge sums spent in this agitation prove that it is not a workers' movement. It is a movement by women of the wealthy and middle class to open up for themselves more fully careers of exploitation, and to share in the flesh-pots of political office, to get sinecures, position and emoluments among the governing caste.

In their cry for "equality" do not their methods betray them? Every move on their part is an appeal not to sex equality but to sex fetishism. Their tactics rely upon and appeal
to the worship of sex. They know that their sex gives them privileges before the magistrate and protects them from the usual police brutality, and that any strong measures against them would immediately raise a storm in their favour amongst the sex worshippers. Hence their peculiar tactics, which have no other explanation. Let anyone compare mentally the treatment that would be meted out to working men did they pursue a similar policy to these Suffragettes. Let them compare the way the suffragist invasions of Downing Street or the House of Commons were dealt with, with that which would follow persistent forcible entries of the Commons by bands of unemployed. Broken heads, bullets, and long terms of imprisonment—and not in the second division—would be their lot, and instead of hysterical sympathy being created for the ill-treated unemployed, horror at their audacity and a determination to repress them brutally would take its place. And the middle class examples of sex arrogance rely upon this very woman worship and sex inequality to further their demands.

The Suffragette movement is upon all counts but a bulwark of capitalism. It is directly opposed to the interests of the working class—women as well as men, and the Independent Labour Party shows its capitalistic nature when it supports that movement in strengthening the political power of the propertied against the propertyless.

Both sexes of the workers are exploited and suffer. Both are victims of those who live by the ownership of the means of life. Therefore the salvation of working class women lies in the emancipation of their class from this wage-slavery. Their interests are identical with those of working men, and the women of the middle class do but attempt to lure them with false phrases to desert their fellows and to aid the propertied enemies of their class.

The duty of working women is to refuse to allow themselves to be used as catspaws of the wealthy, and to join with their fellows in The Socialist Party, the organisation of their class; thus working for the emancipation of the toilers as a whole, irrespective of sex. Sex-equality cannot be the fruit of the Suffragette humbug, it can only come through economic equality—and economic equality is impossible except through Socialism.

(June 1908)

**The case for free love: some capitalist hypocrisies exposed**

To the Revolutionist it is almost an axiom that modern society is rotten—rotten to the root! The production of wealth—the first essential form of human activity—is carried on, not for the purpose of satisfying the physical needs of the workers, but with the motive of accumulating wealth in the shape of capital. The means of production are exalted above the producer. These supplementary organs of society are owned and controlled by a small percentage of the race, and the rest of mankind exist merely to augment them for the benefit of the few. Every human faculty capable of serving the interests of these exploiters has to be surrendered by those who possess nought else in return for the wherewithal to purchase the bare means of subsistence. It thus becomes perverted and deteriorates as a consequence. Cash dominates all social relationships and vitiates them.

Sexual relations form no exception to the general rule. The natural purpose for which men and women should mate is the perpetuation of the race and the incidental satisfaction of the sexual instinct. This motive, however, has about the least weight of any in determining the conditions of sexual intercourse at the present day.
The great majority of women, as of men, are dependent on the capitalist class for bread, and being by nature inferior to men as wealth producers, are compelled to turn their sexual attractions to account in order to balance the handicap which sex itself imposes upon them in the competition for employment. Just as the poet, the artist, the physician and the lawyer, to say nothing of the parson and the politician, regard their special abilities as the means of "making a career", so women generally look upon their natural endowment as an economic asset. On the other hand men have come to regard women as existing mainly, if not wholly, for the satisfaction of their own sexual desires, which tend to degenerate as a natural result into lust unredeemed by any regard for the will or the affection of women.

In ordinary public prostitution the divorce of the sex relation from its true motive is too obvious to need no special comment. Marriage, however, is in reality similar in nature. Stripped of all the sentiment with which an essentially false conventionalism has surrounded it, the legal contract, like all others, consists of an exchange of commodities. In return for the guarantee of economic maintenance the woman surrenders her body to the man, who thereby acquires the "marital right" to force maternity upon her whenever he chooses, irrespective of her own desires.

It is true that wives are also useful as household drudges, but considering only the sexual aspect of the relationship, the only difference between marriage and so-called immorality for cash is that the former is purchase, with the terms legally recognised and enforceable while the latter is hire. The monetary damages awarded in breach of promise and divorce cases serve to illustrate this. The loss of prospective maintenance by the woman, or the loss of the conjugal monopoly by the man, as the case may be, is estimated at so much in cash. Need more be said to show that the sex-nature in woman has been reduced by capitalism to the level of a commodity?

Children may be said to be the incidental bye-products of marriage rather than its fundamental object. They also become the property of the husband who, like any other slave-owner, is responsible for their maintenance. The advantages of this arrangement to the parent, however, depends upon his own economic status. The capitalist can exploit the "expectations" of his heirs by making their inheritance depend upon the subservience of their activities to his commercial interests. It is considered a matter of honour for both sons and daughters to make matches with a view to enhancing the stability of the family fortunes.

On the other hand, the working man with a precarious income is compelled to drive his "brats" to the factory, the workshop, or the office in order to enable him to barely fulfil his legal responsibilities toward them. Indeed, large numbers are compelled to rely on similar aid from their wives. Even these measures tend to cut the ground from under the feet of the working men themselves, for the entrance of women and children into the labour market necessarily results in keener competition for jobs hitherto performed by men, with a resulting lowering of the rate of wages and an increased inability to maintain a family on their part.

Verily, modern machinery under capitalism is the sword promised by the Prince of Peace to set parents against children and vice-versa, and to make a man's foes "those of his own household".

Marriage and family, for the working class, are to the extent that they survive, mere legal devices to prevent encroachment upon the pockets of the ratepayers. For society as a whole they are the means of maintaining and augmenting private property. We come back, then, to our starting point, that human relations are dominated by this necessity. Let us consider its effect on the quality of sex.
In all phases of the competitive supply of human requirements, their quality is determined by the power of the purse. The economic resources of the great mass of the people consist of subsistence wages. Consequently cheapness is the first consideration, and quality naturally deteriorates. Sex is affected in the same manner as all other commodities. Supply tending to exceed demand in this as in all other markets, all manner of tricks to ensure a ready sale are resorted to. Sham attractions are set in competition with real ones. The adulteration of food stuffs, clothing, etc., in such a manner as to tickle the palate and catch the eye, is here paralleled by the substitution of paint on the cheeks for the glow of health, and the use of perfumes for preventing the detection of the symptoms of indigestion. Constricted waists and artificially exaggerated figures seek to excite male passions, while in order that these same passions may be cheaply indulged, various methods for the prevention of conception are commonly resorted to. Finally, the excessive and promiscuous intercourse, which the legal contract can neither prevent nor completely hide, gives rise to various diseases, which form a source of profit for innumerable purveyors of patent medicines, appliances, and systems, which, like most palliatives (political ones included), make bad worse.

The fancied security offered by marriage from the necessity of entering the labour market or adopting life on the streets leads women to give little consideration to the physical fitness of the first male person who is in a position to offer marriage and does so. Consequently matrimonial misfits, temperamental and physiological, tend to become the rule rather than the exception, and it is not to be wondered at that the children of such unions are degenerate. Add to this the myriad forms of "literary", "artistic", and "theatrical" enterprise devoted to the stimulation and exploitation of vicious imaginations, and the "problems" arising from the possession of the same, and it becomes questionable whether the limit has not been reached in the commercialisation and degradation of sex.

Above this welter of misery the employers of cheap feminine labour, the financiers of the white slave traffic and all the gold barons who directly or indirectly levy toll on the vice and its effects, idle away useless, harmful, albeit "philanthropic" lives amid the luxury heaped up by their degenerate slaves; while, hanging on to their purse strings with the tenacity of limits, the parsons and moralists, "physicians" and "reformers" of every description, pretend to be clearing up the mess—incidentally appearing to enjoy the job the more the longer it lasts and increases in extent—and in the market squares and recreation grounds crowds of debilitated and anaemic wage-slaves listen with bated breath and simulate the pious shudders of the "intellectual" gents of the Anti-Socialist Union as they describe the orgy of bestiality they assure their audiences will be inaugurated by the advent of Socialism. "Community of Women!! Universal Prostitution and Promiscuity!!" they cry, endeavouring to frighten their hearers with the shadow in order to divert their attention from the reality, and the economic system on which it is based and which these same paid hacks are out to defend.

Years ago Marx and Engels (unlike the Fabian Society, the ILP, and all the other pseudo-Socialist crowd who allow this misrepresentation of free love), challenged these gentry with the facts in terms that are worth quoting. In the Communist Manifesto, section II, dealing with numerous objections to Communism, they say:

The bourgeois (capitalist) sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the means of production are to become common property, and naturally can only think that the lot of becoming common property will likewise fall to women.

He never suspects that the real point aimed at is to do away with three position of women as mere instruments of production.

For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous horror of our bourgeois at the community of women which he pretends will be officially established by the Communists.
The members of our bourgeoisie, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take special delight in mutually seducing each other's wives.

Bourgeois marriage is in reality community of wives. The Communists could at most be accused of wishing to replace a hypocritically concealed community of women by an official and open community of women. For the rest, it is evident that with the abolition of the present system of production will disappear also the community of women resulting from it, i. e., public prostitution.

And so it is.
The degradation of women as a sex is but a special aspect of the general degradation of humanity. The cause of this degradation is, as we have shown, the private ownership of society's means of subsistence. To remove the cause is the task of the great mass of society—the working class. Only by converting the instruments of production into common property can they emancipate themselves from the necessity of prostituting their faculties to the foul service of the capitalist class, which, like an octopus, sucks the blood of every part of the social body.

With this freedom established, all human activities will depend upon their desirability and usefulness to those who perform them. Consequently our faculties will be devoted, unhampered by economic considerations, to their true purpose. When women have free access, as members of the community, to a sufficiency of those things necessary to a healthy and happy life, their genuine sex-nature will assert itself. When children are born with a similar birthright, the need for avoiding them or exploiting them for private ends will disappear also. They will be born and reared for their own sake, as they should be. Therefore between man and woman, parents and children, affection will be the only tie. Modern marriage and the present so-called family life, like all other legal institutions, with their sordid monetary and proprietary bases, will be relegated to the limbo of the forgotten past. Where love exists chains are unnecessary; where it does not they are undesirable to those who would be free. But to expect sexual love, parental love, or fraternal love to flourish under a social order based on competition, greed, and hatred is akin to looking for figs on thistles.

To sweep away the foul conditions of producing and distributing the material wants of mankind, which today render these latter qualities essential to existence, thus preventing the development of human love, we call our fellow-workers to arise.

There is a sordid system to be overthrown, a class battening thereon to be fought. And as the power of this class, to which it ferociously clings, consists of the control of the political allegiance of the workers themselves, our course is obvious. We must organise as a class, wrest from our masters the forces of coercion directed by the machinery of government, and having thus removed the only obstacle, take possession of the indispensable resources of nature and of society—the land, the machines, and all those things necessary for the production and distribution of wealth. Such is the programme of the Socialist Party. We do not flinch from any of its implications.

"The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims . . . The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains: they have a world to win".

**Remember Tonypandy!**
Some weeks back a strike occurred in the Moabit quarter of Berlin, during which the workers were brutally assaulted by the police and soldiers. The London Liberal Press saw in that outbreak the dire effects of Tariff Reform and an anti-Liberal Government! But recent events in South Wales, where under Free Trade and Liberal rule, the striking miners have been treated with barbarity before which the Berlin horrors pale, have exploded this idea. Moreover, the chief owner concerned is a prominent member of the Liberal party, and so greatly is he esteemed by them that they propose to raise him to the Peerage now that he has retired from the House of Commons. Wales, too, is such a stronghold of Liberalism that the events there show up Liberalism in no uncertain light.

It will be remembered that for years past the South Wales miners have been trying to get an eight hours Bill passed. But—manifestation of the fraud of capitalist reform—ever since this "Great Charter of the Miners" has been law they have been striking against its effects. The employees of the Cambrian Combine in the Rhonda Valley, and of the Powell Duffryn Co. in the Abedare district, have been driven to desperation by the harassing conditions imposed by the great Liberal mine-owners. Tremendous profits have been made—the Cambrian Trust have made a million pounds profit in the last dozen years with a capital only half that sum—yet the companies have added device to device in order to increase their spoliation, until thousands of miners can make no more than 2s. per day. And now the owners refuse to allow the men to take home firewood—a privilege they have had for half a century.

Altogether 20,000 miners are out, and in order to induce others to join them they have held demonstrations and appointed pickets, and the pickets have been attacked by the police. But the climax came on the 8th Nov., at Tonypandy. Prior to this the mine-owners became alarmed for the safety of their property, and determined to cow the strikers into submission by sheer force of arms. In the words of the Daily Chronicle (Nov. 8) "the Company, as a precautionary measure, had wired for a detachment of cavalry to protect the pits".

Although "every available constable from the surrounding country had been summoned", the Home Secretary sent over 1,000 metropolitan police—many of them being mounted and armed with swords—besides which about 1,500 soldiers, including many cavalry, were despatched. The hypocrisy of Churchill was shown by the statement he issued on Nov. 8, declaring that he had sent police instead of soldiers, whereas he had already ordered the 18th Hussars, North Lancashire Regiment, and the North Lancashire Fusiliers to Wales (from Tidworth, Salisbury Plain), and they arrived at Pontypridd next morning.

Boiling water was directed upon the strikers and live wires were put around the vicinity of mines, but notwithstanding all their savagery the Companies could not break the strike. The night of the 8th saw the most bloodthirsty attack upon the workers that has been recorded throughout the strike. Men and women were bludgeoned, kicked and maltreated so terribly that hundreds were maimed and wounded beyond description. Even little children did not escape, and many are disabled for life. Samuel Royce, a miner, was murdered by the police that night; he had joined the Territorials some time ago to defend "his" country. What a tragic commentary!

For evidence of police brutality let us quote the Liberal M. P. for Merthyr. Speaking in the House of Commons on Nov. 15th Mr E. Jones, "referring to the conduct of the police and soldiers at Aberdare, said the people were bludgeoned a quarter of a mile from the mines, absolutely innocent people being savagely attacked. It was openly stated in that district that the policemen in this case were under the influence of drink, and many incidents pointed to the fact that the police had altogether lost their heads". (Daily Chronicle, 16. 11. 10).
Although the soldiers have not been in action yet, they are being kept on the spot in case the police fail to satisfy the requirements of the colliery owners. In his official statement of Nov. 10th the Home Secretary said that he will not hesitate to use the military, and in the House of Commons (15th Nov.) he stated that "the Central Government has acted more directly than is usual or usually desirable", and further said "I take full responsibility for all that has been done".

In face of these admissions of the murderous nature of capitalist government, the workers should note the despicable conduct of those who claim to represent them in the House of Commons. That prominent member of the Labour Party, Mr. W. Abraham ("Mabon") in the House of Commons on Nov. 15th said that "he declined to take any part in condemning the Home Office or the Government for the part they took at the commencement of the sad affair". His attitude is that of all the other members of that wing of the Liberal party. For the sake of securing their seats and their salaries they are now engaged in supporting Liberals all over the country. In Dundee, for instance, the workers are being told to vote for the two "progressives", who are Mr. Alex Willie and—the assassin Churchill! Elsewhere—at Bow and Bromley and at Deptford for example—the Liberals are carrying out their share of the bargain by telling their supporters to vote for the "Labour" candidates.

Mr. Keir Hardie is anxious for the Government to appoint a Committee of enquiry. Of course—many of those on strike are his constituents. But how childish to ask the capitalists to appoint a committee to enquire into their own conduct! It will be remembered that on the occasion of the Featherstone massacre the Liberal Government gave way (!) to public demand and appointed a Committee of enquiry. Here are the miners' names: Lord Bowen, Sir A. K. Rollit, and Mr. Haldane. The result could only be the whitewashing of butcher Asquith. The traitorous Labour Party were dumb when the workers were slaughtered at Belfast in 1907 by order of the Liberal Minister Birrel. And Keir Hardie absented himself time after time in 1893 although Asquith challenged him to be present and accuse him inside the House.

Notice the impartiality of our capitalist masters. See what a sham the party divisions of Liberal and Tory are, when the issue is between the workers and the capitalists. When the Tory mine-owner, Lord Masham, appealed for soldiers to protect the Acton Hall Colliery, the Liberal Asquith immediately drafted troops to the spot, with the result that Gibbs and Duggan were murdered. Now when the Liberal mine-owner D. A. Thomas applies for military aid he receives it. The Tory party are in the same boat. When Penrhyn sought military assistance to subdue the starving quarrymen ten years ago it was readily afforded him. And in 1887 they sent armed mounted police to Trafalgar Square to disperse the unemployed—and poor Linnell was done to death.

The working class have many things to remember concerning the history of both political parties. The fact stands out clear that both political fractions have used every agency at their command to keep the working class in subjection. The hypocritical Liberal cries out against the Tory: "Remember Michaelstown!" what time he overlooks those landmarks in the class struggle—Featherstone, Belfast, and now Tonypandy.

The lessons of Tonypandy should be remembered by the toilers and driven home whenever support is asked for for the capitalist candidates. Capitalism stands for murder, whether direct as at Tonypandy or indirect as at Whitehaven, West Stanley, or at the Maypole Colliery—murder, whether in the enforced starvation recorded daily in the papers, or in the suicide of those unable to bear the burden of misery any longer.

The race for profits by our masters is a race that means misery, starvation and premature death for its victims the workers. Therefore our policy must be one of unceasing hostility to capitalism, whether "reformed" or not. Unceasing hostility to all is upholders, whether they label themselves Liberal, Tory, Labourite or Social-Democrat.
We cannot ever ally ourselves with that class whose hands are stained with the blood of our fellow toilers. We can never forget that in the struggle between the workers and the capitalists there can be no truce, no quarter, no compromise! The South Wales horrors have once again demonstrated this fact with the tragic emphasis of blood. It is for us to point again the lesson that the armed forces of the State—nay, the whole machinery of the State—exists but to conserve the interests of the ruling class. The capture of this State machinery must then be the object of our endeavours. Vengeance and our emancipation are one and the same thing, and must both be sought on the political field. If the miners learnt this lesson the masters would have cause to Remember Tonypandy!

The class struggle aboard the Titanic

Once again humanity has been staggered by an appalling catastrophe, in which hundreds of human lives have been thrown away, and hundreds of homes plunged into grief and despair. Once again the wild cry of horror has vibrated through the world, and the multitude have been not only shocked, but astounded, as if the unexpected had happened. Once again the newspapers have been slobbering sentimental platitudes and unctuous hypocrisy as though this were not the best thing that has happened for them for many a long day. Once again the machinery of bogus inquiries and sanctimonious "charity" has been set in motion in order to hide awkward and incriminating facts. And finally, once again have the flouted working class, on whom the brunt of this stupendous sacrifice to Mammon has fallen, begun to forget all about it.

Well, there is nothing at all unusual in that. The workers have proverbially poor memories. They have forgotten Featherstone; they have forgotten Whitehaven, they have forgotten Bolston, and in a few short days they will have forgotten the "Titanic". Murder of workers is so common; the workers are so used to it, that they cannot even recognise it for what it is. When the murderous rifles of the soldiery shoot unarmed workers down, it is only the operation of the Law, and there's an end on't. When mine-owners neglect to keep their mines ventilated, and blow hundreds of miners into eternity, or brick them up in the pit to be burnt alive, it's a lamentable occurrence but quite an accident, and again there's an end on't. And now that the vast "unsinkable," the floating city, has carried its full living cargo to the bottom of the Atlantic, the workers arouse themselves in horror of it for a day or two, note with approval that the Royal Family have donated about one day's income to the relief fund, and then slip quietly back into their sleeping sickness.

And, of course, they are to be helped to do this by a sham enquiry which will start out with the set purpose of fixing the blame on the iceberg, or at most on the dead officers who were supposed to have control of the ship. But this enquiry is a mere blind, a cunning attempt to cloak the real position and to screen from blame the real culprit.

The enquiry in America, for all its seeming fierce determination to get to the bottom of the matter, and for all the awkward evidence it has elicited, was only embarked on for the purpose of skating on the surface. If they could fix the blame on the White Star people, then so much the better for the American shipping interests. But beyond this they did not go; beyond this they never intended to go; beyond this they dared not go. All their virtuous indignation is of a piece with the "patriotism" of their grandfathers, who poisoned Washington's soldiers with villainous provisions with an unscrupulousness even modern Chicago fails to beat.
To those who understand modern conditions no enquiry is necessary in order to apportion the blame. The starting point of this enquiry will, of course, be the hour immediately preceding the collision. They will go on the worn-out assumption that the captain had the command of the ship. No one will ask why was the "Titanic" built. No one will dream of making the designing of the ship the starting-point of the enquiry. No one will dare to suggest that the captain and his officers had not the command of the vessel.

Yet this way lies the truth. In the very designing of the "Titanic" is the first word of the tragic story, in keeping with which is every jot and tittle of evidence to the end. In the luxurious furnishings—the swimming baths, the flower gardens, the racquets courts—read the secret of the catastrophe. The ship was built to carry rich passengers across the herring-pond.

Almost the first comment that was made by the newspapers when the fatal news came to hand was that among the first class passengers aboard the vessel were millionaires who were collectively worth £30,000,000. This in itself is significant.

The fares of those six hundred first and second class passengers must have totalled an enormous sum, compared with which the passage money of the steerage was a negligible quantity. The "Titanic," then, was essentially built for rich passengers upon whom the White Star Company depended to enable their vessel to "earn" a dividend.

The course is clear from this. The ship was on her maiden voyage; it was necessary to convince the wealthy, whose time is so extremely valuable, that she was a fast boat. So, as it is admitted, there was a general order to "smash all records"—which was duly done.

This explains why the look-out men had glasses until they reached Queenstown, but not afterwards—record smashing on the Western voyage commences at Queenstown. When records are to be smashed it is very inconvenient to have the look-out seeing too much—especially when the ship is an "unsinkable" and well-insured. It also explains why the vessel was on a wrong course at a wrong speed, and why no notice was taken of the look-out's warning.

Much will be made of these latter facts, no doubt, and the dead officers will be blamed. It must not be forgotten, however, that capitalist companies invariably choose for responsible positions those men to do what they are paid to do. It is all moonshine to talk of the captain being in command. They command who hold is livelihood in their hands. If we will not take risks and get the speed they want, then he must give place to one who will.

So at the bottom it is the greed for profit and the insatiable desire for speed on the part of the rich that is responsible for the disaster, whatever conclusion the Committee of Enquiry may come to. Of course, they will not give any such verdict as that, for that would be to indict the capitalist system.

The actual details of the wreck afford a further opportunity of pressing home a lesson. The evidence of the survivors and the evidence of the official figures of the saved, show that even on the decks of the sinking liner, and to the very end, the class struggle was on. Those who had clamoured for speed were the first to monopolise the boats, and the way was kept open for them by the officers' revolvers. Even the capitalist newspapers are compelled to admit the significance of the figures. Of the first class men 34 per cent were saved: of the steerage men only 12 per cent. Figures like those are eloquent enough without the evidence of the officer who admitted that he kept steerage passengers from a half-filled boat with shots from his revolver.
Much has been made of the fact that the cry "Women and children first" was raised, and it is not necessary to cast aspersions on the courage of any man who survives. The salient fact is that it was not a question of courage but of class. "Women and children" meant women and children of the wealthy class. Of first class women and children practically all were saved, some even with their pet dogs. Of the steerage women and children more than half perished. The "chivalry" of the ruling class does not, save in very rare instances, extend itself to the class beneath them.

We are not of those who expect any great results from this ocean tragedy. Working-class lives are very cheap, and the age that abolishes the Plimsol Line at the demand of those greedy for profit is hardly likely to insist upon the provision of proper means of life-saving or the careful navigation of passenger vessels. Murder by wholesale may be committed without doing violence to "law and order," so long as it is committed by the capitalist class in the "legitimate" scramble for profits. The law only moves against the Crippens and the Seddons, but the murders quite commonly committed by the capitalist class are not one whit less foul, for all nobody is hanged for them.

(May 1912)
The Balkan Conspiracy

To arms! To arms! Thus once again is the "Eastern Question" answered. Turk and Bulgarian, Mohammedan and Christian, are at one another's throats in a frenzy of blood-lust. The clash of arms and the roar of guns once more shake the hills and mountains of the near East, and the cries of wounded and dying men fill fair valleys with horror.

What does it all mean? What has it got to do with us of the working class?

Although some say it is no affair of ours, we emphatically hold otherwise. Before almost all else we Socialists are internationalists. We belong to the international working class. Our grievance is international; our only hope is international, and our enemy is international also. Hence we are interested in every activity that hurts, hinders, or helps our fellow workers anywhere and everywhere. The Press, the politicians and the parsons are quite certain the war is the fight of Christian martyrs against the infamies of the Turk! We hear from them much of the gross barbarities, the murders and the miseries, inflicted upon helpless Macedonia by the Terrible Turk. But we are unconvinced. It may all be true. The Christian may be as meek and mild as he is usually painted. All the provocation may be on the side of the unspeakable Turk. But the information is suspect. Black and bad as the crimes of the Turks may be, criticism comes with little grace from Russia, reeking with the blood of butchered workmen, or from Spain, dank yet with her blood-feast of Barcelona, or from Italy, washing her hands after her callous inhumanities in Tripoli, or from France or Germany where as late as this year even, peaceful gatherings of unarmed workers have been ruthlessly crushed with the sword, or from Belgium with her Congo record, or from Britain whose capital has almost blotted a people out in the Putomayo district of Peru, with every fiendish cruelty that could be cheaply inflicted.

To mouth the horrors of Armenia, to point to the infamies of the Sultan in Macedonia, as do those who are trying to find excuses for this stupendous waste of working-class life, it is quite obvious, is nothing but the sheerest humbug. Why, then, this war?

Montenegro was the first with its declaration of war—a country with under 250,000 inhabitants—not, in that respect, the equal of the London suburb, West Ham—and as poor as the oft-quoted church mouse. Where did she get her armaments? Bulgaria, Servia, Greece, every one of them poor—who backed them and why?

Why did Russia take up the Montenegrin war loan? Why did "The Powers" take up the Bulgarian loan? Were they moved to do so by the promptings of humanity? Read the cynical answer in the story of past wars.

Japan fought Russia for the forests of Manchuria. Korea helped Japan—now Korea belongs to Japan. The United States fought Spain ostensibly on the ground of the Cuban "horrors", and the Yankee Eagle has his beak in the hearts of the Cubans and the Phillipinos.

The English Government "sought neither gold nor territory" in South Africa, but the Transvaal and the Orange Free State went the way of Zululand and the Basutos' country—and it was the wrongs of the Uitlanders, who hadn't got the vote, that justified the war!
Every brutal and bloody gang of rulers, sitting armed on the backs of their groaning, bleeding and starved multitudes, have sobbed and slobbered and shed crocodile's tears over the suffering subjects of the Sultan. Austria was so shocked by the miseries of the poor people of Bosnia and Herzegovina that she had to soothe her feelings by "annexing" both these countries. Britain also has been sorely troubled over the horrors perpetrated in the Ottoman Empire, so the Cross relieved the Crescent of Egypt and Cyprus. Russia wrung her hands in agony, and then laid them on Bessarabia. That monument to Garibaldi's genius, A United Italy, itched to stop the villainies of the Porte, so she seized Tripoli at the admitted cost of 9,000 Italian workers' lives, and goodness knows what cost to "the enemy", if we are to believe the Italian boasts of slaughter.

Have we answered the question of why this war? It is the old story of Grab! The monopolists of the means of life are out for plunder. Already the Daily News and Leader has published a possible division list of the spoils—of the division of Macedonia—the filching of Turkish territory.

The world's financiers, the world's brigands, are seeking wider fields for exploitation. The owners of the New World are grasping at the old. Bulgarian peasants, Servian toilers, Grecian slaves, are to sacrifice their lives to provide plunder for the moneyed tyrannies of Europe. Women of our class are to be widowed, children to be orphaned, homes to be desolated, to make a masters' holiday. Hence the war fever is aroused, religious rivalries stirred up, racial hatreds and jealousies fanned to fury by judicious but unscrupulous lying—and all that Macedonia may go the way of Persia.

We counsel our toiling brothers of the Balkans, be their religion what it may, to seriously ask themselves who really is to benefit by this war. The "Powers", who so applaud their "heroism", who affect such pained surprise at each new enormity of the Porte, could have prevented those enormities, could have prevented this war, if they had been in agreement upon anything else than the desire for plunder. But they were not. For a generation they have been sitting like vultures on the mountain tops waiting for a beakful of carrion. For a generation they have carefully treasured every discordant element that could possibly engender strife and evolve into "atrocity" because they knew that out of that strife and "atrocity", sooner or later, would come the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire, and the attendant rich pickings for whoever was strong enough to take them.

Make no mistake about it—the "Powers" wanted war. Just as the Christian religion has been the stalking horse of European diplomacy for the last half century, preserving ever fresh the excuse of "Turkish misrule", so now the Balkan States are the stalking horse of that same callous diplomacy. If that diplomacy has not entirely overreached itself; if it has not set up in this Balkan League a power it is afraid to tackle; if the fruits of its machinations have not developed into something beyond its control, then the plums of the Turkish cake will find their way into the insatiable maws of the "powers" at last.

The lesson of it all for the workers is that nothing in the world is sacred that stands in the way of capitalist aggrandisement—which is spelt: "Profits". In pursuit of profits no crime is too stupendous to be undertaken. We have examples of this everywhere, from the supplying of poisonous provisions to American troops by American contractors during the War of Independence to the deliberate raising of the load line of ships by the present British Government.
Some years ago a novel was published, the essence of which was the situation of a man who had a
great fortune within his reach if he would, by the mere pressure of an electric button, slay an unknown
man many thousands of miles away. The book created something of a sensation—which shows how
very ignorant are the average man and woman of the obvious facts of the world about them. The
situation depicted by the author presented nothing new. It just reduced to the private individual the
situation groups of the dominant section of society are always finding themselves in, with, of course,
different details—the situation they use all their diplomatic forces to place themselves in. In the
pursuit of this end every known means is exploited without compunction. Religion, patriotism, greed
—any human emotion will serve. Hence the Jameson raid as a prelude to the South African War—it
roused the "patriotic" fervour of the "bull-dog breed" to frenzy. Hence religious strife has been
fostered in the Near East by the great European powers, in order to provide the excuse that it was the
Cross against the Crescent.

It doesn't need the inducement of a great fortune for the button of murder to be pressed in our modern
civilisation. We have just been told the price English capital sets upon human life. The silk hats of
Throgmorton Street have manipulated the button which sent a Peruvian native to death for—guess
what—two hundredweight of rubber! In the Congo human beings were much cheaper. Every fourteen
pounds of Congo rubber produced under the auspices of that moral turpitude, the late King of
Belgium, cost one human life.

For the mines of Morocco hundreds of French soldiers went to their doom. The armies of Russia and
Japan died on account of forest concessions in Manchuria in the hands of a few Russian nobles. An
English court of enquiry has just found that 23 British seamen were sacrificed for the freightage of
160 tons of overload cargo. The chairman of the Consolidated Mines spoke volumes when he told his
shareholders some thirteen years ago that a victory for the British arms in the war then raging (S.
Africa) would mean £4,000,000 a year in extra profits.

Workers of the world, it is necessary for you to understand these things in order that you may
penetrate the curtain of excuses behind which it is endeavoured to hide the real reasons for this new
butchery. You see from the above how much value the rulers anywhere set on the lives of the workers.
What, then, think you, are the sufferings of Macedonian Christians to them? They would press the
murder button on the lot for the sake of a concession to run a railway over their corpses.

The working class of the world has only one enemy—the master class. We call earnestly upon all
working men and women to join with us for the overthrow of that enemy.

To arms!

(October 1912)

The Pace That Kills. The Modern Street Traffic Problem
Discussed.

A philosophy in a Nutshell
"Hurry on, please!" is the catch phrase of the day. It expresses the salient characteristic—with or
without the please of every modern industrial centre, just as "Get on or get out!" sums up its brutal
philosophy. In the roaring traffic of the highway, indeed, we have a vivid yet typical example of this
"non-stop" age.

Take modern road traffic, then, as a case in point. It illustrates the rapid yet enormous changes forced
upon society by economic development, and it shows unmistakably how little the hireling worker
profits by the wonderful mechanical progress his physical and mental labour has made possible.
The ubiquitous motor has made the dweller in the most distant hamlet familiar with its dust and dangers, but in London's streets the "motor peril" now reaches its apotheosis. Truly the motor is everywhere, but on the crowded roads of the metropolis its presence and speed have raised a problem for which the multitudinous highway authorities seek in vain a solution.

The streets are turned into slaughter yards, and it is no crime in the eyes of those who administer the law, for the motorist to slay the harmless passer-by. It is by far the cheapest form of murder, for it is scarcely too strong a statement to say that the motorist has practically been granted the right to slaughter any who dare to cross his path.

At inquests the motorist is almost always exonerated from blame—particularly if it is pointed out that he was sober. And even in those rare cases where this does not happen the penalty is a puerile censure, or a punishment ludicrously disproportionate to that which is inflicted when the murder is done other than with the aid of a motor.

**Way for the Road Hog!**

Above all the conflicting and hysterical statements anent the modern highways problem one thing is clear: that high speed is the chief bugbear. "It's the pace that kills." Exceeding the speed that is safe in the particular circumstances is the cause of most of the maiming and slaughter. Indeed, the law, although it nominally establishes a speed limit, yet motorists habitually exceed that limit. In fact, travelling at the legal limit is stigmatised as a "mere crawl". Moreover, it is not for the safety of the public that corners are rounded and roads widened and strengthened, but simply to allow greater speeds to be attained—with the inevitable consequence of a longer casualty list.

It is, further, an understood thing that the police never prosecute for exceeding the speed limit unless it is exceeded by over five miles, and very rarely even then. The car owner's most frequent boast is of the speed at which his motor travels, and the rare fine is regarded as a certificate to the quality of his engine, and is a tribute to his childish vanity. Despite the fact that most of those killed and maimed on the highways would still be safe and sound if a rational speed in the circumstances had been adhered to, representatives of motor associations fatuously assert that not high, but "low" speeds, are the concomitants of accident! And as though to support this risible doctrine, almost every motorist in the courts, contemptuous of the law relating to perjury, states his speed to have been at the time of the smash, between five and twelve miles an hour! That is the homage that vice pays to virtue!

Motoring magistrates are ever ready to condone the recklessness of the motorist, and sometimes even lecture pedestrians and cyclists on the nuisance and danger their existence on the road presents for the man behind the "petrol gun"! They reserve the vials of their wrath, however, for the urchin on a bicycle, whose crime was in enjoying an innocent "coast" down an incline at little more than half the legal speed limit for motors!

**The Hog's Grunt Translated.**

To such a pass have things come that the attitude of the average motorist is practically that the roads are his property, and that all others are trespassers, to be hooted off. "Get off the earth or I'll push you off!" is the sentiment expressed in the imperious howl of the motor syren.
Besides being the capitalist's instrument of profit, the motor is now his chief toy—or at least it runs his "blonde" or his "brune" very close for pride of place in this connection—and to the arrogance engendered by the possession of the most powerful and speedy thing on the road is added the arrogance of wealth and class. The result is a growing contempt and intolerance on the part of the motorist toward the weaker users of the road, mitigated only faintly by spasmodic reprisals and agitations on the part of the latter.

But why go on? It is neither necessary nor advisable to recount at length the manifold abuses of the motor vehicle—the simplest statement of fact suffices.

Yet the petrol engine is a marvellously efficient instrument, and in its further development its possibilities are great for humanity. The simple question to be emphasised then arises—why should an undoubted mechanical advance spell greater discomfort, toil, and danger to the workers?

It would be quixotic, or worse, to attempt to stop the development of motor traffic, and it would be equally futile to drag the red-herring of the individual "reckless driver" and the exceptional "road hog" across the trail. The trouble has deeper roots. The chauffeur, for example, must obey his master or be supplanted by a more obedient servant. The taxi-driver must keep up the earnings of his cab or lose his livelihood. The employee of the motor-bus trust must keep carefully to his schedule times and maintain the earnings of his vehicle—indeed his wage depends on the number of miles he can run. Thus it is that other road users suffer who are too weak to cope with the powerful motor.

**Inciting to Murder.**

Among the weakest of road users is the cyclist, and, it so happens that the cycle is, above all others, the workers' vehicle; and those who employ it as a means of getting to and from their daily toil, know full well how the danger grows. But the bus driver, held by the trust to an inelastic time table, with his livelihood endangered if the takings of his vehicle and its daily mileage fall, is economically compelled to make unscrupulous use of the power his motor gives him, to the detriment of others. Self-preservation makes him regard the slowly moving cyclist and pedestrian as obstacles to his livelihood, hindrances to the keeping of his time schedule, impediments to his speed in getting first to paying points on the route.

The type of mind engendered by such an economic position may be gauged from the complaint of a motor bus-driver, at a South London inquest on a victim, with regard to cyclists, that "he frequently had to give way to them".

Not always, evidently. Indeed, when pedestrian or cyclist is killed, well, "accidents will happen", and there is an obstacle less on the road, while after all, coroners are indulgent. If a cyclist is scared off, he becomes a passenger the more for the bus, and another source of profit for the trust—a trust which, by the way, has the sublime effrontery to pose, in an official letter to the Press, as jealous of its "reputation as the guardian of the public safety". Gordelpus!

Of course, if every human being killed or injured by their agency was made to cause such a heavy monetary loss to the transport companies that it outweighed the profitableness of high speed and reckless driving, then the massacre would cease. But is anyone so simple as to believe this will be done? Can thugs be relied upon to prohibit murder? It is motor owners who legislate. What avails human life when put in the scales against dividends. Indeed, the attempt to make human life of more account than profits would be howled down as a dastardly, senseless, revolutionary attack upon the sacred rights of property.
A Profitable "Remedy".
No. Whatever "reforms" may be inaugurated will not diminish, but may increase, profits. A limitation of further bus licences is already semi-officially foreshadowed, and worked for. This would mean the granting of a permanent monopoly against the public to the existing trust, and the exclusion of fresh competition, without any guarantee for public safety or convenience.

But is this question of the killing and maiming by motors the only one, or even the most important? Obviously it is not; and it is only dealt with here because it is but a symptom. It is true that nearly 150 persons have been killed outright by the motor-bus trust in the metropolitan area alone during the past year. That is terrible enough; but have not equal numbers of workers being sacrificed at one fell swoop in preventable colliery disasters—not this year alone but every year? And should we have heard so much about the motor-bus slaughter had it not suited the purpose of a set of office-hunters to make political capital out of it, on behalf of that cheerless piece of humbug, "the people's trams"?

There is, however, no need to belittle in any way the facts relating to the motor peril. They are appalling. But the rest is more terrible still. The one is but the manifestation of the greater evil, for the sinister result of modern traffic conditions has a deeper meaning than is realised or expressed by commentators in the Press. It signifies the growing pace and intensity of industrial life, the universal acceleration of production, and the decreasing value of the life of the worker when put in the balance against the pleasure or the profit of the class that owns the country. The huge and increasing size of industrial centres, and the greater distances between the workers' home and the factory, the need for more quickly transferring labour, the greed of the rack-renter of the central districts, the knowledge that the workers' "time is money" to the capitalist, the rush for profits of a transport trust, and the all-pervading atmosphere of hustle, recklessness, and speed that is engendered by capitalist greed and the ever-increasing worldwide competition—all these are symptoms of the deep-lying social malady.

It is not very long ago that miners were entombed in a burning mine by bricking up the mouth of the pit in order to save the property! No! the sacrifice of human life on the road is not an isolated phenomenon. The drowning of seamen for the sake of a few extra tons of cargo consequent on the raising of the load-line by a Liberal Board of Trade; the killing and maiming of an enormous and increasing number of workers in mine and factory for the sake of extra output and extra profit; and the toll of life taken on the highways for the sake of the profit or pleasure of accelerated transport, are all phases of the same fact. Men are the slaves of the machines they have created.

Modern machines, in their marvellous precision, complexity, and swiftness, bring with them the possibility, the material groundwork, of greater leisure, and the provision of the good things of life in ever-increasing abundance. Yet the only reward of those who toil is more intense labour, a less secure position, greater hardships and dangers, and a shortened life. Out of good cometh evil? Why? Because those who work are hirelings, while those who toil not own. The machine supplants the hireling, makes him redundant, and starves him instead of feeding him. The new machines and higher speeds only increase the wealth of the parasitic owner, enabling him to discharge more wage-labourers, reduce wages, and intensify toil. Thus it is that instruments capable of dispensing wealth and leisure to all, impoverish and overwork the many. Thus it is that the triumphant advance of technology has only carried our class on to ever more painful labours. We are victims of the machine only because we are the hirelings of the class that owns it. The evolution of industry leads us on, and we struggle painfully to adapt ourselves to its steps. Hitherto the workers have neglected the one needful step—the democratic ownership and control of all industrial machinery.
Speed and concentration are the order of the day. But the London transport trust, while it provides the example of the disease, hints at the only remedy. Industry after industry has developed to the trust stage, and has shown us plainly that since those who produce now run the machinery and organise industry—for absentee shareholders—they are demonstrably capable of running production for themselves! Surely the time when they will do so is near at hand! The need, the possibility, and the economic foundation of Socialism are manifestly present.

Industrial advance places the means of socialised production within the workers' reach, and their daily trials and difficulties must open their eyes to the supreme need of realising that possibility, and of wresting the power to control from those who now usurp it. Then they will resume control of their means of life, becoming the masters of the tool of production instead of remaining enslaved; and will for the first time be able to utilise technical progress humanly and intelligently, to provide more leisure and a completer life for all.

But so long as class ownership remains, for just so long will the long list of killed and maimed continue to grow, and all remediable measures fail to keep pace with the break-neck speeding up of our daily tasks. Already we are becoming inured to the motor murders as to the butchery in other spheres of industry. The sudden development of the road motor "within the memory of a schoolboy" has struck the popular imagination, leaving scarce heeded other and more deadly fields. But soon this too will pall, and the great problem as a whole will only press more surely for solution.

Hustle and worry, then, will continue to be the worker's lot; danger, suffering, and want dog his footsteps ever more closely, until, in the fullness of time, the scales shall fall from his eyes and he shall see how frail his fetters are. And when he feels his mighty strength, and at long last sees its obvious use, woe betide the parasites who have battened on his sweat and blood in the long night of his blindness and ignorance!

(January 1913)
The War and You

As we went to Press with our last issue, but too late for us to deal with the events in our pages, the great capitalist States of Europe were flinging declarations of war at each other and rushing in frenzied haste to the long-expected and carefully prepared for Armageddon.

When we say that this mad conflict has been long expected and well-prepared for we make a statement which is almost trite. However much the masters of Europe may have tried to hide the underlying causes and objects of their military preparations, they have never taken any pains to conceal the fact that they were arming against "the day", and that "the day" was inevitable. Miles of paper and tons of printing ink have been used in the various countries in order to disseminate among the "common" people—i.e., the working class—explanations calculated to fix the blame on other shoulders. In each country voluminous "exposures" have been made of the villainous machinations of the "foreigner", always in such deep contrast to the Christian innocence of the exposers. But so far have any of the chief parties ever been from disguising the inevitability of the event they have been arming for, that they have used these very "exposures" to obtain the assent of public opinion to the race for armaments and the preparations for wholesale slaughter.

On the Continent they speak of British hypocrisy. The truth is that there is among the rulers of every capitalist country, hypocrisy enough and to spare, and the attitude of British Statesmen toward neutrals and the working class at home reeks with characteristic hypocrisy. In spite of the fact that nowadays very few even of their working-class dupes really believe in the "altruistic" humbug regarding the maintenance of the "independence of small nations", or attach any importance to Asquith, Grey & Co's drivel about the "honour of Britain", it is on those canting grounds that our masters seek to justify their plunge into the red vortex of war.

However hard our masters may try to cover their actions with the tattered and slimy cloak of "national honour" like slobbering and sentimental frauds, and however a politically and economically ignorant working class may applaud and echo these sentiments as if in an effort to hide from themselves brutal facts of which they are conscious and ashamed, there remains the obstinate truth, obvious to anyone who will go out into the streets and listen to what is there said, that even the working class realise that the motive for the war is in the last resort an economic one. Behind the covering screen of cant about British honour and German perfidy is the consciousness, frequently voiced, that it is a question, not of German perfidy but of German trade; not of British honour, but of wider markets for the disposal of British surplus products.

Let us, then, clear away from our minds the befogging folds of cant and humbug in order that we may see the facts naked and understand them, and face the situation as it really is.

We must understand, first of all, that it is essentially the character of the modern system of wealth production to bring into existence a tremendous amount of surplus wealth. This surplus wealth is that portion which the workers produce but do not receive; the portion which goes to the employers and other sections of the ruling class in the shape of Rent, Interest and Profit.
There are two things peculiar about this surplus: (1) Production cannot continue unless it is produced, because the landlord only lets his premises in order to get his rent, the investor only lends his money in order to get interest, and the employer only employs to get profit. (2) Production can only continue whilst this product can be sold, because the proceeds of the sale to pay the landlord his rent, the investor his interest, and to realise for himself that profit which is his sole incentive to engage in industrial enterprise.

The result of these two features of modern production is very simple. They have brought the master class of every capitalist country face to face with the problem of finding a market for the disposal of their surplus products. And this problem becomes every day more pressing for the following reason.

The wealth produced by the workers is divided into two portions—the portion which they receive (wages) and the portion which is retained by the masters. The portion they receive is just sufficient to enable them to reproduce their strength and efficiency, and is therefore nearly stationary. But as the means and methods by which they produce are improved, the total of their product increases. Hence, since their share remains practically constant, what remains—the surplus or master's share—increases in proportion as the machinery of production improves. Therefore, since this machinery improves at a prodigious rate, the surplus which the masters have to find a market for becomes larger every day.

As the rate of surplus wealth produced increases, it becomes more impossible for the inhabitants of the country in which it is produced—inhabitants of both classes—to use it up. The consumption of the working class is limited to that which their wages will buy, and therefore cannot encroach upon the surplus which is just that portion of their product their wages will not buy back. The consumption of the master class is limited on the one hand by their physical capacity, and on the other hand by their necessity for ever increasing their capital. Hence an outlet for it must be found in foreign markets.

Every reader will go with us so far, of course. Every British working man feels that behind all the cant and slobber about honour and the rest of it, is the solid, practical consideration that the successful issue of the war will cripple a great trade rival and provide increased opportunity of work for British workers—and so far our theory does not conflict with this. That the conception is false, however, we shall see when we return to it, as we shall later.

Military history of the past fifty years has been based upon this fact. Britain has gained control of the sea trade routes, and has seized most of the best markets of the world. At the same time it has been the policy of her statesmen to take up a repressive attitude towards the aspirations of all possible rivals. Hence the Crimea was fought in order to prevent Russia establishing herself on the trade routes to the East. Since then every endeavour has been made to prevent Russia getting an outlet to the sea through a port free from the ice grip in winter, and from the oppression of commanding forts of rival nations. This antagonism continued until the Japanese put a stopper on Russian hopes in the East, and other jealous eyes were watching her nearer home.

Now took place a change of policy—or rather, a change in the direction of the old policy. A new rival had come to ripeness. And here we come to the drivel about national "honour".

First, a treaty with Japan releases the larger part of the British Naval forces in the Far East. Then an arrangement with France transfers the French Fleet to the Mediterranean, and clears the way for the concentration of the British Fleet in Home waters.

Now these facts are matters of history, and allow of no dispute. Therefore it is quite plain that so far was it from being any question of honour which impelled the British Government to range themselves on the side of France, that they had deliberately planned the present situation years ago.
Therefore when Sir Ed. Grey came before the British House of Commons and declared that it was simply a point of honour for the British Fleet to defend the Northern coast of France he spoke with his tongue in his cheek. It was not honour but just cut and dried policy. A man so completely versed in these matters as is Sir Edward Grey must have known that there could have been no such qualified neutrality as this. In the face of such an attitude as this not only was the Northern coast of France protected from German attack, but her Southern shore and her Fleet in the Mediterranean also; for the German Fleet dared not put to sea for fear of being cut off by the British ships and caught in a trap. Meanwhile German shipping was to be at the mercy of the French and the latter left to transport troops from their African colonies without a care in the world.

As far as effecting the course of the war goes England could do very little more. If Germany was to be strangled at sea by a "neutral" nation who could not strike very hard on land, then Germany had but little more to fear from flouting that nation's "love" for Belgium. And this is so very obvious that it must have been plain to those who entered into the arrangement with France by which the defence of the French coasts was shouldered by the British Navy.

That arrangement was no secret to Germany, and its purpose and object must have been perfectly clear to them. It meant that, under the guise of neutrality, perhaps, the British naval force was to be thrown into the scale against Germany. How would this affect the situation of Belgium? The very foundation of the treaty to respect the independence of Belgium was the assumption that when either France or Germany should attempt to use Belgium as a jumping off ground against the other, it would be at the cost of arraigning Britain on the opposing side.

But years before the war broke out the British Fleet was placed at the disposal of France, under a cunning arrangement that could not possibly deceive those against whom it was directed, and on whom the responsibility of meeting it fell. All they had to consider, then, in making their plans, was whether the British Naval force against them, and the rapidity of action more than ever necessary by reason of their strangulation at sea, the employment of the British Expeditionary force against them was too dear a price to pay for the advantages of a passage through Belgium. Whether the German military authorities blundered or not, they decided to take the risk. There is no escaping, then, from the conclusion that British statesmen deliberately planned some years ago to place the country in such a position that the outbreak of the war must inevitably have involved both the participation of Britain and the invasion of Belgium. So much, then, for the canting reference to honour and the preservation of the independence of small nations—such as the Boers, for instance!

It is not for us to say that there is anything to be ashamed of in admitting that the war has an economic basis. It is certainly more honest than throwing it back upon such humbug as the "honour of the British nation". But it has this disadvantage in the eyes of the ruling class—it leaves this clear issue facing the working class (who are to do the fighting): what economic advantage are they going to gather as the reward of the blood they spill, the lives they sacrifice, and the miseries they endure through this most ghastly of all ghastly wars?
To this question their masters have but one reply, and that is based on an economic fallacy. They say that as a result of humbling Germany British trade will expand and there will be plenty of work for everybody. Only so long as the ruling class can maintain the belief in this fallacy among the working class can they hope to get working-class support for their wars. The old "bull dog breed" brand of "patriotism" is nearly dead—as the War Office recognised when, in their great recruiting campaign of a few months ago, they abandoned their time-worn policy of trying to convince the worker that he has a "glorious heritage" to fight for, and appealed to him on the ground that civil life had such poor prospects to offer him that he would be better off in the Army.

The contention that the crushing of Germany would lead to the extension of British trade and plenty of work for the British worker is plausible and perhaps partly true. British trade may certainly expand, but then the curious thing is that expansion is its normal condition, yet unemployment accompanies the unceasing growth of "Britain's prosperity".

Extracts from two Government publications will knock the bottom clean out of the argument that the expansion of British trade necessarily means less unemployment for British workers.

The 55th No. of the Statistical Abstract (Cd. 4258) published in 1908, gives the following information (p. 69):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total exports of the United Kingdom</th>
<th>Proportion per head of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>£234,219,708</td>
<td>£5 17s 2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>£426,035,083</td>
<td>£9 13s 3d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(The figures refer to the produce of the United Kingdom only.)

In ten years, it will be seen, the total exports of home produce almost doubled, and even as regards proportion to population, jumped up from £29 5s 10d. to £48 6s 3d. per family of five people. Now what was the result upon unemployment? Has this gigantic increase in the national exports provided "plenty of work"?

The Local Government Board's Statistical Memoranda Cd 4671 tells us that the average unemployment among Trade Unions making returns was in 1897, 3.65; in 1907, 4.3.

So we arrive at the result, fatal to the argument that the seizure of Germany's trade must mean "plenty of work for the British worker", that this vast increase of exports which took place in a single decade, was actually accompanied by an increase of unemployment. The reason for this is very simple. It is due to that unceasing improvement in machinery which is constantly making human productive energy more fertile and enabling each worker to produce more wealth in a given time.

Now what would be the effect of Great Britain capturing a large portion of Germany's export trade? The capitalist economists say that it would result in the absorption of the unemployed. Suppose we accept that, even then what is the position?

One of the first effects of a decrease in unemployment is the rise of wages, as is indicated from the Local Government's Board's Cd. 4671 (p. 44):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>Wages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>162.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>166.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>170.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>178.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>177.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Value 1</td>
<td>Value 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>174.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>173.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>172.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>173.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>175.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It will be noticed that there is a fall, a rise, and a second fall of unemployment recorded in the above table, and in agreement therewith, a rise, a fall, and a second rise in wages.

Wages are the price of labour power. Labour power, like other commodities, cannot be sold in the face of cheaper and efficient competitors. It has one such competitor—machinery.

Think what the general nature of the pressure of machinery upon labour power is. It is not that this pressure is only asserted when and where some new invention has appeared. No, on the contrary there are many labour saving devices which are anything but new which still have not altogether displaced the means which were in use before them, though they are conquering fresh ground every day. The steam plough is an example in farming, the morticing machinery in joinery, and the Linotype Composing Machine in printing.

In almost every field of industry the workers know that what they are doing by hand can be done quicker with machinery, and what they are doing with machinery can be done still quicker with more efficient machinery. Take the cylinder machine in printing. First a worker is necessary to "lay on" the sheets of paper and another to "take off". Then the invention of "flyers" knocked out the latter, and the perfection of a pneumatic appliance made the "layer-on" redundant. Yet today there are probably far more machines in operation without flyers than there are with the "laying on" apparatus.
So it is in every branch of industry. At every point operations are being performed by the means that are cheapest today, but at every point also other and more highly developed means are trying to oust the old. They can only advance by cheapening the productive process, that is, by economising the labour cost.

It is clear from this that a rise in wages, desirable as this is, is after all a handicap on labour power. At a given price it offers a given resistance to the advance of its competitor, machinery; but a rise in that price (a rise in wages) at once encourages the introduction of machinery which will enable the work to be done by fewer men.

For instance, suppose ten men with horse ploughs can plough a field at the same cost as three men with a steam plough outfit. If all their wages go up 5s. the steam plough at once becomes the cheaper means, because the advance of wages is only 15s. on three men, while in the other case the rise affects ten men, and amounts to 50s.

So it is seen that the inevitable result of the capturing of German trade must be after a little that machinery would advance and, by displacing workers, provide a new unemployed army. This indeed always happens with the expansion of trade. The exports of British products increased by over £50,000,000 in the single year 1906-7, yet so easily did machinery absorb the "shock" that, instead of there being "plenty of work", unemployment rose from 4.1 to 4.3!

So much, then, for the economic fallacy with which the masters, with their tales of their preparations for capturing German trade, try to make the workers think they are interested in the issue of the war. The workers are wage-slaves, and as such they are and always must be subject to economic laws which govern the wages system. An unemployed army suitable to the capitalist requirements of the time is one of the constant provisions of the operation of those laws—working through the development of machinery. No matter how trade may expand, or whether the German masters rule the country or the English masters continue to do so, this unemployed army will continue to be produced, and will determine the main conditions of working-class existence.
In addition, to take a job from a German in order to give it to a Briton still leaves unemployment in the working class, and the unemployed German simply follows the job to this country, and thus unemployment is again in our midst.

The question for the working class, then, is not that of British or German victory, since either event will leave them wage-slaves living upon wages. Under German rule those wages cannot be reduced lower than under British, for every British workingman knows that the masters who are shouting so loudly today for us to go and die in defence of our shackles and their shekels, have left no stone unturned to force wages to the lowest possible limits. The question, then, before the workers, is the abolition of the whole social system of which war and unemployment are integral parts, and the establishment of society upon the basis of common ownership of the means of production—the establishment, that is, of SOCIALISM.

(September 1914)
The call of the patriot

FELLOW Workers,—During the last three months there has been staring at you from every hoarding, from trams, buses, and stations, from vans, warehouse walls, and notice boards on churches, from the pages of the newspapers and every other available space, the statement that: "YOUR KING AND COUNTRY NEED YOU."

This statement, showing, if you will but think, how important and vitally necessary you are to the ruling class, has been re-iterated again and again, with innumerable variations, from countless pulpits and platforms up and down the country. Urgent appeals by the hundred thousand have been made to all "fit" men to enlist; every device and every weapon that the "liberty-loving" masters could invent, from the call of a sham patriotism to the wholesale backing of employers; from lying to bribery; from silent coercion to the insults of the white feather brigade, and from this to the deliberate suppression of hostile opinion, have been used either to entice or drive you into the ranks. For you, fellow workers, are today, as you always are, indispensable to the bosses, both for the production of profits in the "piping times of peace" (!) and for cannon fodder and the slaughter of the "enemy" in times of war.

Without you the masters are helpless; without you the State collapses and the rulers of the one country cannot hope to win in their struggle against the rulers of another country; and knowing this, and recognising YOUR supreme importance, the bosses have been moving heaven and earth, spending money like water, lying like Christians, combining cajolery with economic pressure, and ringing the changes on every form of cant, from "stirring" appeals to your manhood to virulent denunciation of your indifference or backwardness, in order to make YOU go and fight battles from which you will receive the usual rewards of empty honour, broken health, wounded bodies, or the eternal silence of the grave.

The reasons advanced why you and the working men of Europe should fight each other have been many, and we could fill a column with the contradictions of the politicians, the black coats, and the "intellectuals" on this matter. Any excuse has been good enough as long as it has had the effect of making you and the German working men defend your respective masters. From the violation of treaties by Germany to deliberate provocation on the part of England; from Russian court intrigue to the capture of international trade; from the rottenness of secret diplomacy to the enthronement of Atheism; from the policy of "blood and iron" to the jealousy and hatred of the Allies: each and every excuse in its turn, according to whether the apologist was pro-British or pro-German, has been offered as justification for the infamy now going on, and as a reason why you should take part in it.

In England it is declared to be a war for "liberty, righteousness, democracy," and other bunkum—although the bosses occasionally give the game away by stating, as the "Sunday Chronicle" of August 30th, that "the men in the trenches are fighting on behalf of the manufacturer, the millowner, and the shopkeeper." In Germany it is declared to be a conflict in which the ruling class of England, Russia, and Japan have combined to reduce her to the level of a fifth-rate power, and to render her politically, militarily, and above all economically, impotent for ever. And each aide, using every possible device, has dragged you and your fellow-workers abroad into the arena.

You had neither lot, voice, nor counsel in the events leading to the conflict; YOUR place while it lasts is that of automata, conscious only to obey blindly and, if need be, to suffer; and your lot after it is over will be the usual lot of your class, the lot of the poor, the down-trodden and the oppressed everywhere.

Of the forces now engaged not more than five per cent come from the ranks of the well-to do; YOU furnish the remaining ninety-five per cent. YOU have to bear the infinitely greater proportion of the deaths, the disease, the permanent injury and the awful strain, while those who goad you on with sweet words or threats, rest securely and comfortably in their easy chairs in club or office, killing the enemy every day with their mouths, but taking particular care, in the vast majority of instances, never to risk their precious carcases within a hundred miles of the actual conflict. We Socialists would therefore ask you to put on your considering caps and think for yourselves, instead of allowing the capitalist Press, Tory, Liberal, and sham Labour, to think for you.

When the war is over, and you are tramping the country, as you will be in many cases; when you and those near and dear to you hunger and thirst; when you feel the whip of semi-starvation and the gaunt spectre of want is your daily companion, will your "King and Country" need you then? Does not your daily experience teach you that you have no country, that you are landless and propertyless? Does it not show you that here, as in Germany, the land and its fatness belong to the masters, your portion being a mean tenement in a mean street, with the bare means of existence, and then only if you are lucky enough to get work?
When the bosses ask you to fight—to offer your lives for "democracy and liberty against militarism"; when they pose as the defenders of oppressed people, and express themselves deeply concerned to uphold justice, humanity, and right, ask them why it is that they have so long practised in England—practise to this day the tyranny and oppression they now denounce abroad.

The present British Government, the "champions of liberty," through their then Home Secretary, Churchill, prepared, previous to the railway workers going on strike, and turned out at the request of the railway magnates, no less than 58,000 troops, crushing by militarism the attempt of those workers to slightly improve their admittedly rotten conditions of existence.

This Government, "the apostle of humanity," during the last London Dock strike—when the men merely asked that agreements previously entered into by the Government itself should be honoured—placed at the disposal of the capitalist Devonport and the gang around him, an unlimited supply of police and military, and deliberately starved the women and children, in some cases to death, in order to break the resistance of the men.

This Government, the "defender of freedom, the upholder of justice, and right," endorsed martial law, the denial of all liberty and the firing on defenceless crowds in S. Africa; it batoned 700 men in Dublin, turned out the military against YOU at Belfast, Llanelly, Leith, the Rhondda valley and elsewhere; it has callously refused to give underfed children sufficient food; it mocks with pretty words, but cynical, brutal inaction, the condition of the ever-growing army of unemployed; it has sanctioned wholesale imprisonment, exile and butchery, in India, Persia, Egypt, and the New Hebrides, and allied itself with the infamies perpetrated in Russia and Japan: in a word, it reeks with lying pretence and self-satisfied Pharisaism, for in very truth, it is the ever-willing tool of autocracy. Capitalism, and class rule and the deadly enemy of the working class everywhere.

Ask this or any capitalistic Government for their credentials, examine their records, and you will learn that, beyond all dispute, whether it be England or Russia, France or Belgium, Germany or Japan, there is, so far as YOU are concerned, no difference between them whatever. They are all made in the same mould, filled with the same lust—the lust of exploiting YOU. When it suits them they flatter you; but when you ask them for a little of the justice they now prate about, then they insult, imprison and often murder you. To-day they want you badly, for they are at war with each other and want YOU to do THEIR dirty work; but remember that whoever wins or loses, your lot will be the same; the politician will still soft-soap you; the industrial machine will still grind you, and poverty and all that it means will still enchain you.

If, therefore, you are wise, if you are men, if you are really anxious for freedom from slavery, then look around you here, and you will soon learn the truth, that it is your class which is denied this freedom, and denied it by the very class who now call upon you to act. One law for the rich and one for the poor. Adulation, servility and the world's wealth for the rich; grinding toil, insecurity and eternal hardship for the poor—these are the commonplace of every day life. Is it not so?

Your duty, then, is to fight against this, and the only way you can fight successfully is by understanding your position in society, realising that wars and hate, malice and theft, oppression and greed, class rule and the travail of the workers the world over, are to-day born of capitalism. *This it the root evil*; it is *this* you have to war against if you would be free, for all else is futile; and when you do this, BUT NOT BEFORE, then liberty will be with you as your possession; there will be no oppressed peoples, for the might of the working class, organised consciously for the overthrow d the modern octopus, will have conquered, and the international commonwealth will be here.

(November 1914)
**Strikes for peace**

Signs are steadily growing that the working class of Europe are becoming weary of the war, with its endless slaughter, its lack of decisions making for peace, and the increased privation and misery that result from its continuance.

Enthusiastic at first for the war, with an enthusiasm inflamed and fed by the Press and the preachers - religious and political - of the master class, the workers of the various belligerent countries rushed to the fray, to the cry of “On to Berlin!” “Paris in a week!” and the like. Three and a half years of appalling slaughter have intervened, with immense improvements and developments in the instruments of torture and destruction, but the belligerents are no nearer a military decision now, on either side, than they were in 1914.

Food is becoming short, not only because millions of men have been called to the armies and navies, but also because millions more have been taken from the production of the necessaries of life and put to making instruments and articles for its destruction. And this second army has to be fed along with the first.

This food shortage is further aggravated by the favouritism that is rampant all round. Working-class women may wait for hours in queues for meat or margarine, and then fail to obtain any, but wealthy novelists, paunchy parsons, triple chinned quondam “white-feather” ticklers, and prosperous “patriots” in general, can easily obtain hundreds of pounds weight of good things to nourish their determination to sacrifice and strengthen their “will to victory.” Shops in working-class neighbourhoods are often shut for days because of the lack of supplies, but there is no shortage of first class meat, genuine butter, choicest tea, and so on at the big hotels and clubs of the West End of London, and of certain fashionable resorts. The wives of the capitalists never stand in queues for anything except a view of the latest extravagance in expensive fashions.

Although the news published here of things that are happening on the Continent has to be taken with a certain amount of caution, as we must remember that the Censor will only allow the publication of items that suit the interest of the master class, it seems fairly certain that disaffection is growing there and strikes are increasing. In many cases the avowed object of the strikes in Germany and Austria is the securing of food, but nearly always accompanying this demand, and in some cases forming the sole object, is the call upon the governments to declare an armistice and enter into negotiations for peace.

In this country a similar movement is spreading and strikes are not only in progress, but more are threatened. This movement has received a great impetus from the introduction by the Government of a measure for extending the power of Conscription by the military authorities, usually referred to under the misleading but catchy title of the “Man Power Bill.” In the Press the greatest prominence has been given to the attitude taken up by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, though this society is not the only, or even the most important, section affected by the Bill. The reason for singling out the ASE has been the refusal of the Executive of that body to take part in a joint conference with the other trades and Sir Auckland Geddes, on the details of applying the Bill. The ASE Executive claim that, as they have a separate agreement with the Government on this question, they should be consulted separately on the withdrawal of that agreement.

While this Government have a complete answer to this objection, it is significant that, so far, they have not attempted to bring that answer forward. Sir Auckland Geddes or Mr. Lloyd George (whose title will no doubt arrive later on) could easily have answered the ASE Executive somewhat as follows:

> “It is true we made that agreement with you, but what of it? Did we not point out at the time that there was no guarantee that we would keep it? Did not Mr. Henderson answer your question on this point by telling you point-blank that no such guarantee would be given? And, far more important than this, is it not a fact that we have made various promises, pledges, and agreements, several of them embodied in Acts of Parliament, not only to sections, but to the whole working class. Even now your protest is not on behalf of the working class, but a claim that a small section - the members of the ASE - should not be placed in the Army until the ‘dilutees’ have been taken. Surely if you did not complain when we smashed agreements and pledges given to the whole working class it is illogical to complain now when a section of that class is being similarly treated.”

This latter fact is the fatally weak point in the ASE case, and is being used effectively by the capitalist Press and spokesmen against them.
While such narrow, short-sighted views are held by sections of the working class the master class have an easy task in keeping alive the jealousies and divisions that are so useful to them in their fights with the workers.

Sir Auckland Geddes was quite successful in urging the other trade union leaders whom he met in conference to accept his proposals and to promise to persuade their followers to accept them without trouble or friction. One reason why the ASE officials were not so ready to follow their old methods on this occasion is the growth of the “Shop Stewards” movement up and down the country. This movement has helped to undermine the influence of the “official” cliques in the trade unions, as shown by the numerous “unauthorised” strikes, and with the loss of this influence over the rank and file the officials realised that their chance of bargaining for jobs with the master class would be gone.

Apparently some of the Shop Stewards, however, are merely rivals for the “official” positions and refuse to move far outside the beaten track. According to the Daily Telegraph for Jan. 30th, 1918, the “National Administrative Council of Shop Stewards” passed the following resolution:

“That they are not the body to deal with the technical grievances arising out of the cancellation of occupational exemptions from military service embodied in the Man Power Bill, and must, therefore, leave such grievances to be dealt with by the official organisations concerned.”

Most of the “official organisations” are swallowing the “grievances” whole.

It would be a big mistake to suppose that these strikes and threats to strike indicate an acceptance of the principles of Socialism, or even a general awakening to the fact that they are slaves to the master class, on the part of those engaged in this movement. In some cases there may be some suspicion as to the good faith of certain Ministers and the War Cabinet, but even this suspicion is only of a faint type, as is shown by several of the resolutions passed at various meetings. According to Press reports resolutions of similar character have been passed (up to the time of writing) at meetings held at Woolwich, Albert Hall (London), Barrow, etc, in the following terms:

“That the British Government should enter into immediate negotiations with the other belligerent Powers for an armistice on all fronts, with a view to a general peace on the basis of self-determination of all nations and no annexations and no indemnities. Should such action demonstrate that German Imperialism was the only obstacle to peace they would co-operate in the prosecution of the war until the objects mentioned in the first part of the resolution were achieved. Failing this they would continue their opposition to the man-power proposals” - Daily News, 28.1.1918.

These resolutions show the confused mental condition of the workers concerned. Does their claim for “self-determination” apply to Ireland, India and Egypt? If so, do they really imagine the British capitalist Government will agree to such application? Certainly they must be simple if they believe a threat to strike would bring such a result.

A resolution moved at Glasgow at a meeting where Sir A. Geddes was present struck a firmer note in the following terms:

“That having heard the case of the Government, as stated by Sir Auckland Geddes, this meeting pledges itself to oppose to the very uttermost the Government in its call for more men. We insist and pledge ourselves to take action to enforce the declaration of an immediate armistice on all fronts; and that the expressed opinion of the workers of Glasgow is that from now on, and so far as this business is concerned our attitude all the time and every time is to do nothing in support of carrying on the war, but to bring the war to a conclusion.”

The supporters of the war could of course point out that, as far as the workers are concerned, there is as much - and as little - reason for carry on on the war now as ever there was. Better late than never, however, and if the Clyde workers realise even at this late date that they have nothing to gain but a good deal to lose by the continuance of the war it is a point to the good.

Of course the Government soon arranged for a counterblast to these resolutions, and the Press gives somewhat vague and rather circumstantial accounts of meetings where resolutions of support of the Government were supposed to be passed. But this action itself is a proof of how widespread, if not deep, is the movement.
It would be folly, or worse, for the workers to fail to recognise the forces that can be employed against them by the Government if it chooses. Already in certain cases where men have refused to work in a particular factory or on a particular job the protection cards have been withdrawn, the men called to the colours, and then ordered back to the factory or job at ordinary soldier’s pay. With its present powers and without troubling to pass the “Man Power” Bill at all the Government could withdraw the protection cards and exemption certificates of the engineers and others concerned, call these men to the colours, and then draft them back into the shops and shipyards under military orders and discipline and on army pay.

The messages, more or less reliable, purporting to show that this action is also taking place in Germany against certain of the strikers there may merely be the newspaper preparation for an extension of such action here.

It is true that, to the outsider, signs of another sort are not wanting. The sudden calling of the Labour Party Conference to formulate what it called its “Peace Aims” without even taking time to consult its constituent bodies was undoubtedly the work of the Government to prepare for a “climb down” on their previous bombastic claims. The contemptuous treatment of Mr. Havelock Wilson at the Conference shows how readily the capitalists throw aside their tools when they have served their purpose. Mr. Lloyd George’s speech a few days later was practically a withdrawal of almost every claim, from Constantinople to Alsace- Lorraine, previously put forward. Of course the game of bluff will not be dropped all at once; but how transparent it is becoming is shown by the official statement of the Inter-Allied War Conference published on 4th February, 1918:

“The Allies are united in heart and will, not by any hidden designs, but by their open resolve to defend civilisation against an unscrupulous and brutal attempt at domination” - Daily Telegraph.

To draw up such a statement during the very week that the question as to whether the war was to be continued till the objects of the secret treaty with Italy were attained was being raised in the British Parliament was certainly an exhibition of irony.

Rumours have been floating round that the Bill was introduced with the object of raising disturbances so as to give grounds for a further abatement of claims on the part of the Government and whether these rumours have any foundation in fact or not, it is certainly curious that a Bill should be introduced to give the Army authorities power they already possess in substance if not in method. The excuse that the matter is too pressing to allow the time necessary for the present procedure, while valid, hardly seems strong enough for the introduction of such a trouble-raising measure.

By far the greatest danger to the workers lies in another direction,. The ablest representative of the master class to-day on the public Press is Mr. A. G. Gardiner, of the Daily News. Not only has he a firm grasp of the situation from the masters’ side, but he is easily the cleverest of their agents at the game of misleading the workers by using a style of seeming honesty and openness to cover up a substance of slimy deceit. A good example of this was his ‘Open Letter to the Clyde Workers’ (Daily News, 19.1.1918). His articles, while appearing to condemn the Government, are strenuous attempts to defend the existence and maintenance of capitalism. Another instance of danger from this direction is the employment of Mr. Henderson as a decoy duck to lure the workers into dangerous waters. Despite his unceremonious and contemptuous dismissal at a moment’s notice from his position in the Cabinet, he is again engaged on dirty work for the masters in the statement he issued to the Press on 1st Feb. In that screed he urges the workers to realise the gravity of their threatened action because it -

“… may precipitate a crisis which in the interests of the whole international working-class movement we must do all in our power to avert” - Daily Telegraph, 1.2.1918).

The cant and humbug of talking about an “international working-class movement” that has no existence, while the capitalist governments refuse to allow even a meeting of international delegates, is characteristic of one who has done all in his power to urge the workers to slaughter each other for the national interests of the capitalist class.
But these statements, along with those of Mr. Gardiner, sound plausible. Their purpose is to persuade the workers to still leave in the hands of the masters’ agents the manipulation and direction of affairs. And there is a great danger that the workers, so long used to following this course, so long in the habit of following “leaders” will succumb once more to this influence. Some of them not daring to trust themselves to manage affairs, will believe it better to leave the management to these “experts.” If only half of the blunders and appalling crimes of this war should be brought into the light of day, these timid workers will have a rude shock concerning the ability of those “experts.” Even such reports as have leaked through up to now show what a gigantic hypocrisy is their claim. The revelations that have been published in regard to Mesopotamia should convince every worker that they simply could not themselves manage matters worse, while the contempt they are held in by both the master class and its agents may be illustrated by a small incident from one of the war fronts.

A certain road on a portion of the line is used to bring up munitions and food to the men in the trenches. The “enemy” knows the position - and use - of this road quite well. It is therefore watched during the light hours, and swept with shell and machine-gun fire during the night. The transport vans are stopped just outside the area of fire to save the mules (four-legged ones) and the supplies are then carried through the shot-swept zone by the men.

As the working class begin to understand the position they occupy in modern society; as they begin to take a hand in settling affairs of social importance, they will make many blunders and mistakes. In the main, however, these will be easily recognised and corrected. But the biggest danger that confronts them - the biggest mistake they can make - is to place power in the hands of “leaders” under any pretext whatever. It is at once putting those “leaders” in a position to bargain with the master class for the purpose of selling out the workers. It allows the master class to retain control of the political machinery which is the essential instrument for governing Society. All the other blunders and mistakes the workers may make will be as dust in the balance compared with this one, and not until they realise this fact will they be on the road to Socialism.

(February 1918)

**A Socialist View of Bolshevist Policy**

**Where We Stand**

Ever since the Bolshevik minority seized the control of affairs in Russia we have been told that their "success" had completely changed Socialist policy. These "Communists" declare that the policy of Marx and Engels is out of date. Lenin and Trotsky are worshipped as the pathfinders of a shorter and easier road to Communism.

Unfortunately for these "Bolsheviks," no evidence has yet been supplied to show wherein the policy of Marx and Engels is no longer useful, and until that evidence comes the Socialist Party of Great Britain will continue to advocate the same Marxian policy as before. We will continue to expose and oppose the present system and all its defenders and apologists. We shall insist upon the necessity of the working class understanding Socialism and organising with a political party to obtain it.

**Socialism Far Off in Russia**
When we are told that Socialism has been obtained in Russia without the long, hard and tedious work of educating the mass of workers in Socialism we not only deny it but refer our critics to Lenin's own confessions. His statements prove that even though a vigorous and small minority may be able to seize power for a time, they can only hold it by modifying their plans to suit the ignorant majority. The minority in power in an economically backward country are forced to adapt their program to the undeveloped conditions and make continual concessions to the capitalist world around them. Offers to pay war debts to the Allies, to establish a Constituent Assembly, to compensate capitalists for losses, to cease propaganda in other countries, and to grant exploitation rights throughout Russia to the Western capitalists all show how far along the capitalist road they have had to travel and how badly they need the economic help of other countries. It shows above all that their loud and defiant challenge to the capitalist world has been silenced by their own internal and external weaknesses as we have so often predicted in these pages.

**Lenin's Confessions**

The folly of adopting Bolshevik methods here is admitted by Lenin in his pamphlet *The Chief Tasks of Our Times* (p. 10). "A backward country can revolt quicker, because its opponent is rotten to the core, its middle class is not organised; but in order to continue the revolution a backward country will require immediately more circumspection, prudence, and endurance. In Western Europe it will be quite different; there it is much more difficult to begin, but it will be much easier to go on. This cannot be otherwise because there the proletariat is better organised and more closely united."

Those who say "Russia can fight the world", are answered by Lenin:

"Only a madman can imagine that the task of dethroning International Imperialism can be fulfilled by Russia alone."

Lenin admits that "France and England have been learning for centuries what we have only learnt since 1905. Every class-conscious worker knows that the revolution grows but slowly amongst the free institutions of a united bourgeoisie, and that we shall only be able to fight against such forces when we are able to do so in conjunction with the revolutionary proletariat of Germany, France, and England. Till then, sad and contrary to revolutionary traditions as it may be, our only possible policy is to wait, to tack, and to retreat."

**State Capitalism for Russia**

We have often stated that because of a large anti-Socialist peasantry and vast untrained population, Russia was a long way from Socialism. Lenin has now to admit this by saying: "Reality says that State Capitalism would be a step forward for us; if we were able to bring about State Capitalism in a short time it would be a victory for us. How could they be so blind as not to see that our enemy is the small capitalist, the small owner? How could they see the chief enemy in State Capitalism? In the transition period from Capitalism to Socialism our chief enemy is the small bourgeoisie, with its economic customs, habits and position" (p. 11).
This reply of Lenin to the Communists of the Left (Bucharin and others) contains the further statement that, "To bring about State Capitalism at the present time means to establish the control and order formerly achieved by the propertied classes. We have in Germany an example of State Capitalism, and we know she proved our superior. If you would only give a little thought to what the security of such State Socialism would mean in Russia, a Soviet Russia, you would recognise that only madmen whose heads are full of formulas and doctrines can deny that State Socialism is our salvation. If we possessed it in Russia the transition to complete Socialism would be easy, because State Socialism is centralisation control, socialisation—in fact, everything that we lack. The greatest menace to us is the small bourgeoisie, which, owing to the history and economics of Russia, is the best organised class, and which prevents us from taking the step, on which depends the success of Socialism."

Here we have plain admissions of the unripeness of the great mass of Russian people for Socialism and the small scale of Russian production.

If we are to copy Bolshevist policy in other countries we should have to demand State Capitalism, which is not a step to Socialism in advanced capitalist countries. The fact remains, as Lenin is driven to confess, that we do not have to learn from Russia, but Russia has to learn from lands where large scale production is dominant.

**Lenin and the Trusts**

"My statement that in order to properly understand one's task one should learn socialism from the promoters of Trusts aroused the indignation of the Communists of the Left. Yes, we do not want to teach the Trusts; on the contrary, we want to learn from them." (p. 12) Thus Lenin speaks to his critics. Owing to the untrained character of the workers and their failure to grasp the necessity of discipline and order in large scale production, Lenin has to employ "capitalist" experts to run the factories. He tells us: "We know all about Socialism, but we do not know how to organise on a large scale, how to manage distribution, and so on. The old Bolshevik leaders have not taught us these things, sand this is not to the credit of our party. We have yet to go through this course and we say: Even if a man is a scoundrel of the deepest dye, if he is a merchant, experienced in organising production and distribution on a large scale, we must learn from him; if we do not learn from these people we shall never achieve Socialism, and the revolution will never get beyond the present stage. Socialism can only be reached by the development of State Capitalism the careful organisation of finance, control and discipline among the workers. Without this there is no Socialism." (p. 12.)

That Socialism can only be reached through State Capitalism is untrue. Socialism depends upon large-scale production, whether organised by Trusts or Governments. State capitalism may be the method used in Russia, but only because the Bolshevik Government find their theories of doing without capitalist development unworkable— hence they are forced to retreat along the capitalist road.

**The Internal Conflict**

Lenin goes on: "The workers who base their activities on the principles of State Socialism are the most successful. It is so in the tanning, textile, and sugar industries, where the workers, knowing their industry, and wishing to preserve and to develop it, recognise with proletarian common sense that they are unable at present to cope with such a task, and therefore allot one third of the places to the capitalists in order to learn from them."

This concession is another example of the conflict between Bolshevik theory and practice, for the very argument of Lenin against Kautsky and others was that in Russia they could go right ahead without needing the capitalist development such as it exists in other countries.
The whole speech of Lenin is directed against the growing body of workers in Russia who took Lenin at his word. These people fondly imagined that after throwing over Kerensky they could usher in freedom and ignore the capitalist world around them. They thought that factory discipline, Socialist education, and intelligent skilled supervision were simply pedantic ideas.

A further quotation from Lenin will make this clear: "Naturally the difficulties of organisation are enormous, but I do not see the least reason for despair and despondency in the fact that the Russian Revolution, having first solved the easier task—the overthrow of the landowners and the bourgeoisie, is now faced with the more difficult Socialist task of organising national finance and control, a task which is the initial stage of Socialism, and is inevitable, as is fully understood by the majority of class-conscious workers."

He also says: "It is time to remonstrate when some people have worked themselves up to a state in which they consider the introduction of discipline into the ranks of the workers as a step backwards." And he points out that "by the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and landowners we have cleared the way, we have not erected the structure of Socialism."

How far they have cleared the capitalists out of the way is uncertain, as they are a long way from self-reliance. The long road ahead is admitted by Lenin in these words: "Until the workers have learned to organise on a large scale they are not Socialists, nor builders of a Socialist structure of society, and will not acquire the necessary knowledge for the establishment of the new world order. The path of organisation is a long one, and the tasks of Socialist constructive work require strenuous and continuous effort, with a corresponding knowledge which we do not sufficiently possess. It is hardly to be expected that the even more developed following generation will accomplish a complete transition into Socialism." (p. 13.)

**The Rule of the Minority**

The denunciation of democracy by the Bolshevik leaders is quite understandable if we realise that only the minority in Russia are Communists. Lenin therefore denies control of affairs to the majority, but he cannot escape from the compromise involved in ruling with a minority. Not only is control of Russian affairs out of the hands of the Soviets as a whole, but not even all the members of the Communist Party are allowed to vote. Zinoviev, a leading Commissar, in his report to the First Congress of the Third International said:

"Our Central Committee has decided to deprive certain categories of party members of the right to vote at the Congress of the party. Certainly it is unheard of to limit the right voting within the party, but the entire party has approved this measure, which is to assure the homogenous unity of the Communists. So that in fact, we have 500,000 members who manage the entire State machine from top to bottom." *The Socialist*, 29.4.20. Italics not ours.

So half a million members of the Communist Party (counting even those who are refused a vote within the party) control a society of 180 million members. It is quite plain why other parties' papers were suppressed: obviously they could influence the great majority outside the Communist Party. The maintenance of power was assured by the Bolshevik minority through its control of political power and the armed forces.

(July, 1920)
Ireland, the Labour Party and the Empire

After a long and bitter struggle, there is at last the prospect of peace in Ireland. The workers of Ulster and the South have fought with a fervour only equalled by the frenzy of the late world war, and are now to be able to see what it really was they fought for. If they hope for anything better than the fate common to ex-soldiers in all the countries of Europe—victors and vanquished alike—then disappointment awaits them.

Sinn Fein, behind a screen of fine-sounding no-surrender proclamations, appears to be preparing to forego the demand for full recognition of Ireland's status as an independent Republic; while the English Government, under the pressure of a variety of political and financial factors, considers the cost of continued refusal of concessions prohibitive, and offers a form of Dominion Home Rule.

The chief, the economic, causes of the dispute are not far to seek. The northern Capitalists, whose prosperity lies in their easy access to markets within or protected by the British Empire, could never submit to being cut off from the source of their wealth. Similarly, the numerically strong body of farmers and traders in the South, plundered and thwarted for centuries by successive English Governments, and seeing themselves, for the benefit of their competitors, denied the right of freely developing commercial relations abroad, looked to the victory of Sinn Fein as the precursor of a new era of expansion for their trade. Add to this the hopes of the younger generation for satisfaction of their hunger for land, hitherto inaccessible to them owing to foreign ownership and profitable use for non-agricultural purposes, and we have some idea of the material basis for the Irish war.

The workers were called upon to take up arms for objects far enough removed from these, "Protestantism and the Flag" or "Catholicism and Liberty," as geographical accident ordained: it was always the trade of the politician to provide plausible excuses. They responded with the usual disastrous results for themselves. Under the pretext of the necessity for presenting a united front to the external enemy, robbed and robbers, workers and employers, closed up their ranks to the manifest advantage of the latter.

Trade Union organisation was wrecked by internal dissension, or rendered innocuous in the larger interest of patriotism, that is, of the employers, whether Belfast shipbuilders or Southern farmers. Now, with the coming of peace, the class struggle will once more be forced to the front, and whether the wage-earners are in a position to resist attempts to lower their standard of living or not, they can at least learn the lesson of their recent folly. In Erin, no more than in this or any other Capitalist country, do war slogans or the sentiments of national brotherhood weight heavily where they conflict with profit-making.

The cessation of guerrilla warfare and the raising of martial law will provide a welcome removal of political and mental obstacles to our propaganda, but it must always be remembered that the form, the time, and the terms of the peace are in the hands of the Ruling Class. Theirs is the political control, and the accompanying military power enables them to give or withhold, and to bargain as they think fit. On neither side have the workers the deciding voice.

As might be expected, the Labour Party, which has long put at the forefront of its programme the solution of the Irish problem, has something to say at this juncture which incidentally is of interest to us. The Labour Party, as also might have been expected by those who know that body, puts the case for the English Capitalist Class.
At the height of the conflict, when there was no sign of a weakening on either side, of or any kind of rapprochement, the Labour Party, somewhat vaguely it is true, stood for Ireland's right to Independence with but two qualifications: guarantees for the protection of minorities and against the possibility of future military or naval menace to this country. Now, however, that changed circumstances or changed feeling in the constituencies lead the Government to negotiate, the Labour Party withdraws from the attitude it had taken up. When war is the order of the day, it is useful but harmless in bye-election tactics to promise Independence, but when Capital decides to have peace and the actual terms are to be settled, the Labour Party is called to heel and must follow its masters.

Thus we have Mr. J. H. Thomas declaring (Daily Herald, September 2nd) that "no political party in England can hold out any hope of an Irish Republic." The Herald commented adversely on this "astounding" remark, and dismissed it as a private opinion only, not representative of the Labour Party.

Curiously enough, a week before H. N. Brailsford has written in the Herald under the title "Ireland and Sea-Power," expressing the same opinion in even more vigorous language, and it is with this that I propose to deal. The Daily Herald did not comment on Brailsford's article!

Brailsford is a Labour candidate, and in the Labour Daily which in this instance claims that it represents the real attitude of the Labour Party, he writes as follows (August 30th):

"The British Government (with the nation behind it) is, I believe, sincere in its readiness to yield everything except naval control . . . In plain words the issue for the British people is our world power. That is the only issue for which we ever fight . . . but it is an issue for which we always fight, and will fight. It was the issue in the world war; first, because the German navy challenged ours, and, secondly, because a German occupation of the Belgian coast must have interfered with our control of Dover Straits . . . For sea-power is the instrument of our economic expansion. Upon it rests our possession of half Africa and all India, and our ability to expand at will in China or elsewhere."

This is somewhat staggering, and one cannot help wondering whether the hundreds of thousands of out-of-work ex-soldiers are fully appreciative of the advantages that accrue to the through their "possession" of "half Africa and all India." To continue with the quotation:

"No instinct is so deeply rooted in us all (the exceptions are negligible) as the instinct which teaches us without talk or exhortation, or reflection, to guard our naval ascendancy against any risk. None even of the sincerest advocates of the League of Nations (not even Lord Robert Cecil) had a word to say in support of Mr. Wilson's proposals for the freedom of the seas. No one criticises (I except the eccentrics) the virtual British seizure of Constantinople.

"One may feel sure in advance that while we may accept, or even propose at Washington, a limitation in shipbuilding, we shall not agree to abate by a single vital concession our unlimited and uncontrolled right to blockade."

Incidentally this throws an interesting light on the bona-fides of the League of Nations and on the use to the workers of it and its Labour Party backers. We notice, too, that the "eccentrics" are excluded from those Labour Party claims to represent. For my part, I must confess to being one of them: the deep-rooted instinct of guarding "our naval ascendancy" seems to have passed me by, and I simply never froth at the mouth at the mention of this bloody old Empire.
"We are ready to concede much . . ., but we will no more give up our naval stations on the Irish coast than we will give up Gibraltar or Malta or the Suez Canal. To do so would be to begin to give up world-power.

"On the ordinary level of thought (Tolstoyans, Quakers and Communists are the only exceptions) we are acting rationally. An independent Ireland would be a danger. Our next enemy at sea would assuredly occupy, or try to occupy, it. Belgium was not the only violated neutral in the last war. China, Greece, Persia and Albania were all used or over run. There will be no yielding here . . . and Irishmen who expect us to yield eventually will have to wait till our Empire is overthrown and our sea-power vanished like Germany's."

Have you grasped the full import of this frank statement of what the Labour Party stands for? The class privileges of the Capitalists are in question, and the Labour Party is forced into the open to defend them.

Of course, the Ruling Class will not allow the Empire to be endangered by an independent Ireland. The Empire is theirs, and they won't see their private property damaged, unless superior force compels. That is simple enough. They have the power, and use it to protect and further their interests against opposition from workers and other States alike. But what is the Labour Party doing in this?

They offer themselves as an alternative to the Coalition and are in great hopes of early success. We consider them worthy of condemnation for their past record alone, but are told we should give them a chance, and wait and judge by results. Well, here is their own promise of their intentions. The fulfilment may be worse; it can hardly be better. Not only Ireland is touched upon:

"The (Washington) Conference may then be futile, and, over the issue of Imperialist exploitation in the Far East, the naval rivalry will begin in earnest, and ultimately we may find ourselves involved even in war."

What does this mean in brief? Just this: The wealth of the Empire, built up by the toil and sacrifice of generations of British workers, is to remain what it now is, the exclusive possession of our exploiters, and for their acquiescence in this the Labour Party is to be graciously permitted to take over the Government. Only nominally in power, they will be, in reality, as helpless as the Labour Governments in Australia, and will serve, as they are intended to serve, as the last defence of the Capitalist system.

Hoodwinked by a repetition from the mouths of their leaders, of the old fiction of the alleged community of interest between themselves and the employers, the workers are again to be privileged to defend the country they do not own, against all comers, from the Capitalists of USA to the Irish Republicans. Their reward will be the reward the unemployed are reaping now.

Did the last war concern the workers, or will the next? Does it matter to them that "our" naval supremacy should remain intact, any more than it matters whether Sinn Fein colours or the Union Jack fly over Dublin, or whether the German Black, Red and Gold, or the flag of Poland mocks their poverty in Silesia?

While the Capitalist Class dominates the civilised world, and owns and controls all the means of wealth production, the disposal of nations in this or that empire or sphere of economic interest is not the business of the Working Class. If you think the choice of war ministers as between, say, Churchill and Col. Will Thorne, to direct you to the slaughter-house, is worthy worrying about, then, of course, you will select your respective champions in the Coalition or the Labour Party.
If you don’t, and if you consider it time that any fighting the workers may have to do, be done for their own emancipation from the system which makes wars inevitable, you will be well repaid for the devotion of a few hours to the study of Socialism. There is urgent need for you inside *The Socialist Party*.

(December 1921)
Fake Labour Government. The puppet show

The workers, the producers of wealth, are poor because they are robbed; they are robbed because they may not use the machinery of wealth production except on terms dictated by the owners, the propertied class. The remedy for working class poverty and other social ills is the transfer of ownership of these means of production from the Capitalist Class to society. That, in a few words, is the case for Socialism.

The work of rebuilding society on this new basis cannot be started until power is in the hands of a Socialist working class, and that cannot be until many millions have been convinced of the need for change and are broadly agreed on the way to set to work to bring it about.

It is just here that the Socialist meets with an objection which is in appearance reasonable enough. Many who would accept the foregoing remarks can go with us no further.

Is it not better, they say, in view of the certainty that Socialism cannot be introduced at once, to devote much, if not all, our energy to making the best of Capitalism, and getting "something now"? By "something now" they mean higher wages, increased State protection against destitution through illness or unemployment, and other like proposals. It may then come as a surprise to them that we also believe in getting something now. We differ in that we are not willing to subordinate Socialist propaganda to the demand for reforms of Capitalism, and in that we strongly hold that the best way to get these things is by the revolutionary activity of an organisation of revolutionaries. In other words, the quickest and easiest method of getting reforms from the ruling class is to let them see that it will endanger their position to refuse.

While we recognise that Socialism is the only permanent solution, we are not among those who consider that the Capitalists are simply unable to afford better conditions for the workers. A comparison between the total income from property, and the petty cost of doles and relief, shows the falsity of that somewhat common notion. On the one hand the workers would, if they ceased to struggle, soon find that there is still room for a worsening of their conditions, and on the other hand were they free from the mental blindness which prevents them from striking a blow when and where it would be most damaging, they might, even within Capitalism, raise their standard of living and diminish their insecurity. Unfortunately they do not yet see the brutal facts of the class struggle, and too often allow themselves to be paralysed in action by their belief in the supposed community of interest between them and their exploiters, by their response to every deceitful appeal in the name of patriotism, and by their lack of confidence in their own powers and intelligence. They will put up a straight fight against their employers, but they have not yet seen through the more subtle hostility of the newspapers, the politicians, and all the other defenders of the employing class who pose as neutrals because it makes their influence more deadly. The employers and their hired defenders know well enough that your gain is often their loss, and they therefore have good reason to persuade you not to seize the opportunities that offer of raising your wages or reducing your hours. But many who talk about the beauties of an "advanced programme of social reforms" seem not to have realised that if such things are to be of any worth to you necessitate at first the dipping into the profits of the other class. Various well-meaning persons may preach arbitration and conciliation, but you know well enough that sweet words do not, as a rule, charm employers into giving higher wages. They will not give up any part of what they hold except under pressure one kind of pressure is fear; the fear that refusal to spend part of their on reforms will encourage revolutionary agitation for the seizure of the whole. There is supposed to be another way of getting "something now." It is to assist into office a non-revolutionary party like the Labour Party.
It is pleaded at the moment on that Party's behalf that it is "in office but not in power," and that its weaknesses arise from that one fact due to causes beyond its control. Within limits this is true, but why in such circumstances was office accepted? It can hardly be questioned that an official opposition, 192 strong, bent on hampering the Government could have influenced legislation not less than when actually in office. In fact, however, the Labour Party was not free to choose. It dared not refuse office; it dare not while in office attack the roots of Capitalist privilege, and had it continued in opposition to Baldwin's Government it would not have dared to obstruct as a means of compelling the granting of concessions. The reasons for its impotence in each of these situations are the same. Its programme and policy, its supporters, the basis of its organisation, and the ground upon which it chose to fight elections all combined to commit it to the administering of Capitalism as distinct from treating the present opportunity merely as a prelude to the fight for Socialism.

From the circumstance that the bulk of the members of the Labour Party do not accept Socialism as a present political issue, but at best only as a hope for the future, it would be plainly suicidal for them to talk of throwing down a challenge to the Capitalist Class. The only alternative is to do as the Labour Party are trying to do. They are trying to run the Capitalist system better than the older parties have done.

We can we can readily concede that as administrators the Labour men will prove themselves no less intelligent and capable than their predecessors, and probably more receptive of new ideas and methods than the men who made and mismanaged the war.

But the essence of our opposition to this policy is that except in quite minor respects there is only one way of administering Capitalism—the Capitalist way. Ultimately it is the economic organisation of society which dictates the broad lines of policy and breaks those who ignore them. The problems which present themselves for settlement, such as war, unemployment, poverty, arise from the very nature of the present social system. They may be dealt with in more than one way, but they cannot be treated in a manner satisfactory to the workers without first destroying Capitalism.

Support of the unemployed at comparatively trifling cost is, from the Capitalist viewpoint, a solution of the unemployment problem. Their problem is to avoid the risk of riot and revolt and their policy succeeds. War is but an extension of ordinary commercial competition, and poverty is both the effect and the necessary condition of capitalist wealth and monopoly.

Even where a Labour Government is able to introduce certain alleviations, these must be paid for in the sacrifice of political independence. The removal of the "Gap" is the price of consent to plans of the Conservative majority for the Navy and Air Forces. To argue that these objectionable measures would have been carried through by the last or any other Capitalist Government misses the point of our criticism. Capitalism produces certain evils. These evils, have, by their persistence, discredited three Governments since 1918. A Labour Government which seeks to carry on is certain not to be able to remove the evils, and under the added embarrassment of having roused high hopes, will be discredited, too, and the unhappy sequel will be that those who openly defend the present system will with some show of reason instance the failure of the Labour Party as proof that there is no solution, and many of the Labour men will drift or be forced into offering the same defence themselves.

It is to the general situation and not to the weakness or cowardice of individuals that we must look for an explanation of the actions of the Labour Government, many of which have already given obvious displeasure to their more advanced supporters.
Their term began with a strike of locomotive men, who, despite their solidarity, were compelled to accept wage reductions. So far from intervening to obtain "something now" for the strikers, Mr. MacDonald appointed as Colonial Secretary Mr. J. H. Thomas, who quite openly condemned them and hoped and intrigued for their defeat.

The miners, too, are putting forward a demand that their wages be raised to the 1914 standard, but the Editor of the Labour Magazine (January, 1924), an official Labour Party organ, can offer them no better assistance than an appeal in the following terms:—"We are sure that the miners will not embarrass the first Labour Government by pressing untimely demands . . ."

It would appear at least reasonable for the miners to receive slightly more than a starvation wage before the non-producers who own the mines should be allowed to draw their millions of pounds of profits. Even if the Labour Party, like MacDonald, are definitely committed to retaining the profit-making system, it cannot be doubted that they would, if they conveniently could, raise the miners wages; but because they are "administering capitalism" such a demand is of necessity an "untimely" one. What the miners get, even if it be given legislative endorsement, will be the result of their own organisation and action.

When the Dockers came out on strike for increases which were generally admitted even by some of the Dock employers to be long overdue, the Government had mails unloaded by Naval ratings and had made all preparations for unloading foodstuffs, etc., had the strike continued. This does not necessarily imply on their part a positive wish to break the strike. What it does mean is that this is one of the duties inevitably forced upon those, whatever their beliefs, who would undertake to administer Capitalism.

The strike had to be ended or countered. If the Labour Government had refused to act it would have forfeited the right to govern. Through Mr. Shaw, therefore, pressure was brought to bear on the Dockers' representatives to accept certain terms which were actually slightly worse than those finally granted by the employers.

"It was stated yesterday that the settlement terms follow the 'private suggestion' made by the Minister of Labour last week, with the exception that July instead of June was first proposed for the operation of the second shilling increase." (Daily News, 22 February, 1924.)

As for the nature of the "private suggestion" referred to, the Worker (March 1st) quotes as follows from Mr. Bevin's speech to the delegates:—

"The Government is responsible for the moving of the mails. They have refrained from using soldiers, naval ratings, blacklegs or force of any kind. But they are being driven up against it, and soon will have to take the choice of exercising their powers or going out of office. That was the choice, and there is no need to beat about the bush. We discussed the position with the Government. . . I want you to see the influence on our judgment in the course of the developments that have gone on."

With regard to the unemployed, Mr. MacDonald, in his opening speech on policy in the House of Commons, made it quite plain that he is not going to assist them at the expense of the propertied class.

"We are not going to diminish industrial capital in order to provide relief." (Daily Herald, 13 February.). This was received with "renewed cheers."

That attitude is explained by an interview MacDonald gave to an unemployed deputation in Edinburgh, at which he is reported as saying,
"The possibility of financial panic was also a factor to be taken into account. . . For the immediate
future good administration was requisite to win the confidence of the financial groups and ensure
stability." (Worker, 9 February.)

It is evident that to gain and keep the "confidence of the financial groups" rules out all measures
aimed at depriving the Capitalist Class of any part of what they hold, except on terms pleasing to
them.

Dr. Salter, in the New Leader, lays down a general principle on the wage question:

"It is quite certain that under present world circumstances and in view of the competition in outside
markets, no new and higher rates of wages in any industry or in any locality should be imposed by
law without careful preliminary expert investigation." (7 March, 1924.)

It would doubtless be "untimely" and "embarrassing" to suggest careful enquiry into the need for
supporting an idle class of property owners out of the product of industry.

But the question of armaments has shown up in its most glaring aspect the weakness of the Labour
Government, its complete dependence on those who pull the strings, and the truth of the Socialist
contention that those who accept office on such terms can be no more than caretakers of the Capitalist
system. In the first place it was no accident that anti-working class imperialists like Lord Chelmsford
and Brigadier- General Thompson should have gone to the Admiralty and the Air Ministry
respectively. Labour members may be allowed to prattle about the Sermon on the Mount, provided
they keep the fighting forces up to the level require by the international situation. Thus we have Mr.
"Pacifist" Ammon at the Admiralty announcing the intention of laying down five new cruisers and
two destroyers, and MacDonald actually defending it as a means of providing employment. Of the
whole batch of Labour men only one, the Rev. H. Dunnico, voted against the Government; 161 voted
with them, and the rest abstained. Some of the latter will perhaps follow Dunnico on the next
occasion. The internal anarchy of the I.L.P. is well illustrated by their inability to control the M.Ps. A
message of congratulation to Dunnico was passed unanimously by the 55 delegates attending the half-
yearly conference of the Northern Counties Divisional Council of the I.L.P. It conveyed to him
"Heartiest congratulations on being the only M.P. who stood loyally to the principles which our party
hold."—(Daily News, February 27th). It was left to Liberals like Kenworthy to protest.

The Government which will not "diminish industrial capital in order to provide relief" for the
unemployed has also agreed to "a big scheme of Air Defence," involving an additional expenditure of
£2,500,000 for 1924-25, and with the promise that "the total of air Estimates may be expected to rise
for some years."—(Lord Thompson, Daily Herald, March 8th.)

The Herald uses the word "Defence" on its front page, yet in its editorial of the same day it
endorses MacDonald's view, supported by numerous "experts", that no aircraft building can really
provide any security whatever against hostile raids.

Much has been made by Labour Party apologists (e.g., New Leader, March 14th) of the fact that the
gross expenditure on the three services is less than last year, but as Lansbury points out, this is merely
due to the changing technique of warfare:

"It is said we are to spend less on armaments as a whole: it is true, because the more deadly weapons,
such as bombs, gas, aeroplanes and submarines, are cheaper and yet more deadly than the obsolete
Dreadnoughts and other costly weapons." (Daily Herald, 15 March.)
Lansbury's further reply to those who pretend to see something different in the Labour Party's attitude to armaments is equally forcible.

"But far more important is it to realise that exactly the same kind of speeches as are being made today from the Government benches in defence of armaments, were made during the years 1906-14 by Sir E. Grey, Lord Haldane, Mr. Winston Churchill, and Mr. Lloyd George." (Ibid.)

The belief, which is now the bedrock of the Labour Party's policy, that peace can be ensured by preparing for war, is not new, and it has not exactly been confirmed by history.

The truth is that competition in disposing of the surplus products of each Capitalist country in the world's markets, and rivalry in the struggle for possession of raw materials and trade routes, lead inevitably to war. The Labour Government are now busy considering schemes for reducing the cost of production in the Empire's staple export industries. In a capitalist world that means more embittered competition, and a consequently increased probability of early war with those who feel themselves being throttled in the commercial struggle. Those who have taken on the administration of Capitalism must also face the responsibility of preparing for the conflicts that are the product of Capitalism.

The true cause of modern wars was bluntly exposed by a French General, Marshal Lyautey, speaking at a Banquet of the National Congress of Councillors of Foreign Trade at Marseilles in October, 1922.—(Star, October 31st, 1922.)

"French soldiers are fighting in Morocco to acquire territory in which rise rivers capable of supplying power for electrification schemes which will prove of great advantage to French trade. When we have acquired the last zone of cultivatable territory, when we have nothing but mountains in front of us, we shall stop.

"Our object is commercial and economic. The military expedition in Morocco is a means, not an end. Our object is the extension of foreign trade."

Without foreign markets capitalist industry in Great Britain perishes. Without protection by dominant armaments those markets are prizes to be had for the asking. Those Labour men who believe that they can promote capitalist trade without needing to arm in order to hold what they gain, are living in a fool's paradise. They have to build cruisers and bombing planes to overawe and if need be to shatter the forces and cities of whatever States come into conflict with Great Britain.

We Socialists see that wars are unavoidable if the interests of the Capitalist Class are to be protected, but we are not concerned in protecting them. We recognise that under Capitalism the workers have nothing to lose in war except their lives and nothing to gain, and so we urge them not to support Capitalist wars or the preparation for them.
Our aim as Socialists is the destruction of the Capitalist system of society, and we are therefore unalterably hostile to all political parties which seek to gain control of Parliament for any other purpose than the establishment of Socialism. The Labour Party is such a party; it has gone into office in the custody of the Liberal Party; its so-called Socialists are puppets dancing on the strings of the industrial and financial capitalists behind the scenes; its Pacifists are merely decoys who will allay suspicion while the militarists prepare for war; its wild men are a convenient buffer to receive the blows of the workers so soon as they tire of waiting for something to be done to relieve their misery. As has been well said, the Labour Party has taken over a bankrupt concern; not, however, to wind it up, but to carry it on. As well as the troubles of previous administrations, the present Cabinet is threatened with a promising crop of revolts. The men of peace grown suddenly stiff-necked and high-handed in office will surely come into early conflict with those of their late "comrades" who were too honest to desire or too insignificant to be offered posts in the Government. The genuine disapproval of the former and the ill-concealed venom of some of the others are likely to make for turbulence rather than tranquillity. So that even if our first Labour Government is only a Puppet Show, it should merit the distinction conceded by one observer, of being the best show in London.

The General Strike Fiasco. Its causes and effects.

The long anticipated month of May has come and nearly gone, and with it have evaporated both the fantastic hopes of the hot-heads of the Communist Party and the baseless fears of the nervous old women of both sexes who run the Primrose League and kindred organisations. Mr. A. J. Cook has repeatedly promised us "the end of capitalism" if the mineworkers attempted to force the miners' wages still further down; but in spite of the fact that the attempt is being made, with many prospects of success, the "revolution" obstinately refuses to materialise. In its place we have witnessed what looks suspiciously like the dying kick of Trades Unionism in its present form.

Four years ago (in our issue for April, 1922, to be precise) we definitely advocated combined action by the workers to resist the wholesale onslaught by the masters upon wages and working conditions. We did not promise a sweeping victory nor encouraged illusions regarding the ever-downward tendency of the standard of life of the workers under capitalism, but we did lay stress upon the necessity for making the best, instead of the worst, of a bad job, by means of an organised test of strength along class lines.

Experience had repeatedly shown that the old sectional mode of industrial warfare was obsolete; that, while the development of industry had united the masters into giant combinations, with interests ramifying in every direction, supported at every point by the forces of the State, representing the entire capitalist class, the division among the workers, according to their occupations, led automatically to their steady defeat in detail. The only hope, even for the limited purpose of restricting the extent of the defeat, lay, therefore, in class combination.

The Socialist Standard has only a small circulation, and our words passed unheeded by the mass of the workers, doped both by the organs of capital and the counsels of their own leaders. They were too absorbed in the petty details of their sectional struggles to perceive the general conditions governing those struggles. They could not see the wood for the trees; or they saw it only in the blurred form visible through the spectacles provided for them by the Labour Party. Those of their number who looked to "nationalisation", piecemeal or wholesale, to solve their problems and end the class conflict, considered themselves "advanced"; and their duly sceptical fellows were regarded as reactionary and hopeless. Thus, economic and political ignorance kept the workers divided and the defeats went on.
Yet even worms will turn, and rats forced into corners will fight; and it would, indeed, have been nothing less than supernatural if at length the steadily increasing pressure of their backs against the wall had not forced the hard truth into the workers enslaved minds. There is a limit even to the stupidity of sheep; and not all the smooth-tongued eloquence of their shepherds could prevent the flock from realising that they may as well hang together as hang separately.

The first official indication of this changing outlook occurred last July when the threat of a further attack upon the slave-rations of the miners led the TUC to intervene. The modesty of the workers' aspirations was proved by the ease with which their representatives were satisfied. The granting of a subsidy to the mineowners (in order to gain time and enable the Government and the master class as a whole to prepare for the wider struggle) was hailed by the entire Labour Press as a "great victory". Subsequent events have shown the absurd hollowness of that claim.

When the miners were working through the winter increasing the stocks to enable their bosses to lock them out, their leaders wasted precious time and money in futile negotiations with those employers. While the Government proceeded coolly and leisurely with its scheme for maintaining essential services and breaking the resistance of the workers, the General Council of the TUC took no step to similarly organise the efforts of the working class. Practically every section of any size (miners, engineers, railwaymen, transport workers), all had grounds for demanding increases in wages; yet instead of co-ordinating these demands in a common plan and thus giving a solid basis for united action, sectional negotiations were proceeded with, in honour of that capitalist shibboleth, the "sanctity of contract". The enemy was allowed, not merely choice of ground and weapons, but the opportunity to get in the first blow.

Much ink has been spent on discussing the responsibility for the breakdown of negotiations, yet it was plain for months that war was inevitable. Mr Baldwin had made it plain that "all wages must come down", and that position, in practice, is still adhered to by the class which he represents. So far as the rank and file of trade unionists were concerned, the renewed attack on the miners was merely the commencement of a series of further attacks all round; and this fact, not some belated "sense of justice", explains their ready response to the signal for the general stoppage. Lacking any clear insight into their class position in society, however, they were guided by feeling rather than by reason, and blindly left the conduct of the struggle to the executives of the unions and the General Council.

The weakness of the leaders in the face of the common foe, their abject "begging and pleading for peace" (in the words of J. H. Thomas), merely expressed the disorganised condition of the movement as a whole. No such weakness characterised either the Government or the mineowners.

The lock-out notices were posted at the time appointed and the terms for their withdrawal were laid down. Having allowed themselves to be bluffed and held off by months of diplomatic confab, the General Council were forced, relentlessly, to act or abdicate. Yet to the last their irresolution was apparent.

Mr A. Pugh in a statement to give "the real truth" in the British Worker of May 11th, said:

"From the moment the mineowners issued lock-out notices to their workpeople, the question at issue, so far as the General Council was concerned, was the withdrawal of those notices as a condition preliminary to the conduct of negotiations. From that we have never receded."
Yet according to the same statement, they continued negotiations right up to the evening of Sunday, the 2nd of May, two days after the lock-out notices were actually operating! They waited for the Government to give them the final ignominious kick, and this was duly administered on the pretext that the printers of the Daily Mail had more determination than their "leaders".

Once the stoppage commenced, however, these same leaders assumed all the airs of omniscient military generals. Pompous exhortations to the rank and file to "hold fast" and "remain calm and dignified" were issued in their official Strike Bulletin what time they were already succumbing to the siren-like blandishments of that "friend" of the workers, Sir Herbert Samuel.

Not once had the leaders any cause to complain of lack of support. On all hands they admitted that the workers were solid behind them. In the issue already quoted they announced,

"The number of strikers has not diminished, it is increasing. There are more workers out today than there have been at any moment since the strike began."

Further,

"the engineering shops and shipyards are to stop tonight . . . The men have awaited the instructions impatiently, and all over the country they received their marching orders with enthusiasm and a sense of relief."

As an expression of working-class solidarity the response of the rank and file was unquestionably unprecedented; but the long months, nay, years of delay found effect in the official confusion between "essential" and non-essential occupations, the handling of goods by some unions which were banned by others and the issuing of permits one day which had to be withdrawn the next. Just prior to the strike the railwaymen were working overtime providing the companies with the coal to run their blackleg trains. Afterwards they refused to handle any traffic at all while the transport workers tried to pick and choose. The lack of practical unity with which to give expression to the sentiment and secure the end in view justifies, up to the hilt, our long-standing criticism of Trade Unions upon their present base.

The confusion on the industrial field was reflected in the political sphere. In spite of the obvious fact that they were involved in a class struggle and that the machinery of government was being brought to bear at every point, the Council fatuously endeavoured to represent the issue as purely industrial. They endeavoured to confine the efforts of a class to the point at stake in one industry. They thus denied the very basis of their own existence, i. e., class interests; but if they were blind to the logic of the conflict, the Government were not. They brazenly declared the whole affair to be an attack upon the Constitution and Parliamentary methods. In order to obscure the class character of their own acts, they invoked the mildewed pillars of the "nation". According to their spokesmen, the Council with whom they had been negotiating had suddenly become "an alternative government". With unerring judgement they saw in the manifestation of working-class solidarity the latent possibility of revolution.

The only objective of a social revolution, however, is Socialism. The very facts, that the Government were in power, that millions of workers had supported them less than two years ago at the polls and that those who did not were, in the main, far from understanding Socialism, rendered any immediate question of revolution ridiculous. It was the ultimate outcome of the ceaseless struggle to which their apprehensions gave expression.
The role played by the Labour Party corresponded with that of the General Council. While disclaiming any desire to see the Government defeated by the strikers, they nevertheless proclaimed from their platforms that the Government were responsible for the "trouble". "Had the Labour Party been in office", men were told, "such a situation could not have arisen." They relied upon the short memories of their followers who omitted to remind them of the loco' and transport strikes during "Labour's" term of office, and the application of the Emergency Powers Act by these false "friends". In their eyes the Government's chief crime lay not in its support of the mineowners, but in its breaking off of negotiations with the General Council. The lock-out and the strike were secondary matters compared with their being shut out from the counsels of their beloved friends, the bosses.

True to their sham romantic outlook, the Communists covered themselves with "glory" by circulating wild rumours as to disaffection among the troops. They performed the worst possible service to the workers by trying to persuade them that the soldiery would not fire if called upon. Fortunately few people took them seriously, and in the main, the only sufferers from their advice were themselves. The importance of possessing political power was brought well to the front in repression of anything in the nature of incitement, and the bulk of the workers showed their keen appreciation of the fact in their orderly behaviour.

A sinister secrecy surrounds the capitulation of the General Council on May 12th. At the time of writing they have yet to give an account of their action to their constituents, the TUC. Their cool contempt for the intelligence of their followers easily gauged by the correspondence between themselves and Sir H. Samuel, which they had the audacity to publish in the British Worker of the 13th.

The emissary of "peace" frankly stated that he "acted entirely on his own initiative, had received no authority from the Government and could give no assurances on their behalf". Yet on the strength of this diplomat's unofficial memorandum (rejected on the 12th by the miners' officials) the General Council "terminated the strike assuming that the subsidy would be renewed and the lock-out notices would be immediately withdrawn."

We are not prepared to state in what exact proportion the ingredients of treachery and cowardice were mingled in the composition of the General Council. Suffice it that the miners remain locked-out and that, thanks to the capitalist terms of peace, even the rank and file are not deceived as to what actually happened. Union after union has signed a treaty of surrender which leaves the workers worse off than ever. In addition to this the unemployed army on the Exchange books has swollen to the tune of half-a-million, thus giving the employers an unparalleled opportunity for further inroads upon wages and working conditions. The height of enthusiasm reached by the workers during the strike is now matched by the depth of demoralisation of the leaders everywhere apparent. The outlook before the workers is black, indeed, but not hopeless, if they will but learn the lessons of this greatest of all disasters. "Trust your leaders!" we were adjured in the Press and from the platforms of the Labour Party, and the folly of such sheeplike trust is now glaring. The workers must learn to trust only in themselves. They must themselves realise their position and decide the line of action to be taken. They must elect their officials to take orders, not to give them!

Most important of all, however, they must change the object of their organisation. Even in the now unlikely event of the miners gaining the day over the wages question, how much will the necessary sacrifice avail them? The reorganisation of the industry, to which they have agreed, will, on the admissions of its promoters, spell more unemployment among the miners! Are they prepared in face of recent experience to trust any capitalist promise such as is contained in the suggestions of the Samuel memorandum? At the very best they will but be marking time.
On every hand it is evident that the downward pressure upon the slave-class will continue until they unite to end their slave-status. The sentiment of solidarity must be embodied in practical organisation based, not upon the mere transient necessity for wage adjustments, but upon the permanent need of the workers for the abolition of the wages system.

That can be secured only through the establishment of socialism by the conversion of the means of living into the common property of the whole people.

To that end the workers must organise as a class, not merely industrially, for the capture of supreme power as represented by the political machine. For this purpose neither the Labour Party nor the Communist Party is of any value. The former is hopelessly compromised with the ruling class, while the latter ignores the basis of political power. It is useless for the workers either to "trust" leaders or to "change" them. The entire institution of leadership must be swept by the board.

The one thing necessary is a full recognition by the workers themselves of the hostility of interests between themselves and their masters. Organised on that basis, refusing to be tricked and bluffed by promises or stampeded into violence by threats, they will emergence victorious from the age-long struggle. Win Political Power! That is the first step.

(June 1926)

The cause of the crisis

In the two preceding articles it was shown that the fundamental cause of the crisis is not to be found in the defects of the world's monetary systems, and that the collapse of the gold standard, in this and other countries, was not responsible for the chapter of accidents but merely one of the features of the economic collapse. The real cause of that collapse has now to be determined. In discussing the depression in which the trade of the world has been floundering since the end of 1929, it is usual to relate the sequence of dismal events since then to the sharp break in general gold prices that occurred at that date. Thus Sir Henry Strakosch, in a Memorandum on the Crisis (Supplement to the Economist, January 9th, 1932) writes that, "To-day it is difficult to imagine that, even among the uninstructed, there is anyone who does not regard the fall of commodity prices as the root cause of the present crisis." A discussion of the cause of the crisis can therefore fairly take as its starting point the sharp fall in prices that has occurred during the last eighteen months.

The answer to the question, "Why did prices collapse in 1929?" contains the explanation of the causes of the crisis. It can be affirmed straight away that such factors as reparations and war debts, tariffs, mal-distribution of gold, failure on the part of creditor countries to lend unlimited amounts to debtor countries etc., were not the cause of the fall in prices, although they may have helped to intensify the decline. The price structure crumbled in 1929 because then a number of factors, such as those just mentioned, combined to reveal the unsound position that had been built up in the preceding years.
After the break that occurred in 1921, the general level of gold prices remained comparatively steady up to 1929, although there was a slight downward tendency from 1925. This steadiness in the general price level is of importance, because it occurred at a time when production of all commodities was expanding rapidly. The expansion was due to a variety of causes. In industrial production the extension of capital equipment, the simplification of processes, new inventions affecting technique, rationalisation, etc., were characteristic of the period preceding 1929. The truth of this statement is so obvious and well known that it is hardly necessary to elaborate the point. Nevertheless, it is perhaps worth while to refer to the following statements taken from the Commerce Year Book for 1930 (U.S. Department of Commerce). While they only relate to American conditions, they are indicative of world trends:

"For 1929 the index (of industrial production) stood 18 per cent above the average for the base period from which it is computed (1923-1925) . . . On account of the increasing efficiency of manufacturing industry, resulting in greater output per man employed, the number of workers in factory industries has shown no such upward movement during post-War years as is shown in the production statistics. There was, in fact, some decrease in the number between 1923 and 1927, the latest year for which complete census data are available . . . In the factories each wage earner on the average is aided by engines and other prime movers of a capacity of 4.7 horse power: in 1899 the average was 2.1."

In all branches of mining the opening of new areas, for example, the new copper fields in Central Africa, estimated to be capable of satisfying, by themselves, the whole world's requirements (see Manchester Guardian Commercial, March 7th, 1929), and new methods such as those that have permitted gold to be mined at greater depths and that raised the percentage of refined petroleum recoverable from crude oil from 26.8 per cent in 1920 to 44 per cent in 1929, added to productive capacity.

The same tendency manifested itself in agriculture. As an example wheat can be taken. The production of wheat (excluding Russia and China), which was about 368 million quarters a year before the War and averaged 391 million quarters in the four years immediately after the War, rose 480 million quarters in the bumper crop year of 1928, and averaged 447 million quarters for the four year period 1927-30. For all practical purposes it can be taken that the increase in production has been accompanied by a nearly equivalent increase in acreage, although notable increases in the yield per acre have occurred in some areas. The higher yields in these parts, however, have been offset by the low yields in some of the newer areas, where production has not yet been fully developed. The increase in acreage is attributable to the expansion that took place during the War, when belligerent Governments were prepared to pay high prices for foodstuffs for their armies, and to biological and mechanical discoveries. For instance, Canadian acreage is now two-and-a-half times what it was before the War. The introduction of the Marquis variety of wheat alone permitted the cultivation of areas which had formerly been unsuitable, for climatic reasons, for wheat. It was stated in the Report of the Imperial Economic Committee on Wheat (1931) that, "The striking result of these biological developments has been to extend very greatly the area within which wheat can be grown. By sowing these newer types, wheat is not cultivated fifty to a hundred miles further north than was possible ten years ago" (page 29). In the same report the opinion is expressed that "the most significant change (in wheat cultivation during the post-War period) has been the rapid increase in the application of mechanical aids to the farm in the principal wheat producing and exporting countries." Later the following facts are quoted to show the extent to which mechanisation has proceeded:
"In the United States in 1916 only some 30,000 tractors were manufactured. In 1928 it is estimated that some 850,000 were in use. In 1914 the total number (of combined Harvester-Threshers) manufactured in the United States was 270; ten years later, in 1924, it was 5,828; two years later, in 1926, it had more than doubled to 11,760; in another two years, in 1928, it has again doubled to 25,392; and in the next year, in 1929, it had increased once more by very nearly 50 per cent to 36,957. . . In regard to Australia the 'combine' or its equivalent is now 'universally used'; other harvesting machines, including the 'stripper thresher' and the 'header harvester; are also widely used . . . In Argentina over 30 per cent of the total wheat area is now harvested by means of the 'combine '."

Before proceeding with the main argument it is interesting to look for a moment at some of the effects of this mechanisation. Four of these are of particular importance. These are the reduction in production costs, the reduced demand for farm labour, the "decasualisation" of harvest labour, and the decline in the number of horses used in farming, which has meant a decrease in the acreage required to provide their food. On these points the Report, already referred to, makes, together with many others, the following statements:—

"A combined harvester-thresher usually harvests and threshes wheat at a cost of from 3 to 5 cents a bushel while the cost of threshing alone, when the header or binder is
used, usually amounts to more than 10 cents per bushel. . . The total working cost of harvesting per acre with different types of machinery is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Machine Type</th>
<th>Cost per acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-foot combine</td>
<td>1.47 dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-foot header</td>
<td>3.56 dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-foot binder</td>
<td>4.22 dollars</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Canadian official estimates (of costs) show a reduction from 17 cents to 9-1/3 cents per bushel harvested. Figures from Argentina also show a similar result. . .

In 1928 the largest Canadian crop ever recorded was estimated to have been harvested by 16,500 fewer men than would have been necessary if some 4,000 combines had not been in operation. In 1929 the considerably smaller crop was harvested with the aid of some 7,500 combines without a single harvest excursion is over. . . In the United States for agriculture as a whole the output per agriculture worker during the decade following the war is estimated to have increased on an average 25 per cent. . . during which time, however, more than three million people left the land.

Mechanisation in harvesting has 'decasualised' harvest labour where casual labour has been employed; it has smoothed the traditional peak in the labour curve and has thereby greatly reduced labour costs. . . Next to harvest, the time of severest strain on the labour staff is at ploughing and sowing. Here again mechanisation is producing a fundamental change. It is stated that in the United States one person with a large tractor-drawn drill can sow from 70 to 80 acres a day, while one man using at 50 h.p. tractor can plough as much as 18 acres a day. According to the United States Secretary for Agriculture it is possible, when conditions are suitable, to farm as much as 1,600 acres per day, by using improved cultivators instead of ploughs.

Technical advances in the methods of wheat production of (these) magnitudes carry with them the implication of a continuous pressure of wheat on the world's markets, as an inevitable accompaniment of the spread of the new technique. The extension of the use of the tractor on the farm and of the motor on the farm and in the towns has led to a reduction of the number of horses, and therefore to a decline in the acreage required to provide their food. . . Between 1918 and 1928 the arable land thus released in the United States amounted to not less than 18 million acres."
After this digression we can return to the point, already made, that the period preceding the crash was one of the great increase in capacity over the whole field of production. Although consumption of nearly all commodities was expanding, it was not keeping pace with the increase in productive capacity. This disequilibrium, however, was masked in some industries by the shutting down of excess capacity. In others where it was found to be impossible to apply this method and stocks accumulated, recourse was had to schemes of artificial price control. In a memorandum (Stocks of Staple Commodities) published by the Royal Economic Society in October, 1930, it was stated, "When all factors are weighed together—production, consumption and prices—it is now quite clear that there was a definite lack of equilibrium in tin, rubber, sugar, coffee and petroleum: with copper lead, spelter, nitrate and cotton conditions were somewhat less out of line . . . Conditions of free production and marketing existed last summer only in cotton, tin, rubber and teaout of the twelve commodities (cotton, copper, tine, lead, spelter, rubber, sugar, tea, coffee, petroleum, nitrate)." This memorandum dealt with only twelve commodities, but the list of articles subject to artificial control, of one kind or another, could be extended indefinitely and would include finished products as well as raw materials. Now schemes of artificial control, if they are to enjoy even a temporary success, require financing. A large volume of credit was in fact utilised for the purpose of maintaining, and in some instances raising, the prices of commodities. A few instances must suffice. Between 1925 and 1928 the world's production of coffee doubled, mainly as a consequence of an immense increase in Brazilian production due to better methods of cultivation, a greater use of fertilizers and an extension of planting. During the same period consumption rose by only about 10 per cent. As a consequence world stocks rose to an amount nearly equal to a year's consumption (today stocks are nearly 30 months' consumption). Despite this manifest disequilibrium, the price of coffee did not decline, as Brazil stored the excess supply and so kept it off the market. This she was only able to do because of the large amounts borrowed abroad both for long and short periods. In 1927-28, for example, £13% million was borrowed in London for the acknowledged purpose of financing coffee. When finally prices crashed in 1929 a further £17 million was borrowed in order to prevent a complete disaster for the Brazilian producers and those who had provided the periods loans. (On this, see Studies in the Artificial Control of Raw Materials, No, 3, by J. W. F. Rowe: Royal Economic Society.)
The position in wheat was very similar. Apart from direct Government assistance to producers in Europe through tariffs, quotas, etc., the formation of the Federal Farm Board in U.S.A. in 1929 and the action of the Canadian and Australian "pools" in keeping supplies off the market were directed to maintaining prices, unjustified by the relationship between supply and demand. At the end of the 1931 crop year the Federal Farm Board was holding 265 million bushels of wheat which it had taken off the market, and it had also made loans to wheat co-operatives. Funds for these operations were obtained from the Treasury. "The increase of holdings (of wheat) in the U.S.A. was largely the result of official efforts to support prices by means of loans to growers and actual buying and boarding by the Government. The larger Canadian stocks were mainly furnished by the big crop of 1928, which the West Growers' Pool refused to sell at competitive prices. There is no doubt that the action of the Pool in this matter received Government approval, and, eventually, Canadian Provincial Governments guaranteed the loans which banks had made to finance the wheat." (The World's Staples: Wheat, by G.J.S. Broomhall, published in the Index, April, 1931, the official organ of the Svenska Handelsbanken, Stockholm.) Instances of the dependence of price stability on restriction of supply, itself dependent on the provision of finance by banks, governments or other lenders, could be multiplied indefinitely. These two, however, will suffice to show what a crazy structure had been built up prior to 1929, and how it was inevitable that the whole edifice would crash if anything occurred to restrict the supply of credit available for holding up of supplies. When the time came there was no lack of factors capable of toppling everything over. The crash in Wall Street in October, 1929, which led from stock liquidation to forced selling of commodities, and to the calling in of loans by banks and a cessation of new lending, ushered in the deluge; but in any event the game could not have been played much longer. With the increasing disequilibrium between production and consumption of all kinds of commodities, it was inevitable that sooner or later it would become impossible to obtain finance for the stock accumulated, or to enable to sufficiently large capacity to be shut down.

We have now got so far behind the fall in prices as to be able to trace it to the persistent disequilibrium between production and consumption that resulted from the increase in the world's productive capacity. This has already been affirmed in several quarters. Thus Prof. Bonn writes:—

"The crisis was ultimately due to the misuse of capital. The savings which productive surplus had yielded, or was expected to yield, had been spent in the construction of newer productive plants of constantly increasing capacity in the hope that the consumers on whose behalf this vast apparatus was to operate would grow up automatically."

To pass from this stage to the statement that the crisis was the result of overproduction is not to solve the problem, but merely restate it. The question at once arises, "Why was there overproduction?"
In the first place it is clear that over-production, in the absolute sense, never has existed and is hardly likely to exist. At no stage in history, and certainly at no time in recent years, has the supply of goods and services been more than sufficient to satisfy the needs of the people of the world. No one would venture to assert that there is, or has been, over-production relative to needs in view of the fact that in this country alone, even during the years of prosperity, unemployment for no length of time fell below a million. To-day world unemployment is over twenty million, and it is estimated that, including dependants, "over 40,000,000 persons are now living below the minimum standard of health" in America alone (Manchester Guardian, March 17th, 1932). But there is still over-production. It is patent that the term can only have a relative application. By over-production is meant production in excess of the demands of purchasers. This leads back to the purpose of production to-day. Under capitalism, with the means of production privately owned and controlled, the purpose of production is the sale of goods at a profit. The making of profits is the aim and object of all production, not the supplying of wants, although of course a producer, having to sell his goods before he can realise his profit, will endeavour to produce commodities that satisfy a want. Not only is production organised for sale at a profit, but it is carried on by the exploitation of legally free workers, working for wages. The consumption of the workers is limited to the amount they receive in wages. This is only a part of the amount produced by their labour, as otherwise there would be no surplus available to constitute the profits of the capitalists. Out of the profits the capitalist takes the amount required for his personal needs. The rest is re-invested in further means of production. Thus fresh means of production are constantly being provided that turn out goods far in excess of the effective demand for them. This is the inherent contradiction in the capitalist method of production which cannot be overcome while that method prevails. As at this moment there must always be a piling up of commodities for which profitable markets cannot be found, owing to the workers being denied access to the production of their labour. And when such accumulations occur, the only way out of the difficulty under Capitalism, short of a destruction of stocks, is an economic crisis, which by causing a slowing up of future production will allow stocks to be reduced, and so prepare the way for another burst of prosperity, which in turn will dissolve into a crisis. This painful corrective of the defects of Capitalism means for the workers unemployment, reduced standards of living, in many instances starvation, acute want and misery. And while Capitalism endures this must always be their lot. Only when, by using their votes to gain political power, they abolish the capitalistic system, and substitute for its anarchy a system of production based, not on profit-making, but on the satisfaction of needs will they benefit materially instead of suffering from man's increased powers of production. Only then will economic crises cease to occur.

(May, 1932)
The Rise of Hitler: A Warning to the Workers

The rise of Hitler to power in Germany is an event which the workers of all countries should study with care. It is not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a world-wide overflowing of discontent. It is not a coincidence that the three years since the oncoming of the crisis late in 1929 have witnessed the abrupt and sometimes violent overthrow of governments in different parts of the capitalist world. "National" Governments in the United Kingdom and many of the British Dominions; the advent of De Valera in the Irish Free State; the colossal defeat of "Prosperity" Hoover in the USA; repeated cabinet crises in France; political revolutions and counter-revolutions in South America; the Republic in Spain; political crises in Scandinavia; expulsions of leaders and reversals of policy in Russia; no country has escaped the economic consequences of a capitalist world which is seriously out of joint.

Each country has witnessed the consequent political stresses and strains of new discontents, and new slogans, which had generally brought about new political groupings and new figure-heads. The universal insurgency expresses itself in different ways according to the traditions, experience and constitutions of the various countries. A century ago such economic crises brought to a head deep underlying social conflicts and produced the revolutions of '30 and '48, with their violent overthrow of kings and absolutist constitutions. Nowadays the more advanced countries have developed systems which permit easier adjustment to new pressures, avoiding the disturbance and expenses of the appeal to violence. Countries which have not travelled so far along the road of capitalist democratic government still resort to the old method of the bomb, the rifle, and the machine gun, the mass demonstration, the barricade, and the organisation of insurrection in the armed forces.

In a broad way the cause and the effect are the same everywhere. Everywhere capitalist private ownership reigns. Everywhere the rulers must serve the interests of the capitalist class, but everywhere it is an over-riding condition of social life that rulers cannot ignore the active discontent of the mass of the population. The discontent, even the open rebellion, of individuals and minorities can be bludgeoned into acquiescence, but when great masses of the population are driven by intolerable conditions into organising for common action then the rulers must sooner or later provide a safety valve; placate the movement or find means of dividing it; turn it into new directions or harness it directly to the capitalist state. In no other way can capitalism maintain itself.
Long before the war the British ruling class learned how to incorporate radical politicians and labour leaders in the parties of capitalism. The German capitalists in 1918 jettisoned the Kaiser for a similar end. Fifty per cent of the German voters had registered their disillusionment and war-weariness by voting for the reform programme of the Social Democratic Party. German capitalism thereupon "digested" the SDP and watched it stabilise German capitalism in the troubled post-war years. The military and civil associates of the Imperial Kaiser humbled themselves to the "upstart" labour leaders because they had to have someone who could control the workers and keep them loyal to the fundamentals of capitalism. So for fourteen years the Social Democrats, either in coalitions or in "friendly opposition", worked out their policy of bargaining for reforms as price of their support. The outcome was inevitable. They have shared the fate that has always overtaken "Labour" politicians and parties when they accept responsibility for the administration of capitalism. Discontent with the effects of capitalism cannot for ever be stifled by Labour promises of better times or apologetic assurances that things might be worse. The membership and influence of the German SDP declined year by year until it had shrunk to a third of its former size. Part of the loss was picked up by the Communist Party, but in the meantime a new group had arisen, led by Hitler. At the election on March 5th he received 17,266,000 votes (43.9 per cent) and his allies, the Nationalists, received 3,132,000 (8 per cent), giving him a clear majority. The Social Democrats received 7,176,000 (18.3 per cent) and the Communists 4,845,000 (12.1 percent).

In one important respect Hitler's Nazis are just like the Social Democrats and the Communists; they are all parties of discontent. Hitler promises work for the workless; secure government jobs in the police, the Army or the Civil service for 100,000 of his members; higher prices for agricultural products to help the peasants; and protection for the small investor and little shopkeeper squeezed by the big stores and the banks.
Immediately on taking office Hitler imposed fresh taxes on the big departmental stores and chain stores with the professed object of helping the small shopkeepers. He promised also to find posts for out-of-work professional men (doctors, lawyers and others), and it is because a relatively large number of bankers, proprietors of big stores and the more successful professional men are Jews that the party has taken on a violently anti-Jewish character. Every Jewish doctor driven out of practice, every Jewish lawyer barred from the courts, every Jewish schoolmaster and civil servant dismissed, makes another vacancy for one of his members. He was supplied with funds by German heavy industry, by armament manufacturers both in Germany and in France, and by American and other business men and financiers who had investments in Germany for which they needed protection. With the help of these funds Hitler's party has known how to rally all kinds of discontent into a great movement representing half the electorate of Germany. Therefore Hitler has had to be "digested" as fourteen years ago were the Social Democrats. The stately and imperious Hindenburg and the aristocratic Von Papen, representing the military caste and big landowner, have had to receive on terms of equality the Austrian house-painter Adolf Hitler. Dr Hugenberg and the Nationalist Party, representing big industrial capitalists, have had to enter into coalition with him. Hitler will now have to administer capitalism. He will have to curb the demands of his followers, disappoint them, and ultimately lose many of them to new political adventurers, whereupon the capitalists and landlords who now use him will scrap him and use his successor.

The great lesson to be learned from the decline of the Social Democrats is the sterility of the policy of reforms and of reform parties. The day on which a reform party reaches power is the day on which the evil effects of capitalism begin to sap and undermine the strength of the party, turning the members' blind loyalty first into bewilderment and then into dissatisfaction, causing them to drift into new parties.

The depths of mental bankruptcy of the reformists are shown by the comment of the Fabian New Statesman (London, March 11th, 1933). After explaining that Hitler scored because he appealed, with banners and uniforms and parades, to the electorate's love of glamour, the German correspondent of the New Statesman says that the Social Democrats should have done the same, and should have given more prominence to pageantry and less prominence to social reforms. In other words, the workers are to be enticed, not even by the old plan of "bread and circuses", but by circuses without the bread! This is what forty years of Fabian reformism has brought to the working-class movement!
The second lesson is one which has been entirely missed by the Labour Press in Great Britain, that is the evidence given by the Hitler episode of the overwhelming importance of controlling the political machinery. Six months ago, although the largest party in Germany, Hitler was not in control of the German Parliament and the machinery of government. He was ridiculed and derided by the members of the Government, and insulted by President Hindenburg. His party officials were hauled into court on charges of treason, and thrown into prison. Others were forced to flee the country. His newspapers were suppressed, his offices were raided by the police, his troops were forbidden to parade or wear uniforms in the street. When they attempted defiance they were driven off just like the Communists.

Now, having become possessed of the political machine and confirmed in power by the electors, he is able to turn the tables on his former opponents. He has removed the Governments of all the States of Germany. Former Cabinet Ministers have been arrested, beaten and made to suffer many indignities. Newspapers have been suppressed and their offices raided—from Conservative Catholic newspapers at one end of the scale to Social Democratic and Communist newspapers at the other. The Communists, in spite of their 5,000,000 voters and their year-long boasting of their belief in “mass action” and military revolt, have been cowed into complete submission without offering any real resistance whatever. Events are proving to them what they refused to learn. The organised political majority which controls the political machinery of the modern State is in a position to dominate, and can enforce submission on minorities. There is no road to Socialism except through the control of the machinery of government by a politically organised majority of Socialists.

(April 1933)
The civil war in Spain

The civil war, which began with the revolt of July 18th, is, at the time of writing, still dragging on without either side having gained decisive victory. What the outcome will be it is still impossible to say, for the issue depends to a great extent on the assistance given to the rebels by foreign governments. Before examining the struggle from the Socialist standpoint, we may pay tribute to the conduct of the Spanish workers. Believing that a vital principle was at stake, they rallied to the Government against a powerful revolt backed by the greater part of the armed forces. Workers, with little or no military training, stood up to trained and experienced soldiers. On the one side was all the advantage of organisation and equipment, and on the other the enthusiasm and voluntary discipline of a popular movement. It is true that large sections of the military forces remained loyal to the Government, but even these were hampered by treason and sabotage among the officers. Only the untrained volunteer militias were thoroughly dependable. The Madrid correspondent of the Economist (London, August 15th, 1936) was moved to admiration and wrote: "The splendid way in which the citizens of Madrid rushed to arms was a fine page in the history of democracy."

He pointed out something else deserving of notice:-

As far as Madrid is concerned, discipline has been excellent. In the early days, when almost every working man in Madrid had a rifle in hand, the jewellers' shops were open as usual, with their windows full of valuables, without the slightest attempt at theft being registered.

If the workers attacked churches, "that was", he said, "because of the close political connection between the clericals and the Conservatives."

So much for the conduct of the Spanish workers. What of the wisdom of their action in rallying to a purely capitalist government in order to defend it against a military, aristocratic and clerical rebellion?

The Need for Democracy

It has always been recognised by Socialists that it is necessary for the workers to gain the vote, so that they may be able to place themselves democratically in control of the machinery of government. Marx was one who recognised this.

At first sight the Spanish struggle appears to be simply a struggle of this kind, and many people have indeed represented it to be. When, however, all the facts are taken into account, the position is by no means simple and straight-forward.

The recent political history of Spain dates from 1931, when the Monarchical Government was overthrown, undermined by its own corruption and decay. At the first democratic election the Spanish Labourites (the so-called Socialist Party) obtained 117 seats out of 470, and three of their representatives entered the first provisional Government in coalition with various other parties. The Government introduced a number of important pieces of legislation providing for the division of the big landed estates among the land-workers and peasants, the disestablishment of
the Catholic Church, divorce laws, an educational system to remove the appalling illiteracy, and the grant of a wide measure of autonomy to Catalonia. The last-named law is to be explained largely by the fact that Catalonia contains (in and around Barcelona) a big share of Spain's industrial concerns, the owners of which have interests opposed to those of the land-owners, the Catholic organisations, the military cliques and the Conservative traders of Seville and elsewhere. The aim of the Republican Government, in brief, was to change the constitution and governmental system of Spain in the direction of capitalist development. From the first they faced the wealthy, powerful and ruthless opposition both of the representatives of the old order, who are able to appeal to the ignorance of the priest-ridden sections of the population, 60 per cent of which is rural, and also of new groups preaching some kind of Fascism, who can attract quite a number of idealistic young people with promises of the rebirth of a unified powerful Spain.

The Coalition Government did not last for long. The Monarchists and military groups recovered their courage, and, at the same time, dissension arouse between the Labourites and other workers' groups, and the frankly capitalist parties. The latter felt that they no longer had need to rely on the organised workers and pay a certain price for their support.

At the General Election in November, 1933, the Labourites lost heavily and came back with only 61 seats.

The next development was an abortive military coup by workers' organisations and Catalan separatists in October, 1934, in answer to the inclusion of three Catholics of Fascist sympathies in the Cabinet. As was inevitable, the revolt was crushed by the Government without difficulty, but with great brutality. Some 30,000 workers were imprisoned and held there throughout 1935. Indeed they were not released until the victory of the "Popular Front" at the election in February, 1936, the indignation caused by their imprisonment and ill-treatment being one of the factors which helped the Popular Front to win.

The Popular Front at the General Election, February, 1936

The reasons for the electoral victory of the Popular Front were many, but outstanding among them were the following. First, dissatisfaction with the results of two years of Conservative Catholic rule, and the disclosure of financial scandals affecting members of the Government. Then the fact that the reforms begun by the first Republican administration were not only not carried through but had been largely undone. Most important of all, however, was the electoral pact between a number of organisations hitherto bitterly hostile to each other. The Popular Front consisted of the following large or fair-sized parties, together with several smaller ones (the figures are the seats won at the election in February, 1936): Labourites (about 96), Left Republicans (80), Republican Union (32), Esquerra (Catalonian Party—20), Communists (16). Above all, this was the first time that the Syndicalists, who normally oppose all political action, had voted at an election. Another contributory cause for the Popular Front victory was the shocking poverty of the land-workers, aggravated by wage reductions enforced under the former Government. The Popular Front undertook to raise wages if they got power.

The outcome was that the Popular Front obtained a total of about 265 seats, to 148 for the Right group and 55 for the Centre group. Even so the total votes obtained by Popular Front candidates were slightly fewer than those given to the candidates of the Right and Centre together—4,357,000 to 4,571,000. (Daily Herald, February 27th, 1936).
The new Government was entirely a capitalist-Republican one, under Senor Azana of the Left Republican Party. It took office pledged to introduce certain reforms, but without any suggestion of trying or even desiring to help Socialism. As Senor Azana constantly said in his election speeches, "I am not a Socialist and I am not a socialisator." (Manchester Guardian, February 27th.)

The Government contained not one Labourite, Communist, Syndicalist, Anarchist or Trotskyite. All its members were avowed supporters of capitalism. In addition to being pledged to carry through the reforms introduced by the first Republican Government, the Azana Government proposed to introduce an income tax and to bring the banking system under Government control.

The Government Faces Revolt
No sooner did the Government take office than it received due warning that the military-clerical-Fascist groups would not accept their electoral defeat as in any way binding on them. They do not pretend to have any time for democracy and majority rule, as was admitted by General Franco, leader of the present revolt, to a News Chronicle representative on July 28th. When asked "What about the February elections? Didn't they represent the national will?" Franco's contemptuous reply was, "Elections never do." (News Chronicle, July 29th, 1936.)

Thus it was that General Franco and General Godet (the latter was executed in Barcelona on August 11th for his part in the new revolt) staged an unsuccessful rising in February, immediately the election results were known. The revolt was crushed, but the Government, either through negligence or fear, allowed these and other known rebels to continue to occupy influential officials positions in Majorca, Morocco and elsewhere, positions which they used to prepare a more powerful rising.

In the five months after taking office, the Azana Government was faced with individual acts of terrorism by military and semi-Fascist organisations, which were replied to in a similar way by those workers' organisations which have long preached and practised violence—the Syndicalists and Anarchists. Two culminating incidents were the assassination of Senor Costillo, Lieutenant of the Shock Police, by Fascists, and the counter-assassination of Calvo Sotelo, self-styled future dictator and rebel leader. It is believed that the rebellion was planned for July 25th, but was brought forward a week owing to the assassination of Sotelo.

The rebels took with them the greater part of the army—officered largely by men belonging to the landed aristocracy—and part of the navy. The Government kept the support of most of the air force, part of the navy, some of the rank and file of the army, and the greater part of the Civil Guard (a military police force). The rebels had the backing of the land-owners and the Catholic Church, itself the biggest land-owner of all, and also the backing (probably in advance of the event) of the German and Italian governments, interested in the promise of naval bases in Morocco, the Canary Islands, and Majorca, if Franco won. The Daily Telegraph (supporting the rebels) reported that General Franco was building up a new air force during the first weeks of August with "modern German and Italian 'planes and personnel", and the latest types of German anti-aircraft guns. (Daily Telegraph, August 13th, 1936.) The Government in Barcelona unearthed in the headquarters of the German Nazi organisation there evidence of a widespread Nazi organisation in Spain. (News Chronicle, August 19th and 20th.)
As regards the objects of the rebels, the rebellion can be described in the main as a landed-class revolt against the agrarian reforms (splitting up of their estates among the land-workers), aided by the Catholic Church, military group, and by organisations with more or less Fascist outlook. The last-named are, however, at present probably the least important. The rebel movement, as a whole, and even its Fascist wing, bears little resemblance to Italian Fascism and German Nazism, with their popular appeal, fake-Socialist phraseology, and considerable working class support.

The dictatorships in Germany and Italy—and especially Portugal—have other reasons for being interested in the future Government of Spain. Undoubtedly the revival of workers' confidence and activity in the French stay-in strikes, the Popular Fronts, and the Spanish militias, are having repercussions in Portugal, and even Italy and Germany. It is probably not a coincidence that extensive wage increases are being granted by Mussolini's Government just now.

**Spain's Divided Working Class**

If the rebels represent more than one point of view, the Popular Front militias are an example of the temporary unity of very divergent forces. Catalanian capitalist-Republicans and Catholic-Conservative Basque nationalists join hands with Labourites, who stand for democratic government, constitutional action and social reform, and with Anarchists and Syndicalists who reject political action and the need to capture the State-machine, oppose centralised organisation and favour local self-governing "Communes", and whose traditional methods are sabotage, insurrection by strikes, and gunman tactics. In addition there are Communists and Trotskyites, bitterly opposed to each other but agreed in favouring a strong centralised State based on dictatorship.

As regards relative strengths of the workers' groups, the General Union of Workers (UGT), which supports the Labourites, has about 1 million adherents, and is the strongest trade union organisation everywhere, except in Barcelona. Their political reflection, the Labourites (themselves divided into "Left" and "Right" Wings), are the strongest party in Parliament, with about 96 members. (The next largest was the CEDA, led by the Conservative Gil Robles.)

The Anarcho-Syndicalist National Confederation of Labour (CNT) has about 500,000 members. Although it has recently grown, it is far below its former strength. Its great stronghold is Barcelona.

The Communists and Trotskyites each have perhaps 50,000 members. The Anarchists, especially in Catalonia, have their own organisation with a large following.
These fundamental divergences of aim and method naturally have serious consequences. In the first place, their very existence was a factor which emboldened the rebels and encouraged them to launch their attack. They calculated, not without reason, that such a mixed Popular Front would soon show signs of disintegration. Dissensions have indeed occurred. The Syndicalists, while reluctantly supporting the "Front" at the elections, and joining the militias, still declined to collaborate with capitalist bodies in the government of Catalonia. *(Manchester Guardian, August 8th.)* Also, being strongly opposed to the idea of dictatorship, they mistrust and are hostile to the Communists and Trotskyites. Even in the midst of the civil war the leader of the dockers in the General Workers' Union at Barcelona was assassinated with two of his colleagues. As they were Labour Party sympathisers, and had a long-standing quarrel with the Anarcho-Syndicalist CNT, it was taken for granted that the latter were settling old scores. *(Manchester Guardian, August 7th.)* The past history of the murderous antagonisms between these bodies would make such an action by no means surprising. The Labour Unions protested and were met with the threats of violence. It may be mentioned that the Anarcho-Syndicalists have no reason to love the so-called "Socialist" Party, which coquetted with the dictator Primo de Rivera when he was suppressing them ten years ago.

(In passing, it is interesting to notice the remark of a *Times* correspondent that the customary discipline of the Labourites and Communists in the militias made them more effective as fighting men than the Syndicalists and Anarchists, whose disbelief in organisation resulted in their suffering great losses in action.—*Times*, August 6th.)

The Trotskyites continued to deride Parliament, criticise the Government and demand a dictatorship.

The disunity of method, organisation and object of the Spanish workers are important from another point of view. We may readily grant, with Marx, that workers *seeking democracy* have an interest in striving, as well as the capitalists, to overthrow military, Monarchical or autocratic Government, but Marx certainly never envisaged a situation in which not only were the workers' groups bitterly hostile to each other, but many of them (in Spain possibly a majority) are not aiming at democracy at all, having no inclination for it. Should the Communists or Trotskyites gain power they would, as in Russia, promptly and ruthlessly suppress democracy, and along with it the Labourites, Syndicalists and Anarchists. The latter two groups, whatever Government is in power, will continue to do their utmost by strikes, sabotage, and even assassination, to destroy it, even at the cost of producing chaos.

The truth is—and the Spanish workers have got to learn it before they can hope to make progress in organising for the conquest of power for Socialism—that Socialism is at present absolutely out of the question, and that their only present hope is for the right to organise and carry on Socialist propaganda under capitalist democracy.
Trying to go beyond this (or in the case of the Anarcho-Syndicalists, trying to go backwards) by means of armed revolts, and so on, will gain nothing except disillusionment, and will not help the working class or the Socialist movement.

**Things to be Remembered**

For reasons of space, it is impossible to deal at length with many important aspects of the struggle, but certain points and certain facts deserve to be touched upon or recorded.

First, there were the atrocity stories and the outrageous misrepresentations of sections of the English Press, notably the Rothermere organs, and *The Time* and *Daily Telegraph*.

Lord Rothermere's journals openly sided with the rebels, whom they described as patriots and Christians. His *Evening News* (August 4th) actually charged the "Reds" with being responsible for plunging Spain into a "blood bath". By the "Reds" it meant the Spanish capitalist-Republican Government, but the Rothermere press consistently hid the facts of that Government's composition. The same paper (August 3rd) demanded a Fascist victory as the only way of "saving" Spain and justified the rebellion on the extraordinary plea that the Government's defensive measures against the rebels ("orgy of slaughter and rapine") would have been launched "whether there had been a Fascist rising or not".

Needing to hide the fact that the rebels were largely dependent on Mohammedan Moors in the Foreign Legion and Riff regiments, trained in savage fighting methods, in order to bolster up the claim that the rebels represented Christianity the *Evening News* (August 8th) avoided disclosing that they were Moors. Instead they were described as Franco's "men from Morocco".

*The Times*, with typical craft, dodged standing frankly as the supporter of rebels against a democratically elected Government by maintaining—without any evidence—that the conflict was bound to result in "a despotism either of the Left or of the Right" and that the Government side was becoming "violently Marxist" (*Times*, July 29th); this in spite of the fact that its own correspondent was well enough informed to know, as everybody else knows, that the Anarcho-Syndicalists are anti-Marxists (August 11th), and in spite of *The Times* own admission (July 29th) that "Perhaps a majority" of the Government's armed supporters were neither Labourites nor Anarcho-Syndicalists, but "members of less extreme groups", i. e., capitalist-Republicans, Catholic-Nationalists, or pure and simple democrats.

Another *Times* trick was to describe the rebels as "anti-Government troops", and the Government troops as "an armed mob". (See *Times*, August 1st.)
Such misrepresentation, extending in the Rothermere Press to unashamed lying, is what the workers may always expect from some at least of the organs of capitalist interests.

Two important points which emerge from the struggle relate to the importance of having control of the machinery of Government, which has been consistently stressed by the SPGB. In Vienna in February, 1934, and in Spain in October, 1934, workers' armed revolts against the Government were easily crushed. In Spain, even if the Government is eventually defeated owing to the intervention of Italy and Germany, enough has happened to show that control of the machinery of Government would have gained the day against the rebels, even though they were backed by a large part of the military forces.

The second point is that we can see from Spain how easy it would have been to crush Fascism in Italy in 1922 if the Italian Government at that time had wanted to—which, of course, it did not. Mussolini's rabble could have been dispersed in a few hours, as the military authorities there said at the time.

The dependence of the Spanish rebels on outside aid and the inability of the international working class to give any effective assistance to the Government is worth nothing. Collections of money (insignificant in amount except that arranged in Russia by the Government) can make little difference in such a case.

This brings us to the utter futility of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Aware, in spite of themselves, of their impotence, all they could do, apart from making collections, was to appeal for the summoning of Parliament, which they so often declared to be useless (Daily Worker, August 8th); appeal for the sending of a cooperative food ship, which the Co-operative Societies refused to do; appeal to the Tory Government to help the Spanish Government (they called it "demanding and resolving to enforce our will that the National Government shall give to the elected People's Government of Spain the help it needs". (Daily Worker, August 10th); and to demand "a mighty campaign everywhere in Britain. Meetings, meetings, meetings, in streets and halls and schools . . . resolutions, protests, collections for the Spanish people . . . writing to the local Press, to the local Council, to the local MPs (Daily Worker, August 11th.) In other words no action of any moment, but simply endless varieties of talk. What we witnessed here was a repetition of the Communist Party's futile gestures of help for Abyssinia. Perhaps the crowning absurdity of the Communists, in view of the League fiasco over Abyssinia, was that they proposed calling the League in to "help" Spain!

Atrocity-Mongering
It is impossible to deny that cruelties, apart from the destruction of the war itself, occurred on both sides. In view, however, of the one-sided or lying reports in many organs of the English Press the following statements are worth recording. It cannot be doubted that the rebels deliberately perpetrated far more ghastly atrocities than anything the Government militia's were guilty of as acts of revenge or reprisal.

When Moorish troops captured Badajoz they slaughtered 2,000 Government troops in cold blood, or, as their commander, Colonel Yaque, said: "Perhaps not quite as many as that." (*News Chronicle, August 17th*)

*The Daily Telegraph* (August 15th) reported from their own correspondent that the rebels at the Montana barracks, in Madrid, three times showed the white flag of surrender and each time opened fire under cover of it on the Government forces which came to accept the surrender.

Reuters' correspondent (*Daily Herald, July 28th*) was told by a rebel legionary that they had "been strictly instructed not to take any prisoners but to cut off the heads of all Communists."

Jay Allen, *News-Chronicle* correspondent (August 12th), stated that the rebel Foreign Legion "are leaving a trail of blood and villages in ruin behind them."

*The Times* correspondent at Malaga reported (August 8th) that 900 Royalist and other rebel prisoners there "are not only safe but in tolerable comfort"). Only some five or six, after summary trial, were shot.

On August 14th the British colony in Madrid sent a telegram to the English Foreign Office indignantly repudiating "hysterical stories published in the British Press by refugees from here"). The telegram was signed by six business men, and said that none of the British colony had ever been in the slightest danger. Reuter's Madrid correspondent reported (*Manchester Guardian*, August 15th): "there have been, as far as anyone knows, no atrocities here."

The same, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, was true of Malaga. The BBC had repeated refugee stories, alleging numerous atrocities at Malaga, but when the *Guardian*s special correspondent in Andalusia investigated he "found them to be untrue".

One incident deserves to be recorded. Mr Winston Churchill wrote an article on Spain in the *Evening Standard* on August 10th. In it he made the interesting admission that in his view a constitutional, parliamentary Government is only deserving of allegiance if it "prove itself capable of preserving law and order, and protecting life, freedom and property" (italics ours).
We think we are not misrepresenting this capitalist politician's outlook when we read into it that he claims the right to stage a pro-capitalism rebellion when a Socialist majority have obtained control of Parliament in a constitutional way. Socialists will remember this.

Regarding the future of Spain it can be said with certainty that whichever side wins the present civil war, the matter will not end at once. The defeated will be awaiting a further opportunity of appealing to arms. Also it may be taken for granted that whether the Government forces or the rebels come out on top they will seek to disarm the workers.

It need hardly be added that the only ultimate solution for class-conflict and unrest in Spain, as elsewhere, lies in Socialism.

(September 1936)

**Can the Means Test be abolished?**

Ever since 1931, when a large number of unemployed were brought under what is known as the "Means Test", this has been a burning question in British politics. All of the opposition candidates at the November General Election promised, in more or less guarded fashion, to abolish the test, although we are entitled to wonder whether their promises mean quite what the electors thought they meant.

Before going into that question further, it will be useful to explain what is the means test—or rather, what are the several means tests applied by the Government in connection with unemployment pay, Public Assistance, and Old-Age Noncontributory pensions.

**The Poor Law Means Test 300 years old**

First, in point of time, is the Poor Law or Public Assistance Means Test. This has a very ancient history and has been the model on which other tests have been based.
The group of Poor Laws which concern us here are those passed in the 16th and 17th centuries. By that time, recognising that they were faced permanently with the problem of workless and homeless men and women, then deprived of a main source of help by the abolition of the monasteries, the Governments abandoned the effort to torture the starving into quiet submission and arranged to provide some sort of maintenance for them. Several Acts passed during the 16th century, culminating in the Acts of 1597 and 1601, appointed collectors in each parish whose duty it was to levy householders and use the proceeds—flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron and other materials—to provide work for the poor. Pauper children were sent out as apprentices and alms-houses were built for the aged. Needless to say, the provision was niggardly and hedged about with callous restrictions, although some of the most inhuman of the earlier provisions had to be dropped because those responsible would not work them. (See Social Administration, including the Poor Laws, by John J. Clarke, M.A., Pitman & Sons, Ltd; 1922; p. 25). What particularly concerns us is the principle of family responsibility. Already in 1601 it was laid down that the destitute must be kept by their relatives if the latter had the means. Under the Act of that year it was provided that grandparents must maintain their grandchildren, parents their children, husbands their wives (and the children of their wives by another father, up to age sixteen), and finally, children had to maintain their parents. (See Clarke, p. 29.) This principle has been retained through many changes of Poor Law Administration, and we find it in the Poor Law Act, 1930, with little alteration. Section 14 of the 1930 Act lays it down that "it shall be the duty of the father, grandfather, mother, grandmother, husband or child, of a poor, old, blind, lame or impotent person, or other person not able to work, if possessed of sufficient means to relieve and maintain that person". Under this clause the authorities may, and do, force relatives to contribute.

The mother of an illegitimate child, so long as she is unmarried or a widow, is bound to maintain the child until age sixteen. A man who marries a woman who has a child, whether legitimate or illegitimate, is responsible for the child till age sixteen.

One interesting addition is that a married woman, with property of her own, now has responsibilities similar to those of the husband.

It will be seen that the ruling class do not show to the destitute wealth-producers and their dependants even a crumb of the open-handed generosity with which they reward dud Generals and Admirals. Yet although the applicant for relief has to satisfy the above conditions, and many others, we find that, on the last Saturday in September, 1935, Poor Relief was granted to no fewer than 1,280,942 persons, equivalent to 3.17 per cent of the population, double the number in 1913 (611,448).

The Old-Age Pension Means Test
One development of the Poor Law has been the smaller use of workhouses and the greater extent to which relief is paid to the applicant in his own home. Provided that the authorities maintain a tight check—as, of course, they do—they have found the latter method cheaper. According to the 14th Annual Report of the Ministry of Health (p. 199) the average cost of relief in general Poor Law Institutions in 1932-33 was about 24s. a week, while the average expenditure on relief per head of the "ordinary outdoor poor" (i.e., excluding persons ordinarily employed) was 6s. 1d. a week.

An extension of this method of relieving the destitute in their own homes was the grant under various Acts from 1908 to 1924 of non-contributory old-age pensions at age seventy. There are at present something like 760,000 persons in receipt of old-age non-contributory pensions of 10s. a week or less. This system has now been copied in USA, and, there, also, one of the arguments used in support of it is that of cheapness. As Mary T. Norton, a Congresswoman from New Jersey, USA, declared last year, "old-age pensions are cheaper than poor-houses". (New Militant, New York, November 30th, 1935.)

The non-contributory pensions are not given to all persons over seventy years of age, but are subject to the condition that the applicant's income from all sources, including gifts, is below a specified low level, savings also being taken into account. The "means test", however, only concerns the income of the applicant, not that of his relatives as well. It differs, therefore, from the "family means test".

The Unemployment Pay Means Test
We now come to the question which has so much occupied the Opposition parties in recent years, the "family means test" applied to some of the unemployed. In 1931 the Law was altered by the National Government so that unemployed persons who had exhausted their right to benefit (by reason of the fact that they had received benefit for six months in a benefit year), and persons who could not show thirty stamps for the two years preceding their application for benefit, were declared eligible for "transitional" payments only. Before this change there was no limit to the period an unemployed person could draw ordinary benefit, provided he or she satisfied the various other conditions.

The difference between ordinary unemployment benefit and "transitional" benefit was that the latter was only payable provided that the Public Assistance authority satisfied itself that the claimant was in need of assistance. In other words, when an unemployed man came under the transitional benefit regulations his claim became subject to the "family means test", the kind of test applied from 1600 onwards.

The applicant had to provide information regarding the earnings of all members of the household, also Army and Navy pensions, blind pensions, etc., income from
Workmen’s Compensation, Friendly Society benefits, assistance from relatives not living at home, savings, etc., etc.

These provisions were embodied, with modifications, in the Unemployment Act, 1934. Section 38 provides that unemployed persons who run out of benefit, instead of having transitional benefit shall come under the newly-created Unemployment Assistance Board and be entitled to an allowance dependent on needs, the need being determined by taking into account the resources of all members of the household. The 1934 Act ruled out, however, from the family income which is taken into account, part of the benefit from a Friendly Society and from National Health Insurance, the first £1 of a disability pension and half of any weekly payment by way of Workmen's Compensation.

That is the Law as it stands at present, but the Unemployment Assistance Board's activities promptly led to further outcry and the Government is still considering the question of the allowances. The Means Test will still apply. Eventually the Unemployment Assistance Board is to have control, not only over the unemployed who have fallen out of benefit, but also other able-bodied unemployed (including those not insured at all), who are now under the control of the Public Assistance authorities.

**The Labour Government's Poor Defence**

The application of the family Means Test to the unemployed was an innovation of importance affecting hundreds of thousands directly, and likely to affect others if they remained unemployed for over six months. All the same, the extent and violence of the outcry surprised not only the National Government but even the Labour Party. The reasons why the question has taken on such importance in elections is not far to seek. It meant that the unemployed found even the security of unemployment pay taken from them and also the parents and children of anyone unemployed or likely to become unemployed found themselves involved. They resented the obligation to contribute to the support of their unemployed relatives out of their own inadequate earnings, and resented having to provide information. The interest of the unemployed and their relatives is understandable enough, but the indignation of the Labour Party leaders is not so easy to understand.

It is true that the National Government was responsible for applying the family Means Test to the unemployed after twenty-six weeks on benefit, but the two Labour Governments had applied the test under the Poor Law and appear never to have contemplated its abolition.

Moreover, the Labour Government, in 1931, just before its resignation, had already agreed to economies which included the application of a Means Test to those of the unemployed who had been long out of work. What they deny having agreed to was a family Means Test.
Mr J. H. Thomas recently infuriated some of the Labour MPs by saying--as he has often said before--"there is no leader sitting on that Front Bench who was a member of the Labour Government with me who dares to say that he opposed the Means Test." *(Hansard, December 9th, 1935, col. 688.)* Mr George Lansbury thereupon intervened to explain exactly what happened in 1931 and what was the attitude of the Labour Government. He said:-

"While it is true, as I have said several times, that we were in favour of a Means Test, we were definitely and emphatically against putting the unemployed under the Poor Law and thus bringing them within the Poor Law Means Test . . . The unemployed who were receiving transitional payments never came under the Means Test until after the Economy Act, brought in by Lord Snowden, was passed by this House . . . The able-bodied poor who came to the Poor Law were always under the Means Test . . . " *(Col 696.)*

In order that there may be no doubt about the attitude of the Labour Government in 1931, we may refer also to other authoritative statements. Speaking in the House of Commons on November 13th, 1931 *(Hansard, November 13th, col 446)*, Mr Lansbury said:-

"As to the Means Test, the hon. Member knows as well as I do what is our attitude on the subject. I am not prepared to give people money year after year without knowing what is their own personal position; that is to say, if a person has gone out of ordinary benefit and has means of his own to maintain himself. I am not prepared to pay him State money."

In keeping with this policy of favouring a Means Test, but not one based on family income, an *amendment* moved by Mr Kirkwood, at the Scarborough Conference of the Labour Party, 1931 (see Report, pages 206-209), which would have entirely abolished the Means Test for workers on transitional benefit, was defeated. The resolution which was carried was moved by Sir Stafford Cripps. It merely committed the Labour Party to the abolition of the "Poor Law tests", leaving the way open for a non-family Means Test.

The Labour Party's Election Address, 1935, cautiously promises to sweep away "the humiliating Means Test imposed by the National Government", but does not promise to abolish all means tests, either for Poor Law or for Unemployment pay.

**A Vital Question for Capitalism**
It does not require much examination to see why the question of Means Tests is a vital one for capitalism. Capitalism cannot exist without something which will drive the workers to submit themselves to exploitation for the benefit of the propertied class. That something is poverty and the threat of starvation. The capitalists must have always at their disposal the millions of wage-earners ready to be exploited in order to live. Once allow the able-bodied (i.e., profit-producing) workers to have free access even to the most frugal necessities of life and capitalism is ended. For reasons of stability and security of property the rulers must provide something for those workers whose services are not at the moment required, but it must be so hedged about by restrictions that it does not enable workers to receive from all sources more than will barely keep them alive. So the working class must not receive unemployment pay indefinitely without fathers and children being made to meet part of the cost; they must not be able to get Public Assistance while they or their relatives have the means to keep them. Mrs Sidney Webb in her useful lecture on *The English Poor Law* (Oxford University Press, 1928, 1s.), gives an apt quotation from Patrick Colquhoun.

He was living in the early 19th century, but the relative position of capitalists and workers, has not changed since then:

"Without a proportion of poverty there could be no riches, since riches are the offspring of labour, while labour can exist only from a state of poverty . . . Poverty is, therefore, a most necessary and indispensable ingredient in society, without which nations and communities could not exist in a state of civilisation."

If we remember that for Mr Colquhoun "civilisation" meant "capitalism", his statement is a good description of the facts; and, in passing, it is interesting to recall how Mr Colquhoun proposed to enforce poverty. Mrs Webb calls him "the inventor of the modern system of preventive police", and one of the chief original purposes of the police system was to smash up workers' demonstrations without loss of life and without incurring the criticism which the use of troops always aroused. (See *British History in the 19th Century*, G. M. Trevelyan, Longmans; 1922; p. 199.) The police came in useful when the starving agricultural labourers and textile operatives demonstrated against the effects of the Poor Law Act of 1834, which brought to an end the practice of subsidising low wages by Poor Relief.
Coming back to the present problem of the Means Test, it is conceivable that the Government could achieve the same purpose—that of compelling the workers to submit themselves to exploitation—without any kind of Means Test, family or otherwise, by applying much more harshly the remaining restrictions. The present method, however, has the advantage from their point of view that an unemployed man's relatives can usually be relied on to goad him into accepting any work, however ill-paid and uncongenial. How much more satisfactory that is to the Government than that the Government itself should be accused of driving unemployed into accepting work at all costs!

**Only Socialism will abolish Means Tests**

One thing is absolutely certain. Any political party which administers capitalism has got to find some means of compelling the workers to produce profits for the capitalists. Nothing but the alternative of starvation will do it. No appeal, whether in the name of patriotism, religion, social duty or anything else will serve the purpose. Capitalism is supported by force and will collapse if the force is withdrawn.

That explains why we can be sure that no Government, Liberal, Labour, Conservative, or any other, which administers capitalism, will abolish the Means Test without reintroducing it under another name or something of similar effect and equally obnoxious. That explains why the Labour Party and its spokesmen in the House of Commons do not undertake to abolish all Means Tests, but only to abolish the "family" Means Test, and even that they do not promise to abolish in relation to Public Assistance.

They may have the best intentions, but capitalism is based on class ownership, class antagonism. The effort to keep the basis but humanise the administration may decrease somewhat the amount of human misery, but cannot solve the problem. It also increases the opposition of those who say that the workers abuse every concession made to them, and that, therefore, progress and Socialism are impossible.

Only Socialists have a solution. Society must get rid of the class basis and the system of wage-labour. It must be so organised that people are no longer offered the alternatives of being exploited or of striving to retain or become an exploiter. Wealth must be produced only for use and without the wealth producers being driven to their uncongenial tasks by the whip of starvation wielded by the ruling class and their governments.

The incentive must be the common appreciation that work, in which all will cooperate, will be for the good of all. Access to the necessaries and comforts of life must be free. There will be no need for "means tests" for anyone. All will be members of society without privilege one over the other.

(January 1936)
How can Hitlerism be destroyed?

That the Nazi Government, or what has come to be known as Hitlerism, is a menace to the peace of the world, is a fact as much recognised by Socialists as by all those who support the war. No Socialist will deny that all the Hitler regime stands for is repugnant and revolting to every ideal which he strives to establish.

The suppression of free expression of opinion, the concentration camp, the racial persecution and exiling of all people arbitrarily deemed out of sympathy with Nazi-ism, the public and private burning of a vast literature on Socialist and scientific subjects, the untold number of outrages committed by the Gestapo, are things indicative of a form of social life (pardon the phrase) which must befoul the finer feelings of all those worthy to be classed as really human.

Intellectual development cannot be where such conditions are prevalent. And where intellectual forces are stifled, real social material well-being is impossible of attainment. There must be no mistake that Socialists hate Hitlerism in a manner beyond question. It stands out to us calling aloud for destruction. But when we have said all this we have but touched the fringe of the problem presented by the existence of the present German Government. That Government, like that of any other throughout the world, owes its origin and maintenance to definite historical and social causes, in which we include such mass ideology as that upon which all governments largely depend for their existence.

Let us begin at the beginning.
The basic condition for the rivalry between modern states is the quest for profit on the part of those who own the means of living, the land, mines, railways and all such resources of the earth as the whole of mankind needs in order to live. The people who own these vital forces of human life are, in broad outline, represented by those who are in control of the machinery of government. Whether such government be *democratic* or dictatorship in form, the above statement applies with equal force. It cannot be too often stated that the method of government in all capitalist countries is a sort of by-product of the same general mode of wealth production and distribution. We leave aside for the moment whether the *democratic* or dictatorship form of the state in capitalist countries is more favourable for working-class expression and development. One point here is, that in democratic Britain, France and America, as in dictatorship Germany and Italy, wealth is produced primarily for profit. Therein is to be found the secret of the world situation in modern times. Profit represents--is in fact--the unpaid labour of the workers. Every worker must realise that after he has spent his energy in producing things for the capitalist, and after all materials and other items have been provided for, there is a surplus above the amount he gets in wages. When this surplus fails to materialise, capitalist production normally ceases. We describe the surplus wealth taken by the capitalist as surplus-value. The worker labours for the capitalist (when he is permitted to do so) for wages, and the capitalist puts him to work to realise the difference between the wages paid and the value of the worker's product of labour. "It is this sort of exchange", says Marx, "between capital and labour upon which capitalistic production, or the wages system, is founded, and which must constantly result in reproducing the working man as working man and the capitalist as capitalist."

The perpetuation and expansion of the capitalist's pursuit of surplus-value gave rise to the imperialism underlying modern war. For capital to grow to maturity it must break down national boundaries and seek the world for its sphere of activity and gratification. Hence the conflicts between national groups of capitalists represented by their respective governments backed by armed force.

The phrase, "the workshop of the world", at one time so aptly applied to this country, indicates an ideological landmark, not merely in the economic history and development of England, but also in that of the other leading capitalist powers. Those who were once the customers of "the world's workshop" became, in the very nature of the capitalist process, its competitors for markets, trade routes, spheres of influence, and the occupation of strategic positions, or the acquisition of raw materials.

Thus arose the intense rivalry of Britain and Germany, which culminated in the war of 1914-1918. The defeat of Germany in that conflict and the imposing of the Treaty of Versailles upon her paved the way for the war in which we are once more engaged.

One of the chief architects of the Versailles Treaty, Mr Lloyd George, has said of his own part-handiwork:-
I am one of the four upon whom devolved the onerous task of drafting the treaties of 1919... The conditions that were imposed upon Germany were ruthlessly applied to the limit of her endurance. She paid £2,000,000,000 in reparations. We experienced insuperable difficulties in paying £1,000,000,000 to America--and we are a much richer country than Germany. We stripped her of all her colonies, confiscating her equipment in those vast territories. We deprived her of part of her home provinces, some of which she had possessed for over 200 years.

We took her great fleet away from her.
We reduced her army of millions to 100,000 men.
We dismantled her fortresses and we deprived her of artillery, tanks, airplays, broke up all the machinery she possessed for re-equipping herself.

It is no part of our Socialist work to shed tears over the demilitarising of Germany or any other capitalist state. But as we look back from the time of the termination of the last war, up to date, we are forced to observe the economic and political consequences which called forth the author of Mein Kampf and his gang as the heads of a great state. Hardly had the Versailles Treaty been signed than the then German Government began to plot and scheme to defeat it. Hemmed in as Germany was by strong powers like England and France, there is little cause for surprise that, to quote Mr Lloyd George again:-

"When communities are deprived of the protection of law by selfish and unscrupulous interests they generally find refuge in taking the law into their own hands."

That the thrusting of the Versailles Treaty upon Germany was in principle no worse than the German or Prussian Treaty imposed upon France in 1871, than that imposed upon Roumania at Bucharest, or that on Russia at Brest-Litovsk, is but begging the question. The real point is that capitalist treaty-making is not only no safeguard against wars, but as a sort of storehouse for their recurrence. And so is Europe, perhaps the whole world, once more on the verge of gigantic slaughter, blinding and maiming; the approximate end to the whole butchery and destruction being beyond reasonable forecast.

The British Government again drags the workers of this country and its colonies into the battlefields on the plea of resisting aggression, as it did in the last "war to end war". This time we are to smash Hitlerism, as we were in 1914 incited to destroy the Kaiser and his military caste.
But it is not the Nazi form of government as such that the British ruling class seeks to end, but the policy of Hitler's regime in aiming at the interests of those who own and control the British Empire. Hitler and his murderous thugs might have raped and persecuted, imprisoned and tortured indefinitely, without as much as a stir from the "Mother of Parliaments". The sacking and slaughter of Abyssinia, the overrunning of Austria and Czechoslovakia, were as much undisputed acts of aggression as that of Poland, but they evoked the British Government to acts of accommodation rather than conflict. Not until it was certain that Hitler had designs on the dismemberment of the British Empire were the forces of slaughter released by Great Britain and her ally, France.

If the present war is allowed to run its course until one or other of the combatants is crushed, are we likely to witness, if we are still alive, the downfall of the Nazi form of government in Germany, the restoration of some form of democratic social life in Germany, and the maintenance of what democratic means of expression remain in Europe today? If Chamberlain, Daladier and Company are the spokesmen in setting the seal of defeat on Germany, will they invite the "leaders" of the working-class movement to secure that the German workers be permitted to voice their political and social views, whatever they may be? We know from experience they will do nothing of the kind; it is not a matter in which they are the least bit interested. Therefore, the backing of the "Labour Movement" given to the British and French governments is preposterous.

The working-class movement of Europe, even that part of it which claims the war to be one of Democracy versus Nazi Dictatorship, is no more likely to be consulted at the "funeral" of Hitler than they will be granted their emancipation from wage-slavery by the international capitalist class. The real issue before the working class of the world is one of ending its exploitation and all that such entails.

The present war is most likely to bring in its trail, unless it is stopped by working-class action meanwhile, greater misery than the last war, greater and more intensified exploitation, less freedom to achieve our purpose than we now possess, whichever side is triumphant in the struggle.

The German workers must, it seems, be the means of effecting the downfall of the Nazi system of government.

For ourselves we, as Socialists, would render them any service which would assist in their accomplishing the overthrow of their despotic ruling gang, if only to gain for them the immediate means of being able to give expression to their social and political aspirations without fear of being murdered or placed in a concentration camp.

Until the working-class movement in Germany or anywhere else can gain the means of emerging from underground into the daylight, their chances of finally freeing themselves from capitalism through Socialism are well-nigh hopeless. To assist in the war against Germany is not the way by which this can be accomplished, we should be slaughtering the very people we desire to liberate from the Nazi yoke. Moreover, our action then would assist Hitler and Co. to bury still deeper the opposition to his rule. He would point to the unanimity of feeling here to secure it in Germany. We find no valid reason for the support of this war, as we found none for the last war, which left us, of the Socialist Party, more isolated in our opposition than we are today.

When the war of 1914-1918 was at its worst, when the blood-bath was full to overflowing, we said then:
"Every Socialist must, therefore, wish to see peace established at once to save further
maiming and slaughter of our fellow-workers. All those who, on any pretext, or for any
supposed reason, wish the war to continue, at once stamp themselves as anti-Socialist, anti-
working class, and pro-capitalist." (Socialist Standard, July 1917.)

Quite frankly, facing the matter realistically, we see no immediate prospect of the workers
becoming Socialists in sufficient numbers to come to real grips with the capitalist class in a
challenge to the latter's political power. The talk of a Socialist peace, although supremely desirable
and necessary, would therefore seem to be Utopian at the moment. If the working class becomes
alive to the realities of the war issue they will see that their first task is to stop the blood-letting,
and finally to gain political power for themselves and establish Socialism throughout the world and
thus end all wars.

(February 1940)

In the front line

Tucked securely into the valleys that cut a deep line between the range of mountains lying in —,
somewhere in England, are a number of small towns and villages once included among the
distressed or "special" areas.

Until three years ago, industrial activity around this neighbourhood was practically at a standstill
and it was the exception rather than the rule to find a working-class household whose adult males
were not on the dole.

The standard of living, poor at the best of times, had sunk to an incredibly low level. Tuberculosis
and kindred ailments, directly due to malnutrition, were accepted as an inevitable scourge
alongside all the other evils commonly associated with extreme poverty.

But about three years ago the stillness of the surrounding countryside was broken by the clanging
sound of hammer upon steel, the staccato of the mechanical drill—builders at work.

The men idling at the street corners sniffed the air like dogs picking up a fresh scent—they smelled
work.

And they were right. Far-seeing industrialists, certain of the war to come, were looking for places
to build factories to accommodate the needs of capitalism at war, districts comparatively safe from
air attacks—not to forget a plentiful supply of cheap labour close at hand. And here they believed
they had found both.

Happy mortals, to be able to look the landlord straight in the eye when the grim individual calls for
rent on Monday morning, not to slouch into the grocery shop with that hang-dog look in your face,
because last week's account was still unpaid; no wonder the people's misgivings at the
unmistakable signs of coming war—the coat of camouflage paint upon the factory roofs and walls
—were stilled and forgotten in the growing realisation that at last work had come again to the idle
valley.
The factories have now been in full swing for a considerable time. Textiles, aircraft, paint, sweets—an odd and varying assortment of commodities are being turned out in huge quantities every day. The idlers have gone from the streets, a solitary clerk does duty at the once crowded local labour exchange.

True, the men are not getting the wages they hoped for, but they do not grumble much, for spells of unemployment lasting for ten years or more are not conducive to working-class militancy.

Besides, the women-folk, particularly the younger section, are all working and contributing to the household exchequer.

On Saturdays the shopping centres are literally mobbed with working people. They are charged high prices for shoddy goods, the shops always getting a fat picking out of an industrial boom. After that there is very little left in the wage packet when the rent and other weekly payments are put by.

The working-class table is still short of many of the vital necessities of life. Fresh milk is rare, instead, tins of condensed milk, which are cheaper and save the use of sugar, expensive at present, do duty.

The price of good fruit is prohibitive for the same reason, meat and eggs make only rare appearances.

Because of the terrific strain and worry of work under war conditions, both men and women are heavy smokers, and the outlay on the now so expensive cigarettes makes another deep hole in working-class pockets. Still—there's work again on Monday and another wage packet at the end of the week.

Let me take you into one of these factories so that you can see for yourself how working-class brawn and brains are swelling Britain's war efforts and the profits of the British capitalist class.

This one is engaged on the manufacture of textiles, and the first thing that amazes you is the overwhelming preponderance of young persons, mostly girls. Large numbers of them are between the ages of fourteen and sixteen and they look what they are—children. They work a forty-eight hour week for mere pittances, sums as low as eight and sixpence per week.

Inevitably, with so much unskilled labour, much of the finished material is faulty and then the stern-faced supervisors, all of them elderly and unprepossessing spinsters who stand most of the day with folded arms watching the youngsters like hawks, rate the unfortunate miscreant soundly.

The construction and machinery are of the most modern type, and it seems anomalous for such frail, young bodies to be pitted against the giant structure and faultless precision of the machine tool they operate. Accidents occur and young fingers and hands are badly smashed or ripped, but for the most part young and flexible hands and brains quickly gain control over the intricate mechanism.

The walls are liberally adorned with posters bearing slogans such as "Go To It", "Keep At It", and so on, ad nauseam; even the lavatories are not immune from these harrying catch-cries.

Evidently the owners are deeply patriotic, and so they should be, for is not their whole existence bound up with the preservation of the British Empire? In this particular instance the factory is engaged on Government contracts, and the young sons of the proprietor have been excused from military service on the grounds that they are "directors" of work of National importance. What their directing consists of is not quite clear; they live some hundreds of miles away and are only seen when they arrive by car to make a brief tour of inspection.
This takes place once a month and then they are shown around the place by the manager in a manner reminiscent of royalty.
In conformity with the truly enlightened outlook of the modern capitalist, the welfare side of the employees has not been forgotten. There is a canteen which serves badly cooked and microscopic mid-day meals for sixpence, and there is also a radio, for which all workers are docked a penny a week from their pay.

This instrument is in constant competition with the deafening roar of machinery, but somehow manages to make itself heard above the din now and again.

Modern tunes set everyone singing lustily in accompaniment, but at present everyone is earnestly concentrating on their particular task, whilst a deep, baritone voice is booming out a song about "Ye Yeomen of England", or words to that effect.

Air raid warnings are a frequent occurrence, but no one takes any notice of them, certainly not the management, who would not dream of stopping work for the duration of the "Alerts".

Indeed, it would be interesting to know why air raid warnings are sounded at all, since no provision for shelter has been made in the whole neighbourhood.

Nothing much has happened during the warnings—yet. If something did happen, well that would be "hard lines", bound up with the risk of being in the front line—at the age of fifteen at eight and sixpence per week.

Then you would be informed in the usual BBC sing-song that "there were a few casualties, some of which were fatal".

Overtime is compulsory for all the older employees, and the discipline that prevails is that of the barrack room.

If you show any independence of spirit at all and "answer back" to the humiliating bark of the supervisors or managers you are discharged forthwith.

No concern in the district will entertain direct application for employment—these must be made through the local labour exchange, which transmits particulars of your last employment and reasons for leaving to your prospective employer should the latter require them. This should be sufficient to discourage any sort of defiance in a people already cowed by many years of hunger, and besides, there are always the schools, disgorging hundreds of boys and girls from time to time who can quickly be trained to perform all but the key operations essential to the smooth running of these highly rationalised productive machines.
There is constant pinching of precious minutes from the workers' meal-times; these are already finely cut: three-quarters of an hour for dinner, and a quarter of an hour for tea in the afternoon. There is no break during the morning, when the workers, including the very youngest, have to slave four hours without a break. The manager and the forewomen, of course, are not included among the "rabble"—they must have a "snack" as a relief from their arduous task of watching others work.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that what I am describing are exceptional conditions laid down and carried out contrary to regulations imposed by law or frowned on by Trade Unions.

In fact, all the female employees at least are members of a Trade Union, although the men, to the best of my knowledge, are not allowed by the management to be organised in the same way. In any case, there is no shop steward, and the local Union official, who lives many miles away, is never seen.

And are not the signatures of our big Trade Union bosses on the Government posters, exhorting us to work faster, not to make any trouble, and, above all, DON'T STRIKE! So there is no help to be expected from that quarter.

Some of the older people who remember the last war and the terrific slump that followed are apprehensive. Sometimes, they cannot make up their minds whether they would like the war to end or not. They do not seem to believe the promises of "a new world", "a better heritage", and the rest. They are afraid that when the "piping times of peace" return these factories will be dismantled and the human fodder cast adrift upon the streets and the dole.

And they may be right, unless--!

Perhaps this war will end as neither side has planned. Perhaps even workers as meek and humble as those about which I have been writing will assert themselves as HUMAN BEINGS and, joining hands with their fellows all over the globe, will put an end to this nightmare existence of poverty, tyranny and despair which the rule of capitalism has imposed upon the masses of workers.

Does that day seem far away to you? Then you do not realise the growing force for social change gathering within the present world catastrophe.

(November 1940)
Some Socialist Points on the Beveridge Report

Time does not allow a thorough examination of the Beveridge Report in this issue, but a few preliminary remarks may be made on aspects of particular interest to Socialists.

First we may ask why all this fuss about proposals which even the *Times*—not remarkable for its generosity towards social reforms—admits are "moderate enough to disarm any charge of indulgence" (*Times*, December 2.) The spokesmen of capitalism are already preening themselves on the score that the Report shows what a generous and progressive country this is. They might pause to notice Beveridge's claim that everything he proposes could and should have been done decades ago. All that time they have been boasting of the numerous reform measures they have introduced, yet the sum total of them all is so niggardly and displeasing in the eyes of its beneficiaries, the workers, that the latter can be impressed by the seemingly important advance the Beveridge scheme represents by contrast with the evil condition of today.

Even so the scheme should be viewed in proper perspective. The *Times* reads into the Report the "confident assurance that the poor need not always be with us", but this is merely a misuse of terms, and one incidentally for which Beveridge appears not to be responsible. He talks all the time of abolishing "want", by which he avowedly means something quite different from abolishing poverty. By want he means the condition into which the workers fall when their wages stop, not the condition in which they are always because they always are carrying the capitalist class on their backs. Beveridge is quite clear about the distinction and says so. Did he not make a statement on December 1 (reported in the BBC news broadcasts but apparently not in the Press) that it had always been his view that want could be abolished within the ranks of the wage-earners without any inroads into the wealth of the rich? He is saying in effect in his Report want could be abolished without interfering with capitalism, but neither he nor the *Times* want to abolish poverty. But for the poverty of the poor there could be no riches for the rich—a state which he and they find quite acceptable.

The Report has had a good Press, and already it is claimed that the Liberals and half the Conservative Party view it with favour. A characteristic and intelligible capitalist comment was reported in the *Daily Worker* (December 3, 1942) from Captain Somerset de Chair, who is a Conservative MP. He is reported as follows:-

I welcome it as a comprehensive plan to remove insecurity without resorting to the uncertain hazards of social reconstruction, he said.

This plan promises what we young Conservatives have always Demanded—a square deal for the working man within the existing social and economic framework, instead of some utopia on the further side of an economic torrent.
The Report is mistakenly referred to as a measure of insurance for the workers against the evils of capitalism. It would be more accurate to see it as a measure of insurance for the capitalists against the (for them) desperate evil of working class discontent with capitalism. Better far to give something away in time than to risk losing all.

The Report has been criticised by the Insurance Companies whose profits would be affected by the proposal to hand over their industrial assurance work to a Government Board. This was to be expected, but it gives rise to some interesting speculations. The Insurance Companies, with their enormous investments in all kinds of industrial and commercial enterprises, wield great influence, not excluding influence in Parliament and the Press. Fifteen or twenty years ago it was common in so-called Labour papers to see bitter attacks on the Prudential and other companies. What has happened to change all this, so that nowadays the clamour against them has almost disappeared? The Daily Express (November 28) has a curious little reference to this in an article on a book by the late Sir Arnold Wilson in which he attacked the insurance companies. According to the writer of the article, Sir Arnold was struck by the way in which the economists had ignored the problem presented by the "concentration of financial power in the hands of the companies. "The oracles", he found, "were strangely dumb". "He searched libraries. He found little. He consulted the experts. And chief among them was Sir William Beveridge, who explained why the London School of Economics, on the grounds of expediency, had ignored the subject" (Daily Express, November 28. Italics ours.)

Sir William is, of course, no longer with the London School of Economics, and perhaps finds his hands less tied.

In one fundamental respect, the scheme is a gamble, and Socialists can be certain that the gamble will be a losing one, for it is based on the expectation that unemployment will be less than it was before. If this optimistic assumption proves wrong, then the whole of the financial provisions are undermined and either the benefits would have to be reduced, or the high contributions raised still more or a large further deficit made up from taxation. This optimism of Sir William Beveridge is too much for the City Editor of the Times. He points out (December 3) that Beveridge assumes that unemployment will not exceed an average of 8 1/2 per cent of the insured workers, but

Only in one year, 1927, in the 14 years before the war was the average below 10 per cent; in 1932 it was over 22 per cent. It is right to hope . . . that unemployment can be reduced to below 8 1/2 per cent . . . But it is clear that a corollary of the social security plan must be a plan for full and efficient employment. Without it the social budget will be thrown out of gear.
The Labour Party who gaily went into office in 1929 with a pledge to deal with unemployment and a hope that things "were on the up grade" should not need to be reminded that what happened to them (unemployment soon mounting to three millions) may well happen again even in the best of all possible capitalist worlds.

The Labour Party might also like to reflect on another incident in their experience. When the crisis occurred in 1931 it was a common theme with them that capitalism was for ever bankrupt and never again could there be any question of trying to make capitalism palatable to the workers by offering social reforms. Capitalism, they said, would never again be able to afford reforms. Socialists pointed out the absurdity of this belief that capitalism, choked with its own surplus products, could not afford to surrender some of them to alleviate the workers' miseries. What have the Labour Party to say now that they are hailing the Beveridge and allowing themselves to be manoeuvred into defending his scheme?

One of the major purposes of the Report has already been served, its use as war propaganda. Both from the point of view of offering the workers at home some more or less concrete hope of benefits to come and from the point of view of offsetting Nazi propaganda for a new European Order the Report can be described as an instant success for the Government.

(December 1942)
The black hole of Calcutta

What might be termed the sequel to the historical incident we know by the above term has been, and is being written in the blood of thousands of starving, pestilence-stricken Indian workers and peasants of Bengal. Daily references in the newspapers to the famine in India have provided grim evidence of the ghastly scenes enacted on the streets of Calcutta by actors unable to choose the part they wish to play. Stories have been related of children being sold for a handful of rice, and of skeletons of men and women feeding on jungle roots and leaves. Figures of the death rate show it to have increased to nearly four times the normal average. The whole tragedy is graphically epitomised by the Calcutta Statesman which said:-

"Thousands of emaciated destitutes still roam the streets in the ceaseless quest for food, scouring dustbins and devouring rotten remains of castaway food and fruit. Rickety children clutching imploringly the tattered garments barely covering the bones of their mothers are seen in all quarters of the city." (Quoted in Manchester Guardian Weekly, October 15, 1943.)

Famine has always been a factor to reckon with in the economy of India, and has usually meant suffering for large sections of the population. It is commonly understood that a famine means a shortage of food owing to the natural failure of crops, but what is not generally recognised is that the character of the famine, and the way in which it affects the people, varies with the type of society in which it occurs. To the middle of the nineteenth century famines in India were localized in the area in which there was a shortage of crop, and meant an appalling lack of food in that area and of employment. Even if one had money there was no food to be brought, and the general solution was to migrate to areas where food was available. From about 1850, however, capitalism, under the tutelage of the British, became superimposed on the old Indian feudal economy at an ever quickening rate.

With the spreading of capitalism the growth of industrialisation, the development of the plantation and factory system, the production of goods for sale came more and more into evidence. Concurrently with this development the means of transport and communication were vastly increased and extended. Hence, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it became relatively easy to shift quantities of foodstuffs into famine-stricken areas, and a change in the general character of Indian famines took place. They now meant, not so much an appalling lack of food as high scarcity prices and lack of employment, and whilst the growth of the means of communication lessened the danger of local famines, it tended to widen the area where high prices would prevail.

Thus the famine, from being a calamity of the natural order, turned into a calamity of the social order, aggravating the sufferings inflicted on the poorer sections of the population, notably the peasants, the landless day-labourer, and the growing urban working class.

It is true that in the area most affected by the recent famine, Bengal, Bombay, and Madras, there has been some destruction of crops due to natural causes, but at the same time there have been good crops in other provinces. In the reports that have arrived in this country there is a general insistence that the catastrophe has not come about because of any basic natural shortage, but because such deficits in supply as did exist have been taken advantage of by hoarders and speculators. The loss of the Burma rice crop, excessive inflation, and general economic dislocation (all factors arising out of the war), and natural shortages in certain districts, all tended to encourage the farmers and merchants to hold on to their stocks in order to get still higher prices and greater profits when they did at last decide to sell.
This was the position as early as January 15, 1943, when in the Manchester Guardian Weekly it was reported that "price control has never been rigorously enforced, except against small retailers. The impression is widespread that there are considerable stocks which would be brought out if price control was removed and this would relieve the shortage until next harvest." The same issue of the paper also stated that black markets flourished everywhere.

After seven months had elapsed the same paper wrote as follows (August 13, 1943):

"The Government of India's Food Member did not deny last week the allegation that men in authority have obstructed the Government's measures to bring relief to the masses. The Food Secretary on Sunday admitted that Sind had made enormous profits through the sale of surplus wheat and rice. Lack of foresight, the toleration of profiteers, and the fear of alienating certain favoured sections like the landlords, have created the food crisis."

Whilst we learn on the one hand of the fear of alienating certain favoured sections of the property owning class, we learn that there was no such fear during the period of alienating those sections of the population with little or no property. Side by side with the blackest of black markets, dealing in the very life-blood of the poverty-stricken masses, there were "long queues of hungry workers waiting all night outside Government controlled grain shops in places like Bombay." (Manchester Guardian Weekly, January 15, 1943.)

Investigations conducted by Calcutta University have revealed that 50 per cent of the families of destitutes have been broken up, and that 47 per cent are landless labourers, 25 per cent small cultivators, 6 per cent town beggars, and the remainder unclassified.

Such evidence as this throws into bold relief the fact that it is the propertyless who suffer and die, whilst the propertied reap excess profits and get all want in the black markets.

The Indian scene, in normal times, is a picture of a vast mass of humanity living in the grip of abysmal poverty. Utter destitution resulting in a prolonged death through starvation, or a quicker death through mal-nutritional diseases such as tuberculosis, cholera and typhoid, is the lot of Indian workers and peasants. What then must be their lot when the price of the food they require for a bare existence soars far and away above their means? What can they do but wait for death to claim them, their bony hands held out imploringly for food, on the pavements of the second largest and one of the "most prosperous" cities in the British Empire! In other parts of the same empire the granaries of Australia and Canada are full to overflowing with the wheat that would bring succour to those in need. The problem, however, according to Mr. Amery (Secretary for India), speaking in the House of Commons, October 12, 1943, was "entirely one of shipping, and has to be judged in the light of all the other urgent needs of the Allied Nations." Yet the Allied Nations are producing ships faster than they have ever been produced before in the history of mankind, and the USA is able to boast of a production of 15,000 naval ships of all dimensions in the past three years.

Well might the reader at this point exclaim, "This is madness!"

No, reader, this is not madness—simply another example of the ever present anarchy in CAPITALISM, the economic system of society that holds the world enslaved.
An economic system that is based on the ownership of the means of life by the few, and the exclusion of the means of life from the many. Only under capitalism is it possible for conditions to arise where hoarders, speculators, and black marketeers of every nationality can flourish on the one hand, and be the social complement of starvation, unemployment, squalor, disease and poverty on the other.

Only with the abolition of this private property basis of society and its replacement by the ownership of the means of wealth production and distribution by the whole of humanity, can humanity solve the evils with which it is confronted.

This is the job, the only worth-while job, of the working class. Not only the working class of this country, but of the working class of the world acting in unison. No longer must they acquiesce in the retention of a system which condemns great numbers of men and women to exist like a seething mass of gentils beneath a rotten, stinking piece of meat. Just as the meat is a condition of existence of the gentils, so is capitalism a condition of existence of the working class. It must be removed, and with it will go all class divisions.

This can only be done by a working class conscious of the cause of its troubles, desirous of solving them, and with knowledge of the solution. Even in the case of the Indian working class the solution to their problems is the same as ours. It does not lie in the substitution of one kind of capitalism for another. It does not lie in the substitution of a native Indian master class in place of the British Raj; their fellow countrymen are among their most ruthless exploiters. In common with the rest of the workers of the world, their solution lies in the establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means of life—the establishment of SOCIALISM. Along this road alone, however tiresome may be the journey and however many pitfalls may be on the way, lies the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

**Concerning "A National Health Service"**

The White Paper issued in February 1944 dilates on proposals for a National Health Service. This is the result of discussions with various bodies including the British Medical Association (which may be termed the doctors' trade union), the Royal Colleges, Voluntary and Municipal Hospital representatives. In the words of the report:-

The Government . . . want to ensure that in future every man and woman and child can rely on getting all the advice and treatment and care which they may need in matters of personal health; that what they get shall be the best medical and other facilities available; that their getting these shall not depend on whether they can pay for them, or on any other factor irrelevant to the real need—the real need being to bring the country's full resources to bear upon reducing ill-health and promoting good health in all its citizens.

As Socialists we are not impressed by this show of good-will; we give due regard to the capitalist need for healthy workers, and to the date of publication—viz., during a period of something very like war weariness, when accounts of Jap atrocities are needed to pep up morale.

We will digress for a moment to examine the state of medicine at this time in relation to the working class.
Ideas regarding a State medical service for all, not just for insured workers as prevails at the present time, are by no means new, but in their previous forms they have met with opposition from both the British and American Medical Associations. In their organ, the British Medical Journal, the BMA have expressed fear that the present "free" choice of doctor will cease. That freedom of the present choice will be apparent to most workers, but should any retain illusions, they may be quickly dispelled. A worker may not choose a Harley Street specialist, but most have a general practitioner engaged in panel practice, unless he is prepared to spend his meagre earnings on doctor's fees. The doctor chosen is usually the nearest, in order to save time. Frequently nothing is known of his or her qualifications, letters after the name conveying no more than would hieroglyphics. When the choice is made, unless the worker is extremely ill, he attends an overcrowded surgery, perhaps being allowed five minutes of the doctor's time. He may, however, not get this, for it has long been the custom for doctors with large panel practices to employ assistants—e.g., newly qualified doctors. The assistant sees the panel patients whilst the doctor attends his fee-paying patients. (This practice is in abeyance during war time, due to the calling up of young doctors, so the poor panel patient gets less time than ever.)

In these days of specialisation, the general practitioner cannot completely attend to all his patients' requirements. Equipment and the services of dispensers and secretaries are costly. The White Paper recognises this fact and proposes Health Centres in which a group of doctors could practise with staff and equipment provided. The private patients also suffer under the present system. Their own doctor may administer palliatives inserted of sending them to the appropriate specialist for radical treatment.

The BMA have also feared they may find their members working in the guise of civil servants subject to control, which they state would stifle initiative and responsibility towards those sacred trusts, their patients. The American counterpart went so far as to remove from membership any doctor taking part in salaried practice, until prevented from so doing by an order of the Supreme Court in 1942.

Much of the opposition to a National Health Service arises from the inability of doctors to regard themselves as members of the working class. They are, in their own opinion, a class apart, members of the highest profession, rendering selfless service to mankind. No doubt many start with the highest ideals, but few keep them. This is not intended to portray doctors as batten ghoulishly on the lay public, but like all others, they are caught in the cleft stick of capitalism. The doctor is an expensive product; he must keep up certain appearances, and bring up his children in like manner. To be successful he cannot escape the sordid struggle for life under capitalism. He must sell his labour power in order to live, as does his meanest panel patient. These facts are not readily appreciated by the BMA, who, however, by their resistance to salaried schemes, have compelled the doctor to sell in the open market.

Nevertheless, the views of the BMA have not been wholly representative of opinion here or in America. In a leading article, The Lancet (January 22nd, 1944), anticipating the proposals in the White Paper, commented on the advantages to the patient of Cupertino between local authorities, hospitals and the doctor, now inadequate, and states that hitherto most attention has been paid to the convenience of the doctors concerned. Unpopularity of central control may be the reason for this outburst. "Enough of this bureaucratic planning; give me my own show and let me get on with it". The article continues: "The answer to him has already been given. "The needs of the sick are endlessly variable; the resources of medicine are multifarious; and only a large adaptable, sensitive, smooth running organisation will fit one to the other in the largest number of cases."
Similarly the attitude in the USA, where there is no National Health Insurance, is changing. Reviewing *Kaiser Wakes the Doctors*, by Paul De Kruif, New York (a work demonstrating the success of shipbuilder Kaiser's medical scheme for workers in the mushroom ship yards of the Pacific coast, employing 60 salaried doctors), *The Lancet* of February 19th, 1944, quotes De Kruif's confession. Hitherto, he had "remained content with official medical explanations that this prepaid medicine was unethical; 100,000 doctors could not be wrong." It now appears that they could. At the present state of development it is uneconomic for the doctors to sell their labour power in the open market, as the worker cannot afford to buy it, and his health suffers in consequence. The needs of war-time industry here and in the States require workers to receive expert medical attention in every sphere, in order to return to work rapidly and make the wheels of capitalism spin. Note the recent accent on "rehabilitation". In times of slump the breakdown of a few workers is immaterial when others can be drawn from the reserve army of the unemployed. The present arrangements, in which the general practitioner works alone, are not conducive to the production of efficient, healthy workers. "Accident proneness" is inevitable in sub-healthy states. Also the fact that the worker's wife has no panel doctor has come to be realised as an anomaly overdue for remedy. As she must be a fee-paying patient, she often fails to seek necessary advice, and comes to accept ill-health as part of her life. The widespread influence of the BMA compelled the Government to accept its offices in the recent discussions. The White Paper is throughout a sop to the BMA, reiterating again and again that "the patient should choose his own doctor". The suggested arrangements for the entire population to be covered by insurance has the advantage of simplicity, but not so the arrangement of general practitioners. The Health Centres proposed will be used by a group of doctors who will see their patients there instead of at their surgeries. A salary or equivalent will be paid to them but—and what a large "but" it is—the doctor may still have private fee-paying patients. The report states, however, that no one must be given "reason to believe that he can obtain more skilled treatment by obtaining it privately than by seeking it within the new source".

Socialists may suppress a smile at so naive a hope. What reason is there to suppose that a doctor now giving greater attention to his private patients than his panel will not continue to do so under the new scheme? It is not hard to visualise a doctor seeing his erstwhile panel patients at the Health Centre, receiving his salary for so doing, and then rushing off to see his private patients. True, the better equipment provided at the Health Centre may even be an inducement to persons of means to attend, so that private practice declines and the doctor ceases to sell his labour power in the open market, but what then?

Will the doctor's salaried position enable him to see his true place in society? Time will show, but under neither this proposed scheme nor any other will the worker get the requisite attention. Under any scheme in capitalist society expenditure is resisted at every step, as has been the case with housing for the workers (not their masters), sanitation, education and the like. Even the Beverage scheme for health insurance requires that large scale unemployment shall not obtain; such statements serve to demonstrate the hollowness of capitalistic schemes, for it is powerless to prevent unemployment, which is inherent in its constitution. Only under Socialism, where the wages system will no longer exist, and where the workers will enjoy the fruits of their labour under ideal conditions without exploitation, can doctors truly serve their fellow-workers, and a real health service for all be established.

(June 1944)
Hiroshima and after!

Another date has been added to History's gruesome chronology of horror. Hiroshima, August 5th 1945, marks the application of a new technique in the sordid science of slaughter. In one catastrophic flash a city has been destroyed and "all life seared to death". While the monument of dust still towered above the ruins, the news was released upon a world almost satiated with carnage.

Yet it is significant to observe that although the use of the atomic bomb hastened the end of the war in the East, the announcement was received with little popular enthusiasm.

Before 1939 it was comparatively easy for the ruling class to convince the workers of the need for a large navy, army, and air force. Armaments, they maintained would ward off would-be aggressors and thereby ensure peace. Their solicitude for our safety seemed almost genuine. Years of grim experience, however, have proved the Socialists' contention that armaments are no insurance against war. New methods of persuasion will be needed next time to herd the population into the future shoddy equivalents of Anderson shelters, particularly since we are told by the US War Department that "an atomic bomb could be made 1,000 times more powerful than the type used on Japan".— (Sunday Despatch, August 12th, 1945). There will be very few near miss stories!

The reaction of the military mind is summed up by General Ismay, who in 1941 stated on behalf of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, "although personally, I am quite content with the existing explosives, I feel we must not stand in the path of improvement".— (Times, August 7th, 1945).

Let there be no mistake! The disastrous effect of this latest device to uplift humanity will in no way prevent its use. In fact because of the power of destruction, it becomes obvious that the element of surprise will be a major advantage in war. It may well be that a matter of hours will decide which group of capitalists will emerge victorious from the next edition, which gang will be jet-propelled on the next Crooks Tour, to sit at the fleshpots of some future Potsdam Conference.
Unfortunately for the British and American capitalistic class it will be impossible to monopolise the development of nuclear power. Sir James Chadwick, chief scientific advisor to the British members of the Combined Allied Policy Committee in Washington, has admitted that any nation with reasonable industrial facilities could start now and produce an atom bomb in 5 years' time, without assistance from Britain and the USA. Its antecedents are the past ages of patient research. From the 1890's when the Curies conducted experiments in radio-activity, up to the recent perverted achievement, the efforts of such scientists as Professor Rutherford of Manchester, Niels Bohr of Copenhagen, Dr Lawrence of California University, Professor Joliot of France, and others in Germany, Japan, Russia and elsewhere, prove indisputably that in the modern world production is a social function. In brief, as reported by the US War Department the bomb was created "not by the devilish inspiration of some warped genius, but by the arduous labour of thousands of normal men and women". — (Sunday Despatch, August 12th, 1945), i.e., members of the working class.

Needless to remark the news has produced a spate of advice, comments, explanations, warnings, and prophecies from people qualified and otherwise. Among the latter, Mr G. B. Shaw, in the Sunday Express, August 12th, 1945, unable to explain, yet urged to say something reverts to hollow flippancies, and reminiscences of childhood days. Dr Joad, emulating Churchill thanks God, "for one of the innumerable dispensations of Providence by which this country has been preserved", and asks querulously, "Will nobody stop these damned scientists, put them in a bag, and tie them up! Or into a lethal chamber?"—(Sunday Despatch, August 12th, 1945). Although goaded to repeat the question when we see such waste of print, or hear his brain storms distorting the ether waves, we know that the fault lies not with the scientists, but with the system of society which corrupts their discoveries.

General Fuller in the Sunday Pictorial, commenting on the cause of war, says "there are several . . . but in the economic age in which we live, the one which seems to me to tower above all others, is the 'profit motive'". To socialists the profit motive is the only explanation of war in the modern world.

As long as Capitalism remains, there will be no slackening of research for even "better and more beautiful" methods of destruction, no tightening of the purse-strings which have already disgorged £500,000,000. Meanwhile the producers of wealth will be sampling the elusive fruits of rationed victory amid Portal shanty-towns and unemployment queues.

There is no need to enlarge on the physical results of atomic warfare. Combined with jet-propulsion, mass-murder is possible by remote control.

It is, however, relevant to examine a few of its effects on the current political fallacies of the defenders of "private enterprise".
The USA is now as vulnerable to attack as the rest of the world. Geographical situation offers no advantage, and in consequence the last crumbling bastion of isolationism is breached. This is clearly demonstrated by her policy of expansion especially in the Pacific.

All ideas of warfare are obsolete, or at least require drastic revision, and already, at the end of the worst war in history, the spectre of the next conflict haunts the celebrations of peace.

Sooner than we realize nuclear power may be harnessed to industry. In the inevitable scramble for production and profit gluts, slumps and unemployment figures will reach new levels and defy solution by the obsolete plans of the Beveridge type.

These are just a few of the problems of Capitalism: that Hydra-headed system which the Labour Party now administers in Great Britain; but will never control. Many supporters of the Labour Party are still deluded by the idea that Nationalisation is a major step in a policy of gradualism which will "reform capitalism out of existence". The sledge-hammer blows of events will nail this tragic error! Wars are inherent in the private-property system itself, and are likely to wipe millions of workers out of existence, while the futile pin-pricks of reform leave its structure untouched.

Who can now suggest that the policy of the Socialist Party of Gt. Britain, though correct in theory, is one for application only in some remote future? Who would question the practicability of our case?

There is no time for complacency! Let us face the fact that time is on our side only if we seize it by the forelock and use it to our advantage.

Socialism, the only solution to the problems which confront us, is the need not of the century, but of the hour!

Sympathisers, men and women of the working class, we urge you to join with us in the struggle for emancipation.

You have but two alternatives! Either the poverty, servitude and degradation of Capitalism, culminating in war, or Socialism in which the inventive genius of man will be used for the welfare of all society.

Your choice is as simple as it is vital! On it rests the future of humanity!

(October 1945)
Britain’s Third Labour Government

“This time there can be no alibis."

For the third time Great Britain witnesses the spectacle of capitalism being administered by a Labour Government—though this time with a difference. The Labour Governments which entered office in January 1924 (for eleven months) and in June 1929 (for two years) had only minority representation in the House of Commons, and were dependent on the support of Members of Parliament belonging to the Liberal Party. This time the Liberal Party is almost wiped out (only twelve MPs in a House of 640), and the Labour Party has an overwhelming majority. There are 390 Labour MPs, and with the support of three ILP MPs, two Communists and some Independents and Liberals it can count on well over 400 votes as against about 210 Conservative MPs and others who will vote Conservative. As one of the Labour MPs writes

"Labour has no alibi left. If it fails to produce the goods—full employment, all-round national prosperity, international concord, health, homes and happiness for the whole people—it can fall back on no excuse."—(Garry Allighan, MP, Daily Mail, July 31st).

This time the Labour leaders have given away in advance the "alibis" they used in 1931 when they pleaded that their failure, and the secession of their leaders to form a National Government, was the result of an "economic blizzard"—the world industrial crisis—and of a "Bankers' ramp". They are going to nationalise the Bank of England and are naively confident that through a National Investment Board they can eliminate the normal capitalist trade cycle of expansion and depression. Nationalising the Bank merely means bringing this country into line with the rest of the capitalist world. As the Manchester Guardian points out "Great Britain is almost the only country in the world to have a privately owned central bank." (Manchester Guardian, August 2nd).

In an Election broadcast Mr Herbert Morrison, who occupies one of the most important Cabinet posts in the Labour Government, declared that the Employment Policy accepted by the late Government (in which, of course, the Labour Party was strongly represented),

"has quite a fair chance of smoothing out booms and slumps. The idea is very simple. It is one of Labour's basic ideas. It is to make sure there is enough spending power to buy enough goods to keep everyone at work making them. The thing can be done. Whether it will be done depends on how firm a grip the Government intends to keep on the spending policies of the great private industries." (Daily Herald, June 30th, 1945).

The experiment now being embarked upon is that of trying to run the capitalist system as if it were not a capitalist system. A Labour Government is going to try to straddle the class struggle and to represent at one and the same time the interests of the owning class, and of the class exploited by the owning class! Labour supporters expectantly and hopefully await the outcome. Socialists do not need to wait to prophesy failure. After experiencing Labour attempts to run capitalism in Great Britain the workers will discover that Labour administrators cannot make capitalism function in any but the accustomed way.

The reasons for the Labour victory are many, though it must be admitted that hardly any observers expected the turnover of votes to be so large. Working class mistrust of the Tories, who had been dominant since 1931 in all the National Governments; the discontent and impatience with slow demobilisation of men in the Armed Forces, most of whom voted Labour; the usual desire of many electors to have a change; the feeling that the very acute housing shortage would best be tackled by a Labour Government—here are some of the factors.
How have the Capitalists taken the advent of "Socialism"? Their attitude may, perhaps, be described as one of waiting on events, worried but not seriously alarmed. The avowedly Capitalist Press is disposed to assume that the cautious Labour leaders will prevent any very drastic demands of the rank and file from being pressed. This is illustrated by the attitude of the Conservative Daily Mail (August 2nd), which urges the Labour Government to take steps to let the Press and public in the USA know that their ludicrous and dangerous doubts and fears of the Labour Government are needless and misplaced. The Times (July 30th) accepts that the Labour Government may nationalise coal, at least part of the transport industry, and possibly electricity and gas supply, and is not greatly perturbed. It points out that "to bring public utilities under direct public control and possibly even outright public ownership is not wholly revolutionary; and coal is politically a special case." The Times goes on to plead that "with steel, or with manufacturing industries of any kind, the case is rather different", and takes comfort in the view that "the responsible leaders were more hesitant" than the rank and file on nationalisation, and that they may seek a further mandate from the electors before converting any manufacturing industry into a State monopoly.

The Liberal Manchester Guardian (July 27th) declared that "Banking opinion expects the Bank of England to be 'nationalised' but does not turn a hair at the thought". Mr Herbert Morrison recalled during the Election campaign (Daily Express, June 18th), that in 1932 the Tory Lord Beaverbrook was advocating nationalisation of the Bank of England in his Daily Express, and likewise it was Mr Morrison who stated in a speech on February 11th, 1944 "that more Socialism" (meaning State Capitalism) "was done by the Conservative Party, which opposed it, than by the Labour Party which was in favour of it". (Times, February 12th, 1944). Mr Morrison had in mind, of course, the nationalisation of Telegraph and Telephones and setting up of Public Utility Boards (which are the model the Labour Party will follow in its nationalisation schemes) such as the Metropolitan Water Board, the British Broadcasting Corporation and the London Passenger Transport Board. The last named was initiated by Mr Morrison and completed by the succeeding Tory Government.

A factor of importance from the capitalist standpoint is that the Labour Party is wholly committed when taking over industries to do so "on a basis of fair compensation" ("Let Us Face the Future", Labour Party, 1945, p. 7). Some capitalists—those in declining industries—can welcome a change which guarantees their investments against further depreciation since they may receive Bonds with a Government guarantee in place of shares dependent on the ups and downs of fortune of a private company; which recalls a curious comment made by the Times (September 19th, 1942), in an article which urged its readers that "we must beware of the people who advocate Socialism in order to make the world safe for capitalists".

Doubtless the Labour Government will do away with the restrictive clauses on trade unions introduced by the Tories in their Trade Union Act of 1927. This in itself may have little direct effect in the direction of encouraging strikes, but it is certain that the rule of the Labour Government will be accompanied by many and large industrial disputes. A Tory Government at this time would be faced with much industrial unrest, but with a Labour Government there is no doubt that the trade unions will feel encouraged to make large demands for higher wages and shorter hours. This was doubtless foreseen by Mr Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour in the Churchill Government, who has now become Foreign Secretary instead. The Daily Express (July 28th), published the following report from Stockholm of a statement made some time ago to a Swedish trade unionist. Mr Bevin is reported to have doubted a Labour Victory and to have said "Even if we win we shall have hard times before us. To convert industry to peace production with lower wages as a result will be an enormous problem". Like other governments in this dilemma the Labour Government may be tempted to make the adjustment by allowing prices to rise instead of lowering wages.
In one field the Labour Government will be tackling a problem that many leading capitalists and capitalist politicians are agreed has to be tackled, in order to prevent the interests of the whole capitalist class from being damaged, that is the problem of monopolies. Here the language of the Tory Times and of Mr Churchill in his calmer pre-election frame of mind, is identical with the views advocated by Mr Herbert Morrison in a series of speeches in recent years. Mr Churchill in a broadcast in 1943 said:—"There is a broadening field for State ownership and enterprise, especially in relation to monopolies of all kinds (Manchester Guardian, April 5th, 1943). And the Times put its view in words every one of which could have been lifted from one of Mr Morrison's speeches:—"It is a sound principle that, whenever competition is ousted by monopoly, the monopoly must come under Government control—though certainly not under Government management—either through a public utility corporation or by other means appropriate to the differing circumstances of different businesses" (Times Editorial, September 19th, 1942).

On Foreign Affairs Mr Bevin hastened to declare "British foreign policy will not be altered in any way under the Labour Government". (Evening News, July 26th). In this sphere and in handling India, Egypt, Palestine, etc., the Labour Government will be faced with many knotty problems, not of their own making or to any extent under their control, but arising inevitably out of the normal trade rivalry between the Powers. Here in a most glaring form is demonstrated the childishness of the Labour Party's belief that Labour Governments, by exercising goodwill, can keep capitalism and yet suppress its tigerish propensities.

To conclude we may repeat the words published in the SOCIALIST STANDARD in June 1929, when the last Labour Government entered office:--

"We deal elsewhere in this issue with the failure of Labour Government in Queensland. We prophesied that failure, and with absolute confidence we prophesy the similar failure of Labour Government here. No matter how able, how sincere, and how sympathetic the Labour men and women may be who undertake to administer Capitalism, Capitalism will bring their undertaking to disaster. As in Queensland, those who administer Capitalism will find themselves, sooner or later, brought into conflict with the working class. Like their Australian colleagues, the Labour Party here will find themselves in a cleft stick. Having no mandate to replace Capitalism by Socialism, they have pledged themselves to solve problems which cannot be solved except by doing the one thing for which they have no mandate."

There is no need to add anything to that. It still stands, as those who have voted Labour will discover.
(September 1945).
Lord Keynes Economist of Capitalism in Decline

In the sickness of its declining years capitalism is being nursed by the Labour Party. Lord Keynes, who died on April 21st, was the doctor who prescribed the treatment. His theories, on which rest the belief in the possibility of "full employment" under capitalism, have come to the widely accepted not because of intrinsic merit or originality, but because capitalists and the Labour politicians alike have dire need of a panacea that will, they hope, make capitalism work or at least persuade workers that it will. Faced with mounting unemployment and the political discontent that it causes, many Tory and Liberal politicians had lost confidence in their ability to save capitalism. Lord Keynes promised them another lease of life. The Labour Party, new to power, never had much confidence in its own ability, and the "economic blizzard" of 1931 that wrecked the Labour Government destroyed even what it had; so Keynes was their hope, too.

He believed that investment and price trends could be made subject to governmental control and thereby booms and slumps could be ironed out and approximately full employment secured. His views found expression in the National Government's "White Paper on Unemployment Policy" (1944), in which the Government accepted "as one of their primary aims and responsibilities the maintenance of a high and stable level of employment after the war". The Labour Government has endorsed this White Paper. Keynes directly influenced the Liberal and Labour programmes.

"It was mainly through his personal influence", says the Times (April 22nd), "that the Liberal Party adopted as their platform in the election of 1929 the proposal to conquer unemployment by a policy of public works and monetary expansion". The section of the Labour Party that opposed the MacDonald-Snowden economy cuts in 1931 quoted Keynes in support of their view. The Labour Party's report on "Full Employment and Financial Policy" (1944) largely rests on Keynes's theories. It declares that "the best cure for bad trade is to increase purchasing power and to speed up development". It looks to loans, "compulsory if necessary", from the Banks to "help the Chancellor to find the purchasing power required for full employment . . ." "If bad trade and general unemployment threaten, this means that total purchasing power is falling too low . . . We should give the people more money, and not less, to spend."

Socialists have no hesitation is saying that if the Labour Government attempts anything of the kind—it may, of course, get cold feet and scurry to the safety of "orthodox" financial policies, as did Snowden and MacDonald—it will not succeed in avoiding unemployment and crises. Capitalism depends for its relatively smooth functioning on the capitalists' confidence in their prospect of selling their goods at a profit. By the time that bad trade threatens the capitalists will already be apprehensive and the proposed government policy would sap their confidence still more. It is one thing to propose to increase the workers' purchasing power but the capitalists (including the Government itself in State industries) are at all Times forced by competition to seek to reduce the purchasing power of the working class in relation to the mass of goods produced for the market. This they do, if not directly, by wage cuts, then indirectly by installing labour-displacing machinery to increase output and lower costs of production.

Always the workers can buy only part of the commodities they produce (but which belong to the owners of the means of production), the part represented by their wages. Keynes and the Labour Party ignored these basic facts of private ownership and the wages system and looked to financial schemes to relieve the disequilibrium when, periodically, it had produced a crisis of bad trade and unemployment. Events will show that unemployment cannot be abolished under capitalism, even though its growth may for a time be masked by war, war preparations and totalitarian controls.
The extent and nature of the dependence of capitalists and the Labour Party on Keynes's theories was shown by the estimates of his work published by the Herald and the Times on April 22nd. The Herald, under the heading "The Great Lord Keynes", by a Labour MP, Mr. Evan Durbin, said that Keynes "more than anyone else . . . bridged the gap between Liberalism and Socialism". The Times developed the same idea at length:

"The Keynesian approach offered a bridge between the academic economists on the side and 'the brave army of heretics'-Mandeville, Malthus, Marx, Gesell and Hobson (to name only a few)-on the other. This may yet prove to have been Lord Keynes's most valuable achievement".

Marx is here put in curious company, but the Times' inclusion of him had a reason. The Times thinks that Keynes had found the way to cure unemployment and thus save capitalism from the challenge of Socialists. It quotes him as defending his policy of full employment through State control of investment "both as the only practicable means of avoiding the destruction of existing economic forms in their entirety and as the condition for the successful functioning of individual initiative".

The Times went on to claim that Keynes had shown how to bring about reconciliation between the orthodox political parties and the "growing army of deeply discontented reformers and revolutionaries". The claim is certainly true of the Labour Party, but woe betide that Party when Keynes's full employment policy fails them and the bridge he built collapses. Let it therefore be clearly understood that neither Keynes nor anyone else has reconciled the Socialist demand for the abolition of capitalism with the despairing attempt to make the system tolerable by trying to cure unemployment within its framework.

(June 1946)

**What is a Spiv?**

In these days, when everybody is becoming Spiv-conscious, to ask what is a Spiv might seem to border on the fatuous. The purpose of this article will merely be to attempt to show that as a comprehensive definition of idler, drone and parasite the word Spiv leaves much to be desired.

Undoubtedly high-powered publicity has focussed the Spiv in constant if dubious limelight. For some he may yet come to acquire something of the symbolical status his more sinister counterpart, the American gangster, possesses for a generation of film-goers.

Shortages, Rationing, The Black Market, as some of capitalism's present evils, have provided the conditions and opportunities for making England much more a land fit for Spivs to live in than it ever was: or likely to be it seems. For if the statements of certain Government spokesmen are to be taken at their face value, the Spiv is already on his way out. The Government in their efforts to ease the embarrassing, even if temporary, "labour shortage" for contemporary capitalism, have ear-marked the Spiv as a source of potential labour-power. For this Government of planners the unplanned existence of the Spiv (unplanned that is for the existing requirements of Capitalism) becomes at least a little irksome.

The Spiv thus finds himself the subject of Governmental interest and the object of weighty political pronouncements. The word is officially recognised now and is considered normal to the vocabulary of Cabinet Ministers.
Even in the rarefied atmosphere of The House of Lords the word has made its debut. Lord Pakenham replying to Lord Amwell (formerly Mr Fred Montague, MP) on the direction of idleness, said, "Lord Amwell no doubt referred to the gentlemen known as spivs and drones. He agreed that however wide his definition we had no use for slackers at this time". (Daily Telegraph, 7/8/47). No doubt an interpretation of slackers in the sense of "a wide definition" might have found room for a broader and perhaps more embarrassing inclusion than that permitted by the more restrictive nature of the word Spiv. Doubtless comprehensive definitions of terms, while admirable in theory, are not necessarily politic in practice.

Mr Attlee in the House of Commons the same day said, "We shall take all action open to us against the Spivs and other drones". Like Lord Pakenham Mr Attlee did not attempt a definition of terms. To have done so might have held awkward implications for the consideration of the members present. It might conceivably have led to the reading of "The Riot Act" in the "Mother of Parliaments". A political flash-back, nevertheless, recalls the coupling of drones with "idle rich", in the classic days of Labour Party propaganda.

Nevertheless, Mr Shinwell speaking on the question of appointments to the Electricity Board, did say "We have no regard for those persons who perform no useful service at all . . . They have been described as parasites, idlers, drones and rentiers". He added, "I don't intend to appoint them to any Board for which I am responsible." (Daily Telegraph, 24/6/47). Whether this constitutes one of Mr Shinwell's noted lapses into indiscretion or a momentary glimpse of a more fundamental aspect of drones and parasites, we venture no opinion. No threat of work direction for these gentlemen, however, only non-appointment to various Boards.

Mr Isaacs, Minister of Labour, has said, that "Spivs are not so numerous as some people think". But at the trade union Conference he spoke of using full Governmental powers of direction in regard to them (Daily Telegraph, 3/9/47). He also told us that there are people who toil not and depend on the dividends earned by other workers. Had he said a wealthy section live on dividends and profits produced solely by the workers, he would have obtained full marks. Mr Isaacs is, however, not a person inclined to indiscretions.

Mr Tom Williams, MP, also spoke on direction of labour. He suggested if there are Spivs and drones or any one else (italics ours) who refused to accept occupations, Unemployment Benefit should be stopped, adding that starving men and women into work is the highest penalty which ought to be tried in the first six or twelve months. (Evening News, 2/9/47). Coupon clippers, rentiers and other profit-participants are, however, debarred from drawing Unemployment Benefit. Moreover, as their level of incomes have no more relevance to "The Poverty Line" than it has to "The Plimsoll Line", Mr Williams' dire threats to people refusing direction of work will doubtless be met by them with calm and studied contempt.

The Spiv assumes then the role of the Labour Government's whipping boy. In the past the hard-faced business man and the treble-chinned plutocrat could be pilloried in the political stocks for Capitalism's shortcomings. Called upon to administer capitalism the Labour Party must perforce—vide Morrison—ask for their co-operation and even enthusiasm for "Labour's" New Social Order. The Spiv will be pleased or perturbed to discover that it is he and not the private ownership of the means of wealth production which now constitutes the basic contradiction of capitalism.
The Spiv, however, is not merely a post-war product or the illegitimate child of a Labour Government. His prototype has for many decades alternatively flourished and decayed in capitalist society. He is generally a big city product. Born mostly in city slums or near slums he early experiences the drab life and sordid surroundings of those who, like himself, dwell there and toil for others. When the opportunity occurs for doing a bit on the side or fiddling, he seizes it as a more lucrative and more colourful occupation than the monotony of the daily grind. He is often, however, compelled to devote more time and energy to his peculiar calling than is customary for him to admit. Neither can the Spiv for the most part wholly emancipate himself from his working class status. "In bad times" he is often reluctantly forced back into workshop or factory. For the Spiv, however, the age-long habit of work engrained in his fellow toilers has been seriously undermined.

It has been said that the Spiv is at least a rebel. Some people have even sentimentalised him as a kind of revolt against the conditions imposed by the nature of capitalist exploitation. The Spiv's own anti-Government and anti-authoritarian outlook might seem to lend colour to this view. The Spiv, however, generally lacks the class loyalty and class sentiment that goes to the making of the class-conscious social revolutionary. The zeal and selfless devotion of the socialist, with his illimitable vista of a world based on production for use and the Brotherhood of Man, lights no fires in the mind and imagination of the Spiv. A good time and plenty of fun at the expense of others gravely limits his social horizon. Pleasure and "the easy way" becomes basic to his existence. His mode of life constitutes a form of social parasitism which conflicts with the healthy social instincts of the vast majority of workers.

Also the Spiv evolves a standard of values that make for unconscious subservience to wealth and luxury. He is consequently, however insignificant, a factor making for its perpetuation. At his best he is a politically unreliable element. At his worst he can become the strike-breaking instrument of the employing class or a tool for political reaction. In a socialist society where all able-bodied people will engage in productive activity and where the principle prevails—From each according to his ability, to each according to his need—the Spiv, as such, can have no place.

The social solidarity of a system such as the present one is cleft by its basic class antagonism. With the decay of its own outworn economic functions goes the decay of its outworn ethical creeds. The ideological veneer of its so-called public opinion merely hides the subversion of its traditional moral tenets to private forms of hypocrisy and cynicism. The wealth and luxury of present society then breeds its own type of social parasitism with its individual greed and unscrupulousness and its inevitable antisocial consequences. It is this which sets the individual against society and, as in the case of the Spiv, who attempts to imitate and emulate the ruling section, society against the individual. It is hardly to be wondered that the putrefying effects of such a social cesspool as Capitalism, fail to secure for the population at large a 100 per cent immunity from contamination. Given capitalist society the Spiv must flourish like a green bay tree. Changing circumstances may decimate his ranks, but as an inevitable product of existing social conditions, he can hardly cease to exist.

True that the padded shoulders, the diagonally woven suit, the spear-pointed collar and dazzle tie have given the Spiv a sartorial significance and setting. If, however, for a double-breasted camel coat we substitute a faultlessly cut dress suit, the four bob jive for the dance floors of expensive clubs and exclusive hotels, the cheap billiard hall and garish saloon for Monte Carlo and other fashionable gambling resorts; the significance attached to the word Spiv becomes vague and even blurred.
It may be said that the Spiv, by devious methods of obtaining goods in short supply and selling at extortionate prices, is guilty of anti-social practices. Nevertheless he has the time-honoured methods of "Rings", "Market Corners" and their inevitable outcome, Trusts and Combines, to set him a precedent. Again, if he plies a doubtful trade, the long existence of nefarious company-promoters and Bucket shop sponsors shows that in the matter of shady transactions the Spiv is no path-breaking pioneer. That the Spiv lives by the dubious exercise of his wits may also be true. Yet while a section of the community live on the unpaid labour of others well might the Spiv- kette, in the matter of social parasitism, retort "Why call me black, brother pot?"

Nevertheless the word is accepted now. From a slang term of doubtful pedigree it is on its way to an assured place in the English dictionary. Henceforth it will be synonymous with idler, drone and parasite. As a definition it will obscure rather than enlighten. Its emphasis will be on those who live by their wits and doubtful practices and not on those whose social parasitism is the outcome of the exploitation of the vast majority through the medium of class-ownership of the means of wealth production. All of which might suggest that there is a form of intellectual Spivery in addition to a social one. Concluding, may we repeat—What is a Spiv?
Divide and rule in India

The British invaders of India did not create Moslem-Hindu rivalry but they certainly made use of what they found. A divided India was a weak India. Although communal riots were troublesome for the Police and costly to traders it was possible for the alien rulers to view them somewhat philosophically. British capitalists were holding down India because they made big profits out of it and they no more thought of getting out of India because of Hindu-Moslem riots than they would have thought of giving up the profits of capitalism at home because of occasional conflicts with the workers.

The enthusiasts for Indian independence, particularly the members of the predominately Hindu Congress Party, built up their propaganda on a foundation provided by two charming myths. One was that if only British capitalism would get out Moslems, Hindus and the adherents of other religious systems would forget their traditional differences and live peaceably together. The other was that India is a “nation,” all its 400 million inhabitants yearning to be united under their own Indian government. Events during the past year have shattered both. British rule has ended but the largely Hindu India and the largely Moslem Pakistan refused to unite. They are two separate States facing each other in an atmosphere of tension bordering on war. Many tens of thousands of Moslems in India and Hindus in Pakistan have been brutally murdered in communal disturbances that dwarf anything that has happened for years. Hundreds of thousands of refugees now live in misery and fear.

It may be asked, in view of what has happened, have the leaders of the Indian parties failed in their object? Were they mistaken in their myths and have their eyes now been opened? By no means. Myths are made by leaders for the deception of their followers, not for the leaders’ own consumption. The masses may now be suffering pangs of disillusionment, but not the leaders—except perhaps some curious figures like Gandhi and his circle.

Gandhi’s despair was exposed in a speech he made late in September:

“If there is no other way of securing justice from Pakistan and if Pakistan persistently refuses to see its proved error and continues to minimize it the Indian Union Government would have to go to war against it. As for myself, my way is different. I worship God which is Truth and non-violence. There was a time when India listened to me. Today I am a back number. I have no place in the new order where they want an army, a navy, and an air force and what not. I can never be a party to all that.” (Times, 29/9/47.)

No, the propertied classes, the Princes, landowners, and thrusting capitalists with their expanding textile steel and engineering plants have not failed in their object, which was the same as that of the British capitalists in India, the object of preserving their privileged position as exploiters of the masses. Compared with a matter of such paramount importance words about religious and national union are of no account. It is possible some day that India and Pakistan, faced with a menacing threat from some more powerful state may unite for mutual protection, but at present they are rivals, quarrelling about the division of the arms of the former British-controlled army, and maneuvering for control of areas rich in natural resources or of strategic importance.

So capitalism runs true to form whether under the banner of Christianity, Hinduism or Mohammedanism.

The conflict between Pakistan and India and their religions is being made to serve the interests of the respective ruling class groups just as British capitalism made use of communal rivalry. What could be more useful to the Pakistan ruling class in persuading peasants and workers to be content with their lot than to be able to distract their attention away from bread and butter questions towards the iniquities of Hindus and the greed and aggression of the Indian Government? And how convenient for the latter to be able to rally the masses to the need for patriotism and to defend the country against Pakistan cruelty and trouble making.

Under cover of the need for a more national spirit the Congress Party in India decided early in the summer to form a rival trade union federation to combat the existing All-India Trade Union Congress. “Communist control” was the excuse but the real object is certain to be to divide and weaken the organised workers.
The chief bone of contention between India and Pakistan is Kashmir, and an invasion by tribesmen is reported in Indian circles to have been promoted and helped by the Pakistan Government. Spokesmen of the two governments have much to say about the rights and wrongs of their respective claims to take over the territory. India, which at present holds it, promises a plebiscite; to which Pakistan writers retort that it will be faked. The real reason why the issue is so important that both sides are prepared to use military force has nothing to do with the wishes or welfare of the inhabitants. Strategically, from the standpoint of defending India (as well as Pakistan) from attack by other Powers through Central Asia it is a vital area. It has also great natural wealth in its vast forests and undeveloped coal deposits and other minerals, and its water-power may become the foundation of a great electrical development.

The ending of British rule in India was to be the opening of a new era. So said the supporters of Indian nationalism. Indeed it is. For long years capitalists and administrators plundered this conquered land in the haphazard way appropriate to the times and conditions. Now the Indian workers and peasants are going to be exploited under home-born instead of alien masters. Their craft skill and muscular energies are going to serve in the modernisation and industrialisation of India and Pakistan, new Powers fighting for the markets of Asia. The workers there could learn much from the European countries and US., if only to avoid the costly mistakes made and still being made by the workers who first suffered from the capitalist industrial revolution that is now sweeping over Asia.

(December 1947)
The Grimethorpe Miners

For those who have eyes to see there are lots of valuable lessons to be learned from the strike of the Grimethorpe miners against the efforts of the National Coal Board and the Union to make them do more work. The mines were nationalised only on January 1st, 1947, but within a few months the determined resistance of a few hundred men backed by thousands of other Yorkshire miners who struck in sympathy, showed the hollowness of the claim that Nationalisation and Labour Governments can solve the problems of the workers. When Nationalisation took place Labour Party supporters welcomed it as a new era of industrial peace and the death of private profit, but socialists warned the workers not to be deceived into thinking that wage-slavery in the mines would be altered in any way. It has not taken long to reveal in the clearest fashion that the difference between private and state capitalism is not worth the workers' votes.

In May of this year the National Union of Mineworkers made an agreement with the National Coal Board for a change-over to a five-day week, without loss of pay, on the understanding that the Union would co-operate with the employers, the Coal Board, to "promote every possible and reasonable means of ensuring that the maximum output of coal is produced". The Union specifically pledged itself to co-operate with the management in persuading the workers to accept re-assessments of work which would mean in many cases cutting down the number of men required for a particular piece of work. The Union undertook that it would "not countenance any restriction of effort by workmen resulting in failure to perform the work so assessed". (The full agreement was published in the Ministry of Labour Gazette, May, 1947).

The dangers of an agreement which binds the union to help the employers bring pressure on its own members are obvious. If the members of the NUM understood and approved of this the responsibility rests on them and not only on their Communist General Secretary and the other officials who signed the agreement. There is, however, much evidence to show that the members went into it without realising what they were accepting. This may be partly due to a temporary lack of contact between the members and the executive, resulting from the recent changeover from a federation of county associations to a centralised national union. In addition it is certainly due to the close tie-up between the national officials of the Union and the Government, which results in the former imagining that it is their job to give orders to their members rather than take them. The comment of the Manchester Guardian is to the point:

"The Union leaders took a great risk in giving the Government the assurances they did without being sure that the miners were really willing to attend regularly and to do a full shift's work. It will not do to put the blame on a minority of 'bad' miners. A little slacking has to be taken into account in any calculation. Either the union officials misjudged the temper of their men or they did not do as much as they knew to be necessary to explain what the five-day week meant. This failure is not surprising. The NUM's constant concern with the handling of national policy in Downing Street and Whitehall has left its leaders with too little time for the details of affairs in the pits . . . The Union will have to make a bold effort now to regain the full confidence of the miners. Like the National Coal Board it will not do that unless it can restore the close touch with local problems that has to some extent been lost by its conversion to a centralised organisation." (Manchester Guardian, 9/9/47).

The amazing situation developed of the miners' officials denouncing their own members in terms that the former coal owners could not have exceeded for arrogance.
Mr Lawther, President of the Union, told the strikers they were "acting as criminals at this time of the nation's peril". He actually invited the Coal Board to prosecute: "Let them issue summonses against these men, no matter how many there may be. I would say that even though there were 100,000 on strike." (Daily Mail, 29/8/47).

The Communist General secretary, Mr Arthur Horner, was nearly as bad. In a statement to the Press (Daily Herald, 28/8/47) Mr Horner said that the strikers "must be regarded as an alien force and treated as an enemy of the true interests of the majority of the miners of this country'. What some of the miners think of these swollen-headed gentlemen may be judged by the words "Burn Will Lawther" painted up at the entrance to the Grimethorpe colliery and by the comment made by a miner to a representative of the Star (9/9/47):

"Mr Horner seems to have forgotten that he is our servant and is acting as if he were our lord and master. We pay him to fight our battles and not to fight against us."

This miner was right and the sooner all workers take steps to bring their would-be dictators into line the better for the trade union movement.

One aspect of this must not be forgotten. Years ago the Communist Party popularised the slogan "Watch Your Leaders". If ever it was necessary to do so it certainly is now when Communists like Mr Horner have reached positions of eminence in the unions. A letter published by the Daily Worker (13/9/47) pointed out how closely Horner's phrases resembled those for which the Communists used to denounce Mr J. H. Thomas. Not that the idea behind the slogan is a sound one. Against the Communist idea that what the workers need is "better leaders" (who all turn out to be just like their predecessors) the Socialist urges the need to get rid of leadership.

The bitter experience of the Grimethorpe miners brings out clearly that nationalisation has changed nothing, except perhaps that it is harder for men to fight the National Coal Board than it was to fight the local mine-owners. The following statement by a Daily Herald reporter was published on August 30th:

"The real point of their grievance seems to be that in the general reorganisation of work underground involved by the change, men may be put on to other jobs at which they earn less money. A joint committee of miner's delegates and representatives of the Coal Board decided on the increased stint. The Grimethorpe men complain now that they had no representatives on this joint committee, and that the decision to increase the stint came as a bombshell... They also complain that the divisional Coal Board officials are the same officials they had before the Government took over."

Those foolish optimists who fancied that the bitterness of the class struggle, if not the struggle itself, disappears when the employer is the State might note the remarks of a Daily Mirror representative. He wrote (6/9/47):

"How they hate the Divisional Officers of the Board! Big salaries, big cars, big offices, big titles-but they don't go down the mines." One miner remarked "What do these know about it? They couldn't get themselves enough coal to boil an egg."

The National Coal Board's attitude to the workers was expressed by one of the Board's spokesmen:
"This is the test case of our authority. It is the first real test we have had, and at such an early stage in our career we cannot afford to have our prestige shaken by withdrawing the extra stint order." (Evening Standard, 4/9/47).

The miners have indeed exchanged one hard master for another.

Another illusion cherished by Labourites is that when an industry is nationalised human aspects and the well-being of the workers no longer have to take second place to financial considerations. Since the mines have got to pay their way, including the necessity of meeting the cost of compensating the former owners, it is obvious that this cannot be. It remained for the Communist General Secretary of the Miners' Union to dot the i's and cross the t's of this fact. In his statement denouncing unofficial strikes and urging increased production he disclosed that at a secret session of miner's delegates in July he told them that "the Coal Board is at the present time losing money in a very serious fashion." (Daily Herald, 28/8/47). There was a time when miners' officials would have told employers that the finance of the industry was their affair or would, as in 1926, have told the owners to go to the Conservative Government for a subsidy if they couldn't manage otherwise. Now, under a Labour Government, this Communist conveys the employing Board's lament to the workers, and instead of demanding a five-day week unconditionally urges the workers in effect to work harder to put the Board's finances on a profitable basis.

Whatever else may come out of the Grimethorpe strike it should teach some miners at least not to put their trust in Nationalisation, or in Labour administration of capitalism, or in leaders, Communists included.

(October 1947)

The Nationalisation of the Railways

Railway nationalisation has a long and varied history. In comparatively recent times it has occupied a prominent place in the Labour Party programmes, has been backed by railway unions, and has been made an urgent problem for Governments because of the rise of competing motor traffic. Yet the first Act of Parliament giving the British Government power to take over the railways was passed over 100 years ago, more than half a century before the petrol motor was invented or the Labour Party was born. The Railway Regulation Act was passed in 1844 under Sir Robert Peel's Conservative Government and was introduced into the House of Commons by Gladstone, at that time a Conservative Free Trader and President of the Board of Trade. The immediate purpose of the Act was to force the railways to reduce charges in the interests of the whole body of capitalist manufacturers and traders, by holding over their heads the threat of nationalisation. The power was never used, but the threat remained a useful weapon. It is an odd commentary on the broad continuity of policy under different governments that if the compensation terms of that Act had been applied before the recent War (25 times the annual profits based on a three-year average) the compensation would have been very near to the £900 millions that the Labour Government now offers. (If applied to the past three years when traffic and revenue were swollen by abnormal war conditions, the compensation would have been more.)
The Labour Government's Transport Bill provides for the nationalisation of Railways, Road Haulage (except short-distance local carriers), Canals and Buses and Trams. London Passenger Transport Board will be included in the scheme, and power will be given to take over harbours. The present owners will be bought out. The whole organisation, employing nearly 1,000,000 workers will be managed by Boards set up by the Government. When the Bill becomes law British capitalism will have entered on a new stage in the organisation and control of inland transport, nearly a century after railway nationalisation began in some European countries. In Britain it has been a story of continuous conflict, between the sectional groups of capitalists who owned the various means of transport and the whole body of capitalists who depended on them. The former were out to get maximum profits; the latter wanted cheap and efficient service. The owners of the transport services also competed with each other. Proprietors of horse-drawn coaches on the 18th and early 19th century Turnpike roads were at war with the Turnpike Trusts over the tolls the latter charged for passage on the roads. With the first canal in 1761 an era of competition began between road and canal; followed after 1825 by the entry of a new competitor, the railways. The manufacturers needed the railways, but the canal and road vehicle proprietors used every effort in Parliament to protect their own investments by preventing the railways from being built. In due course the railways triumphed, then fought each other for traffic, then went in for amalgamation to protect themselves against wasteful competition.

At this stage a long battle was waged by traders to get the State to exercise more and more control over railway fares and charges. In the present century the petrol motor brought the roads back into the picture and it was now the turn of the railways to use their influence in Parliament against their road rivals. Already before 1914, many observers had become convinced that British capitalists' problem of underselling the new great trading powers, Germany, America, Japan, etc., in the markets of the world required unification of inland transport with State ownership, or at least close State control, so that the whole body of manufacturers would get cheaper transport for their goods. Their chief argument was that national unification would eliminate wasteful competition and overlapping, and permit charges to be reduced. Supporters of the movement for nationalisation were the Fabian, Mr Emil Davies, the Liberal, Sir Leo Chiozza Money, and other Liberal and Labour politicians, as well as manufacturers and traders. It was, however, road competition that gave the movement new life, and in 1919 the Tory-Liberal Coalition Government declared its intention of nationalising, though it then drew back and contented itself with the compulsory amalgamation of the numerous large and small railways into the four existing companies.

It was Mr Lloyd George who, in March 1918, told a TUC deputation on nationalisation of railways and canals that "he was in complete sympathy with the general character of the proposals put forward"; and Mr Churchill, who said at Dundee, December 4th, 1918, "that the Government policy was the nationalisation of the railways (The Times, December 5 th, 1918). It has remained for the Labour Government to complete what the Coalition Government in 1918 hesitated to do. Truly, as the Daily Herald remarks (November 19th, 1946): "the co-ordination of transport has been advocated by people who are far from Socialist in outlook".

The reactions of the capitalists to the present Bill reflect their various sectional interests. The Manchester Guardian and The Times are much concerned with the new organisation that is to be set up, wanting to be satisfied that it will provide cheap and efficient transportation.
While most newspapers maintain that the compensation terms are harsh, one exception is the Beaverbrook *Evening Standard* (November 19th, 1946), which suggests that the shareholders have little to complain about and that it is the "taxpayer" to whom the deal "by no means represents a bargain".

The *Economist* (December 7th, 1946) takes a cautious view. It starts off from the proposition that the railways and the road transport industry together are much more than is needed to carry the traffic. In fact, as the recent war showed, the railway system "is still about large enough to carry the whole burden". Consequently it would be possible to divide the traffic between railways and road transport in such a way that each handled the kind of traffic it could deal with most efficiently and most cheaply. The railways could handle long-distance traffic and the road industry could act as "feeder" to the railways. The important point to notice is that this unification would enable both industries to dispense with a great deal of their present equipment (including railway branch lines) and reduce the number of workers employed, these economies being the chief object aimed at. Why the *Economist* hesitates about endorsing nationalisation is that it considers further inquiry is necessary to make sure that these economies can actually be achieved and that the structure proposed in the Bill is likely to produce them.

The Liberal Party issued a statement supporting the nationalisation of the railways (as it had also done at the General election, 1945), but opposing nationalisation of the general road transport industry. The Liberal view is that nationalisation will only give "cheapness and efficiency" if competition is retained. In their view there should be nationalisation of the railways, canals and docks, and also of the road transport services owned by the railways, but the rest of road transport should be left to compete with the nationalised concern. The Liberal Party also considers that the compensation arrangements are unsatisfactory (*Manchester Guardian*, December 11th, 1946).

Naturally the shareholders clamour for higher compensation. Their special grievance is that, unlike the Bank of England shareholders, they are not being guaranteed the same income as they were getting during or before the war. In effect, they are to receive a State-guaranteed income of about £22,500,000 a year in place of a larger but uncertain sum they received as shareholders in concerns the profitability of which had been rendered precarious by road competition. How the shareholders must regret not having jumped at Nationalisation on the much better terms they would have got in 1919, when profits and share values were higher!

So much for the shareholders. What of the workers? The workers merely change one employer for another; little else is changed, for the State undertaking, as the *Daily Herald* specially emphasises (November 19th, 1946), has got to pay its way. The *Evening Standard* remarks that nationalisation cannot bring any possible benefit to the railway worker—"for him it can mean neither higher wages nor shorter hours" (November 19th, 1946) And the *Observer*, in like vein, says, "It . . . leaves the transport workers and the consumers to wonder what difference it can make to them except for the worse" (December 1st, 1946). The sudden solicitude of these two journals for the worker is naturally suspect, but "Critic" writing in the Labour *New Statesman* (November 30th, 1946), also confesses that "nationalisation of the railways . . . really doesn't much matter to anyone except the shareholders, who seem likely to make an uncommonly good thing out of it". This deserves notice, coming as it does from a year-long supporter of nationalisation.
Another journal which has had a sudden flash of enlightenment is the *News Chronicle*. Writing on the trade union "closed shop", and the danger it involves that if for any reason a man forfeits his union membership "he becomes an economic outlaw and may be unable to get a job at all in his trade", the *News Chronicle* (November 21st, 1946) goes on to discover that "an even worse danger threatens in a society which is moving steadily towards ever wider nationalisation", the danger that a worker will have to belong to one "monopoly union", that union tending more and more to co-operate with the employer—the State—rather than represent the interests of the men. It will no doubt surprise the *News Chronicle* to be told that the Socialist Party of Great Britain at its formation 42 years ago was pointing out to the workers that nationalisation of an industry would put the worker even more at the mercy of the employer, the State. With competing concerns a worker sacked from one may seek employment in another, but the worker who earns the displeasure of the State monopoly and loses his job is effectively barred from the whole industry.

The other problem affecting the workers is that of redundancy. Nationalisation, by eliminating overlapping will lead to the displacement of many workers, and even if some compensation is provided and they manage to get other jobs, it is bound to mean a worsened position for many of them. It was always the complaint of railwaymen, when the railways were being amalgamated, that a railwayman's specialised training is largely useless for other occupations. The advocates of nationalisation have not been blind to the certainty that it would mean the displacement of many workers: it has, in fact, been one of their main arguments in its favour that it would eliminate waste. Mr Emil Davies in the Fabian pamphlet *State Purchase of Railways* (1910, p. 19), suggested that railway nationalisation ought therefore to be introduced gradually in order not to throw too many men out of work at once.

The Labour Government has kept its pledge to nationalise transport, but for the workers it is all sound and fury, signifying nothing. Nationalisation is State capitalism and leaves untouched the real problem of the working class of emancipating themselves from capitalist exploitation.

(January 1947)
Palestine and its problems

A new state has come into existence in Palestine, the Jewish State of Israel, and it has come into existence against the intentions of the British Labour Government. This Government which, to paraphrase Mae West, has climbed the ladder of power wrong by wrong, took its stand on the Balfour Declaration of 1917 guaranteeing the Jews a national home in Palestine, but it resisted what was bound to be the inevitable consequence of the carrying out of that declaration, the demand for an independent Jewish State. In 1936 the Arab landowners inspired a revolt against the continued immigration of Jews into Palestine, foreseeing a threat to their interests in the existence of the highly industrial and commercial community that was growing up in their midst. Since then Britain, which had secured a mandate over Palestine in 1922, has been exercising a virtual reign of terror. A significant commentary on this is the following statement contained in the *News Chronicle* (28/4/194):

"Palestine Government has ended its censorship, and yesterday's papers published their first uncensored editions for 12 years.—News Chronicle Correspondents, A.P., Reuter and B.U.P."

Within a few hours of the proclamation of the new Jewish State by its self-appointed Provisional Government, President Truman startled the world by publicly stating that America would recognise it. Commentators of Truman's action attributed it to a late attempt to capture the Jewish vote in the forthcoming presidential election. This is too thin. While in fact it may have this result there is far more behind the action than electioneering propaganda. Jews and Arabs in Palestine, like the Greeks, the Italians and the Jugos, are pawns in a much greater game which involves oil and the struggle between Russia and the Western Powers for economic domination. Why, for instance, has an allegedly democratic and anti-imperialist Labour Government supported the semi-feudal Arab landlords against the Jews, particularly when the leader of the Jewish nationalists, Ben Gurion, has proclaimed himself a social democrat and labour leader in sympathy with the outlook of the British Labour Party?
The Labour Government's blundering methods in Palestine are the offspring of attempts to harmonise conflicting policies. For years anti-imperialism has been a plank in the Labour Party's programme and the withdrawal from India, Burma, and Egypt (except the canal zone) is held up as an example of the implementation of this policy. But the Labour Government is also committed to the safeguarding of the British capitalists' commercial and industrial interests; this dictates an opposite policy. Torn between the two they have failed to satisfactorily accomplish either, disappointing their working class supporters and exasperating their capitalist directors. To protect capitalist interests they must take measures to conserve the monopoly of the oil interests and safeguard the supply lines of oil, a great and growing quantity of which comes from the Middle East. A glance at a map will reveal what has guided the blundering and hesitant steps of the Labour Government in Palestine and the adjacent territories.

There are two oil pipe lines from Iraq to the Mediterranean; one through Syria to the Coast, and the other through Transjordan to Haifa. Thus it is necessary to placate or force the ruling groups in each of these territories to favour the production and transport of oil on behalf of Western capitalists. As the Arabs form the majority of the population in these territories the Arab landowners and rulers have been the principal objects of placation, not only by the Labour Government but also by their predecessors, and millions of pounds have been spent, both directly as an annual tribute to Transjordan and Iraq and indirectly under various forms of bribery, to influence a favourable attitude to the oil interests. The final result of terrorism and bribery has been to unite the Jews and Arabs in at least one direction—antipathy to the Labour Government. But the problem does not end with the territories already mentioned. Iran and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company also come into the picture, in dangerous proximity to Russia.

So far we have only looked at a part of the picture. On Saturday, the 15th May, the Daily Express announced, with large headlines, Truman's recognition of the Jewish State. In the very same issue of that paper we read the following, under the headline "Shares Boom on Wall Street":

"New York, Friday.—Shares went up £250,000,000 today in the biggest day Wall Street has seen in years.

"Rises per share were as much as 35s. Experts think another boom market, due to rising profits and rearmament orders lies ahead."
Yes! The vultures are gathering again! What is America's interest in the Middle East and what does it portend? Why, for instance, was America so frantically concerned about the Italian elections, and why does it back British policy in Greece? In the main the immediate answer is the same as that which concerns Britain—and which finally decided the British Government to give up the Mandate in Palestine convinced that America would be forced to help carry the burden. The answer is Oil and Russian expansion; in other words Oil and Strategy. UNO, as usual, has been ignored where matters of fundamental importance to the leading powers are concerned.

Economic necessity has forced America to become a Mediterranean power to whom the future policy of Italy, Greece and the Middle East is a vital matter. The Commander of the US Mediterranean Fleet, Admiral Bieri, recently pointed out that the US Fleet intends to stay in the Mediterranean and "American forces will be allocated wherever there are American interests, in closest co-operation with the British." (Manchester Guardian, 10/9/47). Modern mechanisation, both for industrial and for military purposes, has converted oil into priority number one. In spite of their own large oil reserves neither America nor Russia can meet their growing needs out of their own production. American oil interests are pressing into the Middle East and the safeguarding of the oil life line is of paramount importance. Russia has already shown its interest in Iranian oil, and it is trying to get a strategic foothold in the Mediterranean. The whole area from the oil fields of Iran, covering the coast of Palestine and the Mediterranean, is as much a matter of concern to American capitalists as to British. So far the British capitalists have borne the costs of maintaining the oil life line. What the British Government has now done is simply throw the ball to America, and America is compelled to take the pass.

The Palestine episode is thus another move in the strategical line-up of the two major imperialistic powers—America and Russia. Russia originally backed the Arabs—then they changed over to support of the Jews. Truman's quick response was obviously aimed at getting in first and forestalling Russia. Russia has since also announced its willingness to recognise the Jewish State, but this need not prevent them from also backing the Arabs. It may be that Russia will find that its imperialistic interests will be better served by backing the Arabs. If it comes to that conclusion it will have no difficulty in finding a pretext for doing so, and we shall witness another somersault in Russian foreign policy. As an imperialist power the Russian Government is not cluttered up or inhibited by any ideals relating to democracy or the self-determination of small nations, Its methods are essentially the same as those of the Western Governments but lacking in the finesse and polish of the latter.
Whether the turmoil in the Middle East will be contained or will involve a wider conflagration (as American investors appear to anticipate) no one can at the moment determine with certainty, but what can be said is that it brings nearer the inevitable clash between Russia and the West. Both Jews and Arabs are in a position to block the oil supply but they would only ruin themselves by attempting to do so. Therefore the question is will either of them be able to turn East or West successfully for assistance.

Within the tormented area of the struggle Arab and Jewish workers have already given evidence of where the chains rub them by the strikes that have taken place against Jewish, Arab and alien masters. These Jewish and Arab workers form the vast mass of the population of the territories involved; they are the poverty-stricken exploitable material without which neither the Jewish nor Arab capitalists and landowners, nor outside capitalists, would be able to reap their harvest of profit from those rich areas. Industrially and commercially Jewish capitalists have been the progressive force. They have brought highly developed Western methods to a backward area, and in places have made the desert bloom. But with Western methods they have brought Western forms of wage-slavery and expanded under cover of nationalist ideals. For the Arab and Jewish worker neither Arab nor Jewish national independence will remove the mark of subservience from their brows. Their only hope of a life of comfort and security lies in joining with their brethren of other countries in a world socialist movement to overthrow capitalist domination in all its forms and establish Socialism in its place. Only a world Socialist system can remove from society the machinations of the oil and other capitalist interests that periodically turn the world into turmoil and bring greater misery to the millions of the workers.

Finally the personnel of the Provisional Government of Israel bears a striking likeness to the personnel of the British Labour Government. While this will not make for harmony between the two Governments it will provide another instance of how faithfully Labour Governments reflect capitalist interests.

(June 1948)

**Pomp, Pageantry and Privilege**

The coronation on June 2nd of a young woman by the name of Elizabeth Alexandra Mary of Windsor, as Queen of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth of Nations, is an event which, it is safe to say, has received more publicity and been the subject of more propaganda than any other peace-time occurrence of the last fifty years. Since the death of her father, the Queen has been publicised to such an extent that there can hardly be a literate person in the whole world who is not aware of the forthcoming event.
For the first time millions of people will, as it were, be inside the Abbey witnessing the ceremonial, the religious service, and the rest of the mumbo jumbo with which a Monarch is crowned. They will be there by virtue of Television, and wireless which will relate every detail of the ritual. Every organ of propaganda has been geared to the event; schools, Churches, newspapers have given it every attention all with the design to make us feel that we are part of the coronation and that we shall all be the better for it.

There can be no doubt that the organisation will prove itself efficient. The collection of notabilities from every corner of the world; the display of heraldic symbols; the presence of dignitaries with such titles as Gold Stick, Bluemantle, and Rouge Dragon will provide a magnificent spectacle beside which the productions of Hollywood will pale into insignificance. We may be sure that the belted Earls, the Dukes and Marquesses, the Society ladies, the Dowagers, the Duchesses and so forth will appear dressed in their full regalia, their diamonds sparkling, and their coronets adding lustre to the occasion.

But when the cheering has died away; when the inevitable dustcarts which follow coronations as well as Lord Mayor's Shows appear to clear the debris; when the "captains and the kings" have departed, what will remain? When the sightseers stands have been demolished; when the red carpets have been taken up; when the diadems and the crowns and the rest of the regalia have been returned for safe keeping to the Tower of London, what then?

If the historians and the publicists, the journalists and broadcasters are to be believed, Coronation day is to usher in a new period of glory and prosperity for this country. They assure us that whenever a Queen had ruled this land it has flowed with milk and honey, and its influence spread all over the earth. They cite the days of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria as evidence for their claims, yet even the most superficial examination of those two periods will show that they are either ignorant fools or deliberate liars who by promising us the fictional glories of the past, hope to blind us to the grim, sordid realities of the present.

The Elizabethan Era
What are these glories of the first Elizabethan age? It is true that then was laid the foundations of the British Empire and British mastery of the seas. It is true that British merchantmen sailed all over the world trading goods and bringing back to these shores unimaginable wealth. Colonies were established in America; pirates, cut-throats and swashbucklers flourished, prospered and were honoured by the Virgin Queen. Those not brave enough to fight the Spaniards indulged in trading in the human flesh of the African coast. Many fortunes were made in those days and it is interesting to note that some of the congregation at Westminster Abbey are there because their ancestors in the days of Queen Elizabeth were successful freebooters. But while all these things are true and while the rich and ruthless became ever more wealthy, the majority of the people of England had no share in that prosperity. For them there was work and poverty and starvation. For them the privilege of fighting to preserve the wealth of their Feudal Lords. (Strange how history repeats itself!) All the viciousness of the Elizabethan era is now glossed over with a tawdry coating of journalistic paint. But a writer of the period shows in a few words the hollowness of the claim that England as a whole was prosperous in the days of Queen Elizabeth:
"The poor lie in the street upon pallets of straw, and well if they have that too, or else in the mire and dirt as commonly it is seen, having neither house to put in their heads, covering to keep them from cold, nor yet to hide their shame withal, penny to buy them sustenance, nor anything else, but are suffered to die in the streets like dogs or beasts, without mercy or shame showed to them at all.
"Truly, brother, if I had not seen it, I would scarcely credit that like the Turkish cruelty had been used in all the world." (Philip Stubbs; The Anatomie of Abuses).

The truth is that in all ages and at all times in written history, prosperity has always been for the rich, never for the labourers, the "hewers of wood and drawers of water".

**The Victorian Era**

If we have demolished, as is the case, the claims made about the days of Good Queen Bess, what of the age of Victoria? The Industrial Revolution had already taken place. Railways had been introduced and England had become the workshop of the world. No other country could compete in the manufacture of goods, and the world's markets were the preserve of British industrialists. Huge fortunes were built up and their possessors bought themselves titles forming a new aristocracy to replace the fast-dying old. At such a time then, surely the poor and oppressed were better off? Work there was in plenty for they were forced to toil sixteen to eighteen hours a day. Surely, therefore, the workers were amply rewarded for their toil? Nothing could be further from the truth.

Men, women and children slaved in the factories, their pay a miserable pittance, their homes hovels, their food cheap and adulterated. Epidemics, when they came, killed them off like flies. The child labourers became stunted and old before their time. There was no lack of priest or Bishop to condone this cruelty in the name of God. They praised the manufacturers for keeping children at work so that evil thoughts would not invade their otherwise idle hours.

During the reign of Queen Victoria, India became the "most precious jewel in the Imperial crown"; the Suez Canal came under British control, and yet a poet of that time could still write of Child Labour:

"'How long', they say, 'how long, O cruel nation Will you stand to move the world on a child's heart--
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?"
("The Cry of the Children", E. B. Browning)

And if a poet's word is not considered evidence we can refer to many factual reports given by Government Inspectors, reformers and others. In a book published just before Queen Victoria came to the throne, and dealing with conditions which prevailed well into the Victorian era, the author, J. Fielden ("The Curse of the Factory System") wrote:--

"Cruelties of the most heart rending were practised upon the unoffending and friendless creatures who were thus consigned to the charge of master manufacturers; they . . . were harassed to the brink of death by excess labour . . . they were in many cases starved to the bone while flogged to their work . . . "The beautiful and romantic valleys of Derbyshire . . . secluded from the public eye, became the dismal solitudes of torture and of many a murder. The profits of manufacturers were enormous; but this only whetted the appetite it should have satisfied." (Fielden did not know his capitalists!)
So much for the "prosperity" of the Victorian era, that age of ruthless exploitation when the wealth and power of the ruling class was literally built on the blood and life of the workers.

**The Coronation and its Meaning**

Not content with telling us that the Coronation will usher in this new period of glory and prosperity, we are told that it will be a dedication and a consecration. Bishops have prated on the holiness of the occasion, politicians, with their ability to seize every opportunity, have tried to fill us with patriotism, and the whole collection of lickspittles, ink-slingers and columnists of Fleet Street have combined to convince us of the promising life which lies ahead.

What is this dedication and to whom in this day consecrated? Prayers for the safe keeping of her Majesty will be offered up to God; and all over the country, if the Archbishop's suggestion is followed, people will join the choir at Westminster in singing "All people that on earth do dwell". And in that sense perhaps it will be a day of dedication. But behind the facade of prayer and patriotism there are other interests involved which makes the Coronation a day of dedication to Mammon.

The late King's body was scarcely cold in its grave, when every junk manufacturer in the Kingdom rushed to produce enormous quantities of shoddy souvenirs. Not one avenue for making money has been neglected. Even the "Gentry" tumbled over themselves to cash in on this "day of consecration". They have advertised their homes to let at fabulous rentals, from which even American millionaires have recoiled. Hotels and boarding houses, restaurants and nightclubs have put up their charges, and anybody with window-space to let on the route of the procession has been courted, bribed and enriched.

Nothing has been overlooked in this money-making jamboree called the coronation. *The Star* fashion expert tells us:--

"If you're fired with a desire to be patriotic through and through, so you can be . . . right down to your corsets. Berlei are showing—as the star item of their new summer collection—a strapless one-piece controlette in elastic net and nylon voile in a choice of red, white or royal blue".

This then is the "holy" character of Coronation day, a day on which the money-makers will give their workers a day off on full pay. While they count their money they will join in the singing of the incantations at Westminster Abbey. And indeed they will have something to sing about for it is estimated that over twenty million pounds will accrue as a result of this "day of consecration". Is it not strange how holiness is so often linked with the "things of this world"?

**A People's Coronation**

Efforts have been made by means of propaganda to imbue this Coronation with a democratic flavour. For the first time, at least that is what we have been told, the people are to take part in this event. But again this claim is hollow. The only part that the "people" will have is to stand in the streets and at their windows, or crouch before their TV sets cheering the procession of as great a collection of parasites as have ever been seen together before.
Not a dignitary involved but is a wealthy banker, landowner, Field Marshal or Major-General. There will be Black rods, and Gold sticks, and Knights Pursuivants in profusion. Most of them directors of large Banking or Insurance Companies. Many of them huge land-owners who are no more representative of the people than is the Queen herself, a by no means poverty-stricken personage. Surrounded as she is by these wealthy courtiers and nurtured in Palaces with a background of wealth and splendour she is cushioned off from the ordinary cares that beset the people who will stand and cheer her as she passes through the streets.

We have no personal quarrel with the Queen. As occupant of the Throne of Great Britain she has no power. The monarchy has become a mere facade of authority, a rubber stamp signature at the bottom of State documents. The Queen's whole life is regulated by strictly-defined rules and a standard of behaviour is expected which would make even the humblest of us protest.

Surrounded at the Abbey by Bankers, landowners, Labour leaders and a "few representatives" of the Trade Unions her Majesty will perform her part, we have no doubt, with grace, charm and dexterity, and the Archbishop will intone at the right time and in the right places. The choirboys will contribute their "Vivats", and the people whose coronation we are told this is, will stand outside and cheer. Thus it has always been; the people on the outside looking in, wearing clothes which cost less than one button of the gorgeous raiment that they have made and which they are allowed to see only at a distance. This is all the people will receive or can expect from this "People's" coronation.

The ceremony to be performed on June 2nd has no meaning for us. It is of no consequence who sits on the throne, which flag or Royal Standard flies over Buckingham Palace; or whether her titles are Elizabeth II or I. We are not concerned with all the flummery and mediaeval mumbo-jumbo with which the event is to be celebrated. Nothing will have changed. The private ownership of the means of life will continue with all its consequences. The threat of war, the general insecurity will not be abated one jot or tittle by this glorified circus. Not one of the claims made for this event will be fulfilled as far as the workers are concerned. The promises and allurements of a brilliant future will be forgotten almost as soon as the procession has disappeared from sight.

In the Psalms, some of which will be read during the service there is a phrase which we commend:--  
"Oh, put not your trust in Princes, nor in any child of man . . ." adding only the counsel to trust to yourselves, to your experience, to your knowledge to build a better Society in which all mankind will live in freedom, peace and security. "Who would be free themselves must strike the blow."

(June 1953)
Jamaican Journeyman: Job-Seekers from the Isle of Sun and Poverty

"This island excels the others for the goodness of the Ayr, and bounty of the soyl, it is for the most part a plain and even country, yielding in great abundance whatever is necessary for Man's Life". (A True Description of Jamaica, 1657.)

On a January evening—very cold, as they say in the weather reports, and with a touch of mist, a train from the South coast arrived at a main-line London station and sent its passengers tumbling and spreading onto the platform, then towards the barrier in a jumble of suit-cases and parcels, children and clothing. They were not the usual type of traveller. Their clothes were thin against the cold; many wore pyjamas as added protection, with towels around their necks and heads. Some sported wide-brimmed hats. A few came pathetically carrying stringed musical instruments. "You can always tell them", said the man leaning against the bookstall, "From a distance they haven't got any faces". Another batch of immigrants from the West Indies had come to London. It must, one thought, have been a pretty powerful Something to have brought them, the Caribbean sun still warm on their backs, to the bitterness of an English Winter.

It is impossible to accurately judge the number of Jamaicans who have recently arrived for, as British citizens, they are not compelled to register as aliens are. A reliable estimate puts the number of West Indians who came in 1954 at over 11,000—at the end of the year about 1,000 were arriving every month. 1955 is expected to bring another 15,000, most of them from Jamaica. These immigrants are living mainly in the large cities—Manchester (in Moss Side, an older part of the City), Birmingham, Coventry and London, where the Boroughs of Brixton and Paddington have taken a lot of them.

Whatever their qualifications, the Jamaicans are for the present content to take almost any job, so they mainly do unskilled work. Birmingham has nearly 300, and Oxford 20, working as bus conductors. The London Passenger Transport Board has employed some, but none for work in a bus crew. The Jamaicans are vulnerable to the rack-renter for they have come on to the end of a long waiting list for housing (in Birmingham, for example, it is 60,000) and they prefer to make their homes in areas where their countrymen are already living. The tendency to live together has hampered the Jamaican's absorption into the population at large; Birmingham is the only city to have tried to disperse them. Many are in overcrowded slums—some, it is said, owned by profiteering landlords who are themselves West Indians. The problem has aroused much concern; in Parliament it has provoked questions and a "ten-minute-rule" private member's Bill. Several delegations from borough and city councils have been worrying the Colonial Office; it is even reported to have been discussed at a Cabinet meeting.

Jamaicans in Brixton
About 3,000 West Indians are living in the Borough of Lambeth, in South London. Most have taken homes in Brixton, packing themselves into Geneva Road and Somerleyton Road, where the houses are large and high and dowdy. To judge from the number of windows which at night are lit up, with the shadow of a dressing-table mirror thrown onto faded, pinned curtains, a lot of the houses have been divided into flats and bed-sitting rooms. "For Sale--8 Lots Without Reserve" reads a notice outside one dusty looking residence. Is this, one wonders, the work of some rogue landlord?
On a wall in one these roads someone has whitewashed the slogan "Keep Brixton White". The whitewash has been partly covered by brown paint and the weather has taken off some of the remainder. But the cool, menacing words are still just discernible and it is faintly sickening to read them in the lamplight. Yet from the evidence of a number of visits to Brixton, one would say that on the whole the Jamaicans are quite unobjectionable; as sober and as responsible in their behaviour and as modest in their bearing as anyone could wish. They have their mannerisms, it is true. In the local pub (“Select Dining Room Upstairs”) they play darts with the regulars and to a man keep their hats on their heads. Some, like the two men who passed into the night, discussing how to keep warm, walk as to some inner, throbbing music. But only the chronically irascible would object to such things. There are certain London streets which have the reputation of being "tough", so that, it is said, the police always patrol them in pairs. That is a fairly reliable guide to the amount of civic disturbance habitually expected from any given neighbourhood. Along Geneva and Somerleyton Roads the policemen walk singly. Truth to tell, there are cat-calls to be heard in Brixton of a Saturday night, but they are from the local Teddy-boys and their flat-shoed girl friends, who as bearers of a white skin are exempt from having rude words written on walls about them.

Beautiful Jamaica

The Jamaicans come from an island in the Caribbean Sea—about 90 miles south of Cuba—which was discovered by Columbus in 1494 and called by him St Jago, after the patron saint of Spain. This name was changed to the Indian Xayamaca, which means "Land of Wood and Water", an allusion to the lush vegetation and many springs which give the island its beautiful scenery. Xayamaca later became corrupted to the present name of Jamaica. The island is about 4,400 square miles in area and has many luxuriant forests which furnish abundant dyestuffs and spices and some rare cabinet woods. The mean average temperature is 78° F., the best period being January to March, when in England we are treading the cities' slush; Jamaica, of course, has its occasional earthquakes and hurricanes. Principal exports are bananas, sugar, rum (said to be the best in the world), raw coffee and cigars. An extensive fruit trade is carried on with Great Britain and New Zealand; deposits of bauxite (aluminium ore) are in development. Jamaica's population, at 1 1/2 million, is about twice that of Manchester; nearly one half of those working in agriculture.
The island is a popular Winter holiday resort which attracts 120,000 vacationists each year, about 65% of them from America. Those lucky enough to arrive at the airport are greeted with a large glass of rum, presented with the compliments of the Sugar Manufacturers' Association. Kingston, on the south coast, is the capital—it is an ugly city with some dense slums. The principal Jamaican newspaper is the Daily Gleaner, a well respected publication. Cricket is the islanders' favourite game and when a Test match is being played at Sabina Park they cheerfully risk their necks at the tops of surrounding palm trees and houses to watch the game. Sometimes they are not so cheerful; they recently beat up the wife and child of an umpire who had adjudged a local hero to have lost his wicket when within reach of a century in a Test match.

Spaniards and Sugar
Spain held Jamaica, with the blessing of a Papal dispensation, during a century and a half of cruelty and neglect, not untypical of its time. Little was done to develop or protect Jamaica and when a mob of ill-armed and undisciplined Englishmen under Penn and Venables invaded the island in 1655 they met little resistance. The last Spaniard left in 1660, from Runaway Bay; the English conquest was recognised in the Treaty of Madrid (1670).

The Spaniards had introduced sugar to the West Indies from the Canary Islands; this industry is now the bedrock of Jamaica's economy. The plantations, originally worked by slaves in the charge of the usually brutal and corrupt overseers, at first flourished but later were subject to the changes of economic fortune. The early 18th Century was a time of low prices and depression but the slump was shaken off and by 1760 the industry had reached a high point of prosperity. Then, in the middle of the 19th Century came the competition of Cuban sugar and European beet sugar, and a further decline from which the West Indies has never really recovered. Beet sugar production is heavily subsidised for strategic reasons and in any case its refining is now no costlier for the United Kingdom than that of cane sugar at the Commonwealth price, so there is no weapon of cheapness to help the Jamaican planters. Cuban sugar is a strong competitor—75,000 tons were recently sold to Canada and it has an enviable protected market in the United States. West Indies sugar is today about 2% of the world's crop; under the Commonwealth Sugar agreement of 1951—endorsed by the 1953 International Sugar Agreement—the islands are guaranteed an annual export quota of 670,000 tons, sold at a fixed price.
Before the war the United Kingdom and Canada stimulated the expansion of the West Indian sugar industry by granting preferential entry to its exports. This has caused the West Indies production to exceed its agreed world quota, at a time when the market is already over-stocked. This year Canada and the United Kingdom will be taking all the sugar they need; any Jamaican surplus (expected to be about 50,000 tons) will have to make its own way in the unprotected world market, with no hope of breaking into the United States. This is not an attractive prospect for Jamaica—the world price of sugar has been depressed by the glut and is now considerably lower than the price at which she sells three-quarters of her crop to the United Kingdom.

Other Troubles
Jamaica has other troubles. Her citrus growers are threatened with extinction in face of competition from the USA, Israel and Spain. Her cigar industry has been forced to contract drastically and lay off several hundred workers; this once again due to competition from Cuba. Mr Bustamante, then Jamaica's Chief Minister, came to London in May, 1953, to ask for help for her island's ailing industries and to protest at the financial restrictions which force Jamaica to take 90% of her imports from Britain but forbid her to buy in the cheap dollar markets. A West Indian trade delegation came in May last year to ask for guarantees for their exports of citrus fruits, bananas, rum and cigars. The Colonial Office was firm that "...it would not be possible to guarantee a market for the whole of West Indian export crops..." This lofty refusal from Whitehall is partly due to the restrictions of Imperial Preference which the United Kingdom must enforce as a member of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. For this reason the new government of Jamaica, led by Mr Norman Manley, QC, is opposed to the British Commonwealth's membership of GATT.

Any airline folder or shipping company brochure will show Jamaica as a glamorous tropical island with a history rich in the romance of Spanish treasure galleons, rum-soaked buccaneers and elegant plantation houses kept up by docile, whitely-grinning negroes. The other Jamaica, which the immigrants know, is an island of stark poverty, where 250,000 are unemployed, of a total working force of about 750,000. This is the colony with one of the worst standards of education in the British Empire, whose most troublous diseases are characteristic of its malnutrition and bad housing, hookworm, venereal disease, pulmonary tuberculosis and yaws (a skin complaint bred in dirty huts and carried by flies). Blindness is also a serious problem. Before the war a retired politician called Jamaica an Imperial slum and the description is as apt today; we can hardly blame the Jamaicans if, in the hope that things cannot possibly be worse elsewhere, they trust their luck in emigration.

Restrictions
It is likely that, given the choice, most of the Jamaicans would emigrate to the United States, but they are prevented by that country's strict immigration laws. Restrictions also bar their going to Canada and Australia. England is about the only country which offers freedom of entry and a good chance of a job. With employment easy to find at the present, there is little general resentment against the Jamaicans; this might change if British industry is hit by a slump. Then the Jamaicans would discover that England has as many hardships for them as there are springs in their native island. And, as they already know, it is so much colder.

(March 1955)
Hungary and Suez--Hope Amidst Tragedy

The Governments of Israel, Britain, France and Russia, when they resorted to war in October 195 in pursuit of their own separate objectives, have at the same time struck a decisive blow to achieve something they never sought and are hardly aware of. The tanks and bombers in a few days of destruction have helped to shatter the most hampering illusion of our generation, an illusion that has held back multitudes from taking the first step towards a real understanding of the problems facing the human race.

This illusion was the belief, held with equal fervour by democrats and Communists, and on both sides of the Iron Curtain, that there are "two worlds", essentially different in aims and conduct.

On the one side the democrats and Labourites of the Western world believed that they and their rulers are guided by a superior moral code, are inherently against brutality, are committed to "law not war", and to the United Nations, and are incapable of naked aggression to further their interests.

On the other side were the Communists and their followers, who believed with equal sincerity that Russia, by virtue of being a "Socialist" country, is free from and superior to the sordid imperialism and colonialism of the West, and utterly incapable of opposing the aspirations of ordinary workers.

Now the foundations of both beliefs have been smashed into fragments. Sincere men and women in both camps are horrified and heartbroken to discover in one revealing flash that the men they reviled behave in exactly the same criminal way; that the Edens and the Krushevs are blood brothers after all, worshippers of the same capitalist god of violence and war. The sickening dismay of those who trusted Eden, "the friend of the United Nations", is only equalled by that of Communists who see Russian tanks smashing down Hungarian workers. For both groups the one thing that could not happen has happened.

This sudden and dramatic exposure of the sham on both sides of the Iron Curtain provides a splendid opportunity for Socialists, who alone can give a valid explanation to the bewildered adherents of the rival ideologies. Only the Socialist can explain that it is not a failure of men, but the unavoidable results of the workings of the social system. The division of the world into separate capitalist states, each seeking to achieve its own commercial ends amid the international rivalries, compels each government again and again to make a choice between using military force to achieve some gain and enduring some weakening and loss by not using military force; the ideals and temperaments of the men who make up the governments is of minor, indeed negligible importance; they all have to use the same methods or get out.
The Socialist, too, and only the Socialist, can deal with the difficulty of the admirers of Russia. At the core of their admiration is the belief that Russia is "Socialist", and only the Socialist can deny this fraud and explain the truth. State capitalism, the conduct of financial, commercial and trading operations by a government in place of a private company is not Socialism and has no relationship to Socialism. It is not the manner in which these operations are controlled, but the nature of the operations that constitutes them capitalist. The efforts of a government, Russian, British, Indian, or any other, to control sources of raw materials, protect frontiers and trade routes and capture markets for its exports—these activities are the cause of war no matter how or under what flag they are conducted. The worker in every country in the world should take to heart the elementary truth that wars are not made by wicked foreigners, but at home, in the land he lives in: through the everyday activities, seemingly peaceful and innocent, of those who employ him and make profit out of him, and who seek to sell the products of his labour in world markets against the similar activities of other employers under other governments. This is the factor common to all the countries: the factor that drives governments into war and workers to their death in fratricidal combat with their fellows. But this factor is the capitalist organisation of society, and only Socialists know the remedy, the introduction on a world-wide basis of a different social system Socialism.

(December 1956)
TV in modern life

Lambasting television is easy. The only difficult thing, indeed, must be for the critics to produce fresh variants on the bitter, derisive comments which seem all that can be found to describe the offerings of man's latest marvel. The same things were said about the films thirty years ago (those same films, by the way, now being hailed by the U-mob as aesthetic masterpieces); and, as with films, one fact brushes aside all the invective. In America families look at television for an average of five and a half hours a day, and in Britain for over half that time. Television, whatever they say about it, has become established as part of modern social life.

Obviously that does not justify its banality. It is quite true that most television programmes are stupid, noisy, mediocre and pointless, and they have become more so since "commercial" television began in this country. But why single out television? Are not most radio programmes stupid, clamorous, mediocre and pointless, too? And most films, novels, papers and plays? Bad as television may be, it has only followed the illuminated trails blazed by every other form of mass entertainment.

In fact, much of the sneering and jeering at television is not really aimed at television at all, but at the working class. Mr Maurice Richardson, commenting on the *Backward Child's*—i.e., commercial television's—*Birthday* in the Observer a few weeks ago made merry with phrases like "slobbering cretin" and "the Ad-mass". Smart, easy stuff this; it would be equally easy, if less smart, for Mr Richardson to observe the U-mob lapping up stuff just as poor and twice as nasty as television in practically any West End theatre or cabaret.

Television is the passive entertainment *par excellence*. Indeed, if there is anything it emphasises about present-day society, it is this: the second-handedness of almost everything. The football spectator is often condemned as a passive watcher, getting satisfaction by proxy from the deeds of others, but he appears an active participant against the television-watcher—at least wrapping-up, going out of doors, meeting other men, arguing and letting off steam, while the viewer is as wholly non-participant as is possible to be.

That is only the least part of it, however. The awful, meretricious mimicry which a universal visual medium breeds has to be seen to be believed: unending imitations of imitations, until imitation is an end in itself. It applies to the artistes of course, but they are only the focal point of the pattern. See the amateur talent contests—*Find the Singer*, *Opportunity Knocks*, and so on. The dreadful thing is not that the competitors can't sing. They aren't trying to. They compete only in effectively copying the looks, gestures and antics of the stereotyped professionals.

It is this, the standardization, the depreciating of originality, and the acceptance of prototypes for practically everything, that makes television set the seal on the trends of the last quarter-century's popular entertainment. The man in the armchair is the least noxious of its end-products. What matters much more is the man wearing other people's looks, copying other people's tricks, living by other people's judgements, and thinking other people's thoughts.

The differences between BBC television and "commercial" resolve themselves into the latter's flamboyance—like comparing the *Telegraph* with the *Daily Mirror*. Thus ATV's news-readers are engaging and breezy, the BBC's staid; the BBC children's hour is carefully "improving", while ATV gives them gunplay and thunder. There is one other vital distinction, however. On ATV they give things away; on BBC they don't. The give-away programmes are on every evening. The prizes (modest in comparison with the American ones) include £2 a week for a year, two jackpots which rise to £1000, and television sets *ad lib.*
The give-away programme is a reiteration of one of capitalism's oldest myths: that if you can't climb the tree, there are always windfalls. The excitement of the thought is heaped on for the viewers. "How does it feel to win £1000? Viewers may be able to tell tonight, if the Treasure Trail reaches its thrilling climax", says the TV Times advertisement of Double Your Money. The 64,000 Question, in which the eventual prize is £3000, is positively ghoulish—the contestant in a glass box, macabre music, close-ups of the audience in dramatic lighting to squeeze out the last vicarious thrill.

What are the social effects of all this? The most obvious one is a loss of sociability: people go out less and welcome callers less. A few years ago there was a good deal of inviting-in to watch the television, but that has fallen off as television ownership has spread. Other forms of entertainment and recreation have lost accordingly. More beer-drinking is done at home and less in the pubs; cinemas, which kept their end up until last year, are now reporting a serious decline. And round this writer's way the local vicar circularized houses last Christmas, to apologize if his carol-singers disturbed the viewers.

With this increased insularity, more attention has probably been paid to homes themselves, in the way of decorating, furnishing, and so on. At first glance that may seem a good thing, but in fact it means acceptance of the individualizing and atomizing of society that has been going on for the last hundred years—the division of labour carried to the point where each man hardly knows his neighbour. Indeed, going back to the television programmes, one of their most remarkable features is the almost hypnotic appeal of seeing other people revealed: in their occupations, in loss of dignity, or, most incredible of all, in the guise of the Man Who Eats Razor Blades, or the Woman Who Got Stuck in the Bath.

The ownership of a television set means far more than mere entertainment, however. It holds implications of prestige, of status shown by conspicuous consumption. Seven or eight years ago the mere fact of owning one was enough; the man who said: "I watched a good play last night" was saying unmistakably: "I've got a television". That has passed, and nowadays it isn't worth having an outdoor aerial. Prestige today involves having a better, brighter and (above all) bigger set: one with a seventeen- or twenty-inch screen, where you can get both programmes and don't have to turn out the light.

It is funny—and sad—this business of "living standards". One would imagine that having a good standard of living could mean only one thing: having plenty of good food, being adequately housed and clothed, having no debts to worry about, and being able to please one's self. Well, it doesn't. It connotes, in fact, not living at all, but possessing. The standard is seen as the rung one has reached on the acquisitive ladder. The lowest rung, below which there isn't a standard at all, is the radio-set. Above it, roughly in ascending order, come the nine-inch television, the washing machine, the refrigerator, holidays abroad, the mortgage-bought house, the big television set, and, indisputably top, the motor-car.

There are endless other things, of course—clothing, children's schooling, the sounds which come out of the radiogram; they have to be endless or the game might stop, and it can't. The common conception is that for people to be getting any or all of these things means more and more money is, by the grace of industrial civilization, being pumped into working-class homes.

That can be tested. According to the London and Cambridge Economic Service wages currently are 176 per cent above their 1938 level. Prices are given as 154 per cent above 1938. In other words, wages in relation to prices (and that is the only way wages can be assessed) are just 8 per cent more than what they were in 1938. In concrete terms, at today's prices a man with £7 10s a week is eleven shillings better off than he was before the war.
Where does the money for the television sets come from, then? Most are bought on hire-purchase or credit sale. The instalments can be anything from fifteen shillings a week upwards; in the case of a credit sale, when payment must be completed in nine months, they can be as high as three pounds a week. There are two answers. The first is earnings over and above wages—overtime and production bonuses; the second, that more wives go to work than ever before. Cauter and Downham's investigation in Derby found that:

"The explanation of the ability of the lower-paid worker to buy a television set is suggested by the family size analysis. In fact, two-thirds of the owner-families where the chief wage-earner received £7 10s a week or less had more than one wage-earner in the family." (The Communication of Ideas, 1954).

The truth, then, is that television sets, like the other working-class "luxuries" are paid for by men working longer hours, their wives going to work, and both of them going without other things. It may be a pity that sacrifices are made in such a cause, but that is a different matter. Perhaps a final word may be said about the economic aspect of it. It is a mistake to think that all this—expensive means of amusement coming into ordinary homes—is a modern wonder. Before television or radio, literally every working-class home had a piano. The price of a piano thirty-five years ago was anything between thirty and seventy pounds; it was, in fact, a far greater luxury.

Don't write off television as another machine-age monstrosity. Potentially, it can do a lot for man; as an instrument of communication, information and amusement. Its failings are not inherent in the cathode-ray tube, but are in reality the failings of social life displayed in three dimensions on a small screen. An American critic described television as a device by which a man may sit in one room and observe the nonsense going on in another. As was said at the beginning, that sort of lambasting is easy and it misses the point—which is that the real nonsense is going on in the room where the man is sitting.

**A message for Aldermaston Marchers**

When your house is on fire you drop everything until you have put out the flames: and if your neighbours come into help, you are glad to see them, without asking questions whether they are vegetarians or teetotallers or anything else. So might the campaign for Nuclear Disarmament argue, to justify the political diversity of their membership, united as it is only in the desire to abolish nuclear weapons.

We can all agree that these weapons are monstrous. The two Japanese cities were terrible enough: since then, the bombs have been made many times more destructive. The Home Office publication *Nuclear Weapons* estimated that a bomb a little smaller than that exploded by the Americans at Bikini in 1954 would cause total or irreparable damage for a radius of six miles and would certainly kill everybody within half a mile, by burns if not from other cause. A Chief Inspector of Fire Brigades has said that a hydrogen bomb on London could cause 100,000 fires—and might temporarily alter the course of the Thames. These forebodings are several years old. Now we have even bigger bombs, and rockets which can deliver them over thousands of miles. Yes, nuclear weapons must be abolished. How can it be done?
What if the governments yielded to the pressure of the nuclear disarmers and agreed to scrap their bombs? This would be worth no more than all the other solemn vows to disarm, or to refrain from taking up arms, or to be non-aggressive, which governments, when it suited them, have broken in the past. The fact that Germany in 1919 signed an agreement not to arm did not prevent her becoming a powerful military nation a few years later. The non-aggression pact of 1939 between Germany and Russia did not prevent the conflict of 1941-45. But let us suppose that governments, strangely, kept their promise to forego their nuclear weapons. That would only take us back to 1945, when wars were fought with blockbusters and flame throwers and Napalm bombs. There is nothing desirable about that. Or we could make a really good job of it and go back to the weapons of 1914-18. Or 1870 or 1415 or 1066.

Of course, it is foolish to expect a modern government to run an army of longbowmen. It seems too obvious to say that as one country develops a weapon, so the others must find one similar or better. That is how the military aircraft and the nuclear bomb, for example, were born. Nowadays, no foreign minister has much of a say unless he has a fistful of H-bombs. In the last election campaign, Sir Winston Churchill said, "... you are more likely to obtain a hearing for your views if you have some substantial stake in the balance of world power. And these stakes... are still much measured in military terms". To win a stake in world power, the French and Chinese are working up their atom bombs—and the established nuclear powers, to keep their stake, have to make rockets and missiles with Hydrogen bomb war heads.

When the French atom bomb was exploded a few weeks back, General de Gaulle exclaimed, "Hurrah for France!" He knew that he was really saying hurrah for destruction and death, because that is what military power means. But military power is only necessary to modern states because in peace and war, they are struggling for economic advantage. This is a world where everything is produced with the intention of selling it profitably, which means that sellers compete for markets, manufacturers for plentiful raw material sources and transporters for trading routes. These are the disputes which, when everything else fails, are settled by force—by war. So France hangs on to Algeria for, among other things, the oil that is there. So Britain fought for years in Cyprus, because it is a base near the strategically important Suez Canal and the vital Middle East oilfields. So the last two world wars were started—and so a third could start if, for example, Russian economic influence in the Middle East or the Caribbean became too great a threat to British and American interests.
In these conditions, national states are bound to maintain a military machine to fight for the interests of their ruling classes and to equip that machine with the most powerful—and most deadly—weapons possible. It is futile to expect them to do otherwise. In 1917, it would have been suicidal for them to have thrown away their tanks, or in 1944 their bombers. In 1960 they are similarly reluctant to give up their nuclear bombs. There is only one way to deal effectively with this problem. Go to the roots. The capitalist system is the cause, from beginning to end, of modern war and the horrifying methods of prosecuting it.

Marching from Aldermaston, sitting in the mud in Swaffham, or lying in jail, the nuclear disarmers deserve our respect for their concern with one of the horrors of modern society. But we can only regret that so much energy is wasted in such a topsyturvy movement. If it is desirable to abolish one weapon of war, how much more so is it to get rid of them all? Or to get rid of war itself? Our house is burning because it is made of inflammable materials—and people will keep dropping matches. It is useless to tackle each fire as it breaks out. We must build ourselves a new house.

(April 1960)
"You’ve never had it so good"

Mr Macmillan has served the Tory party very well indeed. Along with shrewdness and other qualities he has shown himself to be a master showman in a team of showmen. But when he told the British workers that they’ve never had it so good, there must have been some of his fellow Tories who doubted its wisdom. A tag like this labels a politician and his party for a very long time and when their luck runs out—as it always does—they will never live it down. But a master showman has to take risks and so far the thing has exceeded beyond all possible expectations. He persuaded his followers that it is so, and then the Opposition, so that we now have Mr Anthony Crosland, Labour MP for Grimsby, endorsing it. He confessed this at a Labour Conference at Utrecht, and he told them that the British workers "now scarcely seem, either to themselves or to other classes, to be suffering from oppression or capitalist exploitation". (Daily Mail 11.1.60). It helped to win the support of a majority of the electors for the Tory party. It convinced the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Fisher, though it failed to win his approval. He calls it a "dreadful phrase". "Whenever I hear it", he said, "I say to myself in the words of Our Lord, 'how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven'". (Daily Telegraph 11.1.60). With his comfortable £7,500 a year he is worried lest the general affluence of the workers should imperil their souls.

But just how much substance is there in this propaganda, and how much of it exists only in the distorting imagination of the politicians and Press?

Half the Story
There is no lack of supposed evidence to back it up. Let us look at some of it.

The Evening Standard (1.1.60) greeted the new year with an editorial telling us about the "Age of Plenty". The opening paragraph set the tone:-

The age of scrimping is over. The age of affluence has begun. In the past 10 years Britain has passed through a social revolution whose full impact is only likely to be felt in the new decade which has just begun. For the first time in history the greater part of this country's people—and not just the fortunate minority—have money to spare beyond their immediate needs.

Even a light-hearted journalist would hardly make this claim without evidence, and evidence is there.

One figure sums up the progress of this revolution. As the 1960's begin, everyone living in this country has an income higher by an average of £3 a week than at the beginning of the 'fifties.

But before passing on we must look more closely at the average increase of £3 a week. It was clearly derived from figures that turned up in the Press about that time. In the Financial Times (31.12.59) under the heading "Standard of Living" we were told that average personal income per head of the population jumped from £220 in 1950 to £375 in 1959. Sure enough the difference, £155 a year, is £3 a week so what more need be said? But what the writer omitted to point out was that in the same
period, on official figures, the price level (cost of living) rose by 47 per cent. To buy in 1959 what could be bought for £220 in 1950 would need £323. So the real increase was not £3 a week but the difference between £323 and £375, a matter of about £1 a week, and that the £1 a week would buy in 1959 only about half that a like amount would have bought in 1950.

Another figure published by the Financial Times showed "expenditure" per head of the population (after deducting from average income the amount of taxation and the amount put aside as savings). This produced an increase between 1950 and 1959, of nearly £2 a week. But again, after allowing for the increase of prices this seemingly large increase gets cut down to a mere 4 per cent—not a lot to show for 10 years of "social revolution".

It is particularly surprising that the Financial Times should give figures in this incomplete form because four years ago (6.9.55) when that paper looked at similar figures published then, they pointed out what a miserable showing the figures gave when compared with 1938. They made the point that the real increase per head of the population (after allowing for higher prices) was the trifling rise of 4% per cent as compared with 1938.

It happens to be useful to the case of those who see a vast increase of the standard of living to have chosen the year 1950 because average expenditure in all the post-war years up to 1952 (after allowing for higher prices) was actually below the pre-war level.

Mr George Schwartz in the Sunday Times (10.1.60) had his own line of comment. He at least is very well aware of the fact that much of the current statistical evidence of higher incomes is merely a reflection of the steady rise in prices and a corresponding decrease in the purchasing power of money. On this occasion he wanted to make the point that booming production and exports are not a new phase in British capitalism. He reproduced columns of figures showing how "peace and prosperity" were booming in the years 1903 to 1913. Again some very imposing figures, but when we look at prices in these ten years we see that they were steadily rising, a total rise of about 12 per cent. Wages were rising more slowly so that the higher wage actually bought less.

Staggering Truth
What is really astounding about Macmillan's boast is that, at least on average, it contains an element of truth, remembering however that the rich too are in the average figures. The state of most British workers really is a little better than it has ever been before. Of course there are large numbers of clerical workers (including most of the civil service, bank clerks and others) who are worse off than they were before the war, and some industrial workers, including London busmen, are also worse off. But with fewer unemployed and several million married women enjoying the dubious advantage of doing two jobs, home and away, working class purchasing power has gone up. But what a commentary on capitalism that this small advance can be hailed as a social revolution and set the church worrying about the corrupting influence of working class "riches"!

Just about the turn of the year agricultural workers advanced to £8 a week for 46 hours toil. Hundreds of thousands of other men in industry and transport are on much the same level. The average earnings of women of 18 and over in manufacturing industry is £6 17 0 a week—hardly a corrupting level of affluence. And there are over 2 million people who in the course of a year are poor enough to qualify for National Assistance—with wives and children the number is much larger.

Real Capitalism
In spite of the talk about a social revolution capitalism has not changed. It is still a system of minority wealth and mass poverty and insecurity—and just at present it is profits, stock exchange prices and the emergence of new crops of millionaires that truly mark the phase of "you never had it so good". And the Church, with a rise of £50 million in the value of its investments in the past five years, hasn't done badly.

Just before Christmas, the *People* (20.12.59) gave unintentionally a close-up of the capitalism we still have with us. Mr Gilbert Harding ran a charity fund and invited readers to subscribe. He was proud to report that 40,000 readers had sent in £15,000 (it later reached £30,000). In particular he recorded that 89 workers in Reading had voted to his fund the £630 held by their defunct Social Club. They had been employed by a biscuit firm but a week before Christmas the firm closed down, unable to meet the competition of larger firms. In all, 290 workers got the sack, "with not a penny in compensation from the firm", although many were likely to get other jobs, "for most of them the Christmas prospect looked bleak". Mr Harding was entitled to single out the charitable mindedness of the workers who gave the money to his fund, the money "they had scrimped and saved to put the social club on its feet".

But there was another item of interest. The *People* disclosed that when the chairman of the firm died "he left a quarter of a million pounds—all made out of biscuits".

How much more useful it would have been to point out that the quarter of a million was just part of the tribute levied by the capitalist class from the workers, not "made out of biscuits" but out of them.

The socialist struggle has not ended, it has hardly begun, and it will achieve in due time a social system which really will be a social revolution. One in which, incidentally, it will not be necessary for workers to scrimp and save to help the discarded members of their class.

(February 1960)

**The Bishop of Woolwich squares the circle**

A great deal of attention has recently been focused on controversies within the Church of England by the publication of a book written by the Bishop of Woolwich entitled *Honest to God*. The book has prompted wide interest in issues basic to religion within the Church itself, propositions involving the modification of assumptions fundamental to the religious outlook have been argued about for some time.

These arguments, forced upon the Church by social developments external to it, have been reluctant but inevitable, bitter and agonised. There is no doubt, however, that the publication of this book has brought these arguments under wider public scrutiny, has stepped up the intensity of the discussion, and has brought about a new phase in what is quite frankly a time of crisis for the Church of England. Its problem is how to reverse mounting indifference to it and its dogma. This may be a problem for the Church itself, which quite obviously will resent and strive against becoming a social anachronism, but in relation to the crucial social problems facing man today it is irrelevant and superfluous. The significance of the controversy is that it opens a fresh chapter in man's long struggle to free his existence from service to outside agencies—the gods.
Of all the churches in this country, it is the Church of England that has suffered most of the erosion of what was once a compelling enthusiasm for religious activities, especially in urban areas. At least until the turn of the century, the Church of England remained a powerful force that intervened actively in the everyday affairs of the community. Quite apart from providing spiritual balm to a 19th century working class depressed by acute poverty, it was the authoritative keeper of the community's moral conscience. It was the father confessor to an era in trouble, as well as a positive force in political and economic affairs. The pulpit was a platform, and congregations were large enough to make them worth talking to.

But since those days, the thunderous voice of the Church of England has softened to a whisper, largely ignored and unnoticed. The declamations from its pulpits re-echo around virtually empty caverns; its morality is flaunted; the soporifics that it once dispensed are now found elsewhere in more acceptable forms. But it is not a situation that has been created by mass active opposition, coherently articulated or positively demonstrated. The majority of the population are not even atheists, let alone aware and convinced of Marxist theories, but the attitude of a growing number of people is of massive indifference and crushing unconcern. The consequences for the Church are just the same. Although there is still a degree of social esteem accorded to baptisms, marriages and burials presided over by the Church, they have more significance as desirable conventions than as conscientious acts of faith; as customs they have become drained of their religious and spiritual meaning.

The steady withdrawal of active support for Church affairs does not apply in equal degree to every branch of religion in this country. Quite certainly, the Roman Catholic Church retains a firmer grip over its members than the Church of England. But there are good historical reasons for this, and whilst the Catholic Church makes it much more difficult for individuals to drift away, and although it still remains a powerful bastion of superstition based on fear and ignorance, it is unlikely either that in the long term it can resist tendencies fundamental to modern capitalism--scepticism and individual self-interest.

The dogma of the Church of England boils down to an expedient. It summed up the aspirations of a 16th-17th century trading class seeking freedom for the development of its own activities outside the influence of the established landed interests whose political and economic power was based, at least in part, on the Roman Catholic Church, and which expressed themselves in its ideology. The Roman Catholic Church secured subservience by the weapon of tyrannical superstition. Thus its god was a tyrant and a taskmaster; a god who imposed a duty of constant adulation and who threatened wrongdoers with the nightmare penalty of eternal damnation. Beyond this, since the Church itself was the physical embodiment of God on earth, the worship of God had to be the worship of the only gateway to heaven and its followers were forced to submit to its authority on all aspects of moral and political behaviour. A hierarchy of sin, the bleeding heart of Jesus, the pain of eternally stoked hellfire and other frightening fundamentalist accoutrements of primeval religious fervour. And by means of its power over ignorant and bewildered men, it secured their economic subservience.

Protestantism then was the expedient ideological innovation of a dynamic social element which still felt the need for religious justification but which sought freedom from the authoritarian structures of the Roman Church. Thus with the Reformation and the establishment of the Church of England, a god was invoked who dispensed with the Church as a necessary turnstile between himself and his flock. A dogma was created that allowed entrance to heaven merely on condition of belief in the holy trinity. The expedient changing of cherished beliefs is in the long-standing tradition of the Church of England, and it is not surprising that Catholicism retains a more enduring grip over its members.
As a true child of his age, and in emulation of the image-mongering techniques of advertising, the Bishop of Woolwich believes that in order combat the growing lack of interest in the Church and Christianity, it is necessary to change the image of its god. He holds that it is no longer acceptable to think of god as some supernatural, yet objectified, reality existing "out there", somewhere in outer space, holding omnipotent sway over a universe of his own creation. He holds that God should no longer be thought of as an entity external to society's own existence, to whom individuals owe personal worship. For the Bishop of Woolwich, the idea of God represents all the best aspirations of man towards brotherhood, mutual tolerance and dedication to community interests. God to him is a force for common good inherited by contemporary man from the most obscure beginnings of history. Different from beer-swilling vicars singing Nelly Dean with contrived yet conscientious enthusiasm, the absurd indignity of ton-up parsons, hymns sung to skiffle and other props, the ideas of the Bishop of Woolwich form the more credible substance of today's radical theology. The Bishop has realised that social consciousness has developed past the point of an easy acceptance of the supernatural imagery of traditional religion that sprang from social conditions in which science was in its infancy and man's technical apparatus crude. The evolving scientific culture of the space age displaces the superstitious faith of religion and reduces it to an irrelevance. It could once be truly observed and easily demonstrated that the Church was a fundamental support of capitalist society; but the order of priorities between religious faith and scientific method in a society driven towards greater technical complexity has changed all this.

Because capitalism is essentially a competitive form of society, and because this competition takes the form of struggle for commercial success both within nations and between nations, society is impelled to seek greater efficiency and productivity of labour. Thus technical change and scientific research and all the social consequences of them, including a bias towards technical education, are basic features of modern capitalist society. The fact of continued technical innovation so deeply permeates our culture that even momentous achievements are accepted with equanimity. Man lives today in an atmosphere of intense scientific enquiry which results in new discoveries daily. The means of communication are developed to a point where this new knowledge, whether it is about stars a million light years away, or the breeding habits of some obscure species of tropical fish, can be communicated immediately to all men. It is an age that emphasises the contrast between knowledge that can be proved and assumptions that require faith.

The first premise of historical materialism is that all man's thinking is social thinking; that there is no idea that man discusses, no interest that he fights for, and no ideal that he aspires to, that is not derived from social origins. When the Bishop of Woolwich denies God a supernatural existence outside human society and uses the concept to mean a social force between them, then whether he is aware of it or not, and whether he likes it or not, he has taken a faltering but definite step into the materialist camp.
In face of a developing scientific culture, the nature of religious belief undergoes gradual but definite qualitative change. Appropriately, it is during National Productivity Year that the Bishop of Woolwich articulates his death wish.

Even in the early 19th century, the economic structure of society was justified as being God-given, and to advocate its change was a sinful and heretical challenge to almighty predetermination. The relationship between man and God was close and personal. Earthly existence was merely a brief testing time for one's fitness to live eternally in heaven. It was a life in the service of God rather than a life of service to self. Today, even for those who are not religious, God is not thought of with the same awesome fear and only a few believe seriously that if life on earth is unsatisfactory, there remains the second chance in heaven. In the space age, the control of man's destiny is gravitating from outer space to earth itself.

Where the working class accepts allegiance to religion, to royalty or the state, or accepts a false ideology or economic subservience to the capitalist class, it denies itself the realisation of its own interests. The poverty of the modern proletariat still results from the fact that its labour operates in commodity form, is bought for wages and exploited by capitalists with a view to profit. To buy a man's labour power and set him to work is to reduce his existence to a commercial transaction and alienate his individuality.

In offering religion in more credible form to an age that is increasingly sceptical, the Bishop of Woolwich seeks to strip it of its supernatural paraphernalia and present it as an indispensable system of morals. But from the time that the Church cornered men's superstitious fear and exploited it with declamations of nature as the created province of the almighty, it has evolved to a position where it is no longer even confident in its dogma and is reduced to weak exhortations to live in good neighbourliness and brotherly love. And even these appeals are nothing more than hypocrisy since at the same time that it spurious wishes social harmony it condones and supports a competitive economic system whose fundamental feature is the exploitation of men by men.

The evolving technical nature of capitalist society will go on revealing the Church as more and more of an outlandish anachronism and in time will heap greater and greater embarrassment upon its dogma. Yet in spite of this and of the attempts by churchmen to modify the image of the Church and alter its social role, it will retain one enduring characteristic, that of an anti-working class institution. The Church supports the present method of producing and distributing wealth--capitalism. The ideas that it disseminates, its concepts about society, and the universe it trades in, are either irrelevant or hostile to the ideas that the working class requires to achieve its economic emancipation.

Socialists seek the universal brotherhood of men, but for the Church to sloganise ideals and in practice support a system that precludes their realisation, is worse than hollow gesture, it erects a barrier to their practical achievement. What an organisation that genuinely aspires to social harmony on a world scale should do is relate to specific social situations within actual experience, and discern and illuminate and explain the reasons why men now behave in a manner contrary to their mutual interests. It should argue a valid social theory and advocate a practical course for political action that offer the sure prospect of the unity of all men based on relations of genuine social equality. Only Socialists do this.

(August 1963)
How close was France to a socialist revolution?

One of the most amusing reports to come out of France during the recent unrest was of one panic-stricken capitalist, convinced that his class was about to be expropriated, who loaded his car with over £1 million in cash and made a dash for the Swiss border. But his terror, ridiculous in retrospect, was matched by a corresponding euphoria in left-wing circles. Anyone accustomed to thinking along Bolshevik or anarchist lines was convinced that "a revolutionary situation" had developed and, in Britain at any rate, there were several groups declaring that the socialist revolution had started. Already May 1968 is part of the mythology of the left and there is a generally accepted explanation of why the agitation seeped away and why the strikers drifted back to work. The French workers are supposed to have been ripe for revolution and all that was missing was "a large revolutionary organisation capable of giving direction to the demands of the working class".

This raises the whole question of what constitutes a socialist revolution. The Socialist Party of Great Britain argues that it is not enough to have thousands of demonstrators on the streets or even millions of workers occupying the factories. Above all the working class must have a clear understanding of what Socialism entails and what methods are effective in overthrowing capitalism. A grasp of socialist principles by the vast majority of the workers is a minimal condition for going forward to Socialism and no party, no matter how religiously it follows the Bolshevik tradition, can substitute for this.

If this is accepted, then we can estimate how close France came to a socialist revolution by taking a look at the demands which the workers advanced during the period of upheaval. Most prominent were the usual claims for higher wages, better working conditions, shorter hours and security of employment. (There are between two and three million workers on the minimum wage level of less than £8 a week and at least four million earning under £11 a week.) Such demands have the full support of the Socialist Party--but we must emphasise that there is nothing revolutionary about them. In fact, the wage increases that have been secured need to be put in perspective. They seem to be averaging out to a general rise of about 13 per cent (on the basis of a 10 per cent all-round increase and a 3 per cent rise in the minimum wage) but this needs to be set against the fact that nominal wages have been rising by 6 per cent annually over the last few years anyway. Although these increases will naturally cut into profits, the international capitalist class hastened to reassure itself that the outcome would be far from a disaster As the Economics Editor of the Sunday Times put it:

The pay settlement will not be wholly adverse for France's economy. The big increase in the minimum wage will help send the poorer French firms to the wall, releasing workers for the big, profitable ones--which pay well above the minimum.

Yet the strikers did not restrict their demands simply to these issues. At numerous plants there were calls for "a radical change in the power structure" and for "participation of the workers in the running of the factory". A leader of Force Ouvriere (the social democratic trade union federation) pointed out his members were agitating for "genuine workers' participation in the policy of industry" and a senior
Renault shop steward came out for nationalisation of key sectors of the economy, including all the car firms, the chemical industry and the banks. Understandably, demands such as these were greeted with rapturous delight by all those who imagine Socialism as a system of nationalisation under workers' control; but the Socialist Party rejects this view. For socialists nationalisation, whatever its trimmings, is nothing more than state capitalism. The policy of workers' control does not pose a threat to the capitalist system as long as those workers are still committed to capitalism and have not understood the socialist alternative. That this was the case in France is made clear by the fact that even the most extreme elements, such as Cohn-Bendit, went no further than the old utopian demand for equal wages. Who was urging the abolition of the wages system and an end to the market economy? For this reason, we cannot accept the claims of one young activist in St. Nazaire:

The long-term outlook is uncertain, but not hopeless.
On one tier, there are the traditional union claims, which must be met immediately. On another, the government and the regime itself are in question.
There is the challenge of capitalist society, of social orders based on private property.

Obviously there was a challenge to the government and the Gaullist regime but capitalism remained secure throughout.

For all that, the Socialist Party recognises that there are vital lessons to be drawn from the recent struggles of the French workers. One of the most important is the complete bankruptcy of the "communist" parties, as demonstrated by the PCF. Another striking feature was the way in which the factories and universities were organised while the employers and authorities were temporarily eliminated. Although there was no production during the strikes, all the factory services had to be maintained. At the Renault plant at Billancourt, for example, the factory hospital was still functioning, the firemen and security officers had to keep patrolling, food had to be prepared—and so on. Even more impressive was the Sorbonne, with the students in control. A hospital service, treating those injured in the riots, was centred on the Medical Faculty and it was estimated that a daily average of 10,000 posters and hand-outs were being produced by the Fine Arts School. Yet all of this was done by unpaid, voluntary labour, by people cooperating for a common purpose. Too much should not be made of this (we are not suggesting it represented "socialism in action") but it does at least disprove the often-heard objection to a socialist society that, if the coercive pressures of the wages system were removed, nothing but chaos would result.

Another important aspect was the role of the police and armed forces. Although vast publicity was given to the brutality of the CRS, there was less on the discontent which was building up among the ordinary police forces over their use as government thugs Already by May 18 there were reports from the police unions of "extreme tension" in the forces. Some of the police were also adopting the tactics of the strikers themselves. An article in the Times mentioned that the branch dealing with intelligence on student activity had been deliberately depriving the government of information about student leaders in support of an expenses claim! This indicates that the majority of those who make up the police and armed forces are subjected to the general pressures which act on all working men and women.

As for the army, General Fourquet—the Chief of Staff—made it clear that it would obey any constitutionally elected government—even a "communist" one. Whether Fourquet and the general meant this or not is largely immaterial for, when we are in a position to establish Socialism, the bulk of the armed forces (as with the rest of the working class) will be socialists and will understand that their interest lies not in fighting their fellow workers but in freeing mankind as a whole by stripping the capitalist class of its wealth.
If there were a working class committed to Socialism in France the correct method of achieving political power would be to fight the general election on a revolutionary programme, without any reforms to attract support from non-socialists. In fact, the first stage in a socialist revolution is for the vast majority of the working class to use their votes as class weapons. This would represent the transfer of political power to the working class. We adopt this position not because we are mesmerised by legality and not because we overlook the cynical and two-faced double-dealing which the capitalists will no doubt resort to. We say, however, that a majority of socialist delegates voted into the national assembly or parliament would use political power to coordinate the measures needed to overthrow the capitalist system. Any minority which was inclined to waver would have second thoughts about taking on such a socialist majority which was in a position to wield the state power.

But since the workers in France are still convinced that capitalism is the only viable social system, the immediate task must be for genuine socialists to concentrate their efforts on spreading socialist ideas among the working class. For this purpose an independent socialist party, which does not compromise its principles or dissipate its activity in attempts to reform capitalism, is indispensable.

(July 1968)
Why Socialists oppose the Vietcong

Vietnam is the latest of the leftwingers' adopted fatherlands. Before Vietnam it was Algeria, before that it was Cuba, and so on back to Russia. This support for the Vietcong does not depend on what is actually going on in Vietnam, but is rather an expression of the leftwingers' dissatisfaction with certain aspects of modern society. To that extent it is irrational.

Nevertheless those who support the Vietcong imagine that they are Marxists and it is in pseudo-Marxist terms that they rationalise their support for this nationalist movement whose aim is to set up a state capitalist regime in the South similar to that in the North. The Vietcong is not a socialist movement, and by no stretch of the imagination can it be said to have anything to do with Socialism. But since those who shout for "Victory for the Vietcong" have dragged in Marx and Socialism, we must at least refute their arguments and state why Socialists do not support the Vietcong. Leftwingers use two basic arguments. First, that socialists should support any movement, even if it is not socialist, that weakens "American imperialism" which they say is the main threat to social revolution throughout the world, just as Marx supported moves against Tsarist Russia. Second, and this comes from Lenin, the Vietcong and workers in the West are fighting the same enemy—imperialism—and so we should support each other.

It is true that in the middle of the nineteenth century Marx saw Tsarist Russia, the "gendarme of Europe", as a great threat to the further social progress of mankind. He felt that if Russia overran western Europe it would crush the democratic movement and put the social revolution back for years. Therefore, he was ready to support any moves that might weaken the power of Tsarist Russia. He supported Britain, France and Turkey in the Crimean war. He stood for an independent Polish state, to be a buffer between Russia and the rest of Europe. He did all he could to expose the pro-Russia policies and intrigues of Lord Palmerston. These may seem odd activities for a socialist—and, indeed, we have criticised Marx for them. Marx argued that before Socialism is possible society must pass through the capitalist stage. But this is no automatic process; it depends on the outcome of human struggles. Russia was "reactionary" in the proper sense of the word in that it was a threat to the development even of capitalism. Marx opposed Tsarist Russia, not because it was the strongest capitalist power, but because it was the strongest anti-capitalist power.

Looking back now we can see that Marx was over-optimistic as to the prospects of a socialist revolution in Europe. In time the capitalist states of western Europe grew stronger and the Tsarist Empire weaker, finally to be destroyed along with Austro-Hungary and Imperial Germany in the first world war. Before that even, Russia in a bid to keep its armed forces up to date had become indebted to the capitalists of France and Belgium. Well before the turn of the century we can say that conditions had changed since Marx's day. Capitalism was firmly established as the new world order. Russia was no longer a threat. The task of socialists was even clearer: to oppose all wars and nationalist movements and to work to build up a world-wide workers' movement with Socialism as its aim. This has always been the policy of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.
Today capitalism quite clearly dominates the world, in Russia and China as well as in the West. To talk of "American imperialism" as the main threat is to play the game of state capitalist Russia and China. Every up-and-coming capitalist power finds the world already carved up by the established powers. If it is to expand its influence it must clash with these powers, as Germany, Japan, Italy and Russia have found and as China is now finding. All of them, in their time, have beaten the "anti-imperialist" drum, that is, have opposed the domination of the world by Britain and France and later America. Mussolini talked of Italy as a "proletarian nation" in a class war against the "bourgeois nations". Nazi Germany stirred up Arab and Latin American nationalism. Japan advanced the slogan of "Asia for the Asians". Russia, too, and now China, like Germany before, vociferously denounce Anglo-French-American imperialism.

Naturally socialists, wittingly or unwittingly, do not allow themselves to be used as tools of some capitalist state, as most of those who shout for the Vietcong are (some know full well what they are doing). Socialists are opposed to world capitalism and to governments everywhere.

Lenin could not believe it when he learnt that the German Social Democrats had voted for the war credits in 1914. Later he worked out a theory to try to explain it, his theory of imperialism. Basically, he argued that as profits were greater in the undeveloped parts of the world capitalists were eager to invest there; this brought the capitalist states into continual conflict over the division of the world. Part of the "super-profits" of this imperialist exploitation were used to pay higher wages and provide social reforms for sections of the workers at home. They were thus led away from revolutionary socialism towards opportunism.

This theory is mistaken on nearly all counts. It has not been proved that the rate of profit was higher in the colonial territories. There is a much simpler explanation for capitalist expansion into the undeveloped world in the forty or so years before the first world war: the need to secure sources of raw material for the expanding industries at home, and then to secure strategic points to protect these sources and the trade routes to and from them. As for Lenin's explanation of reformism it is the purest nonsense. To suggest that workers share in the proceeds of colonial exploitation is to reject the Marxian theory of wages which says that wages are the price of labour-power. But this argument was an essential part of Lenin's theory. For on it he based his strategy of support for anti-imperialist nationalist movements. If they succeeded, he believed, they would deprive the imperialist state concerned of its super-profits and so also of its ability to buy off its workers. Deprived of their share the workers' standard of living would drop and they would once again become revolutionary, affording a chance for a Bolshevik-type vanguard to seize power.

This is typical of Lenin's thinking, to rely on some factor outside of the development of the working class itself to create the conditions for social revolution. It fits in well with his contempt for the abilities of workers and his view that they should be manipulated by a self-appointed vanguard. Needless to say this short-cut to Socialism is just as much a dead-end as all the others.

Of course defeat in Vietnam, and the whole of South East Asia, would have serious consequences for American capitalism. That is why they are fighting. It would deprive them of access to many raw materials, but more important it would shift the balance of power around the pacific in favour of Chinese state capitalism.
It is not true that the Vietcong and workers are fighting the same enemy. The Vietcong are fighting American capitalism. The interests of workers are opposed not only to American capitalism but to capitalism everywhere including Russia and China. Victory for the Vietcong, as we have already explained, would shift the world balance of power from America to other capitalist powers. This is not something that is in the interests of workers, or something that they should support. There is no issue at stake in Vietnam worth a single worker's life.

The Socialist Party, then, is opposed to the Vietnam war, as to all wars. We do not take sides. Nor are we hypocrites like those who cynically use all normal people's abhorrence of the burning of women and children (as if the Vietcong did not use flame-throwers) to get them to support one side in this war. Such people do not really want an end to the killing; they want it to go on till the side they support has won. Let them at least be honest and stop trying to fool people with their phoney anti-war sentiments.

(October 1968)
Politics of Pop

“The Commandments say ‘Thou Shalt Not Kill’ and half the world is in training to annihilate the other half. Nobody would get me in uniform and off to Aden to kill a lot of people I’ve never met and have nothing against anyway. I know people say they are against wars and yet they go on fighting them. Millions of marvellous young men are killed and in five minutes everybody seems to have forgotten all about it. War stems from power-mad politicians and patriots.”

Except for the final comment, this could be a socialist speaking in Hyde Park. In fact, it is Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones giving his views on war and militarism. On many other questions his ideas come close to the arguments which socialists use. For example, he is outspokenly anti-religious and opposed to marriage. While he does not appear to relate any of this to the class structure of society, he does at least look upon private property as a curse.

“There should be no such thing as private property. Anybody should be able to go where he likes and do what he likes.”

Jagger calls himself an anarchist and, like most anarchists, his weak point is his failure to understand how capitalism works. Politicians he claims are "a dead loss" and it is they who are responsible for wars, the legal system and the rest of it.

“Politics, like the legal system, is dominated by old men. Old men who are also bugged by religion.”

Socialists would reply that it is not the individuals, such as Wilson, who administer capitalism who are to blame but the system of society itself. Nor would we accept that it is the “old men” who have landed the world in its present mess. Even Jagger must recognise that he is in the minority among young people; most youth are just as ardent supporters of private property as their fathers and grandparents. In fact, one has to look no further than some of the other groups competing on the pop scene to see just how committed they are to capitalism, religious superstitions and all.

Probably the most depressing case is the Beatles. An immensely talented and versatile group, politically they seem to come about as wet as they come. One of them, George Harrison, is convinced, like Jagger, that is the “old men” who are the cause of the world's problems.

“I think music is the main interest of the younger people. It doesn't really matter about the older people now because they're finished anyway. There's still going to be years and years of having all these old fools who are governing us are bombing us and don't' all that because, you know, it's always them.”

Confronted by this, Harrison's philosophy is to shut his eyes and pretend it isn't there. He sees an individual way out in meditation. Everything in the material world is superficial, he argues; it is only by burrowing deep inside yourself that you can find god and personal fulfilment.

“If you can contact that absolute state you can just tap that amazing source of energy and intelligence. It's there, anyway you've just got to contact it and then it will make whatever you do easier and better. Everything in life works out better because everybody is happier with themselves.”

This might be a comforting creed to someone with Harrison's wealth but unemployed workers in Birmingham or hungry peasants in Bengal are likely to be slightly less impressed by the miraculous powers of meditation. The Beatles' spiritual mentor, the so-called Maharishi Mahesh Yag, obviously has a shrewd understanding of this and restricts his missionary efforts to the clientele of the London Hilton and such places. The Maharishi, a sort of latter-day Rasputin with mental powers seem to be in inverse proportion to his impressive title, is at least a magnificent showman. Some his profundities have to be heard to be believed:
“I think ladies meditate comparatively more successfully because the quality of heart is more developed in the ladies than in the men, and therefore the waves of joy are more aroused, and that's why the joy is felt more. The heart is more—a mother's heart is much more much more wavy—more waves, deeper waves rise in mother's heart than in the father's heart. An experience of bliss does need a more capable instrument of emotion.”

People who fall for this sort of rot will obviously be taken in by anything and, like Rasputin, the Maharishi seems to have a low opinion of those who provide him with a comfortable living. Interviewed recently in Bremen (West Germany) he was reported to have laughingly remarked that “no matter where I am people will find in me the commodity that they want.”

As well as their hatred of the "old men", Jagger and Harrison have another trait in common—their dislike of oppression. Yet there are plenty of pop singers with other ideas—some openly racialist, others advocating dictatorship. P. J. Proby, for example, is fond of making half-witted generalisations about negroes—"They're always asking for handouts. They don't have any real dignity." Another singer with totalitarian sympathies is Scott Walker who, unlike Harold Wilson, has a passion for telling the working class what is wrong with them. According to Walker we have all gone flabby in the West and we ought to have this knocked out of us by a good dose of Stalinism.

“Russians have an unbelievable strength, nothing shakes them. The workers here should have the same opportunities, they should be educated on radio and television. They need a good dose of propaganda and more than anything else they need a form of dictatorship again . . . then we'd be all right again.”

The politics of pop are worth looking at not because pop singers are anybody in particular but because most of them are from the working class and, to a certain extent, their ideas are typical of the lines which young workers think along.

One of the most widespread of their illusions is the feeling that the fundamental division in society is between young and old, rather than between the working class and the propertied class. Prejudices such as this are just as dangerous as racialism because they obscure the fact that the real conflict in society is between classes—not generations. The gulf which separates a young worker from a young capitalist is immeasurably wider than that which exists between two workers of different ages. Whatever superficial differences there might be in styles of dress or tastes in music, working men are united as a class by the fact that each one of us has to sell his labour power to the capitalists. In the same way the capitalist class stand together, whatever generation they might identify themselves with as individuals, because collectively they live off the surplus value which they wring out of the working class. It would be nice to have a few politically conscious pop singers who recognised this but, in the end, it doesn't matter that much. After all it is not a few individuals like George Harrison or Mick Jagger who are going to win the revolution but the millions of working men and women, young and old, who make up the working class.

Let’s finish by giving the floor to Jimmy Savile—one of the most successful DJ’s in the pop business. Preaching in a church near Halifax just before Christmas he sent up a prayer to capitalism which would have warmed the heart of any Victorian mill owner or steel baron.

“For the first few years, I worked down a coal mine. Now I have hit this 'gold seam' and I say, ‘Thank you, Lord, business is good.’”

For the rest of us, who are still working down the mines, or in the factories and offices, how many of us feel like echoing Jimmy's pious gratitude? The only “golden seam” we are ever likely to hit is socialism. And that won't be thanks to any gods but just to our own revolutionary initiative.

(February 1968)
Man: ape in wolf’s clothing?

Perhaps the most famous of scientific frauds was the fake Piltdown Skull of 1910, a "missing link" fabricated by a person unknown. That anonymous joker put together an ape's jaw with a human skull. Desmond Morris has grafted the most ignorant fairy tales about human society onto a body of basically sound ideas about human biological evolution. The Naked Ape is a barefaced hoax. As a gimmick, Morris pretends to describe the human animal just as it would be pictured by a zoologist if it were a newly-discovered species. "Naked ape" is a clinical term (like "black-footed squirrel") which is supposed to denote men's most noticeable characteristics: their lack of fur. But evidently, Morris has become a rich man because to millions of his readers, nudity is a novelty. It should be obvious that the most important thing about human animals is not that they are naked, but that they are clothed. In other words, they produce what they consume; they turn the artificial into the necessary, and (like Morris) sometimes confuse it with the natural. His book is a hymn of praise to modern capitalism. All the current practices, preoccupations, superstitions, myths and manners are, according to Morris, highly admirable. Furthermore, they are natural because they stem from man's past as a wolflike, monogamous, predatory killer. Frequently this approach becomes so manifestly silly that we are tempted to suspect the author of perpetrating a spoof, a sarcastic attack on the ludicrous legends of human nature: One of the essential features of the hunt is that it is a tremendous gamble and so it is not surprising that gambling, in the many stylised forms it takes today, should have such a strong appeal.

We can safely wager that not one of the fish-eyed zombies who stand for hours in front of a fruit machine has yet thought of defending his addiction with the excuse that it stems from the bloodthirsty excitement of his prehistoric past. Derision is the only intelligent response to this sort of foolishness, yet Morris seems to be serious. Anyone with a smattering of education knows that societies have changed historically, and that customs vary geographically. But according to Morris, only capitalist man is truly human:

The earlier anthropologists rushed off to all kinds of unlikely corners of the world in order to unravel the basic truth about our nature, scattering to remote cultural backwaters so atypical and unsuccessful that they are nearly extinct. They then returned with startling facts about the bizarre mating customs, strange kinship systems, or weird ritual procedures of these tribes, and used this material as though it were of central importance to the behaviour of our species as a whole. The work done by these investigators was, of course, extremely interesting and most valuable in showing what can happen when a group of naked apes become sidetracked into a cultural blind alley. It revealed just how far from the normal our behaviour patterns can stray without a complete social collapse. What it did not tell us was anything about the typical behaviour of typical naked apes. This can only be done by examining the common behaviour patterns that are shared by all the ordinary, successful members of the major cultures—the mainstream specimens who together represent the vast majority. Biologically this is the only sound approach.
In other words, don't talk to me about filthy savages. Of course, biology has nothing to do with it. There is no evidence that different cultures are due to different biological endowments, and plenty of conclusive evidence against this. People from "all kinds of unlikely corners of the world" have been educated to be perfectly competent under advanced capitalism. Sometimes, even, the more backward the better: as in many parts of Africa, where people from stateless societies (such as the Ibo) have caught on to capitalist values much quicker than people from near-feudal societies at a more advanced stage of social evolution. For that matter, it is common knowledge that the peoples in the most advanced societies today (the Anglo-Saxons, Japanese, Russians, etc.) were for thousands of years scattered in "remote cultural backwaters" while highly successful empires sprouted in what are now wretched deserts. Morris would be very contemptuous about the "bizarre mating customs, strange kinship systems, or weird ritual procedures" of his European ancestors of 2000 years ago.

Tightly blinkered
Not that he is a racist. His point is that "the characteristics that the earlier anthropologists studied in these tribes may well be the very features that have interfered with the progress of the groups concerned". But to say this is to gloss over the weak point in his argument. If the development of civilisation has been social and not biological, then why stop the clock at one point in time and say that this particular stage of society corresponds to an inborn pattern? Is it not clear, instead, that man is capable of a very wide range of cultural behaviour, and that the modern set of conventions in marriage and politics is just one of many, all equally compatible with any of man's inborn characteristics?

Not to Morris. He constantly refers to his society as "mainstream", "healthy", "go-ahead", "natural", and "typical". His reasons for this judgement are mainly two: that capitalism has the biggest population, and that "the naked ape is essentially an exploratory species." Morris is thus a typical example of an individual tightly blinkered by the capitalist system, inside which he has been brought up. It never occurs to him that his own value judgement in placing a massive population and an exploratory drive above all other considerations is itself a result of social conditioning. It would seem to him extremely "bizarre", "strange", "weird", and "typical" to judge a society by (for instance) whether its population is happy, or whether its exploratory drives are harnessed to the satisfaction of human needs. He cannot avoid recognising the danger of capitalist war:

We are, to put it mildly, in a mess, and there is a strong chance that we shall have exterminated ourselves by the end of the century.

And, as one whose mind is open to every myth and delusion in popular circulation, Morris believes that there is a danger of world "overpopulation", so it might seem surprising that he should consider a large population the primary badge of success. But he has an answer for this:

It looks very much as though, during the next century or so, we are going to have to change our sexual ways at last. But if we do, it will not be because they failed, but because they succeeded too well.
Therefore, although the 20th-century predator is a marvellous piece of work (Morris claims his approach isn't a moral one, but his strong approval shines through every page), the writer can have it both ways. We are a tremendous success because of our animal nature; our colossal failure is due to our animal nature. He has further room for manoeuvre in man's twofold origin: that of a vegetarian primate which descended from the trees and became a hunter. Anything which cannot be "explained" by man's predatory nature can of course be quietly slotted into his primate nature. Morris's strategy is to assume that all modern man's behaviour is caused by his "nature", then to look into the current theories of man's evolutionary origins for the most plausible tie-ups with his present-day activities. Naturally they can easily be found, and this approach then becomes circular, "proving" itself. Since Morris is quite good on biology, his obvious expertise in this field seems to give his elfin portrayal of society some authority. It is a widespread superstition that an expert in one field carries some weight in all fields, and Dr. Morris has exploited this to the full. Latter-day Original Sin merchant Robert Ardrey was overjoyed to find some apparently scientific support for his utterly discredited "Man the Killer" fantasies, and commented on The Naked Ape: "This spectacular book by a master scientist is what every naked ape has been waiting for."

Dislike of facts
Actually Morris is more than just a specialist who imagines the universe is part of his speciality. He, along with Ardrey and Lorenz, is part of a very definite "backlash" against social science. The problem is that modern sociology and social anthropology, even though sponsored by the capitalist state, have proved up to the hilt what socialists have long insisted: that man's most sacred institutions are not the product of his nature, but of his changing social environment. There is a very powerful and widespread dislike of this well-substantiated (and rather elementary) fact, which manifests itself in a strong appetite for the output of anyone who can undertake to "prove" the opposite. Anthony Storr wrote in the Sunday Times recently:

"One quite certain principle of sociology is that very little, if any, human behaviour is inherited". This extraordinary statement must arise from the idea that man is perfectible by altering his social institutions: a delusion to which only very old-fashioned Communists can now subscribe. We know very little about the fundamental patterns of human behaviour, but we know enough to be sure that man is not infinitely adaptable, and that we neglect biological factors at our peril.

This passage bristles with interesting details: Storr's coy recognition of the apologetic political function his views serve, the meaningless but ominous-sounding "neglect biological factors at our peril", the casual admission that "very little" is known about the subject of his heated denunciation, the unjustified use of the alarm-word "extraordinary", and amid this wordy dust-storm, the one definite statement: that man is not "infinitely adaptable", which no-one ever suggested.

Actions learned
At the risk of labouring the obvious, let us point out that all of man's behaviour results from a combination of environmental and genetic factors; that man is the most adaptable of all animals all his deliberate actions are learned; that historically and geographically societies have varied very greatly in their systems of marriage, leadership (if any), property, religion (if any), and status, and that these diversities are not due to genetic differences; that to call any of these systems innate is exactly as ridiculous as to say that the grammar of the English language is innate.
The very fact that the whole human species has spent a very brief period of time (a few centuries) in Morris's "mainstream", while it spent the vast majority of its career (many tens of thousands of years) much closer to his "remote cultural backwaters", should dispel any notion that capitalism's conventions are inborn. But on one point we agree with Morris. Capitalism is the most advanced system the world has ever seen. For our part, however, this not a moral judgement. On the contrary, capitalism appeared upon the scene drenched in blood from head to foot; it sent its hideous scourges, Jesus and VD, into all "remote cultural backwaters", as the advance guard of murder, pillage, and profit. Under capitalism, genocide has become commonplace; misery the very air we breathe. But when we say that capitalism is the most advanced social system, we mean that its potential for satisfying human needs is greater than that of any previous order. Capitalism is still a tremendously dynamic society, a society of unparalleled achievement, but of unparalleled waste and destruction also. Only Socialism can put the "exploratory urge" of capitalism to the service of human happiness. 

_The Naked Ape_ does contain some well-established facts, and some reasonable speculations (though even the zoological data cannot be entirely relied upon. Some of Morris's sweeping generalisations about sex in non-human primates are falsified by Leonard Williams's observations of woolly monkeys). Furthermore, even in 1969, many workers still have a religious, sentimental view of man, refusing to believe that everything about human beings can be explained scientifically. The book may therefore do a good job here, in stripping away mystery and confusion.

**Monkey myths**

_Violence, Monkeys and Men_ by Clare and W. M. S. Russel explains itself at the outset:

First, we have tried to show that violence is not the result of an innate propensity to aggression irrespective of conditions, but a response to stress in societies. Second, we suggest that violence is part of a complex of responses evolved to achieve drastic reduction of a population that is in danger of outgrowing its resources. Here we have the familiar Malthusian view of human violence, linked up with observations of the behaviour of overcrowded captive monkeys. The main error is the confusion of overpopulation with overcrowding. In the world today there is plenty of overcrowding but no overpopulation: the general trend is the depopulation of some areas, together with the cramming of large masses of people into gigantic cities. There is plenty of room in the world.

Overcrowding does place terrible strains on workers, leading to outbursts of violence, but these must be seen in association with all the other oppressive features of life inside capitalism. Interesting is the summary of research into monkey violence. In 1932 Zuckerman published _The Social Life of Monkeys and Apes_, based on observations of baboons in Regent's Park:
The notion of violent aggressiveness as an inherent quality of monkeys (or at least of baboons) was impressed upon a generation of scientists. By the fifties, when the crime returns from the affluent societies began to hit the headlines. the apparent results of Zuckerman's work may well have influenced a wider public, and helped to bring about the resurgence of the unconditional view of aggression. Alike in monkeys and man, it seemed, the improvement of living conditions is no guarantee against violence; aggressiveness is human nature, monkey nature, a fact of nature in the most fundamental sense. Only in recent years have researchers begun to study apes and monkeys in the wild, though they have done so with their heads full of prevailing capitalist myths about "human nature" and hence "monkey nature". These scientists have been astonished at the peaceable behaviour of wild monkeys, and at first tried to write it off as exceptional or "unusual", but they have finally had to face the unpalatable fact that healthy monkeys and apes in the wild hardly ever fight. The author's conclusion is that "all monkeys are peaceful in some conditions, and violently aggressive in others. Violence is a property of mammalian societies exposed to stress." They apply this to human beings, and refute the theory (held by Morris) that man's nature has been predominantly moulded by a wolflike hunting experience. For by far the greater part of the evolution of man's ancestors, after they came down from the trees, it would be truer to term them "scavengers" rather than "hunters". In any case, adaptation to a hunting life would not necessarily make any creatures more aggressive within their own society, Man and Monkey by Leonard Williams is a strange book: an idiosyncratic account of the author's relations with woolly monkeys, combined with a theory of history and society which is a mish-mash of undigested bits of Hegel, Freud, Nietzsche, Lorenz and, yes, Marx. Here we see again the naked ape syndrome, of mixing up half-baked, gossipy opinions with hard facts, in the hope that the latter will add some conviction to the former. A couple of samples: "We are all agreed that the fate of humanity depends on whether the strength of morality can cope with the instinctive drives of man." "History shows that aggressive races possessed more initiative and energy than their passive neighbours." Williams generally does reach opposite conclusions to those of Morris: he finds modern life profoundly unnatural.

One very clear conclusion from both Violence, Monkeys and Man and Man and Monkey is the horribly cruel treatment of our cousins the apes and monkeys, both in zoos and in the pet trade, in the interests of profit.

(September 1969)
Hippies: An abortion of Socialist Understanding

Everybody seems to think I'm lazy.
I don't mind - think they're crazy.
Running everywhere at such a speed.
Till they find there's no need . . .

Ever since the explosion of "Flower Power" in Summer 67, the world's working-class has been aware of the Hippy movement, or as it is now more frequently called, "The Underground". Attitudes to the hippies have varied from amused fascination to angry revulsion. Many people have grown more hostile to them over the past two years, as their emphasis on such harmless-sounding words as "Love" and "Beautiful People" has declined, and their tendency to smoke pot has become more widely publicised.

In Britain the occupation of 144 Piccadilly confirmed the hippies' bad reputation — though the occupiers were not typical of the Underground by any means. TV news announcers put on their frowns for this item, were careful to identify the occupation with soccer hooliganism (both were "violence to property"), and equally careful to avoid dragging in irrelevant details like the fact of empty houses alongside homeless people.

A wave of horror swept the country at the realisation that there were people who not only wore long hair (and obviously smelt foul, as anyone could see by looking at their TV screens), but actually believed they had a right to live without working. In one television programme, David Frost, Hughie Green and Robert Maxwell — those highly productive labourers who toil so usefully to justify their existence—led an attack on the hippies for their conscientious objection to work. When Richard Neville (editor of the Underground magazine *Oz*) suggested that the idea of work as a duty hadn't a very ancient historical pedigree, that work in the modern world was "really a form of slavery," and that with today's productive techniques there could easily be more than enough wealth for everyone, he was devastated by Frost's crisply intelligent retorts: "Very high-flown I'm sure" and "I really am an old fuddy-duddy you know."

**Hippy characteristics**

The hippy phenomenon is a movement, a set of attitudes, a subculture or a nuisance, according to your point of view. It consists of several hundred thousand people, drawn mostly from the working class, in the advanced regions of Capitalism. It is vaguely defined, fuzzy-edged — no one can draw up a hippy manifesto; no one can specify who is a hippy and who isn't. It differs from country to country: in America, for example, there are relatively fewer semi-hippies or weekend hippies than in Britain, for the simple reason that long hair is a much greater obstacle to getting a job in the States than in Europe. All the same, we can list some of the features which distinguish hippies from what they call "straight" society.

First, there is age — or rather, youth. Hippies are predominantly under-thirties. Second, they have an unorthodox pattern of drugs consumption — mostly pot, with occasional recourse to acid ("pot" is now common parlance for cannabis(marihuana), and acid for lysergic acid (LSD)) and minor use of amphetamines and other pills. Or as "straight" society (gaily swilling down immense quantities of alcohol, nicotine, barbiturates, aspirin, etc.) usually puts it: "Hippies take drugs." Whatever may be the medical properties of the hippies' chosen stimulants, they do have the important social property that their use is, for the time being, prohibited by the State.
Third, hippies possess a typical style of appearance: long hair, casual-to-scruffy clothes, beads, etc.
And fourth, like all minority groups they have their own language: "mind-blowing" (stimulating to the point of powerful hallucination); "hang-up" (unfortunate disturbance of tranquillity); "fuzz" (policemen), and so forth. It is a measure of the commercial cashing-in on hippies that virtually all of their jargon is very widely-known through its dissemination in pop music. Most of it was borrowed from other sources, not coined, by the hippies.
Fifth, hippies are preoccupied with certain forms of art, for example beat music accompanied by displays of coloured, flashing lights. Sixth, they aim at an inversion of the values of "straight" society. They embrace spontaneity rather than self-control; childlikeness rather than sophistication; love rather than power; "dropping-out" rather than careerism; "doing your own thing" rather than imposed uniformity; admiration for the destitute rather than for "affluence"; disorder rather than method—and of course, Indians rather than cowboys.
Seventh, hippies often show a greater than average susceptibility to superstition. They are generally against established "organised religion," but fall for all sorts of religious and mystical clap-trap which have an exotic flavour; astrology, transcendental meditation, palmistry, sunspots, or Krishna-consciousness.
Lastly, many hippies advocate a revolutionary change in society, though both the manner of achieving this, and the nature of their proposed new system, (sometimes described as "tribal" or "communitarian") are extremely vague. An example of this vagueness was the slogan advanced in one Underground paper: "Alternative Society Now!"—its urgent tone somewhat cancelled out by the woolliness of its descriptive content, which could scarcely be less informative. At least many hippies are clear that the major social evils of today are all bound up together, and can be removed only by a total social change. Both of the important politically-oriented offshoots of the hippy movement, the Diggers and the Yippies, make specifically Socialist proposals, such as the abolition of wages and of money. In our opinion, both these groups are doomed to futility because of their methods, but they do constitute an advance on the previously fashionable assortments of youthful radicals. This groping towards Socialist understanding is particularly impressive when set against the temporary direction of trendy Leftism in the US: flirting with black racism, romantic idolising of Guevara and similar state-capitalist prophets, or the demagoguery and vanguardism the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS).

Causes of hippies
The Socialist argument that the majority of workers must arrive at a clear understanding of Socialism before they can get it, that a Revolution in ideas must precede the Revolution in politics and economics, is often sneered at by those who say that the mass of the population (except, for some reason, the extraordinary people who make this statement) are brainwashed robots, puppets manipulated by TV, and the press.
But Capitalism is not a conspiracy. It cannot be controlled by set of individuals, not even the Capitalist class. Current ideas provide a support for capitalism (though the "mass media" are only a part of their reinforcement), yet Capitalism is dynamic, constantly advancing and frequently unpredictable in detail. The very ideas which defend capitalism have to be adjusted or replaced, to fit new conditions. Workers must be trained, not only to do their jobs, but also to be versatile, because their jobs are changing all the time, and also to make radical criticisms of the way capitalism is run, because otherwise inefficient and unprofitable blunders would result. As the Communist Manifesto put it:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production . . . All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their trains of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned . . .
Today, traditional ideas about work, leisure and "the purpose of life" are under attack, and in retreat. Capitalism has killed God stone dead, and is stamping on the twitching corpse. Capitalism extends the juicy carrot of the "Leisure Society"—a golden age of short working-hours and automated abundance, which is ever imminent yet never arrives. Capitalism holds aloft an image of glamour, high-powered pleasure, rest and freedom—whilst the worker's mind and body are reduced ever more thoroughly to instruments of accumulation. From the belief that work is a grim duty, consumption its reward, capitalism is shifting emphasis to the view that consumption is a duty, work something to be made rewarding.

It is in this context of irresistible change that confused vortices of rebellion like hippyism must be seen. The hippy movement has been centred in California—the most technically advanced region of the world, the window on the future. That is not an accident: it is just what Socialists and historical materialists have predicted. The embryo of Socialist ideas is constantly gestating in the womb of advanced capitalism: the foetus is aborted repeatedly, but the fertility of working-class consciousness cannot be lost, and the insemination of Socialist organisation must grow more copious. The hippy movement is one of those abortions.

Hippies are a product of the youth cult, the commercialisation of young people and the "generation gap." But this gap is not only a construct of the publicity men: the new generation does live and think differently from its elders. Many of the things our fathers and mothers were grateful for (and that is a measure of the servile depths to which the working-class has sunk), we take for granted. Young people in the advanced countries have never been brought to heel by a major slump, nor by a war at home. Their standard of consumption has generally risen steadily throughout their lives, and they confidently expect it to go on doing so indefinitely. Given this outlook, mere technical progress and fatter wage packets lose their capacity to impress. Young workers are more likely to ask "What's it all for, this endless treadmill? When do we start to live?"

The rapid dissemination of hippyism throughout the advanced world is a consequence of the similarity of conditions in these counties, plus the globe-shrinking communications network: any fad, fashion, doctrine or cult, once it has popped up in one nation is almost instantly mirrored in all. This buttresses our case that the notion of a Socialist revolution in a single country is ludicrous. The hippies' deliberate irrationality, and their earlier Love worship, are a protest against "straight" reasonableness and logic. (In fact the very term "straight," like the archaic "square" reveals this). Capitalism manifests very thorough rationality in the service of inactive irrationality—scientific means to insane ends. Those who don't understand capitalism's structure often find its "logic" oppressive, and retreat into gooey, mindless sentimentality. This is a very common modern theme, exemplified in things like Godard's early films, such as *Alphaville*. 
Mysticism is favoured by a reaction against modern institutional Christianity, seen as a cover for the "straight" virtues of ambition and conformity, and mysticism links up with drug-induced hallucinations which provide escape from an aimless and insecure reality. It is romantically pretty, a source of poetry, in attempt to give back to life a lost "depth," and in its imported forms it has the flavour of more primitive societies in which alternatives to the score-card mentality of "straight" achievement compulsion can be found.

The hippy movement is now virtually finished. Certain aspects—the dress, the jargon, the music—are steadily incorporated into a much broader and less rebellious area of commercial youth culture. "The Underground", always a term with a more political slant, becomes infiltrated by Leftist reformists and insurrectionaries. It is to be hoped they will learn something from the Underground, for they have little to teach it. A feeling of community, and a common set of values, will persist among those who smoke pot (and therefore dislike policemen), but this becomes vaguer as the habit spreads. The really important question of future movements, perhaps partly hippy-derived, perhaps bigger, perhaps more explicitly antagonistic to the economic system.

Criticism of hippies

A few young workers, whose anti-Capitalist tendencies were initially stirred by the Underground have progressed in their understanding to the point of embracing revolutionary Socialism, and joining the Socialist Party of Great Britain. But much more could have been accomplished if there had existed a bigger Socialist movement with the resources to put its case more loudly. As it is, a potentially fruitful upsurge of critical and anti-authoritarian idea has in the main been diverted into reformism, anarchism and mysticism.

The hippies' emphasis on a style instead of a programme, whilst in many ways endearing, and possessing an obvious advantage for propaganda, is a grave obstacle to their progress in understanding. Distinctions of dress, hairstyle and musical taste are, after all, fairly trivial—and many hippies come dangerously close to regarding them as fetishes. Flickering lights, a psychedelic design, a whiff of incense, a Clapton guitar phrase—such things can be combined into a powerfully unified appeal to all the senses, yet Capitalist society has no difficulty in prostituting this as it prostitute all art and all enjoyment. Whereupon the market, having squeezed the Underground dry, moves on to the next short-lived modish fad. As Wilde put it, the trouble being very modern is that you become old-fashioned very quickly.

One of these Bolshevik reactionaries, D. Widgery, recently remonstrated with the Underground, via the columns of IT (Oct. 10): 'IT would still be publishing its twee pop-star interviews two months after workers' soviets were declared on Merseyside and Clydeside.' Widgery's delusional system is so fantastic that he imagines an administrative apparatus which was a symptom of Russian backwardness half a century ago has some relevance to the working-class problems in the 1970s! Notice how his two chosen regions are centres for manual workers, that proportionately declining section (soon to be a minority) of the working class - a section which the Bolsheviks invest with unlimited Romantic potential. Compared to the fairytale world of the Bolsheviks, Tolkien's fables are scientific sociology, twee pop-star interviews the last word in revolutionary politics!
With the first, naive realisation that a new society is necessary, three elementary errors are committed in turn. First, it is supposed that the adoption of attitudes appropriate to the desired society will bring it closer—hence the "Love" phase. This is quickly seen to be largely unsuccessful, since the conditions of the present system generate completely opposed attitudes. To the extent that it is successful it merely helps to reconcile people to the existing state of affairs. The next stage is to go beyond mere attitudes, to try and act as though the new society were already here. This is like trying to get out of a prison by ignoring the bars, and equally futile. After this, attempts are at last made to overhaul the system, but only piecemeal, by changing bits at a time. However the nature of the bits is mainly determined by the nature of the whole, not vice versa—as student militants are among the most recent to discover. Thus, what started out as something really radical, and in its implications revolutionary, has been shepherded back into the fold of orthodox reformist politics. Only clarity of thought, and courage in the face of the jeers about "sectarianism" which are always hurled at revolutionaries, can break out of this vicious circle.

Now the Underground veers between two courses of action: assaults on Capitalism and attempted withdrawal from it: respectively symbolised by the occupation of 144 Piccadilly, and the move to Saint Patrick's Isle. But Capitalism will not fall before sporadic demonstrations and happenings, however defiant or amusing these may be. Neither will it let anyone drop out.

It may be argued in defence of the Underground that this is the age of exploration rather than of Principles, and that there is much value in looseness, informality, and even incoherence. But exploration is worthwhile only if it leads to discovery, looseness if it leads to firmness, informality if it leads to definable formal organisation, and incoherence if out of it emerges a new coherence. The Underground is incapable of making these advances because, though often expert at dramatising its criticism of "straight" society, it seems quite incapable of criticising itself.

Hippies then, are only the symptoms of a sick society: Socialists the cure. Yet to those workers infuriated by the hippy way of life, we say: Don't look for scapegoats. A few "spongers" are nothing compared to the vast wastage of Capitalism: the arms/space race, built-in shoddiness, the unnecessary monetary system, the "sponging" of the owners of industry. To blame hippies (students, immigrants, unofficial strikers) for your troubles is to lose sight of the actual cause—which is precisely what your masters the capitalists want. Anyway, the view that people ought to work to "earn" their subsistence is out-of-date in a world which could easily provide more than enough for everybody, with a tiny fraction of the work done today. Everything should be free; all work should be voluntary—that is Socialism.

To hippies themselves, we say: Pulling faces at Capitalism is not enough. Even talking about "tribal" alternatives is not enough. An uncompromising stand on Socialist Principles is required before we can start to bring about the new moneyless world society.

(December 1969)
Up in arms

If the success of a movement is to be judged by the amount of popular misconception about it, then Women's Liberation Movement have almost won. Discontented women have traditionally been a target for lewd contempt from gentlemen, and any dissatisfaction with their social conditions is often treated as a projection of sexual frustrations. Thus any woman who has ambitions above being a shorthand typist at work, a housewife at home, or a sexual vehicle in bed, is liable to be dismissed as a shrivelled spinster, or a hairy lesbian, or at any rate someone in need of a good, cleansing orgasm.

It was this sort of contempt which gave such licence for the maltreatment of the Suffragettes, who could be kicked and punched and mauled by the police and subjected, by the gentlemen of London, to such indignation as would under other circumstances have earned a court appearance for indecent assault. When the last Miss World contest was disrupted by a few Women's Lib members Bob Hope, who is not a famous anthropologist or psychiatrist or sociologist, but who was earning a few bucks as compere to the flesh parade, could attribute the incident to the only possible cause that the demonstrators were junkies. Of course, Hope was in trouble; his gag writers had not supplied him with material for such an eventuality.

So how frightening are Women's Lib? Trembling, the SOCIALIST STANDARD went along to one of their meetings—apart part from one very old man the only unaccompanied male in the room. We looked around but found none of the obvious lesbians we had been promised. There were very few unmarried girls there and one of them was in any case a schoolgirl. What there were at the meeting were plenty of trendy young wives and mothers—articulate, angry and, since they think they are suppressed, underprivileged and exploited (as indeed they are, but more of that later) rather obsessive.

It was an amateurish affair—conspicuously so, with the projector not working and when it did the picture went far enough off the screen to make it difficult to follow. The speakers were stuck on their inferior status as wage slaves and what was billed as an open forum soon dissolved into several shy discussion groups. The girls served tea and biscuits. The one professional touch was a table flogging contraception— pamphlets, models, devices, posters—which was what the meeting was supposed to be about.

This amateurishness contrasted with the movement's professional techniques in other activities. They have, for example, shown how to get quick, plentiful publicity; their protests are thoughtfully aimed (the Miss World rumpus, and the project to rewrite fairy stories, were little short of strokes of genius) and the posters and handbills advertising their national demonstration last month were good professional jobs.

Whatever criticism we may have of them, Women's Lib represents an impetus to the glacial movement of ideas. It is impossible not to agree with some of their attitudes. We must all feel sick at the commercial exploitation of sexual appeal and it says a lot about capitalist society and women's position in it that this exploitation is so often a women's sexuality and not a man's. Who can say that they were wrong about Miss World? One of the demonstrators there later wrote in their magazine Shrew of what she had said, amid the uproar, to three of the beauty queens:
I managed to say we weren't against them we were for them, but against Mecca and their exploitation. "Come on, Miss Venezuela, we're on" and the trio disappeared down the corridor.

The relevance of Women's Lib is that, although their ideas are by no means original, one of the prejudices which must disappear as property society is ended is the one which says that some human beings are by virtue of their sex doomed to a lower, less privileged social position. In spite of all the changes since the New Women were pilloried as mannish ogres, that prejudice is still in existence in one form or another. At present most women are as ready to accept their lower standing as most men are to impose it upon them. Perhaps, if they begin to question their position, they will become that much readier for the idea that privilege based upon property rights is even more noxious—and more fundamental.

Women's Lib can produce a forest of statistics to support their case that women are deprived and suppressed. In October 1969 the average earnings of women in full time employment were 47 per cent those of men—and the gap is widening. Women get the worst, most boring and repetitive jobs. If they have children they are doomed to spend years with their heads in the nappy pail while their husbands are out in the big, exciting world of wage slavery. Ask them why they are so worked up about getting onto the same level of employee exploitation as their husbands and they point out that their economic standing conditions their social position.

But here they do not adequately meet the point. The present arrangement exists not because of any prejudice against women; rather it is the other way round. The priorities of capitalism have made the prejudices which, once they exist, are themselves a priority; little girls are given dolls and frilly clothes to condition them to accept the prejudices and the whole thing soon becomes a profitable field in its own right. When they grow up, the little girls are excluded from some jobs not because of their sex but because from the employers' point of view it is a better prospect to employ men. Recently, for example, British European Airways stated that it is not their policy to take on women pilots, no matter how qualified or experienced they are. A Tory MP complained about this discrimination but got the point of it:

... a girl may get married and pregnant—or the other way round—and the airline would lose an investment of £10,000.

Although most of the jobs which are closed, or restricted, for women are not that costly, the MP was making a fair statement of the sound, solid, sensible reasons which capitalism has for its discrimination in employment, whether against women or mental defectives or cripples—or even against wholesome men who have simply tended to change their employer more than average. We—men and women—are here up against the fact that workers are not employed as a favour to them or as an act of natural justice. They are employed with the idea of producing surplus value for their masters. There is a distinct risk that a woman who has had an expensive training will fail to produce the surplus value and will produce babies instead.

Women's Lib's answer is to make the training and the employment profitable; they campaign for free abortion and contraception on demand, and for free 24 hour nurseries so that a woman who has a baby will not be out of work for too long. Like all other reformers, they accept the cause of a problem while rejecting its effects. And what does this mean for their dignity? What does it mean, that a woman should have an abortion to keep a well paid job?
Again, why do Women's Lib go for problems which are experienced only by working class women and say that these are women's problems rather than working class ones? No female member of the capitalist class has to worry about the effect of childbirth on her earning capacity. She can have as many children as she likes and, since she can afford a 24 hour nursery all to herself, she can also carry on an interesting, rewarding occupation. Such women do not have to wait for the Pill for their sexual freedom; expensive medical attention took care of that along with everything else. Women's Lib are tackling problems which will end only when the working class end, when class society is finished.

In the meantime, they do their cause no service by obscuring the facts about their place in capitalism. It is not surprising that this leads them into mysticism of the most confusing kind. One old American Suffragist, Alice Paul, recently said:

> It's hard to find a woman who's not for peace. The most fundamental way to work for peace is to work for power for women. (Life magazine).

Perhaps she has never heard of Golda Meir. Or perhaps never read Women's Lib declarations that they support the "... national liberation struggles in Palestine or Vietnam", partly because "... all women are sisters and wherever they're fighting we're behind them" and partly because of "... an analogy between our own oppression as women and that of peoples oppressed as nations."

It does not need a very practised political eye to discern here the signs of some busy boring from within. It shows through even the mysticism. Women's Lib say they stand for the "transformation of society" although confessing to be "... essentially heterogeneous, incorporating ... a wide range of opinions and plans for action". It seems that some monotonously familiar opinions and plans are at work within the movement and it is not difficult to guess what these elements mean when they talk about transforming society.

The aims of the women's Liberation Movement—a free association between men and women, pure of the contaminations of capitalist society—can be attained only when capitalism is no more. Conditioned as we are to capitalism's degradations, it is difficult to imagine what the freedom of socialism will be like. How it will feel, for a woman and a man to associate only because they like and respect each other. How it will be when sexual activity is not a matter of conquest and possession, not a suppressive neurosis too easily exploited to sell cars, hair sprays, washing machines, suitcases, toothpaste, politicians—but a pleasure. To reach that we need all of us to be conscious of our role in society and the reasons for it. From there we will not be far from the will to change our roles by changing society.

**Shadow of a gunman—The Irish Republican Army**

Sinn Fein was formed in 1905 and its numerous political utterances between then and the establishment of Partition leave no doubt that it represented the interests of the rising capitalist class in the South of Ireland in their struggle to achieve political autonomy in order to legislate political conditions suitable to the growth of a fledgling capitalism.

The Sinn Fein Policy Statement of 1917 summarised the utterances and actions of the organisation over the previous twelve years and made nonsense of the noble-sounding sentiments expressed by Pearse on the steps of the GPO in Dublin in 1916. The capitalist class of every country when they are striving for power pay lip-service to noble sentiments in order to rally the working class in support of their struggle and the honeyed phrases of the Declaration of the Irish Republic, with its generalisations about the Irish Nation being the property of the Irish people, were a far cry from the practical economic aspirations of the native capitalists, expressed in Sinn Fein's Policy Statement:
No possibility would be left as far as Sinn Fein were concerned for a syndicate of unscrupulous English capitalists to crush out the *Home Manufacturer and the Home Trader* (Our italics).

Despite the play with words, "English capitalists" as opposed to "Home Manufacturer", there can be no doubt about Sinn Fein's meaning: they stood for protection of the native capitalists from the competition of "foreign" capitalists. Indeed the Policy statement spells it out:

> Protection means rendering the native manufacturer equal to meet foreign competition. If a manufacturer cannot produce as cheaply as an English or other foreigner only because his foreign competitor has larger resources at his disposal, then it is the first duty of the Irish Nation to accord protection to that Irish manufacturer.

This is what it was all about then! This was the bitter reality of the poet's songs, the patriot's dreams, the worker's sacrifices; this was the prize for heroism, sacrifice, murder and counter-murder, bitterness and division. The promised pot of gold at the end of the patriotic rainbow was for the Irish "manufacturer" and the "home trader"; for the worker the only gold was on his new badge of slavery, the national flag that was to adorn his poverty, fly over his slum and replace the Union Jack as a symbol of his political ignorance.

And it could not have been otherwise. Despite the heady romantics of Pearse and the phrase-mongering of James Connolly the political and economic conditions that then prevailed excluded completely the possibility of an alternative to capitalism. The purpose of the struggle was, and could only have been the political stewardship of that system; the flag that symbolised the claim of the native capitalists bore as little relevance to the problems of the working class then, as it does today.

National struggles, especially when they are waged by the very weak against the very strong, are always seen in a romantic light. They are the material for songs and romantic novels and the new masters that emerge from such struggles are not adverse to the fictions and heroics which later purport to be history—"history" which becomes an important ingredient in the fog of ignorance essential in the exploitation of the "nation's" working class.

Our purpose here is not to deny the bravery and self-sacrificing of those who contributed these qualities in the so-called fight for freedom. Such qualities were not the preserve of one side in the struggle—they are to be found in the unfortunate combatants of any war; often, sadly, they are to be found in inverse ratio to the amount of reasoned political thought on the part of their contributors.

Our object is to show that whatever the ideas, or lack of ideas, of the membership of the Sinn Fein movement and its militant arm, the IRA, the only thing they could have achieved—and its achievement was consciously desired by the political leadership of the movement—was the maintenance of the same old failed system of capitalism out of which all working class problems arise. This was true of the IRA yesterday; it is equally true today.
If we leave aside the romantics and "principles" and get down to the facts of working class life, now or in the Twenties, it will be seen that the problems that affected the working class in Ireland under English rule were similar to the problems of the working class throughout the world of capitalism. The facts of working class life were (and since the Six Day War, namely the memory of those are!) poverty, insecurity, unemployment, homelessness, slums, as well as the violent contention, war and violence which form an inevitable sackcloth to such conditions and the economic circumstances in which they arise. These miseries did not originate in "foreign" rule any more than they can be assuaged or eradicated by "home" rule. The French, English, German or Russian worker under his "own" government, lived with these problems in the same way as the Irish worker or the Indian worker, living under a "foreign" government.

In a word, the problems of the working class in Ireland were, and remain, the problems of the working class of the world and originate in the class stratification of capitalist society. Given capitalism, these problems were inevitable; they could not then, no more than they can now, be "planned" out of the system. They did not arise out of the "evil" intentions, nor the blundering or stupidity of governments, "home" or "foreign", no more than they could be planned, prayed or fought away by brave, sincere or wise men. They were the facts of capitalism and would continue to exist for as long as the working class, the only class with an economic interest in bringing about a real change, accepted that system.

In Ireland at the turn of the century the leaders of Sinn Fein were, as we have seen, concerned with the sectional interests of the rising Irish capitalist class. They did not take issue with the fact that the system of capitalism promoted by the dominant British capitalist class resulted in poverty and misery for the working class and small farmers in Ireland—and England. Their concern was not at the fact of exploitation but rather at the identity of the exploiters—at the fact that "English manufacturers (were) squeezing out their less-powerful Irish rivals". Sinn Fein's was not a cry from the heart at the plight of the people of Ireland but a protest from the pocket of the new bandit against the fact that the older, more resourceful bandit was not giving him a "fair" opportunity to carry out his plunder.

But the fledgling native capitalists were not themselves capable of changing the political conditions that thwarted their exploitative function. They needed the battalions of the working class behind them to give point to their argument but to rally the working class they had to appeal to working class interests by falsely identifying the plight of the working class with the rule of the foreign capitalists.

In 1905 Sinn Fein's demands were limited to the idea of Ireland having such measure of political control as would allow for the restriction of foreign, mainly British competition in order that Irish capitalism could develop behind tariff walls and a quota system of imports. This was to be within the framework of an Ireland "hereditary to the (British) Crown . . . with King, Lords and Commons for Ireland". Such evident selfseeking on the part of native capitalism was not especially conducive to this task of rallying the workers and this, along with the declining value of the system of Empire Preference, turned the Party's propaganda increasingly towards the idea of complete separatism that it had engendered in its militant wing.

Predictably, propaganda by deed took over and the Irish Republican Army evolved into an effective weapon waging war on the forces of British capitalism in Ireland.
The IRA was composed mainly of young workers and farmers largely unaware of the economic pressures that had given rise to the struggle. They were "fighting for Ireland"! Ireland was an abstraction, a vision, a "principle"; Ireland was the opposite of what they knew and lived with, but then they did not know that all that was hateful in the Ireland they knew was the product of centuries of class rule culminated now in the harsher vulgarities of capitalism and all that was possible for the Ireland of their vision was a continuation of the same old miseries. The law would remain to enshrine the right of one class to exploit another even if the immediate enforcers of that Law wore different uniforms. Only a flag would be changed.

When the needs of the native capitalists had been served in the treaty of 1921 the capitalist class were satisfied. For them it was a matter of regret that some sections of the IRA did not see in the establishment of conditions compatible with the economic needs of capitalism the fulfilment of their vision and if that vision—largely compounded of romanticism, heroics and a sense of comradeship—impelled such sections of the IRA to the continuance of the struggle, then it was to be put down with all the viciousness at the command of the new forces of "law and order".

The IRA had fulfilled its purpose; it had served the class interests of Irish capitalism and by its very nature, apart from its lofty and ill-defined notions of "freedom", it could not have done otherwise. After the Civil War and the desertion of its leadership to the more mundane and profitable offices of capitalism such fragments as continued to exist deteriorated into a political gang that canalised the genuine discontent and revolutionary fervour of some sections of the working class, North and South, into the dream of a tomorrow that was bit the pale reflection of the sad ghosts of yesterday. During the decades that have passed the principal and tragic preoccupation of the IRA has been the useless sacrifice of the lives of young Irish workers on the altar of romanticism. Many of its members have been killed by the forces of "law and order" it helped to create in the South. Still more have died in futile adventurism in the North and thousands of young workers have spent the best years of their lives in jails in both parts of Ireland.

Inevitably years of stagnation and infiltration by informers and police spies have brought their toll of viciousness, intimidation and death within the organisation. The counter-espionage activities of police agents have at different times caused havoc and leaks in the form of young men's bodies have often been plugged with lead after arbitrary conviction by drum-head court martial. In the early Forties, after a senseless bombing campaign in England, the "major leak" scare ran rife in the movement; after numerous bullets and some tar-and-feathers had failed to stop the stream of information to the authorities the IRA discovered that the movement's own chief-of-staff was an informer!

Possibly the only positive role played by the IRA since the Civil War was that ascribed to it by the Unionist Party—and that mainly falsely. No Unionist politician ever faced an election without discovering an IRA plot. At different times throughout the last four decades the IRA was largely a figment of the imagination of the Stormont Government—in the mid-Forties the organisation could not have mustered a platoon of volunteers in the City of Belfast—but it was a useful device for stampeding those workers who were tempted to stray from the paths of Unionism. It was an almost farcical reciprocity: the Unionist Party created the conditions in which the IRA continued its tenuous existence; the IRA helped to maintain a political climate in Northern Ireland conducive to the continuance of Unionist rule.

What has it all been for . . . the tragic deaths, the beatings, the imprisonments? "For Ireland", answers the mocking voice of yesterday.
But there are two Irelands: there is the Ireland of the capitalist class which is doing quite nicely for itself and has no need for, nor interest in, the IRA; and there is the Ireland of the working class. What do they, the working class, owe the IRA? North and South for nearly six decades now members of the working class have contributed their blood in the cause of "Mother Ireland"—and yet their problems remain. If it is accepted that these problems have their roots in capitalism and will disappear only when the alternative to capitalism, Socialism, becomes the system of social organisation then it must be recognised that the IRA have played their part in thwarting the essential unity of the working class, rendering division within the working class more deep and waylaying the working class into the blind alley of nationalism.

The organisation has declined in strength since 1922 but since then its real menace has mainly been to its own members. But the situation following on the rioting in Northern Ireland has given the IRA a new lease of life and it is true to say that from the point of view of the working class it now constitutes a dangerous ingredient in the Irish situation.

In the years following the collapse of the IRA's last military activities in the late Fifties a growing section within the movement began to promote the ideas of constitutional political action along the now-fashionable "left-wing" lines. Inevitably the latter-day ideas of one of Republicanism's patron Saints, James Connolly, began to take greater prominence in the thinking of the leadership and, just as inevitably, the nationalistic state-capitalist implications of these ideas has led the movement in the direction of the "Communist" Party.

The events in Northern Ireland since 1968 caused a split in the ranks of the IRA but while the immediate problems posed by the troubles in the North may have triggered off this split it was the growing influence of Leninist ideas within the movement, and the effect these had on dividing the IRA's reaction to events in the North, that formed the core of the division.

The breakaway element, or "Provisionals", as they have come to be known, were led by those who resented the growing influence of "Communist" ideas in the organisation. Not only did such people feel that politics was an irrelevancy within the context of the Republican ideal of a thirty-two county Irish republic but the new political bias in the movement clashed with their Catholicism. When the Catholics of the North were under attack such elements saw the defence of their fellow-Catholics as an immediate priority and when this course was resisted by the official leadership the long-brewing dissension and division came into the open.

The result is that there are now two IRA's in Ireland and to confuse matters still more the "official" group, that has moved away from the uncomplicated formula of a Republic, and now pursue a contradiction-in-terms which they refer to as a "Socialist Workers' Republic", are known as the "Traditional IRA" while the breakaway group still espouse the traditional cause—even if they are, at least in the troubled areas of Belfast, a mere anti-Protestant counterpart of the Ulster Volunteer Force.

The "Provisionals", in an attempt to maintain their claim to the title IRA are beginning to refer to the other group as the National Liberation Front—a title which demonstrates not only the real differences that led up to the split but also places the "traditionals", in the view of their erstwhile ex-comrades, in the position of stooges for the "Communist" Party.

Members of the working class, whether in the IRA or lending support to that organisation should realise that Nationalism is the tool of capitalism. The working class have no country—they have the choice of enduring the miseries of capitalism within the confines of national frontiers or enjoying freedom in a Socialist World.

(January 1971)
The end of "full employment"?

Unemployment has been increasing continuously for five years. It was increasing under the Wilson Labour government and the rate of increase has accelerated under the Tories. At first it was noticed that the monthly figures were higher than they had been a year earlier; then they had reached levels which were a record for seven, eight, nine and ten years; and when unemployment passed the 900,000 mark in August, this represented the highest total for thirty years—back to the beginning of the war. Normally unemployment is expected to rise in winter and fall in summer. This summer the fall did not take place. The September figure was 280,000 more than in January and about 560,000 above September 1966. It may well reach the million mark this winter. Every industry has been affected—private and nationalised, old and new. No section of the workers has escaped and some of the most heavily hit have been the clerical, technical and managerial. Many who have lost their jobs have little prospect of ever getting work again at their old rates of pay.

This is not the first time since the war that unemployment has reached peak levels, but the peaks go higher. In the four years 1947, 1958, 1959 and 1962 the average for the whole year just exceeded 500,000. In 1963 and 1967-9 it was about 600,000. In 1970 640,000 and for 1971 it is likely to come out at 850,000. Of course it will drop back again sometime as markets and production pick up but there are signs that it will run in future years at levels considerably higher than it was in the nineteen fifties and early nineteen sixties, when the annual average was usually below 400,000 and often below 300,000.

One new factor is that employers' expectations about quick recovery have been undermined by the long duration of the present recession. In earlier setbacks employers expected a quick recovery with a return of labour shortage, and were often prepared to keep surplus staff on in slack times; now it has become the practice to get rid of "redundant" workers immediately.

Why was unemployment relatively low in the early post-war years? Why is it rising now? and what will happen in the future?

Many politicians and economists have had a ready answer. They believed that governments have almost complete control of the situation and can make unemployment as high or low as they choose. This assumed control was not claimed to be total—it would not eliminate small up and down fluctuations and it might take a few months to be effective. In 1957 Professor A. C. L. Day in his *The Economics of Money*, discussing the pre-1914 ten year cycle of boom and depression, wrote:

> It may now have been mastered as a result of the insight into economic processes which has been acquired in the last generation.

Even more confidence in what the government can do was expressed in the *Sunday Times* (24/5/70) when their contributor Malcolm Crawford wrote that American bankers "know that the government can stop a recession of any magnitude, nowadays, at about six months notice", and that the steps already taken by the American government were "enough to stop the recession". (Since then Nixon has had two or three more goes "to stop the recession", but it still persists). The economic backwoodsmen of the TUC still firmly believe in this assumed power of governments.
Naturally, therefore, those economists and politicians regarded the low level of unemployment which lasted for about fifteen years after the war as proof positive that they were right in believing that Keynesian methods had changed the nature of capitalism and that serious unemployment need never be feared again.

The explanation was too simple. From the start it had one major flaw, for the same Keynesian methods were also supposed to keep prices more or less stable and not even the most zealous believer can regard the rise of prices since 1938 to a level four and a half times what it was as price stability. And now they have to explain why the Labour government before 1970 and the Tory government since 1970 could not prevent unemployment rising to levels both say are too high.

The odd thing is that though they claimed to be Keynesians they hadn't even got Keynes on their side for he didn't believe it possible to keep unemployment down to two per cent or less, which it was in those years. When Lord Beveridge hoped that, taking the good and bad years together, they could keep unemployment to an average of three per cent, Keynes dissented on the ground that Beveridge was too optimistic. Keynes did not state how much above three per cent he thought it should be but if we assume only three and a half per cent as an average, this would mean a range of, say, two and a half per cent to four and a half per cent. This would mean unemployment ranging from about 600,000 to 1,100,000. So present unemployment is Keynes' "Full Employment".

It is interesting to note that in America, where Democratic Presidents have from time to time been said to be operating on Keynesian lines (and Nixon suddenly announced in January that he too had been converted) unemployment in May was at a nine year record level of 6.2 per cent, and Nixon's Chief Economic spokesman John Connally admitted in a moment of candour that, except in war-time, it has never been below four per cent (Financial Times, 8/7/71). In Britain four per cent would be about a million.

An examination of the causes of low post-war unemployment in Britain was made by Professor R. C. O. Matthews, himself broadly a supporter of Keynes, and published in the Economic Journal (September 1968). His conclusion was that, starting with the stimulus given by making good war damage of all kinds, a major cause was a prolonged investment boom and that "the decline of unemployment as compared with 1914 is to a large extent not a Keynesian phenomenon at all".

On a comparative basis he estimated pre-1914 unemployment at 4.5 per cent and that from 1945 to 1967 at 1.8 per cent. He expected this situation to continue, but the doubling of unemployment since 1967 has already destroyed the basis for that optimism. On one point in particular Matthews has been proved wrong. He thought that the greater job-security of the post-war years, due to employers retaining surplus workers in slack periods, would continue, but this is no longer true as the hundreds of thousands of redundancies show.

The fact is that some British industries have been losing ground and failing to keep up with the expansion of world markets. Better equipped, more efficient rivals in Japan, Germany and elsewhere have been undercutting British (and latterly also American) companies. The two devaluations of 1949 and 1967 delayed, but did not stop, this drift.

Belief in the ability of any government to secure "full employment" at will soon came up against a complication. The 1945 Attlee government (followed by Tory governments) discovered, as Marx or even Keynes could have told them, that when unemployment is very low the workers are in a better position to push up wages and this combines with other boom developments to cut into profit margins; which in turn discourages capitalist plans to expand industry. So the governments applied their "incomes policies" to keep wages down. It never succeeded for long. The Heath government came in with its alternative, of encouraging employers to show tougher resistance to wage claims, and warning them that if they could not pay their way they must no longer count on the government bailing out "lame ducks"—which also adds to unemployment.
If we disregard the possibility of another world depression like that of the nineteen thirties, present indications are that the years ahead will see more unemployment in Britain, coming nearer to the pre-1914 average of four and a half per cent. But the myth of "full employment" will die hard. The Labour Party and trade unions will go on pursuing it, for—not being Socialist—what else have they to offer?

(November 1971)
Anti-affluence: the debt-ridden society

Writing to the newspapers in protest against the receipt of unsolicited credit cards is an honourable as well as a popular occupation. Implicit in the nuisance is a degree of social flattery: those selected to be pestered in this way are the cream of shopping customers, whose bills are paid promptly and whose credit is worthy. There has been no stream of complaints and Questions in the House from the scores of thousands who, ask as they may, will get no credit cards or hire-purchase terms. These are the sometime defaulters whose failures, and a great deal more about them, are recorded in the finance companies’ registers of debtors.

Once in those files, you never come out. Capitalism drives and presses us all to buy to the limits of our means, and offers devices by which those limits may be apparently stretched. But the pressure must never be yielded-to by an inch beyond the limits. The point of marketing, after all, is not that goods shall be distributed but that they be paid for. He who, lured and compelled by deferred terms or slashed deposits or simple needs, fails to meet his money commitment is as far as possible prevented for the future from buying on those terms again. Morally condemned as well, for violating the golden capitalist rule that everything has its price.

Recording and Collecting

There are about 3 million registered defaulters in Britain. The most common ways of getting listed are by irregularity or failure in payments to one of the companies which finance trading credit, and through a County Court judgement. It does not follow, however, that the absence of such a record means credit granted automatically. An application for hire-purchase or the opening of an account always means an enquiry being made. One widespread practice is to send forms to local officials likely to know something about the applicant, asking for an estimate of what he is worth and any useful information regarding him. The car-finance companies keep detailed records in which procrastination over payments is noted for future reference, even if there is no actual failure to pay.

When a debt occurs, the usual first step is a warning letter—from the legal department if the firm is big enough, from a solicitor if it is not. Some traders employ debt-recovery agencies, which work on a percentage of money collected and aim, generally, to scare or embarrass the defaulter into paying up. One technique is to send a notice on blue paper, looking remarkably like a summons, with words like “Bailiff”, “Distrain on Your Goods”, “Appear in Court”, etc., printed in capitals and underlined. In other cases, collectors call on the debtor repeatedly and make themselves objectionable. No doubt there are laws against much of what goes on, but a debtor is likely to feel he is hardly in a position to shout. Car-finance firms, for instance, are known to employ men who stand on defaulters’ doorsteps jingling keys and announcing their intention to take the car away—despite the fact that this cannot be done without a court order.

Penalties

If all the threatening is ineffective, a summons follows. There are two kinds, the common one being the default summons. No-one goes to court over it: the defendant has ten days to settle his debt, dispute it, or offer to pay by instalments. If he fails to do any of those, a judgement summons (the other sort) is served; he must attend the court to answer questions about his means, and the normal outcome is an instalment order. And if the instalments are not paid, a “warrant of execution” is issued for each as its due date passes. This is simply a distraint order—the County Court bailiffs call and arrange to take enough belongings to cover the amount owed plus the Court costs. The costs are standard fees charged at each step in the proceedings, so that the repayment of a debt in these last-resort circumstances is itself an extra expense.

Until a year ago debtors could be imprisoned instead of distrained upon, by order of the court. The purpose of “committal orders” was to deal with people who supposedly could pay but were reluctant to do so. However, County Court judges were in the habit of making the orders almost automatically, and an impoverished defaulter was liable to be hauled to prison by the bailiff. What good was thought to be done by it, no-one knows; though its abolition aimed at reducing the pressures on prison resources, not at sense or humanity. Imprisonment orders are still made for one common class of debts, non-payment of rates to local councils. Since rates are levied under statute law, defaulters over them are summoned not to the civil courts but to magistrates’ courts which continue to make committal orders.

Hard Cash
One other course of action against a debtor is the High Court writ. This is more attractive to creditors than County Court proceedings because the outcome is swifter and more relentless. The debtor has ten days following the service of the writ to file an “appearance”. Unless he has (and is prepared to pay for) a defence, the plaintiff may then “take judgement”. The High Court does not deal in instalment plans, and very shortly after the judgement the debtor will be called-on by a Sheriff’s officer — i.e. a licenced bailiff—with a view to distraint on his possessions. However, High Court proceedings are for larger sums. The County Courts are intended to deal with actions for debts up to £700; though claims for smaller amounts can and do go to the High Court, they are not encouraged there.

It is true, of course, that proceedings for debt can be expensive to the plaintiff. The cost of solicitors’ letters, and representation in court for the hearing of a judgement summons, is not recoverable. Proceedings to get back, say, £50 can well cost that amount and so have their success nullified. Many traders acknowledge this, and either write off small debts when the threats have failed or try the percentage collecting companies. Larger firms can afford the proceedings, but the fact remains that much debt-recovery is sterile: the real object is to make default an unpleasant experience, to brand the defaulter and let it be known that this sort of thing will not be tolerated.

A Dirty War

“Unpleasant” is a mild word. For those who have got into debt through adversity, over-optimism or simple inadequacy in dealing with everyday matters, the consequences are harrowing and humiliating. Threats; the bailiff (or, for rates, a policeman) on the doorstep; the possibility of an auctioneer’s van come to take one’s belongings away, and even of being taken to prison. One wonders what future generations will think of a society in which such miseries were commonplace. There is the thought, too, what kind of people are prepared to treat other human beings like that. For judges, the question need hardly be asked. Bailiffs generally are either men who got into it through the accident of starting in associated employment when they were young, or retired policemen and the like. Loathsome as their functions are, it ought to be remembered that they are wage-workers—only daubed with more of capitalism’s dirt than most of us. Certainly they suffer a penalty in social isolation: it is not uncommon for bailiffs’ wives to have been in the same line of business, leaving one with the thought that most women draw the line at living with that.

Since debt is a struggle, it produces its own strategies. A debt is personal; the desperate defaulter becomes a dodger. A wife may stave off the pressures by saying her husband has gone away and left her, though bailiffs are likely to keep an eye on the house and make neighbourhood enquiries. A High Court writ has to be put actually in the defendant’s hand and proceedings can start only when this has happened, making elusiveness desirable (process-servers usually are young smart-alecs ready to find fun in the chase). Likewise, when distraint is proposed a husband may claim that all the household belongings are his wife’s or someone else’s and therefore not seizable for his debt. This can be challenged by a creditor—the action is called “interpleader”—but the difficulty of proof make the cases rare and seldom successful.

States of Mind

Whatever the reasons for which people get in debt, it is likely to become a spiral from which extrication is hard: continually half-robbing Peter to half-pay Paul, with the result that both remain hot-breathing creditors. One of the attractions of the “second mortgage” is that it offers the exchange of a lot of small debts for a single large one, an apparent fresh start which also can take a haunted person from the realm of County Courts to that of the High Court. But if an even keel is reached, the record of money troubles remains asa permanent disability. It is permissible for a small fee to have past judgements erased from the court registers, but they are never deleted from the credit companies’ records. Extenuating circumstances are not allowed: a defaulter is marked for the rest of his life. It is possible for defaulters to be victimized through their records. Two or three years ago someone circularized several thousand households offering highly favourable mail-order terms. They were all in fact selected from registers of defaulters, their readiness to jump at the prospect of being allowed to buy on a credit system obscuring more rational doubts such as how the advertiser was financing his generous activities. Orders with deposits rolled in, for the money to be pocketed by an adventurer whose chief asset was a little comprehension of the states of mind that debt produces.

Must it Continue?
Looking at all this; what a way to live! Yet it is part of how a very large number of people do live. Statistics about it tend to appear unbelievable because people will admit to other problems but not this one—disgrace in money matters is the deepest kind of disgrace in a money-dominated society. Nor is it anything new. The 18th-century *London Spy* describes women in the debtors’ prisons through default to tallymen. Spike May’s account of pre-1920 village life, *Reuben’s Corner*, refers to the village postman “walking many miles round the scattered community pushing bills and debt-summonses into letterboxes” (a different picture from the romantic one of rosy-cheeked rural bliss).

Most people under capitalism exist in “quiet desperation”, hair-breadths away from this sort of calamity. To talk of the proliferation of debt as a consequence of irresponsibility, of failing to cut coats according to the cloth, is beside the point. For the great majority, there chronically isn’t enough cloth to keep out the cold. The respectable with credit cards and no histories of default are in debt just the same, paying monthly for what they cannot otherwise afford. Debt is a demonstration of the inescapable poverty problem of the working class. The slogan of the latest credit card is that it “takes the waiting out of wanting”; but the only way wanting and waiting will be ended is by the abolition of capitalism.

(December 1972)
What socialism means

The object of socialism is to unite humanity and to solve social problems by building a society which can satisfy the universal need for co-operation and material security.

Socialism involves a creative outlook concerned with the quality of life. In association with others, the individual will develop himself as a social being. With enlightenment and knowledge, man will replace the ignorance, false illusions and prejudice from which he suffers in our own day.

Socialism is the form of society most compatible with the needs of man. Its necessity springs from the enduring problems, the economic contradictions and social conflicts of present-day society.

Socialist society must be based upon the common ownership and democratic control by the whole community of the means of life.

Life will be based on human relationships of equality and co-operation. Through these relationships, man will produce useful things, construct amenities and establish desirable institutions. Socialism will resolve the conflicts which at present divide man from man. Regardless of ethnic or cultural differences, the whole world community will share a common interest.

Under capitalism the whole apparatus of production are either privately owned, as in America, or state controlled by a privileged minority, as in Russia. The economies of some countries combine both private and state control. Both forms are alien to the interests of the majority, since the priorities of trade and commerce, exploitation and profit-making, dominate life. Under both forms, production for sale on the market is organized primarily for the benefit of a privileged minority.

The building of Socialism requires a social reorganization where the earth's resources and the apparatus of production are held in common by the whole community. Instead of serving sectional interests, they are made freely accessible to society as a whole. Production will be organized at world level with co-ordination of its differing parts down to local levels.

In Socialism there will be no market, trade or barter. In the absence of a system of exchange, money will have no function to perform. Individuals will participate freely in production and take what they need from what is produced. The fact that Socialism will be based on common ownership does not mean that an individual will have no call on personal effects. It means essentially that no minority will have control over or possession of natural resources or means of production. Individuals will stand in relation to each other not as economic categories, not as employers and employees or buyers and sellers, but simply as human beings producing and consuming the necessary things of life.

Socialist society will minimise waste and set free an immense amount of human labour. Armies and armament industries with their squandering of men and materials will be swept away. These will disappear together with all the wasteful appendages of trade and commerce.

Work

Work is a human need not only because it produces the material things of life, but because it is through work that man expresses his social nature.
In present society, human labour-power is the source of profit. Economic antagonism causes strikes and lock-outs. The uncertainties of trade result in dislocation and unemployment. The present chaos generates frustration and violence. Work becomes repugnant when carried on in this context of competition and exploitation. Life is a personal struggle.

In Socialism there will be a common interest in the planning and smooth operation of production. Work will be a part of human co-operation in dealing with practical problems. Work will be one aspect of the varied yet integrated life of the community.

With the change in the object of society, that is human welfare instead of profit, man will freely develop agriculture and housing, produce useful things and maintain services. As well as material production, man will freely develop desirable institutions such as libraries, education facilities, centres of art and crafts and centres of research in science and technology.

It will be a problem of social planning, statistics and research to ascertain the requirements of the community. Although these techniques are used for different ends, there is already wide experience of them. With experience of Socialist production, these planning techniques will gain in accuracy.

Once produced, goods will be transported to centres of distribution where all will have the same right of access to what is available according to individual need. It will be a simple matter of collecting what is required. As well as tradition and geography, it will be a matter of organization and practicality as to which things will require a complex world division of labour for their production and which things will be produced regionally.

Social values
The insecurities of our present acquisitive society drive men into ruthlessly selfish attitudes and actions which frustrate the human need for co-operation. With success in this competitive race goes a hollow pride; with failure there goes guilt and stigma. Against this background the failure is general because where the individual is isolated, co-operation breaks down.

Socialism will establish a community of interests. The development of the individual will enhance the lives of other men. Equality will manifest attitudes of co-operation. The individual will enjoy the security of being integrated with society at large.

Institutions
The establishment of Socialism does not call for the complete destruction and reconstruction of society. Techniques of production and some of the machinery of administration which can be transformed already exist. The task is to allow their free use and development by and for the community. With the change in the object of society from profit to human welfare will come a change in the function of social institutions. The schools and universities will no longer be concerned with the training of wage and salary workers for the needs of trade and commerce. Education will be a social amenity for life, providing teachers and a storehouse of all accumulated knowledge and skill. Education will not be rigidly separated from other aspects of life. The provision of education facilities will call for some permanent specialists, but knowledge and skill will to a much greater extent be passed on by those actively engaged in their practical application. Education will be tied more closely to the whole process of living.
There will be a body concerned with safety, the co-ordination of services in the event of an emergency, traffic regulation and the like. Here again, whilst some specialists may be required, it will be desirable for members of the community to participate as part of the normal pattern of their lives.

Institutions such as the armed forces, customs, banking, insurance, etc, will become redundant. Socialism will continue those institutions necessary to its own organization. For example, the Food and Agricultural Organization could be expanded to submit plans and execute decisions concerning world food production.

**World unity**
Socialism will end national barriers. The human family will have freedom of movement over the entire earth. Socialism would facilitate universal human contact but at the same time would take care to preserve diversity. Variety in language, music, handicrafts, art forms and diet etc will add to all human experience.

**Democratic control**
Socialism will be democratic. World policies will be subject to the control of the world community. The most complete information relevant to all issues under discussion will be made fully available. Elected delegates will carry local viewpoints to a world congress where the broad decisions on all aspects of social policy will be made. From that point, the social machinery would be implemented to carry out these decisions, subject to democratic control through both local and world bodies.

Decisions affecting only local interests would be made democratically by the local community. Whilst the general direction of social policy will be decided by the whole community, many decisions will be technical ones arising out of the problem of this policy. These decisions can be left, subject to regular democratic checks, to men and women with specialized knowledge and experience; but given the whole context of Socialism, they could only be consistent with its general aim--human welfare.

The elimination of vested interests will mean that men will have no ulterior motives influencing their decisions.

**The challenge of Socialism**
The greatest challenge facing humanity is the need to increase the production of wealth on an enormous scale, but this cannot be done within present capitalist society. Men and resources serve profit. On all sides it can be seen that commerce, trade and vested interests are preventing man from expanding production on a scale necessary to serve the community's needs. Socialism will provide a social framework that will enable man to get on with the job. The initial task of producing enough goods for the whole human family will be a huge one. We do not underestimate the problems of organization and production involved, but to eliminate world poverty must be one of the first tasks of Socialist society.

It is the glaring contradiction of our times that wealth is socially produced but possessed by a minority. Whereas in science, technology and in the development of the means of production man has brilliantly asserted his genius, in his relationships man suffers an abiding failure. It is this failure which is expressed in war, nationalism, racism, world hunger and poverty, unemployment, industrial chaos and social disunity. In all history, man has never suffered such universal frustration whilst having so close at hand the means of building a better world.
(July 1973)

The Common Market: in or out—does it matter?

What It’s About
EUROPE 1945—a shattered continent after the second war within 30 years. Industries laid waste. Millions dead. American aid pouring in trying to create a bulwark against the Russian menace. What was the future for European capitalism, as it drifted into the latter half of the 20th Century? To continue as a bunch of warring states; as competitors in the process of making, buying and selling? Or could they not become one big family? The conception of the EEC—European Economic Community—Common Market was born and the Treaty of Rome, 1957 signed by France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries contained the following clause:— “To permit goods to travel freely without Customs Duties or quota restriction throughout the area of the six and thus to permit manufacturers to invest on the scale that modern technology makes possible and necessary” (our italics).

This is what it’s about.

Capitalism—a system based upon class ownership of the means of wealth production and distribution must invest in order to survive. It needs a developing technology, it needs a growing market, and the European bunch, faced with competition from America, Russia etc. saw their Community, as the answer. It was a bold step and despite constant setbacks the foundations were laid and building commenced.

Great Britain, despite the pro-European utterances of Winston Churchill, did not join. She was lumbered with the Commonwealth and any deal with Europe had to relate to New Zealand lamb, Australian butter, Jamaican sugar etc. Harold MacMillan, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Tory Government, even prior to the Rome Treaty had no doubts “...or we might ourselves join the Union; but this would involve abandoning the preferential system in the Commonwealth, and obviously if we had the choice of alternatives, we could not hesitate; we would choose the Commonwealth” (Llandudno, 12th October 1956).

So the British capitalists wanting the best of both worlds—the Commonwealth and a tariff agreement, formed with Switzerland, Portugal, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway the European Free Trade Area (EFTA). This association was to negotiate trade terms with the Common Market. But why swim with the small fish when you can see larger fish in another pool, getting larger and threatening your existence? The Commonwealth and EFTA notwithstanding, Britain applied for membership of the EEC in 1963. The application was rejected largely due to the attitude of the French Government who wanted total commitment to a European policy—not an applicant with one foot in the Commonwealth and a certain reliance on America. “On Monday the General [de Gaulle] made it clear that he did not want Britain in, and that his reasons were political.” (Observer 19th January 1963). America incidentally, looked upon all these European proposals with suspicion.

But the British capitalists’ appetite had been whetted. The plums in Europe seemed larger and juicier, so again application was made under the Heath Government in 1971. Suitable terms were negotiated and Great Britain became a member on January 1st, 1973.

Neither the politicians nor the capitalists were united on this move. Some said the terms were not good enough; some said whatever the terms we should not be in. The Labour Party in particular were split on the issue. In their Election Manifesto of February 1974. they said our continued membership would depend upon more suitable terms being agreed. After months of discussion and brinkmanship, Mr. Wilson was able to report to Parliament on 18th March, 1975. “The Government have decided to recommend to the British people that they should vote in favour of staying in the Community on the terms which I have described”. Many commentators questioned whether the now acceptable terms were fundamentally different from those originally agreed but this need not concern us. And so we are being allowed to vote in the Referendum—IN or OUT. But more on this later.

Much of the discussion on the Common Market centres around the economic aspect but the EEC also entails a political angle. If such an economic set-up is to function, then the political machinery must be geared accordingly. You can’t have all these separate Governments taking decisions from a Nationalist viewpoint, ignoring the greater good. So individual sovereignty will have its wings clipped. The British Parliament will not be the sole master in its own house. The European Parliament will take decisions that often seem to cut across the interests of National States.
It was also agreed by the Community, that by 1980 there would be Monetary Union with a common currency and the harmonisation of National Budgets. According to Herr Scheel “…this is the most ambitious project ever tackled by the Community”.

In all the EEC was an exciting and demanding future for Capitalism. If only it wasn’t such an awkward system to control and manage.

How is the Community making out?

Eighteen years on is but a passing moment in the development of European capitalism. Many of the tariff duties have been disbanded. A greater volume of trade has taken place. A workers’ Charter has been formulated even to the extent of agreement on “worker participation on Industrial Boards”. The politicians fall out from time to time; the Brussels administration grows and grows. Fine words are spoken about the future. And then, despite a number of advances, that awkward capitalist system starts throwing its weight about and spanners in the works. Butter; beef; wine; fish; fruit. All you might say part of the sinews of life. But not in the world of capitalism. These are commodities produced for sale with a view to profit. And capitalism in its normal anarchistic fashion has produced too much for the market. You will remember the Butter Mountain. 152,000 surplus tons at the end of 1970. A definite policy was adopted to curtail production, involving the slaughter of thousands of cows. But this didn’t get rid of the butter. It was costing a bomb to store. The old age pensioners with the price reduced coupons mopped up some of it. Some official thought of a brilliant idea to feed it back to the cows. Eventually they did a deal to sell it in bulk to Russia—a deal that cost the Community millions of pounds. And butter in Paris still costs 69p per lb.

French farmers, like all farmers, are constantly demanding higher prices for their produce. To prove the point, thousands of tons of fruit have been dumped on French roads over the past few years. And then we had the fascinating pictures of French fishermen likewise tipping their catches on the roads. English egg producers, claiming to be working at a loss, demonstrate against the importation of French eggs. Dried milk, an embarrassing surplus, is being rendered unfit for human consumption and processed into animal feed. And you all know about the beef. How it is much more profitable to put it into store and get the intervention price, whilst rump steak is £1.40 per lb. And now there is the Wine Lake. The Italians have so much that they want to sell it. But the French won’t have it at any price—they’ve put up a barrier against Italian wine. They have too much of their own for comfort. We could go on and on.

Another point about the Common Market with its great resources was the demand for labour. In fact, when Britain entered the Community, lists of jobs in Europe were pinned up in the Labour Exchanges and great play was made of how labour would be more mobile. ‘It’s a nice thought that any of the 800,000 unemployed in this country could shove off over to the continent and get a job. Their journey might not be fruitful; the Common Market members over the Channel have an unemployed army of 4 million. Little is said of the many thousands of migrant workers in Europe who having played their part in the development of capitalism are now out on a limb.

During the oil crisis of 1973 it might be assumed that “the partners” would show a united front against the Arab oil producers. But national aspirations won out. All countries were falling over each other to do a deal with the Arabs. Inflation; currency crises; restriction on production; unemployment etc., etc. These are the stock in trade of capitalism. The Common Market will never solve these problems. The EEC ship will constantly smash itself against the rocks of its own system—a problem-producing system.

The Referendum—In or Out

For the first time in British History—a referendum. A device often used in other countries; Norway voted in such a manner to keep out. This vote, largely favoured by the anti-marketeers in the Labour Party, will resolve the decision for the Government. Mr. Wilson, when recommending the terms said “This is one of the most important parliamentary occasions in our history”. Not so. The British people are only being asked to endorse the continuation of capitalism, in or out, and they do this at every General Election. As yet, they continue to give this endorsement.

To remain in or get out has produced a weird assortment of protagonists. IN—Mr. Wilson and some members of his cabinet ally themselves with Mr. Heath, Maudling, the Liberal Party, the Confederation of British Industry, the Farmers’ Union and generally speaking ‘big business’. OUT—this includes an even weirder assortment. The Communist Party, Enoch Powell, Benn, Foot, Shore, the National Front and the TUC. A selection of the Ins and Outs is illuminating.
IN. “If we came out we would end as a country with nowhere to go.” (Lord Pritchard, President, Institute of Directors. *Times* 18th March 1975).

OUT. “I am really warning people in the West Midlands that the capacity of British Ministers to help industry to re-equip is going to be gravely affected by membership, and that is one of the reasons why I hope the British people will vote to withdraw.” (Wedgwood Benn, speaking at Birmingham. *Guardian* 22nd March 1975).

IN. “British withdrawal from the EEC would probably cause Lucas Industries to reduce its workforce by between 8,000 and 10,000 jobs.” (Bernard Scott, the Company’s Executive Chairman, *Guardian* 13th March 1975).

OUT. He told the French Chamber of Commerce in London that the TUC believed Britain should not be in a Market of which competition was the guiding principle. (Len Murray, Gen. Sec. TUC. *Evening Standard* 7th March 1975). (Perhaps Mr. Murray can enlighten us as to what is the “guiding principle” under which British capitalism works at the moment?)

IN. “I would not be involved in the Government if it has to take Britain out of the Common Market” Shirley Williams, Secretary for Prices and Consumer Protection. (*Guardian* 13th March 1975).

OUT. Pop Concerts, talks to Women’s Institute tea parties and trade union meetings and a a galaxy of prominent speakers including playwright John Osborne, author Kingsley Amis and scientist Kit Pedlar will be used in the fight to pull Britain out of Europe. (Get Britain Out Referendum Campaign. *Evening Standard* 20th March 1975). (Pardon us if we are not altogether overwhelmed by the galaxy of prominent speakers.)

IN. Mobilise for a Socialist Europe. (Labour Committee for Europe. Advert. *Guardian* 17th February 1975). (Hardly we feel the reason why the CBI wants to keep in).

And so we could go on and on— one boring reason after another. How you will vote is your concern. We tell them to stuff their referendum. The real issue that the workers should tackle is Common Market or Common Ownership.

*Where We Stand*

We and our sympathisers will vote. We shall register on our papers our commitment for Socialism. The question you are being asked to answer—In or Out—is of no concern to members of the working class. Whatever the outcome of the vote, Capitalism will continue. And continue it will until you and a majority like you take the revolutionary step of deciding to abolish capitalism in all its forms and to bring into being a new society.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN has only one object—Socialism, which briefly means the common ownership of the means of wealth production and distribution, democratically administered for the common good. The earth, with its untold riches would be harnessed and utilised for the benefit of all mankind. This means that human needs take priority and production centres around these. From each according to ability—to each according to need would be the guiding principle. Simply put, it means that all those sinews of life previously mentioned, and the thousand and one other things that mankind needs, would be produced to meet human satisfaction.

Socialism cannot operate in one country or in one continent. It is a worldwide concept to deal with worldwide problems. It cannot be established by any leader or so-called intellectual Left Wing group. Its very democratic nature demands that people will have to understand both the capitalist and the new society so that they play a full and responsible role in its administration. Its establishment will result from political action based upon understanding: a class-conscious act to take control of the reins of Government; then strip the capitalists of their power, their wealth, and found a new way of life.

Whilst we claim that Socialism alone can solve the basic economic problems that confront mankind, it is not a society just concerned with “belly problems”. Its new economic basis will give rise to a new set of social relationships. Man, no longer a wage slave or an appendage to a productive machine, will be able to utilise all his potential, to blossom as a full human being.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN offers itself as your instrument for the establishment of Socialism. We offer an understanding of capitalism and some concrete ideas on how Socialism will work. But we are not leaders. You join our Party on the basis of your Socialist knowledge. We would welcome you and what you have to contribute to the only question worthy of consideration—Common Ownership or Capitalism.

Away with all the trappings of capitalism—tariffs, customs duties, monetary union, competition, buying, selling etc. Vote for nothing but Common Ownership.
The Crisis: Capitalism’s Stranglehold on the Labour Government

There is of course nothing new in governments breaking pledges and turning policy somersaults, but latterly the occasions have become more frequent and more farcical. At every election since the second world war the Labour and Tory parties have undertaken to deal with inflation: to so little effect that prices have risen continuously for thirty years, with the rate of increase getting faster and faster.

It is not at all surprising that this should have happened because the governments have been running a policy of inflation in the belief that this was a way to prevent unemployment from increasing. A vain hope, because at each of the half-dozen recessions since 1950 unemployment has risen to a new higher peak—over a million in 1972 and now forecasts of a possible 1 1/2 millions by early 1976. Instead of stopping inflation, it has been government policy first to promote it and then to try to suppress its symptoms by means of a "Prices and Incomes Policy".

It started in 1947 under Attlee's government and has been re-enacted half a dozen times. A long succession of failures as far as stopping inflation is concerned, but it would be churlish not to acknowledge its one happy achievement—the enrichment in the use of our vocabulary. We have had wage restraints, wage freezes, wage thaws, plateaus, pauses, ceilings, guiding lights, norms, standstills, early warnings, guidelines, slow-downs, explosions, wage-stops, thresholds, curbs, social contracts, and a lot more.

The latest from Mr Wilson "the £6 limit on wage increases", which he admits means a lower standard of living, has a novel refinement. For years the centrepiece of the Labour programme was the "national minimum". The law was to be used to force "bad employers" to become "good employers" by making them put wages up. Now Mr Wilson threatens to use the law to prosecute employers who put wages up too much. They are, he says, "rogue employers". The recipients, of course, could be workers whose wages are only a small fraction of Wilson's own income.

Is it really possible for government ministers not to understand how capitalism operates? And to be unaware of the inevitable consequences of their own policies? Indeed it is possible. During the nineteenth century, although capitalism regularly went through the recurring cycle of expansion, boom, crisis and depression outlined by Marx as the economic law of the system, governments, capitalists and many economists were forever expecting booms to be permanent and being amazed as each crisis blew up. There are plenty of similar examples in our own times.

Any serious student of capitalism knows that the capitalist is in business to make a profit and therefore will not invest more to expand production at those times when there is no prospect of selling the product profitably. Yet in the last recession, in 1971-2, Heath and Barber complained bitterly that though for months on end they pleaded and threatened and offered inducements for increased investment, "nobody would listen". Healey, Chancellor of the Exchequer in the present government, confesses to having been equally ignorant of the facts of economic life. "One thing I have learnt from my experience in the past seven months [as Chancellor]: there is no chance of investment if business expects a general and prolonged recession, however generous the tax incentives" (Report of speech, The Times, 5th October 1974).

Later in the same month he was again airing his ignorance, this time as guest speaker at the Lord Mayor's banquet for bankers and merchants of the City of London:
I simply cannot understand how it can make economic sense . . . to keep a million active men and women idle when the nation needs the goods they could produce (Times, 18th October 1974).

Since when has capitalism been interested in meeting people's needs? And, in a depression, who needs additional production of unsaleable cars, motor-cycles, supertankers, steel and so on?

In one respect nineteenth-century British governments were better informed than governments since 1945. They knew how to prevent inflation and decided that it was in the interest of capitalism to prevent it. There was no inflation for the hundred years before 1914. Prices rose and fell by moderate amounts in booms and depressions, but the level was lower in 1914 than in 1814. Now the price level is more than seven times the 1938 level and rising fast, by far the biggest cause being the depreciation of the currency consequent on government policy.

There were always some uninfluential groups advocating inflation to cure the ills of capitalism. One was dealt with in the SOCIALIST STANDARD in August 1906. Using the Marxist analysis the writer of the article showed that it would cure nothing and would simply raise prices: "the workers, as is usual, being the first to suffer". Another example is mentioned in The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin, by Alan Bullock (p. 17). Bevin, trade union leader and later a minister in the Attlee government, was present in 1908 at a conference to discuss remedies for unemployment. One proposal was "the issue of paper pounds". A Liberal politician who was there thought that it was "very sensible" but politically impracticable.

After 1945 it was quite different. Influenced by Keynes (or by crude distortions of Keynes) the Labour and Tory Parties and the TUC adopted the doctrine that the government could "manage" the economy in a way that would prevent crises and depressions occurring again. By "maintaining demand" they believed they could always prevent unemployment. Maintaining demand meant in practice printing more money and putting up prices. Keynes, whether he intended it or not, had made inflation respectable.

A number of economists in the past have understood that if an inconvertible paper currency is issued in excess amounts it will correspondingly put up prices. Marx's special contribution was to anchor it to his theory of value. In given circumstances a certain amount of currency will be required. If the currency consisted solely of gold coin it would represent a certain total weight of gold and therefore a certain total mass of value. If the gold is replaced by inconvertible paper money (not convertible into a fixed weight of gold) and is then issued in amounts exceeding the gold it represents, it will simply put up prices. This is the present situation. Currency in Britain in 1938 was under £500 millions. It is now over £6,000 millions. It went up £835 millions in the year to July 1975. Those who reject this explanation of inflation can apply a test. Let them show when such excess issue took place without raising prices; or when such excess issue was halted and prices did not fall.

In December 1919, after a very fast rise in prices, a ceiling was placed on the note issue and within a year prices were falling fast and wages with them. Lord Rothschild (Times, 30th June 1975) recalls that German inflation was halted in 1923 by applying the recommendations of a Committee (two members of which were the banker Brand and the economist Keynes) which included the Reichsbank being "forbidden to print more notes".
Some modern "monetarists" have confused the issue by trying to relate price movements to the total of currency plus some or all of bank deposits. Why should the act of lending by depositors to banks affect the price level? Historically there is no justification for the theory. The enormous growth of bank deposits in the last decades of the 19th century was accompanied by a fall of the price level, not a rise.

Harold Wilson used to be quite confident about how he would prevent inflation. In 1957 some of his articles in The Guardian were published as a pamphlet, Remedies for Inflation. In Section III "What Labour Would Do" he wrote:

Ever since the Coalition Government's White Paper (Employment Policy, 1944) all major parties have been committed, on Keynesian lines, to using the Budget as a means of avoiding undue inflation or deflation. In inflationary times, therefore, all are agreed in theory on the need for public saving through a large Budget surplus, though we have felt that a number of Conservative Budgets have sacrificed financial stability to a desire for fiscal popularity.

In practice Wilson's government in 1974-5, instead of running a Budget surplus, has shown the biggest deficit in British peace-time history. Wilson says that the Government's latest measures have been forced on it by the threatened drastic fall of the pound under pressure from foreign holders of sterling, just like Labour Premier Ramsay MacDonald in 1931.

There is no sign that the bulk of the Labour ministers and the TUC have given up their delusion that unemployment can be prevented or reduced by a further round of "reflation" (their name for inflation). But at the moment Wilson, after years of promoting inflation because he thought it would prevent unemployment, is now declaring that inflation causes unemployment.

Some of his critics in the Labour Party and trade unions (including apparently Mr Scanlon, leaders of the engineers), think they have Marx's backing for their view that the way to deal with crises is to raise wages further. They are quite wrong. Of course Marx favoured the attitude of workers getting as high wages as they can at any time, but he did not hold that crises could be averted by raising wages. He dealt with the higher wages argument in Capital (Vol II, p. 475) and showed how absurd it is. Depressions end when the capitalists see prospects of profit improving. Putting wages up further would reduce profit margins not increase them.

Because Socialists view the thirty-year Labour-Tory experiment with Keynesian fallacies as a complete fiasco for the working class it must not be concluded that we are enamoured with the prospect of returning to capitalism without inflation. With or without inflation capitalism will go on producing unemployment, crises and depressions. With Labour government, or any other government, "managed" or left to market forces, with or without more nationalisation, capitalism has nothing to offer to the working class. The only course for the workers is to replace capitalism with Socialism.

(August 1975)
Democracy and the silicon chip

Karl Marx once said that the hand mill gives you feudalism and the steam mill gives you capitalism. Had he lived for another hundred years, he might have added with a wry smile that the computer gives you Socialism. The ways in which human society can be organised, is organised and ought to be organised depend on the techniques and resources which can be used in its running. The idea of a society where no one goes hungry and all co-operate to control the conditions of their existence is no more than a pipe dream unless there is the wherewithal to translate idea into reality.

It is the case of the SPGB that the wherewithal is there. The potential for providing for everyone's needs has been created by capitalism. Thanks to the development of machinery and automation, wealth can be produced in quantities which would have been unthinkable in earlier phases of human society. However, one of our greatest difficulties in getting anyone to accept our view is to convince them on just this point. For its truth is masked in capitalism. The potential for plenty is there, but it cannot be made actual. A profit system can only work with a labour force compelled to sell its energies. If an abundance of the necessaries of life were freely available, the system would grind to a halt. (Who would work at the kinds of jobs on offer in our society if they did not have to?)

We do not ask anyone to take our word for it that the problem of producing enough wealth has been solved. Rather, we refer them whenever possible to the facts unearthed by non-Socialists who are particularly concerned with such issues. (See, for example, in our pamphlet *Questions of the Day*, the chapter on the myth of overpopulation, and our Canadian companion party's pamphlet *A World of Abundance*). In this way we hope to show that hackneyed prejudices about human greed are irrelevant and that, far from being a pipe-dream, a society based on common ownership is a practical necessity.

But this is only one aspect of our case. Our aim is not just common ownership; it is democracy. For us, democracy is not an optional extra or simply a means to an end. It is part of our end, as anyone can discover by reading our Object on the inside back cover of this journal. We define Socialism as "...common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth..."

What do we mean by democracy? Amongst other things, a world in which people are not bossed around by a government or told what to do by their "superiors". More positively, a world where everyone takes an equal and responsible part in making decisions which affect society, without the strife which is inevitable in a class-divided society. That is one reason why we say there will be no socialist society until a majority desire it. As long as most people are content to be told what to do by elected representatives there will be no democracy in the sense defined. (Not that an electoral system is completely worthless. More of that later).

At first sight, this suggestion of literally everyone taking part in social decisions may seem as unrealistic as the earlier one of common ownership. Surely, it might be said, these matters have to be left to the experts, and surely modern populations are far too large for active participation by everyone?

Objections like these are meat and drink to political theorists and political philosophers. They think the point so obvious that they state them far more often than actually arguing for them. Yet they are not obvious. In view of the demonstrated failure of legions of experts and government advisers to solve any of the major problems of civilisation, the less said about expertise the better. On the other hand, numbers may seem a genuine problem. How can millions of people all have a say in running society?
The answer, once again is that this would be a mere "good idea" unless the means were available to make it a reality. And the means are available. Here, too, it is a matter of pointing to existing resources and developments within capitalism. It would be futile for us to offer a blueprint, of course. The exact form the future democratic society takes will depend on the historical circumstances prevailing when it is established. But there are aspects of the technology already available which show how large numbers of people could be drawn into the decision process.

Communication is the lifeblood of capitalism. This is reflected in the facts that by 1975 over 95 per cent of households in Britain had TV sets, 53 per cent had telephones, and world traffic in telecommunications has continued to grow at a rate of 12-15 per cent per year (much higher than the rest of world trade). If no vested interests were involved, and if there were a desire for it, imagine how much useful information could be disseminated and how far the ordinary citizen could participate in decisions, just by replacing one old American film every week with an information-and-decision programme. People listen to proposals for some project (say, the building of a new playground or power station), discuss the issues by phone-in, and then ring in to some central point with their vote for or against.

But this is only the tip of the iceberg. Developments are now taking place which will put phones and TVs in the museum along with the stone-age axe. The device which will be responsible is the microelectronic silicon circuit. It is about one centimetre square and is made, incredibly, of grains of sand. In effect, this "silicon chip" is a tiny computer, enormously efficient and dirt-cheap to produce, which has been responsible for bringing together computer and telecommunications technology in one all-embracing "information technology".

The first fruits of the marriage will be available next year when the Viewdata system goes into public service. This will make available to its select customers 100,000 pages of information, any part of which can be called up on a screen literally at the touch of a button. Not only that, but the system will be fully "interactive"—which means that as well as it giving you information, you can give it information, which it will then store. Even the feeblest imagination should be able to grasp the implication for democracy. Such technology gives the opportunity for the population to keep themselves better informed and to take a more active role in decisions than at any time since the small city-states of ancient Greece.

But back to reality. Viewdata is being developed in capitalism, which means it is first and foremost a commercial venture. It will be used not for the sake of participatory democracy but to store information for its customers—advertising agencies, financial institutions, mail order firms and the like. Moreover, systems of this kind have already begun to cause headaches in America, producing the telephone equivalent of junk mail and the hard sell. The micro-computer works its way methodically through a list of victims, automatically ringing them up to relay its recorded message to buy someone's goods. You may not want to buy them, but it's no use putting the receiver down because the computer will automatically continue to ring you back until you have heard it out. And that is the least of it. This potential boon to mankind is not just proving to be a nuisance: it threatens to produce a crisis. Microelectronic technology is so flexible it will be throwing people out of skilled jobs such as making precision watches and cash registers. In the UK telephone equipment industry alone the number of jobs is expected to fall by 30 per cent between 1976 and 1979. How far the capitalist system can cope with these far-reaching consequences is a problem for those who continue to support it.

Not to labour the point, here as elsewhere capitalism is double-edged. The system has itself called forth instruments which could, in a different framework, be of untold benefit. But under capitalism their use is perverted and only means further trouble. Once again, therefore, the implication is clear that we must change the framework.
The development of information technology is double-edged in a further way. At the turn of the century most political organisations depended largely on outdoor meetings for getting their message across. With the widespread introduction of radio and TV this ceased to be true for the larger and richer parties. But the gap which thus opened up has begun to close again. The SPGB has managed to snatch the odd few minutes of broadcasting, and no doubt if capitalism lasts long enough we shall also, like our companion party in America, come to have our own programmes. For the technology developed by capitalism for its own needs eventually becomes available for those who wish to replace capitalism. The computer will make the dissemination of Socialist propaganda an easier and more efficient affair.

That it is something for the future. For the present all we can do is make the best use of our limited resources in what is at least a relatively open political climate. In Britain we can publish a journal and make tapes of our meetings without the threat of immediate persecution. In a one-party state like Russia we could not. We do not exaggerate the extent of this freedom: it costs a lot of money to exercise it fully, and we know that such political freedoms as we have now can be withdrawn. But equally we do not underestimate its importance. (Only a person who had never imagined living under a totalitarian regime would do that). A climate of tolerance is useful to Socialists. It is also fragile, and constantly endangered by our opponents of left and right. Their policies of confrontation and smashing this, that and the other serve only to make it easier to place further curbs on political activity. We received tangible proof of this recently, when one of our London branches lost the use of its meeting room in a pub as a result of threats between other organisations which use the room. The SPGB will have no part in such tactics, and the only force we shall continue to use is the force of rational argument.

A number of points have been made in this article to show that our aim of a democratic society is a practical possibility. There is also another kind of evidence—that of example. The structure of the SPGB is democratic, foreshadowing the future society we advocate. We have no leaders or ruling groups. Though we cannot afford a computer or even to become a customer of Viewdata, our affairs are run according to the decisions of the entire membership through instructed delegates at Annual Conference, and all our officials are elected annually, again by the entire membership. Any organisation can claim to be in favour of democracy. We ask to be judged not on what we claim but on what we do. Having nothing to fear from the presence of non-members (welcoming them, in fact), we have never held a closed meeting in our entire history. That is completely in keeping with our conviction that the revolution to establish the Socialist democracy will not be ours; it will be a revolution itself decided upon by a majority of humanity.

(September 1978)
Running riot: Britain’s urban violence

Bristol, Brixton, Southall, Toxteth, Moss Side, Wood Green, Woolwich, Brixton again . . . A wave of civil disturbances has erupted in England. As livelihoods go up in flames and mindless destruction explodes on the streets, there is a stampede on to the political stage from both wings by politicians and assorted spokesmen. They hold forth loudly to the audience—the “general public”—about what must be done. They shake their fists and point angrily at each other. They make ominous warnings and each tries to win the support of the audience with promises to carry out the right policy. Political commentators arise and plaintive vicars descend to offer their planned remedies in the din.

A stern attitude has been struck by the government: “the law must be upheld, people must be protected” said Margaret Thatcher in her recent broadcast. Such a kind concern for people’s welfare doesn’t exactly square with her policy of closing down emergency casualty departments in hospitals and spending millions of pounds on murderous armoury, but then consistency is not one of her strong points. The Home Secretary, William Whitelaw, is planning measures to suppress the street violence. He advocates the use of water cannon, CS gas and increased power for the police to enable them to arrest anyone found in the area of a disturbance. He suggests that parents of those on the rampage should be punished for not controlling their children. There have also been cries from Conservative quarters to bring back the birch and to introduce the Army to “pacify” civil disorders. The idea behind these sorts of proposals seems to be that if some people become so frustrated with the dehumanising lifestyle which capitalism imposes on the majority that they rebel violently, then you have to teach them that violence is wrong and immoral. And the way you must teach them that violence is wrong and immoral is by beating them with truncheons and spraying them with gas.

On the other hand, supporters of the Labour Party argue that the real causes of the disorders are the reactionary economic policies of this Conservative government. Inner city decay, urban deprivation and high unemployment are all identified as precipitating the riots and the Tory administration is held responsible for having bred the causes. It is true that the economic policy of this government has done much to exacerbate living conditions for many in the working class, but this government has not caused the problems of unemployment and inner city decay and its removal and replacement by a Labour administration will not solve the difficulties of life in the profit system. Not so long ago there were less than half a million unemployed in Britain. Now there are almost three million living on the dole. There are approximately 30 million workers registered as unemployed across the continent of Europe, in countries operating a great variety of economic and political administrations of capitalism from totalitarian state control to “liberal democracies” with comparatively low degrees of state intervention in the economy. The evidence is clear enough that the trend of high unemployment, during periods of glutted production for the market, is one which moves on largely unaffected by the different economic schemes used in running production for profit. Similarly, the urban deprivation of places like Brixton, Toxteth and Moss Side was not something which grew out of the paving stones after May 1979 when the Tories won the General Election. Squalid housing and unemployment are problems which have been developing for decades and which successive Labour governments have been unable to alleviate. The recent spate of civil violence is the tip of an iceberg of discontent and frustration and it is a delusion to imagine that the problems which face us—the working class—can be eradicated by Labour plans to provide more employment (more exploitation) and more second-rate housing.

Supporters of left-wing organisations like the Socialist Workers Party have been greatly enthused by brick-throwing at policemen, which is somehow regarded as the kind of anti-establishment action of which revolutions are made, or at least from which they can be begun. The attempts to manipulate this collective aggression and stoke up more disturbance are made by ambitious crusaders who believe that if they could be elevated to positions of power on the shoulders of the angry masses, then they could charitably set to work on implementing revolutionary policies for the good of those who know no better than to oppose capitalism with damage and injury. As people who declare their support for the working class, those leftwingers have an offensively patronising view of the capacity of workers to reach socialist consciousness.

A similar enthusiasm for the rioting has been shown by the various extreme right-wing organisations like the National Front who, like the Left, regard the fury of the riot as fertile ground from which to recruit violent rebels. The nature of the political philosophy of parties like the SWP and the NF, and the degree to which the role of the rank and file membership is simply to put forward the changing slogans of the leaderships, means that enrolment to membership can be based on having yo” or “The Blacks”.

The first riot in Southall was different from the others. The violence began there when several coachloads of racialists were ferried into the area, ostensibly to attend a pub concert. Shops owned by Asians were damaged and the proprietors assaulted. The violence was committed amid barked racialist slogans and provocative Sieg Heils. Local Asian residents managed to organise themselves against their aggressors while the police had taken almost their entire force away to another district, allegedly on a tip-off. In all of the other riots in London, Liverpool and Manchester, black and white workers were in the broil together. They were not race riots but poverty riots. Poverty, that is, both of wealth and ideas. The riot in Southall did not rage because local black and white residents found it impossible to exist peaceably side by side. It was fomented by violent thugs imported for that purpose. And to those who insist that there will always be an underlying tension when different cultures exist in the same district, let them travel to somewhere like cosmopolitan Kensington in London and witness how privileged “Englishmen” have no resentment living in the same community as wealthy Arabs and Nigerians and Iranians. They have no poverty to blame on anyone, and must feel quite safe so long as we blame ours on each other.

Priests and vicars have not been slow to get off their knees to give vacuums of sympathy to victims of violence and sinister warnings to the sinners. The practicality of their advice in the aftermath of the violence is well summed up in the words of the Archbishop of Liverpool, the Most Reverend Derek Worlock, who after the destruction in Toxteth proclaimed “Out of the ashes of these last days must come new life and new hope.” But then if you believe that the ultimate control of the affairs of mankind lies with a force beyond the skies, what else can you offer those suffering from socially produced hardship, but hope?

In certain degrees of poverty, especially at a time of economic crisis when there is no hope on the horizon, pent up frustration will be likely to burst into violence among those who have not considered the cause of their problems and sought to remove it. The dashed hopes and bitterness of most of those in the recent upsurges were not so much to do with the conditions of employment as the condition of unemployment. Hundreds of thousands of young members of the wealth producing class have left school in recent years to go directly on to the dole queue. The feeling of rejection and uselessness which this creates contributes to their resentment of their environment. In Toxteth, to take one example, with thousands of young people leaving school, significantly just about the time the riots broke out, the local career office was offering only 12 jobs. In the city of Liverpool, according to the latest unemployment figures, 81,000 people were chasing 1,019 job vacancies. Other factors like aggressive policing and routine stop-and-search tactics will have obviously aggravated the tensions.

The fact that the bursting frustration and desperation expresses itself in the ferocity of the riot is understandable. Capitalism is a social system which is shot through with everyday forms of “respectable” and institutionalised violence from the teacher’s cane and the policeman’s truncheon to the government’s tanks and bombs. From the most lighthearted comic book to the late-night documentary on the brutalities of Northern Ireland or Afghanistan we are confronted with images of violence as a method of trying to cause social change. The deeds of those participating in the riots were thoughtlessly destructive. Cars, shops and homes of fellow members of the working class were irrationally ruined. It was a foolish misdirection of anger.

Where do we go from here? It is possible for capitalism to attempt to quell the areas of extreme deprivation by pumping money into housing, industry and welfare for the poverty to become just endurable. The riots which broke in southern America in the late 1960s had their immediate causes treated with giant expenditure on welfare relief payments to the poorest families and training programmes for ghetto youngsters. The profit-system will not be burnt away, neither will it be dislodged or smashed with bricks. A few riots, even large scale rebellions, can easily enough be quashed by the authorities, and usually the rioters will be in a worse condition after the insurgence than before it. But, to borrow from Friedrich Engels, there is no power in Britain which could for a day resist the British working class organised as a body.

(August 1981)
Doing the bulldog thing

Some said it was war, to others it was more like comic opera. Most people's knowledge of the Falkland Islands was limited to what they had read in their stamp album but they were sure that it was a place worth defending against a vile foreign dictatorship. The Argentinians were rather better known, since their football team was once called "animals" by the then England team manager Alf Ramsey, who was not averse to including one or two cloggers in his own side.

The British fleet which was despatched to deal a mighty blow at the invaders of the Falklands sailed out of Portsmouth trying not to look as if it was redundant. It was led by two aircraft carriers, one of which will be sold to the Australian Navy and the other scrapped. Five hundred of the sailors preparing for battle had notices of redundancy and so had 180 of the workers in the Portsmouth dockyards where the ships were made ready. Among the crew was Prince Andrew ("a serving officer like anyone else") who truly is redundant but gets paid handsomely for it and who seemed liable to fly an expensive helicopter into battle. It was in a rather desperate patriotism that thousands of workers waved the fleet away: "We have to do the bulldog thing" urged the wife of one of the sailors, perhaps reasoning that a dead dog is better off than a live unemployed sailor.

There was too some bellicose relief. Capitalist powers devote an enormous amount of resources to training their people in how to kill other workers in a war. Servicemen are liable to become frustrated, if all their expensive training and equipment is allowed to atrophy for want of the nourishment of a nice, destructive war. So the Guardian could report: "The men, with their planes and missiles are, after years of war games, spoiling for the real thing". There was also some relief at the sudden emergence of this external "enemy", who are always useful in helping persuade workers to accept sacrifices. And sacrifices, as the dole queues get longer and prices rise and rise, are what British capitalism wants from its workers right now.

The government's acute discomfiture at the "humiliating affront to this country" (the departing Lord Carrington's description) was in large part due to the fact that they had based a lot of their electoral appeal on the promise to be strong on "defence". Was the Iron Lady to be foxed by a bunch of gibbering foreigners who spend all their time turning out cans of poisoned canned beef? Would the Tories ever live it down? There was much praise and sympathy for the hugely suave, hugely wealthy, Lord Carrington. Even American Secretary of State Alexander Haig had a good word to say for him, forgetting that only recently he called him a "duplicitous bastard". Carrington didn't need sympathy; he retired in good order to his acres in Buckinghamshire, a green and pleasant county of which he owns a substantial amount.

There was nothing comic about the Labour Party's nauseous frenzy to exploit the situation. It was almost as if a general election had already been called. In the Commons on March 30, Denis Healey accused the government of being "caught with its trousers down in the South Atlantic—a phrase for the connoisseurs of Healeyisms. Callaghan, pretending to be helpful, recounted how much better the interests of British capitalism had been looked after when he was responsible, In 1977, he claimed, there was a similar crisis but the Labour government resolved it secretly, with a combination of military threat and diplomatic pressure. No MP took Callaghan's trousers down by asking why the leader of a party which once claimed to stand for international working class interests should be fishing in the murky waters of capitalist diplomacy. In fact, Carrington had been following the same policy—on this issue, as on others there is no difference between Tories and Labour—but his bad luck was that the Argentinian rulers were under pressure to call his bluff and the whole thing was played out in public.
Of course the real star of the Labour benches was Michael Foot. Belying his reputation as a doddering, ineffectual bungler, the Labour leader lashed the government for their "betrayal of those who looked to it for protection" (he was not talking about workers struggling to live on social security). "We should not", he raged, "see foul, brutal aggression successful in our world". (He was not attacking the record of past Labour governments on Korea, Malaysia, Biafra, Vietnam . . .) Foot's speech was applauded by the MPs as a flag-waving, drum-banging demand for the war in which, of course, he would not personally be in the front line. It was, we remember, only a few months ago that he won an affectionate ovation at a Labour Party gathering by describing himself as "an inveterate peacemonger".

Many Tory MPs were delighted with Foot's performance. One sure way of winning their respect is to make a speech calling for workers to be sent off to war. One of the more effusive—or perhaps he had merely lunched well—gurgled, "For once, you truly spoke for Britain". There was no report that Foot so much as blushed at this insulting compliment (a few days later he was calling himself "an international democratic socialist"), nor that he was perturbed by Labour MP George Foulkes' warning that "inevitably thousands of British troops will be killed". The Labour Party has never flinched from the prospect of workers dying in the conflicts to protect their masters' interests, especially if an inveterate votes-monger like Foot may be able to translate their deaths into an election win.

The Conservatives, also worried about their political standing, simply tried to shelter in a measure of fantasy. Thatcher declared:

The Falkland Islands and their dependencies remain British territory . . . It is the government's objective to see that the Islands are freed from occupation and returned to British administration at the earliest possible moment.

But in the reality of world capitalism 1982, places like the Falklands are not defensible by any available British force for any length of time. British foreign policy has been based on that reality for some time now. In historical fact the "British administration" of the Islands was itself an "occupation". The British settlement of the Falklands was contested by France, Spain and Argentina, from the latter half of the 18th century. The Spanish were there until 1806, when the Argentinians threw them out and in 1833 a British force arrived and, politely but firmly, ejected the Argentinians. The Prime Minister of the day made it plain that the British ruling class would not allow " . . . any other state to exercise a right as derived from Spain, which Britain had denied to Spain herself". This has never been accepted by any Argentinian government and, at the very least, they have registered an annual protest. Children there are taught about the perfidy of the British over the Falklands, rather as British children have been taught about the Germans, French, Japanese, Argentinians . . .

In 1851 a Royal Charter—the official sanction to the exploitation of the resources and the people—was granted to the Falkland Islands Company and since then the Islands' economy has been dominated by that company. The FIC owns nearly half the land, a third of the sheep (wool is the Islands' only product of any significance) and employs over one sixth of the population. It controls the bank, the dock and the supermarket. In 1972, after a brief spell of ownership by an offshoot of Slater Walker, the FIC was taken over by Charrington Industrial Holdings, which has big interests in fuel distribution and was probably attracted by the FIC stake in the islands' transport and warehousing and the possible presence of oil. Argentinian investors almost pulled off a stealthy take-over in 1977 but this was thwarted, partly by the Foreign Office. Charrington seemed shaken by the experience, and declared that they would never sell out to a foreign concern. Soon afterwards they were themselves taken over by Coalite, a company based in Derbyshire. Through all these machinations the workers of the Falklands plodded on, in the bare, windswept landscape, raising sheep and turning out the surplus value for whichever bunch of capitalists was appropriating the wealth they had produced.
Those workers are in the main descendants of the Scottish, English and Welsh who went to the Falklands after 1851. Most families are tenants of the FIC and live in tied cottages which they must leave when they are too old to be exploitable any longer. Until recently the majority of members of the Legislative Council were nominated by the British government. If the Falklanders prefer this kind of feudal paternalism it can only be because they think—with good reason—that that life under Argentinian military rule has even less to offer them. A final irony is that, if any of them tries to take refuge in Britain they will have no automatic right of entry. The Foreign Office has promised them special concessions but, although they hold British passports, they are legally excluded because they are defined as non-patrials under the 1971 Immigration Act.

Behind the feigned concern for the fate of the Falklanders is the fact that for a long time it has been British policy, under Labour and Conservative governments, to phase the Islands over to Argentine rule. As James Callaghan pointed out in the Commons on April 7, in a brief respite from his jingoism, there had already been negotiations about the British hold over the Falklands, which might have led to some sort of leaseback arrangement with Argentina. In 1971 a commercial agreement gave Argentina a near monopoly in fuel supply and air travel and the first big runway at Port Stanley was Argentinian built. The Director General of the Falkland Islands Office in London had this to say, about the British attitude to their efforts to resist this trend: “We have consistently not been getting sufficient support from the Foreign Office these last twelve years”.

Naturally a lot of publicity was given by the British media to the transparent cynicism behind the invasion. Argentina is another country in the grip of a severe recession. At the end of March a trade union demonstration against the effects of unemployment and rising prices brought some of the worst civil disorder since the military took over in 1976. But the move against the Falklands brought a miraculous change; patriotic frenzy swamped the reality of the workers’ parlous condition and of the murderous repression by which the Argentinian rulers defend their position. As the news came through there was another demonstration but this time the Argentinian workers were chanting support for Galtieri and his annexation of Los Islas Malvinas.

The hysteria and deception on both sides ensure that it will take a long time to purge the Falklands crisis of historical myth. It will be written up as an affair of honour; the Argentinians will describe it as a blow against foreign imperialism and the British as a defence of human rights. But the wars of capitalism have never protected human rights; in truth they have damaged those rights, at times destroyed them. Diplomacy—one of the practised arts of the capitalist system—cannot be an affair of honour; it must function by double-cross, concealment, treachery and lies.

So British and Argentinian servicemen went across the ocean to do battle with each other in their masters’ cause. It was another doleful example of ignorant workers being easily duped by the empty jingoism of desperate politicians. Animals do it better; at least they don’t take themselves willingly to the slaughterhouse.

(May 1982)
The Miner’s Strike—Why

Why did 120,000 miners join what has become the longest, bitterest and most controversial strike in the British coal industry since 1926? Clearly, it is no answer to say that they are motivated by subversive political aims or that they have all been hoodwinked by nasty Arthur Scargill and the NUM leaders. We can read this kind of facile substitute for an explanation in the propaganda press.

Economics under capitalism are concerned first and foremost with price and profit. Production is regarded as "uneconomic" when investment of capital shows little or no prospect of leading to profit for the investor. Being "uneconomic" is not at all the same as being "useless". For example, dairy farming is currently "uneconomic" within the EEC countries because more milk is produced than can be sold profitably. However, milk is desperately needed by the 40,000 children who, according to UNICEF, die of starvation or malnutrition-caused diseases every single day. So, when the economic experts say that miners are producing too much coal, this excess relates to profit rather than need. Similarly, when they say that investment in certain miners is "uneconomic" this does not mean there is not plenty of coal in them, but that capital investment in mining such coal would be unprofitable.

Politicians like Thatcher have never forgiven the NUM for the success of their last strike. Responding to the feelings of many capitalists, her government wants to weaken the power of the miners. A leaked Cabinet Minute of 1979 explained that

A nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial proportion of electricity from disruption by miners and transport workers.

Economists are not paid to think about the devastation of the old mining communities which pit closures cause: destroying long-established ways of life does not appear on their balance sheets. Economists are not paid to register the harsh facts that more than half of the men attempting suicide are unemployed and that the rate of successful suicides in Britain has shot up during the present recession. Nor are they paid to bother themselves about the old workers who will die this winter because they are too poor to switch on a heater. Electricity output has been reduced because there is much less market demand for it by domestic consumers, while the non-recognition of real human demand leads to the totally unnecessary social disease of hypothermia. But none of these factors is of economic significance under capitalism: let communities be converted into industrial wastelands, let thousands of useful and energetic miners be forced into idleness, let thousands be cold for lack of coal-based heating.

There was once a time when miners, in the company of many other workers, were easily persuaded that the solution to the problems of the profit system was nationalisation of industry. If only the mines were owned and controlled by the government rather than by private capitalists, it was asserted, the miners would have little to worry about. Forty years ago Will Lawther, the President of the Mineworkers’ Federation of Great Britain (the predecessor to the NUM), asked readers to imagine what could be achieved through nationalisation:

It would win the complete confidence of the miners and their families. Generations of suspicion and hatred would be wiped out, and an entirely new attitude developed towards the coal industry . . . Only through public ownership can you really plan the effective use of Britain's coal resources, plan production on the basis of modernisation or mechanisation, and bring about complete unity between your export and domestic coalfields . . .

(Foreword to Britain's Coal by Margot Heinemann, 1944).
Lawther goes on to predict that nationalisation would "enormously improve output and make use even of old coalfields that are looked upon as being worked out" and that "only the nationalisation of the mines can win the confidence of the miners". One can forgive miners for having been taken in by these hopes for capitalism at the time, even if—it must be added—the Socialist Party of Great Britain was then pointing out to those who would listen that nationalisation offered no solution to the workers. But now, after decades of experience of state capitalism in action, it is politically inane for workers to imagine that nationalised industries are in any way immune from the economic laws of capitalism. The NCB, as the state employer, is just as exploitative and antagonistic to the workers' interests as were the old mine owners.

The second myth which needs to be dispelled is that the state—the government, the law, the judges, the police commanders—is neutral. The state must be the political defender of the ruling class. When thousands of miners are stopped from picketing, when hundreds of miners are beaten by the police and when the funds of the South Wales NUM are stolen by the courts, it is clear that the state exists to reinforce the needs of capital. It would make no difference if the Labour Party was running the state instead of the Tories. That is why, when the Labour Party was in office between 1964 and 1970, they closed down 48 pits and made over 50,000 miners unemployed in the South Wales region alone.

In the first three months of the strike one miner was arrested every twenty minutes—3,282 arrests in all. Over 80 per cent of these arrests were for "breach of the peace" or "obstruction". Obviously the government has instructed the police to use tough tactics in dealing with the strikers. The well-known television picture of a police officer beating a defenceless striker with a truncheon is but one of numerous examples of police brutality in a battle initiated by the state. But as ordinary workers, paid to do an unpleasant job, it is not the police workers on the picket lines who are to be blamed: the real culprits are the legally respectable and physically secure boot-boys who pull the strings of the state.

The NCB has increased its importation of cheap Polish coal which is one of the factors weakening the effects of the British miners' strike. The NUM now has an official picket outside the Polish Embassy, calling on the Polish bosses to suspend imports in order to strengthen the effects of the British strike. But when Polish miners attempted to set up an independent union of their own the President of the NUM (writing in his personal capacity) argued that such action constituted "sabotage" and that the Polish miners should be loyal to their state bosses. The capitalists, who not for the first time are benefiting from the tactic of Divide and Rule, must be laughing all the way to the bank as they import cheap coal from their "Communist" enemies. Reproduced below is the full text of a resolution published by the underground Solidarity union in the Warsaw region, first published in their illegal journal, CDN. It shows that the writers and supporters of this Polish resolution are thinking along internationalist lines:

For four months the British miners have been on strike against a programme of mass closures of mines for economic reasons. The miners are threatened with unemployment. The government has rejected compromise solutions and has resorted to severe police methods against the strikers. Thousands of miners have been arrested; hundreds have been hospitalised and one has been killed. The government of the Polish People's Republic, despite hypocritical condemnations of the activities of the British police in the columns of the regime press and by the regime's pseudo-trade unionists, is profiting from the export of coal to Britain. It sells dirt cheap coal which has been mined in scandalously neglected working conditions and with reckless condemnation of the labour force and the coalfield. The slave labour of the Polish miner serves to break the resistance of the British miner.
British miners! The true sentiments of Polish trade unionists towards the authorities of the Polish People's Republic and their practices was shown in the recent electoral farce which was boycotted by the workers. In the prevailing conditions of terror, the Polish workers' movement is at present not in a position to undertake protest actions. But you may be certain that as you have supported and are supporting our struggle, so we are in solidarity with you. We strongly oppose every case where force is used against workers struggling for their rights and interests. (Published in CDN, Mazowsze region, 26 June, 1984).

How painful it would be for the workers who produced the above resolution to know that the President, and several other key leaders, of the NUM believe that Solidarity should not exist. As the miners' strike has not been organised by socialists, it is not surprising that tactics have been employed with which we disagree. It is possible that the division within the NUM could have been avoided; full, democratic decision-making within the workers' movement is always the surest guarantee of strength.

But the miners' struggle has shown the importance of solidarity between workers of one county and another one country and another. The sense of common purpose and dedication which thousands of miners have shown during the strike contrasts sharply with many previous struggles in trade union history, where workers have been conned into co-operating in their rulers' interests. Let any miserable little cynic who says that workers are incapable of self-organised co-operation take a look at the tremendous achievements in communal self-help which strikers have set up.

Secondly, the strike has shown the Labour Party and its Leftist followers to be quite unable to point the miners in the direction of socialism. According to the theory, Leftists are supposed to wait for major struggles like this one in order to move in and tell the workers about the alternative to capitalism. In fact, the SWP, CP, WRP, RCP and numerous other inflatable vanguards have not produced a single leaflet between them urging the miners to transform their demands into the political aim of abolishing the wages system. As for the Labour Party, Neil Kinnock and his fellow mis-leaders have had little to offer but empty rhetoric. After all, every time the Labourites stand up in the House of Commons to tell the Tories how wicked they are, the Tories have been able to quote chapter and verse showing that previous Labour governments have run the mines in just the same way-to meet the demands of the profit system.

In any strike between robbers and robbed (with the exception of political strikes, such as when the dockers opposed immigration or the Labourites ran their phoney day of action) the Socialist Party is unequivocally on the side of the robbed. In the class war no worker and no political party can be neutral. But in expressing solidarity with workers in struggle, we point out that our sympathy and their temporary gains will be meaningless unless victory involves winning the war and not just one battle. To win the class war workers must organise as a class for the conquest of the earth and all its resources. No lesser victory is worth settling for.

(September 1984)
Leftist Wonderland: Militant in Liverpool

For those of you who are confused about what’s been going on at Liverpool City Council, here are the facts:

Militant is a newspaper. The people who sell it are members of the Labour Party, although they don’t support it, and supporters of Militant (the tendency, not the newspaper) although they are not members of it. The Labour Party leaders are neither members nor supporters of Militant (the tendency), and neither do they sell Militant (the newspaper), although you can never be sure since Militant newspaper sellers are notoriously shy about coming out.

The Labour Party leaders want to expel Militant supporters from the party since they think that they are wrecking Neil Kinnock’s chances of moving into Downing Street after the next general election. They claim that Militant (the tendency) is in breach of the Labour Party’s constitution since they operate as a party within the Labour Party, with different aims and objectives. But Labour’s leaders are worried that to expel Militant might upset other Labour supporters and also, presumably, damage Neil Kinnock’s election chances. So instead of expelling supporters of Militant, they have suspended the whole of the Labour Party in Liverpool—home of the Tendency’s most vociferous spokesperson, Derek Hatton, who they especially want to get rid of. (There are rumours that at least some supporters of Militant are no longer so keen on supporting Hatton, but maybe we shouldn’t make this any more complicated than it already is.)

Militant in Liverpool are very upset that the Labour Party is treating them in this way and assert that they, unlike the Labour leadership, are the real guardians of Labour Party conference decisions since they are resisting “Tory cuts” and fighting to “save the jobs and services for the people of Liverpool”, and want to institute Clause Four of the Labour Party’s constitution (the one stating that the Labour Party is committed to nationalisation). The Labour Party conference is supposed to be the main policy-making body of the party, but the leadership ignores conference decisions when they don’t like them. So, just to recap, Militant, which doesn’t agree with the Labour Party, is upholding its constitution and decisions made at conference, while the leadership, who do support the Labour Party, are ambivalent about nationalisation and Kinnock has said that he will ignore conference decisions if he doesn’t agree with them. But it is Militant that looks set to be thrown out of the Labour Party for a breach of the constitution, while Kinnock is increasingly regarded as the party’s saviour.

The Militant leaders of Liverpool City Council, as already mentioned, claim that they are fighting to preserve jobs and services. As part of their strategy to do this they sent out redundancy notices to 31,000 local authority workers and looked set to close council-run facilities like day-care centres for the elderly and handicapped, children’s homes, libraries, sports centres and swimming pools. Their concern for the workers of Liverpool was such that they asked them to work for nothing after they received their redundancy notices. The workers however could not understand how this was helping them (not surprising, Militant would say, since to them workers are too stupid to recognise their real interests and so need leaders like Militant to protect their interests for them). Teachers in Liverpool took the City Council to court and managed to get an injunction against the redundancy notices. But it wasn’t just the teachers who were too stupid to understand that Militant were looking after their interests; just about every trade union with members working for the local authority have also shown signs of “stupidity” by expressing their hostility to the leadership.

Militant also claims to be working for racial harmony in Liverpool and to that end they appointed a community relations officer. That appointment has resulted in almost every community group representing black people in Liverpool refusing to have anything to do with either the council or the community relations officer and trade unions have advised their members not to co-operate with him. So much for racial harmony and community relations.

Finally, Militant claims to be “socialist”. Apart from the doubt cast on this idea by their membership of the anti-socialist Labour Party, their support for state-capitalism, their undemocratic organisation, their patronising attitude to their fellow workers, besides all that, this “socialist” tendency has just accepted £30 million from those well-known supporters of socialism, the Gnomes of Zurich, to bail them out.
So, to sum up: Militant are members of the Labour Party although they don’t agree with the Labour Party. Labour’s leaders want them out because they are in breach of the party’s constitution even though the leadership itself does not honour decisions made at the party’s conference. Derek Hatton and his fellow Militants on Liverpool City Council claim to be acting on behalf, and in the interests, of the working class of Liverpool and demonstrate this by threatening workers with the sack or asking them to work for nothing. They claim to be “socialist” but are quite happy to take money from a bunch of capitalist financiers who are no doubt rubbing their hands with glee at the prospect of making a financial killing from all the interest they are going to receive on this loan.

Still confused? So you should be!

(January 1986)
All yuppies now?

Are you young—upwardly mobile—professional? Are you the sort of person who buys downtown slums and fits them out with designer furniture and hand-painted blinds? Do you drive the sort of car which people who work in car factories can never afford to drive, listen to Suzanne Vega albums on compact discs, and check the share index in both the *FT* and *The Independent* to make sure that your highly ethical investments are looking as healthy as you do after you’ve been for your six-monthly BUPA check-up? If the answer is yes - sorry, yah - to those questions it is probable that you are a member of The Class of ‘87 - the yuppies.

Under capitalism there are two classes: the capitalists who rob and the workers who are robbed. But of course, as all trendy-minded readers will know, capitalism is not what it used to be. The working class - those cloth-capped fossils who dig coal and drive trains and have dirt under their fingernails and say things like “gawd blimey, mister” and “You can’t beat ‘er Majesty and ‘arold Wilson” - has apparently vanished. The corpse has been buried by a team of sociologists-cum-undertakers who write for *Marxism Today* who have conducted a thorough search of the wine bars of Covent Garden and can find no trace of any horny-handed sons of toil. Even the holy trinity of the new left - Eric Hobsbawm, Ralph Miliband and Jeremy Seabrook - have announced in the columns of that robust proletarian journal, the *Guardian*, that the proletariat (they who work in factories and vote Labour) are missing, feared dead - or, worse still, “up North”.

Both the left and the right wings of capitalism (not to mention the centre, which constitutes the Liberals and the SDP and David Owen who singularly represents the real centre) are sure that capitalism as described by Marx and the Socialist Party is old hat. Now we all live under Thatcherism. No longer are there masters and wage slaves; these are disgusting remnants of the past, entertained only in the deranged minds of people like the present writer who, in revolutionary obstinacy, insists that everyone he ever meets is either one of the bosses or one of the bossed. But if you accept the new line - as propagated by Thatcher and swallowed by her enemies in their own haste to sound indignant about it - we now live in the age of popular capitalism. And under popular capitalism you are all in one of three classes (unless, of course, you are the Queen or one of the other aristocratic parasites, in which case you are where you always were: rich, idle and useless). But the rest of us are either in class A - people who’ve made it, or class B - people who are making it (yuppies), or class C - people who can’t make it because they are too stupid or won’t make it because they like living in squalor.

Now the object of this so-called Thatcherism is to “make it”. Needless to say, “making it” bears no relation to making anything. If you go around producing goods and services you’ll never get on in the City. “Making it” means making money. You get other people to produce goods and services and you exploit them. If you are a yuppie you are not yet in the exploiting class. (In fact - don’t tell the yuppies, now - you never will be). But you act like you are heading in that direction. You do the dirty work for the capitalists. The so-called yuppie class are simply the errand boys and girls for the capitalists. They are paid extra for taking on themselves the problems of the exploiting class.
According to the Thatcher propaganda, we are all becoming capitalists now. This is a load of old twaddle. Firstly, only 19 percent of the British population owned any shares in the week before the BP share sell-off. So even if you define all shareholders as capitalists (which is a daft definition), that means that over 80 percent of British people are outside this new capitalist class. But it is not the case that workers who buy a few shares are capitalists. The test of whether you are a capitalist is easy: give up selling yourself for a wage or salary and see how long you can live on your share dividends - if you’re on the last can of baked beans within a fortnight you have proved that whatever you are you are not a capitalist. The capitalist class are those people who can live without having to work: they invest in the labour of others.

Secondly, if Thatcher’s policies meant that we did all become capitalists there would be no wage slaves left to produce our profits for us. If we all became the Queen, who would we have to wave at, who would there be to bring us our dinner on a silver tray? It is a necessity of class society that superiority for some can only logically exist at the expense of inferiority for most. Thirdly, there has in fact been a record number of bankruptcies under the present Conservative government. The capitalist recession is not creating vast numbers of new capitalists, as the government liars state, but squeezing out large numbers of cockroach capitalists who land with a bump into the growing ranks of the wage and salary earning class. The notion that the workers are enjoying greater prosperity than ever and that poverty is an obsolete conception is not only a myth but an unforgivable insult. Go to the Docklands area of East London - the showpiece of resplendent yuppiedom - and you will find thousands of workers without jobs or much money who are being driven out of their area because the gamblers of the City have decided to redevelop it for their own purpose.

It is not only the Tories who preach the virtues of the new yuppie vision. Nor is it confined to the Alliance whose dream of the new Jerusalem is everyone sending their kids to progressive “independent” (exclusive, private, fee-paying) schools and driving Volvos with push-button windows. The silly old Labour Party has decided to fall in love with the yuppies too. Bryan Gould, the genius who masterminded the Labour Party’s spectacular defeat earlier this year (next time they’re hiring a computer linked up to an opinion poll teleprinter to organise it for them), has decided that Labour needs to speak to a wider constituency. What this means is that Labour needs to work harder at convincing Tories that their shares are safe in Labour’s hand. Gould wants Labour to go for the yuppie vote. After all, Ben Elton has made a packet posing as a socialist appealing to just such an audience. As ever, the Labour Party’s tactical astuteness bears a strong relationship to a wino negotiating his way to the bus shelter. Just when the Labourites decided that there’s nothing wrong with what Thatcher says about workers getting in on the Stock Exchange, what does the old Stock Exchange do? It crashes. The opportunism of the Labour Party is boundless, as they merrily proceed to urge workers to buy council houses and invest in private medical insurance and shares - as long as they’re ethical. (Marxism Today - the theoretical organ of the Lefty Yuppie Party - is now advertising a company which will advise pseudo-Marxists with a conscience which shares they should buy if they don’t want to exploit people.)

The yuppie left has become one of the more grotesque eyesores of 1980s politics. In the good old days lefties would waste our time discussing whether Russia was a deformed workers’ state or a degenerate workers’ state or a workers’ state with minor deformities; they would quote (and often
misquote) bits from Marx and insist that we Sodalist Party members had failed to study our Trotsky. No longer is such rhetoric prevalent (except in Chesterfield, of course, where the whole population is currently undergoing a Collected Works of Trotsky reading course). These days the yuppie left are into “feeling Green”. If you don’t know what it is to feel Green and put yourselves in the position of a baby seal you have no right to call yourself a socialist. Coffee-picking in Nicaragua is all the rage now (even Jimmy Carter’s at it) and singing South African liberation songs at book stalls displaying pamphlets about the need for armed struggle in the Third World written by Paul Foot who lives in Hampstead. If you are a male you must become what the yuppie left calls a new man, which means that you are extremely patronising to women (who are all your sisters) and must endure the rest of your life on a permanent guilt trip for the crime of being a potential rapist. It is little wonder that most wage slaves prefer the down-to-earth callousness of Norman Tebbit and his fellow gangsters to the phony, self-righteous, condescending, half-baked outlook of the trendy yuppies who constitute the left-wing of capitalist politics.

The Socialist Party is not out to win over the yuppies. We do not appeal to the “middle class” any more than we appeal to the Wizard of Oz or the residents of Albert Square, Walford. We do not seek to trim our message to suit the prejudices of fictitious classes of people. We direct what we have to say at the working class - all workers, be they paid in wages or salaries, whether they wear overalls or carry filofaxes. Socialists do not make the leftist error of imagining that the true workers are those who live in council flats and stand on the terraces at football matches. Nor do we believe that so-called yuppies, most of whom are simply entertaining the self-delusion of privilege, are anything but workers. We have no grudge against workers who are making an extra crust out of capitalism. But they would be fools to be bought off by crusts and crumbs. The yuppies of the right who imagine that they are part of Thatcher’s new elite will find out the hard way which class they are in and yuppies of the left who feel guilty for being “privileged” people like teachers and social workers should stop boring the rest of us with the needless guilt.

Where are the Greens going?

Even if turns out to be a mere flash in the pan, the result of the Euro-elections in Britain were rather remarkable. The Green Party polled some 2.3 million votes (one in seven of those who bothered to vote), overtaking the SLD (or whatever the Liberals are now called) and even pushing Labour into third place in six constituencies. This is the first time that a party to the "left", in conventional terms, of the Labour Party has been able to make such a breakthrough, even if it can be doubted whether most of its voters saw themselves as voting for a radical alternative to Labour.

That the Greens have a far more radical programme than Labour is not open to any doubt. While Labour now openly stands for trying to run the profit system better than the Tories, the Green Party has as its long-term aim the establishment of what it calls a "Sustainable Society". This it defines in its basic policy document *Manifesto for a Sustainable Society* as one in which "all constituents of the environment all activities under human control" are maintained in balance through not "using resources faster than they can be replaced, nor creating effects or products which cannot be assimilated indefinitely by the environment". Such a society could only function, the Green Party says, "within an interlocking system of small communities each as self-sufficient as possible in the necessities of life and in its own management", in which these "small, relatively self-sufficient, self-governing communities can coexist harmoniously within the framework of a greater nation and the World as a whole".
In a recent debate with the Socialist Party, the Green Party candidate for the London West Euro-
constituency put it this way:

The Green Party . . . offers the concept of non-polluting, sustainable, human-scale
communities. No one looking for more than they need. No one striving for more than they
need. No one striving for more and more to dress up their lives. Why should they? A real
community knows what it needs. It looks after its own and it cares for the people around it.
The success of its neighbours is part of its own success. The success of its own broad reason
is part of the success of each smaller part. And knowing how every community intermeshes
within the world, each community will want success for each other, throughout the world. We
see a Europe of Regions where each region is built as sustainable human scale communities,
each more or less self-sufficient, each taking no more than it needs. Trade is almost unknown.
The economy is run on sustainable lines. We see a Europe of regions where we have broken
the power of the multinationals and set the agenda for all the Continent. We see a Europe of
Regions that will be joined by the rest of the world (Jeremy Hywel-Davies, 5 May 1989).

So, what is being proposed is the abolition both of the world market, with the competition for
resources and sales it engenders, and of existing centralised states, and their replacement by a
worldwide network of smaller human communities providing for their own needs. This is a
proposition so radically different from the profit-oriented national market economy Labour espouses
that one Labour MEP, Carol Tongue, was moved to remark that it was "reminiscent of the visions of
some early 19th century French socialists" (New Ground No 16, Winter 1987/8), not that the Labour Party knows
anything about socialism.

Although it would only be in the context of a socialist world that a worldwide network of
decentralised, self-reliant communities could be established (not that this is necessarily the form
socialism will take, though it is a form that has been favoured by some socialists, William Morris for
instance), socialism is not in fact the right word since the Green Party and nearly all Green thinkers
and writers see buying and selling as continuing within the smaller self-reliant communities they
advocate (Murray Bookchin is one notable exception). Nevertheless, for a party committed to such a
radically different conception of how society should be run to make a political breakthrough can only
raise the level of political debate. Questions such as how can we free production from the tyranny of
the world market, what are our needs, are smaller-scale human communities self-sufficient in basic
needs desirable and possible, by what can we replace centralised states—these are the sort of
questions that we would prefer to see people discussing rather than such irrelevant trivialities as
should Britain join the EMS or would Kinnock make a good Prime Minister.

There is, however, the key question of how to get from here to there. The Green Party is committed to
a gradualist, reformist strategy: seeking support on the basis of a programme of environmentalist
reforms for the election of a Green Party government that would take steps to reduce Britain's
dependence on the world market (by imposing import controls, discouraging exports).
Such a strategy won't work as the experience of the Labour Party has shown. The case of the Labour Party is relevant here in that they too originally set out to impose on capitalism something—in their case, social measures in favour of the working class—that was contrary to its nature as a profit-driven system. The Greens are also setting out to impose on capitalism something that is incompatible with its nature and, if their electoral support were to grow sufficiently to allow them to form the government, they would sooner or later come up against this restraint and learn that they could not proceed except at the expense of provoking an economic crisis, as inevitably happens when governments try to make the profit system work other than as a profit system, which would undermine their electoral support. Green government would then be faced with the choice of compromising with the system or abdicating. If the experience of Labour is anything to go by, they (or most of them) will compromise, justifying this on the grounds that a Green government of capitalism will at least be better than a Tory one.

A gap between the aims of Green Party activists and their voters is already evident. Very few of their voters in the Euro-elections will have voted for their long-term aim of abolishing the world market and centralised states; most won't even have voted for their programme of environmentalist reforms but simply used the occasion to express a justified concern about food contamination and pollution generally.

The Greens are facing the same choice of strategy as did the first socialists in Britain at the end of the 19th century: to build up support on the basis of the maximum programme of fundamental social change and remain small till people have become convinced of the need for the change in question or to build up support on the basis of reforms within the system and grow faster but at the price of abandoning the maximum programme or relegating it to a vague remote, non-operational long-term objective.

This dilemma is recognised by some Greens and, interestingly, the same language is being used to categorise the two competing (mutually exclusive, in fact) strategies as came into use in the socialist movement. In their recent book *The Coming of the Greens* Jonathan Porritt and David Winner distinguished between environmentalists (or "light greens") and radical greens (or "dark greens"). Environmentalism, they say, "is essentially a reformist movement, based on the premise that industrialism can be perfected, or at least improved, to the point where it no longer endangers the environment". They add that "probably about 95 percent of the uses of the word 'green' fir into this category", as, we would add, do 95 percent of Green Party voters. As to the others:

By virtue of being so far removed from power, there has always been an irrepressible streak of utopianism within the Green Party. A good thing too, some would say, in a visionless age. But this utopianism has a tendency to degenerate into 'impossibilism', manifested in a series of green-prints for the future which seem oblivious of where we are starting from in the present.
If, or more probably as, the Greens continue their present strategy of building up support for environmentalist reforms within the system rather than for their longer-term aims, then the original members can be expected to be pushed aside by aspiring Centrist politicians, from within their own ranks as well as deserters from the moribund Liberals, and derided as "fundamentalists", "utopians" and "impossibilists". Then the vision of a radically different world to today's will be thrown overboard and we'll be back to discussing whether Britain should join the EMS. Alternatively, Greens who want a radical transformation of the world can stick to their principles but come to realise, as Socialists have done, that a sustainable society can only be achieved within the context of a world in which all the Earth's resources, natural and industrial, have become the common heritage, under democratic control at local, regional and world level, of all humanity.

(August 1989)
Why the Left needs a Thatcher

So, Thatcher is dead, the victim of a rotten egg that she told the workers it was safe to eat. The offending chicken has been ritually slaughtered by the Guildford Association of Conservative Ladies. The funeral cortège passes slowly through the streets of London, which have been cleared of beggars the night before. Behind the coffin march vast rows of stockbrokers and workers with red-rimmed glasses and portable telephones; they have gone from deepest Surrey and deepest Sussex, from Hants and Herts and Bucks and Beds. In Dorset the firm selling black armbands (made by cheap labour in Hong Kong, of course) is expecting a boom. The cops and soldiers, saddened by the loss of an Empress, pacified by the overtime bonus paid out for funeral duties, march tearfully. Behind them shuffle the silly old proles who will weep at anything: they wept when Charles and Di got married and when the Queen Mother swallowed a trout bone (who would have believed she'd outlive Thatcher) and when The Firm got Dirty Den in Eastenders. They cried with joy when they received the letter telling them that Maggie was going to let them buy their council slum, and with fear when a letter came informing them that the whole estate had been bought by a property company on the Isle of Dogs. The media whores march along, forgiving the old girl for her excesses; after all, she was a character to write about. And who is this tailing on to the procession? They are weeping more than anyone. They feel deserted, they have lost a cause, Satan has descended to Hell and the children of righteous have no-one to blame for their misfortunes. With Thatcher goes into the grave Thatcherism: a decade of leftist illusion being carried away to be chewed up by the worms. What will they do without her?

The British Left needs Margaret Thatcher. Bankrupt of ideas or vision, all that is left for them to do is detest hers. The Left rarely talks of capitalism—except, as at the Labour conference last year, when Kinnock said that his government would have to run it better than the Tories. The aim of the left-wing has always been to establish state capitalism, the profit system planned centrally by a miracle-performing state. Eight Labour governments have demonstrated that the miracle cannot be performed. Whoever runs it, the capitalist system must exploit and oppress the working class; that is its inherent nature. So, the debate on the Left is about how to run capitalism. And to do the job as ruthlessly and callously as the system demands has come to be called Thatcherism.

Most of the Thatcher policies are hated by the Left for good reasons. Thatcher is a militant class warrior. Not even The Daily Express would ever have called Wilson or Callaghan that. Laws have been passed in the past ten years which have hurt workers and blunted our instruments of self-defence. The unions have taken a battering; services like the NHS, which Labour had boasted was the cream of the reformist gains, have been attacked and then attacked again. It is understandable that many workers see in Thatcher the personification of all that is wrong in society. The question they must ask themselves is, Would society have been a much better place to live in had Thatcher never come into office? The answer, based on the hard evidence of history, is that Thatcher has not been governing capitalism, but that it has governed her. Just as it governed the Labour government before she came to power. That is why the last Labour Chancellor of the Exchequer, Denis Healey, introduced the policy of monetarism as a means of cutting the state budget in a bid to deal with inflation. It was under the last Labour government that expenditure limits within the NHS were first introduced. It was the last Labour government which took on the low-paid workers of NUPE and NALGO in the winter of 1978—when Callaghan told the unions that they would have to take cuts in real wages. Back in the mid-Seventies there were "Fight The Cuts" rallies being organised across the country. Whose cuts were being fought but those of the last Labour government? It was under the last Labour government that unemployment doubled to the then "wholly unacceptable" level of one and a half million.
And those Thatcher policies which Labour did not implement before 1979, they are now ready to accept as their own. Before 1979 Labour was opposed to British membership of the Common Market. Now they agree with Thatcher that Britain should stay in. Labour was opposed to selling off council houses. It is now Labour policy to sell them. Labour was opposed to selling off nationalised services, such as Telecom. It is now official Labour policy not to take back such services from private hands, lest the votes of the shareholders be lost. Labour made noises of opposition to the monstrous Tory laws aimed to limit union powers. Kinnock is now on record as opposing any substantial alteration to those laws in the event of a future Labour government. So, where does the Labour Party actually disagree with the wicked Thatcher who is supposed to stand for everything that they are against?

Membership of NATO? Both parties agree that Britain should stay in. Troops in Ireland? Both parties want to keep them there. The nuclear bomb? With passionate unilateralists like Neil Kinnock, the men at the Pentagon need no fears that both British parties of capitalism will be with them on the day. The chief differences between Thatcher and Kinnock are these: she admits to being a swine who will do whatever the system requires of her, he lies about it; she is in power, he is not.

Some of the Left are of the view that capitalism has been fundamentally changed by the Thatcher years. It is no longer the same system. It is now a new phenomenon called Thatcherism. It is, to be frank, very difficult to know what such people are talking about. The Communist Party's latest policy document New Times claims that we are now living in a period of "post-Fordism" in which the old working class has disappeared and been replaced by a new Thatcherite breed. The CP's response to these "new times" is to seek some sort of broad, popular front reform movement, comprising every brand of political timewaster from the SNP to the SDP, with a view to offering the voters a better lifestyle under the system than Thatcher has offered them. The entire theory is flawed by two basic mistakes.

Firstly, the working class never was just that group of people who wore cloth caps and worked on the line at Ford. "Post-Fordism" is a mourning at the funeral of a class which has not disappeared at all, but is now exploited in new areas of the economy. There are vastly more workers in the service industries now than in manufacturing, and over the last ten years the move away from making to selling has been a characteristic of the European and US economies. But the workers in these countries are still wage (and salary) slaves, legally robbed by their employers. You don't have to be a miner to be in the class struggle.

Secondly, the assumption that the way to fight a system is to concentrate all of your forces into defeating its leader of the moment is as foolish politically as it would be militarily for the Warsaw Pact to imagine that it could win the next world war by knocking off the current head of NATO. The Communist Party theorists argue that the crucial battle is at election time when a non-Tory alliance must win the day and slay the Thatcherite dragon. But what if a new dragon in the form of an Owen or a Kinnock or a Hattersley is elected instead? Surely, it is the job description and not the person appointed to do the job which is the real issue. The point of the battle should be to put an end to the dirty job of running capitalism. But, disloyal to the working-class interest in its death throes as much as it was at the outset, the CP is of the view that it is better to have capitalism run by "the lesser evil". And who are they, who spent most of their political history telling us that Stalin was "the lesser evil", to advise the workers on such matters? The foolish tactical plans of Professor Eric Hobsbawm for a broad anti-Thatcher alliance are to the cause of socialism what Groucho was to Marxism.
Back in 1979 the Socialist Party took the same principled position that we take now. We are opposed to capitalism and all who seek to run it. We do not want reformed capitalism or the profit system better managed. We are not looking for "nice" leaders or any kind of leaders for the workers to follow. The wages system is against the interest of the workers and only workers' self-emancipation will solve the problems that we face. We were told not to waste our time upon such revolutionary ambitions. Many on the Left urged us to join the Labour Party and achieve what little could be achieved. After all, that was the party of the workers, so we were told. The present writer was even urged by Neil Kinnock no less (when the latter was Shadow Minister of Education and the former was a persistent questioner at a meeting) to join the Labour Party and help swell the ranks of "real socialists". We were told that with just a little harder push Tony Benn would take the leadership and set the world ablaze. those who joined the Labour Party in 1979 have not had much for their subscription money. The Tories have won three elections, with millions of trade unionists voting for them, despite the fact that the union leaders count them in as affiliated members of the Labour Party. Foot was elected as Labour leader (to loud cheers from the Left) and proved to be an utter failure; then Kinnock was elected as the Left's choice against Hattersley. Now Kinnock is detested by the Labour Left—before he has even had a chance to betray them in power.

Most political commentators, and most of the more candid Labour leaders, do not think that the Labour Party will win the next general election. Indeed, a split in the Labour Party is on the cards. Where Labour is in power locally it has shown that it can be just as ruthless at cutting essential services as the Tories. In short, after ten years of degrading and unprincipled compromise of the few principles that they once had, the Left stands without much hope, without much support and with a few cranky theories of further opportunism about joining with Dr Owen, the Greens and the Nats to form a reformist alliance. The so-called hard left retreats annually to Chesterfield to lick its wounds, praise the achievements of Gorbachev and listen with devotion to the guru, Benn. The other hangers-on to the Labour Party (who have urged workers to vote for them in every election) have turned into parodies of themselves. The Workers' Revolutionary Party is now busy singing the praises of the Russian dictators and the SWP has degenerated further than ever, existing now as a group engaged in a few single-issue reform campaigns, such as opposition to the poll tax and—the sign of real senility—support for the Khomeni regime in its territorial conflict with Iraq. The Left which warned the Socialist Party that we would be left behind while they stormed the fortress has been left seriously wounded, largely by its own utter lack of principles.

That is why the Left needs a Thatcher. It needs that hideous voice and that look of contempt that leaves you in no doubt that you are being politically abused by the woman even when she is simply telling you the time. The hope of the Left is that hatred of Thatcher will cover up the fact that the opposition has nothing to offer in her place. The Socialist Party does have a clear alternative to the mean-minded narrowness of what Thatcher stands for. And when Thatcher is cold in her grave and another despicable faker is mouthing her lies, the call to the workers to transcend this system of misery will be as fresh and as urgent as ever.

(May 1989)
Economic causes of the Gulf War

The Prussian militarist Clausewitz declared that war was "nothing but the continuation of politics by other means". He would have been nearer the truth if he had said that war was the continuation of economics by other means. Since the onset of capitalism five hundred years ago wars have been caused by conflicts of economic interest over sources of raw materials, trade routes, markets, investment outlets and strategic points and places to secure and protect these. The threatening war in the Middle East is no exception to this rule, and in fact strikingly confirms the socialist analysis of the cause of war.

Although it is rather obvious that what is at stake is oil, both sides try to play this down. Bush and Thatcher say that Saddam Hussein is a dictator whose expansionist ambitions must be checked in the interests of world peace. Saddam Hussein says that he has struck a blow for Arab Nationalism by eliminating a state tailor-made by Western imperialism to suit its interests. Saddam Hussein is a dictator and he has taken over a state created by Western imperialism, but it is not for these reasons that the West is preparing to go to war. The Western powers tolerate dictators when it suits their interests. In fact they tolerated, financed and armed Saddam Hussein himself when they needed someone to prevent Iran under Khomeini coming to dominate the Gulf area and threaten their oil supplies. And they tolerated the Indonesian invasion and annexation of East Timor in 1975 as they had that of Goa by India in 1961 without shrieking that world peace and order were threatened. The difference was that, while in East Timor and Goa only carrots grew, Kuwait is situated right in the middle of the world's largest and lowest-cost oilfields.

Oil and Empire

British imperialism made Kuwait, which remained nominally part of the Ottoman Empire, a "protectorate" in 1899. This was done not for its oil resources, which nobody even suspected existed, but for its strategic position.

At the time Imperial Germany, already squaring up to Britain in the inter-imperialist rivalry which eventually broke out as the First World War, was planning to build a railway that would extend from Europe through Turkey and Mesopotamia down to the Persian Gulf. This was the Berlin to Baghdad railway of history book fame and, if completed, would have represented an alternative and rival to the British-controlled Suez Canal as a trade route to and from the Indian Ocean and the Far East. Kuwait, a small port and pearl-fishing centre at the northern end of the Gulf ruled by a sheik called Al-Sabah, was the likely terminus for the German project. So it was "protected" by British imperialism, to thwart German imperialism.

Oil, however, was soon discovered near Kuwait, first in Persia and then in Mesopotamia. Britain acquired complete control of the Persian oilfields but those of Mesopotamia had to be shared with Germany. As Turkey had entered the First World War on the side of German imperialism, the British and French imperialists made plans to carve up the Ottoman Empire amongst themselves in the event of victory. A secret agreement in 1916 gave what is now Syria, Lebanon and the northern part of Iraq to France, and Palestine and what is now Jordan and the southern part of Iraq to Britain. Almost as soon as the agreement had been signed, someone in the Foreign Office realised that a ghastly mistake had been made: northern Mesopotamia contained the oilfields of Mosul and Kirkuk. The French were persuaded on some pretext to agree to a rectification, and after the war the spoils were divided along the lines of today's Middle Eastern states. Iran is just as much an artificial creation of Western imperialism as Kuwait, though its ruling class ought to be grateful that perfide Albion outwitted French imperialism, otherwise its northern oilfields would be in Syria.
Britain creates Kuwait

Kuwait remained a British protectorate when Iraq became an independent state in 1932, but the new Iraqi rulers were not happy about being deprived of a secure outlet to the Persian Gulf. A glance at a map of Iraq will show that it only has two possible outlets to the sea. The first is via the Shatt al Arab river, but this is shared with Iran. The second is via an inlet to the west, access to which is controlled by two islands belonging to Kuwait.

At one time—in the fifties when Iraq under a pro-Western king and government seemed firmly anchored in the Western camp through its membership of CENTO, the Middle Eastern equivalent of NATO—British officials considered making some concessions to Iraq on this issue, but this was blocked by the Al-Sabah dynasty. The Emir of Kuwait, which since 1946 had become an oil-producing area with huge reserves, proved to be the better judge of his interests. On 14 July 1958, the king of Iraq and his pro-western prime minister were overthrown and killed in a military coup led by pro-Nasser army officers. The British Foreign Minister, Selwyn Lloyd, rushed to Washington to discuss the crisis. On 19 July he sent a secret telegram, recently released under the thirty-year rule, to Macmillan, the Prime Minister, in which he reported:

I am sure that you are considering anxiously the problem of Kuwait. One of the most reassuring features of my talks here has been the complete United States solidarity with us over the Gulf. They are assuming that we will take firm action to maintain our position in Kuwait. They themselves are disposed to act with similar resolution in relation to the Aramco oilfields in the area of Dhahran, although the logistics are not worked out. They assume that we will also hold Bahrain and Qatar, come what may. They agree that at all costs these oilfields must be kept in Western hands. The immediate problem is whether it is good tactics to occupy Kuwait against the wishes of the ruling family.

Selwyn Lloyd went on to discuss the options, including turning Kuwait from a protectorate into a colony, i.e., annexing it as Iraq has just done, but rejected this in favour of another option:

On balance, I feel it very much to our advantage to have a kind of Kuwaiti Switzerland where the British do not exercise physical control. (Independent, 13 September).

This was the solution eventually adopted and in 1961 Kuwait was granted "independence" in the sense of no longer being subject to direct "physical control" by Britain. Iraq immediately moved its troops up to the border—and British troops had to be rushed in to prop up the artificial Middle Eastern "Switzerland" that their government had just set up.

Kuwait survived and its rulers prospered. Thanks to revenues from oil, the ruling Al- Sabah dynasty became one of the richest families in the world, overtaken only by fellow oil nouveaux riches the Saudi royals and the Sultan of Brunei, and far surpassing other dynastic billionaires like the Queen of England and Juliana of the Netherlands.

The Shatt al Arab War

Iraq meanwhile also developed its oil resources and revenues, which were mainly used to build up its armed forces so strengthening the grip of the military on the state. Iraqi politics came to consist of coups and plots and counter-plots amongst the leaders of the armed forces. Out of these Saddam Hussein emerged as top dog in 1979.
The current Iraqi regime, though in fact a military dictatorship pursuing the national interests of Iraqi capitalism, has as its ideology the Pan-Arab Nationalism of the Baath party. Iraq, however, is by no means purely an Arab country since up to a quarter of its population speak Kurdish rather than Arabic, and the attempt to impose Baathism in the 1970s led to a revival of the armed revolt of Kurdish nationalists in the North of the country, where the oilfields of Mosul and Kirkuk are situated—which explains why Iraq has been prepared to use all means, including, more recently, poison gas, to retain the area.

This revolt was encouraged as a means of weakening Iraq by the Shah of Iran, whose country had a long-standing dispute with Iraq over the control of the Shatt al Arab river. The dispute went back to the time of the first commercial exploitation of Iranian oil before the First World War and concerned Iran's demand for access and protection for its bordering oil wells and installations.

The Shatt al Arab is the name of the river formed by the confluence of the Euphrates and the Tigris. From the Iranian town of Khorramshahr to the sea it forms the frontier between Iraq and Iran. Safe, free navigation in this waterway is absolutely vital to Iraq as its main port, Basra, can only be reached via the Shatt al Arab. Without this, Iraq becomes virtually a land-locked country, dependent on other countries for the transit of its imports and the export of its main product, oil. Its vulnerability in this respect was well illustrated by the ease and speed with which the pipelines via Turkey and Saudi Arabia were closed to enforce UN sanctions (and by the fact that a third pipeline via Syria had long been closed by the Syrian government for political reasons).

The Shah's strategy worked and in 1975 a treaty was signed between Iraq and Iran under which Iraq ceded control of the eastern side of the Shatt al Arab to Iran in return for Iran withdrawing its support for the Kurdish nationalists. When, however, the Shah was overthrown in 1979 and Iran began to slip into chaos, the tables were turned. The Iraqi ruling class decided to use the occasion to attack Iran and regain control of the whole of the Shatt al Arab and perhaps more. So began, in 1980, one of the longest and bloodiest wars of modern history. The war lasted eight years and led to the death of about one million people—all for control of a strategic commercial waterway.

The Western powers were happy to let the war go on, using Iraq to block any Iranian take-over of the Gulf region. When, however, Iran began to attack shipping in the Gulf in 1987, the West was forced to send its own taskforce of warships and warplanes to the area to protect the free flow of its oil supplies.

**Why Iraq invaded Kuwait**

The war ended in 1988, in a stalemate, with Iraq in control of some Iranian territory but with the port of Basra blocked. This put pressure on Iraq to turn to its other possible outlet to the sea: that blocked by Kuwaiti control of the islands of Warba and Bubiyan.

The Iraq-Iran war strikingly confirmed a point made in 1938 by the Iraqi Foreign Minister in discussions with his British counterpart:

> Iraq would like to rent a piece of land from Kuwait for establishing a deep harbour and connecting it to the Basra railway line, since Iraq could not guarantee navigational safety on the Shatt al-Arab in the case of an Iraq-Iran dispute. (Quoted in press release on "The Political Background to the Current Events" issued by the Iraqi Press Office, London, on 12 September, pp 16-17).
The present Iraqi Foreign Minister, Tariq Aziz, has made it quite clear that Iraq's motives for taking over Kuwait were economic, commercial and strategic. In a letter on *The Kuwait Question* sent to all foreign ministers on 4 September he denounced Britain for having created and sustained since 1899 an "artificial entity called Kuwait" which cut off Iraq from "its natural access to the waters of the Arab Gulf", and went on to say that all Iraqi governments since the establishment of the state of Iraq in 1924 had insisted that Iraq must have Kuwait to guarantee its commercial and economic interests and provide it with the requirements necessary for the defence of its national security.

King Hussein of Jordan brought out the same point, in a message broadcast on the American TV network CNN on 22 September, when he said that Iraq had been seeking:

> an agreement with Kuwait that would secure it an independent access to the sea which it considers of vital national interest.

The phrase "vital national interest", invoked by both sides in the threatening war, is the key as in the mealy-mouthed language of diplomacy this refers to issues over which states are prepared to go to war in the last resort.

Iraq emerged from its war with Iran with a huge financial debt and a desperate need for money to pay for reconstruction. With oil revenues as virtually its only source of income, Iraq favoured using the OPEC cartel to push up the price of oil by restricting its supply. Since this was in the interests of a number of other OPEC members, including Iran, some move in this direction was agreed. However, two countries in particular—Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates—failed to apply this. They consistently exceeded their quotas, so preventing the price of oil from rising. The reason why the emirs and sheiks and sultans of the Gulf pursued this policy was not shortsightedness or cussedness. It was because it had become in their economic interest to do so. The Al-Sabah family had not wasted all its riches on horse-racing, gambling and gold-fitted bathrooms. Most of it had been re-invested in capitalist industry and finance in the West, so much so in fact that a large part of Kuwait's income came from these investments. In other words, the Kuwaiti and other Gulf rulers had become Western capitalists themselves and not just oil rentiers—with the same interest in not having too high a price for oil.

Iraq regarded this refusal to take steps to raise the price of oil as a plot to prevent it recovering from the war. Combined with their long-standing claim to Kuwait as a means of obtaining a vitally-needed secure trade route to the sea, this decided the Iraqi ruling class to take military action. On the night of 1/2 August Kuwait was invaded and later annexed. As an additional bonus, the Kuwaiti oilfields when added to the Iraqi ones make Iraq potentially almost as big a producer sitting on as big reserves as Saudi Arabia.

**Why the West is going to war**

Bush, and Thatcher who happened to be in America on a lecture tour, reacted quickly, issuing an ultimatum to Iraq not to move further down the coast and take over the Saudi oilfields and dispatching a battle fleet to the Gulf for the second time in three years.
Iraq probably had no intention of invading Saudi Arabia, but America had every interest in finding an excuse to send troops to protect the Saudi oilfields. Since 1950 these had been an American preserve: under an agreement with the King of Saudi Arabia European oil companies were excluded and US ones, grouped together as ARAMCO, given a monopoly. In preparing for war by dispatching troops to the Gulf, Bush is applying the policy enunciated by Carter in his January 23 1980 State of the Union message:

Let our position be absolutely clear: An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by use of any means necessary, including military force.

The Gulf, he explained, was of "great strategic importance" because "it contains more than two-thirds of the world's exportable oil" and because the Strait of Hormuz at its mouth is "a waterway through which much of the free world's oil must flow". At the time the immediate threat was seen as coming from Russia which had just invaded Afghanistan, but the Carter Doctrine applied equally to threats to American oil supplies from other states like Iran and now Iraq.

In Britain the Sunday Times(12 August), which has called for war since day one of the crisis, has been equally frank:

The reason why we will shortly have to go to war with Iraq is not to free Kuwait, though that is to be desired, or to defend Saudi Arabia, though that is important. It is because President Saddam is a menace to vital Western interests in the Gulf, above all the free flow of oil at market prices, which is essential to the West's prosperity.

If war breaks out in the Middle East, the issues at stake will be purely economic and commercial: access to the sea and a high price of oil, on the one side, and control of oilfields and a low price of oil, on the other. Neither of which are issues justifying the shedding of a single drop of working class blood.

(November 1990)
Socialism has not failed

"Crumbling Communism", "Failure of Socialism", "End of Marxism" these are the terms to which the media have echoed as the events in Eastern Europe have unfolded. Something certainly has crumbled in Eastern Europe but it has not been socialism, communism or Marxism. For this to have happened these would have had to have existed in the first place, but they did not. What did exist there—and what has crumbled—is Leninism and totalitarian state capitalism.

The Russian Empire
After the last war Russia extended its frontiers westwards by annexing parts of all its pre-war neighbours. At the same time it established a huge sphere of influence in Eastern Europe stretching from the borders of Sweden in the North to those of Greece in the South and embracing Finland, Poland, the eastern part of Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria.

In all these countries except Finland, identical regimes were installed to the one which had evolved in Russia after the Bolshevik coup of November 1917: a bureaucratic state capitalism where a privileged class, consisting of those occupying the top posts in the Party, the government, the armed forces and industry and known as the nomenklatura, ruled on the basis of dictatorially controlling the state machine where most industry was state-owned, a situation which gave them an effective class monopoly over the means of production.

Finland was the exception in that, after directly annexing a large chunk of what had previously been Finnish territory, the Russian ruling class refrained from installing bureaucratic state capitalism in what was left. Instead, in return for Finland giving up the possibility of pursuing a foreign policy that conflicted with Russian interests, a parliamentary regime and a private enterprise economy similar to that in Western Europe was allowed to develop.

Finlandisation
The satellite regimes installed by the Russian army after 1948 were maintained in power essentially by the threat—and in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 by the reality—of Russian intervention. At no time did the ruling class in these countries enjoy any degree of popular support; in fact what has been happening there could have occurred at any time since 1948 but for this threat. The reason it has happened in 1989 and not before is that, faced with internal economic and political difficulties, the Russian ruling class under Gorbachev has had to dramatically revise its policy towards its empire in Eastern Europe, and decide that it will no longer use its troops to prop up the puppet regimes there. Instead, it has informed the ruling class in these countries that they are now on their own and that they had better make the best deal they can with their subjects.

This is not to say that Russia is prepared to let these countries escape from its sphere of influence, but only that it is now prepared to allow the "Finnish solution" to be applied to them too; in other words, considerable internal autonomy going so far as a parliamentary regime and private enterprise capitalism in return for giving up the right to pursue an independent foreign policy by accepting Russian hegemony over the area.

Welcome advance
This is a startling development whose speed shows just how fast things can change and how the change to socialism could become a prospect sooner than many think. Who would have believed a year ago that by 1990 Poland, Hungary, East Germany and Czechoslovakia would have a limited, but real, degree of political democracy and would abandon state capitalism for private capitalism (or, rather, for the same sort of mixed private and state capitalism that exists in the West)?
We welcome the fall in these countries of the dictatorial regimes which have dragged the names of socialism and Marx through the mud by wrongly associating them with one-party rule, a police state regime, food shortages and regimentation and indoctrination from the cradle to the grave. The coming of a degree of political democracy there is an advance as it extends the area in which socialist ideas can be spread by open means of meetings, publications and contesting elections and in which the working class can organise independently of the state to pursue its class interests.

**Collapse of state capitalism**

The fall of the bureaucratic state capitalist regimes in Eastern Europe and the demise of the ruling nomenklatura\(^\text{a}\) there has relevance for another aspect of the socialist case. The events in East Germany and Czechoslovakia in particular confirm our long-held view that it is impossible for a tiny minority to hang on to power in the face of a hostile, informed and determined majority. Here hard-line regimes, once it became clear that they could no longer rely on the intervention of the Russian army, collapsed in the face of mass popular pressure—fuelled by a determination, born of years of oppression, to kick out those responsible. In theory the East German and Czechoslovak ruling classes, who had shown themselves to be ruthless enough in the past, could have chosen to use physical force to try to maintain themselves in power—there is some evidence that a section in East Germany did consider sending in the troops to shoot down protestors—but in practical terms this was never really likely.

The rulers knew, through the reports of their secret police if not the evidence of their own eyes and ears, that up to 90 percent of the population was against them and that if they had ordered their armed forces to shoot all hell would have broken loose; the situation would have escaped from their control with a good chance of it all ending with them hanging from a lamp-post. So they decided to choose the lesser evil, as we can expect the capitalist class to do when faced with a determined, organised socialist majority, and negotiate a peaceful surrender of their power and privileges.

**Private capitalism no progress**

The ruling nomenklaturas in Eastern Europe are on the way out. In agreeing to give up "the leading role of the Party" and submit themselves to elections which they are bound to lose, as well as to the privatisation of large sectors of industry, they are giving up the means through which they exercised their monopoly control over the means of production. They are becoming mere politicians in charge of a capitalist state without the privileged control over production and the privileged consumption they previously enjoyed as members of a collectively-owning state-capitalist ruling class. Some of them may survive as politicians—given the tacit deal about doing nothing to harm Russian foreign policy interests there will still be a place for some pro-Russian politicians; others may be able to use the private fortunes they have accumulated to convert themselves into private capitalists, the group who are hoping to take over as the dominant section of the privileged owning class in these countries. But a change-over to private capitalism would be no advance. There would still be a minority in society enjoying big houses, privileged life-styles and Swiss bank accounts, only these would be private capitalists instead of state bureaucrats. We therefore urge workers in Eastern Europe, if they are to avoid a mere change of exploiters, to go on and oppose the emerging private capitalist class with the same admirable determination with which they have opposed and defeated the old state-capitalist ruling class.

**Socialism can only be democratic**

As Socialists who have always held, like Marx, that socialism and democracy are inseparable and who denounced Lenin's distortion of Marxism right from 1917, we vehemently deny that it is socialism that has failed in Eastern Europe. What has failed there is totalitarian state capitalism falsely masquerading as socialism.
Socialism, as a worldwide society based on common ownership and democratic control of productive resources and the abolition of the wages system and the market with goods and services being produced and distributed to meet needs, has yet to be tried and more than ever remains the only way forward for humanity.

(January 1990)
What the fascists need

It is too easy to hate fascists. The sight of chanting skinheads, half Stormtrooper of the Year 1932, half late adolescent tantrum, fills us with memories of a genocidal past and fears that the jackboots are being polished up again. Ridiculous screwballs stand in East End markets with swastika tattoos, boots for brains and snarling detestation for the world in which they are impotent merchants of mean-spirited outrage.

What are we to say to them-think of them? "Drive the Racists of the Streets!" says the wallposter from the people who brought us "The Socialist Motherland". But who would be left on the streets except for rival sects of Leninist paper sellers arguing over whose central committee will make the most effective job of dictating over the proletariat? There are hundreds of thousands of racists on the streets. There are one or two in most of our houses. Are we supposed to give them all a good doing? And what good is a sore head to a racist-racism thrives on battered minds.

It is all too simple to paint caricatures of the monstrous jackbooted swine. TV pictures show us them in Germany, spewing hate before them, like primitive fertiliser spreaders. Not just murderous thoughts, but now they burn and kill and rejoice at the suffering of their enemies. Just like British workers did when bombs fell on Iraqi cities and who knows how many burned to death or were crushed in an underground medical centre. And when the conscripts met their death as the Belgrano sailed away from the Falklands exclusion zone, were not we told by the Mad Priestess that we should rejoice at the victory. Rejoice as men drown and babies are buried under rubble and bombs unknown to the non-professional terrorists explode with priestly sanction. Where does war stop and monstrous atrocity start?

The fascist moron follows his leader. The comical sight of fancy-dress Nazis doing their Mosley impressions to a few dozen Bash Street Kids from Povertyville is almost worth a smile. Of course, nobody will be smiling when the petty-fuhrer's words have been heard and another black family gets a petrol bomb or kicking on the way home. But there is an amateurish hooliganism about such viciousness: not an army but a venomous gang of no-hopers.

The military moron follows his leader and is paid well for it. The barking, and often barking mad, fuhrer is given medals and "our boys" are allowed to play with more than home-made bangers. The pseudo-militarism of the neo-Nazi boneheads, drilling in Hackney Marshes for the day when Enoch gives the word to get the Asians, is all rather ridiculous. Not so the official military training camps where violence is taught as a respectable art.

Fascists breed on false divisions. They seek to turn us against each other, as if life is not hard enough having to share the misery as one unhappy family. But what is new about the propaganda of Divide and Rule? it is the basis of all nationalism. "He's one of our lot; he was born under their flag. He is our enemy". Fascists might be the ultimate flag-fetishists, grasping on to their little Union Jack flag on the end of its pointy stick as if it is their lifeline to lunacy, but they did not invent them. The flags, and all the other emblems of nationalist idiocy, were here long before boys with muscles and not many brain cells decided to call street violence a political philosophy.

Let's rock against racism, by all means, but let's do a bit of rocking against nationalism while we're at it. How often is it the case that the right-on lefties who want to smash all racists find no difficulty in supporting the narrow bigotry of trendy nationalism?
So, why fascists? What horrible moment in history set in motion such movements of undiluted venom? The dung-like soil in which fascists are bred is fear. Because behind those hard-as-rock, we're gonna-get-you looks of enmity to the world, what we are seeing are a load of frightened people who are confused, threatened and deeply alienated from their social selves. The fascist is the human who aspires to be anti-human. The social nature which allows us to co-operate allows them to seek refuge in artificially constructed groups based on skin colour, flag colours, football team colours-colour-blind fascists often have a hard time with their pseudo-identities. The unique ability to use language is adapted by the fascists into a snarling, animalistic rage of incoherence. Rational discourse is swapped willingly for brute feeling. That is what the fascist wants life to be. Everything else seems to have failed.

It is a miserable, frustrating and disempowering alienation which is the lot of many under the profit-system—and so many more than those who are foolish enough to go down the fascist path—which is at the root of the fascist mentality. Alienation from a society where life as a conscious being seems unimportant and negligible leads some—perhaps many—to seek comfort in the false security of national, racial and vanguardist loyalty. As the squeeze gets tighter, with a deepening world recession and the collapse of the elementary security offered by the welfare net, is it any surprise that new size twelves are slipping into new jackboots in the futile search for an honourable place within capitalist history?

The psychology of despair is one of the main symptoms of a society which converts the vivacity of the individual into purchasable chunks of labour power to be bought as cheaply as possible—and often left on the shelf to rot. The fascist mentality is part of the rot. And just as you don't blame the woodworm for the damp and dingy wall in which it thrives, it is futile to blame the rotten fascist for the stupidity of his position.

Fascism is a celebration of irrationality. The National Front should be called the Irrational Front. The confused wage slave is capitalism's very best friend. And confused, irrational, unscientific thinking will not be cured by socialists learning to fight better than the fascists. When it comes to brutality we are willing to come last. What the fascist needs is to be hit in those cerebral parts least used and most in need of life support. What the fascist needs, in fact, is to be educated by those who him not as a despicable fascist, but as a bloody stupid worker.

(February 1993)

Building a future

I am one of the many tens of thousands of construction workers who are currently unemployed. Disunited, we must be patient and wait. Surviving on the State-prescribed pittance as pliant trapeze artistes on the unravelling "safety net" which so enchants reformers. Turning useful people into beggars is a historical, and inevitable, principle of the capitalist system. Perhaps this time, we have got to be extremely patient before capitalist investors decide that the opportunity of making profits from our labour power is a distinct possibility. Until then we must needlessly hang on, suffer quietly, await our masters' call.

Twenty-eight years ago, when I started working as a hod-carrier on the buildings, the economic circumstances were quite different from today. The demand for labour was high, consequently wages and degrees of freedom had been rising. Capitalism was in the boom phase of its cycle, and the construction industry anticipating even larger profits was in the process of restructuring itself. The design of buildings was slowly beginning to change, as were materials. Every aspect of what is a labour-intensive industry had to be cost effective.
Cash-in-the-hand wages were starting to become the norm for bricklayers and hoddlies in London. No sick pay, holiday money or wet time for us, after all we were screwing the State, weren't we? Being a nomadic trade—I have had well over 100 jobs—where being a realist is forced on you, the majority took full advantage of the economic situation. It was quite usual for men to jack because there was no crack on the job, tea-breaks were too short, or, because you couldn't get a sub when you wanted it. The sub was very important, its availability was one indicator of an employer's liquidity. It was a simple case of once bitten twice shy. Nearly everyone who has worked for sub-contractors for some time gets bumped, at the first sign the realists abandoned ship before it sank. The Monday Club was in full swing at this time. If 50 percent of the workforce turned up on a Monday the subbie was in raptures all day about how loyal his "boys" were. Building trades unions at this time were generally recognised as the niche of opportunists, liars, and the bribeable. Consequently, negotiations over wages took the form of "we want another shilling an hour". If it wasn't forthcoming, then the tools were immediately thrown into the bag and the ladder descended. A new start was just a phone call away. It was fully understood that what we built during a working week was worth more than what we were paid, it was wholly transparent. The remainder being shared by the layers of pimps that thrived through our labours, this too was understood and despised. Creating profits, through the unremitting appropriation of surplus value from its workers, is the sole function of the construction industry. Building homes, etc is purely incidental to the process. No boom lasts forever. The speculative jamboree of overproduction ended abruptly and inevitably. A few capitalists went bust. The shrewd, and well-connected ones are still there, conniving their way out of their latest short-lived binge. The long boom was over, and those few freedoms have never returned. The barbed-wire around the sites was in the process of being re-erected, and a new reality was beginning, one that over the coming years would increasingly subjugate the realists. New income tax laws had been imposed, and were strengthening. Tax was being deducted at source which meant a percent reduction in wages for those without exemption certificates. We were now self-employed--small businessmen no less. A great many workers, inspired by media reports of large sums of money to be earned, had travelled to London. These were among the first to taste the dole. Realists understand that they are disposable. Skint, most of the smaller and more liberal subbies were back on the scaffold with their "boys". The illusion that they had been more than just intermediary workers in the production of profits was still obstinately imprinted on their thwarted minds. A small elite of subbies were now in a position to more effectively exploit for their masters those who were still in work. Afternoon tea-breaks disappeared and have never returned. Apprenticeships, which had been declining rapidly amongst firms since the rise of the subbie in the early sixties, were now just a source for contrite prattle by reformers. The derisively-paid, and deftly-worked improvers became their replacement. The week in hand was introduced, and the sub became extinct. Competition between workers became more ferocious than ever. It was common practice when starting a new job to be put to work with the fastest bricklayer on the job; if you didn't keep up, you were down the road before breakfast. Few workers now questioned this, and some gained pleasure from it. Guilt, if you thought you hadn't done enough, and fear of what might happen, became as inseparable from your being as the trowel was from your hand. A brutal system can create brutes, and the surviving subbies seemed to be in agreement on the type of foreman that they needed to run their jobs. Only the thug would do, no knowledge of bricklaying was necessary. A bully with a watch and few scruples replaced the tradesman. The old boys said that they'd seen it all before, no-one really believed them.
Semi-literacy, and a knowledge of various state institutions, form the background for many bricklayers and labourers. Alcohol, and latterly drugs, are an integral part of the everyday working life for most. When the sack can arrive at any moment, to anyone, regardless of ability, just "to keep 'em on their toes"; where working conditions can vary from working in shin-high mud, to ramshackle scaffolds; where names and faces over the years become a blur, simply because of their frequency. And forming friendships is fraught with problems, then escapism becomes a necessity. And callousness a shield.

It's an upside-down world under capitalism. Those who are most useful suffer the lowest social esteem. But, laze in a masterfully-built mansion, and devise ways of turning human sweat into profit and you are to be admired, knighted even. After all, how would we cope without them, once the plans had been drawn and the footing dug and concreted, the walls built and then plastered, the joist and trusses nailed into place, and the roof battened and slated. Surely, we would be lost without a parasite to then sell the building?

A common dream, voiced amongst many workers that I came into contact with through the years was to build one's own home. A few achieved it. Some of those have now lost it. The possibility for all to achieve this dream can become a reality. By uniting, together we can begin the work of tearing down the barbed-wire that surrounds our lives, and bring nearer the day when we can establish socialism, and with it our freedom.

(July 1994)
After Bulger

We live in unfriendly times. As neighbourhoods have made way for wretched anonymous towerblocks, so neighbourliness has become outdated. It is not that people have chosen to become careless and uncooperative; as social animals we are never happier than when we are able to behave in mutuality, empathy and compassion towards our fellow human beings. But the way that life has come to be organised conspires against our will to be human. "There is no such thing as society", said Thatcher, and her words were met with howls of protest by those who did not want her words to be true, and by blushes of embarrassment by those who knew just how true her words were becoming. For the truth is that community is now little more than a quaint ideal, a sociologist's buzzword. The depressing reality is that more than ever we live in a society which does not resemble anything very social.

This sense of crushing alienation, which was once a mere term of jargon employed by those who had read Marx (who wrote about how workers are alienated not only from the product of their labour, but from their very selves as creative beings who are transformed into robotic profit-producers) is now inescapable. The city streets are settings for fear and loneliness. Housing is designed according to the cheap measurements of profits for rapacious landlords whose concern for comfort, dignity or social fellowship in the place where we live simply does not exist. The transport system is unsafe and its weary users shuffle ritualistically to and from wage slavery in various conditions of unease, stress and anger. Services are running down—the basic needs of workers are too expensive to bother with, so let us dwell amongst the refuse of late twentieth century squalor. This is our environment. For most of us saving our environment is not about trees and forests and fish ponds; they are out of reach and survival within the urban wasteland is about dodging the dog mess and hoping that it will be someone else's house that they break into.

An alienated world of non-community turns others into strangers and strangers into enemies. People turn in on themselves and draw lines like stone fortress walls around their lives, their emotions. And within the darkness of these enclosed lives horrible, unthinkable abuses occur. People like to speak about "the freedom of the individual", as if being atomised, isolated and excluded from social cooperation were somehow a form of liberation. It is not; it feels horrible inside those fragile, impoverishing, life- limited walls of the alienated human's existence. And this is where awful nightmare's come to life. Yesterday's unthinkable becomes today's headline and, perhaps, tomorrow's routine.

Why did two ten-year old boys kill a two-year old boy? No simplistic answers are on offer here. If you want to blame someone or something there is no shortage of scapegoat hunters on the market. The boys had access to sick videos. One of these, in the home of one of their fathers, appears to depict a crime much like the one they committed. Who made this video? That "artist" of our age was not in the courtroom as the boys sobbed. Perhaps he is working right now on a new work of cinematic art which reproduces the killing in question. And if there is a market for it . . . an audience with cash to pay for thrills from screen violence . . . plenty of profit in that, so what can be wrong? And who are the government to condemn such an entrepreneur? How can a government which sells arms to dictatorships and torture equipment to the highest bidder state any but the most hypocritical objections to films which celebrate gratuitous slaughter? Were there no two-year old babies in Baghdad when British and American bomber planes went on their killing spree in defence of the profits and power of the unelected dictator of Kuwait? Let those who kill children, and celebrate it within their daily lie sheets, claim no moral highground now that the murders are beyond the law.
The boys played video games for hours. These games now outstrip the music record industry in sales. When once (in "the bad old Sixties", of course) kids sang that all you need is love and dopy parables about two little boys with their two little toys, now for hours on end they stare at video violence turned into a game. Press this button and Kill, Kill, Kill . . . and then put in another pound and your licence to kill begins all over again. Killing without consequence. Just as the victim of a shooting in a bad American film limps away and returns in the next scene ready to run the New York marathon, so the message of these "games" are that violence never really hurts. How about a game where you insert your pound and the machine boots you in the balls?

As life has become more of a miserable struggle to survive in the face of debt and the dole and a dreary environment, so entertainment has come to be about releasing anger. The racist louts who killed a teenage lad at a bus stop because they imagined that his skin pigmentation made him a threat were probably briefly entertained by their bullying victory. The kids in Manchester who captured and tortured a young girl might have had a brief high, and the list could go on. The truth is that the list is a very, very long one.

This capitalist system under which we all live—even if we many deny that they do, and most do not even know that they do—has committed against us the greatest of crimes. It has denied us our freedom to be innocent. Contrary to the medieval remains which lurk within Christian minds of professional pessimists like the Bishop of Liverpool, babies are not born evil. The whole notion of evil belongs in the museum of antiquated follies. Would Hitler have been a Nazi dictator if he was your brother?

We are born neither good nor bad. To imagine otherwise is as sensible as to imagine that we are born with a preference for Pepsi rather than Coke, a genetic inclination to rape rather than pass the parcel. We are born to be within the world as it is. And the world as it is right now is not a happy place in which to be born.

Millions and millions of children are born into conditions of such material constraint that it is amazing they grow up fit for anything. Some do not emerge fit for anything. The wounds suffered as a result of authoritarian parenting, of sexual and violent abuse (both misuses of power) and of squalid and ignorant upbringings are injuries which were once unthinkable—or at least, unthought about. Perhaps, if capitalism had been removed long ago, these effects would have been of a lesser magnitude and we could go in greater innocence towards creating our futures.

As this century comes to an end the hard, unpalatable fact (perhaps even for many socialists) is that the psychological pain caused by the artificial way of organising life under capitalism has led to a loss of innocence for most of us. Put plainly, we have all been much more hurt by this system than it is easy to admit. And that is why there will be more horror stories to fill the gutter press. More and worse, until we get rid of this system.

The reformists, who were always wrong, now stand mute before what is to them an inexplicable breakdown in civilised culture. After all, had they not set up a welfare state, with its ever-ready social workers and free schools for the poor? But the kids can't stand the schools and see no point in going when all they must learn is to become unemployed—sorry, "Job Seekers". The churches talk about the collapse of the family, with their eyes carefully averted from the disaster zone of the family which heads their religion. But when Norman Tebbit said to fathers that they must get on their bike and look for work (and families don't fit on bikes, you know) and the smug bankers threw tens of thousands out of their repossessed homes into the insecurity of hostels, then what real chance did the children of those families have?
Now Tory ministers cry for moral education in the schools. But what reasonably sensible school student would for one minute accept moral instruction from that rabble of corrupt and callous rogues? And what moral depravity would characterise the child who received an A+ in the exam set by exploiters to test the sturdiness of the soon to be replaced exploited?

All that is left for capitalism is blame. Guilt is the final cudgel in their diminished ideological armoury. As the 1990s come more and more to resemble the 1930s, no lessons are learned by our masters’ mouthpieces who set the tone of the media. The best that they could do was whip up hysteria. Releasing the names of the two "guilty" boys and delighting in the waste of their lives places the British tabloid press several rungs further down the moral ladder than these little boys have ever had a chance to descend. These were the headlines of the tabloid press on Thursday 25 November, the day after the two boys' conviction for murder:

*Daily Mail:* EVIL, BRUTAL AND CUNNING.
*Daily Mirror:* FREAKS OF NATURE—The faces of normal boys but they had hearts of unparalleled evil.
*Daily Star:* HOW DO YOU FEEL NOW YOU LITTLE BASTARDS?

All of the above appeared with pictures of the little boys—pictures that would ensure the victimisation of them and their families for many years to come. The articles within these rags stooped to any claim in their eagerness to cast blame on these children. The editors and the journalists and the sort of vile readers who throw rotten eggs at prison vans were comforted by this orgy of attributing guilt to the feeble and infantile targets of popular wrath. What they did not report were the four suicides this year within the juvenile detention centre in west London where life for the guilty ended in the defeat of all hope. And while they screeched and yelled about the "unparalleled evil" of two confused and antisocial boys they did not report how killers of exactly the same age are employed by such armies as the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka or the government side in the civil war in Sierra Leone. ("Since the civil war began in 1991 children as young as eight years old have been used by government forces in Sierra Leone to execute suspected rebels, sometimes cutting their heads off with machetes", readers were informed by the *Independent* on 2 December last year). But why worry anyone's narrow minds with such distant, legalised atrocities to which our rulers have uttered not a word of meaningful condemnation? How much easier it is to concentrate little minds on the guilty faces of little children (the freaks, the bastards, the murderers) and rest content that the origin is in the unequalled blackness of their hearts.

Sometimes, through the fog of confusion which is how life is viewed by many people, and despite the brutalised indifference which seems to be the price of keeping afloat within the relentless competition to afford any kind of a life, certain events make us especially sad. These events are very largely selected for us by unaccountable media chiefs whose employees orchestrate public grief on such occasions. That does not diminish the authenticity of our sadness. After all, we are human beings. We are social animals. And sometimes, after a Warrington bomb or an Ethiopian famine disaster, a collective nerve is touched. And then what?

Socialists do not indulge in piety. That can be left to those who prefer to respond on their knees with their eyes shut. We leave moral self-righteousness as their monopoly as well. No sugary sentiments of love for little children will be heard from us. It is only under a system where the material stimulus to love and care is lacking that "loving thy neighbour" is promoted as some great virtue. No proposals here for teaching children what is right and wrong; not under a system which would have willingly taken those sane children only five years further into their lives and taught them to kill strangers as paid members of the British army.
Occasional sadness is a sign that we have not been wholly brutalised. Just as the fact that the overwhelming majority of children do not adjust willingly to the competitive, vicious and violent norms of the capitalist ethos is proof that this system has not and will not desensitise us all. To punish the dehumanised for what an inhumane world has taught them to become is as wise as to lock a dog in a kennel and then beat it for barking. The fact is that the kennel door is unlocked. It does not have to be like this.

(January 1994)
The referendum--where we stand

A Parliament for Scotland? An Assembly for Wales? Unable to agree among themselves and afraid to go ahead without popular support--last time they put this to a referendum their proposals were thrown out--our rulers have decided to ask us our opinion on the matter.

We should be flattered, but don’t be fooled. These proposals are part of a smokescreen to disguise the fact that the Labour Party cannot deliver, and no longer wants to deliver, social reforms aimed at shifting wealth and power from the privileged few to working people.

Labour has always accepted the profit system. They used to believe they could humanise it by social reform legislation. Not any longer. Bitter experience has taught them that where reforms and profits come into conflict, it is reforms that have to give way. The last Labour government under Callaghan ended up applying this and Blair had promised to do the same even before he became Prime Minister.

The Labour Party fully accepts now that priority has to be given to profits and no longer promises more spending on social reforms. But, to distinguish itself from the Tories, Labour still wants to retain a reforming image. But how? By finding reforms which don’t come into conflict with profits. Constitutional reforms fill the bill perfectly. They don’t interfere with profit-making. They don’t cost more money. And they give rise to an illusion of change.

It is in this light that the Labour government’s proposals for a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly should be seen, along with their proposals for turning the House of Lords into a huge non-elected quango and for elected mayors and other such gimmicks. But it’s all completely irrelevant as far as ordinary people are concerned.

Constitutional reform is of no benefit or relevance to us. It leaves our lives and the problems the profit system causes completely unchanged. Exploitation through the wages system continues. Unemployment continues. A crumbling health service, a chaotic transport system, a polluted environment, failing schools, rising crime and drug addiction and the general breakdown of society all continue. As far as solving these problems is concerned, constitutional reform is just a useless irrelevancy.

Deficient Democrats

Naturally, Labour wraps its irrelevant, constitutional reforms up in democratic rhetoric. Elected assemblies in Edinburgh and Cardiff, we are told, would be an extension of democracy, bringing power nearer to the people, so how can Socialists not be in favour of this?

Yes, Socialists are in favour of democracy, and socialism will be a fully democratic society, but full democracy is not possible under capitalism. Supporters of capitalism who talk about “democracy” always mean only political democracy since economic democracy--where people would democratically run the places where they work--is out of the question under capitalism, based as it is on these workplaces being owned and controlled by and for the benefit of a privileged minority.

You can have the most democratic constitution imaginable but this won’t make any difference to the fact that profits have to come before meeting needs under capitalism. The people’s will to have their needs met properly is frustrated all the time by the operation of the economic laws of the capitalist system which no political structure, however democratic, can control.

It is not imperfections in the political decision-making process that’s the problem but the profit system and its economic laws. And the answer is not democratic reform of capitalism’s political structure but the replacement of capitalism by socialism.
As a society based on common instead of class ownership of the means of production, socialism will fulfil the first condition for a genuine democracy. Because it will be a classless society without a privileged wealthy class everyone can have a genuinely equal say in the way things are run. Some will not be more equal than others, as they are under capitalism, because they own more wealth. Socialism will be a society where the laws of profit no longer operate since common ownership and democratic control will allow people to produce to meet their needs instead of for the profit of a few as today.

The argument about elected Scottish and Welsh assemblies bringing power nearer to the people might have something in it if, even within the limited context of mere political democracy, the proposed assemblies were going to have some real powers. But they are not. All their money is to come from the central government, and the only “power” they will have will be to rearrange slightly how the limited amount of funds they will be given is to be spent. In other words, they will have no more power than existing borough and county councils. They will be part of the administrative arm of central government and their members will be no more than elected civil servants spending central government money. All that would happen would be the introduction of another layer of elected bureaucrats. Another trough for the professional politicians to get their snouts into perhaps, but of no significance to ordinary people.

If our rulers want to reform the machinery of capitalist government in this way, that’s up to them. But spare us the pretence that it’s some great extension of democracy.

Nasty Nationalists

Also urging a “yes” vote are the Nationalists of the SNP and Plaid Cymru. They see the sham parliament with token powers that is on offer as a step towards their goal of an independent parliament with full powers to impose taxes and make laws. This argument for voting “yes” cuts no ice with Socialists either. We are not nationalists—in fact we are implacably opposed to nationalism in whatever form it rears its ugly head—and we see the establishment of an independent Scotland or Wales as yet another irrelevant, constitutional reform. One of the last things the world needs at the moment is more states, with their own armed forces and divisive nationalist ideologies.

Nationalism is based on the illusion that all people who live in a particular geographical area have a common interest, against people in other areas. Hence the supposed need for a separate state and a separate government to defend this separate interest. This flies in the face of the facts. All over the world, in all geographical areas, the population is divided into two basic classes, those who own the productive resources and those who don’t and have to work for those who do, and whose interests are antagonistic. The non-owning class have a common interest, not with the owning class who live in the same area, but with people like themselves wherever they live. The interests of workers who live in Scotland and Wales are not opposed to the interests of those who live in England—or France or Germany or Russia or Japan or anywhere else in the world.

Nationalists like the SNP and Plaid Cymru who preach the opposite are spreading a divisive poison amongst people who Socialists say should unite to establish a frontierless world community, based on the world’s resources becoming the common heritage of all humanity, as the only framework within which the social problems which workers wherever they live face today. This is why Socialists and Nationalists are implacably opposed to each other. We are working in opposite directions. Us to unite workers. Them to divide them. So, insofar as the proposed assemblies in Scotland and Wales are a sop to nationalism—as to a certain extent they are—that would be more a reason for voting “no” than for voting “yes”.
Useless Unionists

So, what about voting “no”? It’s tempting. After all, Socialists don’t want constitutional reform (we want socialism) and a “no” vote would be a repudiation of the divisive doctrines of the narrow-minded Scots and Welsh Nats. But in the end the point at issue-- a mere constitutional reform which will leave profit-making, exploitation, unemployment and all the other social problems quite untouched--is so irrelevant that it is not worth taking sides.

In addition, those leading the campaign for a “no” vote--various businesspeople and the Tory rump--are conservatives in both senses of the term. They want to leave things as they are. They don’t want to change anything. We don’t see any point in diverting our energies to changing the constitution but we certainly want things to change. We want people to change the economic and social basis of society and establish socialism in place of capitalism. So we’ve nothing in common with them.

They fear that the proposed change will be the first step on a slippery slope leading to the break-up of the United Kingdom. Maybe, though this is not the opinion of Labour and the Liberals who are also Unionists.

The leading “no” campaigners, too, are nationalists. Not of course Scottish or Welsh Nationalists, but British Nationalists, since that is what the Unionists are, spreading the poison that it is all the people in the British Isles who have a common interest against people everywhere else. But Socialists are just as much opposed to British Nationalism as we are to Scottish or Welsh or any other nationalism.

Just because we are not prepared to back the efforts of Scottish and Welsh Nationalists to break away from the United Kingdom--and vigorously oppose their efforts to split the trade union movement--does not mean that we are Unionists. We don’t support the Union. We just put up with it while we get on with our work of convincing people to reject world capitalism in favour of world socialism.

Vote for Socialism

So we shan’t be voting “yes” or “no”. We shall, however, be voting. We’ll be going to the polling station and, since they are not giving us this option on the voting paper, we’ll be writing the word “SOCIALISM” or “SOSIALAETH” across it.

If you want socialism, we urge you to do the same, as a way of registering your support for world socialism and your rejection both of separatist Welsh and Scottish nationalism and of unionist British nationalism.

(September 1997)
The Balkan War

Once again European cities are being bombed. Once again displaced persons are on the move. This has never ceased to be the lot of people in Africa and Asia but one of the claims of Western capitalism was that it had at least established peace and prosperity in Europe. Now full-scale war has returned to Europe. The illusion that permanent peace and prosperity is possible under capitalism has been shattered.

The NATO bombing raids on Yugoslavia are aimed not just at direct military targets but at the industrial infrastructure of power stations, fuel depots, factories, chemical plants, roads, railways and bridges which serve civilian purposes as well as supplying the Serbian military machine. All this represents the destruction of useful wealth. As Socialists have always said, war means social regression.

But is it sometimes necessary? Although we are not pacifists (we would countenance fighting should a pro-capitalist minority take up arms to try to prevent the democratic establishment of socialism) we say there is no such thing as a "just war". Wars are fought over markets, investment outlets, raw material sources and trade routes and strategic points to control them.

The present Balkan War is no different. It is a continuation of the process that started in 1991 when Slovenia declared its independence from Yugoslavia, in which the stake has been: who shall control the territories of the former Yugoslavia—Serbia or the West, in particular Germany?

When "communism" (in reality state capitalism) collapsed, the NATO powers had a choice. Let the Serbian ruling class continue to maintain order and stability in the area so that trading and profit-making there could continue normally. Or apply the principle of "national self-determination" in the hope that a collection of smaller, more "ethnically pure" states would provide greater stability.

Reunited Germany, with its historic enemy Russia on its knees, was able to revive its ambitions in Eastern and Central Europe and it led the way in working for the breakup of Yugoslavia so that it, rather than Serbia, could dominate the area. First Slovenia, then Croatia, then Bosnia, then Macedonia broke away or rather were broken away. The result, however, has not been stability. Quite the reverse, with only a NATO army of occupation maintaining a fragile peace in Bosnia and eastern Croatia.

And now Kosovo. Serbia claims that it is fighting to retain Kosovo because this is the cradle of "Serbian civilisation", but there is more at stake than the bones of Prince Lazar. As retired Canadian Major-General Lewis MacKenzie, who commanded UN troops in Bosnia during the siege of Sarajevo, has pointed out: "Quite frankly, they want the northern half of Kosovo. That's where the mines and natural resources are" (Times Colonist, Victoria, 26 March). There has been speculation in the media that this may be the compromise that will emerge once the killings and bombings have stopped: the partition of Kosovo with Serbian forces controlling an ethnically-cleansed north and a NATO army of occupation looking after the impoverished refugees in the south.

Faced with this latest manifestation of capitalist barbarity and cynicism we once again place on record our abhorrence of all war and call upon workers everywhere to unite to bring the war-prone capitalist system to a speedy end.

(May 1999)

A century passes
They were the worst of times. They were the even worse of times. The century which offered the promise of providing abundant wealth for all has been characterised by the jackboot, the mushroom cloud and the sizzling stink of Macdonald’s culture.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were high hopes and big ideas. It was to be the Age of Science. Industrialisation had made it possible to produce plenty for all. It was to be the century of Democracy. Votes for all meant that the people’s voice would count from now on. So, what happened?

Capitalism happened. It began as the capitalist century and it ends in the same rut. Capitalism is not an ethos or a state of mind. It is a system. It is based upon minority class ownership of the means whereby we live and production for profit. Its economic laws are inviolable; there is no democratic mandate strong enough to force capitalism to operate against its inherent, systemic nature. A ceaseless conflict between the accumulation of profit and the satisfaction of needs, and an attendant struggle between those who possess the means of wealth production and those who produce goods and services, is innate to capitalism. The problems which result from this conflict and struggle are not accidental or the results of bad government: they are endemic to the system. It is no more possible to eradicate from capitalism the conflict between profit and need than it would be to make cancer of the body compatible with good health.

There have been two main approaches to capitalism in the twentieth century: the liberal Left and the conservative Right. The former have expressed a sentimental opposition to the effects of capitalism. This reaction against the beast is not insincere or without ethical force. It is based upon a humane distaste for what capitalism is doing to society. The Left has spent much of this century expressing this distaste, often with compelling eloquence and force. It has busied itself with endless schemes to remove this and then that effect of capitalism. The Left has never been a single movement for change, but a diverse collection of fragmented campaigns, each hoping that the moral virtue of their position can break down the iron bars of the capitalist prison. Some of the bars have indeed been bent, and others, once bent for a while, have been straightened and strengthened. The Left has only ever concerned itself with remedying effects. Even when it has adopted apparent alternatives—Russia, nationalisation, welfare states, Cuba—these have only ever been state-run versions of capitalism. The tragedy of the twentieth-century Left has been its self-righteous belief in the moral power of its chosen sentiments alongside a deeply conservative resistance to fundamental alternatives to the system which it has derided as utopian and unrealisable.

The conservative Right has accepted the brutal rationality of the capitalist system and has spent the century seeking to justify as inevitable everything that is cruel and socially divisive. In terms of capitalism, they have been right. In opposing every measure for the long-term improvement of life under capitalism they have recognised a truth which is that you cannot impose rules of moral decency upon a system which can only thrive well by being exploitative, oppressive and callous. At its worst, and historically most unforgivable, the Right has embraced the sickest and most disfiguring of the twentieth-century’s ideas: racism, national chauvinism, dictator-worship and pride in war. Bevan was right, of course: Tories are lower than vermin. But the Tories were right as well: Bevan’s moral outrage was one long piss in the wind of history.
If one attempted to draw up an inventory of capitalism’s casualties in the twentieth century it would be longer than the collected works of any encyclopaedia. How many people have had their lives destroyed in its pointless wars? How many more have had bodies ruined by injury in war? Or in industrial accidents where human safety has been sacrificed for profit? How many have been thrown into its prisons simply for violating the laws of property and class rule? How many were gassed to death for being the wrong “race”? How many were thrown from their jobs and forced to stand idle? How many were denied an education that would allow them to develop their full potential? How many died waiting for health care? How many starved to death in a world of plenty? How many gave up hope and killed themselves? How many are there left who feel battered and only partly alive after years of struggling with money?

The inventory can be expanded and the depressing statistics, some of them unknowable because the victims are countless, tell the story of a wasted century. Yes, of course there were great moments and we will remember them—but they have occurred despite the system and not because of it.

At the end of the twentieth century the mood contrasts sharply with the hopes of the beginning. The reformers, once so confident, have become meek and modest. In 1900 they campaigned to end unemployment once and for all. Now they campaign to stop extra means-testing of the disabled unemployed. They started out intending to ban bombs (though never all of them); they’ve ended the century seeking to ban bomb testing, though not the weapons themselves. There has been an undignified and squalid accommodation by the Left to the logic and even the rhetoric of capitalism. At the same time, the Right has learned a few tricks of presentation about appearing to be caring and humane. The two historic wings of capitalist ideology have merged into a single, mushy fudge of dull consensus.

It is this bland acquiescence to an endless future of capitalism—"the end of History", if you don’t mind—which characterises the politics of the conventional political vision for the next century. You want to know what the future looks like? Well, look in your rearview mirror and you’ll get a pretty good picture. Yes, it will be capitalism with modems and moving pavements and viagra and tikka-flavoured Big Macs, but there is no vision of anything new or challenging or exciting.

Close to parliament, and now overtowering it, is a vast Wheel. People can buy seats on the Wheel and whizz round and round until their money runs out and they must pay again. What an appropriate emblem for the twentieth century. You pay. You go round in circles. You get back to where you started. You pay again. It is historically fitting that the Wheel stands over parliament, reminding it and us of history’s demented rhythm in this passing century. We paid. We went round in circles. We got back to where we started.

We paid again. Anyone for a twenty-first century spin? Anyone feeling slightly sick of the sensation?

The Middle East Connection

"The first war of the 21st Century" was how Bush has described the events sparked off by the suicide—and murderous—attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on 11 September. A chilling reminder that, under capitalism, things are going to be no different this century than they were in the last. But not entirely accurate, since the attack on America that Tuesday was the continuation of a conflict that has been going on for half-a-century, irrupting from time to time in open warfare: the struggle for the control of the oil resources of the Middle East.
It all started with Western acceptance of the state of Israel in 1949 as a colonial outpost, a puppet state peopled and run mainly by European immigrants to serve as their proxy gendarme in the region. Then there was the Western-engineered overthrow of the Mossadeq government in Iran in 1951 for daring to nationalise the oil industry. Then the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on Egypt in 1956 for nationalising the Suez canal, at the time the main trade route for bringing Middle East oil to western Europe. Then the Yom Kippur war of 1973 at a time the post-war boom was coming to an end and which helped accelerate this. Then the Gulf War, ten years ago, to take back the Kuwaiti oilfields which Iraq had grabbed from the West, a war which has continued ever since at a lower level of intensity with regular bombings of Iraq by US and British warplanes.

The conflict in Chechnya too had an oil dimension, since a planned pipeline to get Caspian Sea oil out westwards made control of Chechnya of strategic importance to Russia. In fact, the collapse of the Russian state capitalist empire re-opened the Caspian oilfields to Western penetration and control, bringing Afghanistan into the equation as a possible alternative route via Turkmenistan for a pipeline to get Caspian oil out without having to pass through Iran.

The West's rivals for the control of the Middle East oilfields and the trade routes to get the oil out, as well as of the strategic areas and points to protect these, have been sections of the local capitalist class in the region. The ideology they used, to begin with, to get a mass following was an anti-imperialist nationalism which had a leftwing tinge and even employed a "socialist" terminology. This was the ideology of Mossadeq in Iran, Nasser in Egypt, of the Baathist regimes in Syria and Iraq and of the PLO in the 1970s.

It is still a significant political force but, since the 1980s, has more and more been challenged by Islamic fundamentalism as the ideology of those who want local capitalist, rather than Western imperialist, control of the oil resources of the Middle East. A key factor in this change was the triumph of the "Islamic revolution" in Iran in 1979. But not to be neglected is the influence of the long-established fundamentalist regime in Saudi Arabia which, while not anti-Western, used a part of its oil rents to wean Arab militants away from leftwing nationalism. This had been encouraged by America as part of its struggle with Russia for world hegemony. It is now a notorious fact that Osama Bin Laden—a billionaire member of the extended Saudi royal family—was armed by America and sent into Afghanistan to fight against this country falling under Russian control.

That those who attacked America on 11 September should have been Islamic fundamentalists was therefore no surprise. This has become the ideology of many of those in the predominantly Muslim countries of the Middle East who want to wrest control of the oil resources of the region from the West for the benefit of local capitalists.

The West's reaction has been revealing. A grand coalition is being organised to combat "terrorism". But not terrorism in general. The Western powers are not concerned about the Tamil Tigers or ETA or the IRA or the various South American guerrilla groups. They are out to get Islamic fundamentalist terrorism because this is the rising ideology of their rivals for control of the Middle East oilfields. This, not terrorism in general, is the threat to the supply of this key resource. Russia has no problem in joining this coalition since its oil supplies too have been challenged by the same movement, as in Chechnya.
The one accurate thing Bush, Colin Powell and the US media have said about the attacks on the WTC and the Pentagon was that it was an "act of war". It was. The latest act in the 50-year struggle for the control of Middle East oil. This of course is not how they see it, or rather, how they present it. For them it is an attack on "civilisation" and "freedom-loving people everywhere" and (Blair's favourite) "democracy". It is appalling, virtually unbelievable, that any human being would hijack an airliner full of people and deliberately fly it into a tower block where thousands more worked. It is also true that the establishment of Islamic States everywhere would undo the Enlightenment and plunge the world back a thousand years (and has done so in Afghanistan). But this is not the issue. The Islamic fundamentalists who flew those planes would indeed completely suppress freedom of thought and speech and replace ruled by elected politicians by the rule of ignorant and obscurantist priests, but those who trained and sent them weren't attacking America because it was "democratic". They would still have attacked America even if it had been a fascist dictatorship or a Christian theocracy.

Socialists of course appreciate the existence of secular, political democratic forms, limited as we know they are, and wouldn't want to see these replaced by an Islamic State. But "democracy" as an ideology is something different. It is based on the idea that everybody living under a democratic state (as a state allowing the election of certain state officials) share a common interest. This is a lie that socialists challenge.

Under capitalism, whatever the political form, society is divided into two classes with conflicting interests: those who own and control the means of production and the rest of us who have to work for them. This is not changed if the excluded majority are allowed to vote for those who run the political side of capitalism—and who define the "common interest", inevitably since they are governing on behalf of the capitalist class, as in fact the interest of that class.

What Blair and the other call "democracy" is by no means democracy in the full sense of the term, which can only exist in the classless context of a society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production. Their democracy is the inevitably limited and narrowly political democracy that is the most that can exist under capitalism. But, in any event, it is not even this stunted, political democracy that is at stake. It is oil.

So, the line-up in the next—military—episode in the continuing struggle for control of the oil resources of the Middle East is, on the one side, a section of the local capitalist class using Islam to rally mass support and, on the other, the Western capitalist powers using "democracy" as their ideology to win mass support for war.

But "Islamic State" versus "Democracy" is only the ideological smokescreen disguising the real issue at stake: control of oil resources and trade routes. It is not an issue worth the shedding of a single drop of working-class blood.

As Socialists we declare our opposition to both sides in this war and call on the working class of the world to unite to bring capitalism to a rapid end so that no more lives are sacrificed to further the economic interests of rival sections of the world capitalist class.

(October 2001)