

SOCIALIST REVIEW

NEITHER WASHINGTON NOR MOSCOW, BUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

VOL. 7 No. 1

NOVEMBER, 1957

SIXPENCE

This Issue includes :

Bevanism decayed

Back from Brighton

40th anniversary of the
Russian Revolution

Youth and the armed Forces

Building workers' crisis

AEU elections

Trade-union tasks

Forum futures, etc., etc.

LABOUR AFTER BRIGHTON

MILITANT SOCIALISM is in crisis. Left-wing delegates returned from Annual Conference last month dismayed at the ease with which the Right had swamped all opposition, disturbed to see the Left so disorganised, so disorientated and so dumbed.

They saw nationalization replaced by stock-exchange juggling—and only 1,276,000 votes protested; membership of the H-bomb club endorsed—and only three-quarters of a million said “no”; the colonial peoples were again sold to British imperialism—and too few opposed for the votes to be counted; even the elections to the NEC showed, in the words of *The Times*, a “swing to the centre.” The Left took a beating.

The crisis was not unexpected. Under pressure of economic difficulties the Tories had hardened in their attitude to the working class. The Rent Act the Credit Squeeze, the Seven Percent Bank Rate—workers were to pay for class rule. The Tories had no more time for Butskellism. Bipartisanship in home and foreign policy had worn thin. And the Right-wing leadership of the Labour Party was forced into opposition, was compelled to come out with a Leftish programme.

More than half-way

As the Right moved “Left,” “Left” moved right. The Bevanites met Gaitskell half-way, more than half-way. They had no programme, no organization; they had not campaigned systematically in ward and constituency parties. Even *Tribune* was obscure and offered no alternative. And so the pinker Gaitskell looked, the paler they became.

Add to this the certainty of a Labour Government very soon and the sweet smell of office, and we start understanding the collapse of the Left “leadership”: Bevan's sell-out and the embarrassment of the big-name Bevanites.

But expected or not, the blow was a real one. The militant Left in our Party were caught off-guard at Conference. Now, as never before, we felt the lack of a programme, the isolation of the individual comrades, the need for co-ordination and pooling of effort and resources. Suddenly, the futility of having fought under the banner of “Bevanism” without having reserved the right to nail it to a mast of our own choosing, became clear.

And now, after Brighton, what needs be done? There can be no question

* Even after the Labour Party had gone on record in favour of nuclear weapons, Krushchev wrote the following in his letter to the Labour Party: “. . . there has been at present a certain rapprochement between the points of view held by the British Labour Party and the Soviet Communist Party on a number of most important questions dealing with the preservation of peace and international security . . .” (!)

of giving up the struggle for a socialist programme. No militant socialist can be attracted to the Communist Party which endorses H-Bombs for Britain because Russia has them.* Nor can any militant socialist continue to expect a lead from *Tribune*. Just look at them! How do they meet the Right-wing's walkover? “No More Wage Munichs Cry the Tories” was their first headline after Brighton (*Tribune*, October 11); “Round the Moon—Any

Day Now” was their second (*Tribune*, October 18). Any criticism of Bevan's betrayal? Nothing but a faint bleep from Michael Foot gently chiding the Master for using doubtful “political means” in translating his uncontaminated “moral case” into reality (*Tribune*, October 11). And then, of course, the traditional plea from Jennie Lee to hush because “Leaders must argue in private” (*Tribune*, October 18).

No, the militant socialist has nowhere to turn but to his rank-and-file comrades. And now is the time to do so. Hundred, if not thousands, are seeing for the first time what clay the “leader-

ship”—Right and “Left”—is made of. Hundred are looking for a socialist programme. The defeat at Brighton may well be the start of a new, militant Left in the Labour Party.

Our job is to build that Left. Not around personalities, but around a socialist programme such as that of the SOCIALIST REVIEW. Not as a mass of disparate individuals, but as a coherent force, co-ordinating its activities, knowledge and resources.

Brighton was a defeat for socialism in Britain. But many a defeat has closed the ranks of the defeated. Let us see to it that this was such a one.

THE MOVEMENT

RAYMOND CHALLINOR, EC member
Newcastle-under-Lyme CLP, examines

THE DEMISE OF “BEVANISM”

THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE at Brighton will probably go down in history as being the occasion when Aneurin Bevan, who had been drifting to the right for some years, finally and irrevocably broke with the left-wing. To many constituency party delegates Bevan's support of the H-bomb brought agonising disillusionment and swept away the corner-stone of their political beliefs.

How did it occur? Why did Bevan make his dramatic defence of some of the most objectionable ideas which the right-wing Labour leaders and the Tories treasure as common property?

Many socialists regard Bevan's actions as a betrayal, comparable with that of MacDonald in 1931. They consider it is an example of a form of prostitution not dealt with in the Wolfenden report: namely, selling one's self body and soul, to gain political office—in this case, of course, the office being that of Foreign Secretary in the next Labour Government.

However, I think this type of approach to Bevan's actions is superficial. It treats a personal matter something which has very deep political foundations. For, if you are going to understand clearly Bevan's behaviour, then you must consider his whole political ideology and that of the movement—the Bevanites—that sprang up round him.

The heresy of Bevanism came into being tempestuously as a protest against the Labour Government's 1951 budget, which sought to pay for an inflated arms programme by cutting down on social services. This sparked off a long ding-dong battle between right- and left-wings. From the initial cause of dispute—the National Health Services charges—the great debate ranged far and wide. Matters of fundamental principle, such as

whether nationalisation proposals should be included in the Labour Party's policy, were hotly discussed.

However, it has been obvious for the last four years that the dispute was dying down. This was because the Bevanites were gradually becoming less sure of themselves and their own convictions. First of all Harold Wilson, then Freeman and Crossman, followed by many others, crossed over from the Bevanite camp into that of the Establishment. Their sins were quickly forgiven, and some were rewarded with seats in the Shadow cabinet. Their rehabilitation only served to increase the anguish of the few remaining Bevanite MPs and quicken the tempo of Bevanite disintegration.

No program

Why did Bevanism collapse? Well, the answer must be sought in its origins. The 57 MPs who voted against the social service cuts were, like Messrs Heinz's 57 varieties, a very varied assortment. Practically the only thing they all agreed on was the opposition to the National Health Service charges. If Bevanism was to survive it was necessary for it to change from being an amorphous movement of protest into a stable, united force. But this could only be done if there was a thoroughgoing discussion of basic principles leading to the formulation of a clear, alternative policy to the

Attlee leadership. However, this was never done: Bevanism never had a common policy, strategy or tactics. It was, as a result, never a serious threat to the right-wing leadership. Without a common policy, there was nothing to hold them together; inexorably they drifted apart.

This tendency towards disintegration was aggravated by the veneration and the completely distorted attitude Bevan and many of his followers had to parliamentary activities. They regarded Parliament very much as crusty, old, nineteenth century Liberals had done, as the centre of the political universe around which everything else revolved. Instead of getting out into the country, holding mass meetings in a campaign to get the Tory Government out, Bevan was quite content to make his criticisms of the Tory Government in the genteel and tranquil atmosphere of Parliament.

As a result, he failed to make himself the spearhead of mass movement aimed at getting the Tories out. This had important consequences. For if the Bevanite MPs had shown that they were really concerned about people's grievances—and many genuine grievances existed by 1953-54—then they would have gained mass support. The increased Tory majority at the 1955 General Election was not because the Tory Government had been such a tremendous success, but because the opposition had been such a dismal failure. The poor attendance of MPs in the House, the strict adherence to “the rules of the game,” and the failure of

[continued next page]

THE MOVEMENT

THE DEMISE OF "BEVANISM" — continued

the Labour Party to raise their opposition from the level of trivialities to that of principled differences meant that the Tories got away with murder in Cyprus and wholesale deception in this country.

For all this the Bevanites must take their share of responsibility. It was to be expected that the right-wing Labour leadership would only oppose the Tories in a floppish, half-hearted manner. But this surely should have been another weapon in the Bevanite armoury: not only to show the mass of the working class that their ideas were superior to those of the right-wing, but also that their adoption led to a more vigorous and forthright attack upon the Tories.

Bevan opposes industrial action

However, it became more and more painfully obvious that far from wishing to encourage feelings of spontaneous hostility towards the Tories, the Bevanites wanted to moderate them. For example, **Aneurin Bevan was approached by numerous groups of workers in 1953-54 who wanted to get the Tories out by industrial action. They pointed out that their living standards were endangered, that the Tories had failed to carry out their election pledges of maintaining food subsidies and "mending the hole in the purse," and therefore these workers felt they had a right to take an elementary step—that of strike action—to protect themselves. Yet incessantly Bevan sought to restrain them and proudly boasted of his respect for constitutional proprieties.**

Undoubtedly this type of behaviour lost Bevan considerable respect among the working class. It weakened the already tenuous links between the factory militants and the Bevanites. More and more Bevan and his colleagues got out of touch with the feelings and aspirations of the broad mass of the population. More and more they degenerated into an introverted parliamentary clique, devoting their time to smart alec manoeuvres.

But as Bevan's ties with the working class weakened, his contacts with those who do not have to indulge in the sordid day-to-day task of earning a living increased. The *Daily Express* of May 18, 1957 carried these banner headlines on their front page: "The New Monarchy! As the Prince goes on TV Children's Hour, the Queen asks 'Nye' to lunch at Buckingham Palace" Symbolically Bevan even sat at the right hand of the Queen. The "Express" goes on to list the other seven guests at the dinner: Mr. Keith Holyoake, deputy Prime Minister of New Zealand; Sir Patrick Spens, Tory MP; Sir Frank Newsam, Permanent Under-Secretary, Home Office; Sir Robert Fraser, Director-General IFA; Lieut.-Colonel A. S. Bullivent, 16th/5th Lancers; Group Captain John Cunningham, chief test pilot, De Havillands; the Rev. David Sheppard, the test cricketer.

Bevan and the Suez War

As you know doubt gather, Labour has gone a long way—I won't say in which direction!—since Keir Hardie, entered the House of Commons in his cloth-cap. Keir Hardie was vilified and derided by the Tories. Even the king went out of his way to insult him in public by making him the only MP not to be invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace. Bevan, by contrast, is received warmly by royalty and many Tories confess that they have a tender spot for him, at least since he became a good and well-behaved boy again.

Keir Hardie always opposed the use

of gunboats and considered that it was the duty of the British workers to fight alongside the colonial peoples in their struggle for freedom from British imperialism. But Bevan has shown his ideas of a socialist policy are of an entirely different kind. They are derived from such great socialists as Lord Palmerston and Kipling.

When the Suez crisis broke last year, Bevan denounced Egypt's take-over of the Suez canal as an "Ali Baba form of nationalisation." In his righteous wrath at the dispossession of an Anglo-French concern, he forgot to inquire into how the concession was originally gained. The story of how British naval might was used to bully Egypt into granting the land, how the canal was built with Egyptian slave labour, and how, once it was all finished, Britain gained the whole of the original sum she "bought" the canal with back through exorbitant interest rates—all these are among some of the most sordid and outrageous stories in the annals of British imperialism.

Since then the Suez Canal Company has each year reaped a high profit. One would have thought that a British Socialist, knowing all this, would not

merely have been pleased to see it go back into Egyptian hands, but might even have suggested that we paid some compensation for the damage done.

But not so Bevan. He was for an openly imperialist policy. He favoured a policy of employing economic sanctions, of starving the Egyptians into submission. Writing an article entitled "What I'd tell Nasser" in that organ of truth and virtue, "The News of the World" (May 5, 1957), he wrote: "If Egypt is to enjoy the benefits of the international club she must obey its rules." In other words, Bevan will get mighty annoyed if any Wop starts tampering with foreign capital, particularly British capital, making big, fat profits.

In the House of Commons he went on to elaborate on how he would bring the Egyptians to their knees. He would dam the headwaters of the Nile and Lake Victoria thereby depriving Egypt of her only source of water. This measure would inflict tremendous suffering on millions of poor, illiterate peasants and their families. Without drinking water, without water to irrigate their meagre crops, they would die like flies from thirst, disease and

famine. It would have had such terrifying consequences that even the Prime Minister, Harold MacMillan, shrunk back and was not prepared to commit the Government to such draconic measures. It would have been an act of inhumanity comparable with the drowning of countless thousands of men women and children in the underground stations of Berlin during the final stages of Germany's collapse. At least Hitler, who gave the order for that criminal act, was at that time mad and he did not perpetrate his villainy in the name of democratic socialism.

Tories applaud

Bevan's attitude towards Egypt made him the friend of the die-hard Tories. When Bevan put forward his scheme for stopping the water, the *Manchester Guardian* (May 3, 1957) says: "There was ringing Tory acclaim. . . . It was a tacit salute to the new statesmanlike Bevan." Lord Hailsham, who is now chairman of the Tory Party, even went as far as to state: "If I were a Socialist I should unreservedly, after the experience of the last few weeks, declare myself a Bevanite." The *Observer* (May 12) suggests that many other Tories have at least some sympathy for Bevan: "Take, for instance, the recent Conservative attitude to Mr. Gaitskell and Mr. Bevan. There was a time when Mr. Gaitskell was almost a Tory hero. How sensible he was! How unlike that rude tempestuous fellow from South Wales! We do not hear many tokens of regard these days. Mr. Gaitskell can do no right and Mr. Bevan can do no wrong." The same article then goes on to describe how one of Bevan's parliamentary questions "brought an appreciative murmur from Conservatives and especially right-wing Conservatives."

Of course, this trend has continued. His defence of the H-bomb at the Labour Party annual conference was applauded in most Tory newspapers. Not one Tory newspaper could find anything to disagree with in his speech. So much for his socialist utterances!

The H-bomb argument

Many of Bevan's arguments for the H-bomb at the Brighton conference were illogical and mutually self-contradictory. For instance, he urges retention of the bomb because without it Britain would lose her independence, her power to mediate between East and West. He paints a picture of its effect on the rest of the world: "Just consider all the little nations running for shelter here and there—one running to Russia another to the United States. In that situation, before anything else would happen, the world will have been polarised between the Soviet Union and the United States."

Yet in the next breath Bevan argues: "If we abandon the bomb we contract out of all our alliances." But these alliances—SEATO and NATO—are, along with the Warsaw pact, one of the main forces causing this polarisation between East and West. Furthermore, Labour leaders have aided and abetted this polarisation, this getting uncommitted nations such as the Federal German Republic rearmed and into NATO. They referred to it as strengthening the Atlantic alliance.

But one can't consistently favour the H-bomb because it is necessary to keep in the American alliances, as Bevan does, while, at the same time, attacking those who oppose the bomb because, to adopt their policy, would send little nations scurrying to America.

But in any case, would the small nations go scurrying to America or

[continued next page]

"BEVANISM": what we said

1950., after the Margate Conference:

Nothing could be more discouraging to his friends than the role Bevan plays in Party Conferences. Whenever the platform is in difficulties and things look like getting out of hand, Bevan is put up to deal with the malcontents and to act as Counsel for the Defence. (SOCIALIST REVIEW, Vol. 1, No. 1, November 1950).

1952, after the resignation:

Bevan is not at all dependable; lacking the rudder of the Marxist approach, he can be swept to any corner of the troubled political seas. It cannot be excluded that he may even, like the pre-war "leaders" of the left-wing, return to his quiet haven with the official leadership. . . . the rank and file must forget its own policy and leadership, not simply accept a ready-made one, neither Bevan's nor anyone else's. Only in this way can we guard against the ignominious collapse and betrayal of the left-wing organisation when things get hot. . . . (SOCIALIST REVIEW, Vol. 2, No. 1, April-May, 1952).

1952, the question of war:

Questions such as whether or not war is inevitable under capitalism, or whether or not imperialist can be prevented without the establishment of socialism, simply do not exist for Bevan. If one accepted his analysis one would have to conclude that there are no basic factors inevitably leading Stalin's Russia towards imperialist expansion and war, and that there are no fundamental causes driving British and American capitalism to war. (SOCIALIST REVIEW, Vol. 2 No. 2, June-July, 1952).

Can Bevanism hold?

The wide variety of views, often of a completely contradictory character, that the individual Bevanites utter from time to time makes it clear that Bevanism is not a stable socialist force. Confronted with a particular crisis, its members are likely to scatter all over the political rainbow. (SOCIALIST REVIEW, Vol. 2, No. 5, November, 1952).

1955, after the withdrawal of the Whip:

Bevan himself has made it easy for the Morrison-Gaitskell-Atlee wing of

the party to gain the upper hand. He has offered nothing but confusion to the rank and file of the party; no policy; the known Bevanites are at loggerheads amongst themselves. . . .

(According to Bevan. . . . to manufacture H-bombs is all right; to use them is all right; we must only be sure that when they are used it will be in accordance with the rules of the parlour game of war. Where was the appeal for mass action against capitalist suicide? . . . Is this simply a continuation of the Bevanite confusions of which we have had so many examples recently: against German rearmament but for NATO; against SEATO but for Japanese rearmament; against an impossible arms budget but for a "realistic" one?) (SOCIALIST REVIEW, Vol. 4, No. 8, April, 1955).

1955, before the Margate Conference:

. . . examples are listed . . . of the failure of the Bevanites to provide any consistent constructive and coherent Left Wing policy. Because of this it would be criminal folly for the Left Wing delegates at the coming conference to give complete and uncritical support to the Bevanites. (SOCIALIST REVIEW, Vol. 4, No. 12, August, 1955).

1955, after the Margate Conference:

Either the Bevanites must formulate a coherent alternative policy behind which the Left Wing can rally—or else they must relinquish any claims they may make as the leadership of the broad Left Wing of the Party.

1956, after the Blackpool Conference:

However much we welcome the election of Bevan (to the Treasurership of the Party) as a sign of increased left pressure from the rank and file, we cannot regard it as any sort of defeat for the right-wing or even a serious challenge to it. (SOCIALIST REVIEW, Vol. 6, No. 2, November, 1956).

1957, before the Brighton Conference:

The leadership—Right and 'Left'—have taken up their positions, declared their 'war aims' and shown the working class that, whatever the fight is about, it has certainly nothing in common with the fight for socialism. (SOCIALIST REVIEW, Vol. 6, No. 12, October, 1957).

Russia? If a British Labour Government renounced the bomb as well as adopted a socialist foreign policy, it would become a dynamic international force. It would point the way to the masses of the world, who don't support this suicidal arms drive. Millions would flock to the banner of peace. For humanity, over half of whom are still suffering from malnutrition, have nothing to gain from wars and preparation for wars. It merely increases the emptiness of their bellies and the prospects of death. They are opposed to these class systems that leave them poverty-stricken whilst a handful of powerful men live luxuriously in America and Russia. Surely if Britain renounced the bomb and aligned herself with the have-nots throughout the world against the haves, this would be the greatest single contribution she could make to stop this polarisation, to break up the Eastern and Western blocs, and to preserve peace.

Bevan goes on to say he opposes the Norwood resolution for the abolition of the H-bomb, because abolition could "precipitate incidents that might easily lead to a Third World War." Yet is there not more danger in the present position, which Bevan seeks to perpetuate, where "the decision to use it would never be taken by Parliament, or even by a Cabinet, but by an individual man, acting on the report of some of his spies?" What is more, this fateful decision for humanity—to H-bomb or not to H-bomb—may easily be taken by a Nazi General, Speidel, sitting in a French chateau, the headquarters of NATO.

Do-it-yourself, now

Having shown the falsity of Bevan's arguments on the H-bomb, let us ask what the political implications of his swing to the right are for the Labour left. Many consider that we have lost a friend—but, in actual fact, Bevan has always been a false friend. He has exercised a restraining influence upon the development of the left-wing movement. His own muzzy ideas, and the equally muzzy ideas of the MPs associated with him, have been one of the forces that have impeded the clarification of ideas. Also, many sincere rank-and-filers have thought it was not necessary to get down to a consideration of principles—conveniently everything could be left to Bevan. Criticism of Bevan has been deliberately restrained or repressed by these comrades out of loyalty and a false conception of the needs of left-wing unity.

Now we will no longer hear the beat to leave things to Bevan. If a mass left-wing movement is to be built in Britain then we must all get down to build it. We must fight on the pressing day-to-day problems—rents, cost of living and, of course, still the H-bomb—so that people realise that we are struggling in their interests and will rally to support.

We're all the better for it

The defection of Bevan is like a surgical operation—for a short while we will be weaker but in the long run far better off. The final demise of Bevanism has meant that the road for the development of the left-wing movement has become clearer. We shall no longer encounter the twin distractions of Stalinism and Bevanism that have in the past resulted in many good socialists using their energies in ways that were not in the best interests of Socialism.

It has also meant that the need to get down to a consideration of basic socialist principles, of the ideas from which all our actions should flow, is of vital necessity. But this task cannot be achieved in a sealed chamber, away from life's hurly-burl. Theory and Practice must be united.

In the achievement of these objectives the "SOCIALIST REVIEW" plays an important part. Besides providing

BACK FROM BRIGHTON

TWO DELEGATES GIVE THEIR VIEWS

One: "The Stockbrokers' Road to Socialism" • By Wally Russell

NOW WE'VE SEEN EVERYTHING. In one week, the Fifty-sixth Conference of the Labour Party, held at a time of deepening world crisis, both politically and economically, rejected its faith in Socialism, its devotion to peace and its loyalty to the colonial peoples.

Of course we agreed on a programme which, compared with the Tories', can be termed "progressive." Nevertheless, it only takes a small bite at the class basis of capitalist society and can be bracketed neatly with the old Liberal Party policies of pre-1914.

Is this a policy?

Will this sort of programme suffice? Can a policy statement like **Industry and Society**, which deceived so many delegates at Conference but so few editors in Fleet Street, be termed socialist? Can a policy on the H-Bomb, which basis itself on bringing together leaders of rival power groups (whose very social structures need war as an outlet), be termed peaceful?—especially when the **Daily Worker** and the **Daily Mail** sing in unison about the virtues of the resolution which was passed? And can a colonial programme which does not grant our colonial brothers the right to run their countries' economic life be called liberating?

We have always accepted three general trends of thought in our movement: the Christian Socialist (for which we all have a soft spot whether or not we agree with its theoretical approach) that believes we must build socialism because it is morally right to do so; the Fabian Socialist (early variety) or the Co-operative trend which believes in changing the nature of capitalism gradually until it becomes socialist. (Many of us disagree with this "theory" but the very nature of things over the last 50 years has compelled us to work along these lines); and the Marxist trend that has lifted socialist theory from the heart, the prayer-book and the political crystal-ball to the head where reasoned and logical arguments can be evolved about the very nature of human society.

The stockbrokers' road

Now we must add another road to socialism—the stockbrokers' road—which by-passes the class struggle (judging from the contentment with which the City received **Industry and Society**) and makes class collaboration the order of the day. As we drive slowly down this road we shall be supported by those grand examples of proletarian journalism—the **Mirror**, the **News Chronicle** and **Odham's Press**.

Even the **Daily Worker** coughed blood over this shocking pamphlet.

a free forum where any socialist can discuss any aspect of socialist theory, the paper also deals with these pressing day-to-day problems. Its pages are packed with facts that can be used as ammunition in the fight against the Tories and for a socialist policy. The "SOCIALIST REVIEW" also acts as a co-ordinator. It helps comrades up-and-down the country to co-operate in spreading socialist ideas and learning from their mutual experience. As such the paper has become a priceless possession of the left-wing. Unlike the other organs of the Labour Movement, it can be relied upon. It has Third Camp socialist principles and it intends to stick to them—whatever Bevan or anybody else does.

Basil Cameron, writing in the **News Chronicle**, described his terrible disappointment at seeing socialism being voted out of the Labour Party programme on the first occasion he has managed to attend Conference in a life-time of activity in the movement. And we, wretched optimists, who had gone there determined to "do our bit" in the fight for a socialist Britain, trudged home with the slow, dawning realisation that we had been witnessing all we have lived for being frustrated—at least for the time being.

I must ask the NEC an open question. Do they really feel, in all honesty, that they can run capitalist Britain and also indefinitely maintain full employment, social justice and peace? No group of men can do that, however sincere they might be. It is just not possible to resolve the contradictions of a society which produced 1914 and 1939, apart from slump after slump and bellyfuls of abject poverty all the time.

Two: A Conference of "uncompromising compromise" • By Sid Bidwell, prospective parliamentary candidate for East Herts

AS DELEGATES at the 1957 Labour Party Conference at Brighton had their feet frozen on the ice-rink on which the assembly was staged, they witnessed the freezing of the Socialist aspirations of the British workers as well.

The NUR of which I am proud to be a member, refused to remit to the National EC and thus struck a blow for freedom and democracy within the Labour Movement. Above I have used the word "staged;" this about sums up the Labour Party Conference. It is skilfully managed from beginning to end. Years ago I had formed the judgment that it could be carried on by post; and yet I am having second thoughts about that too as I reel from the blows dealt me physically, mentally and politically by the ice at Brighton.

The woolly document **Industry and Society** means, as the **Economist** has said, exactly nothing. Or, to be more exact, the complete subjugation of the Movement to Keynesian economic doctrine. In the booklet his aid is summoned in unashamed terms. It is not easy to get to the rostrum unless one is prepared to speak on every issue (one delegate got there four times as against five at Blackpool)—but never once was the booklet which refuses to advance Socialism, taken hold of by any participant and torn up page by page. To be sure 5 minutes is much

WALLY RUSSELL, Romford Borough Labour Party delegate to this year's Labour Party Conference, is a member of the AESD, member of his Party's EC, Political Education Officer, Vice-Chairman of the Romford WEA and a Councillor.

The world needs peace now more than ever before in history. Only by building socialism which will eliminate conflicting sources of economic interest (and these are the causes of wars!), can we hope to achieve that peace. And yet, the one British party that is based on the working people and which, therefore, is unique in being able to lead us to socialism, has decided to turn its back on its destiny and adopt the morality of the knock-shop. Only if it turns again to its task with all its might can our children and ourselves look forward to anything other than a slow drift to World War III. It is our job to make the turn.

too short to do it but that is why those who hold similar views should do it collectively.

For the regroupment of the Left

The right-about turn of Frank Cousins, T & GWU, had to be seen to be believed. He was the most compromising uncompromiser that Conference has seen. The spectacle of Nye Bevan being catcalled by his erstwhile friends from the floor on the great H-bomb show surely writes finish to the Bevan personality cult in the British Labour Movement. In these days of contemporary capitalist miscalculations and new—but so very old—thinking in the Labour Party, the great need surely is the regroupment of Marxists in the Labour Movement. If Brighton gives any lessons at all it is not the fragmentation of shareholding in the big Public Companies but the fragmentation and sectarianism of those who cling to the ideas of scientific Socialism which struggles for clear and united expression in the Party.

The Ford Management has renewed their attacks on the well-organized Briggs workers. They have challenged the workers' right to accept or reject overtime by trying to make it compulsory; they are undermining the factory organization by outlawing meetings on the works premises. These are matters of the utmost importance to the Labour Movement and should be widely known. Next month, **Socialist Review** will feature an article on the situation at Briggs on the basis of an on-the-spot enquiry.

For the American Political Scene
Read

LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Fortnightly

NEW INTERNATIONAL

a Marxist Quarterly

ANVIL

a Student Socialist Magazine

Obtainable from us

FORUM

SEYMOUR PAPERT reviews what has happened in the

40 YEARS SINCE THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

FORTY YEARS AGO, in November, 1917, the workers of Russia took control of their country.

The echo of this great event travelled through the world as a wave of exhilaration amongst workers, socialists and oppressed colonial peoples. In the soviets—the workers' councils—of Petrograd and Moscow they saw the image of their own future, the promise of the fulfilment of their hopes and struggles.

Today, forty years later, when we ask whether this promise was true, we are given two answers by the great propaganda mediums of the world. One version tells us that Russian society as it exists is a socialist society; or, in its more subtle forms, it tells us that while Russian socialism has been deformed in various ways it remains essentially socialist. The other version tries to persuade us that the 1917 revolution was a monster which, now that it has grown big enough, is threatening us all with horrible destruction.

Which are we to believe—that because Russia has a planned economy and can send Bleep flying around the planet it is therefore an "advanced," "progressive" "workers state"; or that its brutal massacre of the Hungarians is the final proof that communism is evil? Or can we reject both?

The Russian worker

As socialists who believe in the working class we naturally try to answer these questions by examining the life of the Russian worker. Follow one into his factory. He clocks in as he would in England. Inside he finds a managerial and supervisory staff which assigns his work, watches over him to see that he keeps to the time schedule; induces him to work harder by introducing piece-work, production-norms, time-studies and all the hateful but familiar paraphernalia of "management."

To see how the worker reacts to all this read the following report of a discussion with a Russian engineer Sasha:

"There was," Sasha said, "a constant pressure from below. The masses had as yet no political leadership and for the time being they confined themselves to making economic demands which life itself dictated to them. They demand the lowering of production norms, higher wage rates, more and better houses, more and cheaper food. To enforce the demands they were using the traditional working class weapon, that of the strike. . . . Nearly all the strikes were against the high norms being worked though some were linked with specific local grievances against the management and with demands for personnel changes." (Manchester Guardian, October 10, 1957).

All this could easily be a description of a factory in the "Western" capitalist countries. On each side of the iron curtain the worker finds himself face to face with a management using essentially the same techniques (they are increasingly similar) and he resists them in essentially the same way. This open conflict on the shop-floor in Russia is not something new, though it is very likely growing.

In 1947, for example, an "industrial relations expert" wrote:

"We know—from first hand reports of engineers working in Russia under lend-lease as well as from official Rus-

sian publications themselves—that the industrial manager in the Soviet Union, although he does not have to worry about union troubles, faces pretty much the same labour relations problem as his colleague in the West. . . . This conflict is obviously rooted in conditions, relations and politics general to modern industry. . . ." (Peter Drucker in *Fortnightly Review*, February, 1947).

The class struggle

It is not difficult to say what these conditions, relations and policies are. They are the result of the division of society into two classes: the workers who produce and the managers, directors, shareholders, etc., who control the factories and, in consequence, the country as a whole. Of course there are not "shareholders" in Russia: but this makes no fundamental difference to the relationship between the worker and the management in the factory. An ICI manager, a National Coal Board manager and the director of the Orjonikidze factory in Moscow all have the same task—to discipline the workers, oppose their wage demands, get as much out of them as possible and so on. To this the worker has only one reply: he resists "speed-up" and the introduction of unpopular methods of production, demands higher wages and does his best to oppose the strength and authority of the management. The resulting conflict is the real root of the whole class struggle and will be finally resolved only when the workers succeed in gaining control over production and replacing the manager by an elected committee responsible to themselves.

Marx taught us that the fundamental features of any society are decided by the "relations of production" in that society and we have shown that the way in which workers and managers confront one another at the point of production is the same in Russia as it is in the capitalist countries. In other words Russia is essential a capitalist country—though we have to call it state-capitalist in order to emphasise the difference between it and the free enterprise, liberal capitalism which was once the chief form of capitalism in the West but which is losing round even there with the advance of huge trusts, nationalised industries, state controlled armament programmes, fiscal interference, etc.

Horrors of capitalism

Thus we can briefly describe what has happened in Russia as the defeat of the 1917 revolution by a form of capitalism which is different from our own only insofar as it has been able to go straight to the state of complete monopolisation which is the logical conclusion of all capitalist development. The horrors and atrocities of the last thirty years of Russian history have been the horrors and atrocities of capitalism! The compulsory and forceful expropriation of the peasants under Stalin was a recapitulation of the methods used in Britain to achieve the same end; the vicious laws introduced in Russia in the thirties to control the new urban population are a repetition of those described by Marx, Engels and others in Britain. They are the same because they come from the same source: the attempt of

a section of society to impose industrial organisation on society from above and under its own control. Nothing is more disgusting than the capitalist who "abhors" capitalist methods in Russia and attacks them as the work of communism—nothing except those who support state-capitalism in the name of communism.

Our outlook for Russia follows simply from this point of view. The workers there, as here, are engaged in a permanent struggle with their management. The form of this struggle determines both its methods and its eventual goal. Because they have to rely on their solidarity and mutual understanding the working class develops a class consciousness which throws up the proper form of organisation of the workers in a revolution—the workers' councils which played the decisive rôle in every proletarian revolution: The Paris Commune of 1871, Russia in 1917, Hungary in 1956, etc., etc.

Under what slogans will these new soviets fight? Again we don't have to guess, we can see. From day to day the worker in his tussle with management is engaged in a struggle for

partial control over production. A crisis situation, such as that which arose in Hungary, gives this struggle enormously greater energy, greater consciousness and greater unanimity on a national scale. The revolution is simply a continuation, on a more intense and open level, of the permanent struggle and takes its form naturally from it. This is the great lesson to be learned from Hungary; this and the fact that workers under a totalitarian regime which deprives them of the possibilities of "legal" political expression are nevertheless able to arrive at the essential socialist slogans and methods of organisations simply because these are imposed by the very nature of their existence in capitalist society.

The conclusion, then, is that we can and must see the Russian workers as our comrades in arms engaged in the same struggle, using the same methods, and moving towards the same culmination: the seizure of complete control over industry and the setting up of a real workers' council government which will be able to build a truly human society.

PARLIAMENT

"Ring the bell, verger,
Ring, ring, ring,
Perhaps the congregation
Will condescend to sing."
Old Song.

AT THE TIME of writing, two artificial stars are in display in the sky. One is the source of wonder, pride and joy (in various proportions) all over the world, and the other is Lord Hailsham.

Your columnist was intrigued by the Hailsham phenomenon. What, in a phrase, has he got that the others haven't?

Reading his contributions to the Conservative Conference, however, all became clear. The missile's velocity is self-generated since it is in orbit in the constellation of Taurus, the Bull.

When Lord Hailsham spoke on education his speech was a superb slab of waffle, possibly the best since the great days of "on and on and up and up," Rasmay MacDonald.

Insofar as Lord Hailsham's, and the Conservative Party's, views on Education have meaning—some would say that there is no meaning and that Lord Hailsham's arguments are like the Choral Symphony, just an assembly of glorious sounds—it seems to be that the Conservatives would do anything, but anything, for education, just so long as

- (a) none of their social shibboleth are offended;
- (b) It is not necessary to pay out hard money.

For example:

"There was the sensitiveness about the so-called eleven-plus examination. Heart burning has been caused in most areas not so much by the selection, because some sort of selection was the inevitable consequence of the natural differences in needs and abilities, but by the inequalities of the facilities available after the selection had been

Michael Millett has been doing wonders in filling our Parliamentary column during the adjournment. Disappointment at the shortness of the column this month should be tempered by the knowledge that the Editor is a man of little faith who did not expect to see something created out of nothing (the Conservative Conference) and therefore left little space.—EDITOR.

made. The really important thing was to remove the inequalities between areas rather than between children. . . ."

And yet the Conservatives are giving control of school expenditure to the Local Authorities which will mean that the reactionary ones will spend as little as they possibly can in their areas!

In a way, we can be sympathetic to the Conservatives, for education is a classic 'contradiction' in late stage capitalism. The level of technique makes large numbers of highly educated people essential, and yet, the better their education, that is to say, the more truly it shows the nature of things, the more threadbare the foundations of capitalism appear. This is the true reason for the desperate attempts to preserve a class basis—any sort of class will do—in education by such devices as the "sheep and goats" eleven-plus examination.

IT WOULD BE possible (and somebody should do it) to write a book on the dreary fantastic muddle that military planning has fallen into. The situation cannot be described in a few paragraphs. In effect, ultimate weapons bring ultimate contradictions and we will let these words of Mr. Sandys—the Defence Minister—stand without further comment:—

"At present we must frankly recognise there is no effective means of protecting our population against attack with nuclear weapons and consequently we did not think it right to waste the people's money in pretending to do something that we know and you know was impossible."

MICHAEL MILLETT

THE YOUNG SOCIALIST

FOR AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST YOUTH MOVEMENT

NUMBER 1

NOVEMBER, 1957

YOUTH and the ARMED FORCES

By TONY YOUNG • Chairman, Isle of Thanet Youth Section

Eighteen years ago, in the summer of 1939, compulsory military service in peace time was first introduced in Britain. Today, twelve years after the war which was going to establish permanent peace, children born in that grim year are entering the armed forces for two years in uniform, to carry out the foreign and colonial policies of Her Majesty's Government. What sort of job will they be doing, or learning to do? The answer may be seen in the uses to which their elder brothers have been put in these last twelve years. Of course, the details of policy have varied with different Prime Ministers and Colonial Secretaries. But about the broad picture there can be no doubt.

In Indonesia, Palestine, Malaya, Korea, Kenya, Cyprus and Egypt, thousands of the people of those countries, of all ages, both men and women, have been slaughtered, crippled or herded into detention camps. While the Labour movement is absolutely right to be angry about the waste of precious young British lives, the disproportion in casualties which is so glaring—except perhaps in Palestine and Cyprus, the most “purely” military colonial wars—is not often fully appreciated. What is one to say of the obliteration bombing of Korean towns and villages with rockets and jellied petrol, to such effect that seven million Koreans have disappeared? Or the fantastic ratio of “kills” in the campaign against Mau Mau in Kenya, 200 to 1 in favour of the British forces, not to mention the ghastly mass hangings of Africans convicted of “consorting with terrorists,” “being in unauthorised possession of ammunition,” and so on. These operations were less wars, as that word is generally understood, than simple massacres.

The Forces' function

Certainly, many of the plain facts and figures of exploitation and oppression of the colonial peoples are unknown to large numbers of British workers, and conscious Socialists have an enormous task in publicising and explaining them. What I particularly want to emphasise here, however, is the consistent general character of the operation of the armed forces in the colonial countries. There are many young members of Youth Sections who passionately condemn the suppression of Cyprus and the invasion of Egypt, but they often see the Army as just an instrument, neither good nor bad in itself, which has happened to be used for evil ends. But if they are to understand why they are being conscripted, and the real nature of the Army, they must go deeper than this. **The permanent needs of the British capitalist class—cheap sources of raw materials, more profitable fields of investment, strategic bases against rival powers—have conditioned the whole training, method, organisation and character of the armed forces.** I have laid particular stress on the record in the colonies because it is there that their true character has been least disguised in recent years.

But there are other aspects of the work of the forces which show that they cannot possibly be regarded like,

say, a railway system or a telephone exchange, whose equipment and technique could, under different control, do as good a job for Socialism as for Capitalism. From year to year the forces are being re-organised and re-equipped with a view to the most efficient conduct of the Third World War which the criminal lunatics in control are planning to fight. (Sometimes they tell us, and prospective enemies, that they are only bluffing; provided we have twice as many rockets as they, they will never dare to attack us; and we would never attack anyone, of course, provided nobody nationalises any of “our” canals). At any rate, the Minister of Defence, Mr. Sandys, now tells us that in the event of war, his new conception of defence is no defence for inessentials such as the inhabitants of this country, but only for Britain's true treasures, her bomber bases. **To this end the army, especially in Germany and in Britain itself, is being reshaped, and a vast effort of military-scientific research is devoted to producing bigger and better bacteria, H-bombs, nerve-gas, and other weapons calculated to exterminate human beings as though they were insects.** This is of course only a natural expression of the aims of a ruling class terrified of losing its power, but it means that the modern armed forces, in their whole structure, are becoming less and less suitable for use in any way by a Socialist Government.

Blackleg army

True, some capitalist military “experts” are moaning gloomily and expressing fears that this transformation of the old army into a super-suicide force will make it more difficult to crush colonial uprisings effectively, where the use of H-bombs might do more harm to “investors'” property than to any “terrorists” who were about, and might invite retaliation from elsewhere. One can only comment that this is their worry, and Socialists should have better things to do than take sides in arguments between different sections of the bosses as to what sort of army would suit them best. Here young Socialists can set an example to some of their elders.

Finally, in considering the activities of the armed forces, we must never forget their use as strikebreakers or as reinforcements for the police in situations dangerous to the ruling class. It is quite true that recently they have not been in evidence in strikes, any-

how since the period of Attlee's government, when they were in and out of the docks almost every day. But no Socialist should be surprised, if we enter another period of really big industrial and political battles, to see troops brought in against the workers whenever the capitalists consider it can be got away with.

Killing for fun

If we are right in thinking that the capitalist class organises the forces for the three main purposes outlined above, what is the effect of the necessary training and organisation on the hundreds of thousands of young workers annually conscripted into them? Although certainly the majority escape or recover from the very worst effects, there can be little doubt that the net result is a definitely harmful one from the point of view of the Labour movement.

We should realise that the worst effects can be very bad indeed; if a young worker can be turned into the sort of person who is pleased to be photographed playing with the severed heads of Malayan guerillas, or who can boast about his company being top of his regiment's “scoreboard” in its “log” of Africans killed, then he has been turned into something less than a human being, and a shameless enemy of all that Socialism stands for. But the attitude of arrogant contempt for human dignity which expresses itself in these ways is to a lesser degree put across every recruit who lacks the previously formed political convictions necessary to reject it. **To carry out the tasks it is intended for, the capitalist army must cultivate reactionary attitudes of contempt for colonial peoples, an unthinking, “sporting” attitude to killing, and must destroy all working-class instincts of solidarity and comradeship of the exploited.**

I myself once experienced an incident which symbolised rather piquantly the nature of the mental processing carried on in the forces, during my “square-bashing” days. The first period of our training one morning was Religious Instruction, during which the chaplain gave us a very eloquent address on the evils of swearing. There immediately followed an hour of bayonet drill, during which we tore the insides out of straw dummies, which the instructor in colourful terms urged us to think of as Russians.

Breeding apathy

However, in present circumstances, perhaps a more obvious corrupting effect is that produced by the incredible waste of time, and it is here that once again the bosses find themselves divided as to the value of conscription. A day which is spent drinking tea, reading *Reveille* or sex-and-violence novels, and filling in half a dozen forms or

receipts, followed by an evening lying on one's bed listening to Radio Luxembourg, can only enfeeble critical thought or any kind of political or trade union outlook. So far so good, but the attitude of complete cynicism and apathy which frequently results is not very helpful to the boss as it also produces a reluctance to raise a finger to do anything except when compelled to. **Generally, I would suggest, the army fails to inculcate the discipline and unreasoning “loyalty” which it would like to, for all this is dismissed as “bull,” and has no permanent effect; but it does more often than not succeed in creating a deep indifference and lack of enthusiasm for anything at all.**

Class weapon-training

Most of the arguments in favour of the call-up which sometimes crop up in the Labour Party—that it gives people a chance to meet others from different sections of society, or that regardless of the way it is spent, it somehow teaches self-reliance—simply ignore or forget the class purposes and class organisation of the present-day army. But there are some people who hold it to be desirable that there should be some form of compulsory military service, even in the existing type of army, on the grounds that it is a good thing for the majority of the working people to know how to use arms. This is the argument used by the Communist Party in favour of the call-up, but it is also found among Labour Party members who fear that in certain conditions the capitalist class might use force to prevent the achievement of Socialism.

Of course no serious Socialist would rule out such a possibility altogether, although in densely populated Britain, with its close-knit system of communications, the prospects of successfully waging a conventional civil war would be particularly poor. In the General Strike of 1926 the army and police found themselves disorganised and almost helpless in face of the power and sweep of the mass movement, confused and misled as it was: confronted by the enormous majority of the working class consciously acting to establish Socialism, how much less hope would they have of crushing it? Even if I am wrong, and circumstances arose to make the bosses think that they stood some chance of success from violence, such situations do not blow up overnight; they develop over months and years. If it takes the present army six weeks, including long periods of drilling and boot-polishing, to train a reasonably efficient infantryman, then a Socialist movement with reason to fear violent attacks from the Right, could learn to protect itself in time. Surely, then, it is mistaken to argue that we should endure all the proved evils of the call-up for perhaps fifteen

(continued next page)

INDUSTRIAL**ERIC S. HEFFER, warns from the site :****BUILDING WORKERS FACE A CRISIS**

THE PRESENT ECONOMIC CRISIS of British capitalism, which in time must seriously affect the employment of all sections of the British workers, will have an immediate effect on the building trade workers. The rise in the Bank Rate to 7% and the impending cuts in municipal building programmes, hospitals, schools and factory building will lead to a serious increase in unemployment amongst the building operatives. The situation is regarded so seriously by the National Federation of Building Trade Operatives that they have issued a statement of protest against the Government's fiscal policy and have called upon the Government to resign.

Even before the Government's new measures, the signs of an approaching slump in building became apparent. In the first six months of 1957, unemployment increased in the industry, and has only slightly improved during the summer months (particularly is this so in the north-west). **Building workers for the first time since 1945, are beginning again to fear the "sack" and winter is regarded with trepidation.** A building worker receiving dismissal from a firm finds his period of unemployment lengthened from a day or so to possibly weeks. This to him is the sign of serious change. Unemployment to a building worker is not an unusual experience, because of the casual nature of the industry; the test for him is the length of time between jobs.

A further sign is the hardening of the employers on such things as bonus payments, welfare facilities (canteens etc.), and wages. To use a building trade idiom, "the whip is out," or at least beginning to appear.

The President of the National Federation of Building Trade Employers, speaking at Bournemouth in July stated: "I am sure that no industry can continue to be prosperous for long unless and until it is recognised by all that no further wage increase can be considered until it has been shown, and clearly shown, that the previous

one has been earned—there must be giving before receiving."

This is a clear indication that **wage increases are to be resisted and on this issue, particularly if the employment situation has deteriorated, a fight can be expected.**

Nationalization and Registration

For many years the building trades unions have demanded the nationalisation of the industry. This is still the policy of the NFBTO and last year a pamphlet was issued setting out the unions' views. **The demand is obviously a correct one, but the weakness of the plan, is the fact that nationalisation is conceived in a bureaucratic fashion, and the workers in the industry will have no control whatever.** It is a plan for state-capitalism, and not socialist nationalisation. The sights of the union leadership are set more on good jobs emanating from a nationalised industry (like their counter-parts in railways, gas, electricity, mining, etc.) rather than genuine ownership and control by the building workers themselves. Actually, this very weakness in the plan, fails to secure from the workers whole-hearted enthusiasm. They of course have learnt the lessons of the mines and other nationalised industries.

Many workers because of the insecurity of the industry and the grow-

ing fear of future unemployment demand an interim measure, something that can be secured now, within capitalism, and raise the demand for a scheme of registration similar to the National Dock Labour Scheme.

This demand has the support of the semi-skilled and unskilled workers but receives no support from the skilled trades. The tradesmen have no wish to be tied down to one industry and carpenters and joiners for example wish to transfer to ship-building and repair, furniture and cabinet making, and other work, if building becomes slack. Painters and plumbers also have the same desires for mobility, yet they wish security, a security they will never achieve whilst capitalism lasts.

The fight for registration may well be a fight of growing importance, and providing mobility is secured for craftsmen, and control exercised by the Trade Unions (not the employers), it should be supported. However, the fact that such a scheme will not solve the problems posed by the capitalist system (as the dockers well know) must be continuously explained to the workers.

Conditions compared

The building workers have long been the "cinderellas." They do not have a guarantee of full wages for holidays. They have a holiday scheme, whereby stamps are placed on a card by the employer, there are no stamps if a man is ill, or unemployed or temporarily transferred from the industry. These stamps even if complete, do not give the worker his full wages.

Secondly, the worker is guaranteed only 32 hours for one week. If the

ERIC HEFFER, the author of this article, has such long roots in the Labour Movement, it is difficult to list them all. We give the following as an example only. He is:

- EC member of the Lancashire Federation of Trades Councils;
- EC member of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party;
- Assistant Secretary of the Merseyside Trades Council's Consultative Committee;
- President, Huyton Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers;
- ASW shop-steward on a Liverpool building site;
- and so on.

We shall be publishing further articles by him in future.

weather is so inclement that he cannot work, after one week he can be dismissed from employment. Many employers refuse even to give one week's guarantee, and discharge workers on a Friday, at the first sign of frost. Dismissed workers discharged through inclement weather have no guarantee of re-employment, and many militants and shop-stewards have been removed in this manner. Only by strike action by the other workers have these men been re-employed.

The building worker has no pension scheme and no special sickness scheme, although the nature of the industry makes these essential. Although there is government legislation (**The Building Safety & Welfare Regulations**) he has to fight continuously to get the regulations carried out, and building today is still one of the most accident-prone industries. No special clothes are provided in the cold weather, except where the workers themselves have managed by militant action to force concessions from the employers.

Craftsmen in London and Liverpool get 4/7½ an hour, and labourers 4/1. Builders in the rest of the country are on lower rates due to a system of area grading. The hours of work are normally 44, spread over 5½ days, although some areas work 46½ hours. A bonus agreement can be worked, if joint agreement is reached between the operatives and the employers at site level. Increasingly employers are seeking to avoid this agreement. In any case this agreement has the effect of workers in the same industry receiving differing take-home pay and generally leads to a weakening of solidarity. **This bonus agreement is part of the legacy of the "Increase Production" years from 1945 onwards, when the Communist Party leaders, like those of Labour played a major role in assisting to solve capitalism's problems. The chickens now come home to roost, as can be seen by the ridiculously low basic rates of pay. Bonuses replaced wages, and in this period of growing retrenchment, the full effects of such a policy will be felt.**

Building workers' program

The NFBTO is on record like most Federations and Unions for the shorter working week, but does not seriously prepare the ground to get it. In Australia the unions declare for and intend to get the 35 hour week. In Britain 40 hours is not yet achieved, in fact most building workers seek overtime to make enough money to live decently.

Merely to call for the government's resignation is not enough, such a demand must be backed up by militant struggle. In my opinion, the workers must strengthen their organisation by forming shop-stewards committees on all sites, large and small, and by electing NFBTO stewards to co-ordinate the activities on the jobs, and unite the workers as one force. **100% trade unionism must be transformed from the slogan it now is to a fact.**

They must fight now for increased

[continued next page]

Youth and the Armed Forces — end

or twenty years for the sake of some doubtful advantage in a possible future.

We should also remember that conscription causes harm not only during the actual two years it occupies, but in the years which precede it. For tens of thousands of boys leaving school at 15, life is unsettling, frustrating, full of dead-end jobs, because of the shadow of conscription at 18.

Altogether, Socialists can hardly avoid the conclusion that the continuation of the call-up would act as a brake on the development of a militant and conscious movement of the young workers. Not merely the separation from the mainstream of political and industrial life (which we could do more to lessen than we do) but the positively reactionary influences that are imposed, prove this conclusively. Today, when the brasshats, supported by many capitalist papers and Tory MPs, are demanding that conscription be continued indefinitely in view of the steady fall in voluntary recruitment, we must get rid of all doubts in the Labour movement, and press with all our strength if we are to hold the Government to its pledges.

Never mind, we are told. Wait for the 1960 General Election. Comrade John Strachey will replace Sandys as Minister of Defence, and the army will turn into a Socialist organisation, almost eligible for affiliation to the Labour Party. Unfortunately, the experience of the 1945-51 Labour Government does not give us much reason for thinking that the necessary change is automatically achieved by having a majority of Labour Members in the House of Commons.

We are at present witnessing a struggle between Strachey, who advocates an all-regular army at £10 per week for a private, and Wigg and others who say that conscription must be kept and have actually accused Strachey of "demagoguery." They should know. Frankly, there is reason to think that these comrades are a good deal more concerned with "the coming struggle for power" inside the Parliamentary Labour Party than with the one a very different John Strachey wrote about so persuasively twenty years ago. For the Socialist solution, one must break clean away from acceptance of official capitalist military thought, and drawing the logical conclusion from the workings of the ruling class's army, try to think out the lines along which a Socialist military force would be run, during the time which may elapse before worldwide Socialism puts a complete end to all need for armies of any kind.

Future and past

Here it is necessary to turn to the experience of the working-class in those brief periods of history where it succeeded in taking control, and to the writings of the great Socialist thinkers drawing on these experiences. It is on this aspect of our subject that most thought and discussion are needed. Detailed blue-prints must be tentative, and it would be most worth-while to have the views of readers on such problems as how to exert effective control over the more technical military branches that an isolated Socialist Britain might find it necessary to retain for a period. My own opinion is

that the problem is by no means an unmanageable one. But on the central question of how we would create the basic armed force necessary to make invasion an unpleasant and long-drawn-out job for any wild capitalists who decided to try it, experience and theory alike give a clear answer. **There must be a workers' militia, under the control of the trades councils or similar bodies nationally and locally, with their own weapons available, and consciously trained in the spirit of a Socialist force.** It would not be separated from the life of the people by rules forbidding political activity, or barracks to make it a community apart; on the contrary, the greatest amount of participation in public life would be encouraged. Officers would cease to be a class apart. Discipline, and the manner of carrying out the orders of the controlling councils, would become a matter for elected soldiers' committees.

The experience of the Paris Commune, of the Russian Revolution and the Hungarian Revolution testify that this is the force which can serve, not dictate to, the working class, and which in highly-developed Britain more than anywhere, could make an enemy's life intolerable. Of these features, which is the most essential requirement for a Socialist force that would have to hold off any attacks that might be mounted before Socialism spread to make them impossible? We may come to the root of the matter by borrowing the appeal of the bourgeois revolutionary leader Cromwell, for a body of men "who know what they fight for, and love what they know."

TASKS FOR TRADE-UNIONISTS

By Owen Roberts

THE WHISKERS on Macmillan's top lip bristled with indignation at Brighton last month when he denounced as a "wicked accusation" the charge that Tory economic policies would bring unemployment. His Government, he said, sought to avert unemployment and did not desire to reduce the living standards of any section of the population.

A good yardstick against which to measure Macmillan's statement is the recent report of the employment situation issued by the Ministry of Labour—and when this is done it shows quite plainly the direction in which the Government policy is slanted.

When the Ministry of Labour check was made at the end of August there were 266,000 workers registered as unemployed. A year earlier the figure was 264,000. On the surface, then, it would appear that the total result of the Tory credit squeeze policy on employment has been to increase the number out of work by only 2,000. A look behind these figures, however, reveals a more disturbing tendency.

In August of last year the number of persons in civil employment has 23,212,000: this August the figure was 23,111,000—which means that the number at work in civil employment has dropped by 101,000 in twelve months while the number out of work has gone up by less than two per cent of this figure. What, then, has happened?

The main cause for the difference in these figures lies in the fact that the number of women at work has dropped considerably in the past twelve months. At the end of August, 1956, there were 7,878,000 women at work in civil employment: at the same time this year there were 7,809,000—a fall of 69,000.

This trend was noted in an article in the April issue of *Socialist Review* when it was pointed out that it arose largely because many married women, going out to work to make up their husband's pay, were finding it more difficult to get jobs. Hence, on becoming unemployed, they eventually quit the labour force. This, of course, means a slice from the family income and a reduction in living standards.

Cut in standards

Far more important, however, is another tendency hidden in the Ministry of Labour employment statistics: this is the tendency for the credit squeeze to push workers into lower paid jobs by the simple process of unemployment—or "redundancy" to use the word now employed in polite circles.

In August of this year the number of workers in the manufacturing industries was 9,186,000—a reduction of

80,000 on August, 1956. The biggest loss was by the vehicle group—with 20,000 workers fewer than in 1956. Textiles and clothing industries dropped 11,000 each while engineering and metal goods was 6,000 down.

Where did the workers go who were squeezed out of these industries? Some left the labour force altogether—mainly the married, women or elderly workers. Others were forced to take jobs wherever they turned up—and the Ministry of Labour figures show just where these were.

The biggest gain was made by the distributive trade—which increased its labour force from 2,895,000 to 2,906,000. Local government services benefited by pushing their labour forces up by 7,000 to 746,000. Mining and quarrying gained 7,000 workers.

Credit Squeeze in action

These figures show that the industries to gain fell in two distinct categories. Either the work is disagreeable despite fairly high pay—such as in the mines: or else the pay is low—such as in the distributive trades and in local government services. (When the Ministry of Labour did a survey of the earnings of some seven million manual workers last April local government employees came 137 in a list of 138 with average earnings of £9 5s. 5d. a week; including overtime and before deducting national insurance and income tax).

This shows that one result of the credit squeeze during the past twelve months has been a slackening of activity in some industries, a growth of unemployment which has forced some workers to quit the labour force and others to take jobs more unpleasant or with loss of pay. And, despite Macmillan's outburst at Brighton, this is all part of the overall plan of the credit squeeze.

Only two days after Macmillan made his speech, *The Financial Times* featured an article (entitled "unemployment and Wages") which clearly exposed the capitalist economic reasoning behind the Government's policy. The government's disinflationary policy, said *The Financial Times*, is framed to put an end to wage inflation—either by employers resisting "excessive wage claims" or by unions moderating their claims when the demand

for labour falls short of the supply. Either route, said *The Financial Times* with candour, "involves a reduction in the level of industrial activity." The main question, as seen by the article, is how far towards a recession must the economy move before wage inflation is halted? Or, more bluntly, how many unemployed are needed to make the economy work the way the Tory Government wants in order to put the bosses on top?

1,200,000 unemployed

After circling the globe to gain from the post-war experiences of others, *The Financial Times* came across with its answer. "A little under 5 per cent," it said, seemed to be the critical level of unemployment needed in Britain. Five per cent of the working population is around 1,200,000 workers—or nearly a million more on the dole than at present.

However, *The Financial Times* did make some qualification in its article. If nationalised industries acted more firmly in dealing with wage claims this might reduce the pressure on the private sector. And if union leaders moderate their wage claims "some of the unemployment need not occur." The essential thing, as the final sentence in *The Financial Times* article noted, is that "trade union bargaining power is reduced."

This poses the alternatives, as presented to the workers by the Tory Government and its allies in industrial and business circles, quite clearly. Either the unions back pedal and the workers accept a cut in living standards, or else unemployment will come along—which will also mean a cut in living standards.

The big question before trade unionists is: What can be done to resist this Tory attack? And, as so often, it will be found that the best method of defence is attack.

First, on the industrial front, claims on the bosses must be pressed with vigour. In particular the demands for the 40 hour (or less) working week, substantial redundancy and the guar-

anteed annual wage must be pressed with great determination. This not because such demands will be any easier to win than straight wage demands—but because they will make unemployment a less economic proposition for the bosses.

Organize and politicize

Alongside these demands on the bosses must be pursued a really big organising drive in the workshops. There are still far too many workers outside the ranks of organised labour—and in the present situation everyone is a weak link in the chain. A hundred percent union shop with first class factory organisation must be the aim of every rank and file trade unionist—for this will also help to strengthen the hand of the militant rank and file when seeking to convince the right wing leadership to stand up and fight against the bosses rather than retreat in the so-called interest of "Britain's economic situation."

Finally, but equally important, trade unionists must push forward political demands as an answer to Tory policies. Only a Socialist Government can sort out the mess of this Government and provide the constructive alternative to capitalism. This idea must be hammered home to all workers engaged in industrial disputes.

These, then must be the slogans for every militant trade unionist:

1. No retreat in face of Tory attacks. Fight the bosses all the way.
2. For shorter hours without loss of pay; adequate redundancy compensation and a guaranteed annual wage.
3. One hundred per cent union shops in every factory in Britain. First class workshop organisation ready to lead the fight at factory level.
4. Clear the Tories out now. Alliance with the left-wing of the Labour Party to build a Socialist Government determined to dismantle the machinery of capitalism.

Election Addresses in the AEU

IT IS NOT OFTEN that one sees a clear-cut political statement put forward by candidates for election to union office. First, not all unions are as democratic as to allow election of officials. Then, where elections are the rule, most candidates seem to think that the less they deal with the things that matter and the more they extol their virtues as ping-pong player in the boys' club, the more support they'll get. And it is true: the more political principle they show the less support will they receive from the right-wing leaders of their union.

The AEU constitution is a democratic one. Their officials are elected. Every candidate has the right to print an election address putting forward his policy. One could wish for nothing better. This is where conflicting concepts of the union's role, where argument on the union's record will take place. Not a bit of it. The election addresses of the candidates that stood last month for the position of National Organizer make grim reading. With one or two exceptions, the candidates intone their faithfulness to union principles (and ignore some "strings" which have been used to tie these up with); they recite their positions and responsibilities of the past (except responsibilities to trade-union principles like solidarity with victimized workers, e.g. McLoughlin of Briggs); they go on and

on, saying less and less. One would imagine that union and policy are perfect and that there is nothing to do but sit back and reminisce.

There are exceptions. In this same booklet of election addresses there is one that can serve as a model to every socialist in industry. The only one to present a clear-cut alternative to the policies of both right-wing and Stalinists it deserves the support of every trade-unionist in the country. For the benefit of readers who are not members of the AEU, we reproduce it in full below. Readers who read *SOCIALIST REVIEW* regularly will recognize its author, GEOFF CARLSSON, as one of our contributors.

Dear Brothers,

In allowing my name to go forward for the post of National Organizer I realise how serious and important a job it is. I am a comparatively young union member (33 years old) and do not possess many of the impressive qualifications that other candidates have. However, I am a toolroom shop-steward, was Branch President in 1955 and 1956 and executive member of the Hammersmith and Kensington Trades Council during the same years, and am also an NCLC tutor.

We often hear from our members that the trouble with the union is "too

[turn to back page

BUILDING WORKERS — end

wages, abolition of the bonus agreement, for the shorter working week and for the end of overtime working.

They must see the shorter working week, as part of the struggle against unemployment. They must demand a scheme of registration of building workers, to be administered by the building workers themselves, with safeguards for those who wish mobility of employment. The employers to be forced to employ workers only through the trade unions.

They must demand nationalisation of the industry with full workers' control.

They must demand the safety regulations to be strictly applied on all jobs, and ensure that the workers elect a safety inspector to have equal rights to that of the employers' appointee.

They must ensure that canteens are provided where possible and decent lavatories and washing facilities provided. (The day of the Ragged

Trousered Philanthropist is still not over in building.)

They must create greater unity amongst all the workers, by demanding that the NFBTO now be turned into a Building Workers Industrial Union.

Above all else, they must prepare to struggle against the capitalist system as a whole, and carry through their struggle not only industrially but politically. Registration and nationalisation in themselves are not enough, their sights must be set on the grand target of a socialist Britain.

The next stage of the struggle is for those who accept a militant programme of action, to unite and organise support for the programme. To force the leaders to stop retreating and to demand greater control by the rank and file, more democracy is needed, which must lead to more positive action. The cinderellas could well play the leading parts.

AEU election — end

much politics." For most of them this is just an excuse not to attend meetings or to take part in union activity. The right-wing of our movement is also busy trying to keep politics out of industrial activity. I believe we must face the fact that political and industrial activity are one and cannot be separated.

In the elections for union officials over the past few years members have had to choose between candidates backed by either right-wing Labour or the Communist Party. The choice has not been easy: on the one hand, although most Brothers owe allegiance to the Labour Party, they cannot accept the policies pursued by the right-wing of the Trade-union Movement and the Labour Party when these include wage-freeze, class collaboration and "sell-outs" (Annex B of the latest wage award and the ditching of Brother McLoughlin of Briggs are the most recent examples). On the other hand, although they respect the militant activities of the individual Communist Party member in the day-to-day struggle on the shop floor, they cannot ignore the external loyalties of the CP to Soviet Russia nor forget the anti-working measures adopted both in that country and in its satellites (East Berlin, Poznan, Hungary, and so on).

I am a member of the Labour Party and a firm believer in international Socialism, but I do not believe it can be achieved by accepting the policies or leaderships of the Communist Party or of the right-wing at Transport House. I believe that we members of the trade-union movement must fight within these organisations for a complete change of leadership and policy.

We must work for a Labour and Trade-Union Movement that will fight at all times in the interests of the working class as the only class capable of playing a progressive role in society.

We must work for a Movement that, politically, will stand for international Socialism, independent of both Washington and Moscow, and, industrially, will pursue a policy of increasing the share of our product for our members until we arrive at a stage when industry is taken out of the hands of the capitalist class and placed under workers' control.

We must fight to put an end to this era of collaboration with the employers and their Tory Government, Courts of Enquiry and wage-standstill. No more debacles like the "solution" of the BMC dispute, the Norton sell-out and the abandoning of shop-stewards like John McLoughlin.

When workers are in dispute, every possible step must be taken to secure our victory. We have the power to do so. Our members must be made aware of this power and must be prepared for the near future, for many bitter struggles are on the way.

Although I have never had experience as a full-time union official (something which all candidates share at one time or another), I don't believe that this is a serious drawback. The important thing is the candidates' attitude to working class problems. I have tried to convey to you briefly what my attitude is.

I trust that those of you who have read this address will now give me your considered vote.

SOCIALIST REVIEW is published monthly by A. S. Newens, 16 Vicarage Lane, North Weald, Essex (Tel. North Weald 498). Subscriptions: 8s. annually (post paid). Opinions and policies expressed in signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the views of **Socialist Review**, which are given in editorial statements. Editorial Board: Terry Gallogly (Nottingham), Pat Jordan (Nottingham), Michael Kidron (London), Peter Morgan (Birmingham). Printed by H. Palmer (Harlow) Ltd. (T.U.), Potter Street, Harlow, Essex.

THE FUTURE OF FORUMS

By Mercia Emerson • Secy., Islington Socialist Forum

EVERY MOVEMENT depends for its health and growth on the support given by its members. People have been going to Forums because (a) they were disillusioned uncommitted ex-CP members anxious to understand what had happened; or (b) left-wing Labour Party members glad of the opportunity of discussion with other militants, particularly as here was an opportunity to recruit to and strengthen the left tendencies in the Labour Party; and (c) members of various "marxist" trends outside the LP who saw the Forums as a recruiting ground, the latter being in the main the exponents of a "new revolutionary workers' party."

People will stop going to Forums (a) if they feel their understanding and knowledge is not appreciably deepened; (b) if they feel they have "recruited" to their limit and being so assured that they have all the answers feel that Forums are a waste of time; and (c) for all "categories" that the Forums "aren't getting anywhere."

The initial heart-searching phase is over—though because of the 'uneven rate of development' this is not true of all forums. Militant socialists who are searching for a theory and a philosophical outlook which will give them understanding and direction in their practical day-to-day work for socialism, will either in desperation join the LP and work as individuals or attempt to revitalise their marxist beliefs in joining a "tendency" inside or outside the LP (this is known as "coming to a conclusion"!) or, at the worst, drift into a well-meaning a-political personal life.

Need for Marxist theory

And so an historical opportunity will have been lost. An opportunity for marxists and late-marxists outside the CP (together with those critics still in) to present a living real marxist analysis and thus redeem for the working class a theory terribly and unjustly discredited, without which I believe, there can be no consistent coherent advance to Socialism. (It is no accident that the Bevans of the world vacillate, that the present leaders of the LP and Trade Unions cannot carry through a socialist revolution.) For the socialist who is a materialist, there is no all-embracing theory of history, no method of analysing, no guide to action as yet put forward by any school of thought, superior to that of marxism. What there is, is a great deal of criticism. But no marxist would ever claim that Marx, Engels, Lenin put out a "perfect" theory. It is not irrefutable dogmas in which we believe, but a way of looking at man's history, a method of looking at changing society in its reality which means constantly re-assessing and re-testing our theories in the light of this reality.

What there is not in this country, and what I believe is vitally necessary, are centres of marxist discussion linked nationally, and, one hopes eventually, internationally, where workers and intellectuals in the CP, the LP and in the tendencies outside both, where people who have a scientific-humanist, or dialectical materialist view of society can meet and have the opportunity in this age of committee meetings, administering one's Party duties, etc., to think about and constantly re-assess the premises on which their practical activity is based. The Forums could provide this need and indeed if they don't, I can't see a continuing support for them.

The CP, however, would never tolerate the kind of discussions that have been going on; the LP have an equal suspicion of any "marxist" discussion, the ISSS are concerned with essentially a reformist view of national and inter-

national affairs. *Universities and Left Review* are not concerned primarily with developing a re-emergent coherent marxist view but with an attempt at integrating many left-wing, including the marxist, views; the various marxist "tendencies" inside and outside of the LP are more or less "convinced" and really only concerned to recruit, so that in this context Forums have a job to do which no other organisation can do. (I am not saying that membership of any party is unnecessary if one "belongs" to a forum—I disagree with Joe Young about this. I believe you can only effectively live your theories in a political party—but the forums could be a necessary independent source of marxist discussion, complementary with membership of a political party.) Forums should therefore, I believe, *organise* the opportunity for marxist and near-marxists of all schools to meet and discuss, in order to present together a living non-stalinist marxist attitude and written commentary on history around us, in the world as a whole, and on the problems of achieving Socialism at home.

We all know there is an appalling lack of understanding amongst the majority in the Labour movement of what "marxism" means, apart from the disagreements amongst marxists themselves. For the latter, is it too much to hope that the Forums might provide an opportunity for an agreed 20th century marxist analysis to emerge? The majority of workers, however, it must be faced, have no real interest in even wanting to know what marxism means because for them it has become identified with theories like the single Party State and practices like the mass purges and framed-up trials of old communists, theories and practices which they have instinctively repudiated as being anti-working class.

The British CP has been singularly

SOCIALIST FORUMS

successful in making the word "marxism" the object of derision and scorn. In this context it becomes particularly important for those marxists who do not excuse and endorse the practices of "stalinism" (how I hate that word!) to redeem the reputation of marxism and to make it known as the flexible, undogmatic, scientific humanist outlook it is.

An attractive force

If such a militant body of marxist opinion emerged in the Labour movement with a philosophy and a coherent theory behind it, opposed to the "High Church" dogmatic version when it is obviously self-interested but not opposed to it when it is right, friendly and sympathetic to the socialist revolutions and achievements of the Russian, Chinese and East European peoples, I believe such people will be listened to with much greater attention and respect (provided they don't use self-destructive jargon) than the CP can ever muster and that a great many workers can be influenced and educated, who while instinctively rejecting the attitude of the CP to the individual will yet respond to a militant approach to socialism based on a scientific and human theory of society and change.

Better Marxists

If the Forums can succeed in making "better" marxists of us, in educating militant workers in the real essence of marxist method and theory, if they can succeed in getting marxists in the small opposing trends to meet and find agreement and so strengthen for influence of marxists on the Labour movement, then they will be performing a historically necessary job and will flourish and grow.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Socialist Review stands for international Socialist democracy. Only the mass mobilisation of the working class in the industrial and political arena can lead to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of Socialism.

The Socialist Review believes that a really consistent Labour Government must be brought to power on the basis of the following programme:

- [1] The complete nationalisation of heavy industry, the banks, insurance and the land, with compensation payments based on a means test. Renationalisation of all denationalised industries without compensation. The nationalised industries to form an integral part of an overall economic plan and not to be used in the interests of private profit.
- [2] Workers' control in all nationalised industries, i.e., a majority of workers' representatives on all national and area boards, subject to frequent election, immediate recall and receiving the average skilled wage ruling in the industry.
- [3] The inclusion of workers' representatives on the boards of all private firms employing more than 20 people. These representatives to have free access to all documents.
- [4] The establishment of workers' committees in all concerns to control hiring, firing and working conditions.
- [5] The establishment of the principle of work or full maintenance.
- [6] The extension of the social services by the payment of adequate pensions, linked to a realistic cost-of-living index, the abolition of all payments for the National Health Service and the development of an industrial health service.
- [7] The expansion of the housing programme by granting interest free loans to local authorities and the right to requisition privately held land.
- [8] Free State education up to 18. Abolition of fee paying schools. For comprehensive schools and adequate maintenance grants—without a means test—for all university students.
- [9] Opposition to all forms of racial discrimination. Equal rights and trade union protection to all workers whatever their country of origin. Freedom of migration for all workers to and from Britain.
- [10] Freedom from political and economic oppression to all colonies. The offer of technical and economic assistance to the people of the underdeveloped countries.
- [11] The reunification of an independent Ireland.
- [12] The abolition of conscription and the withdrawal of all British troops from overseas. The abolition of all weapons of mass destruction.
- [13] A Socialist foreign policy independent of both Washington and Moscow.