

The New
INTERNATIONAL

THE POLITICS OF BEVANISM

By Gordon Haskell

The Second Labor Government

By Jim Hinchcliffe

Judgment of an Era—III

By Al Gates

Is East Germany a New Order?

By B. Ess

Israel on Its Fourth Anniversary

By Al Findley

An Exchange on Nationalization

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March-April 1952

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A Marxist Review
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MAX SHACHTMAN, *Editor*
JULIUS FALK, *Managing Editor*

This publication project is a noteworthy event for students of Marxism. It is by no means to be thought that the work is simply a historical survey. It contains much material casting important sidelights on Marx's economic views. It may be obtained at \$5 a copy from Labor Action Book Service, 114 W. 14th St., New York City.

We are happy to inform our readers that the Langland Press in New York has just issued the first volume of *A History of Economic Theories, From the Physiocrats to Adam Smith*, by Karl Marx. This work now appears in English for the first time.

Students of Marx will know that this book is part of a four volume work based on material which Marx had hoped to issue as the fourth volume of *Capital*. He died long before the project could be completed, and Engels was able only to complete the famous three volumes. In his literary legacy, Karl Kautsky was given the task of editing and issuing this collected material, which he did in a German edition as *Theories of Surplus Value*, Marx's original title. A French edition appeared as *A History of Economic Doctrines*.

Kautsky completed the work after years of the most painstaking labor of deciphering and organizing the overwhelming mass of handwritten material left by Marx. But almost fifty years have passed since the first appearance of the German edition before an English one has come out.

The material in this volume covers the same ground as that which appears in the first volume of the four which make up the whole of the German edition. Terence McCarthy, the translator, writes that the second volume is already in preparation.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL

A Marxist Review

Vol. XVIII, No. 2 MARCH-APRIL Whole No. 153

NOTES OF THE MONTH . . .

Labor and Elections

With the withdrawal of Adlai Stevenson from the lists of the Democratic nomination possibilities, there has vanished another one of the slender hopes held by the labor leadership that they could get a "satisfactory" candidate for president in 1952.

How happy they would have been even with Stevenson is another matter. They would have had to wonder why Senator Russell of Georgia, another candidate for the nomination, whose platform in effect is white supremacy and Southern-type "states' rights," is reported to be so willing to accept Stevenson for top place on the ticket with himself as running mate. But since the Illinois governor has declared himself out, it is not even necessary to go into this.

The outstanding fact of the 1952 preliminaries, as we write, is not so much the dramatized contest between Taft and Eisenhower for the Republican mantle; it is the yawning pit of nothingness that looms before the labor political leaders as they confront the prospects for November.

After twenty years of tagging along with the Fair Deal and its ancestor, the New Deal, they seem to be left holding the bag. To be sure, the *Democratic Party* may yet save itself; it is certainly too early (even without the

upset of 1948 to go by) to count it out of the running even against Eisenhower. It is not impossible that even a Kefauver or Harriman might make the grade. But could the CIO-PAC strategists make themselves believe that there is much left of the *Fair Deal*?

A two-decades-long strategy of labor is in the process of blowing up. Not until the candidates are finally named by the party convention can one be sure of this, of course; but this much is certain: the Democrats will have to pull a neat trick to assuage the labor leaders' sinking feeling that this is the case.

It means the swan song of a theory—a theory long held by the leaders of labor. Let no one tell us that these men are not theorists but "practical men," and that it has not been a "theory" that they have been acting on. Of course, the CIO leaders are scornful of "theories" and fondly regard themselves as "practical politicians," but this is an illusion on their part.

Like others who scorn theory (by which they usually mean something unconnected with practical life), they are only all the more the slaves of the theories which do fill their thinking; for being unaware of their commitment, they cannot be critical of it.

ONE ASSUMPTION OF THE real theory behind the Fair Deal politics of

the labor movement in the United States is the idea that it is possible for labor's interests to become a decisive and permanent component of the policies of one of the capitalist party machines. For a very short-lived interval after the victory of Truman in 1948, labor politics even dreamed of "capturing" the Democratic Party. Left-wingish supporters of CIO-PAC politics even argued that, after all, *if* the Democratic Party could be transformed into a labor party, in effect, why bother to take the hard route? Let us not be dogmatic, they argued—for to them a "dogma" is by definition a theory which they do not hold.

But that sort of talk went on only for a short period of virtual euphoria. It settled back into the more usual line that, while labor did not even want to transform the Democratic Party into a labor party, since allies and friends would be lost in such a drastic change, it was possible for labor to exercise the balance of power within the Fair Deal coalition so as to achieve its main ends.

One of the troubles with this theory of the "practical men" is that it looked at the Fair Deal coalition solely in terms of party power politics. What would the Democratic Party be without its labor wing, they asked themselves; and not without justification they answered: a hollow shell. Therefore the Democrats must continue to satisfy labor, or else bow to the Republicans. Self-preservation required it. This would keep the Fair Dealers in line.

But it is short-sighted to look on the leaders of the Democratic Party, from Truman to the Dixiecrats, *solely* as

party-power politicians. It is indeed an unwarranted aspersion on these men. They are responsible for the destinies not only of a party but of a national state with great responsibility in the world. That responsibility, in their eyes of course, is not to any allies in the Fair Deal coalition, in the first place, but above all to the basic interests of the "American system." Translated, this means: the basic interests of American capitalism and imperialism.

It is the war economy, with its domestic and foreign policies, which has first priority in determining their politics, in the long run; and they can try to make concessions to labor only within its framework. It is this which is the disintegrating component of the Fair Deal coalition, just as it was this which changed "Dr. New Deal" to "Dr. Win-the-War" in Roosevelt's phraseology. There is no inevitability that 1952 will be the year of that disintegration, for good and all, but it is clearly on the way.

The Steel Seizure

On April 8, President Truman ordered the seizure of the American steel industry by the government. In a nation-wide radio speech ordering the seizure he excoriated the owners of the industry in terms seldom if ever used publicly before by a responsible government official against a section of the bourgeoisie. His whole speech could not have been more "radical" nor more "pro-union" if the speaker had been Philip Murray himself.

The president's action has aroused a storm of protest from almost every

section of the American bourgeoisie. They view this particular type of government intervention as extremely dangerous to themselves. Efforts have been made in the Senate to block the seizure by various parliamentary devices, and rumors of a possible impeachment have been filling the air.

Whatever the immediate consequences of the present struggle may be, one thing is clear. The seizure of the steel industry in a time when the country is not officially at war, without legislative sanction, and in the face of major opposition by the bourgeoisie points to a new political stage in the development of the permanent war economy.

By this act the administration shows that it is determined to keep production going in the basic industries at all costs. The fact that the president put the blame for the threatened strike squarely on the shoulders of the steel barons in this instance is of episodic importance. It relates to the political line which Truman proposes to the Democratic Party in the presidential campaign as the only possible one for victory. But he did not need to seize the steel industry to launch a "pro-labor, pro-the-little-people" political campaign. He had to seize it in order to prevent an interruption of steel production.

BY THIS ACTION the administration has served notice that strikes will not be tolerated in any of the basic industries. The previous railroad seizures, though having a similar motive, did not point up the full import of the new stage in the same way as the seizure of steel. Even were there no war in Korea, and even if the govern-

ment had not embarked on a major rearmament program, a nation-wide railroad stoppage has many far-reaching disruptive effects on the whole economy, effects which are felt so immediately, that the railroad workers' right to strike on a national scale has never been exercised since the disastrous strike of the Pullman workers toward the end of the last century.

Vital as the steel industry is, it could be closed down for weeks without threatening our major cities with starvation, or bringing most of the standstill. One cannot say that the rest of the productive machine to a government is "forced" to take measures to prevent a steel strike, in the same sense in which it is "forced" to see to it that the railroads keep running. What is involved here is the announcement of a *new* government policy.

At the moment it is the bourgeoisie which is howling, as they never howled when the railroads were seized. Their denunciation of the seizure as a step toward socialism can be dismissed with the amusement which it merits. This particular spectre is, unfortunately, a figment of their imagination. Yet the fact remains that they *are* threatened, but by something which has no relationship to socialism. They are menaced by an increasing restriction on their freedom of action by a state which has to concern itself with the over-all and global interests of capitalist society, even if this means that the feet or even neck of this or that capitalist gets stepped on in the process.

Because of the specific circumstances surrounding this seizure, the labor

movement has been complacent about it. Except for the unions directly involved, the labor leaders never became too excited about the railroad seizures, even though they were directed against a section of the labor movement. But the seizure of the steel industry is a portent of something far more ominous for labor than for capital in the United States.

Whether or not the steel workers get their increased wages (or a portion of them) is, in the context of the general problem, far from the most important factor. What is vital basically is that the right of a union to strike a basic industry has once more been suppressed in practice by purely administrative government action. *In the long run*, it is this fact that will continue to haunt the labor movement.

The permanent war economy involves a constantly intensifying series of restrictions on all sectors of our economic and political life. The bourgeoisie can only dream of retaining in full its old freedom of action while

only labor's hands are tied behind its back. But the difference is that for the capitalist class this means that the unrestricted freedom for profit-making is channeled within narrower limits. While for the labor movement it means a degree of restriction which threatens its very existence, which involves its transformation from an independently functioning class force to some kind of a government-controlled "labor front."

There is a long road to travel before that point is reached. But the permanent war economy is moving us down that road. And as the most important feature of this new economic phase of capitalism in disintegration is the dominant and even supreme role of the state in all aspects of the life of society, so the major method of struggle against the trend must be political. The American labor movement is still not fully aware of its danger, and has certainly not developed the political instrument and methods necessary to meet it. The steel seizure may prove a valuable lesson in this field.

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The Politics of Bevanism

Bevan's Program for Britain and View of Stalinism

"The first function of a political leader is advocacy. It is he who must articulate the wants, the frustrations, and the aspirations, of the masses."—Aneurin Bevan.

Aneurin Bevan is a tribune of the people. That is the role which he is playing so ably today, and with such a powerful and salutary effect on the development of the British Labor Party and hence on that of the whole international socialist movement. In an attempt to understand the full content of his political thought, and to come to a clearer conception of what its long-range development and consequences may be, it is not without significance to note that in describing the functions of political leadership he lists *only* that of advocacy, and that to him the most important quality of a representative of the people is that he remain close to their thoughts and feelings at all times.

This is a truism which can well stand repetition in these days when so many of the leaders of labor in Britain, and certainly in the United States, live in circumstances much closer to those of business executives than of workingmen, and all too often seem to be more concerned with the "public opinion" of government and employer circles than with the feelings of their own hard-pressed constituents. Yet an ability to reflect the sentiments of the masses and to articulate them is not a *sufficient* qualification for real socialist political leadership. What is needed in addition is a grasp of the fundamental political realities of our times and the will and

ability to lead the masses in a social struggle along lines which are capable of dealing with these realities. The demagogue may share sensitivity to the current feelings of the masses with the socialist leader. The thing which distinguishes them from each other is not only their subjective motives, but also their socio-political analysis and their program.

THE MOST RECENT, full statement of Bevan's general political views is contained in his book **In Place of Fear* published in the United States toward the end of April of this year. The book is somewhat discursive, and we will not attempt to follow Bevan along all the side-paths into which he wanders. He makes incidental comments on dozens of topics which, though they may have little bearing on his central themes, give the reader a pretty good insight into the way in which his mind works. It does not seem to be constrained by an excessive amount of systematization. But it is always lively, incisive and passionate. His social and political interests cover a wide range of subjects; his hatred for capitalism, its representatives, and all their works is virile and healthy; and his devotion to the cause of the little people of his country breathes naturally and not self-consciously from every page of his book.

We will try to present, and discuss Bevan's thinking under three main headings: the road to socialism in Britain; the nature and role of Stalinism; a socialist foreign policy. Not that *In Place of Fear* itself follows any

***In Place of Fear**

by Aneurin Bevan, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1952, 213 pp. \$3.00

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such division. But it discusses all of them at some length, and in any event, these are the crucial issues to which a British socialist must address himself in our times.

●
"Whenever the Labour party has made a mistake, it has not been in consequence of pursuing its principles too roughly or too far, but by making too many concessions to conventional opinion." (In Place of Fear, p. 103.)

To ANEURIN BEVAN the basic evil in capitalist society lies in the private ownership of the means of production. This is the root cause for the wasteful planlessness of capitalism, for its extremes of unnecessary poverty on the one hand and anti-social wealth on the other, for its instability. But capitalism has also succeeded, in its own bloody, oppressive and planless way in increasing the means of production and along with this, of the skilled, urbanized and educated working class which is its nemesis. And in Britain, at least, this working class has achieved a degree of democratic political power which is a weapon adequate to the job of changing the basic premises of the system.

Bevan believes that private property, poverty and democracy are the chief moving forces in capitalist society. The first is the basic cause of the second. But poverty, when it appears to the masses to be senseless, sets up a drive against its own cause. And democracy is the means by which this drive can and does become politically effective.

"The social reforms of the twentieth century are a consequence of the democratic power of the masses and not of increased enlightenment," he writes. This power is embedded primarily in the universal franchise

which was not fully won in Britain till 1929. The masses have only had it for an extremely brief historical period. And it is wielded primarily by the representation of the masses in the British parliament.

To be sure, Bevan recognizes that the democratic power of the masses can rest in institutions other than the franchise and the parliament . . . institutions such as the trade unions. In the pages of his book there are vivid descriptions of the application of extra-parliamentary democratic powers by the unemployed miners in Wales after the First World War, and of the crisis to which the British government was brought by the threatened strike of the Triple Alliance (miners, transport workers, and railway men) in 1919. But it is quite clear that Bevan regards these democratic powers as at best auxiliary to the franchise, and as dangerous if employed too fully

HIS DESCRIPTION OF AN EPISODE in the struggle of the Triple Alliance speaks eloquently for Bevan's attitude on this matter. He reports that one of the leaders of the Triple Alliance told him about a conference he and his colleagues had with Prime Minister Lloyd George just before their planned strike. "Gentlemen," Lloyd George is reported to have said to them, "you have fashioned in the Triple Alliance of the unions represented by you, a most powerful instrument. I feel bound to tell you that in our opinion we are at your mercy. The Army is disaffected and cannot be relied upon. . . . We have just emerged from a great war and the people are eager for the reward of their sacrifices, and we are in no position to satisfy them. In these circumstances, if you carry out your threat and strike, then you will defeat us.

"But if you do so," went on Mr. Lloyd George, "have you weighed the consequences? The strike will be in defiance of the government of the country and by its very success will precipitate a constitutional crisis of the first importance. For, if a force arises in the State which is stronger than the State itself, then it must be ready to take on the functions of the State, or withdraw and accept the authority of the State. Gentlemen," asked the prime minister quietly, "have you considered, and if you have, are you ready?"

Bevan reports that the union leader told him that "from that moment on we were beaten and we knew we were." To him this was not an admission of cowardice or irresolution on the part of the leader of the workers, nor did the results really constitute a historic defeat for the British working class to which the depression of the thirties, and even the Second World War can be traced in the negative sense that the failure of the British workers to come to power permitted capitalism to drag the peoples of the world through these two great catastrophies.

Actually, the matter is not brought up for the purpose of assessing its historic impact. It is introduced in an aside on "Marxism." Bevan is intent, at this point, on demonstrating that what gives the capitalist state power is not so much its coercion of the workers, as their subjective allegiance to parliamentary institutions. "The opportunity for power is not enough," he writes, "if the will to seize it is absent," and a little later: "the trade union leaders were theoretically unprepared for the implications involved. They had forged a revolutionary weapon without having a revolutionary intention."

Bevan believes that these statements

illustrate some error of what he calls the "undeveloped Marxist school," and he also believes that "classic Marxism consistently understated the role of political democracy with a fully developed franchise." The important point is that he has no criticism to offer of these leaders, and that he fully shares their parliamentary inclinations.

Bevan says that socialists "assert the wisdom of collective action through parliament as the core of their creed." In their hands, parliament cannot remain a passive factor which seeks to intervene in economic life as little as possible. It is a weapon in the social struggle. It should not stand by and only try to redress the imbalances of the capitalist system . . . the limit to its functions assigned it even by the "interventionist" Keynesians. Its power "must be used progressively until the main streams of economic activity are brought under public direction."

SINCE PARLIAMENT IS AN INSTRUMENT which is adequate to the task of transforming the economic structure of a society, socialists assume an extremely grave responsibility when they gain a parliamentary majority. In such circumstances they must act vigorously, and use the parliamentary instrument to its utmost capacity. For their failure will not only discredit them, it will place the whole of democracy in jeopardy. Bevan is fully aware that "people have no use for a freedom which cheats them of redress," and that "if confidence in political democracy is to be sustained, political freedom must arm itself with power." But if, once thus armed, it fails, the people are quite likely to turn to some form of dictatorship which promises vigorous and effective action.

Bevan is here making a plea for a

continuation of the drive for nationalization and, for the democratic planning which is made possible by it. Although he is of the opinion that the socialist state need not nationalize all sectors of the economy, and in that sense is an advocate of a "mixed economy," he is also convinced that in this matter the Labor Government had not gone far enough. Too much of the economy was left in private hands, and this rendered effective planning difficult if not impossible in far too many fields. "At the moment," he writes, "we are between two worlds. We have lost the propulsion of one and we have not yet gained the forward thrust of the other. This is no place in which to halt." And later: "It is a requisite of social stability that one type of property ownership should dominate. In the society of the future it should be public property."

THROUGHOUT THE BOOK he argues against those in the Labor Party who regard taxation as the chief means for bringing greater equality and stability into British society. Although some further adjustment of unjustified inequality can be brought about through tax policies, the vital thing is to get public control over the allocation of the social surplus of the British economy, and this can only be done effectively by establishing public control at the source.

Bevan does not have the attitude attributed to "doctrinaire socialists" by their conservative (and in this country by their liberal and even labor) traducers that nationalization gives the full answer to the problems of British society. As a man who has had practical administrative experience in the Labor Government without losing his touch with the workers, he knows that this is far from true, and that the road from nationaliza-

tion to socialism is neither clear nor easy. But nationalization is the first step which must be taken (a) to shift the power in society so that the conflict between public and private claims can be resolved, and (b) to make direct planning of the economy possible.

But the question still remains: who shall plan, and who shall control the planners? It is significant that here again Bevan sees the problem primarily, though not solely, in parliamentary terms. He attacks the principle of the independent boards which run the nationalized industries . . . on the ground that they are not subject to parliamentary supervision. Actually, what has happened is that the ministers cannot be questioned in parliament on the actions of the boards, and the chairmen of the latter have peerages conferred on them so that they sit in the House of Lords. Thus the only public supervision and control is vested in the unrepresentative section of the British governmental machine. Bevan warns against any "reform" of the House of Lords which would actually give it more power in the economic field. But he ends the discussion on this topic by the following ominous sentence: "We have still to ensure that they [the industry boards] are taking us toward democratic socialism not toward the managerial society."

BUT HOW ABOUT the whole complex of problems and issues summed up in the shorthand phrase "workers control"? Bevan is not unaware of their existence, or of the fact that they cannot be resolved solely by placing the nationalized industries under a greater degree of parliamentary supervision. "The advance from state ownership to full socialism," he writes, "is in direct proportion to the extent the

workers in the nationalized sector are made aware of a changed relationship between themselves and the management."

Yet despite his stated aversion to the "managerial" approach, Bevan's suggestions as to what should be done to bring about this awareness of the changed relationship are directed solely to management—public management, that is. What he has to say on this is not so very different from the advice given to corporation executives by the most progressive school of personnel management experts. The worker must be given an understanding of the part he plays in the whole picture. "A new class of manager must be trained and he must be taught that we are not building a new species of pyramid." The question is: who is to teach him?

True, he ends this discussion by a winged and perfectly correct general phrase: "Liberty and responsibility march together. They must be joined together in the workshop as in the legislative assembly. Only when this is accomplished shall we have the foundations of a buoyant and stable civilization." But in another connection he has already pointed out that social reforms come not as a consequence of enlightenment, but rather of the democratic power of the masses. The point is that until the workers have greater democratic power in nationalized industry, their relationship to management is not changed sufficiently for them to be made aware of it. It is they who will have to "educate" the new managers in the new relationship, just as they have "educated" private management on the limitations of its powers through their trade unions, and the Tories on the limitations of theirs through the ballot box. But it is not likely that they will be given this opportunity from above . . . not even

from their own parliament. At least, they have not been given it yet. And Bevan does not suggest that the road to greater democracy in industry lies through the application of democratic pressures by the workers to win it.

THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM in Britain, for Bevan, is primarily the application of parliamentary democracy in a thorough, bold and militant program of nationalization. Political democracy is its guarantee, parliament its instrument, nationalization its primary method. "Audacity is the mood that should prevail among Socialists." There is little doubt that in these views he gives expression to the sentiments of the most advanced sections of the British working class.

Whether or not the guarantee, the instrument and the method are adequate to their historic tasks will only be demonstrated in practice. It would be the height of pedantry to substitute speculations as to their adequacy for the real job of British socialists, which is to push them to their limits. Whatever theoretical reservations Marxist theoreticians may have about the matter, the British workers appear determined to follow this road. They will recognize its limits only when they have exhausted the possibilities in practice. And Bevan is today breaking ground for them through the marshland of vacillation, doubt and accommodation to "conventional opinion" of the right wing leadership of the party.

IN THEIR STRUGGLE for the achievement of democratic socialism in Britain, the workers of that country are faced with a whole realm of problems, the locus of which lies outside the area of their own direct political control. In fact, whether or not they will

be permitted to test their chosen path to its limits may depend much more on the development of the world struggle than on their own domestic politics.

And in this field, in which the problems and issues are often beyond the scope of the immediate experience of the British masses (or those of any other single nation), the qualifications for leadership are more difficult and complex than those described by Bevan at the beginning of his book. Here it is not so much a matter of the leader articulating the wants and needs of his own people, but rather of getting a grasp of the situation which he can use to educate and guide his followers.

Of all the problems which beset socialists today, perhaps the most difficult is that of the nature of Stalinism. One socialist movement after another has been absorbed, wrecked, or debilitated by a failure to grasp the nature of this new social system and the movements which represent it all over the world. And it is little consolation indeed to meditate that if socialists have misunderstood it, the leading

politicians of the capitalist world have been even less able to understand this social phenomenon.

Aneurin Bevan has been slandered in Britain, and even more in the United States as some kind of a pro-Stalinist. The motives of the British Tories have been clear enough: any argument which might win a vote. The motives of the Americans, though less direct, are equally clear: anyone who criticizes the way we fight Stalinism must be some kind of a Stalinist.

In Place of Fear should re-emphasize, for those who are really interested in Bevan's views, that he is no Stalinist. He is perfectly forthright in his description of the totalitarian, ruthless nature of Russian Stalinism. His views on foreign policy are in no way motivated by a desire to increase the power of Stalinism, and do not constitute an apologia for its actions in international politics. He recognizes the Stalinist "peace campaign" as an attempt to make political capital completely unrelated to any real desire for peace. He does not regard the present Russian regime as the natural outgrowth of the aspirations and achieve-

ments of the Russian Revolution, but rather as the consequence of its isolation in a backward country which has led to the perversion and defeat of those aspirations.

And yet . . . his understanding of Stalinism is vitiated by a supra-historical approach to its origin, nature and development. Though the error may be found in the method, the result has a very real and practical political consequence. It makes possible the *evasion* of the development of a policy to meet the problem.

VIEWED FROM THE HEIGHT of historical abstraction, Russian Stalinism is an attempt of a backward agricultural society to industrialize itself rapidly. Either because it has started this effort at a time when world capitalism is in decline, or as a result of an historical accident, this society is undergoing a process of primitive accumulation similar to that through which every industrial country has gone in its time, but without the private ownership of the means of production. When British capitalism was going through the same process, "the rate of capital accumulation was an expression of the denial of consumption goods to the masses of the people." In the case of Russia: "the economic function of the police state is to hold down the consumption of the people, especially of the peasant population, while their surplus production is drained off for the purpose of fixed capital investment. . . . Herein lies the whole tragedy of the Soviet Union. . . . In the furtherance of this policy she has developed an extreme centralist policy. More local responsibility would reduce the rate of accumulation because the nearer responsibility is to the people the more it is amenable to the people's sufferings. From this centralist policy to the creation

of a vast bureaucracy to serve the needs of the central direction, is a short and logical step. Everything is sacrificed to the requirements of the 'Plan.' "

In Britain, and throughout the capitalist world, Bevan sees clearly that what is going on is a struggle between antagonistic social classes over who shall be master in the house. But as soon as we get to Russia . . . we have the grand, impersonal and classless deployment of historical forces. Here there is no class which holds its power and derives an exalted economic status through its control of industry via its control of the totalitarian state. He even denies that there is a "caste" formation in Russia. Repressions exists on a vast and inhuman scale, "but I should say that only an insignificant minority of the Russian people are aware of them."

In fact Bevan believes that the mass of people are not held in subjection by the police terror of the state. They feel that they are better off than their fathers, that they have much wider opportunities. True, they are indoctrinated by a propaganda which tells them that they are much better off than their brothers in the West, and they are prevented by police measures from finding out the truth by establishing any external contacts. But the workers' support of the Russian regime "rests on his own knowledge that all around him the framework of a modern industrial community is being built, that he is helping to build it, and that in the meantime his life is substantially, if slowly, improving."

AND FINALLY, says Bevan, we must realize that not all people move at equal speed to achieve their political emancipation. Political liberty is, in any event, not a product of the human spirit, but of historical develop-

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ment. And just as capitalism has produced its own gravedigger in the industrial working class, so the Russian system of totalitarianism is doomed, in the long run, by the industrialization of the country. Workers and technicians must be educated to operate effectively in a society of complex industries. Sooner or later those who have the economic function of running industry will demand the political liberty which goes with economic power. Just when and how this will happen, no one can tell. Modern totalitarianism has great power to atomize society and hold it in subjection. Every dissident or questioning person is purged. So it is going to be difficult to get political democracy.

But "so far man has invented only three methods of transmitting political power from one generation to another; dynastic, caste and property." And Bevan doubts that a caste can be formed in an industrial society. Anyhow, "power is ultimately shared with those whose economic co-operation must be ensured. These eventually comprise all the workers, for creation, maintenance and expansion of modern industrial techniques depend upon a literate and trained population."

The Russian government has not yet faced the problem of transferring its power to another generation. Purgues take the place of elections. "The principle of authority has replaced the authority of principle which inspired the revolution in the first instance. Government by authority dominated the history of man until the universal franchise and representative institutions established themselves in the Western world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

In brief, if this analysis is accepted, it is clear that all the peoples of the Stalinist empire must be left to stew in their own historical juice until

such time as the historical process brings their economy to a level at which they will reach out for democracy. The fact that they had reached this level thirty-five years ago is alluded to, but no conclusions follow from it. For them, as for the other peoples in industrially undeveloped countries who are groaning under repressive regimes, Bevan has one answer: the industrialized West must help in their *economic* development. Democracy will follow, as the night the day.

CERTAINLY THERE IS NO *direct* way in which the peoples of the West can liberate the peoples of Russia or of her vassal nations. For one thing, they have yet to get control over their own countries before they can think of conferring political power and the freedom which goes with it on the masses of Stalinland. In fact, until they have done the trick in their own countries the most they can hope to do is to restrain the capitalist governments which rule them from *strengthening* Stalinism through their policies of desperation.

Can socialists devise a program which is capable of undermining Stalinism in Russia to the point at which its masses will rise in revolt against the ruling class which today expropriates the surplus of their labor? It is quite true that internal Russian developments can only be hastened or retarded by what the workers in other countries do or leave undone. The problem, to be sure, can only be approached indirectly.

But that does not mean that the problem cannot be approached, or that an approach to it is aided by making a supra-historical, classless analysis of Russian society. The further industrialization of Russia, and the expansion of Stalinist state rule to other countries no doubt increases

the strains on the monolithic bureaucratic rule of the empire. But this is neither an argument for augmenting the economic and industrial resources at the disposal of the bureaucracy, nor for the expansion of its control over peoples who are still free from its grasp.

QUITE THE CONTRARY. Whatever the historic consequences may be, every increase in the power and area of Stalinist control strengthens the bureaucracy, it does not weaken it. The independent victory of Stalinism in countries like China and Yugoslavia may decrease the specific weight of *Russian* Stalinism, it does not weaken Stalinism as a world force. Bevan understands very well that democratic socialism and Russian Stalinism have nothing in common, but when he approaches Yugoslavia he does not seem to be aware of the fact that he is dealing with a society of the same order as that which prevails in the Soviet Union.

The task of socialists, then, is not simply to regard Stalinism as something which will "work itself out," but to recognize that the duration of this historical monstrosity will be directly related to the speed with which they can offer an *alternative* in significant sections of the world which has an appeal for the peoples in Stalinland. That capitalism, even rich American capitalism, does not appear to these people as such an alternative, goes without saying. There are powerful Stalinist movements in countries where the workers are still free to make a political choice precisely to the degree that no vital, militant socialist alternative is offered them. The creation of such an alternative force can only proceed in terms of a vital response to the challenge of decaying capitalist institutions. Where its cre-

ation is thought of chiefly in terms of "anti-Stalinism" it is bound to fail. And yet it must be clearly understood that the development of such forces is not only the most effective counter to the growth of the Stalinist movement internationally, but constitutes the greatest possible external threat to the stability of the existing Stalinist regimes.

THIS BRINGS US to the general problem of a socialist foreign policy for the British Labor Party. And here it must be said bluntly that although Aneurin Bevan has a good deal to say about foreign policy, and much of it is to the point, it does not add up to anything which is nearly as penetrating or instructive as the ideas which have been summed up under the general heading of the road to socialism in Britain.

From the economic point of view, Bevan has not, it seems to us, quite grasped the vital relationship of a positive foreign policy to the prospects of socialism for his own country. He exhibits a quite justified impatience with those who would council the British workers against taking power in their own country and pushing their nationalization and social programs to their sensible limits on the grounds that nothing can (and therefore nothing should) be done in Britain because her economy cannot be self-contained and it is therefore impossible to start building socialism until there is a socialist world of which Britain is a part. He is quite right in denying that Britain "is exposed to world trade movements to an extent that limits the application of socialist policies to her own economy."

Socialist policies can and should be applied wherever the workers get the

political power to apply them. But this does not mean that in every country where the workers achieve such power they can actually succeed in establishing socialism. Bevan understands clearly enough, though abstractly, the historic-economic reasons which prevented the Russian workers from marching forward to the socialist goal. There are equally strong reasons, though of a different nature, which doom British socialism . . . if it remains confined to the economic area of the British Isles.

THERE HAS BEEN AMPLE, documented discussion of the economic problems which confront a Britain shorn of its former foreign investments and of much of its former empire. Bevan's answer to these problems . . . is to attack British businessmen for not competing vigorously enough in the American market, and to denounce the United States for economic policies which bear down heavily on the British economy. With the adoption of Bevan's domestic policies, the British workers would be able to take care of the obstacles their businessmen have placed in their way. But the American government is run by capitalists who are not likely to adapt their policies to the interests of British socialism. Unfortunately, the American labor movement is led by men who are not much more pro-socialist than is the government, and in any event, they have little political power . . . as they have no political party through which to wield power.

In brief, the disruptive effect which the uncontrolled American economy had on the economic planning of the British Labor Government can be counted on to continue for some time to come. As a matter of fact, if the effect of the American armament program has been disruptive, a full-scale

American depression could have a really *destructive* impact on the economic structure of Britain. In such circumstances British exports to the United States and to all areas where America dominates the market could be all but eliminated.

To be sure, a high-pressure American dumping campaign on a world scale to relieve her economy of surplus products would force the rest of the capitalist world to protect itself. It might even drive Britain and other countries to close ranks economically in the hope of immunizing themselves to the threat of American competition. At the very least they would be compelled to trade via the type of barter arrangements brought to such a high level of development by the Nazi economists during the late '30s.

The British government can cushion the shocks of the fluctuations of world trade on the economy of the country, as Bevan says. But to change the secular trends is much more difficult, and it is these which threaten the economic existence of the country. From the point of view of long-range socialist economic policy, there is no escaping the conclusion that Britain must widen her economic base in order to survive and develop to socialism.

This is primarily a political problem. It cannot be solved by adopting Schuman plans and the like, as the Labor Party has correctly pointed out. For a planned economy on an international scale, parties must be in power on both sides of the border which have a basically similar approach to economic questions and which represent the same class in the society of their respective countries.

UNDER THE THREAT of Russian expansion on the one hand, and the whirlwind of American economic pres-

sure on the other, the bourgeoisie of Western Europe has been preoccupied to the highest degree with developing some form of economic and even political integration. To be sure, none of the plans has actually gone into execution yet, and perhaps never will. But the tendency is certainly there. The question is: do the socialists have the capacity to make an equally strong drive for the unity of Western Europe . . . one which would have a truly progressive historical content?

The British Labor Party has an almost unique opportunity to lead such a movement. Yet they showed no awareness of this when in power, and Bevan shows no awareness of it now. In fact, in his discussions of international affairs the socialist movements of Western Europe and of Asia hardly come in for mention as possible foci toward which a policy could be directed. In Britain it is the masses, the workers who with their democratic power are the force for social progress. When world problems are considered, the chief concern is not at all what the BLP can do to encourage, stimulate, unite and assist the socialist movements to struggle for democracy in their own countries, or where possible to struggle for power so that they can unite the economies of their countries in free, planned association with the economy of Britain and thus form a powerful *world* counter-weight to the systems of capitalism and Stalinism. In international affairs Bevan sees the existing governments as the only real forces which control policies, and therefore toward which policy should be directed.

In this respect it must be said that he has not even risen to the level of theoretical understanding which has been displayed by Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas in this country. Bevan sees the political prospects

of political democracy in Russia as a simple function of the industrial development of the country. He has the same view of the backward areas of Asia and the Middle East. To him a vast Point Four program is *the* answer to the threat of the spread of Stalinism or some other form of totalitarianism in those countries. Douglas, on the other hand, has clearly recognized that the export of industrial and agricultural equipment to these lands will be of little avail unless a social revolution precedes or at least accompanies it. Alas, to hope that the American government will stimulate and encourage such revolutions is to whistle for a wind. But the British Labor Party is not congenitally incapable of effectively aiding such movements, and this will be doubly true when it is returned to power.

As long as Bevan deals with the role of the United States in world affairs, *In Place of Fear* is penetrating in its understanding and devastating in its effect. It has already stung liberal and "socialist" standard bearers for the State Department in this country to bitter and anguished cries of rage. His attack on the speed of rearmament to which America has driven Britain and Western Europe is well known. He charges American foreign policy with unpredictability and with a tendency to believe that an effective social policy can be dispensed with in favor of an overwhelming military one. He points out that once America has built up its military power to the point at which it is thought that "negotiation from strength" is possible, the tendency will be to demand a rapid and simple solution to all international troubles . . . or else!

HE IS EQUALLY CLEAR on another aspect of the American armament program. The vast industrial expansion

to which it has given birth tends to *increase* the economic imbalance in the capitalist world. Any prospect of a serious slackening of the pace of rearmament brings the American economy face to face with the danger of surplus production and hence surplus men. This becomes a reason in itself for keeping the arms race going.

But when he comes to the role of Russia in the world struggle his argumentation becomes once again either highly abstract, or at times even trivial. The main burden of his theme is to discount the expansionist drive of Russian Stalinism.

Russia, he insists, lacks the steel to fight a global war. In any event, she is incapable of a Blitzkrieg, because it would not be "consistent with the nature of her economy, which is sluggish and resistive, not mobile and offensive." Here we have, once again, Bevan the simple economic determinist.

He believes, further, that the Russian government is deterred from starting World War III by another consideration: "such an action on her part [an attack on Western Europe] would lose her the support of those millions in Western Europe who still cherish the delusion that Russia yearns only for peace. No matter how the onslaught might be dressed up, and presented as defense, the presence of Russian soldiers would bring about sharp disillusionment, and consolidate the populations of the invaded countries against her."

And it is this theoretical approach which also completely dominates his thought on the implications of the rise of Stalinism to power in China. He actually sees this as a *blow* to Stalin's aspirations. Why? First, because Stalinist Russia has hoped to achieve her greatest successes not among the peas-

ant populations of the Orient, but among the urban workers of the advanced industrial countries. And second, because the economies of Russia and China do not complement each other. "If you amalgamate a Russian peasant with a Chinese peasant you don't make a steelworks." China, you see, needs industrial equipment, and therefore must look to the Western world where it is available. If America would just understand this. . . .

Bevan has not grasped the fact that once a Stalinist party is in power, political considerations can and are made to prevail over the formal economic needs. China is not *just* a backward country which needs industrialization. She is also a backward country which is now ruled by an all-powerful bureaucratic class. It is not at all to be excluded that the *national* interests of this class will lead it one day to break with Stalinist Russia, as happened in the case of Tito. Such a break would be welcomed by every thinking socialist in the world. But this would not change the basic nature of the regime and its relationship to its own peasants and workers.

Bevan urges on the United States a policy toward Stalinist China which would make easier a break from her ties with Russia. Such a policy is not outside the realm of possibilities, though nothing in the present American political scene makes it appear likely. But its effectiveness would not be a simple function of America's theoretical capacity to industrialize China. Under the circumstances which one can conceive of as bringing about such a break, it is quite to be expected that America would be much more inclined to arm China than to industrialize her. Bevan correctly points out that this has been the tendency of Russian policy also.

After commenting at length about

the failures, inadequacies and outright stupidities of American foreign policy in the Cold War, Bevan admits that he cannot put forth any "novel proposal" to solve the problems presented by the struggle for world hegemony between Stalinism and American capitalism. Basically, in his view, it is a matter of a big and world-wide Point Four program, and whatever is decided upon "must command the resources of idealism." This is rhetoric. But after saying it, he nevertheless does come up with a "novel proposal" which is about as close as he comes to a statement of policy for socialists in the struggle for the world. He suggests that "we fix a date—toward which we should at once begin to work—when a definite percentage of what we are now spending on arms shall be set aside for the peaceful development of backward parts of the world. There are three essentials for success. The date should be far enough away for preparations to be made. It should be near enough to excite hope and encourage restraint. And the percentage of the arms program proposed to be diverted to peaceful purposes should be definite, substantial, and capable of being expressed in terms of men and machinery." Russia, of course, should be invited to participate in this program.

ANEURIN BEVAN is a militant British socialist. But this book does not demonstrate him to be an international socialist. He understands very well that in Britain the masses win that for which they struggle, and that the only hope for the future of British society rests in the success of this struggle. He feels at home in the democratic institutional framework of British society, and recognizes that the value of this framework for the masses is a function of their willingness and ability to use

it for the purpose of transforming the social structure.

But the moment he steps outside of these familiar political and social surroundings (and the relatively similar ones which prevail in the United States) he loses his touch. In the vast areas of the world where the masses have no democratic rights, and where they are therefore constrained to struggle for them by methods less orderly and more violent than those employed by the British workers on election day, he tends to lift his eyes from the battle and fix them on the far reaches of historical development.

In practice, this means that he does not see the masses in Asia, and even in Western Europe, as the real source of social progress in our time, and more concretely, as the only force capable of preventing World War III. "Revolution," he writes, "is almost always reform postponed too long. A civilized society is one that can assimilate radical reforms while retaining its essential stability." And although this is just one of his many asides made in a quite different connection, it is clear that it expresses his real attitude toward the struggles of the peoples against both Stalinism and the repressive neo-feudalism of the East. His arguments for Point Four are frequently set forth in terms which imply that its purpose should be to secure orderly and stable change and to prevent mass upheavals.

A SOCIALIST FOREIGN POLICY for Britain cannot be constructed on the basis of such a conception. The fullest exploitation of parliamentary democracy may be an adequate political strategy for the workers of Britain today, but it will prove itself as such only to the extent that by it they gain the power to reorganize their own society. To secure this power, they

will have to broaden its base. The most immediately available political forces for this lie in the socialist movements of Western Europe. But they need to be helped and encouraged, not to be ignored. The fate of socialism in Britain, and even of the world itself, may well depend on the speed and thoroughness with which the British labor movement becomes aware of this fact.

And beyond Europe lie the vast reaches of the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The political and social struggles in those areas will not await the long-range working out of economic

forces. Quite the contrary, it is these struggles that will in large measure determine how these economic forces will work out. A socialist foreign policy cannot get started until this is understood. And its object must be to assist and encourage in every way possible the actual, present struggle for democracy of the turbulent and aroused masses.

Audacity is indeed the mood which should prevail among socialists. It is needed at least as much in their approach to foreign policy as to their struggle for democratic power at home.
Gordon HASKELL

The Second Labor Government

Lessons Drawn from the Experience of British Labor

The return of a Tory Government precariously based on a minority vote has ushered in a vital new phase for the British Labor movement. Both the result and subsequent actions by the Conservatives have been extremely revealing and have commenced the process of injecting fresh life into the movement generally.

The Co-operative Sunday paper *Reynolds News* conceived a Tory return in terms of an immediate and vicious large scale onslaught on working class conditions which would quickly result in the emergence of pre-war conditions of poverty and unemployment. The first reactions, however, were surprisingly mild. On the day after the Tory victory, the *Daily Telegraph* editorial stated that the "result was no defeat for the Socialists—and no victory for the Tories." Both the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Telegraph* gave the advice that the newly elected government "will have to proceed very cautiously" in view of their precarious position.

The *Daily Mail*, always an outright spokesman for the Conservatives, admitted that a government with such a small majority would be tested by quick results, and named housing, cost of living, etc., as the type of issues on which they would be judged.

Winston Churchill, who had done his best to create parliamentary chaos over the preceding 18 months, now made a statement in which he said that he hoped there would be a lull in party strife and urged his supporters to see the good points in their opponents.

The *Daily Telegraph* in its editorial of November 1, 1951, devoted an entire column to pointing out that the interests of the T.U.C. were really the interests of the Tories!

This amazing about-face, which has caused no small amount of consternation among their supporters, can only genuinely be understood, if we understand the changed relationship of class forces both nationally and internationally.

At present, the British Labor movement, known as the "Trinity of Labor," and made up of the united strength of the Labor Party, Trades Unions and Co-operative Movement, constitutes an extremely powerful and unique combination, and can be said to express the general trend of socialist thought in the United Kingdom.

The fact is, we still have the biggest support, with over 250,000 more voters than the Tories could muster. It is this overwhelming *power and confidence* which is making the Tories very wary. For them, the existence of their own class is at stake over the period of the next ten to fifteen years, and they recognize only too clearly that at the present time they lack the real power to act boldly and decisively.

Even the electoral figures give them a strength they do not in reality possess. For their strength lies in the residential areas while Labor's strength lies in the industrial and productive areas of the country.

Their *future* boldness depends to a large extent on the way in which the British Labor movement reacts to the present situation, and the type of policy it will attempt to formulate for the next election. The experience of the past six years, however, has resulted in a totally different outlook, and the evolution of socialist thought since 1929 and the second Labor government, gives us an interesting insight as to what we may expect in the future.

In 1929, too, Britain was subject to a severe economic crisis. In many respects the situation was not so difficult as in 1945, for her foreign investments were still intact and her world power was still considerable. The Labor government at that time, renowned for its inaction, could conceive of a solution only in terms of economy cuts. There

was no thought of redistribution of the national income in favor of the working class, neither was there any policy to develop and maintain full employment. It is interesting to note that even in 1945 the Labor government did not consider it possible to maintain full employment. The present National Insurance Scheme still bases its contributions upon the existence of 1½ million unemployed which in itself indicates how little faith the Labor leaders had in their ability to provide a job for everybody.

In addition, the increased working class share of the national income (38 per cent to 47 per cent after tax) has been due almost entirely to the efforts of the Trades Unions. Government taxation has redistributed only 1 per cent in favor of the working class.

Thus, it is clear that Labor Party philosophy has been and is very incomplete, and if we were to presume pre-war conditions—and a *pre-war relationship of class forces*—the prospects would not be very bright.

Fortunately, many new factors have come into play in the postwar era, for not only did the working class emerge very much stronger at the end of the last war, but the capitalists also emerged very much weaker—a factor of equal importance. The general loss of investments, plus the 1945 election result stunned the Tories into a state of helplessness which was no small factor in helping the Labor government to tackle the post-war problems.

It was not that the Labor leaders had changed, but that the conditions had, and as we know it is the conditions which determine consciousness.

1945 began five years of intensive legislative work, and it is quite true that more results were achieved in five years than in any previous fifty. There was no co-ordinated plan so far as the

legislation was concerned, and this caused people like G. D. H. Cole to make the comment that the Labor Party had pushed through legislation in an ill-digested manner. However, the idea of co-ordinated planning was to develop a little later, and largely as a result of empirical experience.

The scope of Britain's overseas trade problem can be seen by the simple fact that whereas income from investments paid for 21 per cent of our imports in 1938, they paid for only 3 per cent in 1949. The fact that, despite this, an overall balance of trade was achieved by 1950 was a remarkable result. It was the first time since 1870 that Britain had achieved a trading balance and this enabled the cessation of American aid and the development of a more independent attitude generally.

The fact that this balance did not last, and was very precarious at best, does not alter the remarkable character of the achievement and was one which nobody had previously thought possible.

Labor's major achievement, however, lay in the maintenance of full employment. Critics have attempted to minimize this achievement by saying it was due to either post-war boom conditions, American aid, or the needs of re-armament. But in France, Italy and Germany considerable unemployment existed despite equal amount of American assistance and considerable rearmament programs. Whereas Britain has kept unemployment down to around 1 per cent, Italian unemployment has been in the region of 13 per cent and German 9 per cent.

It is interesting to note that despite criticism of Labor's housing program, for every two houses the whole of Europe including Scandinavia has built in the post-war years, the United Kingdom has built one. Great Britain

builds in one month what France builds in 12 months, and France, remember, is a land of free enterprise, where anybody can build a house if he so desires. Whereas the retail price rise over the years 1945 to 1950 was 21 per cent in the United Kingdom, it was 102 per cent in Italy and 369 per cent in France.

There is not the slightest doubt that full employment has been the decisive factor in the maintenance of the bargaining power and strength of the British working class movement.

No single factor has been decisive in making full employment a continued reality. Bulk buying, which has guaranteed markets for overseas producers and jobs for workers in Britain; price controls which have kept prices down and purchasing power up; economic controls generally, and a large scale development of the depressed areas which have to be visited to fully appreciate the transformation which has taken place. All this has constituted a *socialistic direction of policy* which has resulted in a greater understanding of the need for economic planning, and for the various techniques which can maintain mass purchasing power and full employment generally.

Since the Tories have been in power we have seen a policy which moves in the opposite direction. Dearer loans to local authorities mean dearer rents and prices. Less capital investment and cuts in governmental expenditure must inevitably lower purchasing power to the point where genuine unemployment begins to rear its head once again. Rearmament industries will absorb 500,000 workers, but that will be just a passing phase before we witness the emergence of genuine poverty again.

The *Economist* which can be relied upon to present the outright Tory

solution without regard to popular opinion, stated in 1950: "When at last it is decided that the British people should again pay prices for their food that correspond to the real cost of producing or importing it; a large part of the present apparent demand for houses will disappear overnight."

They recognize only too clearly that the housing shortage, the fuel shortage and electricity shortage, etc., arises from the success of Labor legislation and the only way to remedy this is by cutting the purchasing power and standard of life to the point where the working class will be unable to afford the post-war "luxuries."

I think it is true to say that in a general way, domestic socialist policy should be in three directions:

- (1) Extension of all forms of common ownership,
- (2) Economic planning,
- (3) Democratic control of our industries, etc.

It was not until a year before the 1950 election that these ideas began to take conscious shape and began to be widely discussed. Economic controls were seen more clearly as a form of planning and therefore very necessary. It was seen that a conscious intervention into the mechanics of the capitalist system can produce beneficial results, and there was clearly the evolution of a socialist policy in relation to the capitalist system generally.

What was more important was the growth of the idea that the *structural* alterations which had been carried out (nationalization, etc.) was a process which had to be continued, and, if carried sufficiently far would transform the economy.

Nobody would say that the Labor government has carried out any decisive socialist measures, or solved the problem of a future slump. A good deal of the ground was cleared, how-

ever, sufficient to imbue great confidence by the mass of Labor workers in the government and explained the continued increase in its support. Thus, the weakening of the capitalists plus the power of the Trades Union movement and the greater confidence and experience of the Labor movement as a whole, has resulted in a tremendous shift in class relationships in Great Britain. There is at the present time the element of a subtle and precarious form of dual power. Both the Tories and some of the more conservative Labor leaders are afraid of the "Proletarian Dictatorship," which dictates their actions and makes them do things contrary to a good many of their own wishes.

Even in the field of foreign policy, which has been subject to more criticism than any other aspect of Labor policy, the growing economic independence of Britain in 1950 resulted in the growth of a more independent approach to international problems. The recognition of Mao Tse Tung in China, the policy toward Formosa, and the revelation of the MacArthur-Tribunal which revealed the opposition of British Labor to the proposed bombing of Manchuria, can be seen as the glimmerings of a new approach to international problems, and together with the Bevan resignation was all part of a process which was symptomatic of a growing socialist consciousness far more developed than ever before.

A process of rethinking is taking place in which there is a great and growing discussion on how we are to affect a radical change in the economic structure of Britain. This discussion is taking place with a background of six years of valuable experience. The British workers are acting with a self-restraint born of confidence in their strength, and this finds

its reflection in many of the utterances of their leaders.

The Co-operative Party has issued a pamphlet which discusses the merits of different forms of common ownership, and the manner by which the next Labor government must transfer whole industries and enterprises to common ownership.

Austin Albu, M. P., suggests that we tackle private companies by a form of joint control between workers and employers, with a government nominee as chairman. Others point to the need for *socialists* in the managerial positions in the nationalized industry if they are to develop in the right direction.

No longer does the movement discuss in general terms. It is a question of *how* it has to be carried out, with detailed plans and discussions. Nobody believes that the Tories will last the full term of five years (three is the absolute maximum) and plans are being made on that confident basis. Such is the change over the past decade.

There are of course, a few "Marxists" who refuse to see any progress at all. Acutely aware of their own failure, they are not going to see the virtues of others. To them, social revolution must observe the classic conditions of social upheaval, bolshevik principles and barricades. Marxism becomes a series of books, and quotations become a substitute for independent analysis.

No serious student of political and economic theory can, however, deny that the present and future situation in Britain is capable of pushing the movement forward again: of nationalizing fresh sectors of the economy; of developing the techniques of economic planning and controls which could effectively regulate the economy.

Even with a considerable private

sector in existence, such an economy would not be predominantly capitalist, and would be more progressive than the Russian nationalized and totalitarian system. Only blind fools and incurable sectarians can shut their eyes to this possibility.

It is this breathtaking opportunity which provides British socialists with such a magnificent goal and purpose. Irrespective of the future, it is this approach which must become the focal point around which activities must center—for it is *this* perspective, during the present *optimistic* and *confident* stage of the movement, which will create the maximum influence, and therefore the best point of departure for the problems of the future.

JIM HINCHCLIFFE

February, 1952.

Reply and Rebuttal

The above article was submitted to one of Britain's leading Labor periodicals, and a lengthy reply was received from the editor stating the reasons why it was unsuitable for publication. Because the main arguments in the letter are very relevant, and are presented in a reasoned manner, they are included with my article, together with a brief reply to each point.

J. H.

1. "You say that the present National Insurance Scheme still bases its contributions on the existence of 1½ million unemployed because the Labor government expected that they would be unable to make full employment. Actually, as far as we know, that is not correct. The calculation was made by the Beveridge Committee under the Coalition Government."

I know the calculation was made by Beveridge, but the Labor gov-

ernment implemented it without alteration, although it altered many other features. It had six years to act, but did not do so. Also many government spokesmen referred continually to the possibility of unemployment.

2. "In the next paragraph you say that the workers' increased share of the national income is almost entirely due to the efforts of the trade unions. Don't you overlook the fact that trade unions find it very much easier to get increases for their members if there are more jobs looking for workers, than workers looking for jobs? The former was the case, of course, during the Labor government's period of office. If there had been a considerable amount of unemployment, as there might well have been under a Tory government, it is obvious that the unions would not have been able to get an increase and therefore I think you will agree that it is not quite fair to suggest that all the increases the unions got were entirely due to union efforts. With regard to your suggestion that government taxation has redistributed only 1 per cent in favor of the working class, I don't know what period you have in mind. Where did you get the 1 per cent from and does it take account of social security?"

These facts were obtained from a lengthy article in the "Economist" late last year. It is also stated quite clearly in the article that the T. U. strength and bargaining power was largely dependent on full employment.

3. "You suggest that there was little co-ordinated planning about Labor's legislative work. We don't quite see how you can make that out. There never was a government, so far as we know, that had such a co-ordinated plan for its legislation and carried it

out—it was the plan that was set out in *Let Us Face the Future*, issued before the government took office."

The difference between the partial planning of 1950, and the lack of it in 1946 is considerable. I do not wish to confuse the L. P. program with economic planning. It is clear they must go a lot further along these lines yet.

4. "You suggest that in the future we have got to look for great increases in unemployment and that, although rearmament will help to absorb some workers, it will only be a passing phase before the emergence of "genuine poverty again." You don't submit any evidence to support this statement. It could only happen if the Labor movement is weak enough to allow it to happen and there is no certainty that the movement is going to be as weak as that."

This is happening NOW- The strength of the Labor movement has no DIRECT relationship with the economic policies of the Tories which must inevitably increase unemployment, and is doing so in practice.

5. "You suggest that domestic socialist policy should take three directions and that it was not until a year before the 1950 election that these ideas began to take conscious shape. These ideas have been accepted ideas in the Labor movement since at least the '30's, so far as we know. In fact I should go so far as to say that they have been essential ideas—especially 1 and 2—since I was a boy and that was not yesterday morning, I am sorry to say."

These were not accepted by the 1929 Labor government. (Bevans' book is a revelation on this point) I know they have been essentials in terms of education for many years,

but I am referring to the DEEDS and ACTIONS of the movement at various stages. The official attitude toward rearmament and the advocacy of "consolidation," is in my opinion, a negation of those three principles. What the rank and file think is a different matter.

6. "You suggest that 'both the Tories and some of the more conservative Labor leaders are afraid of the "Proletarian Dictatorship" which dictates their actions and makes them do things contrary to a good many of their own wishes. We are not quite sure what this means. If it means that the active members of the rank-and-file sometimes support a policy to

which the more right-wing Labor leaders object, they also have a habit of supporting policies to which the more left-wing leaders object. We are therefore not very sure what the sentence was intended to convey."

In general it is the pressure of the members which force the leaders TO THE LEFT. Last year, Sam Watson, Durham miners' leader, said the miners did not support Bevan—but it was Bevan they invited to their Gala this year, not Watson. This could be repeated many times, and explains the relative mildness of the Tory budget. It is a question of pressure of class forces in final analysis.

Judgment of an Era

Part III—An Examination of Hannah Arendt's Book

There remain three important closing sections to our examination of Hannah Arendt's book: (1) The origins of Russian totalitarianism as contrasted to the German; (2) the significance and role of the concentration camps under totalitarianism, and (3) Arendt's forecast of the likely disappearance of totalitarianism based on ideas which can best be said to bear surrealist color.

The failures of her book are many, but an important one is her insistence on the identity and common origin of Russian and German totalitarianism. She concludes this on the basis of a study of the phenomenon based primarily on German experiences and the material on Russia, much of it quite beside the point, is presented as though it related to what happened in Germany. Her original theory is, in turn, based upon an indiscriminate accumulation of facts made to fit in

with a prior conception of the nature of totalitarianism. This is the manner in which Arendt "proves" that Russian and German totalitarianism were identical.

The presentation is a superficial one since it accommodates itself to the most obvious, and therefore, superficial similarities in the political regimes and avoids the considerably more difficult task of determining the social bases which produced a similar (not identical) political superstructure in two countries whose societies were different. In this case, the simple approach does not aid understanding; it confounds it. The reader ought well to remember our discussion of the social forces which made up the totalitarianism in the West. Allowing for Arendt's fantastic theory of the breakdown of class system in the West, the abolition of the classes which made possible the rise of the totali-

tarian movement and the victory of Hitler, her estimate of at least the main physical forces which composed the movement is not altogether different from our own. These forces were largely the middle classes, the "petty bourgeoisie gone mad." The leadership of the movement was composed of social rabble and scum.

The petty bourgeoisie had "gone mad" because, as even Arendt recognizes, society had failed to provide for the needs and aspirations of mankind; the breakdown of capitalist society produced a universal moral decay and degeneration. Fascist totalitarianism is an expression of that decay and degeneration—a bourgeois expression of it. Though she is less interested in the "social question" she could not help but to observe that we have been living in a decades long social crisis. She interprets this social crisis falsely as we have seen. Where the Marxists saw a stalemate in the class struggle in a number of countries and the rise of the totalitarian state in the West as a "last refuge" of the power of the monopolist bourgeoisie, Arendt saw a "classless society" of totalitarianism which destroyed the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie and proletariat. In her analysis this new "classless society" produced the necessary numbers to overthrow the existing governments and to replace them with the rule of the lawless. Thus, a society was born, one without law or reason, without classes, but divided between rulers and the ruled, and as we pointed out, presumably an "economy without economics."

In rejecting Arendt's history of what happened in Germany we dealt principally with that country in our last article. The purpose was to show that the Marxist appreciation of the totalitarian phenomenon was in all

fundamental respects superior to her own. We have now only to make some brief references to Stalinist Russia in order to establish the contrast between it and Germany in order to lay the ghost of her theory.

When bolshevism came to power in Russia, a social revolution had occurred. A new type of state emerged from the revolution, the Soviet system, which transferred political power into the hands of the proletariat. We cannot in the limits of this discussion consider whether the Revolution accomplished all of its objectives, or completed the tasks it set for itself. Obviously, it didn't. But what we are primarily interested in now is what the Revolution did in the main, or tried to do.

The Soviet system was the product of a social revolution. Profound economic and political changes followed the Revolution. This new society was not yet socialist; neither was it capitalist. Its socialist direction, however, was expressed in the abolition of capitalism, the enfranchisement of the masses of workers and peasants, the raising of the working class to political power through the broad Soviet democracy and by the nationalization of the means of production. The fundamental differences between the new state and the rest of the capitalist world was thus unmistakably expressed.

As the Revolution developed, its proletarian class character was more firmly rooted, for a time at least. This was a new class state, but of a different type. It was a proletarian state based on collective property, i.e., state-owned property. With the abolition of the bourgeoisie as a property-owning class and the social reorganization which followed, we had in Russia a different type of working class. In the absence of the bourgeoisie, the

Russian proletariat was no longer a proletariat in the sense in which Marx described this class in his economic writings. For want of a better word it was used by the new state (even the Stalinist state uses the same term). Neither was there a petty-bourgeoisie identical with that class in the capitalist West.

The victory of Stalinism, of course, brought an abrupt end to the progress of the Russian Revolution. A new totalitarian system arose on the basis of the Revolutionary society. This totalitarianism achieved power through a counter revolution which began at the top, in the summits of the ruling power. It achieved power after years of intense factional warfare in the dominant Communist party. One group after another was liquidated in the seemingly never-ending conflicts with the bureaucracy which was entrenched in those areas where power resided. The counter-revolution, which lasted many years, finally ended in the complete triumph of a new bureaucratic ruling class under the leadership of the greatest bureaucrat of all, Joseph Stalin. But this totalitarianism, it should be remembered, arose in a *non-capitalist* state with a different and new type of social relations. In undermining the Revolution, the bureaucracy, resting upon collectivized property, slowly but firmly entrenched itself as a new ruling class, in a new society, bureaucratic collectivism. While this new state is non-capitalist, or anti-capitalist, it is also, in contrast to Revolutionary Russia, anti-socialist.

Arendt does not see Russian totalitarianism emerging from this new class stratification and the new nationalism. No, she attributes the rise of Russian totalitarianism to Stalin's subjective desires when "he began to prepare the country for totalitarian

government." If Arendt did not have so strong a bias against science and materialism and understood the real importance of social factors, the main driving forces of her history could not be a number of malevolent men but rather the sum total of the objective factors of society and history.

In the case of Russia, this writer believes that once the working class or socialist democracy was ended, once the Stalinist bureaucracy had assumed total control of the state in a collectivized country where control or, more precisely, "ownership of the state" means "ownership of the property," once the destruction of the Soviet system and all other forms of working class independent organization occurred, totalitarianism was the inevitable form of political rule. It arose out of the tremendous centralization and concentration of economic power in the hands of the state which controlled the entire economy.

At any rate, this happened in Russia. It does not matter that the reason for the degeneration lay in the failure of the European revolution, in the betrayals of social democracy, in the fatigue of the Russian proletariat and its turn toward national salvation, and in the isolation and backwardness of the country, the unenviable heritage of the Russian proletariat. All these factors only emphasize the roots of Stalinism. But it is important to understand this origin of Russian totalitarianism, to understand the social basis upon which it rests. Without such an understanding it is impossible to understand the specific totalitarianism, how and why it operates as it does. Even at a glance it is easy to see that the Stalinist totalitarianism is a considerably different variety than the Western type.

In Russia, the Stalinist regime does not rest upon the masses of the "petty

bourgeoisie gone mad." It is not in alliance or collusion with a bourgeoisie owning the means of production. Property and finance in Russia has not reverted to private industrialists and financiers, accumulating great fortunes, industrial capital or finance. On the contrary, the bureaucratic collectivist state was actually strengthened under Stalin by the enforced collectivization of all agricultural property.

The totalitarian regime in Russia was born inside the existing Soviet state, not outside of it, or against it, as was the case in Germany and Italy. Stalin did not come to power leading a *mass* movement against an existing government. He came to complete power (as matter of fact, he was in power) as the head of a tremendous bureaucracy which was the government and whose interests he personified. He did not have the support of the peasantry; he did in fact suppress the peasantry. If Stalin did not have the support (or opposition) of all the forces which supported Hitler, it was because, in a social sense, they did not exist in Russian society. He stood at the head of a party which was largely proletarian, in composition at any rate. It is true that this proletariat was a worn-out proletariat, a fatigued working class, which had given up its international hopes and perspectives. The very best elements of this class had already been wiped out in the revolution. Millions of new members flooded the old party, but they came without the old revolutionary history and traditions behind them, and they joined because membership in the Stalinized Communist Party was one way of getting ahead in the new society. These new "proletarians" were conservative and nationalist; they were the products of the Stalinization of the country. They

were workers, but privileged ones. And they joined the government party, the only party which existed, because all power remained centered in this party and emanated from it. In what capitalist country is it possible to find a totalitarian state or movement which has this kind of origin or composition?

While one can equate the totalitarian states in Germany and Russia as two anti-democratic, anti-parliamentary systems, based on police terror, the prisons and the concentration camps, the origins of these states were as different as their societies. The difference in the societies explains the difference in the *degree* of the totalitarianization of the two countries. Given the bourgeois class character of German totalitarianism, one can understand Goebbels' constant complaints about the difficulties and the impossibility of organizing a complete war economy in the midst of the war, about the bickering of the various government departments and the lack of cohesion and unity of the war effort. Inefficiency may be a hallmark of the Russian totalitarian system, but no such class independence, or class conspiracies were possible there as they were in Germany. The reason for this state of affairs in Germany, is that while its war economy was also "state-directed" or "state-controlled," no social revolution had taken place when Hitler came to power. Economically speaking, there was a continuity of German bourgeois society. Consequently, with the defeat of Hitler, no social revolution or counter-revolution was necessary to reestablish Germany capitalism, for in fact, it had never ceased to exist; it merely continued on under the new conditions of Allied occupation and control.

The bourgeois totalitarian societies in Germany and Italy produced dif-

ferent types of individuals than the Russian; the ideologies of the inhabitants were as different as their traditions, culture and mores. These must produce great variations in psychological types. To assert otherwise, it would be necessary to say that despite the different social orders which inhere, the peoples are alike in their thoughts and habits, their aspirations, etc. In that case, "human nature," precisely in the sense which Arendt uses it, would have to be considered immutable and anyone seeking to change this—what is it, God-given, nature-given, man-given? — would be guilty as she says, of the "criminal intent to change human nature."

The real facts of life are that bourgeois society of classes, the private ownership of the means of production, of profits and competition, produces men who are quite unlike the men in a slave or feudal society, and also unlike inhabitants of the bureaucratic collectivist society of Russia, which is anti-capitalist, anti-socialist, and totalitarian. This does not mean that Russian society, despite the iron curtain, is a hermetically sealed society, is not reached by events, ideas, practices, habits and traditions of the world outside. These do spill over and effect individuals and groupings in Russian society; the ruling class is therefore all the more vigilant in warding off any influence from the West which might undermine this society. But in the terms of history, even if this new Russian society is rather young, the differences between it and the West are real and strong. It is in this sense that the "symmetrical phenomena" of Germany and Russia remain parallel, but never meet.

The difference between the two totalitarian systems was further emphasized in the post-war period. In Germany and Italy, where the

Western bourgeois states conquered, pre-totalitarian conditions were re-established. Democratic or quasi-democratic bourgeois states were re-established and with them came the re-establishment also of the old "class parties" and "interest parties," representing "class interests."

Where Stalinism triumphed, we have had a social revolution of a new reactionary type, the establishment of new states and new societies reproducing, with variations, the Russian slave state. When Arendt says that "nothing proves better the irreparable decay of the party system than the great efforts after this war to revive it on the Continent. . . ." it not only proves that, but proves something even more important: the impossibility of a finding a solution of the world crisis on a capitalist basis, totalitarian or democratic or Stalinist.

The point of emphasis here is that the victory of the West has a annihilating effect upon one of Arendt's basic conceptions, namely, that totalitarianism arose on the basis of the breakdown of the class system and class parties, the end of class society.

Somewhere along the line, reality caught up with Arendt. She was obviously cognizant that the post-war reorganization of the two Axis powers, Germany and Italy, did something to her theory of the origins of their respective totalitarianisms. For the question must inevitably arise in her mind, if not in the minds of her uncritical critics: Why, after the breakdown of the bourgeois class society and the replacement of classes by masses, should the post-war period see the reappearances of virtually all the class and interest parties which existed prior to the war (and in Italy at the close of the First World War)? Had a social revolution, rather, a capitalist counter-revolution against

totalitarian revolution taken place? Actually her theory of the breakdown of capitalist class society covered a far more extensive period than the one immediately preceding the war. In her analysis the period of this breakdown extended over many decades. Yet with a characteristic indifference to "science and materialism" she believes she covers herself by writing first that:

The moment the movement, that is, the fictitious world which sheltered them (it seemed real enough to them and us—A. G.), is destroyed, the masses revert to their old status of isolated individuals who either hopelessly accept a new function in a changed world or sink back into their old desperate superfluosity.

And then:

The members of totalitarian movements utterly fanatical as long as the movement exists, will not follow the example of religious fanatics and die the death of martyrs. . . . Rather they will quietly give up the movement as a bad bet and look around for another promising fiction, or wait until the former fiction regains strength to establish another mass movement.

In the first place, and as a matter of cold fact, the masses (at least large numbers of them, millions, in fact) did not just "revert to their old status of isolated individuals . . . or sink back into their old desperate superfluosity." The destruction of totalitarianism unleashed a new fervor among millions of people and a new interest in politics and organization. Old class lines, class and interest parties, trade unions, and other organizations, sprung into existence instantaneously the totalitarian regimes were destroyed. In the second place, if Arendt's analysis of the fascist movements as revolutionary, anti-bourgeois movements, with mass fanatical support, was correct, rather than the Marxist view that they were reactionary movements of bourgeois so-

ciety without a liberating social doctrine or program, then the fanaticism of its supports should have carried over in large measure. This should follow from Arendt's theory about disappearance of the class society and the creation of a new totalitarian society which is outside of capitalism and socialism. For after the defeat of Hitler and Mussolini, we ought to have had a social vacuum in which totalitarianism should have thrived. And in the third place, if the masses have reverted to their old status as "isolated individuals" and sank back "into their old desperate superfluosity," how account for the reemergence of the mass political, economic and fraternal organizations?

Here is concrete proof that the kind of analysis given by Arendt, which lacks a scientific and materialist basis, has no validity in reality. The post-war period caught her by surprise. On the basis of her conceptions, we should have seen a different world than the one that exists today. Yet capitalism remains in power in the West; it never really ceased to exist, either in the bourgeois democratic or the fascist totalitarian nations. Stalinist totalitarianism remains in power in East Europe and parts of Asia, on the basis of a new social order. If bourgeois totalitarianism reappears in the West it will not be as Arendt claims because class society and the class and interest parties have broken down, but either because the class society has once again failed society, or because capitalism will be required to fight a new world war, which is the same thing as saying capitalism has failed once more. This totalitarianism may arise even before the outbreak of a new war as the means of preparing for and waging this war. Then Arendt may perhaps say: see, I told you so. But if and

when it comes, it will be for reasons totally different from hers.

One final point on this aspect of the problem. If what the bourgeois West did was to revive a doomed society, in the opinion of Arendt, it would follow, would it not, that the collapse of this society and the revival of Hitlerism is inevitable? That seems to be the gist of Arendt's thesis since the world has not reorganized on the only basis this inevitability could be avoided (we shall go into detail on this in our closing pages): the adoption of a new concept of man. In the absence of this reorganization of society, the uncritical critics of the left-of-center who accept Arendt's views are counseling the world to support an outlived, useless and reactionary system which must reproduce the totalitarian experience of fascism.

What other alternative is there? There is the socialist alternative to capitalist and Stalinist totalitarianism. We shall see why Arendt rejects it after a brief but necessary discussion of her conception of the role of the concentration camp in totalitarian society.

The third part of Arendt's book begins with a quotation from David Rousset's brilliant book on the concentration camp system, "The Other Kingdom." Rousset wrote: "Normal men do not know that everything is possible." Rousset was writing about the varied horrors of concentration camp life and its effect on the prisoners. His book, and the many others that appeared since the close of the war, help to impress on doubting and incredulous minds that what had been reported about the camps was true. Even the most expressive and sensitive writers tell us that they cannot quite convey the absolute terror and misery which beset the prisoners in their daily concentration camp

existence. Words merely describe the experience; they just do not have the ability to penetrate the inner effects of the physical, spiritual and moral suffering of the prisoners.

The individual camps varied in the degree of exploitation, torture and isolation. They became more refined in their organization and extermination programs with the passage of time. Torture and terror became a science and an art in the hands of the totalitarians and this was possible because behind the system stood the power of the state with all its resources available to the camp directors and organizers. Even in this area of totalitarian life, there were great differences between the camps in Germany and Russia. While in both countries, the camps originated in political purpose, the German camps were turned into extermination factories for Jews, Poles, Ukrainians and other nationals. For Germans, they were primarily disciplinary camps, punishment centers, or re-education "schools." The incorrigible Germans often paid with the supreme penalty for their refusal to compromise with fascism. The German camps were not, however, important for any significant economic reason. We do know that many state functionaries, Nazis included, deplored the extermination program because it precluded the use of additional millions as slave laborers in German war industries.

In Russia, however, a far more extensive camp system was organized with multiple purposes, the most important being as slave labor units correlated to the general economic needs of the country. The GPU established a special labor division whose purpose it is to furnish a never-ending supply of workers for Siberian projects. It is true that there are camps whose sole purpose and function is

to destroy morally, spiritually and physically then "questionable" elements. Other camps work their prisoners to death. Whatever their function, millions of prisoners make up a vast labor force who are exploited by the state and become the means of an accumulation and economic expansion of sorts.

The concentration camps do, as Arendt says, destroy human dignity while death is postponed. They destroy all individuality. They destroy the psyche without destroying the physical man. And they do all these things by methods old and new. In most, if not all camps, social criminals dominate life. They exploit, brutalize and punish inmates. The criminals are the prisoner-representatives of the state inside the camps, and in that capacity are privileged prisoners.

Once in power, the totalitarian state, in an effort to consolidate that power, establishes the concentration camp system as the means of terrorizing a whole population into fear and submission. Whether Hitler learned from Stalin, and Stalin from the Czar's system of Siberian exile, the fact is that the camps attained their present form through an evolutionary process. The German and Russian camps based themselves on the experiences of the world, but with this difference: other camps that have existed in various parts of the world, organized in the main by the great imperialist powers, were temporary, isolated and rather mild affairs. For the totalitarian state which establishes a concentration camp system, the camps are state organized, systematically directed from the top and created on a mass scale. They are permanent. The system reflects the tension of the totalitarian rulers, their fear of the people and of rebellion.

Camps are thus a threat to the people as a whole and to any group of individuals that opposition to the rulers is dangerous in the extreme. Therefore, while we appreciate the many things that Arendt wrote on the concentration camp, we cannot accept her theory of the significance of these camps in the totalitarian scheme. Arendt writes:

Totalitarianism strives *not* toward despotic rule over men, but toward a system in which men are superfluous. . . . As long as all men have not been made equally superfluous—and this has been accomplished only in concentration camps—the ideal of totalitarian domination has not been achieved. (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

We think it nonsense to say that "totalitarianism strives not toward a despotic rule over men," for that is just exactly what it strives for, and it does so for good economic and political, i.e., social reasons. It is the totalitarian despotism which makes the concentration camps necessary and possible, but not in all totalitarian states, as we have seen. While it may be true that men are superfluous only in concentration camps, it does not follow that "the ideal of totalitarian domination has not been achieved," if a vast concentration camp system has not been established by such a state. We have little patience with Arendt's theory of "numbers" which, we repeat, is unnecessary to a valid theory and intelligent understanding of this phenomenon. Neither Mussolini nor Franco required an extensive camp system. Even though Arendt does not consider Italy or Spain to be totalitarian states, they were, by every important fundamental consideration of what makes a state totalitarian.

It is necessary to bear in mind that it is the totalitarian state which produces the concentration camp system and not the other way around. The

reader may wonder why it is even necessary to state something which seems so elementary. But it should be clear by now that Arendt's views, which have received such acclaim, challenge this by interposing theories and conceptions which negate the above. She gives the concentration camp system a place in present-day society and a significance it does not have. Her position, as we shall quickly show, is a compromise with totalitarianism because she rejects its essential characteristic which is despotism.

For us totalitarianism symbolizes despotic rule, the total domination of the state, the triumph of the absolute dictator, the destruction of parliamentarism, of political parties, of all forms of freedom and democracy. For us the concentration camp system is but a manifestation of the totalitarian state. But it is not the most important manifestation because no matter how extensive it may be, no matter how many millions it may encompass, the main mass of the population, the overwhelming majority of the people, remain the victims of the more generalized form of rule of this police state.

Life in the totalitarian state is alternately black and gray. The people experience a persistent, never-ending economic exploitation, a never-ending political supervision by secret police, a continuing surveillance by the ruling party, appointed and self-appointed informers and the rulers of the factories. It is the population in general, the workers and the peasants, which provides the economic basis for the existence of the new state. This state could not survive for long on the basis only of a concentration camp system. That might be possible in a very simple society; it is not possible in a complex, industrial system resting on large populations. For society to function at all today, the people as

such are not and cannot be superfluous.

In addition to the above-quoted view which Arendt has on the concentration camp system, she developed a more universal theory which is unacceptable because it is in effect a reactionary accommodation to the more essential characteristics of totalitarianism as a system of political rule. Arendt believes that as long as an individual in a community, whether it is democratic or fascist, slave or feudal, (or any other social system) enjoys the same rights as any other citizen, or the same lack of rights, no matter what one thinks of the system, no special crime has been committed against an individual, i.e., no crime against humanity has been committed. The crime against humanity occurs with the establishment of the concentration camp. She writes:

For man as man has only one right that transcends his various rights as a citizen: the right never to be excluded from the rights granted by his community, an exclusion which occurs not when he is put into jail (!) but when he is sent to a concentration camp. Only then is he excluded from that whole sphere of legality where rights spring from the mutual guarantees which alone can insure them. . . .

Crimes against humanity have become a kind of specialty of totalitarian regimes. In the long run, it will do more harm than good if we confuse this supreme kind of crime with a long series of other crimes which these regimes also indiscriminately commit—such as injustice and exploitation, deprivation of liberty and political oppression. Such crimes are familiar in all tyrannies (and in democratic countries too—A. G.) and will hardly ever be found sufficient to justify interference with another country's sovereign affairs. Soviet Russia's aggressive and imperialist foreign policy has resulted in crimes against many peoples and is of great concern to the whole world, but it is an issue of ordinary foreign politics on the international level, not a concern of humanity as such—that is

of a possible law above nations. Russian concentration camps, on the other hand, in which many millions are deprived of even the doubtful benefits of the law of their own country, could and should become the subject of action that would not have to respect the rights and rules of sovereignty.

Unfortunately for Arendt, the people of the world are concerned precisely with what she thinks is secondary, for she creates a purely arbitrary and artificial division of what constitutes the rights of a citizen and the division accommodates itself to the apparently lesser crimes of totalitarianism. It is like saying: if only the totalitarian state would not set up the concentration camp system, why, then, all the citizens would be equal—i.e., equally deprived—and no one could claim advantage. Now it is true that Arendt is discussing under what circumstances other peoples or nations have the right to intervene in the affairs of another country. She accepts Justice Jackson's concept of "crimes against humanity." These crimes against humanity seem to be the exclusive property of the concentration camps. And when that condition exists, peoples or nations may intervene in the affairs of another country—but not under any other condition, not, for example, simply because a totalitarian state has deprived its people of every single democratic right we have ever known. This is simply not enough in Arendt's view. Why should it be if she believes "it will do more harm than good if we confuse this supreme kind of crime with a long series of other crimes which these regimes also indiscriminately commit—such as injustice and exploitation, deprivation of liberty and political oppression."

What are those crimes? They are not new. They occur all over the world, in all countries, to one degree

or another. It is true they occur all at once in a totalitarian state, but as long as all the citizens suffer equally these deprivations, these injustices, the exploitation, oppression and deprivation of liberty, there has been no "crime against humanity!" And her book is called the greatest work on totalitarianism, the most significant political writing of this century (the equal of the writings of Karl Marx, no less), the clearest examination of the great problem of our times.

We have, for example, always believed that a man imprisoned is a man excluded from his community and deprived of the rights of other citizens. If a community believes in imprisonment as a form of punishment, it may be the law that applies equally to all citizens but the man imprisoned is, by definition and fact, deprived of the rights of citizenship and excluded from his community. The concentration camp is a more severe punishment and exclusion from the community. There have been many inmates who have returned to the society which thus banished them and resumed their proscribed citizenship just as ex-criminals do even in a democratic society. The truth is that any state which deprives citizens of the fundamental rights of democracy commits a crime against humanity. Because it is under this deprivation that the dominant class in society organizes and executes its varied exploitation of the people. This is what is important and Arendt's view is simply absurd. Her concluding chapter carries on this absurdity with a conception of the new social hope of mankind that is in some respects juvenile, in other respects simply unreal, and in still another, a defiant rejection of all the lessons of history.

Arendt's concluding chapter is perhaps the least rewarding in the

whole book. It summarizes her system, for she is a system-builder. The opening paragraph of this chapter proclaims the inevitable failure of totalitarianism; its breakdown is insured because ". . . the chances are that total domination of man will never come about, for it presupposes the existence of *one* authority, *one* way of life, *one* ideology in all countries and among all peoples of the world." She cites how Hitler, when he was astride the European continent, was incapable of holding on to his conquests simply because the Nazis "spoiled their chances to win the sympathies, or at least the tolerance, of the conquered peoples by introducing at once the most extreme aspects of its race politics, thereby giving them no alternative but to fight back even under desperate conditions." The same is true of Stalin. Both might have succeeded had they been willing to take less than everything. This abrupt conclusion comes after a portrait of the invincibility of totalitarianism based on the social, political and moral degeneration of our era.

So, ". . . totalitarianism has only one chance of eventual victory, and that is a global catastrophe which would have to occur, so to speak, at a moment' notice."

Two thoughts then follow, one an unjustifiable optimism, given her "theoretical views," the other a glimmer of the reality of our times. The two thoughts follow in one paragraph, but we shall separate them because there is no necessary connection between them.

All this [the above] seems to indicate that totalitarianism will one day simply disappear, leaving no other trace in the history of mankind than exhausted peoples, economic and social chaos, political vacuum, and a spiritual *tabula rasa*. It may well be that even our generation will live to see a time when it is permitted to forget the holes of oblivion, the mass

manufacture of corpses, and that sins greater than murder ever existed. . . .

Here is the other thought:

The futility of totalitarianism in the long run is as essential an aspect of the phenomenon as the offensive ludicrousness of the tenets for which it is prepared to commit its monstrosities. *The tragedy, however, is that this futility and this ludicrousness are more deeply connected with the crisis of this century and more significant for its true perplexities than the well-meaning efforts of the nontotalitarian world to safeguard the status quo.* It is not only human solidarity that command us to understand the holes of oblivion and the world of the dying as the central issues of our political life; the fact is that the true problems of our time cannot be understood, let alone solved, without the acknowledgement that *totalitarianism became this century's curse only because it so terrifyingly took care of its problems.* (Emphasis mine—A. G.)

The striking point in all of the above is that despite her confusion, Arendt did recognize that this is a century of crisis. It is rather futile, however, to argue with Arendt over the significance of the crematories and the camps. She believes them to be the "ideal" of totalitarianism, the object for which it strives. She believes the relevance of the totalitarian regimes "which is independent of their futility and ludicrousness, reveals itself most clearly in the concentration camps." We, on the other hand, believe that the camps represent the deepest shade of black in the black dictatorship of totalitarianism. We do not agree that if no concentration camp exists there can be no totalitarian regime, or that it has not reached its "ideal," for totalitarianism is essentially a system of political rule, with a complex political super structure of which the concentration camp system may be an important by-product, created for a specific political purpose. If we differ with Arendt on the significance of the camps in the totalitarian schema, it is

not because we do not understand or feel its horrors. We are keenly sensitive to them and were so long before many democrats of our time became militant anti-totalitarians.

What, however, is the crisis of this century? Is it a moral crisis? A spiritual one? A religious one? The crisis incorporates all of these, but it is above all a social crisis reflecting the breakdown of modern capitalist society and the failure of socialism yet to replace the reactionary, outworn bourgeois society which stands as a barrier against progress. The second world war was an extreme expression of this crisis; the expansion of Stalinism is but the expression of the failures of the victors in the war to make one progressive step forward in the solution of the crisis which has lasted now for at least four decades. The crisis is further reflected in the strivings of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the world, and the efforts to survive the present chaos by the newly-established independent nations of the old colonial world. The crisis is still further reflected in the inability of Western capitalist society, democratic and otherwise, to respond to the innermost aspirations of these people; in their inability to fight successfully the spread of the Stalinist totalitarianism, which at least knows how to take advantage of the yearnings of these peoples for agrarian reform and freedom.

Isn't it significant that only Justice William A. Douglas in high government echelons, seems to understand the problem in the Far East, and he has earned the enmity of the entire bourgeoisie and its press in the United States. And in Europe, the only policy the Western bourgeois under the leadership of economically and militarily powerful United States can oppose to Stalinism, is a military one. The bour-

geois system is as ideologically bankrupt, as it is socially. Stalinism totalitarianism thrives precisely upon the ideological weaknesses of the bourgeois world where increasing difficulties can very easily produce new totalitarian movements.

The only hope for survival of the world, for its progress, the only guarantee that the world will not degenerate into a modern barbarism, is a socialist reorganization of society, a world system which would break down the artificial separation of the peoples by national boundaries, and the exploitation and oppression of man by the elimination of the private ownership of the means of production and by the extension of the limited democracy of bourgeoisie society to scale hitherto unknown to modern man.

If socialism does not come, then there is no reason to believe with Arendt that "totalitarianism will one day simply disappear . . ." or ". . . that even our generation will live to see a time when it is permitted to forget the holes of oblivion, the mass manufacturer of corpses, and that sins greater than murder ever existed." The urgency of the social crisis, a short few years after the greatest of all wars, has already shortened the memories of the world's millions whose thoughts are all occupied with the pressing present and an unknown and fearful future of atomic warfare.

Toward the end of her book, Arendt states that "The structurelessness of the totalitarian state, its neglect of material interests, its emancipation from the profit motive, and its non-utilitarian attitudes in general have more than anything else contributed to making contemporary politics well-nigh unpredictable." Every point in this analysis is quite wrong and bear no relation to real history. It is painful to argue that material inter-

ests, the profit motive and utilitarian attitudes have had everything to do with totalitarianism, its origins and development. The history of the phenomenon is really an open book. Moreover, predicting, in general, what the totalitarians would do, was also possible provided political blinders were removed. It is not necessary, nor is it possible, to predict the political future of mankind (and of course, the economic future), in every detail in order to forecast it in general terms, in the same way as the second world war and the post-war period was predicted by the genuine Marxists. Given the experience of the past twenty years, it is not only possible, but necessary to predict the return, a return of totalitarianism in the absence of any fundamental changes in society.

Arendt has a glimmer of understanding of the problem, so she presents a new world program to prevent a recurrence of totalitarianism and to solve the crisis for all time. Where does she begin? With society? With economics or politics? No! She begins with man, as though man were an abstract category, independent of his environment, unrelated to and untouched by the society in which he lives. To avoid the darkness of totalitarianism, that revolutionary, anti-bourgeois, invincible movement of reaction against which "common-sense trained in utilitarian thinking is helpless," a new beginning has to be made. It has to be made because *the bourgeois era has come to an end* and because ". . . the whole of nearly three thousand years of Western culture with all its implied beliefs, traditions, standards of judgment, has come toppling down over our heads." (Emphasis mine—A. G.) No less than that. So where do we begin?

Politically, this means that before drawing up a new constitution of a new

body politic, we shall have to create—not merely discover—a new foundation for human community as such.

Shall it be on the basis of Edmund Burke's assertion that human rights were an "abstraction" and that the only true rights were "entailed inheritance," the rights one transmits to one's children and the "rights of an Englishman" rather than the inalienable rights of man? Arendt cites Edmund Burke's view that rights spring "from within the nation." And she adds approvingly: "The pragmatic soundness of Burke's concept seems to be beyond doubt in the light of our manifold experiences." Yet it was these concepts which led Burke into uncompromising opposition to the French Revolution and the liberating ideas associated with it. He opposed any ideas which might challenge the national state. Shall we then begin the "new foundation for human community" with a nation, a world system of nations, the very system which stands in the way of progress? Yes, but with something new added. Arendt says:

In historical terms this would mean not the end of history, but its first consciously planned beginning, together with the bitter realization that nothing has been promised us, no Messianic Age, no classless society, no paradise after death. Such a consciously planned beginning has obviously never been possible because mankind was only a concept or an ideal, never a reality.

Why was mankind only a concept or ideal and never a reality? It could never be a reality because all previous social organization, based on a division of the world into states, strong and weak nations, property owners and propertyless, exploiters and exploited, precluded the evolution of mankind into a world unity based upon economic and social security, peace and cultural progress. Rather than striking out boldly in this direc-

tion, Arendt puts all responsibility for the future on an abstract mankind.

Mankind will either find a way to live in and rule together an overcrowded earth or it will perish—an event which will leave the sublime indifference of nature untouched.

One has to get beyond this sweep of rhetoric which is the style of Arendt and which employs the language of bourgeois thought and bourgeois categories, for all her protests to the contrary. Nature's interest or indifference to the fate of mankind has really nothing to do with this discussion at all. Man's interest in his future is ever-present. If there were not this interest no hope for the future would exist. But Arendt does not provide such hope. Her great discovery for the future turns out to be so small an idea so inconsistent with life itself, as to become, despite its really human desire, a little bit ridiculous.

"This situation," she writes, "the emergence of mankind as *one* political entity, makes the new concept of 'crimes against humanity,' expressed by Justice Jackson at the Nuremberg trials, "the first and foremost notion of international law." This concept, you see, "enters the sphere of law that is above the nation's." Above all nations! We submit that a new concept of mankind is impossible on the basis of a nationalist division of the earth. Justice Jackson's pronouncement can only be what it is now, a weapon in the hands of any victor in any war against a defeated enemy. Goering was realistic above all when he called the Trials a political weapon of the victors.

The concern of this new kind of law cannot be such crimes as aggressive and criminal warfare, breaches of treaty, the oppression and exploitation of one's own and foreign peoples. All such transgressions must be met in the future, as they have been met in the past (pity poor

mankind for that—A. G.), by the concerted action of those nations which are the offended parties. Within the framework of present political organization and under the circumstances of sovereign statehood—circumstances which in no way contradict the simultaneous political existence of mankind (!)—they can hardly be outlawed otherwise than by international or reciprocal treaties and alliances. . . .

No more than this need be quoted to prove that Arendt has not been able to extricate herself from her bourgeois environment and ideology. Present political organization and sovereign statehood is an unmitigated evil and the obstacle to social progress. It upholds bourgeois society and Stalinism: it is the basis for nationalist totalitarianism. One could wonder how Arendt can be reduced to this kind of political program after reading the scattered material in her book, were it not for the fact that she reveals, in the absence of a scientific and materialist method, an incapacity to understand the significance of her own material. Her great proposal to save mankind thus amounts to a fantastic manipulation of a bourgeois political idea which is quite consistent with this contradictory society. Arendt foresees no change whatever in the present organization of society—the national states. She foresees no economic or political change of society. All she calls for is the adoption of Justice Jackson's "doctrine" to be superimposed on the imperialist system, which is, according to her, responsible for the present evils. And yet, she talks about the end of the bourgeois era!

Arendt continues: "If there is any sense in the 18th Century formula that man has come of age, it is that from now on, man is the only possible creator of his own laws and the only possible maker of his own history." What is new about this? Man has always done this. He has done it well;

he has done poorly. He was always the maker of his own laws and his own history, but on the basis of the conditions at hand, against the background of specific social developments. Yet even if we accept Arendt's formula, how will that bring about, or guarantee the great social reform?

When Arendt says that "We can no longer believe with Lenin that a people will gradually become accustomed to the observance of the elementary rules of social life that have been repeated for thousands of years," what right has she "to try for what Burke's great common sense deemed impossible: 'new discoveries . . . in morality . . . or in the idea of liberty.'" If mankind cannot become "accustomed to the observance of the elementary rules of social life" how can it make "new discoveries . . . in morality . . . or in the idea of liberty." The trouble with Arendt is that she views mankind as one common mass, rather than divided into nations and classes, reflecting an archaic, retrogressive social order.

The decline in morality is progressive; it is noteworthy particularly in the richest and most powerful of all the western nations, the United States. This degeneration cannot but continue as long as capitalism and the present system of national states exist.

The only alternative to the resentment of the "nihilist," according to Arendt, would be "a fundamental gratitude for the few elementary things that are indeed given us, such as life itself, the existence of man and the world." What does this gratitude expect? ". . . nothing, except—in the words of Faulkner—one's 'own anonymous chance to perform something passionate and brave and austere not just in but into man's enduring chronicle . . . in gratitude for the gift of [one's] time in it.'" This, then, is Arendt's program for a solution to

the world's ills; this is her hope for a "consciously planned beginning of history . . . a consciously devised new policy. . . ." It is a small, a utopian ideal because it is divorced from reality. Certainly it is not nearly enough even for a new beginning of history.

In the closing part of her book everything revolves around the concentration camp victims. All her ideas for a new organization of life follows from this concern, as a result of which, she has lost sight of the more important and fundamental questions that weigh heavily on all of mankind and not a segment of it, namely, how shall society be reorganized to wipe out its present ills and to put mankind on the high road to social peace and progress. Precisely, at this point, Arendt's great ideas become commonplace, and as we have said, utopian. Commonplace, because they are a collection of old and worn-out schemas; utopian, because like so many of her predecessors, she hopes to bring about a change in the human condition without changing the social relations which have produced the crisis and the challenge of the century. She has little or nothing to say about the real social problem.

The truth is that the *Origins of Totalitarianism* is a disorganized and chaotic work which does not grasp or understand in clear terms the social basis for the phenomenon, the real extent and limitations of the system. Thus, there is outrage where cold analysis is required, despair where hope should be present, and hope where there is really none.

Arendt has rejected *all* known panaceas, the good and the bad. The ideas of the French Enlightenment, the progress of modern science, utopian socialism and the scientific theory of Marxian socialism. Marx's theory of the classless socialist society is likened

to the Hebrew myth that "a lost paradise would be rediscovered in the Messianic Age. . . ." To her "Only the French and American revolutions made a weak and fumbling attempt to come to a radically new concept, not of human history but of its ultimate meaning." (They were really not weak and fumbling but powerful stimulants to the great progress which society did make in the century that followed.) The errors, or the failures of these two tremendous historical events, Arendt says, is that they proclaimed "human rights" as independent of historical rights; they replaced historical rights with natural rights, "put 'nature' in the place of history and . . . tacitly assumed that 'nature' was less alien to the essence of man than history." The fact is that Arendt simply does not understand historical progress, the progress and development of ideology on the premise of man's social development. It was fortunate for history and society that the revolutionaries of France and America did have a better grasp of the social problem of their time than Arendt has of the social problem of today.

All talk about the dignity of man, the preservation of life, the organization of a new community, of a planned beginning of history and a consciously devised polity, becomes a pure parlor exercise when it does not understand that what mankind needs above all is a radical reorganization of society.

The dignity of man, the rights of man, natural or historical, a new spiritual and cultural development of man can never be realized in any social environment based upon economic and social inequality, exploitation, oppression, national and race antagonism, imperialism and war. All of these factors militate against genuine social and human progress. Yet

these are the social conditions under which mankind lives. Given these social conditions in an era of the universal decay of modern society, then degeneration, which is expressed in such large measure by totalitarianism, is inevitable.

Marx knew all about these things one hundred years ago. When he analyzed the nature of class society, especially capitalist society, forecast its inevitable decay and degeneration, and heralded the coming of socialism as the only way to avoid modern social barbarism, it was not because he was aesthetically enamored of machinery, modern production, and the machine-man, organized by capitalist society. No, his devastating criticism of the exploitation of capitalist society was based on an appreciation of and love of man, on a deep faith in the future of human society and in the firm conviction that only socialism would usher in the real beginning of human history, make possible unlimited cultural and intellectual development, and create the conditions for genuine social progress.

Despite the efforts of the ideologues of bourgeois society, the organization of its vast powers against it, despite the absolute evil influence of Stalinism, Marxism remains the only relevant system that provides a hope for the future. Arendt's book only emphasizes this, even if in a negative way.

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Is East Germany a New Order?

The Stalinist-Sponsored Agrarian Program

It will soon be six years since the agrarian reform was carried out in the Eastern Zone. The arrogant and narrow-minded Prussian Junkers, a class which brought disaster upon Germany and Europe, were destroyed economically. Whatever may be our attitude toward the regime in Eastern Germany, if we belong to the camp of democracy, we can only be grateful for this measure.

The peasantry was enriched by more than 3 million hectares. Two hundred thousand refugees from the East and agricultural workers (about 514,000 benefited from the reform) became small landowners. This is the reality. There was no similar occurrence in Western Germany. This must be credited as an achievement of the regime.*

How, then, can we explain the widespread hostility of the peasantry toward the Berlin regime?

If we study the government's peasant policy in the Eastern Zone during

*Here, as elsewhere in his well-informed article, the author, in our view, tends to regard the Stalinist "agrarian reform" in Germany abstractly and as somewhat comparable to the agrarian reform of the great bourgeois revolutions. The fate of the German Junkers is, by itself, of less interest than that of last year's snow. But since the overdue destruction of Junkerism did not and could not "by itself," but was only one of the absolutely indispensable prerequisites for the consolidation of Stalinist despotism over the workers and the peasants, we see no ground for any democrat or socialist being "grateful" to Stalinism even for this apparently progressive measure.

The agrarian reform, without quotation marks, of the great bourgeois revo-

lutions, was progressive. It was indispensable for the unfolding of the then progressive social order; the Stalinist reform is indispensable for the consolidation of a reactionary social order. The classic bourgeois reform created the independent peasant by giving him the feudal lands; the Stalinist reform in actuality turns the land over to a totalitarian state which organizes all agricultural production and distribution by police measures and converts the feudal or capitalistic peasant of yesterday into a modern serf, as it turns the proletarians into modern state slaves. What the Stalinist reforms have in common with the old agrarian reforms, or any other progressive changes, except for the most transparent externals, is practically inconsequential.—Ed.

the last few years, we are amazed at the mess that a group of men, no matter how shrewd and dynamic they may be, can create if they wear blinders and heed only the Kremlin's voice with no living ties to their own nation. For if there was ever a country ripe for the collective exploitation of the land, it was Eastern Germany: great estates, well equipped, agricultural technicians and an industry which can produce agricultural machinery in sufficient quantity. Besides, the workers of the great estates were ready to accept collectivization after the expropriation of their landlords. The reforms were carried out in the autumn of 1945. There is no doubt that the division of the land, at first, was achieved without enthusiasm. Most of the Junkers had fled even before the Russians came, and their estates were already worked by their hired hands. In some cases this was still going on one year later, and there are instances where cooperative working of the land went on for two

years. Elsewhere, the old workers, among whom the land had been divided, agreed to work their plots in common. As astonishing as it may appear, the peasant expert of the Communist Party Edwin Hoernle, chided them and held up as an example other beneficiaries of the agrarian reforms who worked their plots on an individual basis. (*Neue Weg*, C. P. organ, May 1946.) The Marxist, Hoernle, tried to demonstrate with the aid of statistics chosen *ad hoc* that small scale exploitation of the land is more productive than large.

To stir up the peasants, the Berlin regime, through administrative means, created an atmosphere of civil war in the countryside. In the village square they burned the old deeds to the land and razed a number of chateaux. They explained to the peasants that the Junker must no longer have a place to lay his head.

Of course, at the end of a few weeks, the peasants took their cue. They often began by plundering the chateaux; and peasants who had farm equipment found no difficulty in increasing their plots of land.

There were three reasons why the agricultural laborers were reluctant to go further in exploiting the land: they had received it under the aegis of an enemy army, they were not sure of what the future would bring, and, above all, they lacked agricultural equipment. In some instances new peasants had to begin working the land with a cow and a cart, without a house or a stable. War's destruction and plundering by the occupying army had been on a vast scale. At other times, the landlords had taken their livestock and fled to the West.

The lack of farm equipment along with the dismantling of factories was, in fact, one of the reasons why the regime glorified the division of land.

But this cannot explain everything. Above all, it cannot explain the relentless struggle that was carried on against every attempt to work the land cooperatively. We shall not speculate about the intentions of the Communist leaders in agricultural questions. But it is clear that their attitude on the peasant question is explicable only if we are aware that Stalin had just signed the Potsdam agreement and that the alliance of the three great powers was then at its peak. The Kremlin did not want to frighten the Western powers; therefore, they confined themselves to a modest bourgeois agricultural reform in the Western zone.

Collectivism and Small Scale Production

The next period was very harsh for the new peasants. There were instances where, like the Chinese peasants, they hitched themselves to their carts.

In the village the regime had created a semi-official association, The Peasant's Union for Mutual Aid, to which it had given the Junkers' heavy equipment that was still available—tractors, trucks, etc. The Union for Mutual Aid had to lend its equipment to the small peasant who was not competent to run the machinery. Around the Peasant's Mutual Aid in each village there was a handful of peasants—very often peasants in appearance alone—who were faithful to the regime. The rich and middle peasants with up to a hundred hectares formed another group in the villages of Eastern Germany. They lacked nothing. They had much more farm equipment than the Union for Mutual Aid and the poor peasants were dependent on them.

During this period a growing number of landless men had been organ-

ized to collect products on which quotas had been set; they were the only ones who had been organized for this purpose. When the official assessments had been met and his needs satisfied the peasant sold his surplus on the black market. This paralleled the black market in industrial products and was the only means for the peasant to obtain what he needed.

In the first period after the war the group which represented the regime in the village, the Union for Mutual Aid, lived isolated among a mass of small and middle producers and had almost no influence. The situation gradually changed from 1948 on in proportion as industry revived and the gulf between the two worlds deepened. The tone of the regime changed. They discovered once again that the methods of farming on an individual basis were backward. Edwin Hoernlehoerne, the champion of the distribution of land to the bitter end, was dismissed from the ministry of agriculture. In the villages, assessments on the rich peasants were increased. As industry once more began to produce agricultural machinery the regime at first strengthened the Union for Mutual Aid. Then, as in Russia, they created stations for lending agricultural machinery.

The estates which the agrarian reforms had given to a number of public institutions were combined into "A Union for People's Landholdings"; it was highly favored in the distribution of farm equipment and its landholdings gradually increased. It legally acquired the landholdings of the new peasants who could no longer hold out and left the village. The big traders were expropriated and in their place a state organization for purchasing agricultural products was created. They also succeeded in suppressing the black market in the countryside.

The official Free Stores established at the end of 1948 were able to deliver everything the village needed at very high prices, but, nevertheless, not higher than those on the black market.

At the end of 1949 the situation in the countryside had changed. The influence of the wealthy peasants had greatly diminished. The "new peasants" had been consolidated while the collectivized institutions, machine stations, Union for Mutual Aid, Union for Peoples Landholdings, Consumer's Cooperatives, official purchasing agencies, Free Stores had increased in number and were powerful.

To what extent did all this correspond to reality? The fact is that even in 1950, about 75 per cent of the local leaders of the League for Mutual Aid were rich or middle peasants, most of whom were members of the party. The directors of the machine stations, likewise members of the party, very often fell under the influence of the rich peasants. They were strangers in the village and the rich peasants were the most experienced. What is more the *Neues Deutschland*, organ of the Communist Party, of February 2, 1950, discussing the friendships of the directors of the Stations writes:

"The small peasants bowed by the weight of their cares are not always pleasant companions," and "the calf given as a gift by the rich peasant for a party of the Machine Station men, the package of butter and the ham given to the tractor drivers are always a source of amazement."

Despite everything, we must not give too much weight to these facts. Collectivized institutions made greater progress in the countryside. Private trade was no longer the link between city and country and the small peasants became increasingly dependent on the machine station. During the

year the independent cooperatives which were still in existence and had great strength in Mecklenburg became part of the Union for Mutual Aid. In rural localities the Union and the Machine Stations formed a village community, merging with the local sections of the National Front, actually the S.E.D. Through their combined efforts a precise economic plan for the village was developed in which a record was kept of tasks assigned to the individual peasant.

The struggle against collectivist tendencies was subtly carried on in the town hall and other institutions; the rich and middle peasants still had influence in the villages. What was often at issue was the impending expropriation of 7,500 peasants owning more than fifty hectares; it was a necessity for the regime to do this. At this stage, however, their expropriation was highly improbable. The National Front was still in power; more than ever it was appealing to the whole population of Western Germany against the "American oppressors" and it was impossible, at this time, to run the risk of frightening the peasantry still more.

If capitalism were restored in Eastern Germany it would, in the beginning, find its main social support in rural areas. That would be its means of revenging itself on the social reality with which the Soviet regime was anxious to play. The Communist Party, a revolutionary organization whose reason for existence was its anti-capitalism and collectivist policy, carried out an individualistic, bourgeois reform in the countryside. This was accomplished from above and without popular support, although in Eastern Germany the countryside was ripe for a progressive social experiment. By this action it increased the number of individual pro-

ducers. The logic of its own system later compelled the party to seek to impose a pattern of collectivization on the peasantry and leave its stamp on the countryside. To a certain extent it was successful. The peasant submitted, but being tied to his plot of land and to his products he wanted to trade as he saw fit. He remained profoundly hostile to the system. He had received the land from a Communist government. He never stopped being a supporter of capitalism and the "new" peasant immediately adopted the attitudes of a landlord.

THE REGIME AND ITS BASIS OF SUPPORT

In Eastern Germany it is not society which molds the political system of the country, but the regime, the party which puts its imprint on society.

In May, 1945, a few hundred German emigres arrived from Moscow. Having been put into power, they attempted a difficult task: the transformation of this part of Germany from above, without mass participation, using the USSR as a model (at this time the Russian armies were looting the country of its wealth). To do this, hors le pluvior, they retained an important base. They cast aside capitalism, proclaiming it powerless and invited the workers to seize the whole immense network of administrative and economic posts, the whole apparatus that capitalism had built up for one hundred years. In spite of everything they forged a social base and were able to appear as innovators. Those who climbed the social ladder found in the Stalinist Marxism of the emigres, if not always a true ideology, at least an ideological reason for their success: It is impossible to understand the movement of the activists and especially of the young communists in

the Eastern zone without understanding these facts. However, the party carried on without precise ideas, and it was impossible that in wanting to transform everything, the old German society which it was molding should not, in turn, influence and penetrate the party with its contradictions.

The Youth

The time was ripe in Eastern Germany to overturn the old society. The old teaching personnel, the old technical and administrative staffs were gradually pushed aside and the former workers took their places. More than 60 per cent of the factory directors are former workers. A tremendous shifting was carried out in Eastern Germany. The youth had the opportunity to participate in this and to build something new. What prospect could be more intoxicating?

In order that the youth might participate in this change, many technical and administrative schools were built for them. Workers' and peasants' faculties were reserved for the most gifted. In two or three years of very serious work, the young worker received his degree and could then go to the university. Almost 40 per cent of the students of the Russian zone continue to take advantage of this.

Can we not favor a regime which offers all that? Is it difficult to accept severe hardships for the moment? Can we refuse conditions which are set for taking part in this upheaval? to belong to the Communist youth and have faith in the USSR? The enthusiasm of the youth of Eastern Germany for the communist regime is a more extraordinary phenomenon than its infatuation with Hitlerism in the preceding generation. At that time it lived in the nation which was neutral or favorable to the regime. Now most of the older generation is hostile

to it. It is true that not all of the youth looks admiringly on Pieck and Stalin. The gap between official words and present realities is too great. But the Communist youth (FDJ), the famous blue shirts, are the principal support of the regime. There are shock brigades of the youth in each city and, in the country, the young tractor man (FDJ) of the Machine Station is the best propagandist for the regime. Young Communists have since systematically moved into the administration and if they are not always very experienced they are at least devoted and always ready to spy upon and watch over the young people. For instance Leipzig has a deputy mayor, aged 22. Finally, the famous Volkspolizei of Eastern Germany is recruiting from the young Communists. The regime is well on its way to winning over the youth. It is easy and good to believe in a better world in a vacation camp where friendship rules. It is exhilarating to belong to a system which embraces and answers all questions. The youth is the facade of the regime. What will become of it a few years later when it is active in social life and the process of production? That is at least half of the question.

The Activists

In the factories, the youth formed the most active and enthusiastic group. The first shock brigades were drawn from the young Communists. Of course, "material rewards" were an inducement but the will to build and their enthusiasm were authentic.

The situation among the adult activists was quite different. From 1945-46, incentive bonuses and piece work were introduced. Since money was worth little before the monetary reform, bonuses in the form of food and clothing were distributed by the trade union leaders to good workers. The

politics of the individual was highly significant, and very often personal friendships and antagonisms played a role. This system was raised to the rank of an official institution by Order 234, Oct., 1949, by the joint military commandant.

By this decree, hot luncheons were given to a million workers in the factories. These privileged people—hunger was then widespread in Eastern Germany—were themselves divided into two categories: A and B. Only the first (400,000 workers) received meat at their meal. The workers of the same shop were divided into three categories and ate apart at mealtime. The gradation depended on how important each category was for production. But, as we have mentioned before, the political and personal played an important role. Of course, this system introduced a division among the workers. In this period, too, the pictures of the best workers were hung up and they were called "activists." All kinds of benefits, especially food—were guaranteed them. The mass of workers usually were hostile to these "yellow" ones as they were called and always considered them as followers of the factory management.

In October, 1948, the Saxon miner Hennecke, thanks to conditions specifically arranged, finished more than 400 per cent of his norm. The activist movement, from then on, adopted his name. No efforts were spared to help the "movement of Hennecke activists" expand and at the same time to be proclaimed as a political example. The food situation gradually became better. Members of the movement received big salaries. An activist could earn 6 to 7 times more than a laborer. The activists in each factory formed a group which met separately. They held conferences on a regional and national level. They and their families

spent their vacations in select hotels. Their children had first choice, in fact, if not legally, of schools of higher learning and got scholarships more easily. The personnel for governing was recruited from the "activists" and it was possible to go to an engineering school if you were an "activist."

The "activists" were the workers' aristocracy; an attempt was made to imbue them with an esprit de corps and their movement was a good road to success in the social scale. One condition is indispensable, however, aside from good work: a positive attitude toward the regime, toward the USSR—and to accept the task of serving as an example to the other workers.

Lastly the element of personal interest was greatly strengthened in each factory. A special plan to save raw materials was drawn up for the activists. Each activist had a bank account opened for him and 25 per cent of the savings they made in production were transferred to it.

There were about 150,000 activists in the Soviet zone who became one of the bases of the regime. But what drives them to this point of view? As always happens in such situations, self-interest and conviction are inextricably co-mingled. Whatever the reason, the second pillar of the regime, the activists, is much weaker than the first, the youth.

The Sub-Proletarians

When we consider the mass of workers as a whole, the growth in the number of activists—and their number is increasing—represents an increase in the standard of the average individual. But are the activists really workers in every respect. What kind of proletarian is he whose wage is the smallest part of his share in the social income? At least according to the Marxist definition prevalent in the People's

Democracies, he is not a worker. The mass of workers consider the activists as a foreign element in their midst. They are tied to "those who are on top," they are for increased production and the workers ridicule it. In the nationalized industries they act like bosses; the rest of the workers do not. Pose these problems to a Communist leader and he will not deny the facts. He will only tell you that the activist is the worker of the future. We shall not discuss this hypothesis here. Let us only observe that for the activist movement to become typical, the standard of living in Eastern Germany would have to rise above the pre-war level. This would mean that it would be much higher than in the USSR which seems difficult to accept.

Whatever it may be, another group diametrically opposed to the activists is now taking form in the working class. It consists of unqualified workers and those who are too openly opposed to the regime and have no support, either in a union committee or in any official organization. They and the unemployed—there are 400,000 unacknowledged unemployed in East Germany—are recruited to work the uranium mines of Aue and to other very hard labor.

There are about 100,000 workers in Aue alone. They have been widely discussed in West Germany. The conditions under which they work are not as bad as is supposed but in spite of everything they are inhuman; the lot of many is a barracks life which they cannot leave at will.

The workers of Aue, the "sub-proletarians," are recruited not only from among the factory workers but from every strata. All classes are put into a mould by the regime and all leave "waste." If the activists are growing, we can at least say that the "sub-proletarians" are not becoming fewer.

And if they were not fleeing toward the West (1,500,000 refugees since 1945) it would surely increase in number.

The Party

What then, in short, is the nature of the regime in East Germany and what is its future? These questions cannot be answered in a few words. The regime, the country itself, presents an inextricable melange of new collectivist forms, on the one hand, imposed from above and having deep roots despite everything; on the other, of old individualism, the bourgeois capitalist living in the pores of society and consciousness of men. They influence and distort the collectivist elements and reach the summits of society. All of them are reflected and combined in a thousand forms in a party which including everything must also compress everything: objectivism, cosmopolitanism, practicalism, economism, pure syndicalism, sectarianism, social democracy, etc., are just so many names given to a social reality which does not bow to decrees.

Lastly the Party discusses itself in new terms. In discussing the private entrepreneur who still uses the old expression: "giver of work" in the paternalistic meaning of bread giver, *Neues Deutschland*, the leading organ of the Communist Party, wrote as follows: "The Party, not the boss, is the 'work-giver.'" When it criticizes the formation of cliques in the administrative apparatus the same paper said: "These comrades have reached the point where they no longer serve the Party, but their leaders." The S.E.D. is increasingly finding in itself its *raison d'être*.

The S.E.D. is at present concentrating all its efforts on increasing production. There is no doubt that if the level of production in Western

Germany were surpassed, if the population lived better than beyond the Elbe, the regime would have taken a decisive step toward consolidation. But this effort to increase production is greatly handicapped by the internal contradictions of the system. Eastern Germany continues to pay reparations to and has been forced to conclude unfavorable commercial treaties with Russia. The goal of the S.E.D. plan is not to raise the standard of living of the country, but the requirements of the Soviet bloc. Under these circumstances, the regime believes that to continue its efforts, it cannot allow criticism and must seal itself from the West. "Only what the Party says is true," proclaims the *Neues Deutschland* of March 17, 1950, and "to be eager to listen to the Western radio or to read Western newspapers is to take sides with the enemies of democracy and the war-makers." (*Neues Deutschland*, June 9, 1950).

But can victory be attained in the long run by insulating one's self off completely, by wearing blinders and not understanding world reality. The experience of the last few decades proves that that is the road to catastrophe.

The regime has important trump cards. Enemies lie in wait outside;

they are also within its own domain. The regime must compromise with them and struggle against them at the same time. Everything is changing, merging and being transformed before our very eyes. For the moment we can only say with the German socialist, Kautsky (whose works are forbidden in the East): "We can only define but not describe the transformation."

The structure of Eastern Germany each year moves further away from that of Western Germany. But the difference is much more on the surface than in the real social content of the country. If the regime of East Berlin collapses, capitalism will be welcomed enthusiastically by the remnants of the old bourgeoisie. The majority of the peasantry, the middle class of the cities and the former intellectuals will joyously greet it. The attitude of the working class, of course, remains an unknown factor. It is nevertheless certain that if the working class does not welcome the representatives of the Bonn government with wide open arms, neither will it defend the regime of East Berlin. In the last analysis the latter will find on its side only a handful of old communists and activists and a part of the youth—some ten to twelve per cent of the population at the very most. B. ESS

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Israel on its 4th Anniversary

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Israel, on its fourth anniversary, presents to the observer a panorama of problems and contradictions! Created by a people about whom polemics still rage as to whether they are or are not a nation, the new state is already caught in the great powers' web of preparation for the coming war that threatens to strangle its freedom of action and its very independence. It is a country making tremendous economic progress, yet reeling from one economic crisis to another; a small country with relatively large sources of outside income, suffering from a dollar shortage; a state of an oppressed people that treats its own Arab minority little differently than do most oppressor nations. It is a country with a mixed economy that daily undergoes a tug-of-war between its capitalist pulls and its socialist trends and faces the new problem of the growth of an embryonic new class of "bureaucratic collectivist" rulers of industry; and lastly, it is a state that is separate from but definitely connected with the problem that goes under the heading of the "Jewish Question."

The February, 1952, devaluation of the Israeli pound from \$2.80 to \$1.00 and \$1.40 underscores the constant economic crisis that faces Israel. Even this reduced rate is above the "price" on the Swiss free market and the Israeli black market. New economic crises can be expected despite the "N.E.P." announced by the government at the end of February. The causes of Israel's recurring crises are varied: 1) immigration, 2) the poverty of the country, 3) armaments, 4) disruption of normal trade routes,

5) disproportionate capital investments.

The large scale immigration policy of the government is a mixture of Zionist idealism, a need for a haven by Jews insecure in their homelands, and—to a greater degree than realized—is dictated by the desires of the Government to increase the population for military reasons.

In some cases, as in Iraq, the Israeli government, with the aid of extreme nationalists, helped create panic and fear among the Iraqi Jews in order to swell the ranks of the immigrants to satisfy its need for military power and economic potential for war. In others, its exaggerated portrayals of Israel, as a land of milk and honey swelled the ranks of migrants.

Immigration is not, however, the main cause of Israel's shortages and economic troubles. It must be remembered that while 700,000 Jews entered the country in the last three years, the total population in the area that Israel comprises is not much greater than it was under the British. True, European Jews have a higher standard of living than the Arabs who previously inhabited the area and this accounts for a small part of Israel's difficulties. It must also be remembered that the cost of immigration and settling is covered by foreign contributions, U.J.A., government loans from the United States and other countries, and to a small degree, private capital. Then, too, while the main sources of mass immigration have been exhausted and immigration has for the past half year been less than half of what it used to be, Israel continues to experience grow-

ing shortages, economic crises, devaluation, etc. The reasons for Israel's economic troubles lie elsewhere.

A fundamental cause is the poverty of the country. Israel is small and poor in terms of natural resources, food and agricultural production; Before partition, Palestine as a whole, was a "deficit" food area and had to import its food. Today, in Israel, imports are nine times greater than exports.

A poor country can be made "rich" through industrialization and capital investment. With this in mind, the Israeli government has embarked on an extremely ambitious program of capital investment designed to make the country virtually self-supporting within a few years.

The extreme and exaggerated tempo of capital investment is out of proportion to the needs of a country that is at peace and has time to spread its investments. What is most important, however, is that this investment program has led the government to announce its policy of further reducing the already low standard of living.

The argument that the investment program and the sacrifice it entails are required to increase the productive capacity is specious. The "experts" who have inspired this program can only see machinery as the source of greater production. What they do not see is what Trotsky and other socialists ably demonstrated a long time ago: that an investment in the health and well being of labor will result in a magnified productivity of the worker per unit cost. Reduce the standard of living of the worker and you retard the growth of production despite increases in machinery and other capital investments.

While the economic factors mentioned above play a role in creating economic difficulties for Israel the two

most important and *immediate reasons* for the suffering in Israel are the disproportionately large armaments budget and the cutting of "normal trade" between "industrial" Israel and the Arab Near East. However, these two problems can be easily and quickly resolved.

Israel is a small nation surrounded by a number of hostile Arab states and feels the need for relatively huge armament expenditures. While the exact amount of the cost of armaments is a secret, the vice-speaker of the assembly gave a clue to its size when he stated that the military budget alone was greater than the normal budget and the "investment" budget for immigration taken together. How much greater, he did not say. The cessation of trade between Israel and the Arab states forces Israel to spend needed "hard" currency for food purchases in the United States and Argentina, instead of buying in "soft" currency Arab countries, and, at the same time, closes to Israel its "natural" market for finished goods. That this also harms the Arab states as much as Israel is obvious. A reduction in the crushing burden of armaments and the restoration of normal trade can be accomplished fairly quickly and be of immediate help to Israel. To achieve this, a policy of peace in the Near East and steering clear of the general East-West conflict is required.

A few years ago, all parties without exception were for accepting support from whichever side offered it and for neutrality in the cold war. The pride of a new state and a small nation's natural fear of becoming a tail to the kite of the power blocs was strengthened by the fact that millions of Jews lived on both sides of the Iron Curtain. America's and Russia's declared support of the new state, led

to the hope that Israel would stay out of the cold war by agreement of the principal contestants. But the relations of the big powers to Israel have changed in the past few years.

There has been a distinct rapprochement between Israel and Britain. While Britain still puts greater emphasis on friendship with the Arabs, it has (formally at least) placed Israel on an equal footing. The three-power declaration of the U. S., Britain and France in the spring of 1950, provided equality for all Near East states in acquisition of arms and guaranteed their existing borders. Britain is Israel's largest customer and the Foreign Office has moved to settle the outstanding question of Israeli frozen assets that remained after the partition of Palestine.

The U. S. continues its support of Israel, despite some vacillations by the State Department. Of no small importance is the fact that five million Jews live in the U. S. and the greatest portion of Israeli foreign exchange comes from American Jews. Past loans and the hope for future loans play an important—though not overriding—role in the relations between Israel and Washington. The vacillations of the State Department have their positive side in that they helped prevent a policy of identification with the West.

The U. S. policy in the Near East today is to try to line up *both* Israel and the Arab states, on its side of the struggle for the world. With characteristic arrogance the U. S. tells both that their differences are unimportant and should be submerged in the interests of the U. S. drive to build a front against Russia. While Washington prefers an Eastern Mediterranean alliance headed by Turkey and Israel, it demands peace and important

concessions from both Jews and Arabs.

From Israel it wants admission of Arab refugees and a readiness to cede territory to placate the Arabs. While the U. S. gives modest aid to the Arab states it is not prepared completely to underwrite their existing unstable and reactionary social regimes with large-scale loans. The policy of the State Department in relation to the Arab states is somewhat similar to its policy in relation to Chiang Kai-shek in 1947. Substantial aid is promised but only if there is a "revolution from the top" that will ameliorate the condition of the people and give promise of stability.

Since the pashas and effendis will not change, the U. S. government looks to King Farouk in Egypt, army strong men in Syria, etc., to do the job. The action of the Egyptian nationalists in abrogating the Anglo-Egyptian treaty has led the U. S. to openly propose the establishment of SACME—Supreme Allied Command for the Middle East. At present the only governments, besides the English, who have publicly proclaimed their adherence, are Turkey and those two great "Near East" states, Australia and New Zealand.

In the Arab countries, the nationalist anger at the West has led to the growth of both a neutralist and to some small extent a genuine "third camp" position. The attitude of the governments is, however, to place a price on their adherence—the granting of their "national" demands by the Anglo-American imperialist bloc.

The attitude of the Israeli government toward SACME although it is not a matter of clear public record, can be summed up as follows: The preferred situation would be to have no *formal* set-up, but if there is to be a formal command, that Israel partici-

pate and the Arabs do not. But if the Arabs do adhere, then Israel must perforce also adhere, to prevent the Arab states from receiving arms that will upset the military balance between those states and Israel.

Whether the U. S. will be able to overcome the many political problems before SACME is born remains to be seen.

Russia's relations with Israel have deteriorated sharply. From a very friendly level, they are now distinctly cool. The initiative, of course, came from Russia. Moscow started a violent anti-Zionist campaign and set up barriers to Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe. The extermination of Jewish culture and the growing policy of governmental anti-Semitism in Russia played a role. The extension of official Stalinist anti-semitism to the satellite countries did not aid the relations of Russia and Israel. With the arrest of Rudolph Slansky, former Secretary-General of the Czech Communist Party, a huge anti-semitic propaganda barrage was unleashed by the Stalinist officials and press. Slansky was accused of being an agent of Washington and Jerusalem. The majority of those purged were denounced as traitors because they were "cosmopolitans," "landless," etc., leaving no doubt that those terms mean Jews, employing the exact terminology used by the traditional East European anti-semitic movements.

Israel asked for credits from Russia but received none. If this is explained on the ground that Russia had none to give, it is still true that the absolute refusal of Russia to supply Israel with technical assistance was handled in a hostile manner. When Israel requested Russia to send a few forestry experts Moscow did not have even the courtesy to reply. Unlike its satellite countries Russia refused to buy from

Israel—to any extent, with the exception of oranges in 1951 and '52; and while Israel makes purchases from Russia, such goods purchased had to be limited to those urgently needed, since the Russians demanded 20 to 30 per cent more than the prices on the world market.

Russia has expanded its double-pronged effort to win the Arabs over to its side. On one side is the diplomatic effort to woo the Arab ruling classes and on the other, the Stalinist parties try to get popular support for Russia. Russian diplomatic agents and activities in the Near East are at a record high. The Communist Parties are now using the anti-Israeli feeling of the Arabs in their agitation to line-up the Arabs with Moscow. The Syrian and Lebanese Stalinists issued a joint proclamation that "true patriots" must unite against the U. S. "seeking to force the Arabs to sign a peace treaty with Israel" and to join an alliance with that country.

With the change of the position of Israel in world politics the positions of the various Israeli political parties on foreign policy have changed also; or rather, latent tendencies have been brought out into the open. Friendship with both East and West is still in the political programs but is now only a phrase.

The Mapai has departed from the policy of "neutralism" as between the two power blocs, to one of "no prior commitment." The policy of neutralism is interpreted to mean that nothing was to be done that would aid, or rebound to the benefit of, either one of the cold-war rivals. "No prior commitment" is supposed to mean that Mapai will act in a given situation on the "merits" of that case, regardless of the advantage one or the other camp may gain; but without any advance commitment to all-out

support of either side. Thus, they support the U. S. in Korea and the Stalinists in China. The cumulative record, especially in voting, has become overwhelmingly in favor of the U. S.

Even during their period of neutralism, the Mapai leaders did not hide their own personal feelings for the West. Now the interviews and private statements of Mapai leaders reveal an increasingly pro-West sentiment. David Ben Gurion went so far as to tell a U. S. reporter that in case of war, Israel would be found on the "right" side.

Mapai does observe neutralism in one peculiar way. Its official organs refrain from criticizing the horrible social conditions of Russia and Stalinism, despite the fact that the Stalinists and Stalinoids do not appreciate this attitude. It is part of the political atmosphere in Israel which contributes to the growing Stalinization of Mapai's rival in the Israeli working class, Mapam.

While Mapai still clings to an emasculated version of neutralism, the General Zionists (conservative bourgeois party) have been the first to drop all pretense and come out openly for a pro-U. S. orientation. Their arguments include all the usual lip service to "democracy vs. totalitarianism," and emphasize the economic dependency of Israel on a great power in case of war. They point out that Palestine would have starved—literally—if not for the fact that, as a British territory, it received allocations of food and other necessities. In a future war, Russia will not have the food or the shipping to supply Israel.

Within the Mapam, the Stalinized Hashomer Hatzair has also dropped all pretense of neutralism and has come out for "Unity with the Soviet Union." Like all pro-Stalinists, they

attempt to mask their allegiance to the Russian camp by labeling it the "peace camp." The more moderate elements of Mapam want a position of "neutrality for the state—no neutrality for the party." Even for them the party must "unite with the Soviet Union." The position of Hashomer Hatzair won a majority at the recent Mapam convention and is now the official policy of the party.

The parties of the extreme right—the semi-fascist Stern group and Heruth party (former Irgun group)—present an interesting picture on foreign policy. The Stern group is as pro-Stalinist in foreign policy as the Hashomer Hatzair. The only thing that can be said for them is that they had the forthrightness to declare their pro-Russianism long ago.

The Heruth party was composed of different wings, from pure and simple nationalists, to fascists and semi-fascists. The nationalist elements led by Uri Jabotinsky (son of the founder of the Revisionists) and Peter Bergson, are in favor of a U. S. alliance. The fascistic elements of the party, led by Menachim Beigun, say: "Russia is not our enemy. Our enemies are the Arabs, the British and the Germans." They do not take a pro-Russian position but want to maintain a consistent neutralism.

In addition, however, Israel has another important issue of foreign policy which is unique to it. That is: How to achieve peace with the Arabs?

In discussing Israeli economy, we pointed out that a large part of Israel's economic difficulties come from the fact that Israel is a beleaguered island in a hostile sea, and explained how this disrupts its normal trade channels and imposes a terrific burden of armaments on its economy. The substitution of a citizen army or militia in place of a standing army

would be of some help; but above all, what is needed is peace—not only a formal peace treaty but a peace based on the establishment of friendly relations with the Arab peoples, such as would permit a substantial lightening of the military burden and restore normal trade within the Near East.

In general, both the old government coalition (Mapai, religious bloc, etc.) and its major opposition, the General Zionists, believe that peace with the Arabs can be obtained by holiday speeches about their desire for friendly relations with them while waiting for time to heal the wounds. They also believe that strengthening Israel militarily and economically can force the Arabs to accept Israel as a permanent reality; and through the use of diplomacy, especially the pressure of foreign powers such as the U. S. and Britain, they hope to compel the Arabs to sign a peace treaty. They are willing to sign such a treaty with any of the Arab states, including Abdullah's Transjordan and accept the existing lines as the future boundaries.

Mapam, on the other hand, is opposed to signing any peace treaties with any of the present Arab regimes. It demands that peace wait till the "progressive forces,"—i.e., the Arab Stalinists—come to power. It is especially violently opposed to any peace with Abdullah. Mapam demands the creation of an independent Arab state in the economically and politically unviable portion of Arab Palestine left after Israel's victory in the war deprived it of even the small chance of independent existence it may have had at first.

The Mapam program, in essence, subordinates the need for immediate peace with the Arabs to the interests of world Stalinism. This is further underlined by the fact that the Arab

Stalinists, who represent Mapam's hope, have changed their line on orders from Moscow and are no longer advocates of peace with Israel.

As to Mapam's position on Arab Palestine, it has a dual motivation. The first is, of course, that it hopes the miserable remnants of Arab Palestine to be dependent on Israel. The second: having eliminated Abdullah and recognizing that no other force will voluntarily rule in such a state, they hope the Arab Stalinists will be aided to power, and they purport to believe, with assumed naivete, that such a state will listen to Israel rather than Moscow. Aside from all other considerations, the prohibition of union of Arab Palestine with Transjordan would violate the people's right to self-determination; the minimum that must be accorded by any self-styled democrat is a free vote for the people to determine their own will on independence versus annexation by Transjordan.

The Mapai government's program is not likely to achieve peace by itself, and if it did the resulting formal peace treaty would be little better than an armed truce.

At present there is more sentiment for peace among the Arab ruling classes than there is among the Arab masses. The only Arab voices raised for peace are those of elder statesmen. The Arab rulers dare not submit to foreign pressure since this may well topple their regimes. The governments of the Arab countries are notoriously unstable—for example, Syria has had three "revolutions" in that many years. Other regimes are almost as weak. Without any popular support or demand for peace from below, the regimes would be in danger of falling if they submitted to outside pressure and signed a treaty. The intensity of national feeling in

all the Moslem countries of the Near East is easily capable of bringing that about.

Real peace will come to the Near East only when there is created a desire for Arab-Jewish unity among the Arab masses, when diplomacy has a foundation in the desire of the people for peace. The creation of such a sentiment among the grass roots of the Arab peoples demands a program and a positive attitude on the part of the Israeli labor movement toward the Arab masses, both those in Israel and in the surrounding countries. For both peoples such a policy is not an exercise in morality or good will alone, but is a crying need if the interests of both peoples are to be realized.

The Arab nationalists should and must give up their desires to eliminate Israel as an independent State. The first reason is obvious: as a people, the Jews have a right to self-determination. But, more concretely, the interests of the mass of the people and fellaheen whose standard of living is so abysmally low, demand that the Arab nationalist who is truly interested in the welfare of the Arab people, concentrate on the many plans for raising the standard of the entire region, e.g., Jordan Valley Authority, that the cooperation of all Near Eastern states will allow.

For any real improvement of the status of the Arab peasants, a change from the semi-feudal social order is an absolute necessity. The Arab nationalist movement would gain a great deal in this task from cooperation with the Israeli labor and Socialist movement. Peace and cooperation in the region will also reduce the strength of outside imperialist domination and help secure the independence of the weak Arab states. While the Arab nationalists correctly point

a finger to Israel's treatment of its Arab minority and the Arab refugees, they would do well to take a look at the treatment of Jewish minorities in the Arab states.

The Jews, in order to help create this sentiment for peace, should re-examine their position on the Arab minority and refugees.

The present record of the Israeli government in relation to the Arabs in Israel is a poor one. The Knesseth (parliament) in February, 1952, continued in effect martial law in Arab sections of the country and in reality "froze" the Arab in his status in Israel.

What is the status of Arabs in Israel?

The well-known statistician, Lestchinsky, in an article in the *Jewish Forward* of June 16, paints a cheerful picture—one that is false and so easily disproved that one wonders how a reputable man like Lestchinsky dares make such ridiculous statements.

According to Lestchinsky, there is no unemployment among Israeli Arabs; there is no discrimination; Arabs have full freedom; Arab farmers are prospering; wages are equal; Israeli Arabs are better off than Arabs in other countries; in fact, the Arabs who are infiltrating Israel are not enemies or spies but envious Arabs who want to enjoy the privileges and benefits of Arab citizenship in Israel.

We agree with some of what Lestchinsky says: the Arabs attempting to enter Israel illegally are not enemies of Israel. This undoubtedly true statement only completes the case against the Israeli government policy toward these unfortunates, a policy which Lestchinsky supports.

These refugees do not seek privileges or benefits; they seek only to return to their lands from which

they fled in fear. In return they will act as peacefully as peasants anywhere in the world. In time, by proper action, the Israeli government can win their loyalty.

It also may be true that Arabs in Israel are better off than in other countries; but this is an indictment of the social conditions in the Arab states, and not praise of Israel.

One need go no further than publications of Lestchinsky's own party, the Poale Zion, to prove his arguments and statements false.

The *Jewish Frontier* of February, 1950, describes the condition of the Arabs in Israel, a description that is true and has not changed since that date. On November 8, 1948, there were 69,000 Arabs in Israel; today there are 165,000. The increase is due to the acquisition of new territory by Israel, to the Israeli policy of permitting the return of wives and children of Arab residents, and partly to the illegal re-entry of Arab refugees.

"Individual Arabs have improved their status but the Arab community as a whole has not made the desired progress and the relations between the government of Israel and its Arab citizens have not advanced to the optimum degree."

On the positive side it lists the government's special attention to the religious and communal needs of the Arabs; the growth of the Brith Poali Eretz Israel (Palestine Labor League), the Arab trade-union organization run by the Histadrut, which has grown a great deal through its control of jobs amid widespread unemployment. The league now claims more influence than the Communist Party in Nazaeth and other important Arab sections. "The past year," the article continues, "has witnessed the beginnings of Arab initiative in the economic field." It also lists:

marketing associations, formed in some villages; the organization of one Arab "kibbutz" (collective); and Druze Arab bus drivers have joined a cooperative.

On the other hand, it reports:

There also continues to exist a severe economic crisis amongst the Arabs. Workers are unemployed, former government officials have little hope of finding employment, farmers find it difficult to market their product, businessmen suffer from lack of customers. The exceptions to this rule are farmers who did not abandon their villages but even some of these have mistakenly been listed as absent and their land registered with the office for abandoned property and now have to pay high levies for property that is in fact their own.

Examples of activities of government departments that are constructive . . . are unfortunately few and scattered. . .

In some parts of the country all restrictions on free movement have been lifted.

We suspect that the definition of "some" when this is used in connection with freedom of movement is—very little, while the definition of "some" in relation to incorrect registry of land is—considerable.

An article entitled "Crescent in the Shield of David" in a recent issue of *UN World* confirms the picture of economic crisis among Israeli Arabs and has this to say about freedom of movement: "Arab citizens still need special permits to travel from one town to another."

There is no discrimination against Arabs in cafeterias, etc., such as exists against Negroes in the U. S. However, the Yiddish press reports that even the Arab deputies in the Knesset are almost completely isolated and that *no one* talks to them.

Alvin Rosenfeld, writing in the March 5, *N. Y. Post* reports from Israel:

For 12 long months an Israeli citizen—although not charged with, tried for

or convicted of any crime—rotted in a local jail. He sat there, day in and day out, for some 365 days, simply because the state authorities figured that, free, he might prove to be a danger to the community.

The man, an Israeli Arab named Naif Salum el Khoury, had been arrested as a suspect in the murder of two settlers at the famous war-battered collective farm of Negba. Despite the fact that the charge was dropped for lack of sufficient evidence, the army decided to hold El Khoury anyway, since he was known to be anti-Jewish. The Arab was locked away on the order of the army chief of staff himself, and habeas corpus was forgotten.

The incident, disclosed when El Khoury at last was able to appeal to the Supreme Court for his freedom (successfully), was but one of a series of small but disturbing happenings wherein Israel has sidestepped or ignored democratic principles. . . .

Unofficial government spokesmen admit that a few Arabs are being held without charges even now, after the El Khoury case. Normally, and as a matter of routine, in the search for Arab "infiltrators" the army surrounds entire Arab villages in the early hours of the morning and searches every house without warrants. Even the village of Abu Gush, which fought on the Jewish side in the war, was not exempt. The police lined up all the males in the village, and since they did not know "infiltrators" from natives expelled every tenth man to Jordan. This happened only a year ago.

These searches are not the brutal searches of the Gestapo or GPU. The army has invited the Arab deputies to go along. However, these searches are illegal and place the Arabs in a position of second class citizenship. It is undeniably true that the current bad position of the Arabs in Palestine was born of war, and it is also true that the Arabs in Israel have more rights than the Jews in Arab coun-

tries, but whatever the Israeli government could claim about "military necessity" during the war, there is not even this shadow of justification now. The present no-war-no-peace situation cannot justify this kind of treatment of the Arab refugees and of Arab citizens of Israel.

The fact that legal redress in the form of Supreme Court decisions is sometimes obtained after long delay is slight consolation and ignores two basic dangers.

The first is that the "emergency" pattern of relations with the Arabs will become permanent. This is especially dangerous since the present no-war-no-peace in the Near East tends to perpetuate these evils. These actions also tend to prevent the achievement of peace since it gives the opponents of peace solid arguments. They prevent the emergence of popular Arab demands for peace, as a real and effective force.

The other danger, and by far the greatest, is the apathy of the public press and even the labor movement to these violations of democratic rights. In most cases the government does not even feel the need to apologize for its actions. And this is a government whose ruling party, the Mapai, claims to be socialist. This indifferent attitude reveals a lack of understanding of the road to peace and to Arab-Jewish unity.

While the treatment of Arabs within Israeli is of crucial importance to peace, the question of the Arab refugees who ran away, or, in some cases, were driven from their homes during the war, is an immediate one. The Arab governments have cleverly made the demand for the return of these refugees to their homes their first and main demand. This demand is not motivated by any real concern for the fate of these unfortunate refugees; the

Arab rulers have done nothing in the past to relieve their terrible plight. On the contrary, they have exploited the misery of the Arabs as a source of income and as a good "diplomatic arguing point." They have lined their pockets with the money sent to aid the refugees and have utilized the situation as a popular argument against peace with Israel, both amongst the Arab masses and abroad.

A solution of the Arab refugee question would be a major step toward Arab-Jewish peace. But, can Israel accept the demands of the Arabs? Can Israel turn out the new immigrants from their houses to return them to their former Arab owners? Can Israel afford the cost of resettlement of masses of Arabs, when it can hardly care for settling the masses of Jewish immigrants who have streamed to its shores? The questions seem reasonable. The reality is quite different.

If real peace were established between Israel and its neighbors, the country would enjoy a prosperity that it has never seen. The Arab countries need the manufactured goods and technical resources of Israel. Israeli industry needs the Arab markets. An Israel at peace and standing on a sound economic basis, would be the recipient of investments, loans and donations that would dwarf all the monies now collected for it, and, for the first time, would give the immigrants the means of settling. The return of the Arab refugees to their homes and fields, the majority of which lie idle, would not hinder immigrant settlement but, on the contrary, may help. The new immigrants need not only homes, but work, trade and prosperity. These needs can be met on the basis of Arab-Jewish understanding.

There is also no basis for assuming that the refugees would turn into a

"fifth column." They are exhausted by their sorrows, and bear a deep resentment against their leaders who favor war against the Jews. If Israel should allow them to return as citizens with equal rights, and in recognition of their right to continue their lives in a country in which they have lived for hundreds of years there is little doubt that in time they would become loyal citizens of Israel.

While the return of the Arab refugees is a question of an act of simple justice that does not have to be compensated for in the present circumstances, it will pay nonetheless large dividends to Israel and will bring real peace and prosperity to the country and the entire Near East. In addition it will be a step toward the unification of the Near East which in turn can serve as an important step in restoring peace to the entire world.

The return of the Arab refugees will be a boon for both those who come back and those who allow them to return.

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An Exchange on Nationalization

A Discussion of Government Ownership of War Industries

To the Editor:

Your publication continues to be one of the few things I read that consistently makes sense. It is only because I like you that I would venture a little disagreement.

T. N. Vance ends his brilliant series on the war economy with what seems to me too great an emphasis on the proposal—"Nationalize the War Industries." He says this must now be the chief slogan of socialists, and gives it special place among the other transitional slogans as corresponding to the needs of the workers and the times. But how does it actually fit in with our other demands and our philosophy?

The paid thinkers of the rich like to equate socialism with any build-up in the authority of the state. But we have learned to our sorrow that the equation is false. The most nationalized state in existence is the least social, the least beneficial to man. There exists no economic law to guarantee that as economic power is taken from individual companies or combines of companies and put in the hands of a government, it thereby is any easier for the working class to control and apply to pro-human ends.

Many workers who now find it easier

to deal with private employers would consider it a calamity for the government to operate all big industry.

If carried into effect, nationalization, unlike the other transitional demands, might not stimulate worker power as opposed to owner power. The sliding scale, though distorted by the employers, has raised a great issue and exposed the administration's wage-price fakery. With the "books" once opened, things would never again be quite the same. Worker's control, worker's defense, these things build the confidence of the class and instruct and educate workers to take further responsibilities.

But putting all economic power in Washington, even under an administration of labor leaders, still leaves open the possibility of transition from a capitalist to a bureaucrat state. And compensation to former owners may eat up the economic benefits. So it seems to me that we should support nationalization if in time of crisis the American working class desires to take this road as have the English, Germans, etc., but not make it an unqualified fundamental issue at any and all times.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth MACKENZIE

Reply by Vance

Kenneth MacKenzie is, of course, absolutely correct when he observes that nationalization in and of itself is not necessarily progressive—and may well be reactionary in its impact on society. The lessons of Stalinism—not to mention other examples of nationalization—are all too clear on this basic lesson of modern history.

Nevertheless, *nationalization of war industries* is the correct political slogan for socialists today. It is not put forward in the abstract, but could only become meaningful through mobilization of pow-

erful class and social forces. It is not to be contrasted with Workers Control of Production; on the contrary, the latter supplements the former.

It was not possible at the conclusion of my last article on the Permanent War Economy to expand on the development and interrelationship of tactical political slogans. Nor was it necessary. The essential thought was contained in one sentence: "*Neither nationalization of war industries nor a capital levy are thinkable as realistic political slogans without the development of an independent labor party.*"

In the political context of U. S. A. 1952, nationalization of war industries

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is the only economic slogan that corresponds to the objective needs of the political-social situation. The stretch-out in the "Defense Program" has dramatically revealed the weaknesses of the Permanent War Economy under capitalism. A process of atrophy, revealing an organic disease of the body economic, has set in. The ratio of war outlays to total production required to sustain the economy at full employment and high production levels is constantly under pressure of having to be increased. Immediately after World War II a 10 per cent ratio of war outlays sufficed to offset the natural tendencies of capitalism toward depression and crisis. After Korea, with its consequent acceleration in the accumulation of capital, a 15 per cent ratio of war outlays barely achieved a precarious equilibrium. Today it may well be that a 20 per cent ratio of war outlays (direct and indirect) to total output is needed to prevent a serious undermining of the economy.

On the economic front, war contracts become more and more desirable to the bourgeoisie. Production of the means of destruction is now at least as important as production of the means of production in the capitalist process of production and accumulation of surplus values. And on the political front, the preparations for war against Stalinism dominate the international and American political scenes. Virtually every issue that arises is immediately related to the irrepressible conflict between Stalinist and American imperialisms, if indeed it does not arise out of this conflict.

One cannot imagine Eisenhower, Taft, Stevenson, Truman, or any spokesman for the Republican and Democratic parties favoring the nationalization of war industries. That would immediately generate fratricidal strife within the bourgeoisie. Nor, for that matter, can one readily picture Murray, Green or any other trade union defender of capitalism advocating taking the profit out of war

through the nationalization of war industries. That would immediately lead to a split between organized labor and the capitalist political machines. The trade union leaders would consider such action only if the ranks of organized labor make it unmistakably clear that they are for it.

An entire process of class struggle and education is therefore necessary before any but the most militant workers support the nationalization of war industries. In this struggle socialists must be in the forefront, for here in one, easily comprehensible slogan the evils and ills of capitalism are immediately laid bare. If the Permanent War Economy is to become our way of life indefinitely, as the leaders of the bourgeoisie openly state, then what is more logical than making the war industries serve the "interests" of all by making them the property of all? We do not have to belabor the advantages of the slogan, "nationalization of war industries," properly utilized.

Moreover, we may well be on the threshold of the long-heralded regroupment of American political forces. It is impossible indefinitely to maintain an

archaic political set-up that no longer serves the needs of the ruling class and has long since lost any meaning for the mass of the population. The timid leaders of labor may well be immobilized by the shifting political forces. They may even be unaware that structural alterations are taking place in the body politic. But when they are, so to speak, "hit on the head"—as they must be in the course of the next few years—then they may awaken to the fact that the American political trend must either be in the direction of bonapartism or independent labor political action. In such an objective situation (not "at any and all times"), the struggle to nationalize the war industries can play an important role in the political awakening of the American working class.

Socialists ought not to wait for the working class spontaneously to "desire to take this road (of nationalization of war industries)." They should and can lead the workers in a rapid and vast re-educational process. That is the real significance of putting forward the slogan "nationalization of war industries" today.

T. N. VANCE

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