

**LEFT**

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LEFT

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CONTENTS:-		Page
1. Editorial		
2. Towards the Revolution of Reason.	Colin Mace	1.
3. France: the Socialist Revolution Begins.	Roger Bartlett	3.
4. What Price Pragmatism.	Bob Williams	7.
5. Ethical Socialism or Marxist Determinism.	Kelvin Hopkins	9.
6. Some <i>In-situ</i> Thoughts on Inevitability.	J. M. Bird	12.
7. Czechoslovakia - Intervention and Betrayal.	Paul Johnson	13.
8. "This House believes Capitalism is best for Britain"		
	comment by Stephen Ree:	16.
9. Review of "One Dimensional Man" (Marcuse).	Jim Harbord	17.
10. Songs for Socialists.		19.

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## EDITORIAL.

Most of the contributions in this edition of 'Left' are concerned with getting back to first principles. 'What is wrong with society?' and 'how can it be changed?' are the main questions which are posed. Elementary though these questions may seem, they are extremely important, and a full discussion on them is to be welcomed.

However, though there is clearly a general intention to break with 'pragmatism' - a creed which any socialist should be ashamed to admit to - it seems to me that many of the alternatives suggested in this magazine are merely 'disguised pragmatism' as one contributor admitted to me. Marxism, the only scientific approach to society is 'refuted' with the usual hoary arguments, but anyone who dismisses Marx as an 'economic determinist' has clearly not understood the theory, and might be recommended to read Plekhanov's "Materialist Conception of History". Many of the other anti-Marxist arguments put forward are similarly only arguments against 'vulgar Marxism', they do not refute the theory as it was written.

It is asserted that 'nobody has a monopoly on truth' as if this is somehow an argument against Marxism. In fact no genuine Marxist would claim to have such a monopoly. Again, it is not Marxists who believe in absolute truth, but the idealists. It is even suggested that such truths will be revealed to all (in time), through education. How was it then, that students in Germany played a progressive role in 1848 and yet (after increased education!) supported the rise of Hitler? It is clearly nonsense to see education as neutral in this way.

In one article it is suggested that socialist revolutions just do not take place in highly industrialized societies. In fact in Germany in 1918, in France in 1936 and 1968 (to mention but a few) all the conditions existed for the socialist revolution except a revolutionary leadership. The working class have shown again and again their preparedness to fight; they have not brought in socialism essentially because of the treacherous role of their social democrat and communist party 'leaders'. Socialism will not be successful without the correct leadership. Marx himself continually emphasised that man makes his own history. A Marxist cannot simply sit back and wait for the 'inevitable' revolution. Again and again the ruling class have bought off the workers' leaders and turned them in the safe, reformist, direction. Again and again writers like Marcuse turn to a philosophy of pessimism as a result of a limited period of capitalist stability. Such ideas must be exposed for what they are - mere smoke screens. This is the job of the Marxist. We are told that 'we are all planners now, we are in an age of mixed economy, not of capitalism and class war'. Again it is the job of the Marxist to expose the myth. We live in an age of monopoly capitalism, with the state being used more and more to prop up the economy, not to develop it or plan it.

By no means is the way forward to socialism a straight one. It is obvious from this short piece that many differences of opinion exist, and for that reason I welcome the discussion of basic ideas in this edition.

Paul Johnson.

## TOWARDS THE REVOLUTION OF REASON

Colin A. Mace.

Taken in all their varieties liberalism and Marxism now constitute our major, even our only, political alternative. You might say what about conservatism? Well what about it? Or rather where is it? Wherever it prevails as the dominant ideology of a state e.g. Franco's Spain, Vorster's South Africa, or what was Salazar's Portugal, it rests more on political power than on ideological consent and the days of such regimes are numbered. In advanced capitalist societies the ideological and intellectual functions performed by 19th century conservatism are now performed by liberalism. There is no coherent conservatism that is not a variety of liberalism or mere eccentricity (Enoch?)

We are left with liberalism and Marxism which have both been insurgent creeds in their various forms; they have been the rhetoric and ideology of movements, parties and classes on the road to power and in due course each has become a conservative creed, the ideology and rhetoric of a consolidated political and economic system. As ideology liberalism and Marxism have both been made vulgar and banal - each supplies clichés for the defence of a great power state and for the abuse of the other bloc and all its works. What started off as two political philosophies have become official ideologies and have become, in differing ways, engulfed by nationalism and in the process been castrated.

With success ideology becomes vulgarized. Ideology as the public face of a political philosophy very often becomes myth or folklore - and frequently even a minimum of ideology withers away and all that is left is an empty and irrelevant rhetoric, as in the case of liberalism. L. B. J. on the one hand can begin a speech "Tonight I speak for the dignity of man ....." and on the other bomb hell out of him in Vietnam.

Marxism and liberalism in their contemporary institutionalized forms are at best state controlled ideologies and at worst empty rhetorics. Liberalism as publicly expressed is without coherent content, its goals have been made so formal and abstract as to provide no clear moral standards. Liberalism has become practical and pragmatic and has lost its moral content and force like Marxism. Both have generally become irrelevant to political positions having moral content - both have forsaken their common heritage - the secular humanist tradition of Western Europe.

Today these two folklores, the ideology of vulgar Marxism and the rhetoric of vulgar liberalism, confront each other all over the world, such supported by a vast and elaborate machinery of propaganda. They offer little or nothing of value to anyone, anymore and alternatives are constantly being sought by different sections of society. The search for alternatives will continue as long as men seek political orientation. But of course most men do not, they merely accept the going folklore, liberal or marxist, as the accident of their geographic residence may dictate. However there is a significant minority in western societies today disillusioned by the empty rhetoric of liberalism and the whole political scene. Admittedly this

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minority is one of mainly students and highly educated people and the "revolution" is one of reason and not blood, but it would be foolish to underestimate its importance. Marcuse sees students at Universities developing a kind of universal consciousness which as they go into the wider world they gradually communicate to the ordinary citizens thus the "revolution" is going on continually. The liberal system, in putting young people into such establishments as Universities and Colleges of Further Education, is, according to Marcuse, sowing the seeds of its own destruction.

The students of today are playing a vital role in breathing new life into and resurrecting the moral content of liberalism and the ideals on which western civilization is based. The hippies in their own way were trying to resurrect and in some cases live according to these ideals. They realised as do a large number of students today, that we are living in a global nightmare; that, to use hippie jargon, we are all turned inside out and hanging upside down. We are living in some lousy condition of fragmented consciousness pathetically estranged and alienated from our true selves. There is an unhealthy tendency among some groups, like the hippies, to think that we cannot get back to any self-validating experience except by glimpses, chemically induced, of certain states of being that exist within us, as testimony of a wider and more meaningful consciousness - a universal consciousness. A revolution in the mind itself is a necessary condition for a changed value system which is the only possible hope for the moribund human race. It is students who are experiencing to some degree this revolution in the mind and developing a universal consciousness and gradually transmitting it to the wider world. Studying Zen, occultism, repetition of mantras, and going on "trips" can only provide us with euphoric sell-outs unless we face the only reality that exists here and now - the practical reality of our conditioned minds. Such activities mentioned above can become red herrings nosing us off the track by producing the euphoric delusion that we are holy, when, actually, we behave towards one another like a pack of pigs in a sty.

Opting out or dropping out are not answers to any problems - they are a purely negative approach. We can only work within the system and attempt to change it from within. At Universities and similar places students are developing or discovering this universal consciousness and are demanding the resurrection and implementation of the classic ideals shared in many ways by both Marxism and liberalism. This revolution of reason will necessarily be a slow, agonizingly slow, process but it is taking place now and will continue to do so, until it forms the basis of all practical politics and policies, when the quality of life might be such that we can no longer describe the human race as moribund, and a pack of pigs fighting it out in a sty. But as Gandhi said "It may be long before the law of love will be recognized in international affairs. The machineries of governments stand between and hide the hearts of one people from those of another".

## FRANCE - THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION BEGINS

Roger M. Bartlett.

The events which took place in France this May shattered the theory of "social peace" which has pervaded the Labour movement during the post-war boom years. At the same time the claims of certain so-called Marxists, that the European proletariat had become "bourgeoisified", have been refuted by the revolutionary role of the French workers.

### THE FIFTH REPUBLIC.

The Gaullist regime, relying on the support of reactionary army leaders and the middle class, was itself a progeny of the crisis of 1958. Since then De Gaulle has assumed the mantle of a Bonapartist, manoeuvring between the bourgeoisie on the one hand and the working class on the other. Such a regime is by its very nature unstable, freezing for a short period the class struggle, but only to prepare the way for a social explosion at a later stage. Although De Gaulle's "independent" foreign policy may have appealed to the middle class, the harsh, economic facts of life ultimately provoked the discontent of the working population.

Despite improvements since 1958, on quarter of the labour force earned less than £12 per week, while between 5 and 6 million people lived below the official subsistence level. The average working week was 47 hours, much longer than in most advanced capitalist countries. The housing situation also remains a scandal, with 3 million (out of 9 million) people in Paris living in atrocious conditions.

In February 1967, 2½ million workers went on strike to fight for better conditions. In the elections of the following month, De Gaulle's majority in the National Assembly was reduced to a handful and the Communist Party (P.C.F.) gained over one million votes.

Faced with a deteriorating economic situation, with the prospect of worse to come, the French Government introduced measures in May 1967 giving itself the right to rule by decree on social and economic questions. This decision provoked a 1 day general strike of 12 million workers, which clearly demonstrated the growing militancy of the French working class.

By May 1968, the number of unemployed had risen to more than 500,000, ¼ of whom were school leavers. At the same time wage increases won over the past two years had been eaten away by price rises, so that real wages had actually fallen.

The highly inflammatory situation now existing required only a spark to instigate a mass movement of the working class, a movement which was to threaten the very existence of French capitalism. The students were to provide this spark.

## STUDENT RADICALISATION.

Student demonstrations in early May, in protest against inadequate living conditions and shocking academic facilities, led to the rector calling the police into the Sorbonne. This action, which revived memories of Nazi occupation, succeeded in uniting the vast majority of the students of Paris, and subsequently of the whole of France, behind their more militant colleagues. Professors, teachers and school-children joined in support of the students in the ensuing demonstrations and street-fighting.

In the demonstration of May 8th, the slogans (and the arrests following the demonstration) indicated that large numbers of apprentices and young workers from the technical colleges in Paris, as well as unemployed youths, had joined the struggle. These young workers provided the link, whereby adult trade unionists were drawn into the movement. The success of the students in gaining their immediate demands impressed the workers, and the vicious brutality of the riot police (C.R.S.) won the sympathy of 80% (according to the Daily Express) of the Paris population for the students' demands.

## WORKERS REVOLT

The above factors prompted the C.G.T. (Communist T.U.), C.F.D.T. (Catholic T.U.), F.S.N. (University Teachers Association) and U.N.E.F. (Students Federation) to call for a 24 hour general strike on May 13th. This developed, against the intention of the union leaders, into a nation-wide seizure of factories by the workers, who from then on took the leading role in future developments.

The workers' demands included:

- a) minimum wage of 1000 Fr. per month.
- b) Shorter hours.
- c) Security of employment.
- d) Improved social service benefits.
- e) The right of the trade unions to carry out activity in the factories.
- f) Full wages during the strike period.

In addition, workers committees had been set up in each of the occupied factories. The Financial Times of May 20th revealing the understanding by the representatives of capital of the political nature of the struggle, commented

"The workers are not merely asking for financial compensation, for shorter hours, but like the students are also talking vaguely of revolutionary committees."

At the height of the strike 10 million workers were involved, more than half the working population. This in a country where "7 French workers out of 10 do not belong to any union" (Observer). The peasants of Nantes erected barricades in support of the workers and students, while white collar sections had also been drawn into the struggle. The police had issued a statement saying that "serious matters of conscience" would arise if they were set against the workers by the authorities, and that they "appreciated the reasons which inspired the striking wage-earners" (Times - May 24th). The Army was split and the Gaullist government had effectively ceased to function.

All the preconditions of a revolutionary situation were present, what was lacking was a revolutionary party with the audacity to seize state power.

#### THE ROLE OF THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY (P.C.F.)

The initial reaction of the P.C.F. to the students' revolt was one of open hostility. The Union of Communist Students (U.E.C.), which had played no role in the student movement, said in a statement to Le Monde (5th and 6th May) that the demonstrations "prevented the mass of students from working and taking their exams (!)". The May 8th edition of Pravda used similar arguments, complaining of "trotskyists" in the vanguard of the student movement.

Under the impact of the mass mobilisation of the workers, the P.C.F. line was changed and the students were commended for unleashing a movement which challenged the Gaullist regime.

Faced with the revolt of the workers, the P.C.F. adopted their favourite tactic of a Popular Front - i.e. dropping any pretence to a revolutionary programme in favour of a parliamentary bloc with the Federation of the Left and other "democratic(?)" forces. The excuse for this "tactic" was their reluctance to alienate their "allies" (presumably the middle class); the reasoning being that they would have done so had a programme for the radical reconstruction of society on socialist lines been adopted.

A peaceful revolution in France could easily have taken place in the latter part of May. Yet the P.C.F. used "revolutionary weapons to achieve a parliamentary aim", (Economist - May 25th). The forces of reaction would have been impotent to prevent the transfer of state power to a workers party. A programme, explaining the exploitation of the peasantry under capitalism, the inevitable ruination of the petty bourgeoisie by the huge monopolies which dominate French industry, and the benefit to those sections of a socialist policy, would have won them decisively to the side of the workers. The attitude of the police and army would have prevented the "blood-bath", which the P.C.F. claimed would follow an attempt at insurrection.

Instead of giving the lead to the workers by organising workers councils on a local, then national, basis; instead of consolidating the support of the peasants and the lower middle class; instead of putting forward a transitional programme for the transformation of society; the P.C.F. and its union, the C.G.T., acted as a brake on the workers' movement. They attempted to keep the workers demands at an economic level and then to make concessions to the bosses.

#### GENERAL REACTION.

The cowardly tactics of the P.C.F. leadership enabled the government to prepare its comeback and marshal the forces of reaction. With no clear lead coming from above, the workers began to drift back to work, many of their immediate demands met but their revolutionary purpose frustrated.

As "normality" began slowly to return, De Gaulle called a general election and the P.C.F. welcomed this with glee. "Against disorders and against anarchy - vote Communist." (!) Thus, instead of a programme of radical change, the communists vied

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with the Gaullists as the party of order and respectability. In this campaign are well known, with the Communists losing over 600,000 votes and the Gaullists achieving a landslide victory.

The lower middle-class and backward elements of the working class, who had been brought into the struggle in May, voted Gaullist. This is not, as apologists for the P.C.F. claim, proof that there was no revolutionary situation in May. It can only be understood in the light of the social position of the lower middle class, a class standing between the two great classes of capitalism - the proletariat on the one side and the bourgeoisie on the other. They will respond to a clear lead from the working class, as in the upheaval in May, but will not (and this is the lesson of the election results) support a vacillating and cowardly workers' party. They deserted the flag of the P.C.F., the party of action, for the Gaullists, the party of order.

Thus, by their parliamentary obsessions, the P.C.F. paved the way for a Gaullist victory. "All the physical levers of power were in the hands of the communists". (Times). They surrendered them with only a whimper of protest.

The role of the P.C.F. changed little after the elections. When De Gaulle released the neo-fascist Salan and his associates from prison, arrested the leaders of, and banned, 11 left-wing organisations, the P.C.F. raised no objection.

"They acted like Labians, not like revolutionaries ..... and acquiesced in the government's decision to ban all the small left-wing revolutionary movements" (Economist - June 22nd).

#### LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE.

"The end of the first act, not the final curtain" was the Economist's verdict on the elections. The election victory will be a hollow one unless the government can solve the economic and social problems facing France. The wage rises won by the workers will be eaten away by the price rises and inflation that will follow. This, coupled with the abolition of tariffs within the E.E.C. and the downswing in world trade, will exacerbate the economic position in France.

The Gaullist victory and the government's inability to solve the problems confronting it will only open the road to further crises and general strikes, with the question of a revolutionary transformation of society once more on the order of the day. "Some prophets already talk of the May days as a dress rehearsal, the 1905 of a new French revolution." (Economist - June 8th).

Each section must learn the correct lessons from the events of May. The student revolutionaries must discard irrevocably the ideas of Marcuse and the "New Left", for the inability of the students to destroy capitalism by themselves was clearly demonstrated. The programme of anarcho-syndicalism, which refused to go beyond the demands already put forward by the workers must be rejected in favour of a Marxist policy, generalising and politicising the workers' struggle. The tactics of "teaching" the workers "the art of insurrection" by example alienated the large mass of workers who still supported the P.C.F. The students must understand the futility of going through the motions of an insurrection without the mass participation of the working class.

The Marxists in France must learn from their mistakes, to prepare themselves for the struggle ahead. They must begin immediately the task of rooting themselves in the mass labour movement, especially the P.C.F., with the perspective of wresting the leadership of the workers organisations from the Stalinists. This can only be done by patiently explaining the role of the P.C.F. in the May Revolution, distinguishing between the betrayal of the leaders and the heroic role of rank-and-file communists. At the same time an alternative programme of transitional demands, leading to the seizure of power by the French workers, must be put forward with the aim of winning over the more advanced layers initially and at a later stage converting it into a fighting programme around which to rally the rank-and-file of the P.C.F.

The workers themselves will not quickly forget the feel of power that was in their hands in May. The struggle will have taught many lessons to its participants. The events of May mark the beginning of the Socialist Revolution in France. The temporary lull which has existed since July will soon give way to the next phase of the struggle, when once again French capitalism will be threatened with destruction, and the French workers yet again point the way to the future.

The overthrow of capitalism in France would give a tremendous fillip to the revolutionary movement throughout the world. The ruling class of the West and the Stalinist bureaucracies recognise that a socialist France would sound their death-knell, and take further the task begun in October 1917, of the building of a Socialist World Federation.

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#### WHAT PRICE PRAGMATISM?

Bob Williams.

The three most prominent aspects of recent British politics have been the apparent aimlessness of both Labour and Conservatives, the absence of long-term thought, and the beginning of a public rejection of the political system.

A lack of firm aims is sometimes praised as pragmatism, "keeping one's options open" is, I believe the phrase currently in favour. However, socialists of all descriptions must remember that PRAGMATISM IS NOT NEUTRAL. It implies an acceptance of the existing values and structure of society. As Paul Foot puts it, "Social reforms offered pragmatically, which seek to alter the structure, can, when they conflict with that structure and those values, be pragmatically abandoned".

Harold Wilson's belief in economic growth and his conviction that "the Labour Party is a moral crusade or it is nothing", have been pitted in unequal competition since Labour came to power. The arch-advocate of technocracy has struggled on, but the Moral Crusader has been sunk without trace. The list of Labour's mistakes,

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blunders and downright betrayals makes painful reading, for instance, Polaris, Vietnam, Rhodesia, Prescriptions, Kenya Asians, it is a sorry and seemingly endless list, but to place the responsibility for this tragic record solely on Wilson, is to dabble frivolously in personalities. Wilson's personal faults, errors, and idiosyncrasies would only have been replaced by others, perhaps even more grotesque, from Brown, Callaghan or Jenkins.

Although party leaders are not expected to provide profound insights into the human condition, I think we might justifiably expect some indication from them, of where, in their view, our society ought to be going. Otherwise how can we tell if they are helping to get it there, or indeed if we agree on the destination? Because there has been a lack of definite aims and of long-term thinking, there have been values to which those policies are supposed to be related. It is this lack of a comprehensive social purpose that is the real cause of the despair of the Labour movement.

Economic growth is a valuable and indispensable means to a just, socialist society, but the Labour Party must abandon the idea that economic recovery is the utopian end that will put everything right. When recovery does take place it will be even more important to state the criteria for using the fruits of growth. The aims of policy should be stated in a clear, measurable way, and policies assessed in the light of these aims.

I believe that a radical party must have a set of definite aims if it is not to be "blown off course". No self-respecting socialist could subscribe to Professor Oakeshott's view that politics is like steering a ship in a storm. The good captain is then necessarily concerned with keeping his ship off the rocks and he does not retire to his cabin to construct a general theory of navigation. Neither do I accept Karl Popper's assertion that only "piecemeal social engineering" is possible if totalitarianism is to be avoided. Piecemeal social engineering only makes sense if we have a prior notion of the purpose of the engine.

If government is to become, to use a Wilsonian phrase, "purposive", a vigorous, genuinely socialist theory is a basic essential. Pragmatism has created a theoretical and organisational vacuum in the Labour movement and it is upon the ability to fill that vacuum that the future of British socialism depends.

ETHICAL SOCIALISM OR MARXIST DETERMINISM

Kelvin P. Hopkins.

Very few would doubt the genius of Karl Marx and Leon Trotsky, yet brilliant as their work was, can one accept their central thesis that history is dictated solely by a dialectical materialistic process. Capitalism was for them a mere stage in the unfolding of history, an essential forerunner to the socialist revolution, the cataclysmic change which was to mark the beginning of truly human history with a society free of class divisions, the basic cause of social conflict. In this situation man was not to be the stunted animal-like being of previous history but would at last be free to develop his potentialities to an almost unimaginable degree. The state was to wither away leaving Socialist Man, completely moral, fulfilled, and happy; devoid of aggression and assertive selfishness, and able to live in idyllic harmony with his fellows in a society of equality, plenty and peace.

With this vision as a rallying call it is small wonder that Marxist ideas have proved enormously powerful. However, though having great respect for many of Marx's ideas, his theory of alienation, his sociology and so on, one cannot accept the whole as a consistent rational doctrine. His economic determinism led him to prophesy events which have not been fulfilled. The pauperisation of the mass of the working class leading to socialist revolution has not eventuated.

Perhaps Marx was in fact ethically motivated. Indeed it is obvious he thought as a humanist that socialism was eminently desirable. He wished to promote the overthrow of capitalism and was without doubt the greatest revolutionary propagandist of all time. However he claimed to despise ethical socialists. Capitalism was not immoral but an essential historical stage on the road to socialism. Socialism was not just desirable but inevitable. This is where I cannot agree. Capitalism is immoral, socialism is ethically desirable and judging by world history since Marx's death, one would be wise to think carefully before saying anything was inevitable. One can be generous to Marx and say that he anticipated a growing consciousness of the need for socialist government if some of the problems of man's basic needs were to be solved, and that his dialectic was a kind of metaphor for a belief that progress towards more rationality and humanity in social organisation was inevitable.

An ethical socialist creed implies value judgements. Whence then does one derive these values. One must assert that there are several basic human needs. Life is preferable to death, co-operation to competition, security to fear and of course plenty to scarcity. In short a secure basis on which to determine the course of one's life. One can go further and say that some sort of freedom is desired by all men. This freedom must be some notion of positive freedom. How can one be free if one is subject to the ravages of nature, or the arbitrary will of other men? Can one really be said to be free if a system keeps one in economic subjugation to other men, or if one's mental growth is stunted by lack of educational opportunity? Is a man free if he is alienated from his fellows by being continually forced to compete with them. Positive freedom cannot be that freedom of the laissez-faire ideology still rampant in the United States. As Isaiah Berlin puts it, "Freedom for the pike is death for the minnows".

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A value system is thus built up and expressed, and one is led to conclude that there is a need for democratic government, in order that men may collectively govern themselves and control their own social environment, and also that undemocratic power centres be curtailed. Hence, as private capital held in a few hands is the most potent form of undemocratic power, it is desirable that it be eliminated by economic socialisation. Thus men might also receive the full fruits of their endeavours, albeit collectively. The predominant objective of production might then be that of social need not mere private profit. Socialisation of the supply of man's basic requirements for a tolerable life appears then to have a quite rational foundation. Marcuse has noticed however that value-patterns are implanted and manipulated in man's consciousness by the existing power structures in society and these may well be at variance with some of man's fundamental needs. However one need not be too pessimistic. Education has an enormously liberating effect in this respect and this is evidenced by the world-wide dissent from conventional value-patterns among students.

The derivation of socialist values as attempted above seems reasonably simple but social organisation and human psychology are exceedingly complex. One must always beware of the great danger of convincing oneself that one has discovered an absolute truth. Is it not wiser to use relative terms, one thing appears better than another, one system appears to nurture "happier" people or promote more human development? Men will always disagree to some extent. Their personalities, desires and propensities will always exhibit wide variety and a good thing too! Indeed, will not a society with a high level of education, and minimal economic and social insecurity promote a tremendous growth of individuality? The emotional need for rigid conformity will one hopes be obviated. Man's basic needs and the form of social organisation required to supply them are fairly easily analysed but to go beyond this is hazardous. Classlessness, greater educational opportunities and economic security will not eliminate all man's self-assertive and aggressive qualities. For the foreseeable future men will tend to identify themselves with groups of human beings, be they stamp-collectors, school teachers, or traffic wardens; they will always be some division of occupation or interest, some variety of cultural and geographical identity however small, and friction between groups and spheres will occur. While we must minimise the possibility of conflict, we must still maximise the enjoyment of living. A democratic, socialist and internationalist system can ensure this.

Utopia is impossible, and to find satisfactory compromises, dissent must always be allowed free expression. Constitutional opposition and the possibility of changing governments is as good a way as any of doing this at present. Secrecy and authoritarian rigidity in a more stable egalitarian world with violent conflict a most unlikely possibility, should give way to a truly open and tolerant society.

It is suggested then that we do not put all our hopes in an expected proletarian revolution to install a socialist order. Socialist activity should concern itself with moving in a rationally desirable direction. Utopian visions always tempt one to suggest that ends always justify means. Some ends may justify some means but this area of debate is bound to be treacherous. People alive now are concerned with what happens to them and quite reasonably are not always prepared to risk their lives for a cause. It may be true that most Marxists are really positivists but more impatient than their fellow socialists! Was Marx himself (though not Engels) really attempting to stir workers to revolt against their oppressors as a means of inducing change in a

socially desirable direction by providing a vision and a powerful rationale of inevitability to give them confidence? How many genuine scientific socialists are there? Few can deny that the material base of society is an enormous force in social change and leads to a greater possibility of socialism, but this is not the whole truth. The superstructure of society can be and is used successfully to prevent change.

The question of revolution or reform is quite distinct from that of determinism versus positivism. In some situations revolution may be desirable. The terrible oppression of the Batista regime in Cuba for instance certainly justified revolution as a lesser evil. If a revolution broke out in South Africa what socialist could deny it moral support. However a true Marxist revolution has not as yet occurred. Peasant revolts, coup d'etats, even electoral "revolutions" perhaps may move societies in directions, but Marxist revolutions don't happen. What seems more likely in developed countries at least is that as the level of education increases, a socialist moral consciousness will develop to a greater extent. Is this indeed what is happening now? This combined with more understanding of the real nature of society and its organization may lead to mounting pressure for change. Can we ever hope for more in fact? In Britain revolution is a negligible possibility, and neither desirable nor necessary for reform to occur. If however we mean something else by the term "revolution", a radical programme of socialist legislation, or a revolution in popular attitudes and ideas, then this may well happen. On being questioned by a Tory acquaintance what reforms I would wish to see a Labour government put through he said "That's not reform, it's revolution". However I am regarded by Marxist friends as a "lily-livered" reformist. Obviously revolution means different things to different people! Is revolution a relative concept after all?

England has changed radically since Marx's day, and in a socialist direction. Progress seems agonizingly slow with periods of back-peddling and vacillating faint-hearted Labour Governments, but it has taken place. Is it not more realistic to press continually for more radical reform than to dream of a great leap forward into the promised land. It may show pitifully small returns for enormous effort, but we can do no more.

SOME IN SITU THOUGHTS ON INEVITABILITY

My mind is fractured for a second,  
 The Phantom bucks, she flies  
 On wings of blood I rise.  
 The heaving tourquoise knots and flecks.  
 Intestines in my mind.

Beneath my gut hang jelly pods,  
 And death is in my will,  
 Though I must be blind still.  
 To the burning horror I must devise,  
 With the bald eagle's home grown skill.

Across the sands we flick at pace.  
 Across the beach where terror whines,  
 What can I do to end this race,  
 Held by the will I must abide.

The barrels spark; they're shouting well!  
 The flicking, burning splinters rise.  
 They bright and tear my reverged eyes  
 With visions of a personal hell.

AND SUDDENLY

The bird she cries, the bird is hit!  
 Shit! Must get out, abandon fast.  
 The seat has fired, my head is split.  
 My leg is torn; it will not last.

I'm drifting down: the chopper's there.  
 It should not be: it's far too near.  
 It's glinting blades reflect the sun,  
 And I descend into a bloody, flapjack blackness.

MERCIFULLY AT THAT MOMENT I, HUBERT H. H. AWAKE.

J.M. Bird.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

Paul Johnson.

On the night of August 20th, 620,000 Warsaw Pact troops crossed the borders into Czechoslovakia. Tanks were posted in all the main cities and road junctions, and the Czechoslovakia leaders were put under lock and key prior to 'consultations' in Moscow. What led to this drastic action by the U.S.S.R.? Clearly intervention was a risky weapon in that it provoked an uproar throughout the world communist movement and even in Eastern Europe itself, quite apart from the reaction in the West. There must have been compelling reasons for the decision to invade, but these reasons are not perhaps self evident.

The reforms of Dubcek and co. were in many ways merely copies of reforms carried out in other Stalinist states (including Russia), reforms carried out not because the Czechoslovak leaders were genuine democrats (Dubcek himself served loyally in high office under Novotny), but basically because the economy simply could not progress any further under the old system. In 1960 the tremendous growth rates of the early years of 'communist' rule were at an end, indeed there was a drop in production that year.

This crisis in production heightened the conflict between the two major factions in the Czechoslovak bureaucracy. On the one side are what might be called the party bureaucrats - numerous party officials and those managers of industry appointed for their service to the party rather than because of their ability. On the other side are the 'technocrats' - scientists, technicians and economists. This second group were originally the driving force behind the demand for reform, and they found ready allies among the intellectuals. They themselves did not, however, threaten the rule of the bureaucracy as a political system; they were only interested in making the bureaucracy more efficient and less authoritarian. They attacked the old 'administrative-directive' system of management represented by Novotny, and its emphasis on old fashioned heavy industry. They also resented the unfavourable terms of trade with Russia.

The reforms they wanted did not in any way involve a return to capitalism - the economy was to remain in the hands of the state - but nor were they socialist reforms. The model for the Czechoslovak reformists was Yugoslavia whose so-called 'socialist' system has resulted in high wage differentials and one million unemployed. Dubcek was not acting in the interests of the mass of the working people; he was determined that power should remain in the hands of the bureaucratic elite.

When Novotny lost his position as Part Secretary at the end of last year, opposition to Dubcek came not only from the officials and managers of the old system, but also from the workers. The reformists realized that they could not break the power of the Novotny group without the support of the workers, and in order to win this support Dubcek was forced to grant certain concessions in the form of limited liberalisation. (It should be noted that Poland's Gomulka was considered a 'liberal' in 1956 when he introduced a certain measure of reform in order to head off the movement of the masses. In 1968 he sent troops into Czechoslovakia!).

/Despite



Despite attacks on Dr. Otta Sik's economic ideas, the real reason for the intervention was the fear that Dubcek could not hold back the popular demand for freedom once reforms had begun. Otta Sik was only "carrying Libermanism to its logical conclusions" (Economist Sept. 14th). No intervention was made, for example, in Rumania, even though similar measures had been carried out there. The difference between the two countries is that Ceausecou was able to implement reforms without a mass movement of the Rumanian workers and peasants. In Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, Trotsky's ideas were discussed in the press, and some sections demanded the setting up of democratic workers councils, or soviets, to run industry. Dubcek, too, was afraid of this movement and restriction of the press and public meetings was beginning before the intervention.

Of course the U.S.S.R. leaders had to give another reason for the intervention, namely a 'counter-revolutionary plot'. The whole idea of a plot is of course ridiculous. If the soviet leaders genuinely intended to defend socialism in Czechoslovakia the first thing they would have done would have been to arm the workers, who would hardly be likely to bring back the old exploiters. (In fact, according to a poll held in Prague, 90% of the population wanted to keep the nationalized economy). But of course the Soviet bureaucracy dared not arm the workers - they could all too easily overthrow the bureaucrats as occurred in Hungary; not in order to smash socialism, but in order to build it. If this happened it could all too easily spread to the U.S.S.R.

As it was, the reaction of the Czech people to the invasion had a tremendous effect not only on the troops of the Warsaw Pact, but also on the people of the countries involved. The troops were influenced immediately. Some had been told they were in West Germany; others expected a friendly reception; all were bewildered by the crowds of Czechs and Slovaks who surrounded their tanks and told them they were not wanted. While making clear their opposition to the invasion, the Czechoslovaks initially fraternised with individual soldiers. Some progress was made: "One Russian soldier spoke up ..... Russian soldiers, he said, were intelligent; they sympathised with the argument of the people, but their officers and politicians were stupid and the soldiers could do nothing". (Guardian August 22nd). Troops were already being withdrawn and replaced by more 'reliable' troops by August 24th. Meanwhile in Moscow intellectuals were arrested for attempting to demonstrate against the invasion. Hungarian workers staged token strikes. There were several demonstrations in East Germany, and in Poland.

However, fraternisation had only a limited effect. Russian soldiers were unlikely to desert to the weak Czech side when to disobey an order could mean the death penalty. Also, the Czechoslovak leaders themselves called off the fraternisation. Not only did they oppose armed resistance; they went so far as to say "we must develop a new citizen tactic, continuing normal life peacefully completely ignoring the invaders". (Czech television August 23rd) Hardly a way to win over the invading soldiers!

Despite mass support, the leaders were afraid to do anything which might bring the working class into action 'en masse'. Clearly it was impossible for the Czechoslovaks to win a military victory, but it was entirely possible to win a politico-military victory, if the correct policies had been implemented. The first action

of a socialist government would have been to transference of power to democratically elected workers councils or 'soviets', which could have invited delegates from the invading armies; the fixing of a low maximum wage differential, and the disbandment of the bureaucratic standing army in favour of the armed people. This alone would have been a powerful political weapon. The armed resistance of the workers, with elected officers, would have had a tremendous impact on the invading troops. If anyone doubts this they need only look at Russia during the civil war. The Bolsheviks, on the basis of such a class appeal coupled with internationalist appeals to the workers of the world, defeated 21 interventionist armies from 14 countries. All this despite famine, shortage of arms, and the imperialist blockade.

Instead of taking such action Dubcek and co. worked out a 'compromise', or rather, a sell-out. This infuriated many Czechoslovaks. On August 27th 5,000 protested in Prague shouting "We want the full truth", and ripping down pictures of Dubcek and Svoboda (Guardian August 28th). They particularly opposed the stationing of troops in Czechoslovakia which would clearly be there not for defence against the west, but to prevent political revolution against the bureaucracy.

There is no doubt that Dubcek and co., even if they are only second best as far as the Kremlin is concerned, will do their best in leading off the people's demand for freedom. However, despite the defeat of the Czechoslovak workers and peasants, the outlook for Stalinism is bleak; 1968 is not 1956. Since the worst excesses of the Stalin era, a new generation has arisen in Eastern Europe which is not afraid of the old police terror. Though there may be a period of repression it is impossible to go back to the worst days of the purges. There is a widespread "back to Lenin" movement in the Eastern bloc. "Wake up Lenin, Brezhnev has gone crazy" said a poster in Prague (Observer August 25th). The poet Odnošosov has referred to such a movement in the U.S.S.R. (Sunday Times 14/1/68). The events in France and Czechoslovakia open up a new period in the advanced countries, a period of socialist revolution.

Once again Lenin's programme will be taken up:

All power to the democratically elected Soviets!  
 No standing army but the armed people!  
 No official to receive a higher wage than a skilled worker!  
 All tasks to be done in turn by the workers themselves -  
 "Every cook should be able to be Prime Minister".

Once the revolution has taken hold in an advanced country, whether it be in the east or the west, no force can resist it.

DEBATE: THIS HOUSE BELIEVES CAPITALISM IS BEST FOR BRITAIN

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Stephen Rees.

This occasion was a memorable event for all those who attended but for a rather unfortunate reason. Good debating and good public speaking tend to be mutually exclusive and this axiom was shown to be true on this occasion - more so than on any other. When two diametrically opposed sides of an argument such as this meet head on the result cannot fail to be spectacular. It also means however that in the heat of the moment paper speeches get thrown to the winds and clear reasoning is by furious exchanges of invective. I can claim no exception in my own case. I would like therefore to put before you the speech I had written which did not get spoken.

It must be made clear at the outset that for Britain to move towards Capitalism would be a retrograde step historically as well as socially. Indeed there is no nation on Earth which dares entrust itself to the vagaries of a free market. It was pointed out early on in this debate that there is no happy equilibrium. Experience has shown that the trade cycle left to itself, will become more, rather than less extreme in its effects, and consequently Governments have taken it upon themselves to regulate the market in order to "flatten-out" the trade cycle. The greatest weapon in this battle has been the unbalanced budget; there can be no doubt that to the capitalist deliberately creating deficits is the greatest possible heresy.

Furthermore, there are very few governments who do not now "interfere" to a greater or lesser extent in the market. It would be very difficult for them not to do so, especially if one bears in mind modern society's growing need for public rather than private investment. It is obviously untenable to suggest that highway planning, or a health service, should be left in the hands of private profit making concerns. Even in the United States government action is becoming an increasingly common method of solving economic problems - the prime example being F.V.A., Medicare and so forth. And one should not forget the outcry that arose from the businessmen and the classical economists over such measures.

Very few people seriously suggest now that the best government is the least government for we have all seen the disastrous results of such a policy. Capitalism has been seen to be an inefficient method of resource distribution, at best. In Britain the tendency to positive government, a trend which continues under socialist and Tory government, means that we now live in a 'mixed' economy. Again this is not wholly satisfactory. I doubt if any system devised by men ever could be, but it is patently obvious that moving back to capitalism can only make matters worse.

The answer to Britain's problems does not lie in theoretical 'isms'. There are no easy answers, no one has yet written the textbook for these problems. Surely the way lies in first getting our priorities straight: before any government can act effectively it must have a mandate for the people to change the direction of policy in a way in which the majority wants it to go - this is democracy. The task is to convince them that the answer lies in a policy which puts people first and doctrine

second. Forget Marx and Lenin for a moment and think on what the real aims of our society should be. Does a Red revolution really matter? Or are we more concerned that there should be equal opportunity for all, a just wage. Our guiding principle must still be "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need".

Capitalism was never designed to promote freedom, equality or happiness. Maybe the Utilitarians weren't so wrong after all - why not 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number'. This sort of idealism makes sense - much more so than the ideals of capitalism - a set of black figures on a balance sheet instead of a few red ones: a growth economy at any price : financial stability - who cares? I don't and I contend that few people do. Our concern is for people not artefacts, and capitalism has no place in this sort of thinking. Its out-dated and defunct, lets leave it that way.

- ooo -

"ONE DIMENSIONAL MAN" - HERBERT MARCUSE

Sphere books - 7/6d.

Jim Harbord.

Le Nouvel Observateur has called "One Dimensional Man", "the most subversive book published in the United States this century". Personally I would disagree with this view as in fact Marcuse is an extremely pessimistic philosopher indeed. However, Marcuse's message of despair is one of the best kept secrets since the C.I.A. wrecked the Australian Labour Party. The student revolutionaries who apparently drew their inspiration from Marcuse (although there is doubt about how great his influence was) probably found their justification in that they felt it necessary to make some effort to oppose the inevitable. If student revolution succeeds it will prove not only the openness of history but also the wrongness of Marcuse.

Marcuse's thesis is that "Contemporary society seems to be capable of containing social change". He is sure that a radical alteration of the basis of society cannot any longer be possible because technology has developed its own momentum. This fear of the uncontrolled violence of social change coincides with the themes discussed in Michael Harrington's "Accidental Century". However where Harrington is optimistic Marcuse takes things one step further and tries to show that the "mass media" constantly conditioning the minds of the masses has made revolution impossible.

Marcuse's views on consensus politics are very relevant to the present situation in Britain:- "The British Labour party, whose leaders compete with their Conservative counterparts in advancing national interests, is hard put to save even a modest programme of partial nationalisation".

/like

Like Andre Mahaux - Marcuse has realised that these days you cannot rule without television. Hence the consensus, the redundancy of police state apparatus when it is only too easy to control the minds of the masses by more subtle - less obvious means. As Nicholas Tomalin has noted, students in France rebel against De Gaulle's police-state, whilst in Greece there is no real opposition at all 'because' of the fact that Greece is a police state. "Repressive tolerance" as Marcuse calls it is a far more powerful weapon than tanks.

Marcuse has noted that in the modern "warfare state" based on defence contracts and the constant threat of war with "the enemy", there is a change in the consciousness of the labourer. The union identifies its interests with those of the Corporation e.g. in lobbying for defence contracts in Congress. Hence the consensus and hopes for change become more and more unfulfillable.

In an excellent chapter on "repressive desublimation" Marcuse touches on the relation of art to politics and society. This aspect of illusion and reality has always held an immense fascination for radicals - one recalls Ruskin, William Morris, Herbert Read, and more recently Ernst Fischer. Marcuse says of art that it "contains the rationality of negation. In its advanced positions, it is the Great Refusal - the protest against that which is". However in modern society he feels that the essential gap between the arts and the order of the day is being progressively closed by advancing technological society. Bach as background music in the kitchen is all very well but it is no longer an abstraction from society as opposed to just a part of it.

Marcuse shows the Orwellian absurdity of the unification of opposites that occurs in technological society. Peace is really the brink of war and hence the greatest possible tolerance is the greatest possible unity. "The world tends to become the stuff of total administration, which absorbs even the administration. The web of domination has become the web of reason itself ....."

The only challenge to 'one dimensional society' comes from those outside the productive process, the "substratum of outcasts and outsiders". Racial minorities, junkies, criminals and of course students can alone "violate the rules of the game". Their opposition is revolutionary even if their consciousness is not; in a way they are just blindly lashing out at a system which oppresses them. However one would doubt if any meaningful change can be made to society by the outsiders because revolutions must involve the seizure of power and the anarchist aspects of Marcuse's revolutionary elite would seem to preclude this.

It seems that Marcuse has expanded Oscar Wilde's old dictum that "in America the president is in power for four years but journalism rules all the time", and has made a political theory of it. Like Kirkegaard he finds society to be a "mere scandal" and sees in personal life the source of all absolute values. England is probably the best justification for Marcuse's pessimism, here even the students, junkies and racial minorities seem absorbed into the system. As George Steiner put it in the Sunday Times "England is left out, the old men do not want her in their Common Market: the young have no reason to include her in their conunne".

SONGS FOR SOCIALISTS

The International

1st Arise! ye starvelings from your slumbers!  
 Arise! ye prisoners of want!  
 For reason in revolt now thunders,  
 And at last ends the age of cant.  
 Now away with all your superstitions,  
 Servile masses, arise, arise!  
 We'll change forthwith the old conditions  
 And spurn the dust to win the prize.

<u>Chorus</u>	Then comrades, come rally, And the last fight let us face! The International Unites the human race!	}	<u>repeat</u>
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2nd No saviours from on high deliver.  
 No trust have we in prince or peer;  
 Our own right hand the chains must sever,  
 Chains of hatred, greed and fear.  
 'Ere the thieves will out with their booty  
 To give mankind a happier lot,  
 Each at his forge must do his duty  
 And strike the iron while it's hot!

Chorus as before.

3rd We peasants, artisans and others  
 Enrolled among the sons of toil,  
 Let's claim the earth henceforth for brothers;  
 Drive the indolent from the soil.  
 On our flesh too long has fed the raven  
 We've too long been the vulture's prey  
 But now fare well the spirit craven,  
 The dawn brings in a brighter day.

Chorus as before.

The Red Flag

1st The People's Flag is deepest red,  
It shrouded oft' our martyred dead;  
And 'ere their limbs grew stiff and cold,  
Their life's blood dyed its every fold.

Chorus Then raise the scarlet standard high!  
Beneath its shade we'll live or die!  
Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer,  
We'll keep the Red Flag flying here!

2nd It waved above our infant might  
When all around was dark as night.  
It witnessed many a deed and vow,  
We must not change its colour now.

Chorus as before.

3rd It suits today the weak and base,  
Whose minds are fixed on pelf and place,  
To cringe before the rich man's frown  
And haul the sacred emblem down.

Chorus as before.

4th Look round: the Frenchman loves its blaze;  
The sturdy German sings its praise.  
In Moscow's vaults its hymns are sung;  
Chicago swells its surging song.

Chorus as before.

5th With heads uncovered, swear we all  
To bear it onwards 'till we fall.  
Come dungeon dark or gallows grin,  
This song shall be our parting hymn:

Chorus Then raise the scarlet standard high!  
Beneath its shade we'll live or die!  
Though cowards flinch and traitors sneer,  
We'll keep the Red Flag flying here!