

THE NEWSLETTER

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BEVAN WANTS BOMB: LABOUR WANTS IT SCRAPPED

By GEORGE CUNVIN

THE DEBATE on the hydrogen-bomb at the Brighton conference of the Labour Party dotted the I's and crossed the T's of the new alignment of forces in the party. Bevan, as the spokesman of the National Executive, argued openly in favour of Britain having the bomb, and in favour of the traditional concept of capitalist power politics.

'The implication of the Norwood resolution is that a Labour government would have to withdraw from all its commitments and alliances with countries also possessing the bomb': so spoke the erstwhile critic of the American war alliance, the man who resigned from the 'Shadow Cabinet' over Labour's support for SEATO!

For the first time at a Labour Conference Bevan was heckled by the Left and applauded by the Right.

The Norwood resolution brought out the real position not only of Bevan but of the NEC too. This was clear even on the Saturday before the opening of conference, when the delegates of the hundred-odd organizations with resolutions on disarmament met at the compositing meeting.

After two hours' discussion their resolutions had been condensed into two composites expressing the two trends of opinion: that Britain should take unilateral action—and that she should not even suspend the tests, but merely seek international agreement to ban nuclear weapons.

The meeting was about to break up, all delegates being satisfied that the main points of view were covered in the two composites, when Bevan, who was present as the NEC representative, intervened to propose a third composite calling only for the Parliamentary Labour Party to press the Government to announce the ending of nuclear tests by this country.

Many delegates protested that Bevan was out of order as the meeting had already agreed on two composites; they saw his move (the resurrection of two resolutions that had fallen) as a manoeuvre to water down and confuse the opposition to the H-bomb.

Bevan got his way by hinting that unless the third composite was put forward the NEC might be forced to put its own statement to conference.

The voting on the Norwood resolution did not fully reflect the real strength of the opposition to the H-bomb. The block votes of several unions are sure to be challenged by members as contrary to their unions' policy.

FRANCE

DE GAULLE WAITS IN WINGS AS COTY SEEKS FRANCE'S 24TH POST-WAR PREMIER

From Our Paris Correspondent

PRESIDENT COTY of France is looking for a Prime Minister after the three months eighteen days old government of Bourgès-Maunoury toppled on September 30.

The present Ministerial crisis is likely to last a long time:

(Continued at foot of next page)

COMMENTARY

BRIGHTON AND AFTER

THE FIFTY-SIXTH annual conference of the Labour Party was rich in experiences, in lessons for the Left wing—and in paradoxes. The conference met as the Tory offensive gathers momentum and a showdown between workers and employers looms in sight. Yet the Tory offensive was never specifically discussed, and the conference failed to arm the movement for the coming industrial battles. Delegates were eager for the speediest possible ending of Tory mis-

This analysis of the Labour Party's Brighton conference and the tasks of the Left is being reprinted immediately as a twopenny pamphlet. Copies can be obtained from The Newsletter, 180 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

rule, whose deleterious effects they see each day in their constituencies. Yet no decision was taken that would shorten its period of office by a single day. The feeling among the delegates on the question of rents was that the next Labour government should wipe out the increases imposed under the Tory Rent Act. Yet the resolution on this question was confined to a pledge to repeal the Act; the increases will remain. Most delegates from local Labour Parties opposed the national executive's proposals for buying shares in firms instead of nationalization. Yet the dividends-and-water policy statement *Industry and Society* was endorsed by 5,309,000 votes to 1,276,000. Most delegates from local Labour Parties were in favour of a clear declaration that the next Labour government would renounce British manufacture and use of the hydrogen bomb and destroy existing stocks. Yet in what the *Daily Telegraph* called 'one of the most surprising card votes ever taken at a party conference' the Norwood resolution on these lines was defeated by 5,836,000 votes to 781,000.

But the biggest seeming paradox of all was the sight of the 'Bevanites' heckling and renouncing their eponymous leader with cries of 'You are selling the pass'.

(Continued overleaf)

BRIGHTON AND AFTER (Continued from front page)

I. Bevan's Defection

RAMSAY MACDONALD was in office when he betrayed the hopes of those who idolized him. Bevan's apostasy comes anything up to two years before he holds office again. This is all to the good. The movement knows where it stands. The idol has revealed its feet of clay on two issues close to the heart of the ordinary rank-and-file member of the party: nationalization and the hydrogen bomb. These issues are intimately related to fundamental socialist principles; they are touchstones for the present-day observance and carrying forward of the anti-capitalist and anti-war traditions of the British Labour movement. It is well that the lines of demarcation should have been drawn so unambiguously at this early stage; that after the first shock of dismay there should have been among constituency delegates a sober appraisal of this political lesson read to them from the rostrum in those agreeably lilting, but now no longer spellbinding, Welsh cadences.

Bevan gambled on carrying the bulk of his followers with him. But the gamble did not come off. If the British Labour movement has learned anything at all in the past generation it has learned the truth of A. J. Cook's words: 'We have been loyal to leaders when we should have been loyal to principles.' Only a tiny handful of the 'Bevanites' were disposed to say 'My Nye right or wrong', and Bevan himself was plainly disconcerted by the first recorded failure of his tricks of oratory, by the lack of applause at those carefully-timed pauses.

Here was a 'Left' leader revealing that as foreign secretary he will jealously uphold the diplomatic interests of British imperialism, publicly burning his boats,

delivering himself up as a hostage to the Right wing. Bevan had it in his power to force major concessions from the Right, particularly on the question of nationalization. But now he is destined for a long time to play second fiddle—and not a particularly effective one—to Gaitskell's lead. The *Manchester Guardian* tells how the two of them were 'standing in smiling conversation just behind the chairman' during the final session of the conference. The ultra-conservative *Daily Mail* coos its praises at its boggy man of yesterday: 'Bevan Tells the World' . . . 'a speech requiring considerable courage'. The speech, says the *Daily Telegraph*, was 'statesmanlike'.

To say however that Bevan has sold out for high office would be a gross oversimplification. He is no newcomer to high office. He has consistently stood for social-democracy and for social-democratic types of accommodation with capitalism. No doubt he wants socialism, but without class struggle. There are indications that his defence of British possession of the hydrogen-bomb was motivated, not primarily by personal considerations, but by a reading of the international situation which lays emphasis on Axes and the balance of forces rather than on the role of the working-class movement. Whether Khrushchev in fact told him that the Russians would prefer Britain to retain the bomb is uncertain (though the decision of the Stalinist-dominated Electrical Trades Union to vote for British possession of the bomb seems to indicate a certain . . . rectification of the international line). In any case this is immaterial: Bevan's attitude is based on the assumption that the U.S. government will by-pass the British and will conclude a more a less overt alliance with Adenauer. Hence Bevan's desire to retain the bomb as a bargaining counter, whose absence would, he feels, leave him 'naked' at the international

FRANCE (Continued from front page)

informed circles in the French capital do not see an early prospect of France's 24th post-war government coming into being.

The 42-year-old Premier fell on the question of limited home rule for Algeria. The Right-wing moderates found it too much. The communists found it too little. The nationalist revolt in Algeria, which began 36 months ago, is to continue.

A negotiated settlement of the problem is today further off than ever. The moderates, emboldened by recent military successes, are opposed to the smallest concessions. The communist opposition to the adventure is confined to verbal platitudes in the House.

(It may be recalled that about eighteen months ago 149 communist members of the National Assembly voted special powers to socialist Premier Mollet by virtue of which a state of siege was clamped on the whole of Algeria.)

The Right wing is becoming increasingly bold against any kind of 'surrender settlement'. It was reinforced in the course of the debate by followers of General de Gaulle, including a former Governor-General of Algeria, and was aided by at least one war-time fascist who collaborated with the Germans.

The latter was the loudest in denouncing the Premier who was, of course, a hero of the French Resistance against German occupation.

On the Treasury benches Ministers vied with one another in their determination to keep Algeria as an 'integral part of France'. The socialist proconsul in Algeria, Robert Lacoste, who, oddly enough, is another Resistance hero, told the Defence Minister to keep his clumsy feet off Algerian corns.

But despite the fall of the government the Defence Minister left for an inspection tour of the Algerian fronts, notably the Tunisian frontier, where the army is building fortifications against nationalist infiltration.

While the Defence Minister was still on tour authentic documents were published in Paris, proving that his engineering firm helped the Germans during the war in building the Atlantic Wall.

The socialists, headed by Mollet, still swear by the rejected home rule Bill. There is, however, not the slightest doubt that even these modest reforms, which divide Algeria into six states with elected local assemblies (with less power than the London County Council) are unacceptable to the majority in the National Assembly.

Mollet now knows that he can govern—as he governed during his eighteen-month tenure of office—only on the sufferance of the Right.

It is possible that Mollet might agree, although not immediately—he is now very 'sceptical'—to play the game. He did a good job as the author of the Suez expedition and in continuing the 'dirty war' in Algeria, 'the war which is imbecile and without issue' (these are his own words before the general secretary of the French Socialist Party came to office!)

If the present crisis lasts too long, another solution is envisaged in certain parliamentary circles. It is the advent of General de Gaulle to power.

Such an eventuality should not be regarded as fantastic. After all, the communists were once supporters of the General. He may be able to gain sufficient support from the Right. If he is called upon by the President of the Republic to form a government, he may rally considerable parliamentary support, and also upset the apple cart in the process.

De Gaulle has renounced none of his dictatorial ambitions. This is the danger staring France in the face. He can count on the army, on the passivity of the socialists and communists, on the complicity of the Right.

The present Ministerial crisis could prove to be a crisis of the régime itself.

conference table.

He is already naked, for this is naked power politics, not socialist politics. The working class has no place in his calculations. Will the rank and file swallow this? It is the opinion of many that by the next conference the opponents of the bomb will have secured a decisive majority. Even if this does not come to pass the demand of the Norwood resolution for the 'mobilization of the international working-class movement' against the tests is no idle dream; it will be achieved as understanding spreads of the danger these tests entail.

It will be achieved despite the element of bargaining and intrigue which was not absent from the debate on the hydrogen bomb. Whatever explanation may be offered for the sudden and amazing shift of the Transport and General Workers' Union delegation, the mere fact that delegates were asked to postpone the vote until after the lunch-hour break shows that there were some exchanges—and arrangements—behind the scenes. Nevertheless the bulk of the constituency parties stood firm, and if it had been their conference alone there would have been no doubt of the moral and political position of British Labour on this question.



II. The Leadership of the Left

ON THE SURFACE it might appear that Bevan's defection has left the radical wing of the Labour Party leaderless. This is not quite true. There was a crisis of leadership before; that crisis remains, as the biggest single problem British socialists have to face. Bevan has removed from the Left a powerful and flamboyant personality who for years overshadowed his colleagues. Correspondingly the scales have dropped from the eyes of many of the most active and devoted constituency workers, who now realize that they were wrong to confuse the individual position of one man with the interests of the movement as a whole.

The *Daily Express* carried a cartoon of an imperious, arrogant and elegantly top-hatted Bevan, curling his lip in scorn at the pigmies Barbara Castle and Ian

Mikardo, who bear 'Ban the Bomb' and 'More Socialism' banners and gesticulate under his feet. 'Ugh! Bevanites!' he is saying. And indeed it is now apparent that there never was more than one Bevanite. Those who followed Bevan are people who are interested in a more militant prosecution of what they see as democratic socialism; people who want more nationalization, who want a socialist foreign policy, a harder fight against the Tories, the prospect of real social advance in our time. These people are the backbone of hundreds of local Labour Parties. For too long the fight to get Bevan elected treasurer tended to obscure the discussion of more important questions, and the opening out of the fight on to a broader and more fruitful arena. A Left wing no longer geared to the rise of one man is a Left wing which can embark on real discussion, and which can look with hope to—and link its fortunes with—the developing mass movement. Already *Tribune*, it is believed, has decided to clear up the confusion sown among its readers by its recent reluctance to criticize Bevan. There is talk of the reformation of the *Tribune* group of MPs in the House of Commons, of the building of a lively, alert and vigorous Friends of *Tribune* movement, and of the holding of a series of meetings at which the tasks before the Labour Left can be thrashed out.

In these and similar developments a leadership is bound to crystallize, not necessarily identical in every respect with present well-known Parliamentary figures. And the Marxists inside the Labour Party have an enormous part to play. While they did not foresee that Bevan would announce his defection so soon they are on record as analysing the shortcomings of social-democracy in precisely this sense. Their contribution to the discussion as it unfolds will do much to help clarify the issues in the minds of the ordinary members.



III. The Left and the Workers

THE RIGHT WING cannot derive much satisfaction from its paper victories at Brighton. The British workers are moving Leftwards. Right-wing influence

(Continued overleaf)

The Week at a Glance

The week has been dominated by the magnificent achievement of Soviet scientists: the launching of the first artificial earth satellite on Friday.

A 184lb. sphere about 23in. in diameter, fitted with two radio transmitters giving out continuous signals, it circled the earth about 560 miles up every 95 minutes, travelling on an elliptical orbit at between 17,000 and 18,000 m.p.h.

A Moscow radio announcement on Monday revealed that the rocket which carried the satellite into outer space fell into the orbit behind the satellite, following it at a distance of 625 miles.

The Russian achievement was received with varying degrees of amazement, admiration and consternation by American and British scientists and newspapers. Reactions varied from the assurance by Eisenhower's Press secretary, Mr. Hagerty, that 'it did not come as a surprise' and Senator Symington's demand for a Senate investigation, to the comment of Dr. Joseph Kaplan, chairman of the U.S. National Committee for the International Geophysical Year: 'This is really fantastic'.

'The Russian satellite,' wrote The Times correspondent in Washington, 'continues to dominate the American imagina-

tion both as a matter of scientific conjecture and as an object of apprehension and rivalry.' In London the *Daily Mail* echoed on Tuesday: 'We cannot get that satellite—The Bleep—out of our minds. Round the world it goes again . . . dead on time . . . We are still staggered . . .'

Suggestions that the Russians had failed to give their scientific colleagues abroad the necessary information were refuted by Professor Marcel Nicolet, Belgian secretary-general of the special committee for the International Geophysical Year. He said Russian experts had communicated in good time the wavelengths on which the satellite would transmit and that the conventions of the International Geophysical Year programme had been 'entirely respected'.

On Monday Tass announced the testing of a 'powerful hydrogen device of a new design'.

A few hours after a State Department rejection of Khrushchev's proposal for bringing the earth satellite and all pilotless missiles under international control as part of a general agreement between the USA and the USSR, Dulles indicated that the USA was prepared to discuss with Russia the control of outer space separately from a general disarmament programme.

BRIGHTON AND AFTER (Continued from previous page)

will melt like snow under the influence of the class struggle. A mass movement on wages and rents, against the hydrogen bomb and the Tory government, will solve the paradoxes which marked the conference. The trade union leaders and the Gaitskellites are very much afraid of this rising tide of working-class militancy. This is why the union leaders are so eager for a new Labour government: they are frightened that the Tory government will provoke industrial strife on a scale which might have unsettling effects in trade union head offices. The union leaders do not want to challenge the big capitalists; they do not want to mobilize their forces, lest these forces get out of hand. The logical extension of this unwillingness to fight is the *New Statesman's* appeal that the unions should undertake to accept 'restraints and responsibilities' under the next Labour government. In other words, working-class standards are to be sacrificed to the interests of the monopolists in order to win the floating voter.

This entire conception of watering down socialism and cramping militancy in order to attract the middle-class voter disillusioned with Toryism but suspicious of Labour is riddled with flaws. First, a party which takes such steps runs grave risks of losing the support of industrial workers. Secondly, weakness, vacillations and hesitancy will never attract more than an insignificant section of the petty bourgeoisie. Thirdly, the kind of concessions the Right has made are such as will weaken Labour's fight against the very social force which menaces the security of small shopkeepers and small businessmen: monopoly capitalism. Either the Labour government takes immediate and bold measures to break the power of the big employers in a series of key industries, or it is doomed. *Industry and Society* was described by Bevan in lobby conversations at Brighton as 'rubbish' (though this did not prevent his applauding it). It is rubbish indeed, for it envisages an approach to the economic tasks of the next Labour government which would castrate that government and pave the way for another spell of Toryism.

The Right wing can no longer succeed, as it used to, in pulling the wool over the eyes of the rank and file. No one has any illusions about the efficacy of the decision taken on rents, for instance. It means precisely nothing, as *The Observer* was quick to point out. For years it has been possible gently and unobtrusively to stage-manage the annual conference. But the movement of millions of workers determined not to knuckle under to the blows being struck at their hard-won rights is not to be stage-managed. Nothing can prevent the workers from resisting; and in the course of their resistance there will be many who will learn that economic militancy is incomplete without political militancy; that their place is inside the Labour Party, demanding there that the political fight against capitalism is waged relentlessly, thoroughly and vigorously.

These militant workers constitute the major reserve of the Left wing of the Labour Party. Their militancy and their support mean that the Left can take Bevan's defection without a tremor. The entry of a wave of active workers in workshops and on building sites into the local Labour Parties in the course of the coming battles will strengthen the Left and make clear to the

whole movement the validity of the Left alternative to Butskellism.

At the same time far more attention must be devoted to the composition of the trade union delegations to the Labour Party conference. The time has gone by when the movement could afford to leave hundreds of thousands of votes in the hands of full-time officials who on occasion pay scant respect to the decisions of their own annual conferences. A healthy and vigilant rank-and-file movement in industry, side by side with the active participation of every militant worker in his local Labour Party: these are the guarantees that socialist policies will prevail in the Labour Party.



IV. A Programme for the Left

WHEN THE NEXT Labour government takes office it will start with a substantial and experienced Left wing in the party, a factor which did not exist in 1945. The Brighton conference has given the Left the opportunity, if its lessons are studied in the constituencies, as they surely will be, of beginning to arm itself now for the General Election and the great tasks which will follow it. The most essential weapon in the armoury is a *programme*: a list of fundamental political objectives around which the entire Labour Left, non-Marxist and Marxist, can unite. To the extent that such a programme is agreed and fought for together by such vehicles of Left-wing opinion as *Tribune* and by the tens of thousands of 'old-fashioned socialists' in the localities, it will act as a magnet for all the healthy forces in the working-class movement and will galvanize and inspire the active members of the party for the hard, slogging but rewarding work that awaits them.

This programme ought to summarize the most important socialist steps which the Left believes the next Labour government should take on assuming office, and which it will campaign for at party conferences until they become the accepted policy of the party in Parliament and in the country. Needless to say, the precise terms of such a programme can be decided only in the course of the post-Brighton discussions now beginning; but, judging by the feeling among delegates, it will in all likelihood contain such demands as these:

- (1) **Nationalization of the engineering and ship-building industries. Nationalization of the building industry and of the land of the big landowners.**
- (2) **Renunciation by Britain of the testing, manufacture and use of nuclear weapons, and an appeal to the peoples of other countries to follow this lead.**
- (3) **Repeal of the Rent Act and the removal of all increases imposed under it.**
- (4) **Self-determination for British colonies, and withdrawal of British troops from them.**

In addition to campaigning for such demands as these, the Left should strengthen its links with the industrial workers by setting its face resolutely against any proposal for a wages standstill, from whatever quarter that proposal may come; and by playing a

part in the important struggle for one hundred per cent. trade unionism, which is essential if the employers' offensive is to be contained and beaten back.

This *political* arming of the movement with a common programme ought to be supplemented by an *ideological* arming. The results of the Brighton conference have set tens of thousands of Labour Party members talking; there is a new and salutary readiness to go to the very roots of the problems the movement is grappling with. In discussions on theory with other

socialists, just as in the industrial and political fields, Marxists can make a useful contribution to the common pool of ideas, provided they remember that they do not know all the answers, and that they have something to learn as well as something to teach.

There now begins an uncommonly favourable period for the development of a real, combative, united Left, strongly influenced by Marxist ideas, responsive to the feelings of the industrial rank and file, determined not to lose sight of the socialist aim.

DOCUMENT

WHAT THE NORWOOD RESOLUTION SAID

This is the text of the composite resolution on disarmament, moved by Lambeth, Norwood, Constituency Labour Party at the Brighton conference last week.

This conference, believing that the time has come to abandon the pretence that there can be any protection in a nuclear war, records its belief that in a major conflict there will be neither victor nor vanquished, yet without war starting the tests of nuclear weapons may well doom countless numbers yet unborn to an inheritance of insanity, blindness or malformation.

Conference therefore:

- (a) opposes the further testing or manufacture of nuclear weapons by all countries;
- (b) calls upon the National Executive Committee to mobilize the whole of the movement against nuclear weapon tests by organizing through the National Council of Labour a national campaign, using all means including mass demonstrations in Trafalgar Square and other centres throughout the country along the lines of the Suez campaign last November;
- (c) pledges that the next Labour government will take the lead by itself refusing to continue to test, manufacture or use nuclear weapons, and that it will appeal to the peoples of the other countries to follow their lead;
- (d) calls on the National Executive Committee, in co-operation with the international socialist and trade union movement, to enter into discussion on how best the full force of the international working-class movement can be mobilized to stop any further tests.

ECONOMICS

WHAT TORY NEW ECONOMIC POLICY MEANS

By Our Economic Correspondent

THE INCREASE of the Bank Rate to seven per cent. and the cuts in investment are not the most important decisions taken by the Tories in recent weeks.

In fact these are only symptoms of a deeper change in Tory policy: their complete abandonment of the policy of full employment. In the words of the Economist (September 28, p. 998), they have 'returned to a classical monetary policy'.

Or to put it as Harold Wincott did (Financial Times, October 1): 'It amounted to the first official rebuff for part—but not thank goodness the whole—of the Keynesian philosophy since Lord Keynes died. Nay it was more than a rebuff, it was a flat disavowal, an abrogation.'

And what did it 'rebuff', 'disavow', 'abrogate'? The essence of Keynes. The most sensible part. Wincott quotes it:

'Instead of maintaining the principle that the internal value of a national currency should conform to a prescribed de jure value it [Bretton Woods] provides that its external value should be altered, if necessary, so as to conform to whatever de facto internal value results from domestic

policies which shall themselves be immune to criticism.' (From Keynes's speech in the House of Lords in 1946 recommending the Bretton Woods agreement.)

That has been abandoned, and with it full employment. It is openly admitted that a new economic policy has been adopted.

'During the International Monetary Fund conference . . . it became apparent . . . that the government had accepted a new economic policy. The seven per cent. Bank Rate and the capital cuts were not the basis of the policy but should rather be regarded as its first implementation.

'The essence of the policy was to put the present fixed rate of the pound and domestic price stability ahead of full employment as an economic objective.' (Financial Times, October 5).

All these quotations express the same basic concept. Tory theory has been through a crisis, and has abandoned in fact the high investment policy which has produced both full employment and inflation.

In future prices are to be kept down, or, to put it the other way round, the value of the pound is to be maintained.

They will cause unemployment

To achieve this the Tories are not prepared to end the anarchy of the market, but will restrict investment by controlling the supply of money—if they can.

Investment in both private and local authority building will be cut. That will cause unemployment among building workers.

Investment in the coal industry, railways, gas and electricity is to be cut. That will cause unemployment in steel, engineering and transport.

In fact the purpose is to create a fall in the demand for consumer goods so that the supply shall rise above the demand. And the bankers have been told to limit advances to the present level. A deflationary policy, in fact.

The last time a British government embarked upon a deliberate deflationary policy it ended in a slump.

Of course neither Macmillan nor Thorneycroft has any intention of producing mass unemployment!

'The government does not believe that it is possible to have stable prices if wages continue to go up. To the extent therefore that new wage claims are brought which inflate the economy the Treasury is prepared to act to disinflate it.

'That must have an effect on employment'—although 'it is believed by the government that stability can be found inside a full employment standard through not necessarily at the present ultra-low levels of unemployment.' (Financial Times, October 5).

Disaster in either event

Of course Churchill did not intend his 1925 deflation to end as a slump either. But deflation once started is, like inflation, difficult to stop.

Thomas Balogh warned (Financial Times, September 30) that either the 'new economic policy' would end in slump or fail altogether. In either event he predicts disaster.

Socialists have no crystal ball. The final outcome of this new economic policy is not predetermined. Many things can happen—an end to the Tory government, for example. But one thing is quite clear.

(Continued overleaf)

TORY POLICY (Continued from previous page)

This is a Tory offensive against the standard of living of the working class. It will meet with resistance. And the Government has been warned by every one of its influential Press supporters that this time it must stand and fight.

They point out—the Financial Times, the Economist, the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Mail—that the run on sterling has merely been halted. The foreign holders of sterling have stopped the disinvestment in sterling, but they have not reinvested.

The gamblers and speculators have not increased their operations against sterling, but they have not liquidated their past sales of forward sterling.

The flow of gold and dollars out of the country has stopped, but there has been no flow back into the country. The reason given is that they are waiting to see whether the government will stand to its guns.

In short capitalists both at home and abroad are demanding that the government support a strike-provoking and strike-breaking policy.

WHOSE INDUSTRY? AND WHOSE SOCIETY?

ON PAGE 48 of *Industry and Society* it says that 'the Labour Party recognizes that, under increasingly professional managements, large firms are as a whole serving the nation well'.

Here, to illustrate this contention, are some extracts from an article called 'Monopolistic Tendencies in the Chemical Fertilizer Industry', by H. Frankel, in *Farm Economist*, vol. 8, no. 10, 1957. (*Farm Economist* is published by the Agricultural Economics Research Institute, University of Oxford.)

1) 'The British Sulphate of Ammonia Federation Ltd. fixes identical prices for both types of **SULPHATE OF AMMONIA** and sells them through its agents ICI (its most important member) . . .

The arrangement is probably profitable for both the by-product members of the Association and ICI. The by-product members, who include both the Coal and Gas Boards, profit because of higher prices, and both they and ICI obtain a firmer market.'

(N.B. Representatives of nationalized industries account for about one-third to one-half of the members of the main bodies of the Association.)

'In the United Kingdom in the last few years demand and supply were already close to each other and average stocks of nitrogen were fairly low. It is therefore with some surprise that one notes the abandonment of schemes for the expansion of nitrogenous fertilizers in the UK.'

'The British Productivity Council in its "Review of Productivity in the Fertilizer Industry" (1952) shows the estimated cost of schemes for such an expansion in 1949 at £3,590,000.'

'The Council without comment publishes the proportion of the schemes abandoned at 72.5 per cent. of the total. In 1954-55 the Ministry of Agriculture estimated that an expansion of consumption of nitrogen by over 100 per cent. would be of profit to British farmers.'

'It is difficult to visualize the source of the additional supplies and the effect on prices in case there were none if farmers suddenly decided to accept the Ministry's advice.'

* * *

2) 'The ECE/FAO data show that with the subsidy British prices (of **PHOSPHATIC FERTILISERS**) are among the lowest and without it among the highest in Europe . . .

'The industry is highly organized and prices and margins, including those for rock phosphate, are prescribed in detail. It is difficult in these circumstances, as in the case of most nitrogenous fertilizers, not to speak of monopolistic tendencies or practices . . .

The unsubsidized price of powder superphosphate (18 per cent. water soluble) to the farmer rose from £3 17s. 6d. in 1938 to £14 6s. 0d. per ton in 1955, i.e., by 269 per cent. The average import price of rock phosphate increased . . . by 319 per cent.'

'On the basis of a 50 per cent. proportion of the raw material to the finished product in 1955 we obtain an increase in manufacturers' costs and profits per unit of output, as reflected in prices to farmers, of 32 per cent. This is larger than the increases in prices of coal or weekly wage rates.'

'Professor Plate considers that the relatively bigger difference between the prices of the imported raw material and the finished product in Germany compared with other countries could be ascribed either to higher profits or to higher manufacturing costs. The British price is still higher than the German, and his remark would, therefore, apply a fortiori [more conclusively] to conditions in this country . . .

'On the basis of a 50 per cent. proportion of raw material to finished product in 1952 we obtain the result that manufacturing costs plus profits increased in the United Kingdom by 90 per cent. (between 1952 and 1955) and in the United States by 39 per cent. only.'

* * *

3) 'Prices of **POTASH** increased between 1940 and 1955 by only 14 per cent. in the United States, and judging by this standard the fertilizer industry this side of the Atlantic, with the exception of some compound manufacturers, is either inefficient or riddled with monopolistic practices . . .

'Although there seems to be no discrimination against the British farmer, the possibility that all European farmers are equally discriminated against by the European potash syndicates cannot, of course, in view of the American evidence, be excluded . . .

'The following table shows prices of potash in Britain to be amongst the highest in Europe . . . It seems that owing to the monopolistic structure of the market merchants' commissions in the UK the prices of potash charged in the compounds are too high. Circumstantial evidence from the USA shows that a reduction of prices should now be possible.'

* * *

4) 'We have evidence that productivity increased in both the manufacture of some **COMPOUNDS** and some "straights". If an increase was also obtained elsewhere, as is probable, it was not passed on to the consumer; an eventuality which usually results under monopolistic conditions.'

* * *

5) 'The monopolistic organization of the British fertilizer industry might, therefore, be the cause not only of a higher increase in prices in Britain compared with some other countries since 1939, but also the cause of a declining importance of the United Kingdom in the international trade of chemical fertilizers.'

'Since customs duties do not lower prices or discourage monopolies their role in this trend cannot be ignored.'

'Neither should one ignore the fact that while trade unions are frequently criticized for neglecting the importance of the export trade in their wage negotiations, monopolies are seldom criticized for much the same thing.'

* * *

6) The evidence collected seems to leave no doubt that what are termed 'monopolistic tendencies and practices' are widespread in the chemical fertilizer industry.

'Farmers, who still work in conditions competitive with other farmers, including those from overseas, have to pass on to the consumer any savings in costs resulting from increased efficiency, while the fertilizer manufacturers can refrain from doing so.'

KING STREET'S HISTORY IS A MYSTERY

World News of September 22, 1956—over a year ago—announced the appointment of an Editing Commission to prepare the publication of an official history of the British Communist Party.

Has anybody heard anything about what this commission has been doing since it was appointed? To the best of our knowledge and belief no announcements whatever have been made.

INDUSTRY

PORTWORKERS ACT TO LIMIT OVERTIME

By Our Industrial Correspondent

DISCONTENT over compulsory overtime has been rife on the docks ever since the end of the war.

The Dock Labour Scheme is used to compel dockers—at very short notice, sometimes no more than a few hours—to work either before or after their normal shift or at weekends. And in the northern ports the 'normal' working week is fifty-two hours.

In 1954 there was a strike over compulsory overtime which began in London and which eventually spread to Southampton, Hull, Liverpool, Manchester and Birkenhead.

But before that, in 1951, Manchester docks were tied up for six weeks in a solid strike on the issue.

Last week compulsory overtime led to another Manchester stoppage. This three-day strike flared up over the suspension of a crane-driver member of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers—the 'blue' union—who had refused to work beyond six a.m. after a night shift.

On the day his three-day suspension began the other crane drivers—two hundred of them—decided, as a protest, to stay away from work with him during his suspension.

The crane drivers are now back at work, but they have laid down the challenge to their employer and to the Dock Labour Board. They decided that after their three days' strike no work will be done on ships between six a.m. and eight a.m. unless the vessel is sailing at eight a.m.

THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

'I did not see the militiamen use their truncheons . . . I gained the impression that the militia were determined to show their skill and their authority. And I think that is very much the essence of what is behind the events in Warsaw over the past two days.' (Daily Worker, October 5).

'No citizen is safe on the streets of Warsaw at night because of the indiscriminate truncheoning by the militia of all who come within range . . .

'Your Correspondent is writing in a building . . . in the heart of the city to the accompaniment of tear-gas bombs and citizens' screaming after being struck by truncheons. It is difficult to leave the building as the militia are striking at anyone within reach.' (The Times, October 5).

BOOKS

MARX EXPOSED THIS HUMBUG IN ADVANCE

From Leonard Hussey

VOLUME VIII of the new Russian edition of the works of Marx and Engels has now appeared, reports *Pravda* of September 26. This volume covers mainly the years 1851-53 and so includes Marx's study of the rise of Napoleon III to dictatorship, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

The topical importance of this work as an aid (as regards method) to understanding 'the cult of the individual' and so helping to overcome its consequences was pointed out well in advance by Marx himself, when he compared his own book with those written on the same subject by two famous contemporaries:

'Victor Hugo's "Napoleon The Little" confines itself to bitter and brilliant invective against the responsible author of the coup d'état.

'The coup itself appears to him to have come like a bolt from the blue and to be nothing but the result of the violence of an individual, but he fails to observe that thereby he makes this individual great instead of small by crediting him with a personal power of initiative which would be unexampled in world history.

'On the other hand, Proudhon's 'The Coup d'Etat' attempts to show the coup as the result of a train of previous historical

development, but in his hands the historical construction of the coup developed into an historical apologia for the hero of the coup. Thus he falls into the error of our so-called objective historians.

'In my treatment of the subject, however, I show how the class struggle in France created conditions and circumstances which made it possible for a mediocre and grotesque individual to play the role of hero.'

The *Pravda* announcement mentions that volume VIII includes a number of documents not previously available in Russian, and specifies particularly the minutes of the meeting of the Communist League on September 15, 1850.

It is extraordinary that this should not have been published in Russian before, as it contains some observations by Marx which are very well known to western Marxists.

Presumably the explanation is to be found in the fact that Marx on this occasion ruthlessly debunked a certain type of 'proletarian' humbug much in favour with the Stalinists. He said:

'The minority [in the League] replaces critical observation with dogmatism, a materialist attitude with an idealist one. It regards its own wishes as the driving force of the revolution, instead of the real facts of the situation.

'While we tell the workers that they must go through fifteen, twenty, perhaps even fifty years of war and civil war, not only in order to alter existing conditions, but even to make themselves fit to take over political power, you tell them, on the contrary, that they must seize political power now or abandon all hope.

'While we point out how undeveloped the German proletariat still is, you flatter the nationalism and the craft prejudices of the German artisan in the crudest fashion, and that is naturally more popular.

'Just as the democrats made a sort of holy entity out of the word "people", so you are doing the same with the word "proletariat".'

JOURNAL

Second New Reasoner

The second number of *The New Reasoner* is brightened—if that is the word for such a sombre subject—by Paul Hogarth's moving and evocative drawing of aspects of apartheid 'In Strydom's South Africa'.

Editors John Saville and E. P. Thompson have assembled an impressive team of contributors. They include Doris Lessing, whose short story 'The Day that Stalin Died' is piquant, Malcolm MacEwen on 'The Soviet Changes' and Stephen Hatch on Harold Laski.

Of particular interest are articles by Leopold Infeld and Arthur Miller. But most worthy of congratulation of all are a synopsis and scene from a recent satirical play by Nazim Hikmet, one of whose characters is writing a thesis on 'The significance of punctuation marks in the immortal aphorisms of Comrade Petrov'.

Specimens of Comrade Petrov's 'immortal aphorisms' are: 'If you really get down to brass tacks, sport is a most important factor in the cause of strengthening health' and 'That young lady in the yellow cap is using her arms well. In this way she is developing, widening and securing in her sector our Soviet sport'.

Theory and discussion

The first number of *Marxism Today* includes an article by Harry Pollitt reprinted from the first issue of the new Soviet journal *Questions of the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*.

After four pages of Arnold Kettle's article 'English Blake' there is a note saying: 'The remainder of this article consists of some pages written in 1948. I have . . . left them exactly as I wrote them nine years ago.'

An article by Maurice Cornforth is based on a paper read to the Warsaw Conference of the International Institute of Philosophy last July.

Marxism Today is a 'theoretical and discussion journal'. The discussion article consists of extracts from the Soviet economists' discussion on the political economy textbook,

(Continued overleaf)

JOURNAL (Continued from previous page)

translated into English from a German translation in Sowjetwissenschaft of a summary in the Proceedings of the Moscow University.

The other article in this issue is an original one by Emile Burns on the theory of crisis.

An invitation refused

The Editor of The Newsletter was invited by Mr. J. de V. Allen, President of the Oxford Eastern Europe Society, to address a meeting in Oxford commemorating the Hungarian uprising.

Mr. Allen said the 'only immediate and tangible result' of the meeting might be 'to provide the BBC Hungarian Service with comfortable news for its listeners'.

The Editor replied: 'As a communist, I am not in sympathy with the aims of the Oxford Eastern Europe Society and therefore cannot associate myself with a meeting arranged under its auspices.'

LETTER**AN ANALYSIS OF 'NOT BY BREAD ALONE'**

Now that Dudintsev's 'Not by Bread Alone' is available in English, and now that Arnold Kettle has (through clenched teeth) admitted it is 'readable' (though, of course, 'out of focus'), all sorts of people will be reading and discussing this remarkable book.

I should like to draw attention to the discussion of what we can learn about Soviet society from 'Not by Bread Alone' which appeared in the March-April 1957 number of Labour Review (not to be confused with Labour Monthly).

So far as I know this is the only Marxist analysis of the book as a social document which has appeared to date. Labour Review is obtainable from Messrs. Collets.

London, S.W.

K. Rawlinson

Should We Mourn the Third Programme?

By Alison Macleod

SHOULD we mourn the Third Programme? Not yet, I think. The cuts, now they are here, are not nearly so bad as at first seemed likely.

For this we must thank the vigorous protest movement which has developed in the past few months. No doubt more people would have joined it, if the Third had not in the past gone out of its way to antagonize so many different kinds of listeners.

It has antagonized lowbrows by its snooty tone, and highbrows by offering, as 'poetry', the work of Mr. James Kirkup. It has maddened many who were humbly and honestly trying to educate themselves, by interlarding English programmes with long passages of French. (The pretence that they understand French is among the most tiresome affectations of our half-educated bourgeoisie.)

One of the highest brows I know, who set out to listen reverently to a play translated from the Peruvian, exclaimed half-way through: 'No, no! This must have been commissioned by the Daily Express, in order to discredit the Third Programme.'

WORLD'S GREAT MASTERPIECES. Yet the Third has done a job which no other wavelength has attempted, and which TV is still afraid to tackle. It has relayed the world's great masterpieces at their proper length, unhindered by news bulletins and fixed time-tables.

And this (thanks to the protests) will continue. Last Friday all cuts were in abeyance, and Wagner's *Götterdämmerung* came from Covent Garden from 5.45 to 11.10, with two short intervals.

Last week, too, we had Maxim Gorky's play 'Yegor Bulichov'. And the dreaded 'Network Three' which encroaches on the first two hours of the Third, turns out to be a very pleasant mishmash of an educational kind.

The half-hour on 'Parents and Children', for example, was obviously needed; the BBC has for too long insulted fathers, and mothers who go out to work, by confining all such talks to the afternoon 'Woman's Hour'.

ATTACKS ON CULTURE. But this is not the end of the cuts, or the end of attacks on culture. The BBC is always making timid concessions to the Daily Express mentality.

How many times, on TV, has it presented a Shakespeare play, with a little talk beforehand to tell us it

won't really hurt—and then ruined the whole evening by stupid, barbarous cuts?

The friends of culture will need to shout as loudly for it as the Express shouts against it, if we are to keep the Third Programme. But then, the Third had better make some friends. Not by lowering its standards, but rather by raising them, by making itself more truly and completely human.

What the Third lacks can be felt by contrasting almost any of its items with the recent Home Service programme, 'The Winter of the Bombs'.

VOICES OF LONDONERS. This consisted mainly of the voices of Londoners who had lived through the big blitz. There was the man in charge of the mortuary, who helped people to identify their relatives.

'I said to her: "Was your mother a woman that did a lot of sewing?" She said: "Yes, that's right; she had a lot of marks, from the needle, on her right thumb." "That's her, then," I said. I didn't upset her by showing her the thumb. Because, you see, the thumb was all I did have.'

There was the man who stood on the embankment, the night a German airman came parachuting down. 'His uniform was green, and his face was about the same colour . . . The most extraordinary thing happened. A man came up and kicked him, very hard, on the seat. Somebody who had lost people in the raids, I suppose.'

There was the voice of a mother, deliberately quiet, describing how she had searched the hospitals for days, and had at last been persuaded to look for her child among the dead. 'Her hair was all burred away. And her face was marked, where she'd put her little hands up, to keep away the flames.'

THE FRIENDS IT NEEDS. This is not art; it is what art is all about. The artist is the man who tells us how it is that we can do these things to one another; and how we can learn to stop doing them.

He cannot do his job at all if he is snooty, or superior, or if he talks a language different from our own.

The Third seems to recognize this, when it broadcasts the works of Gorky. But unless it can encourage the growth of new, British, Maxim Gorkys, it will never find the friends it needs to save its life.